

2a Preliminary results on progress achieved and challenges encountered in the fourth phase of implementation

Your Excellencies,
Madame Chair,
Distinguished colleagues,

It brings me great pleasure to be present at the 14th Reunion of the UNECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development and I would like to address, in the context of the Romanian presidency of the Council of the European Union, a few words.

Romania has made remarkable efforts in the field of sustainable development, being a regional hub for it. The working group from the Council of the EU for the 2030 Agenda, chaired by Romania, has managed to obtain consensus from the member states regarding the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda, reflected in the document called "Towards an ever more sustainable Union by 2030". Out of the 27 articles of the Council's Conclusions, art. 15 stresses the importance of awareness raising through ESD as key enabler of all the SDGs and as driver for innovation, resilience and transformative action.

Since the last reporting on the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for ESD the Government has adopted the National Strategy for the Sustainable Development of Romania, in line with the 17 SDGs, a joint effort of the public and private sector, academia and civil society, with targets for 2020 and 2030.

SDGs are now part of the non-formal education in Romania and are subject to monitoring. Moreover, they are under the shape of Open Educational Resources, reusable and free of charge. The Ministry has joined the World's Largest Lesson initiative, supported by UNESCO and in partnership with UNICEF and has created lesson plans in Romanian for all the SDGs. The resources are available on a dedicated page for ESD on the ministry's website, along with strategic documents and useful resources. Additionally, teachers were invited to pursue a paid online fellowship in English on initiating children in the sustainable development goals.

No progress on ESD is possible without the input and dedication of educators, therefore training teachers on ESD is of paramount importance and also one of the three vertical priorities of the Batumi Statement. In this regard, the specialized department from the ministry has accredited a course that equips teachers with important life skills in the context of sustainable development, elaborated by the Association REPER 21 (Réseau Européen pour la Promotion d'une Economie Responsable – 21^{ème} siècle). The programme runs into disadvantaged schools, until the end of 2020. In the same train of thoughts, the Ministry just launched a project - "Creator in education"- where teachers will upload and exchange on a platform best practices in education. The most creative and innovative ones will be rewarded.

Romania maintains its dedication and support to ESD and to the Agenda 2030. One key indicator for this is the working group that exists within the Ministry of Education, composed of very diverse departments, to promote ESD. Likewise, its actions also spread to the staff of the ministry with the organization of the training called Global Learning approach on food waste in non-formal education, delivered by the Association Info Cons.

Another key indicator was the organization in Bucharest on April 16th, by the Department of Sustainable Development (which is under the prime minister's leadership), of the International

Conference Agenda 2030: Partnerships for Sustainable Development. Approximately 300 political leaders, civil society representatives and sustainable development experts from over 40 countries participated. The conference focused on the three dimensions of sustainable development - the economy, the environment and the social component – as well as on the exchange of best practices and partnerships.

Having in regard that there will be an in depth review of the SDG 4 – Quality Education at the coming High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in New York, but also that SDG4 is a key element for all the SDGs, and in particular target 4.7, more efforts and concerted actions need to be taken to achieve the targets of the Goal and Romania will remain a reliable partner for that.

7. Strengthening synergies with other organizations and processes

The key word into making ESD a reality was partnerships. The Ministry of Education from Romania recognizes the important contribution of other relevant sectors and stakeholders. Besides the partnerships made for creating the OER (Project Everyone, NGOs and UNICEF Romania) and the one for the teachers' course on SD, the ministry has signed a collaboration protocol with a coalition of civil society organizations, called ONG 21, that brings under the umbrella of sustainable development 100 entities from the education and environment sector in order to create a public policy on ESD. The policy will be based on the 6 priorities of the Batumi Ministerial Statement on Education for Sustainable Development. The ministry will organize at the middle of this month a debate on the policy, involving civil society, NGOs, public institutions, academia, teachers and school inspectorates. The initiative has also the institutional support of the Ministry of Environment.

In the meantime, a mobilization has started, run by the Department of Sustainable Development, to create nucleus for sustainable development in all the ministries, as well as an interinstitutional working group in order to elaborate the action plan to reach the 2020 targets of the SD Strategy of Romania, and subsequently the ones for the Goal 4.