



3rd Pan-European Days of Environmental Education for Sustainability – Barcelona, 1-2 October 2015

Conclusions Regarding the Third Pan-European Days of Environmental Education for Sustainability

A number of official European and international texts have long recognized Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and encourage countries to take action; for this reason, and within the framework of the Four Motors for Europe presidency, we organized the Third Pan-European Days of Environmental Education for Sustainability with the following objectives:

- To encourage the exchange of experiences and knowledge and thus strengthen relations between European institutions and associations with a view to identifying shared interests and promoting joint work.
- To create a space for reflection on the role of environmental education in tackling future challenges.
- To promote the creation of joint projects between the different European regions.

A total of 260 people from 24 different countries participated in this conference, which took place in Barcelona on 1 and 2 October 2015. The participants came from a wide range of fields, including public administrations, international organizations dedicated to environmental education, universities, schools, and environmental organizations and foundations. This diversity resulted in a highly dynamic conference with simultaneous work groups, oral presentations and a space for the promotion of partnerships, and led to all work groups reaffirming many of the goals envisaged in the **ESD Manifesto for Education on the Environment and Sustainable Development**, which was drawn up after the Second Pan-European Days of Environmental Education for Sustainability held in Bergamo.

With respect to the conclusions of the conference held in Barcelona, we can only validate many of the statements in the **ESD Manifesto** that show that education for sustainable development (ESD) has grown over the last few decades in order to deal with the spread of the environmental, economic and social crisis. Education for sustainable development advocates **a holistic approach to the environment** that includes its territorial and temporal dimensions and contemplates it within the context of the immediate surroundings, the world, the present and the future. It examines all of

the problems encountered in daily life, especially those associated with water, mobility, consumption, food and waste, as well as other problems that affect the climate and biodiversity.

Furthermore, ESD **is aimed at everyone, at all stages of life**, in formal and informal education, from childhood right through to adulthood: from schools to universities, associations, companies, communities, the media, the street, and through the discourse and actions of responsible citizens.

As citizenship education, ESD aims to **encourage critical thinking** and **develop complex thought** in order to turn out responsible citizens who believe in the value of citizen action and are capable of assuming their responsibilities to take action at all levels, and in doing so to foster the development of values that enhance our coexistence.

Its aims to **strengthen the abilities** of all people, so that they obtain a clearer picture of environmental challenges and participate in tackling them individually and collectively. It is intended to **promote participatory debate** with a view to preparing young people and adults to get involved in the development of their territories at local or global level.

It promotes a global, systemic outlook in order to **establish strong links** between people, nature and the environment. These relationships with **nature and the environment** represent a key element of the learning process.

In order to contribute to the creation of a new citizenship equipped to tackle the challenges of the 21st century, it is necessary to address **awareness, information, training and participation in collective ESD actions**. ESD goes beyond educational content; **it is a global training process** that forms part of a perspective of change.

As already demonstrated by specific collective projects carried out in territories and through partnerships, EDS must form part of **public policies** and the strategies of private organizations.

The conference in Barcelona included a workshop with the title **How Do We Create a European Environmental Education Network?** This workshop concluded that all European countries share the same values and needs with respect to EDS, and it is therefore necessary to promote a European EDS network in which representatives of all the actors involved will participate in the continuing efforts and improvements, thus demonstrating that this way of understanding education is the key to achieving sustainable development at global level.