



## **Memorandum of Understanding for the Mediterranean Universities Network for Sustainable Development (SD) focusing on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)**

The Universities listed below called hereafter as “Members of the Network” have agreed on the following Memorandum which includes seven (7) **Articles** and following **Annex**:

### **Introduction-Justification**

The Mediterranean Region, the cradle of major civilizations and one of the birthplaces of knowledge and education faces major challenges at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium. Its Universities have a duty to undertake their responsibilities. A new vision of a higher education that addresses the profound challenges of our societies and the unsustainable practices of our days is particularly needed in the Mediterranean region which is characterised by a particular historical background, and political, socio-economic and cultural conditions, evident in all countries including EU and non EU ones.

There is a great need for the Universities of the Mediterranean to promote sustainable development in the region in order to stimulate and foster synergies within sustainable development and provide an efficient Forum for consultation among key-stakeholders e.g. public administration, future employers, educators at primary and secondary level, NGOs, politicians, etc. and of course, University and Academic leaders.

The establishment of the Network of Mediterranean Universities for the promotion of Sustainable Development (SD) starting with Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in the region is an urgent demand in order to revitalise the educational systems and the educational community of the Mediterranean. The time period is even more appropriate and urgent, since we are marching on the UN Decade of ESD (2005-2014) and the implementation of the UNECE Strategy on ESD and, in parallel, the countries members of the EU of the region work on the direction towards the provisions of the Bologna Process.

Although several initiatives and programmes for SD exist in Higher Education Institutions around the world, in extremely few cases ESD is addressed as such. It is clear that much more intensive and systematic effort is needed to coordinate, complement and support existing initiatives and lead them to synergy.

The realisation of the need to establish and promote ESD has been started at the historic International Conference ““Environment and Society: Education and Public Awareness for Sustainability” (Thessaloniki, 1997) coorganised by UNESCO and the Government of Greece with the Academic and Administrative support of the University of Athens and the Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO-ECSDE). The aforementioned institutions have been also instrumental in the acceptance of the UN Decade of ESD and the elaboration of the UNECE Strategy on ESD. They have taken the initiative for the establishment and facilitation of the operation of a Network of Universities in the Mediterranean region in collaboration with forward looking Universities of the Region, for Sustainable Development (SD) focusing on Education for Sustainable

Development (ESD). The launching of the initiative was further supported by UNESCO-BRESCE.

### **Article 1: The establishment of the Network**

The need for enhancement of our sustainable approaches is a major issue for the Mediterranean Universities. In parallel, as is indicated and required by the *UN Decade of ESD (DESD) (2005-2014)* the expansion of international exchange and cooperation between educational institutions will enhance greatly the impact of DESD, through the development of *“a new global learning space on Education and Sustainability that promotes cooperation and exchange between institutions at all levels and in all sectors of education around the world”*. It is critical that Universities cooperate as they are places of exchange of ideas, research and learning for SD and as initiators and poles of concrete activities in their communities and at national and global level (UNESCO, 2005; UNECE, 2005; Tarragona Declaration, 2005; Bologna Declaration, 1999).

The Universities signing the present Memorandum agree to form the Mediterranean Universities Network for Sustainable Development (SD) focusing on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

### **Article 2: Aim and Objectives**

The **primary aim** of the Network is to promote ESD in the Universities and Higher Education Institutions in the Mediterranean and to promote synergy among relevant initiatives and efforts. In the future the Network may decide to expand its scope n other aspects of SD such as fresh water, marine issues, and environmental diplomacy.

In the present phase, the particular **objectives** of the Network are:

- I. To facilitate and promote SD aspects in the University Programmes, Departments and Facilities.
- II. To develop and implement a Master Course on ESD.
- III. To provide a Forum for consultation and radical re-thinking on ESD among key-stakeholders, not only University and academic leaders and students but also public administration representatives, future employers and the private sector, educators at primary and secondary level, NGOs, politicians, the media, etc.
- IV. To create the opportunities for synergy and to coordinate and complement existing efforts for the promotion of ESD in the participating countries and beyond.
- V. To promote the “whole institute approach” on SD in higher education institutions in the region.
- VI. To contribute to further promotion and implementation of the UN Decade on ESD and the UNECE Strategy on ESD in the Mediterranean and/or a similar appropriate ESD Strategy for the Mediterranean.

### **Article 3: Structure of the Network**

The Network shall consist of the Members, the Core Group, the Council, the Coordinator and the Secretariat.

#### **Members**

Members of the Network shall be Universities of the Mediterranean countries which:

- i. Demonstrate their interest in ESD and the introduction of SD themes in their curricula.
- ii. Are officially recognized in their respective countries
- iii. Agree with the present Memorandum of Understanding.

Each Member shall indicate a focal point to participate in the Network's coordination activities. A good balance of Members from both sides of the Mediterranean shall be sought after.

Members are bound to remain in the Network for a minimum period of at least three (3) academic years. If they wish to resign they should give appropriate notification one (1) year earlier. The process of acceptance of new member-Universities in the Network shall be open. Acceptance will take place following an application by the interested University to the Secretariat by consensus of the Members. Decisions of the meetings of the Network are taken with 3/4 majority.

#### **The Core Group & the Council**

The Core Group is mandated by the Network to be responsible to implement the Master Course on ESD for at least two years. The Core-Group together with representative of UNESCO-BRESCE and eventually major donors shall consist also the Council, in the first phase. In the future the Members of the Council will be elected by the Members of the Network among the Member Universities.

The Members of the Core Group shall be Members of the Network and they should:

- Provide a critical mass of teaching staff able to support and follow up the Master Course. The teaching staff should have the adequate time availability and necessary support from the Member University for their mobility.
- Provide adequate space, equipment of video conferences and other distance learning facilities.

#### **The Coordinator**

The Coordinator of the Network is elected among the Members of the Council. For the preparatory and initial phase (first five years) as Coordinator is agreed Prof. Michael Scoullou, University of Athens.

#### **Article 4: Academic & Administrative Secretariat**

The Coordinating Secretariat of the Network will be provided jointly by the University of Athens (Academic Component) and MIO-ECSDE (Administrative Component). For the preparatory and first phase, it will cover the entire spectrum of organizational issues including efforts of fund raising and the setting up of the Master Course. Nevertheless, in the next Phases and particularly, within the implementation of the Master Course, the Member Universities shall achieve a maximum level of ownership in order to minimize bureaucratic issues and administration burden at central (coordination) level. Therefore, the function of the Academic Secretariat will be undertaken, to a large extent, by the Secretariats of the participating parties of each Member University. The role of the Coordinating Secretariat of the Network will continue to be provided by the University of Athens and MIO-ECSDE for issues of coherence, continuity coordination and smooth coordination.

#### **Article 5: Whole Institute Approach**

All members of the Network shall facilitate and promote SD aspects in their facilities and departments; improve and enrich the related existing courses, and highlight the best practices in related events, fora, conferences, etc. to facilitate the "whole institute approach" on SD in their University.

**Article 6: Resources**

The Network should try to raise funds. Funding for at least three academic years has to be secured from the first phase. The members shall try to get support from their national Ministries of Education and Environment. The Secretariat is mandated to submit proposals for the necessary funding of the Network to appropriate sources i.e. EC Programmes, UNESCO, etc. The Members could examine eventual membership fees to support particularly Secretariat operations in the future.

**Article 7: Revision**

This Memorandum of Understanding will be revised, if needed, in a five years period.

For the Academic Secretariat of  
the Network

For the Administrative  
Secretariat of the Network

For the University of

Rector of the University of  
Athens

Prof. Michael Scoullos  
Chairman of MIO-ECSDE

*Signature and stamp*

## ANNEX

<b>Official Members of the Network (signed the MoU)</b>
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Agricultural University of Athens (Greece)

La Sagesse University (Lebanon)

National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (Greece)

Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences (Greece)

Technical University of Catalonia (Spain)

University of Agriculture of Tirana (Albania)

University of Bogazici (Turkey)

University of Bordeaux (France)

University of Cairo (Egypt)

University of Crete (Greece)

University of Cyprus (Cyprus)

University of Mohamed V Souissi (Morocco)

University of Padova (Italy)

University of Primorska (Slovenia)

University of Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

University of Tunis (Tunisia)

University of Zagreb (Croatia)

University of Peloponnesus (Greece)