Proposal for the Implementation of Education for Sustainable Development in the framework of the Bologna-Process

Based on

- the Strategy of the Education for Sustainable Development of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe UNECE
- the Lüneburg Declaration of Global Higher Education for Sustainability Partnership GHESP
- the University Charter for Sustainable Development of COPERNICUS

Taking into account the Plan of Implementation of the Earth Summit of Johannesburg and the UN-Decade on Education for Sustainable Development 2005-1014
COPERNICUS-CAMPUS

The Cooperation Programme in Europe for Research on Nature and Industry though Cooperated University Studies (COPERNICUS) is a European network of universities, founded by the former European Rectors Conference (CRE). The COPERNICUS-CAMPUS, which forms part of the Global Higher Education for Sustainable Partnership (GHESP) focuses on the activities of the higher education institutions related to sustainable development. This implies that in curricula institutional management and services to the local/regional community need to work out a sound balance between economic, ecological and socio-cultural aspects. A University Charter for Sustainable Development has been developed by Copernicus in order to express a collective commitment within a large number of universities.

GHESP

In order to promote higher education for sustainable development four international organizations have formed a "Global Higher Education for Sustainability Partnership (GHESP)"). The four founding partners of the initiative – which are the International Association of Universities (IAU), the University Leaders for a Sustainable Future (ULSF), Copernicus-Campus and Unesco - combine forces to mobilize universities and higher education institutions in favor of a sustainable development (according to Chapter 36 of the Agenda 21). With the aim of implementing their commitment to action, GHESP Partners have endorsed the Lüneburg Declaration on Higher Education for Sustainable Development (October 10th 2001).

WWF

The WWF Training Center in Switzerland is leading the implementation process on education for a sustainable development on all educational levels and bring in the concerns of environment and sustainable development into the reform processes of educational policy.
Recommendation 1

The European Ministers of Education
- acknowledge the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit held in Johannesburg for an education for sustainable development as well as the commitment of each European country to contribute to the UN-Decade of "Education for Sustainable Development" and to bundle them in a Plan of Implementation
- honor the UN-Decade on "Education for Sustainable Development 2005-2014" with a declaration made by the European Ministers of Education for a "Sustainable Bologna".

The higher education institutions, with their role model and dissemination functions, carry the special responsibility towards society to use public means of education in favor of a sustainable development.

The Plan of Implementation, as agreed on during the Earth Summit 2002 for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, honors the importance of education for the promotion of sustainable development.

The European Ministers of Education are called upon to participate in this worldwide process in the frame of the Bologna reforms, to support the World Decade with European contributions and to follow-up on to the Plan of Action of Johannesburg with a common declaration to "sustainable Bologna".
Sustainability standards for the quality assurance for higher education institutions

Recommendation 2

The European Ministers of Education
- acknowledge sustainability standards of education as part of an integrated and sustainable system of quality and accreditation for higher education institutions and for degrees (Bachelor and Master)
- support the drafting of guidelines, taking into account the sustainable development when establishing modular study courses

The Bologna reforms provide the opportunity to reform the renewal of teaching and learning in accordance with sustainable curricula and training methods. Bachelor and Master-degree studies shall in the future correspond to international educational standards (e.g. DeSeCo of OECD) for sustainable development. Especially by establishing new modular study courses for Bachelor and Master degrees it is necessary to generate binding requirements of competence of sustainable development.

Assessment procedures of the scientific personnel evaluate as well ecological and social qualifications. Innovative learning and teaching methods, the promotion of project initiatives of students as well as external learning processes (like environmental and social responsibility, cooperation at local and regional Agenda 21 processes, and so on) shall be accredited.

The European Ministers of Education have the task to assess the binding guidelines on criteria for the sustainability for organs of accreditation and accreditation agencies, in order that these criteria can be taken into account during external reviews.
Sustainable institutional management in higher education

Recommendation 3

The European Ministers of Education
– support higher education institutions in their effort to integrate ecological, social and economical sustainability in the institutional management and to sign the Copernicus Charta
– and acknowledge the University Charter for Sustainable Development as part of a European mission statement for higher education institutions.

COPERNICUS was founded by the former European Rectors Conference (CRE) as a cooperative network of European higher education institutions for sustainability. Meanwhile, more than 290 universities from 37 European states have joined Copernicus. An important instrument of higher education policy is the COPERNICUS-Charter. As a mission statement of higher education policy, the Charter is an important milestone in the realization of the sustainable institutional management of higher education.

A sustainability institutional management of higher education is economically most affordable. It contributes to an efficient resource management as well as to the transformation of sustainable higher education institutions in Europe. The principles of action listed below are to be followed:

1. **Institutional commitment:** Universities shall demonstrate real commitment to the principle and practice of environmental protection and sustainable development within the academic milieu.

2. **Environmental ethics:** Universities shall promote among teaching staff, students and the public at large sustainable consumption patterns and an ecological lifestyle, while fostering programmes to develop the capacities of the academic staff to teach environmental literacy.

3. **Education of university employees:** Universities shall provide education, training and encouragement to their employees on environmental issues, so that they can pursue their work in an environmentally responsible manner.

4. **Programmes in environmental education:** Universities shall incorporate an environmental perspective in all their work and set up environmental education programmes involving both teachers and researchers as well as students - all of whom should be exposed to the global challenges of environment and development, irrespective of their field of study.

5. **Interdisciplinarity:** Universities shall encourage interdisciplinary and collaborative education and research programmes related to sustainable development as part of the institution's central mission. Universities shall also seek to overcome competitive instincts between disciplines and departments.

6. **Dissemination of knowledge:** Universities shall support efforts to fill in the gaps in the present literature available for students, professionals, decision-makers and the general public by preparing information didactic material, organizing public lectures, and establishing training programmes. They should also be prepared to participate in environmental audits.
7. **Networking:**
Universities shall promote interdisciplinary networks of environmental experts at the local, national, regional and international levels, with the aim of collaborating on common environmental projects in both research and education. For this, the mobility of students and scholars should be encouraged.

8. **Partnerships:**
Universities shall take the initiative in forging partnerships with other concerned sectors of society, in order to design and implement coordinated approaches, strategies and action plans.

9. **Continuing education programmes:** Universities shall devise environmental educational programmes on these issues for different target groups: e.g. business, governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, the media.

10. **Technology transfer:** Universities shall contribute to educational programmes designed to transfer educationally sound and innovative technologies and advanced management methods.
For further information, please contact:

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