Following the Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Republic of Croatia, the Action Plan on Education for Sustainable Development was adopted by the Government on 8th April 2011. The plan was developed in close cooperation of then Ministry of Environmental Protection, Physical Planning and Construction and the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports and other relevant stakeholders.

Further educational mechanisms will be developed through other action plans which are in the process of development, such as Action Plan on Environmental Protection, Action Plan for the Protection of the Adriatic Sea, Coast and Islands and Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production which is in its final stage. Their adoption is expected this year.

Furthermore, last year was set up a training programme “Sustainable development in practice” in the State School for Public Administration which is in charge of professional education and training of civil servants, as well as public employees in local and regional self-government bodies and legal entities vested with public authorities. The countries in the region requested from us to share the experience and knowledge, so we provided Serbia and Montenegro with this training and Croatian manual for their future trainers, enabling them to adapt the materials for their own use and organise trainings in their own countries.

The initial group of 16 trainers on ESD has been trained and in the future they will help in designing similar introductory courses on SD for other stakeholder groups that we want to educate on this subject through the Action Plan on Education for Sustainable Development.

In November 2011, Croatia supported the Sub-regional Seminar on Education for Sustainable Development under the framework of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development which was hosted by Slovenia. The objectives of the seminar were to address the ways ESD could be linked to the green economy process in the sub-region and clarify ESD educator competences against the national contexts as well as address how educator competences could be strengthened on national levels. It also provided a platform for sharing information about the current state of art of implementing ESD in the sub-region, to share materials as well as to promote co-operation between different ESD stakeholders.

The development of UNEP’s and UNESCO’s YouthXchange guide (on sustainable consumption and production) is in its final stage. After the approval of the guide by UNEP, the brochure will be presented to public and other stakeholders in the first half of 2012.

We would also like to mention the “Green Pack” project which focuses on implementation of a proven ESD tool in Croatia and assistance in raising awareness of sustainable development. A feasibility study was conducted in 2011; a detailed plan of implementation of Green Pack in Croatia was developed and a consultation process for the adaptation and up-grading reflecting the Croatian specific needs and challenges of Green Pack was conducted. Potential donors for financing the implementation of the project are being explored.

The education system in the Republic of Croatia in general consists of the pre-school, primary, secondary (vocational and grammar schools) and university education. Among other things, the purpose of pre-school education is to enable the development of ability to
grasp the basic image of the natural and wider social environment and sustainable development. Furthermore, the education on sustainable development (ESD) is acquired through regular primary and secondary lessons in nature and society, nature, chemistry, geography, art, as well as in secondary schools, for example in sociology, ethics, economics etc. ESD is also enriched by optional and non-compulsory subjects and extracurricular activities in line with schools’ profiles and priorities. At the level of higher education institutions the sustainable development issue is addressed through some compulsory or elective courses i.e., at the University of Zagreb postgraduates courses such as Ecology (within the Biology Department - Faculty of Sciences Zagreb), Social Ecology (Faculty of Philosophy, Faculty of Textile Technology) or Eco-engineering (interdisciplinary specialist study coordinated by the Faculty of Chemical Engineering and Technology) etc.

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) was adopted in July 2010. A rational behind it was a shift in curriculum policy and planning, focusing on competences and learning outcomes instead of the content and knowledge transfer. Its educational values arise from the commitment on the creation of a knowledge-based society that will enable sustainable development. The values NCF focuses on (and which are also important for the ESD) are knowledge, solidarity, identity and responsibility. NCF includes wider educational areas i.e., related subject units connected by interdisciplinary themes which are compulsory in all subjects but schools are free to elaborate and to decide how to implement them. The NCF provides for the implementation of the following interdisciplinary themes: 1) personal and social development 2) health, safety, and environmental protection 3) learning to learn 4) entrepreneurship 5) use of information and communication technology and 6) civil education. Although perhaps most obviously present in the health, safety, and environmental protection theme, the content of ESD can be traced in all of the above mentioned interdisciplinary themes.

The Education and Teacher Training Agency through various workshops and seminars continues its work on fostering teacher competences for ESD. In May 2011 in corporation with the KulturKontakt Austria, the Agency organized in Zagreb a Regional conference on ESD, focusing among other things on sustainable development within vocational education (i.e., ESD in hotel-tourism schools). As the Conference follow up activity and as a result of three years long cooperation on professional development of teachers, the Agency issued the Manual for primary and secondary schools for ESD (2011), presenting some of the school projects as examples of good ESD practices.

After participating in the GLOBE programme (Global Learning and Observation to Benefit the Environment) since 1995. Croatian programme was in 2011 awarded with the Globe Star award as recognition for being example of good practice and inspiration to other GLOBE partners in implementing the programme and organizing the Annual Festival and Competition as one of GLOBE Croatia’s most exciting events.

Croatian schools continue their participation in the international programs concerning ESD, such as SEMEP (South-East Mediterranean Environmental project), as well as UNESCO Associated Schools and FEE (Foundation for Environmental Education) in which NGO the Nature Friends Movement ‘Our Beautiful Homeland’ continues its role as national coordinator and organizer of the eco-quiz show ‘Our Beautiful Homeland’.