

## Copernicus Alliance Newsletter No. 10



# COPERNICUS Alliance

European Network on Higher Education for Sustainable Development

Promoting transformational learning and change for sustainable development in higher education

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Prof Dr Daniella Tilbury  
**Elected President  
(2012-14)**

Dr Clemens Mader  
**Elected Vice-President  
(2012-14)**

Dr Ingrid Mulà  
**COPERNICUS Co-  
ordinator**

## COPERNICUS Alliance Newsletter

This is the COPERNICUS Alliance (CA) Newsletter No.10. Its goal is to serve as a news and information platform for members. The CA Team would value feedback. Please could you take a minute to let us know if the newsletter serves its purpose and advise how it could be improved.

If you would like to make a contribution to the next newsletter please contact Dr Ingrid Mulà by the 8th September 2014 at: [office@copernicus-alliance.org](mailto:office@copernicus-alliance.org).

*The newsletters are only available to CA members.*

## Partner of the Month

In every CA Newsletter, we showcase the work and activities of one of our partner organisations. The partner of the month is selected for its contribution to sustainable development and ESD.

### *University of Graz, Austria*

The University of Graz was founded in 1585 and is the second oldest university and one of the largest institutions of higher education in Austria.

Numerous outstanding scientists, among them six Nobel Prize winners, have taught and researched here.

With more than 31,000 students and about 4,000 employees, the University of Graz makes an essential contribution to the vibrant life in and around the University region. Thanks to its geopolitical location, close to the borders to Hungary and Slovenia, the University of Graz is an important gateway to South-Eastern Europe and promotes lively scientific, economic and cultural exchange with this region.

The pro-active sustainability process at the University of Graz started in 1991 with the establishment of an interdisciplinary study program “Environmental Systems Sciences”, followed by signing the COPERNICUS Charta (1995) and the establishment of oikos Graz – Students for Sustainable Economics and Management in 2002. These first initiatives led to a strong cooperation with the university management team to foster sustainability actions at the University. A number of workshops involving students and staff, a sustainability newsletter and a sustainability library were the first actions growing from this cooperation.

Since 2005, the University of Graz is active in sustainability reporting based upon GRI guidelines and has a fully employed sustainability coordinator and commissioner both responsible for introducing sustainability into educational, research and governance programmes across the University. Latest achievements are the establishment of a regional cooperation model – “Sustainability4U” – including all four universities in the city of Graz and the leading role in the development of the “Austrian Alliance of Sustainable Universities”. Sustainable development is also embedded in the vision statement and the development plan of the university.

The University of Graz has been the recipient of the Austrian Sustainability Award five times. In 2014, the University won an award together with the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna and the Technical University Graz for the teaching resources platform “Sustainicum Collection”; in 2012 for its barrier-free mobility project “UniMobility4All”; in 2010 for the establishment of the “RCE Graz-Styria: Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development” as well as for “Sustainability4U”; and in 2008 for its Joint Degree Master Programme “Sustainable Development”.

For more information please visit the “[Sustainable University Graz](#)” and the [RCE Graz-Styria](#) or contact Prof. Dr. Friedrich M. Zimmermann ([friedrich.zimmermann@uni-graz.at](mailto:friedrich.zimmermann@uni-graz.at)).

## CA News

### ✦ A warm welcome to new CA members!

CA extends a warm welcome to the [University of Warsaw](#) in Poland who have recently joined the network as institutional members. We look forward to your participation in our planned activities for this year!

### ✦ Join us at the next CA Conference: “Education for Sustainability: Building capacity in higher education” (Prague, Friday 3 October, 2014)

We are delighted to invite all CA members to participate at the next [CA Conference](#) which will take place on 3 October 2014 in Prague, Czech Republic. Our host is Charles University, one of the oldest universities in Europe and a core partner of CA.

This international Conference is taking place in the year the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD, 2005-14) comes to an end and the Global Action Programme on ESD is taking shape. The Conference will review major trends and changes in higher education towards sustainability over the last ten years, with an emphasis on whole-of-institution approaches, curriculum change, university educators, ESD competences and quality enhancement. A state of the art report which maps existing ESD professional development opportunities for university educators in Europe will be presented at the event. This report has been developed as part of a newly funded European project entitled [University Educators for Sustainable Development \(UE4SD\)](#) coordinated by CA. Most CA members are partners of UE4SD and will be attending a project annual meeting on the previous day.

**KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:** Ms Bianca Bilgram (Rep of the Bureau of the UNECE Strategy for ESD and Head the Secretariat UN DESD of the German Commission for UNESCO, Germany); Prof Gerd Michelsen (UNESCO Chair in HE for SD, Germany); Dr Jana Dlouhá (Researcher at Charles University, Czech Republic); Ms Lenka Parkánová (President of Oikos International, Switzerland/Czech Republic); Dr Clemens Mader (CA Vice-President, Germany); Mr Doug Parkin (Leadership Foundation for Higher Education, UK); and, Prof Daniella Tilbury (CA President and Chair of the UNESCO M&E Group for the DESD, UK).

For further information, abstract submissions and registration details please refer to the [Conference website](#). Please note that as a CA member, you can enjoy one free place at the Conference (including refreshments and sustainable lunches) if you submit your registration before the 15th July.

We hope to see you in October!

#### ✦ **CA Annual General Meeting (Prague, Saturday 4 October, 2014)**

The CA Conference will be followed by an Annual General Meeting (AGM) on the morning of Saturday 4 October. This is a CA member-only meeting which provides an excellent opportunity for partners to meet and review network activities and future plans. This is an important meeting as the new President and Vice-President of CA (2015-17) will be elected by members. A call for candidates will be sent in mid-July.

#### ✦ **New CA Advisory Board**

The online elections for the three vacant positions on the CA Advisory Board closed on Wednesday 18 June. Thank you for taking the time to cast your vote. The voting rate was exceptionally good.

The following three new members were elected by members to join the Board:

**International Advisor:** Mr Mahesh Pradhan, Head of UNEP's Environmental and Training Unit, Kenya

**CA Advisor:** Prof Anna Maria Geli, Professor at the University of Girona (UoG), Former Rector of UoG and President of CADEP-CRUE (2005-13), Spain

**CA Student Representative:** Dario Piselli, Law student at the University of Siena and Founder of Greening USiena, Italy

The elected members assumed their roles on the 1st of July and joined an online meeting on 7th July with existing Advisory Board members Prof Hans van Ginkel, Prof Gerd Michelsen and Prof Friedrich M. Zimmermann. In this meeting, the Board discussed future plans for the network and the election process for the new CA President and Vice-President (2015-17).

#### ✦ **Call for CA President and Vice-President Candidates (2015-16)**

CA was established and is run by members, for members. It is coordinated by a President and Vice-President from CA member institutions and supported by an Advisory Board and a Network Co-ordinator. The CA President and Vice-President are elected by members every two years.

Prof Daniella Tilbury (University of Gloucestershire) and Dr Clemens Mader (Leuphana University of Lüneburg) have acted as CA President and Vice-President since 2012 and will end their roles in December 2014. A new call for candidates for the period of 2015-16 will be circulated to all members in the upcoming days. Those CA members interested in the positions of CA President and Vice-President will be invited to complete a form and present a plan for future network activities. Elections will take place at the next CA AGM on 4th October in Prague.

Meanwhile, if you or any members at your organisation are interested in these positions and would like to discuss the roles informally, please contact Daniella ([dtilbury@glos.ac.uk](mailto:dtilbury@glos.ac.uk)) or Clemens ([mader@inkubator.leuphana.de](mailto:mader@inkubator.leuphana.de)).

#### ✦ **UNESCO Global Action Programme on ESD - Launch Commitments**

As you are aware, the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) is coming to an end in 2014. As a follow-up to the Decade, UNESCO has developed the Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD, which was endorsed by the 37th session of UNESCO's General Conference in 2013 and will be launched at the World Conference on ESD to be held from 10 to 12 November 2014 in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan. The Programme will also be forwarded to the United Nations General Assembly at its 69th session in 2014 for consideration and appropriate action.

The GAP has five Priority Action Areas aimed at (i) policy-makers, (ii) institutional leaders, (iii) educators, (iv) youth and (v) local authorities. To successfully launch and implement the Programme, whose focus is on multiplying and accelerating concrete actions on the ground, UNESCO is inviting stakeholders across the world to register their Launch Commitments for the GAP in advance of the World Conference

on ESD. Launch Commitments are concrete plans to undertake specific ESD activities to support the GAP and will be announced on the UNESCO website and at the World Conference. They will help identify partners with whom it will form partner networks and will also provide an important basis for the periodic reporting on GAP implementation planned by UNESCO.

As part of our commitment to inform and influence policy and practice in the area of higher education for sustainable development, the CA Secretariat will submit two Launch Commitments to progress the [Rio+20 Treaty on Higher Education](#) and the [UE4SD Project](#).

We would also like to encourage CA individual member institutions to register their Launch Commitments or visit the [UNESCO World Conference on ESD website](#). The deadline for the registration is 15 August 2014.

## Updates from members

### ✦ **BOKU University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (Austria)**, by *Adam Pawloff*

In order to promote sustainability in the Austrian higher education system the Sustainability Award was launched in the fall of 2007, as a joint initiative of two Austrian ministries. The Sustainability Award is presented every second year in eight categories to the most innovative and sustainable universities. The BOKU University for Natural Resources and Life Sciences won seven prizes this year. The first place of the category Regional Cooperation was given to the [SUSTAINICUM collection](#), a platform of sustainability related teaching material. SUSTAINICUM is a cooperative project of the BOKU and the University of Graz, and the Graz University of Technology. The first place in the category "International Cooperation" was given to the international joint-degree master program "Sustainability in Agriculture, Food production and Food technology in the Danube Region". The Alliance of Sustainable Universities in Austria won the second prize in the category "Regional Cooperation".

### ✦ **Aalborg University (Denmark)**, by *Mona-Lisa Dahms*

Aalborg University is very pleased to announce that the UNESCO General Conference in November 2013 approved the establishment of the Aalborg Centre for Problem Based Learning in Engineering Science and Sustainability, as a Category 2 Centre under the auspices of UNESCO.

The official launch of the Centre took place at Aalborg University on 26 May 2014. The launch included a workshop on PBL and sustainability and a formal opening with presentations from Per Michael Johansen, Rector of the University of Aalborg; Sofie Carsten Nielsen, Minister of Higher Education and Science in Denmark; and, Prof Maciej Nalecz, Director of Science Policy and Capacity Building at UNESCO.

For further information on this event, please click [here](#).

## Events

### ✦ **Education for Sustainability meeting in University of the Basque Country (4 July 2014, Bilbao, Spain)**

On 4th July the Deputy Vice-chancellor Department of Students, Employment and Social Responsibility of the University of the Basque Country will organise a Conference/meeting day with lecturers of the University to discuss how to continue implementing the strategy for the Education for Sustainability at the University.

In this Conference, Professor Jordi Segalàs, from the Research Institute of Sustainability at the University Politècnica of Catalunya (Barcelona Tech) will talk about sustainability research.

The University of the Basque Country will present some institutional sustainability activities such as the UE4SD project, the new call for grants for innovation in sustainability recently published, the 10 university projects for innovation in sustainability approved in 2013. The latter are projects in areas such as renewable energy, waste management or the improvement of energy efficiency, amongst others. These projects are carried out in Colleges and Schools of the University and inform the curriculum of the participating teaching staff.

In addition, a student of the University who has been doing his post degree internship with the University Sustainability Officer will present a study on how much sustainability has been embedded in the modules of the 95 University.

For further information on this event, please click [here](#).

### ✦ **7th Asia-Pacific RCE Meeting and International Symposium on “A Decade of Regional Centres of Expertise on ESD: Reflections and Advances in Asia-Pacific” (26–28 August 2014, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia)**

The 7th RCE Asia-Pacific Meeting will be hosted by the CA international member RCE Penang in Malaysia from 26–28 August in conjunction with the International Symposium on “A Decade of Regional Centres of Expertise on ESD: Reflections and Advances in Asia-Pacific”. Registration is now open and you can find more information [here](#). If you wish to attend the meeting, please download a registration form found on the [website](#) and send it to RCE Penang and the Global RCE Service Centre by 18 July 2014.

If you are interested in making a case presentation at the International Symposium, please submit your abstract by sending the form to RCE Penang and the Global RCE Service Centre by 14 July 2014.

### ✦ **Workshop on PBL (30-31 October 2014, Aalborg University, Denmark)**

This two-day workshop will include an introduction to PBL learning principles and the Aalborg PBL model, visits to selected study programmes and talks with selected groups of students.

The programme and registration form are available [here](#).

✦ **International Conference on Higher Education for Sustainable Development: Higher Education Beyond 2014 (9 November 2014, Aichi-Nagoya, Japan)**

The United Nations University through its Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS) is organising the “International Conference on Higher Education for Sustainable Development: Higher Education Beyond 2014” in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan on 9 November, in collaboration with UNESCO, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), UNEP, UN Global Compact’s Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) initiative, and the International Association of Universities (IAU). The Conference will highlight the major challenges and pathways for transformation of higher education institutions (HEIs), with a focus on scaling up and mainstreaming innovative practices in learning and knowledge development and research.

Registration for the conference will open in late July. For more information, please visit the [UNU website](#).

## **Publications and resources**

✦ **University Educators for Sustainable Development (UE4SD) Resources**

We are pleased to announce that the UE4SD website is now live and can be accessed [here](#). The website includes key information on the project, the list of partners, recent news and a list of partners.

The UE4SD project leaflet has also been recently finalized and can be viewed [here](#). The leaflet has been translated into all partner languages. The different translations will be available at this link at end of August.

✦ **Summary Statement of the Bratislava workshop "Sustainability Science in Central and Eastern Europe"**

The workshop, organised by the German, Austrian and Slovakian UNESCO Commissions took place 15 to 17 June 2014 in Bratislava, Slovakia.

The summary statement outlines a common understanding of sustainability science and calls for inter-and transdisciplinary research as well as a transformation of academic structures and funding schemes. Representatives of the COPERNICUS Alliance as well as the UE4SD project (Gerd Michelsen & Clemens Mader, Leuphana University Lüneburg, Jana Dlouha, Charles University Prague and Laima Galkute from Vilnius University) contributed in the workshop. Please have a look at the summary statement and spread it widely.

Please click [here](#) to view the summary statement of the Bratislava workshop.

✦ **“Good Examples Catalogue – Problem Based Learning and Sustainability in Engineering and Science Education –**

**Practice and Potential” (Krogh Hansen, K.; Otrell-Cass, K.; Guerra, A.; Dahms, M.L.)**

This catalogue of good examples of integration of sustainability in the study programmes of the Faculty of Engineering and Science at Aalborg University has been prepared as part of the documentation of the project “Problem Based Learning and Sustainability in Engineering and Science Education – Practice and Potential”.

The project was initiated in February 2012 and aimed to investigate the integration of sustainability in engineering and science education at the Faculty. The Dean of the Faculty funded the project and the Centre for PBL and Sustainability, part of the UNESCO Chair in Problem Based Learning, hosted it. The project was overseen by a Steering Committee representing Faculty departments and carried out by an interdisciplinary working group.

Please click [here](#) to access the full catalogue of good examples.

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The Copernicus Alliance brings together higher education institutions from across Europe which are committed to re-orienting universities so that they can make a meaningful contribution to sustainable development. These institutions have signed the [Copernicus Charta](#) which identifies ten change pathways for sustainable development in higher education.

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