

# SWIM and Horizon 2020 Support Mechanism

Working for a Sustainable Mediterranean, Caring for our Future

## REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY IN TERMS OF ESD

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**Bulgaria**

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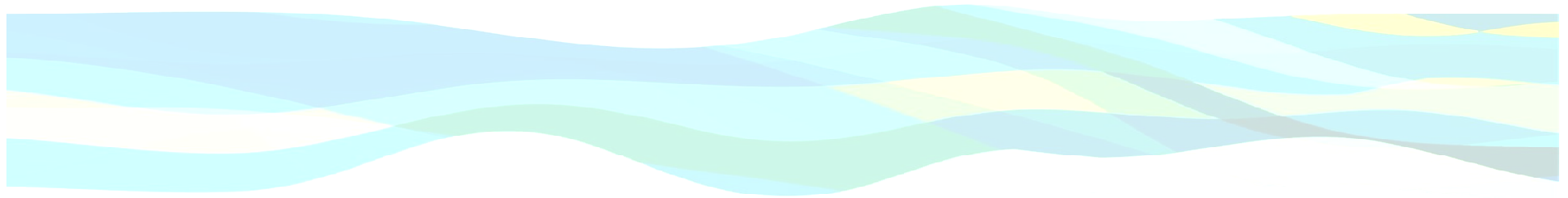
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## Background & Pre-requisites for ESD development (2011/2012)

The 2015 **UNESCO Global Action Programme on ESD** serves as a guiding implementation document for the implementation of ESD at national and institutional level (school).

- There have been some ideas as of 2011/2012 to set up a National Coordination Mechanism on SD under the responsibility of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- A Draft National ESD Strategy was then drawn up and submitted for consideration in parallel with the implementation of the UNECE Strategy on ESD in Bulgaria, and in response to the commitment made at RIO+20 Conference;
- The initial attempt for NCM on SD was later abandoned and replaced by the decision to delegate the responsibility (as much as it is possible) for the further implementation of SD policies and practices to the stakeholders (at national, regional and local level);
- **The reasoning behind this decision:** to empower the stakeholders as the most knowledgeable and experienced in their area of competence for taking action; to encourage entrepreneurship and innovations for achieving transformation in reality (by doing).



## 1<sup>st</sup> PART

# ESD IN THE **FORMAL** EDUCATION SYSTEM

## THE POLICY

- The principles and objective laid down in the new Pre-School and School Education Law are in line with the internationally agreed policies and guidelines for developing sustainable education

*E.g one of the major aims embedded in the Law states that **education is to respond to global challenges by developing appropriate competences enabling the understanding of the global issues and processes, their interlinks and consequences for the sustainable development, therefore is to cultivate a culture of mindfulness and ability to contribute to building peaceful and sustainable societies.***

- The general education preparation at school is built upon the 8 key competences embedded in **the Key Competences European Reference Framework**. However, with the recent legislative developments as of 2016/2017 school year, a 9<sup>th</sup> competence has been added – **teaching skills and abilities for understanding and supporting sustainable development together with maintaining healthy lifestyles and practicing sports activities;**
- A new legislative basis has been developed (2017), encompassing **a state education requirement on civic, health, environmental and intercultural education**, to be implemented **throughout the whole study content by different themes, topics and supporting practical activities** (also in line with the UNESCO recommendations for ESD – Framework for Action: “Education 2030”).

# THE POLICY

- The objective of the specific legislative provision is **to enable the acquisition of social, civic and intercultural competences together with competences related to healthy lifestyles and maintaining a sustainable environment (reflecting UNESCO priorities – EGC & ESD);**
- According to the new legal provisions, as of 2019/2020 school year a separate school subject curriculum will be introduced **on civics, for 12<sup>th</sup> grade**, and will dedicate a significant part of the study content to topics as well as to the acquisition of competences (incl. attitudes, values and skills) related to sustainable development;
- As of 2013 the MoES has been holding every year **an Olympiad on Civic Education**, organized in an interactive way, enabling pupils from 10<sup>th</sup> -11<sup>th</sup> grade to carry out an action research and defend their viewpoint on a controversial topic related either to civic, social or environmental awareness and mindfulness;
- Thus, their ability together with all acquired competences (in terms of attitudes and behaviors) are observed and discussed with the assessors (academics, teachers, renowned personalities);
- The displayed attitudes and behaviours refer to the transformation in their “SD mentality”, taking into account the particular context, within which they have been cultivated.

## POLICY

### EXAMPLES FROM CURRICULA (EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES):

1. Ability to argue about various environmental problems linked to the paper production.  
(Chemistry & Environment Protection, IX grade);
2. Argues the need for reasonable use of natural resources at risk and considers options for alternative energy sources use; (Chemistry & Environment Protection, X grade);
3. Identifies and describes the main problems of local communities – pollution, overpopulation, desertification, transport problems. (Geography and Economics, V grade);
4. Explores ways for addressing the problems related to raw materials exhaustion and energy supply need, and the environmental risks entailed.(Geography & Economics, VIII grade);
5. Knowledgeable about the essential concept of sustainable development. (Geography & Economics, VIII grade);

## EXAMPLES FOR CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES CHOSEN FOR THE OLYMPIAD ON CIVIS (2013-2017)

A case: Learners were asked to make an in-depth analysis on the option to leave their country from the perspective of both: parents and children

1. Which is more important – all members of the family to stay together, even though the family may live on scarce resources **or** the family will be better off if divided so that every family member can have pretty enough?
2. What is your idea for a family that lives well?

**Other controversial issues that have been used for assignments, were related also to:**

- ❖ Laws vs. econorms
- ❖ Cheap **products** vs. fair trade **goods**
- ❖ The **obligatory** voting vs. exercising one's civic, political **rights** by voting;
- ❖ National legal norms vs. international humanitarian law.

# SYNERGIES

What are the synergies with the Med. Strategy on ESD and other internationally agreed policies, e.g. the SDGs, etc. in terms of topics covered and processes?

1. UNECE Strategy on Sustainable Development (a follow-up of DESD 2014)
2. UNESCO Global Action Programme on Sustainable Development
3. UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development Goals
4. UNESCO Framework for Action "Education 2030", target 4.7. (explicitly mentioned ESD)
5. UNESCO Strategy on Health and Well-Being
6. UN Transforming our world: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
7. The Paris Declaration on "Promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and anti-discrimination"
8. UN Environment – 10 year framework programme
9. Mediterranean Strategy on ESD (MSESD)



## CHALLENGE VS OPPORTUNITIES OF ESD

Name 1-2 challenges in the way ESD is applied in the formal system?

Many lie ahead, but to name three:

1. No explicit link and consistency in regard to implementation of ESD as a lifelong learning approach at systemic level (further development of the acquired competences in HE and designing proper ESD pre-service trainings is needed);
2. Knowledge and skills taught through the school curricula need to be further elaborated and **transformed into appropriate attitudes, behaviours and critical understanding** (e.g. by applying a whole-institutional approach and in-service trainings);
3. We need to devise an assessment methodology that considers the context (situation).

Name 1-2 opportunities for ESD in your country?

More to mention, but to pinpoint the main one:

1. The Olympiad in Civics as a forum for all learners, teachers, academics and assessors **enabling them to explore in different perspective** and discuss cases related to topical SD issues;

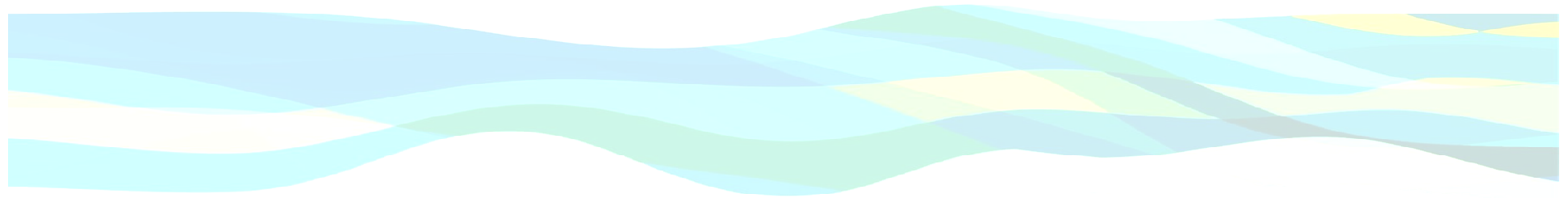
The opportunity for all involved:

- To search for and find sustainable and tailored to the needs solutions to existing challenges;
- **To identify and learn to handle and resolve** ambiguity, stressful and controversial situations;
- **To exercise in reality** the acquired knowledge and skills and get reliable feedback on their interpretation and understanding.

## KEY LESSONS LEARNT

While it is achievable to track the progress or level of **knowledge and understanding of the ESD concept**, however, we are demanded to prepare learners at all levels and from all contexts **to be able to address sustainable development issues, with motivation and commitment**.

- We have realized the need to build capacities, but also to cultivate attitudes and behaviours in order to face and deal with SD existing issues;
- We have realized that we need not only exploratory, action-oriented **methods of learning and teaching**, but also an action-oriented and **transformative school environment**;
- We have realized that learners and teachers need relevant feedback on their achievements in respect of ability to cope with a certain task, related to SD;
- We have realized that we need to focus on **promoting specific/sensitive assessment methods, considering also the displayed by learners SD behaviours and attitudes in relation to a given context**);



2<sup>nd</sup> PART

AN ESD EXAMPLE

FROM THE **NON-FORMAL**

EDUCATION SYSTEM

## INITIATIVE

### Project Activity, entitled "17 STEPS TO THE FUTURE"

**Stakeholders:** the UN Association in Bulgaria (UN Bulgarian YOUTH delegates), AIESEC Bulgaria (a youth NGO), and the Ministry of Education and Science

**Implementation:** 21 young volunteers /19-29 years of age/ from 13 different countries from across the globe (5 continents), teaching about the 17 SDG and how to stay together for a brighter future

**Scope:** 22 associated schools to UNESCO and schools with UN clubs, 2000 pupils in total involved in the Initiative

**Objectives:** 1. raising awareness about the aims and need for teaching and actively learn by doing, about the SDG 17; 2. Give pupils and young people impetus for real and constructive actions to support the implementation of the SDG; 3) providing guidance for the pupils and support them in devising their own creative and innovative solutions, incl. by efficient use of ICT, applicable to their everyday problems, making the connection to the benefits of the sustainable development.

## INITIATIVE

### Project Activity, entitled "17 STEPS TO THE FUTURE"

- ✓ It falls in Priority Action Area 4 (UNESCO GAP on SD – “Empowering & Mobilizing Youth) and in PAA 5 – “Accelerating sustainable solutions at local level”;
- ✓ It complies with Priority Area 3 (Art. 50) of the MSED (Curricular & Extra-Curricular Activities);
- ✓ Enhances the “Whole School Approach”
- ✓ Makes efficient use of the immediate effect of the peer-to-peer approach **to disseminate widely and multiply** the outcomes and the learning to learn about SDGs among other learners and in the local communities;

### In terms of outcomes:

- Creates a sense of ownership of the Initiative (learners, teachers - volunteers and professional practitioners, school heads);
- Creates a sense of responsibility in terms of the way they would approach the building of the future they aspire to);
- Develops their multiperspective and multidimensional thinking;
- Improves their soft skills.

# INITIATIVE “17 STEPS”: 17SDG: Partnerships for Goals

**Duration:** 2016

**Beneficiaries:** pupils from the schools involved, teachers, local communities

**Geographical Scope:** nationwide

**Main themes addressed:** various global issues; responsible global citizenship for a world of sustainability; sustainable global society; national and multiple identity; cultural and multicultural identity; cooperation and partnership skills for promotion of SDG; global distribution of access to internet, etc.

**Funding Sources:** AIESEK & MoES

## SYNERGIES

What are the synergies with the Med. Strategy on ESD and other internationally agreed policies, e.g. the SDGs, etc. in terms of themes and processes?

- ✓ Responsible global citizenship for inclusive and sustainable societies;
- ✓ Competences for critical understanding of crucial for sustainability issues;
- ✓ Values in action for promoting diversity of views and approaches as well as sustainable lifestyles;
- ✓ Making use of the benefits of ICT, including social media, to promote e-learning on ESD
- ✓ Developing creative and innovative solutions to address long-standing issues impacting environment and biodiversity

# CHALLENGES VS OPPORTUNITIES

Name 1-2 challenges / obstacles in the  
your ESD example

1. To provide proper stimuli for learners in order to make them **act as whole personalities** (engaging their head, hand and heart), and thus enable them to understand the added value they can make for the sustainable future for all

Name 1-2 opportunities for your ESD  
example?

1. Opportunity for learners to **explore closely the globalization through real experiences** (incl. possible ambiguity) **through the lens of the Other-different**
2. Opportunity for learners to **challenge their own perception of a good life and a good society**





## CONCLUSION

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!**

**I HOPE THAT OUR MUTUAL COOPERATION WILL  
CONTINUE IN AN EVEN MORE  
EFFICIENT, BENEFICIAL AND SUSTAINABLE ALL WAY!**

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