

**UNECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development
Sixth meeting
Geneva,
Thursday, 7 April 2011**

10.40 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Item 4

Progress by member States in the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development

BELGIUM

The coordination of ESD efforts is surely not evident within the Belgian context of a federalised state structure. Sustainable development is a competence shared by both the federal authorities and the federated states, not only as far as the three pillars of sustainable development are concerned, but also within each pillar. Education – both formal education and (in)formal learning – can for the most part be considered a community matter. This implies that the communities (Flemish, French-speaking and German-speaking) can interpret and implement Education for Sustainable Development in their own way. Still, we managed to yield one single consistent report.

Flemish government:

In **higher education**, learning networks are sharing and building knowledge about the process of integration of sustainable development. Thematic learning networks curriculum were organised in 2010 in different fields of study, e.g.: Educational sciences, Social work, Tourism and hotel management, Engineering sciences, Economics. The presidents of the thematic learning networks are lecturers (volunteers) in higher education. They are supported by the Ecocampus project of the Flemish government (<http://ecocampus.lne.be>).

I want to pay attention to just one Learning Network (LN): 'Orientation of Social Work on Sustainable Development (SD). The LN brings together teachers of schools for social work and some social workers from diverse organisations for study, building knowledge, and exchange of expertise and initiatives for SD in the SW curriculum. The LN combines content and didactics for sustainability to develop and incorporate ESD into the social work curriculum and into the education system. It aims at increasing the awareness of the fact that SD touches upon the very core of the social work profession.

The actors involved are not only teachers of schools for social work but also practitioners in the field since the interaction between theory and practice has always been important in social work professional education. The chair of the network is a teacher; the coordination by a policy advisor of the Flemish government.

Diverse content has been discussed so far: the interrelatedness of social work and sustainable development, education for sustainable development (ESD), ecological economics, transition management, consumption and debts mediation, empowerment, competences for sustainable development, global inequality, globalisation, solidarity as a basic value in social work, resilience, etc. From this academic year on, in every meeting we also address a didactic approach: social-artistic projects, working with movies, games, etc. The themes and issues treated in the LN also inspired the content of a recently published handbook about social work and sustainable development.

The LN can be viewed from three different perspectives: ESD policy, social work professional education and social work practice. Undoubtedly, it contributed to the implementation of the ESD Decade in Flanders by fostering valuable learning

opportunities in higher education. The impact of the LN on professional education and social work practice can be illustrated with two cases. The first is an Intensive Programme about SD set up by three Flemish schools for social work together with seven foreign partner schools. Secondly, the activities of the LN did affect the practices of Globelink, a youth organisation with a focus on global inequality.

In 2010 and 2011 we organised for the second and the third time a Marketplace for Sustainable Development in Higher education. On the market place high schools, universities and NGO's presents their projects. There are also a lot of round tables where participants learn from each other about how to implement sustainable development in educational settings.

In 2010 the Business Management School of the Leuven University College got a two star certificate of the Auditing Instrument for Sustainability in Higher Education (AISHE).

In primary and secondary education 75% of the schools are participating in the MOS-project (Milieuzorg op School, Environmental Performance at school). The text of the contract on the MOS-project explicitly stipulates that the MOS-project enters within the framework of Education for Sustainable Development. The accompanying materials helps schools towards achieving the "whole-school approach".

For secondary education, the cross-curricular attainment targets comprise a context on Environment and Sustainable Development. Six attainment targets have been specified for this context, which are of course connected to more general attainment targets such as Learning to think critically and which can also combined with attainment targets from other contexts.

Minister Pascal Smet advocates investing in Education for Sustainable Development in his policy memorandum on Education. For 2011-2012 he selected Education for Sustainable Development as a priority topic for formation of teachers and headmasters.

Within the framework of the 2020 European Strategy and its aspiration towards sustainable and green knowledge economy, the Council of Europe adopted some conclusions on Education for Sustainable Development at the time of the Belgian EU Presidency.

The sector of **non-formal learning** held a symposium on Education for Sustainable Development to stimulate ESD in the sector. For youth organisations a tool was developed to organise a youth camp in the theme of sustainable development.

Within our ESD-consultation platform a working group on "indicators for ESD" reflected on indicators for ESD, which resulted in a vision and reflection document containing ESD-principles, to which questions for reflection are linked. This document (EDO, de vlag en de lading), also available in English (Flag and cargo), is the starting point for the development for the development of organisation-specific indicators through the use of an appropriate methodology.

<http://edo.lne.be>

French community

The EE – SD within the school context of the French-speaking Community of Belgium

Education for Environment and Sustainable Development has already a prominent place in the schools of the French-speaking Community of Belgium. But regarding the multiplicity of supply and demand on this matter, it is now urgent to think about the

situation and to agree to more strategic developments of EE - SD at school. It is the ambition of these 'Meetings' which will bring together the different actors within and outside the academic world: the educational staff in schools, from nursery schools to secondary schools, government departments of education (AGERS) and environmental, energy and mobility authorities in Wallonia and Brussels, EE SD associations, etc.. And of course, the ministerial offices of education and environment, initiator of this approach. These – Meetings - were organised in October 2010.

The process takes place during the academic year 2010/2011 and includes different phases:

1. Launch Day on October 14, 2010 in Brussels: upgrading of the institutional actors concerned.
2. Working groups and meetings of the teaching staff from the nursery school to secondary school (October 2010-February 2011): Survey on issues related to EE - SD at school
3. Two days of institutional co-ordination (in December 2010 and March 2011): collection of teachers' views, proposals and preparation of decisions.
4. And finally, a closing day of the –Meetings-, April 29, 2011 in Brussels, open to the public.

<http://assises-ere.be/>

From the 27th till the 29th of October a Benelux Conference took place in Luxembourg (Weicherdange). Food, biodiversity and ESD was the central theme. In three days the different dimensions of food were analysed. There was also a reflection on the consequences for education and for the institutions where participants work. In November 2011 there will be a follow-up to strengthen the efforts for biodiversity, sustainable food and ESD in the Benelux. The meeting will be organised in Gembloux by the Walloon Region.

<http://www.environnement.public.lu/kanner/ConfBenelux2010/index.html>

<http://www.benelux.int/nl/dos/dos01.asp>