

Education for sustainable development, professional development and quality enhancement in higher education: case study Slovakia

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The Slovak Republic committed itself in the year 2005 to implement the UN Strategy for education for sustainable development into the educational process at all levels. The Strategy was implemented into the Action Plan of Education for Sustainable Development in the Slovak Republic (MoESRS SR, 2006). Five main pillars were proposed in this Action Plan for higher education for the periods 2007 – 2010: (1) Institutional capacities, (2) Education and training, (3) Research, (4) Institutional efficiency, and (5) Communication, coordination and cooperation and had got the character of a recommendation.

The contribution presents the overview of current situation of education for sustainable development (ESD), professional development and quality enhancement in higher education in Slovakia. We concentrate on the Slovak ESD experience and their comparison with the leading practice in selected European countries (UE4SD, 2014, 2015). The main sources of information is the National Report on the Mapping opportunities for Developing Education for Sustainable Development competences in Slovakia (Kozova, Novanska, Finka, 2014), developed in 2014 in the frame of the University Educators for Sustainable Development (UE4SD) project, which we updated by new information from the years 2015-2016.

Key findings from the comparison the Slovak situation with leading European practice elaborated by the SWOT analysis show that in spite of the facts that Slovakia has a long tradition of transdisciplinary and holistic approaches in teaching (e.g. geographical sciences and environmental sciences), Slovak educators of sustainable development provide many courses in which are applying principles of SD and there is a lot of positive individual initiatives, the current situation in Slovakia has many weak points. The principal weakness is a very low support of ESD as an institutional priority, focusing to organization change (“whole institutional approach”). In the conclusion we recommend possible steps for improving the current unsatisfactory situation.

Reference:

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