

8th WEEC in Gothenburg

Greetings of the Secretary-General Mario Salomone



Distinguished representatives of the international institutions, of the City of Gothenburg and of Gothenburg and Chalmers Universities, dear friends and colleagues involved in environmental education, many warmest thanks for attending this 8th congress in Gothenburg.

Many thanks also to all people unable to attend the congress for a lot of reasons as scarcity of funds or personal problems, but interested in the EE and in our congresses.

Many thanks to the Gothenburg and Chalmers universities, to the GMV Center for Environment and Sustainability, to the scientific and advisors committees, to the staff at the Local organizing committee and at the Permanent Secretariat and, of course, to all bodies that are helping us.

Your participation is going to give value to the meeting.

All people will leave the congress with a luggage richer in terms of new friendships, partnerships, contacts, suggestions, best practices, and, I hope, all people will leave the congress more open-minded and with an improved motivation and enthusiasm.

Since 2003 this is the spirit and the main aim of the world environmental education congresses.

Since 2003 we reached four continents collecting thousands and thousands of people of different cultures, languages, religions.

On Thursday we will announce where the 9th congress will be held in 2017 and from now we encourage all you to consider a candidacy for the 10th congress in 2019.

The call for bids opens today.

Since 2013 we are also engaged in building in Europe a regional network and a Pan-European area of consultation on the environmental and sustainability education.

So, I take the opportunity to invite all European attendees to join the Third Pan-European Days of environmental education that will be held on 1st and 2nd October in Barcelona, organized by Government of Catalonia -I thank warmly- jointly with the Permanent Secretariat and the network of Regions Four Motors for Europe. I encourage all of you to get involved and contribute to the discussions.

You can find more information on the special website of the event at the network international website.

Dear participants to the 8th congress in Gothenburg

We are proud for the capacity of our worldwide community to organize an international meeting each two years.

We are proud to contribute to build awareness, capabilities, participation, and ecological citizenship.

We are very happy for this intersection and true crossroads of institutions, actors from civil society, scientific researchers, experiences and competencies, making the congresses a friendly site where *top down* and *bottom up* initiatives and where academia, public bodies, associations, companies can enhance dialogue and collaboration.

But.. but...

But we are not proud; we are not satisfied with the present, sad world.

In the present world there are too many wars, too many walls, too many refugees and migrants, too many social injustices, too huge ecological debt, too much violence, to dangerous military expenditures...

The humankind seems orphan of horizons of solidarity, of dreams, of freedom, true democracy, and participation. In too many countries the humankind is hostage of egoism, xenophobia, fear, "business as usual"...

This framework is closely linked with this 'robbery' of the planet that continues unabated, and indeed worsens.

It is that I call "Syndrome of Phileas Fogg", from the novel of the French writer Jules Verne. Phileas Fogg burn all wood on his steamship for reaching United Kingdom on time for winning the bet. As Phileas Fogg on the boat Henrietta, we are burning renewable and non-renewable resources for supporting an impossible and unsustainable socio-economic system. We are burning our future and the right of future generations to enjoy the great beauty of the Earth, its biodiversity and to live safe and peaceful. In general, the atmosphere is not encouraging, as the main focus is on the growth, whatever the cost of growth is both for humankind and for the planet.

In many countries, the economic crisis and public spending reduce the funding available for environmental education that is not considered essential.

So, all actors engaged in environmental education over the world need the network to be strengthened. So, we are opening a campaign of formal adhesion to the network.

So that to be able to disseminate information about your activities, to promote events and publications via website and newsletter, to enable collaborations and partnerships, to be better informed about what is happening in the world. Since we are working on the extension of the network, we will welcome any support and direct engagement both on the cultural and scientific level and on the initiatives of the network.

I thank you for your attention.

My warmest wishes and a happy and useful congress!