



Working Conference - Launching of the Network of Mediterranean Universities for ESD, Athens, 18-19 November 2008

The “Launching of the Network of Mediterranean Universities for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)” took place in Athens, on 18-19 November 2008, at the Central University Hall of Athens. The meeting was organized by the University of Athens (UoA) under the auspices of the Deputy Rector, Prof. Ioannis Karakostas, with the support of UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science in Europe (BRESCE) and MIO-ECSDE. The scope and objectives, the activities and modalities of work of the Network were discussed and elaborated during the meeting. The ultimate goal of the Network is to develop and implement a Mediterranean Master Course of ESD. The Network was officially launched at the end of the second day of the meeting by all participating universities.

The first day of the meeting it was officially addressed by Dr Maria Peppas, Head of International Affairs & EU, Hellenic Ministry of Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works and by Mme Michele Gendreau - Massaloux, Rector of the *Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie - Mission Union pour la Mediterranee*, who expressed the commitment to support the initiative.

Prof. Scoullou, MIO-ECSDE Chairman, presented the general scope of the Network giving an overview of the “history” behind the initiative, the goals, the proposed structure, the types of activities and the work plan as well as the Curriculum of the Master Course for ESD -as it was agreed in the kick-off meeting in Sarajevo in 2007. The basic goals of the Network as were clarified are:

- To promote SD in the curricula of the Mediterranean Universities and higher education institutions.
- To establish a Post-Graduate course (Master level) on ESD (Core Group members)
- To create the opportunities for synergy and to coordinate and complement existing efforts for the promotion of ESD in the participating countries and beyond.
- To promote the “whole institute approach” on sustainable development in higher education institutions.
- To contribute to further promotion and implementation of the UN Decade on ESD and the UNECE Strategy on ESD in the Mediterranean.

Dr Christine Jakobsson, Director of the Baltic University Programme (BUP), based in the University of Uppsala, gave a comprehensive presentation of functioning of the BUP network and shared important experience through the work as the coordinator and director of the BUP Network. The second of the meeting was officially addressed by the Vice Rector of the University of Athens, Prof. Ioannis Karakostas.



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Participants discussed about their work and shared experiences in the field of educating for sustainable development at graduate and post-graduate level. Major questions raised from the general discussion were: The need of appropriate motivation and reward of professors to be engaged in such initiatives; The lack of resources –both human and financial –as main reason of lack of continuity in similar initiatives; The need of pioneering methodologies and approaches to apply; The urgency to be in line with the Bologna provisions.

Participants elaborated the objectives, the types of activities, the work plan, the membership, the structure (see picture in page 3) and issues of administration of the Network. They worked these topics based on the draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that was developed by UoA and MIO-ECSDE and distributed to participants prior the meeting. The draft MoU describing in detail all aforementioned was greatly discussed and elaborated. It was agreed for the draft MoU to be finalized by the Secretariat - UoA and MIO-ECSDE – based on the comments and discussion, and sent to all universities to be finally reviewed, officially approved and signed.

A group of the universities members, the so-called “Core Group” will jointly develop and implement a Mediterranean Master Course on ESD. The curriculum of the proposed Master Course was discussed and participants exchanged experience and expertise coming from the national frameworks which are in force in their universities. An updated form of Curriculum was developed and it was agreed to be presented as an Annex in the MoU of the Network. Furthermore, it was agreed that participants will send input for the brief description of the subjects included in the curriculum (including objectives and topics) in due time.

The Network was officially launched at the end of the second day of the meeting by all participants who were officially representing the Rectors of the following seventeen (17) Universities:

University of Agriculture of Tirana (Albania)

University of Bogazici and Akdeniz University (Turkey)

University of Bordeaux (France)

University of Cairo (Egypt)

Technical University of Catalonia (Spain)

University of Cyprus (Cyprus)

University of La Saggese (Lebanon)

University of Mohamed V Souissi (Morocco)

University of Padova (Italy)

University of Primorska (Slovenia)

University of Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

University of Zagreb (Croatia)

Agricultural University of Athens, University of Crete, Panteion University of Athens,

University of Peloponisos and University of Athens (Greece).



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