

# EEESD

Educate towards  
environment  
and  
sustainable development

— So that Europe takes action! —





The education for the Environment and Sustainable Development (EESD) is a necessity. Several European and international official texts recognize this fact and commit member countries to take action.

We, associations and institutions involved in the EESD, find that the commitment made by the countries are still too little visible on the ground and we collected in this manifesto different proposals for an ambitious EESD in Europe.

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The Education for the Environment and Sustainable Development, deployed in recent decades in the world and in Europe, in response to the environmental, economical and social crisis.

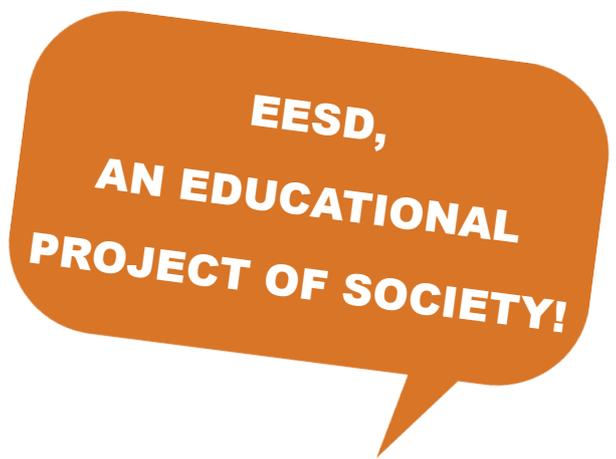
**This type of Education includes environment in a global and systemic manner**, in its temporal and spatial dimensions, from close life background to a global environmental, global, today and tomorrow. Regarding the totality of daily problems especially concerning water, mobility, consumption, supply, waste, habitat, energy, climate, biodiversity, solidarity, health

**It addresses everyone, everywhere and throughout life**, in the frame of formal and informal education, from young children to adults: in school, in the university, within associations, in the enterprises, in communities within medias, in the street and through the words and deeds of responsible men and women.

**Awareness, information, training, participation in collective actions** of Environmental Education and Sustainable Development (EESD) participate in the construction of a new citizenship in order to face the challenges of the XXI century.

More than just a pedagogical content, **it is a formative and global process that fits in a perspective of individual and collective change.**

Already demonstrated by concrete collective projects rooted in the territories and by multiple partnerships, EESD must today be part of **public policies** and of the strategies of private organisms.



## Its aims

« *It aims to restore the relationship between men and its natural, cultural and social environment and to build, for each one and collectively, an earth identity.* »

Edgar Morin - *The 7 principles for the education of the future UNESCO*

Being an education for citizenship, EESD aims to **stimulate critical thinking** and to develop values for a better living together

It aims to **strengthen the capacity of every citizen**, including the less wealthy, to better perceive environmental issues and to **participate** in the life of the city by acting individually and collectively.

It aims to train for a **participatory debate** in order to prepare young and adults to lead a full role in the future of their territories, either locally or globally.

It promotes a holistic and systemic approach and aims to develop complex thinking, in order to create responsible citizens who believe in the value of men's action with the capacity to take up their responsibilities in order to act at all levels.

It aims, in a fundamental way, to (re)-establish strong connections between humans and **nature and the environment**. It makes this link to nature and to the environment a key element of learning.



# Its methods

This kind of education relies on realities and on local specificities, whether cultural, ecological, social, political or economical and so develops a spectrum of practices and rich strategies, complementary and diversified at a European level.

The EESD actors in Europe, meeting in Lyon on March the 4th, 2013<sup>1</sup> and in Bergamo on the 24th and 25th of September 2014, claim **common teaching methods beyond borders**, relying on three fundamental axis:

- 1 - **Learning by action** and by pedagogical activities;
- 2 - A **systemic approach** in order to embrace diverse and interrelated issues;
- 3 - **Multiple partnerships** which are established in the territories.

# Its actors

To achieve its goals, EESD is undertaken in Europe by several thousand non-governmental associations and organizations, thousands of educators who reach every year hundreds of thousands of children and adults.

It is applied through partnerships between associations, communities, government agencies, universities, trade unions, enterprises...

## Many official texts, but few achievements

In different European countries already exist EESD policies or strategies, undertaken by civil society, public authorities, governmental services ... But there is no strategy at a European level that could support the initiatives put in action in member states to promote a European citizenship.

The EESD is seen as essential in numerous texts and intergovernmental agreements such as the Kyoto Protocol (Article 10 e) or the Rio + 20 Conference in 2012 - *"The future we want"* whose articles 229-335 are devoted to this theme<sup>2</sup>.

**Already in 1972**, during the Conference on Environment of Stockholm at the United Nations, the Article 19 stated: *"It is essential to dispense a teaching on environmental issues to the younger generation as well as to adults, taking well in account the most disadvantaged, in order to develop the necessary basis to clarify public opinion and offer to individuals, enterprises and communities a sense of their irresponsibilities related to protecting and improving the environment in all its human dimension. It will also be essential that the media avoid contributing to environmental degradation and that, on the contrary, disseminate educational background information on the need to protect and improve the environment in order to allow the human being to progress in all its facets."*

<sup>1</sup> European Days on Environmental education and Sustainable Development 2013 and 2014: [www.assises-eedd.org/journee-europeenne-http://europe.environmental-education.org](http://www.assises-eedd.org/journee-europeenne-http://europe.environmental-education.org)

<sup>2</sup> The objectives of sustainable development established at the Rio+20 Conference and the redefinition process of this objectives in the frame of the definition of «Post-2015 UN Development Agenda» where the objective N. 47 declares « *Make sure that in 2030 every learner will have acquired necessary knowledge and skills in order to promote sustainable development, where as also through education towards sustainable development and for a sustainable way of life...*»

During the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992, the 10<sup>th</sup> Principle states: *“the best way to treat environmental issues is to ensure the participation of all citizens involved ...”*.

Very recently, the **2005-2014 Decade of UNESCO for Education towards Sustainable Development** ended with the World Conference held in November 2014 in Nagoya. This allowed to put in first place initiatives, actors, networks that have interacted in the last 10 years in different countries. This Decade also resulted in a **road map to build a new global action program for Education towards Sustainable Development**.

In the field of **civic participation, biodiversity and climate change**, also education is identified as a cornerstone of the cultural change necessary for the evolution of our societies, as illustrated by the Aarhus<sup>3</sup> Convention, adopted in 1998, the CEPA<sup>4</sup> program, prepared in late 2014 under the aegis of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, as well as the Framework Convention of the United Nations on Climate Change<sup>5</sup>.

The European Union, in the conclusions of the Council from the 19<sup>th</sup> of November 2010, considers to include EESD within the priority areas for the next strategic cycle for European cooperation in education and training (« Education and Training 2020 »).(2010/C 327/05).

**EADS actors are aware of the importance of all these measures and recommendations in favor of an Environmental Education towards Sustainable Development in European and international official texts, but deplore that these are not sufficiently followed by a real implementation on the ground.**

**The actors of EADS are aware of the processes, events, international agreements and treaties - directly or indirectly- related to their field of work and want to be associated to them, particularly in the near future with the Conference of the Parties on Climate Change that will be held in Paris in December 2015.**

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<sup>3</sup> The convention of Aarhus adopted the 25th of June 1998 by the Economical Commission for Europe of the United Nations (CEE-NU), has entered into force the 30th of October 2001. It declares in its article 3.3 *«every part supports ecological education of the public and raise awereness about the environmental problems in order particularly that they know how to proceed to have access to information, participy to the decisional process and grasp justice in the environmental field»*. See the convention of Aarhus: <http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/pp/documents/cep43f.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> The CEPA program (Communication, Education and Public Awareness) has been instaured in the framework of the United Nations Convention on biological diversity during an international discussion that took place from the 14th to the 26th of November in Mandaluyong (Philippines). The Convention has a wide reach and is an important instrument in the field of education. The principle that is beneath the CEPA issue is completely related to the objectives of EESD *«within the many obstacles to achieving the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and other biodiversity-related conventions, the lack of public awareness on the importance of biodiversity ranks as one of the most serious. ... The lack of awareness of the public contributes also to the relative weak political priority given to biodiversity questions»*. The CEPA has undertaken a practical guide «Communication, education and public sensibilisation (CESP)» <https://www.cbd.int/cepa-toolkit/cepa-toolkit-fr.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> The CCNUCC clarifies in its Art 4,1 i *«Each party, having in mind their common but different responsabilites and their national and regional development priorities, of their objectives and of their circumstances: Promote and support through their cooperation thematics such as education, training and public awareness in the field of climate change and encourage the widest participation in this process, especially for non-governementals organisations»*.



# 20 proposals

## To respond to priority challenges

Nowadays, when the challenges are amplified and become more complex, EESD needs the application of voluntary and coherent policies at European level.

Indeed, the ambitious environmental education program, announced by UNESCO in the 1970s, is still almost completely unfulfilled, at a time when the environmental conditions and the impact of its degradation on the quality of life and society reveal themselves increasingly worrying and problematic. The actual integration of EESD in education systems remains unfulfilled and the relative failure of public policies in this area has been repeatedly highlighted in various intergovernmental conferences. In addition, under the current backdrop of a global economical crisis, the growing divestment of governments in educational effort is evident, since they appoint to it less and less material and human resources.

The findings and statements that follow emerge from a process of collective consultation between EESD actors in Europe and intend to enhance the role of EESD within Europe to allow its strengthening and openness to new perspectives.

### FOR EESD IN SCHOOLS

**Observation:** *EESD was integrated into schools curriculums in many countries, but with different levels of ambition and limitations. Teacher training did not respond to- or followed very sparingly – this official initiatives. The EESD in school exist in all European countries, but often remains related to motivated teachers, due to the lack of institutional frameworks that organize and promote the continuity of EESD; the exits to the outside; the opening of schools to social environment; the knowledge of debating; the transversal interdisciplinary and systemic approaches, the pedagogy of the project.*

**Proposal 1:** Integrating EESD, if this has not yet occurred, transversely across disciplines (and not as a specific course) throughout the mandatory education cycle in each European country.

**Proposal 2:** To train teachers sensibilized to EESD and able to raise with students the complex problems of today, such as environmental issues socially pressing.

**Proposal 3:** Organize, if this has not yet occurred, devices establishing interdisciplinary modules (project dynamics) to the school year.

### FOR EESD IN NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

**Observation:** *EESD belongs not only to formal education, it also focuses on early childhood, youth, adult education and the third and fourth ages. Education for all, throughout all stages of life, when this is admitted, is still very partial and scattered.*

**Proposal 4:** To encourage EESD in all the non-formal education dimensions, giving particular attention to the most disadvantaged, in particular by supporting the monitoring of participatory initiatives of eco-citizenship.

## FOR EESD IN HIGHER EDUCATION

**Observation:** *Specific trainings to environment and sustainable development have developed for two decades, However, beyond these initiatives, cross-cutting approaches to environment and sustainable development in all the technical, scientific, social and economic trainings are far from being widespread. Very few efforts have arisen concerning the insertion of EESD within university or adult education.*

**Proposal 5:** Integrating EESD in all the courses of higher education (initial and continuing) and encourage and support student projects that fall in perspectives associated with EESD.

**Proposal 6:** Integrating environment and SD contents in all university studies (scientific, technological, technical, health, safety, social sciences ...).

**Proposal 7:** To generalize the agendas 21 or Advances to Sustainable Development in all higher education institutions.

**Proposal 8:** Organize, if this has not already occurred, devices introducing interdisciplinary modules in all curricula.

## FOR EESD INTO EMPLOYMENT

**Observation:** *From small businesses to multinational, non-commercial organizations to local authorities, often the opportunity for employees to participate in projects for environmental protection is not provided.*

**Proposal 9:** Encourage sensibilisation and EESD practices in the working world, relying on EESD actors.

**Proposal 10:** Favorising training during the course of the career and the definition of new formation profiles regarding environment and sustainable development in all related professional sectors, particularly in: water, air, waste, food, mobility, construction, production, transport, housing and health...

## FOR THE PROFESSIONALIZATION OF EESD ACTORS

**Observation:** *Beyond borders, EESD practices converge and evolve. The need to capitalize all the practices is pressing.*

**Proposal 11:** Encourage the professionalization of EESD actors, during initial and continuing training at all European level, using a variety of devices: in particular through strategic partnerships within the Erasmus + Program, modules of specific training, a master's degree in EESD or ECTS credits for transversal projects.

## ASSESSMENT OF EESD IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

**Observation:** *In the field there has been a variety of practices, issues and even definitions. If such diversity contributes to the enrichment of EESD, it deserves to be better known, shared and evaluated. Few assessment initiatives exist on the EESD status in European countries and at European level, although such assessment is necessary for the evolution of practices, strategies and the development of EESD.*

**Proposal 12:** Developing research in EESD associating academics, researchers and actors in the territory through research-action devices. Establish chairs of EESD in universities (at least one per country / region) and encourage their integration in networks, analyzing in an intercultural dynamic the different approaches of EESD in Europe, implementing a prospective reflection devoted to progressive improvement of practices and results.

**Proposal 13:** Support the development, the improvement and the evolution of participatory tools in order to establish a mapping of actors and EESD practices in Europe by enabling a real knowledge of the situation at a qualitative and quantitative level, observe the developments, stimulate networking and sustain strategic thinking.



EESD AT THE HEART  
OF EUROPEAN  
POLICIES

**Observation:** Numerous actions and recommendations commit the Member States and Europe, but EESD actors feel there is a distance from the institutions. They observe a decrease of resources: following the 2008 banking crisis, fiscal discipline imposed by Europe led many national governments, and also all other social entities, to implement austerity measures translating in a limitation of EESD policies and their support to non-governmental associations acting in this field.

**Proposal 14:** Implementation of a transversal program of EESD at a European level, integrating EESD in the next general program of the European Union for the environment.

**Proposal 15:** Ensure compliance with the recommendations / obligations that aim to a systematic inclusion of EESD dimension (awareness, information, education, training, participation, governance) in all environmental policies and sustainable development (water, air, biodiversity, climate, waste, agriculture, energy, landscape, health, transport). Give in particular attention to EESD Check in occasion of the COP 21/ Paris 2015.

**Proposal 16:** Associate EESD actors, or their representatives, during the time of reflection and international consultation. During implementation, rely upon local, regional and national expertise in the field of EESD in order to galvanize territories and facilitate their involvement. Create a European area of cooperation (EEC).

**Proposal 17:** Ensure the means of these policies through the support of EESD organizations operating in the field, particularly through sections dedicated to existing European programs (Life, Interreg, Erasmus +, Feder, Horizon 2020).

**Proposal 18:** Identify an EESD axis in all education programs financed by the European Union and / or establish a specific fund for the EESD / citizenship, as recommended in the texts for the development of exchanges and analysis practices; research-action, the creation of collective teaching tools, study trips, joint projects between European regions, projects in partnership with the Southern countries.



EESD IN THE  
EUROPEAN  
INSTITUTION

**Observation:** EESD being located at the crossroads of the General Directions for Environment and Education, it has a hard time to be heard and get support within the Commission.

**Proposal 19:** Appoint an EESD interlocutor within the European Commission, with the task of promoting EESD within the European institutions and dialogue with civil and institutional actors of EESD.

**Proposal 20:** Establish a EESD working group within the European Parliament and enroll EESD on the agenda of the European Parliament for the next two years (2015 to 2016).

# Contributors to the preparation of this manifesto

**More than 150 actors coming from different countries participated in the drafting of this Manifesto, particularly during the Second European Days on EESD held in Bergamo, Italy, in September 2014.**

The coordination of collective writing was guaranteed by the following structures:

- **Belgium (French region):** Réseau Idée Asbl;
- **Spain:** Tekieroverde - Asociación Pastores por el Monte Mediterráneo;
- **France:** Réseau Ecole et Nature - GRAINE, Rhône-Alpes, Collectif Français pour l'Éducation à l'Environnement vers un Durable Development (CFEEDD), Ligue de l'Enseignement;
- **Greece:** Polis - an international network in environmental education;
- **Italy:** eco, Istituto per l'Ambiente e l'Educazione Scholé Futuro Onlus;
- **Portugal:** Lisboa E-Nova - Energy-Environment Agency in Lisbon;
- **International:** WEEC, World Environmental Education Congress - Network.

This document is intended to be spread in all European countries, addressing in particular European deputies, the European Commission, the Economic and Social Committee and the Regions Committee.

To extend its impact, we invite all persons and entities interested to manifeste their support and commitment by signing this text.