First Meeting of the Mediterranean Committee on Education for Sustainable Development (22-24 November 2018)

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The meeting was the follow up on the outcomes of the Ministerial Conference that took place in Cyprus (December 2016) for adapting the Mediterranean Action Plan on ESD.
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Mediterranean Education Initiative for Environment & Sustainability
Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development

The Mediterranean Committee for ESD established by the countries via the adaptation of the Nicosia Declaration, aiming to facilitate the implementation of the MAPESD and coordinating collaboration among countries and with competent international and regional organizations, Conventions and bodies, monitoring ‘its’ implementation and upgrading and revised it
110 Participants from 18 countries attended the meeting. Parliamentarians, policy and decision makers from the Ministries of Education and Environment, Journalists, NGOs, International and Regional Organizations, Academia

Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Mauritania, Montenegro, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia.
purposes of the meeting

(a) To review and discuss how the Action Plan (AP) of the Mediterranean Strategy on ESD (MSESD) has been used/integrated/valued within the existing Programmes/Projects/Initiatives of the countries and the associated International and Regional organisations, one year after its adoption;

(b) To make the decision-makers and, in particular, the Mediterranean Parliamentarians aware of the efforts for ESD promotion;

(c) To provide the opportunity to exchange know-how and experiences on the latest developments on ESD and its role to achieve the SDGs by the countries;

(d) To train all involved on issues related to the ESD implementation.
Innovation of the meeting was the 3 hours special side event that took place in Cyprus Parliament.

The purpose of the meeting was to give the opportunity to the members of the parliaments of various countries to discuss with the Cyprus parliamentary members and the international and regional organizations ways for supporting the implementation of the Med ESD Action Plan in their national and regional contexts as well as to undertake joint actions in ESD direction.

40 parliamentary members participated to the side event from 9 countries. The rest of the delegates were observers.
Main recommendations of the Parliament paper conclusions

• Reinforced the efforts of countries to reform and modernize their institutional frameworks towards strengthening ESD, in line with the Mediterranean Strategy on ESD and its Action Plan.

• Highlighting the urgent need to strengthen ESD as an integral part of the National Strategies for implementing the SDGs. The Parliaments of the countries of the region can convene special sessions to raise awareness and promote such relevant initiatives.

• Highlight that all other relevant Ministries should assist in developing and integrating, within the countries’ educational systems, non-formal education and public awareness raising processes on sustainable development, by integrating and encouraging the activities of civil society and in particular of NGOs dealing with ESD, as well as those of the relevant International and Regional Networks.

• The Parliaments of the countries of the region can actively support the necessary legislative work and approve appropriate funding mechanisms for the promotion of ESD.
Issues of discussion among the stakeholders from Ministries, NGOs, Academia during the meeting

- Explained how UNECE ESD Strategy impacted the formation of the MED ESD Action Plan and discussed how important are the regional strategies as tools that supporting the ESD Implementation in National Context, promoting also the bilateral agreements and networking among the countries (Cyprus-Egypt bilateral agreement on ESD).

- Exchange of experiences on ESD Plans, programs and initiatives for implementing MED ESD Action Plan.

- Discussed how the MED ESD Action Plan facilitate countries to promote SDGs in formal and non-formal education.

- Highlighted the lessons that learnt from each other as well as identify the challenges and challenges that Med Countries phase regarding the ESD
Meeting outcomes – Progress

• For Action Plans serving the actual needs of the educational community it is effective to invest in the long and sometimes painstaking process of bottom up consultation, including youth/students.

• It is highly recommended to educate the students in the international processes and frameworks as important participatory processes.

• In many countries non formal ESD interventions are more robust than the formal ones. It is needed to further integrate the work of the Civil Society.

• The importance of ESD as an inclusive type of education and as a driver to promote other SD agendas is widely recognised. ESD strategies need to tie to SDGs, climate change, zero-waste, circular economy agendas, etc.

• The financial challenge: The political will for ESD implementation needs to be accompanied with concrete and budgeted activities.
Meeting outcomes-Challenges

• The “silo effect” and the lack of interdepartmental and inter-institutional cooperation and coordination. The need for strengthening of systematic interdepartmental collaboration.

• The “person behind” challenge: ESD is in many cases driven by personal commitments of dedicated individuals. There is a need to complement and invest on it by creating solid institutional frameworks and ensure the continuity of the ESD ‘vision’/efforts.

• The monitoring & reporting challenge: data recording in a systematic way is an issue at national as well as at regional/international levels.

• The strengthening of ESD activities at Higher Education. There is a need for stronger links with Academia/Higher Education Institutes and Research Institutes.

• The gender issue.

• Highlighted the importance of collaboration and synergies and recommended the systematic cooperation with the existing regional and international networks that provide ESD (UNESCO, UNECE, MIO-MEDIES)
Meeting outcomes – The impact and dynamic of ESD Med Strategy for the Med Region

• A dynamic network of countries and organizations is created.

• Promotion of synergies at bilateral level among countries.

• Potential to focus on issues that concern the Mediterranean.

• Opportunity for connecting Med ESD Strategy with other strategies (e.g. UNECE strategy on ESD, and to connect them with SDGs).

• Increased mobility for cooperation at the Mediterranean level and to use funding tools.
Steps for the next year

The 2nd meeting of the MED Steering Committee will take place in Venice under the support of the UNESCO office in Venice.

Dates will be announced later on.

The focus of the meeting will be the monitoring, evaluation and respective indicators, as well as to the exploration of existing and new opportunities for mobilizing appropriate resources.

A publication is in process and will include all the presentations, interventions and outcomes of the meeting, supported by the Pedagogical Institute of Cyprus.
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Thirteenth meeting of UNECE ESD Steering Committee
Geneva, 3-4 May 2018

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