



GEDUC (Global / General Education)

ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSORS, RESEARCHERS AND STUDENTS
FROM SWISS UNIVERSITIES

Contact alex.dufresne@geduc.org

GEDUC STATEMENT TO UNECE HIGH-LEVEL MEETING OF ENVIRONMENT AND EDUCATION MINISTRIES

Vilnius, Lithuania
Friday, 18 March 2005

THE ESD STRATEGY AND THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

Madam Chairperson, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentleman,

Let me raise a crucial point for the implementation of the UNECE Strategy.

In two months, Ministers responsible for higher education of 40 European countries, which represent 80 % of the countries involved in this ESD Strategy, will meet in Bergen, Norway, the 19th and 20th of May to set directions for the further development of the Bologna Process.

I'm therefore asking all the delegates concerned, as the UNECE Secretariat and the NGOs to make sure that this Strategy will have some impacts on the discussions going on in Bergen.

There is a huge challenge for this wide process of reform going on at the European level to integrate ESD as a general perspective for higher education.

Let me stress, that the Bologna Process is not only about structures, such as the degree system. In Prague (May 2001) Ministers responsible for the Bologna Process gave their support to the idea that higher education should be considered a public good and that it is and will remain a public responsibility. In Berlin (September 2003), Ministers reaffirmed their position on this issue.

An important element of the higher education framework, which will be discussed in Bergen, is "quality assurance". There now seems to be an agreement that public authorities are responsible for ensuring that there is adequate provision for transparent quality assurance.

We believe governments should provide a quality assurance or accreditation system that evaluates¹ the perspective of sustainable development in every lecture, course and degree offered in the higher education system.

The UNECE Strategy calls upon government to develop and incorporates ESD into the whole educational system. The next ministerial conference in Bergen will be the first occasion at the international level of fulfilling this commitment. I'm therefore asking you, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentleman, to make sure that this will happen. Thank you for your attention.

¹ It could evaluate, for instance, the links made to global issues regarding SD, the importance of the systemic approach or the amount of time left for a reflection on the ethics of responsibility,...