



## **SPEECH ON BEHALF OF ROMANIA**

### **Reflecting on approaches related to ESD challenges and governmental mechanisms focused on youth empowerment**

**Side event:**

**ESD AS A KEY DRIVER FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT FOR CONFRONTING SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID-19**

**Details:** 10 March 2021, 12:15 - 13:45 (CET)

Distinguished Chairperson,  
distinguished colleagues and guests,

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the resilience of international organizations, governments, health systems, local communities, and individuals was harshly tested. In many cases, Romania included, the sustained contribution of young people was vital in offering additional time to experts and policymakers for the purpose of gathering resources and outlining proper policies against the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

It is more clear than ever that our society needs to focus more on sustainability. We have to build a safe future for the new generations. World leaders agreed back in 2015 on a very important document: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Indeed, in Romania, we have a national strategy for the implementation of the 17 SDGs. The Romanian Department of Sustainable Development is coordinating now the elaboration of the action plan for implementing the Strategy in partnership with all the ministries and other institutions. But the responsibility regarding ESD points towards many other actors – business environment, non-governmental sector, academia.

Therefore, Education for Sustainable Development is a must that needs to be expanded and complemented in other areas, in an integrated approach that addresses: democracy and governance, justice, security, human rights, health, gender equality, cultural diversity, rural and



urban development, economy, production and consumption models, civic responsibility, natural resources management and biological and natural diversity.

The Romanian Government, through the Ministry of European Investments and Projects, recently organized public consultations with all major youth stakeholders. The debate focused on the extent to which the funds pertaining to the European Union's Recovery and Resilience Facility will be used in various endeavours that can benefit young people during and after this global health crisis. In other words, funding will be provided with the aim of developing and implementing non-formal learning methods, supporting the progress of youth-led start-ups, nurturing opportunities for youth organizations, establishing stronger crisis management procedures, and fostering sustainable communities. An updated version of the *National Recovery and Resilience Plan* will be presented to the European Commission during this month.

Madam Chair, Romania's commitment to education on sustainable development (ESD) is encompassed in the strategy regarding the digitalization of the Romanian educational system, entitled *SMART-Edu*, which was in the stage of national consultation until mid-February of this year. The aforementioned document aims to create a high-performing digital ecosystem capable of fostering inclusive digital education, social equity and resilience. Moreover, this endeavour will have innovation, sustainability, lifelong learning and accessibility at its core.

In addition, the Romanian Government commenced its process of upgrading the national youth strategy based on quality input from multiple youth stakeholders. *The National Youth Strategy for the 2021-2027* timeframe focuses on transparent and efficient governance, quality education, sustainable entrepreneurship, youth-led start-ups, access to modern medical facilities, and widespread youth empowerment. A final version of the strategy will be presented to the Romanian policymakers in the next couple of weeks.

Further relevant developments in the fields of ESD and youth include the formal establishment of the National Youth Council in August, 2020. This official consultative body provides technical assistance with policy design, monitors the application of youth-related policies, and operates under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Youth and Sports. The council encompasses 50 delegates across 10 specialized commissions. Moreover, its inclusive structure



allows for wide representation from myriads of youth-related and youth-led organizations. The process will continue in spite of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The United Nations Youth Delegates of Romania - a governmental program started in 2006 and managed by both the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs - continues to play a significant role in promoting ESD-related policies. For instance, the two 2020-2021 youth delegates not only represented the interests of Romanian youth at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Committee pertaining to the United Nations General Assembly, but they also organized and participated in more than 25 events aimed at training young people on the 2030 Agenda, quality education, and sustainable development. Furthermore, they created and disseminated to local and national policymakers a document entitled *The Sustainable Development Youth Manifesto* that comprises the stages indispensable to fostering sustainable communities with support from youth.

Romania stands beside all its commitments in relation to education, wellbeing and health, youth empowerment, and sustainable development.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to end my speech by thanking you again for this opportunity. I strongly believe that young generation is eager to be more involved in building a better future. We have to act now. Partnerships are the key to success, so I kindly ask all of you to remain involved to transform our world in a sustainable way.

Thank you!