



**COPERNICUS
ALLIANCE
REPORT**

/ 2017







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1 | *summary*

This report documents the activities of the COPERNICUS Alliance in 2017, in reference to the Alliance's objectives and the ambitions of the COPERNICUS Alliance Leadership Team, Dr Clemens Mader (President) and Dr Jana Dlouhá (Vice-President) re-elected for 2017-18 after their initial term in 2015-16.

VISION

The COPERNICUS Alliance is a European network of higher education institutions committed to transformational learning and change for sustainable development. Working closely with its members and in partnership with strategic stakeholders, the COPERNICUS Alliance seeks to inform international and European higher education policy developments as well as support individual institutions in their journeys toward embedding change for sustainability in their institutional policies, teaching and research. COPERNICUS Alliance is committed to conducting these tasks in an open, transparent way, facilitating a growing exchange of ideas, opportunities to cooperate with and mutually support other actors in society.

CA OBJECTIVES

COPERNICUS Alliance aims to achieve the following:

- **Networking:** Exchanging good practice and enhancing knowledge on sustainability and Education for Sustainable Development in Higher Education.
- **Policy and Representation:** Informing higher education policy-making in Europe and globally. Engaging and participating in international gatherings, dialogues, committees and expert groups.
- **Professional development:** Developing tools and materials and providing professional development opportunities.
- **Outreach:** Working in partnership to promote sustainable development in European Higher Education.

In order to increase opportunities for knowledge exchange, building relationships among the CA members and **networking** with other HE networks have been taken:

- The CA leadership team devoted a great deal of energy to contributing to the development of two ambitious project proposals which networked CA members with other academic partners:

- University educators' Resources for innovation towards Sustainability Science (URSUS) (ERASMUS + , lead partner Charles University) and
- SUCCESS: Sustainability governance by Communication with and Empowerment of Society through Science indicators for Responsible Research and Innovation (Horizon 2020, lead partner Leuphana University of Lüneburg).

Despite the projects not being recommended for funding, this experience did a great deal to boost the knowledge base relevant to the projects and consolidate the social capital in the process of close collaboration.

- Work has progressed according to the MoU describing cooperation with the IAU, including discussion and relationship building with the new Secretary General of the IAU, Dr. Hilligje van't Land, and continuing to work on the special edition of the Higher Education Policy Journal, "Higher Education and Research for Sustainable Development: A New Academic Discipline?"

The COPERNICUS Alliance was represented in dialogues and events to drive **policy development**:

- CA continues to be involved in commenting on the "Framework for the future implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development", a follow-up strategy to the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development.
- CA joined forces with Hoch-N and The Postgraduate European Sustainable Development Symposium to co-organise the

Hamburg Sustainable Development Summit (<https://www.hsds.uni-hamburg.de/>) which provided an opportunity to build on the work of the CA Conference 2016 Sustainability Transformation of Science Systems, and the collaboration on project proposal development for both ERASMUS+ and Horizon 2020 projects both addressing sustainability science.

- CA was represented at
 - The European Environment Bureau 2017 Annual conference: Protecting the environment in a new Europe (Edinburgh, Scotland, 6th November, 2017)
 - Annual meeting of the EEB (June 11-12, 2018). Current environmental and sustainable development policy issues were discussed in the context of the new EU presidency and strategies to be promoted by NGOs.
 - Ubuntu Committee of Peers for the UNU Network of Regional Centres of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development
- The Global University Partnership for Environment and Sustainability (GUPES)
CA signed a MoU with GUPES, a UNEP initiative, in 2014. In accordance with this MoU GUPES and CA collaborate by sharing resources and promotion of events. GUPES, CA and IAU were also partners in the professional training programme ELTT that was coordinated by CA Member University of Zurich.
- CA Vice-President Jana Dlouhá was elected to the position of 2nd vice-chairman of the Czech Commission for UNESCO. This provides an opportunity for networking and advocacy on the national level, and to prepare collaborative activities internationally.

CA dedicated a great deal of effort to try to find a way to support **professional development** 2017:

Collaboration on the University educators' Resources for innovation towards SUsustainability Science (URSUS) Erasmus + proposal focused on professional development tools and was designed to directly benefit and serve all CA members.

CA continues to search for **meaningful ways to support cooperation among CA members** and encourage informal channels of communication and **support for early-career colleagues** at member institutions:

CA issued 3 calls for applications for Micro Funds in 2017: small grants for colleagues wishing to initiate small-scale projects, workshops and research on CA themes. There were three funded projects in 2017. The Open University of the Netherlands received support for the European Virtual Seminar professional development meeting, Maastricht, 6-7th April 2017. The Vienna University of Economics and Business received support in holding the final event of the Competencies for a Sustainable Socio-Economic Development (CASE) project, Vienna, 9th November 2017. Charles University, Prague received support cooperation on the European Virtual Seminar (winter semester 2017-18).

CA MEMBERSHIP

There are now a total of 21 member institutions in 14 countries. In addition to an individual member joining from France, three new partners joined CA in 2017:

- University of Girona
- Cyprus School of Molecular Medicine
- University of Gävle



2 | *secretariat, leadership team and advisory board*

The COPERNICUS Alliance has a rotating Secretariat and Leadership Team. The current Team was voted in at the CA AGM in Prague, November 2014 and for a second term for the period 2017–2018. Dr. Clemens Mader (University of Zurich (Sustainability Team) and Empa (Technology and Society Lab)) serves as President and Dr. Jana Dlouhá, (Charles University Environment Centre) serves as Vice-President. The CA Secretariat is at Charles University in Prague (CZ), where Laura Henderson is the contact point and communications coordinator. Ing. Jiří Dlouhý supports IT and web issues while the financial administration of the network continues from the University of Graz (Austria) where Mario Diethart is the network's financial administrator.

In 2017, the CA secretariat enjoyed the cooperation and support of Claudia Schmitt, Sophie Palm and the team at the Universität Hamburg Center for a Sustainable University during the preparation of the Hamburg Sustainable Development Summit, September 26th – 29th 2017.



In 2017 the following colleagues were unanimously elected to the Advisory Board:

→ **Matthias Barth**, *Professor for Education for Sustainable Development, Leuphana University of Lüneburg, Germany.*

Matthias holds a PhD in educational science and a habilitation (greater doctorate) in Sustainability Science. He is the Dean of Study, Faculty of Sustainability Science and Project leader “Educating future change agents” (<https://edufuca.wordpress.com/>). He has authored 30+ publications on higher education for sustainable development.



→ **Alessandra Viviani**, *Deputy Director, Department of Political and International Sciences, Associate Professor of International Human Rights Protection, former Vice Rector for International Relations (2010–2016), University of Siena, Italy*

Alessandra is a Member of the Steering Committee of the IRUN (International Research University Network), International Expert “Internationalisation, equity and institutional management for a quality higher education (IEMU), a project co-funded by the Romanian Government, the IAU and the EU Commission. She cooperates with the Italian Ministry of Ed-



education on the organization and launching of PRIMA (Partnership on Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area) under the coordination of the PRIMA Chair. Furthermore she is involved in the activities of the SDSN Med (Sustainable Development Solutions Network) Mediterranean, at the University of Siena, with particular reference to educational activities.

→ **Doris Wastl-Walter**, *Professor of Human Geography and former Vice-Rector for Quality (2011-2017), University of Bern, Switzerland.*

Between 2011 and 2017 Doris served on the executive board of the University of Bern for quality management, equal opportunity, and sustainable development. She launched a major multi-year project to mainstream sustainable development in teaching plus Bachelor Minor and Master Minor in Sustainable Development and is acknowledged as a “change agent”, respected motivator for transformations of the university, and staunch but diplomatic defender of equality ideals. She has experience in international leadership and scientific committees (e.g. 2004-2014 President of the Swiss National Committee of the IGU; 2000-2008 Chair of the Commission on Geography and Public Policy of the IGU).



In 2017 three colleagues departed from the Advisory Board (AB) due to changes in their professional situations:

→ **Prof Gerd Michelsen**, *Professor for Environmental and Sustainable Communication and UNESCO Chair in Higher Education for Sustainable Development, founding member of CA, Leuphana University Lüneburg, Germany*

→ **Mr Mahesh Pradhan**, *Head of GUPES and UNEP's Environmental and Training Unit, Kenya*

→ **Prof Friedrich M. Zimmermann**, *Professor of Geography and Regional Science, founding member of CA and former CA President (2010-2012), University of Graz, Austria.*

We thank all three of them whole-heartedly for their support and contribution over their long period of engagement with CA.

The composition of the Advisory Board is currently as follows:

→ **Prof Matthias Barth** *(CA Member Representative), Professor for Education for Sustainable Development, Leuphana University of Lüneburg, Germany*

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

→ **Prof Hans van Ginkel** *(CA Advisor), Former Under Secretary General of United Nations, Rector of the United Nations University and Rector of Utrecht University, Universiteit Utrecht, The Netherlands*

→ **Mr Dario Piselli** *(CA Student Representative), Law student at the University of Siena and Founder of Greening USiena, Italy*

→ **Prof Alessandra Viviani** *(CA Member Representative), Deputy Director, Department of Political and International Sciences, Associate Professor of International Human Rights Protection, former Vice Rector for International Relations (2010 – 2016), University of Siena, Italy*

→ **Prof Doris Wastl-Walter** *(CA Member Representative), Professor of Human Geography and former Vice-Rector for Quality (2011-2017), University of Bern, Switzerland*



3 | *membership*

Table 1. Membership evolution 2015–2016

Membership category	2016	2017
Institutional members & trial members	16	17
HE NGOs and associations	3	3
Observers	-	-
International observers	-	-
Individual members	-	1
TOTAL	19	21

Table 2. List of members for 2017

Member institution	Country	Type	Member since
Vienna University of Economics and Business	Austria	Institutional	2010
University of Graz	Austria	Institutional	2010
Leuphana University of Lüneburg	Germany	Institutional	2010
Open University in the Netherlands	Netherlands	Institutional	2010
University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna	Austria	Institutional	2012
Charles University Environment Centre	Czech Republic	Institutional	2012
CRUE-CADEP	Spain	NGO	2012
University of Basque Country	Spain	Institutional	2013
University of Siena	Italy	Institutional	2013
Flemish Ministry of Environment, Nature & Energy	Belgium	Governmental Agency	2014
The University of Warsaw	Poland	Institutional	2014
University of Bucharest	Romania	Institutional	2014
National Union of Students	UK	NGO	2014
University of Hamburg	Germany	Institutional	2015
University of Zurich	Switzerland	Institutional	2015
University of Maribor	Slovenia	Institutional	2016
University of Bern	Switzerland	Institutional	2016
University of Girona	Spain	Institutional	2017
Cyprus School of Molecular Medicine	Cyprus	Institutional	2017
University of Gävle	Sweden	Institutional	2017
Beatriz Perez-Soto	France	Individual	2017

4 | finances

COPERNICUS Alliance is officially acknowledged as an NGO under German law with the registration number VR200489. Its finances and accounting are assessed on a regular basis by the tax authority of Lüneburg, Germany. They approve the status of COPERNICUS Alliance as a Non-Profit Organisation serving society with a research and science purpose.

The CA income consists exclusively of membership fees. Expenditures in 2017 relate to staff (Administrative Coordinator/Secretariat and Financial Administrator) and the Annual CA Conference in Hamburg as well as communications and profile and representation (includes memberships, travel, subsistence and fees to participate in important events where CA has

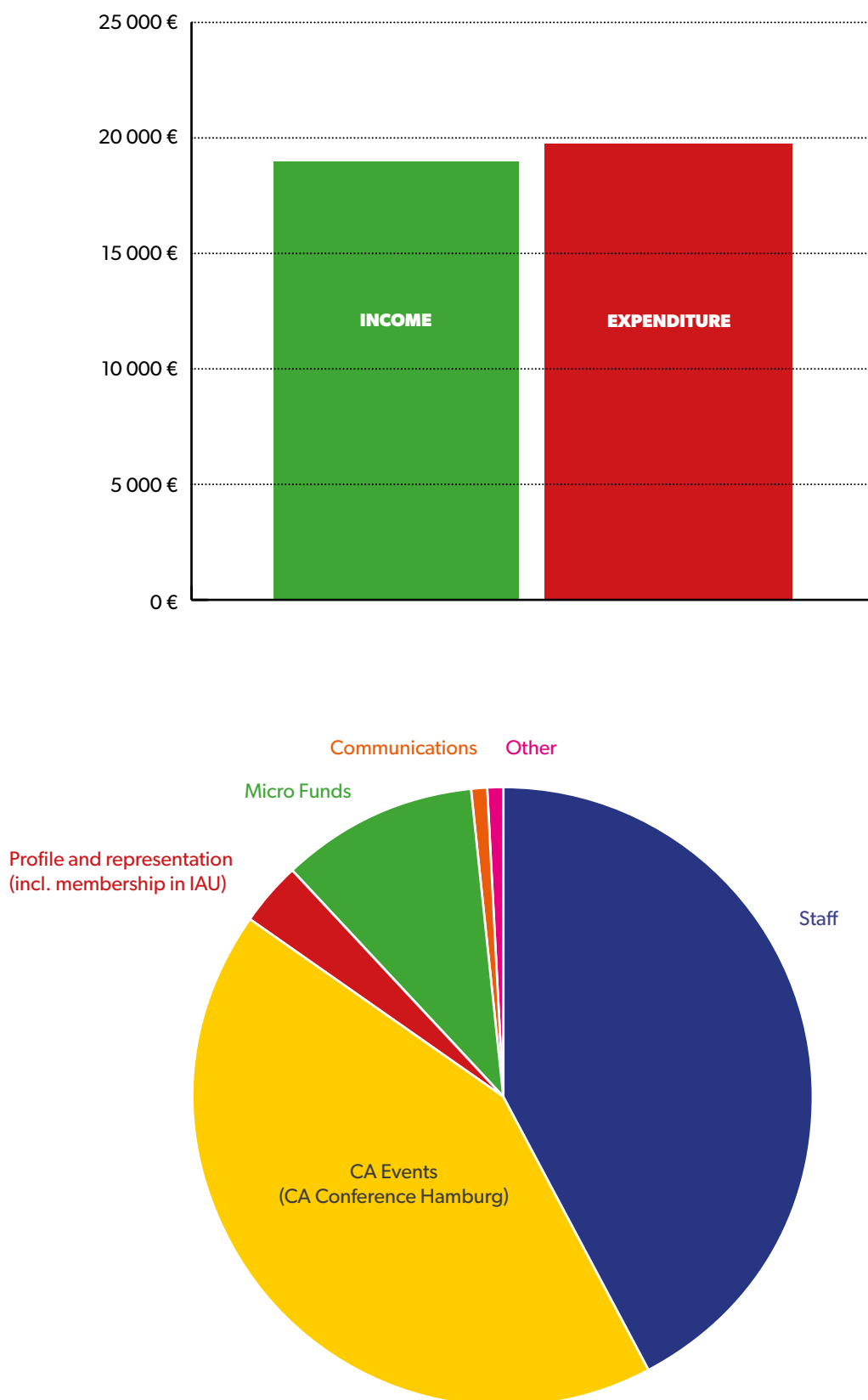
profiled its work and activities). In addition, an important part of the workload is covered by In-Kind-contributions through the whole CA Leadership Team.

As the table and the figure below show the year 2017 was closed with a negative balance of € 757.21 which leads to a total account balance of € 13,526.38 at the end of 2017. The membership fees contributed € 18,500 (from 21 member institutions) to the annual budget. To enhance visibility of the CA and strengthen cooperation with other international organizations € 650 were spent for membership in the International Association of Universities (IAU). For the CA conference in Hamburg as the main event of the year € 8,208.42 (incl. travel funds) were invested.

Table 1. Finances 2017

INCOME	Membership fees	€ 18,500.00
	TOTAL Income	€ 18,500.00
EXPENDITURE	Staff	€ 8,146.80
	CA Events (CA Conference Hamburg)	€ 8,208.42
	Profile and representation (incl. membership in IAU)	€ 650,00
	Micro Funds	€ 1,962.44
	Communications	€ 155.28
	Others	€ 131.30
	TOTAL Expenditure	€ 19,254.24
Balance 2017		- € 754.24
Carried forward from 2016		€ 14,283.59
TOTAL BALANCE		€ 13,529.35

Figure 1. *Top: Income and Expenditures 2017; Bottom: Distribution of expenditures 2017*



5 | *COPERNICUS Alliance initiatives in line with key strategies and visions 2017*

Activities focused on meeting the COPERNICUS Alliance objectives in 2017 and beyond:

NETWORKING

→ **COPERNICUS Alliance - International Association of Universities Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)**

A new partnership for COPERNICUS Alliance was formally agreed with IAU in 2016. The partnership established with IAU provides an opportunity for the COPERNICUS Alliance to engage with a global network of 633 institutions.

The following initiatives are underway according to the objectives set out in the MoU:

- CA members were invited to submit articles for a research prize awarded worth 2000 EUR
- CA is cooperating on editing a special issue of the IAU indexed Journal - Higher Education Policy, Routledge:

“Higher Education and Research for Sustainable Development: A New Academic Discipline?”

- CA Members were invited to upload their institutional profiles on the HESD online platform

→ Work in the framework of the UNESCO International Network of Teacher Education Institutions (INTEI) was continued. The virtual conference “Designing the Future” is planned for November 13 – 15, 2018. The UNESCO Chair on Reorienting Education to Address Sustainability at York University and Kappa Delta Pi are co-hosts of this online conference. CA president and vice-president have been involved in the work of their respective national Commissions for UNESCO

→ Cooperation with the EMSU network facilitated a special issue of the Journal of Cleaner Production.

POLICY AND REPRESENTATION

→ UNECE

CA is an Observer of the UNECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development, contributing to the UNECE Draft workplan for 2017-2019 for the UNECE Strategy for ESD. This position has now been consolidated due to the appointment of Jana Dlouhá to the position of 2nd vice-chairman of the Czech Commission for UNESCO. One of six priority action areas highlighted at the national level:

(f) Acknowledging the important **role of networks, including those of civil society, academia and science**, non-governmental organizations, business and enterprises, in implementing education for sustainable development:

- (i) To consider the role of networks, including those of civil society, academia and science, youth, NGOs, companies and enterprises, in education for sustainable development as a **vital part of the implementation framework**;

- (ii) To empower and increase the capacity of civil society, and in particular youth as critical agents of change, through networking and co-learning, which is essential for a wide and **participatory implementation process**;
- (iii) To **strengthen multi-stakeholder networks** at the local level, as one example of an action under this priority area.

→ SDG Accord

CA has become a signatory to the SDG Accord, which aims to encourage commitment to embedding the SDGs into all aspects of educational activities. Initiated by Iain Patton, Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges, UK, the accord has been signed by 33 education networks, 36 institutions, 49 university support organisations and 149 individuals.

<http://www.sdgaccord.org/>

The SDG Accord

Recognising that we are at different stages in our journey towards a sustainable future, with differing strategic priorities dependant on our strategic ambitions, areas of expertise and organisational culture

This Accord calls upon we, the world's universities and colleges

to embed the Sustainable Development Goals into our education, research, leadership, operations, administration and engagement activities.

We Accord Signatories recognise:

- The indivisible and interconnected nature of the universal set of Goals - People, Prosperity, Planet, Partnership, Peace
- That, as educators, we have a responsibility to play a central and transformational role in attaining the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030

And we thereby assert:

That as leaders or individual practitioners, academics, students or researchers, we will:

- Align all major efforts with the Sustainable Development Goals, targets and indicators, including through our education, research, leadership, operational and engagement activities;
- Aim to involve members from all key stakeholder groups in this endeavour, including students, academics, professional staff, local communities and other external stakeholders;
- Collaborate across cities, regions, countries and continents with other signatory institutions as part of a collective international response;
- Using our own unique ways, inform, share our learning and account to both local and global communities our progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals;
- Annually report on 'how does my institution contribute to the Goals and what more can we do'.

- **G7 Education for All Udine conference and Manifesto.** CA is supporting organisation of the Manifesto which aims to:
 - promote a wider culture of economic, social and environmental sustainability
 - promote democratic participation in social life and social mobility
 - promote the expansion of HE by increasing the number of graduates, with the goal of fostering increased future **economic development**
 - promote the strengthening of **global citizenship** dynamics

The preliminary Manifesto can be seen here: <https://www.cruui.it/g7-university.html>

- **Sustainability governance by Communication with and Empowerment of Society through Science Indicators for Responsible Research and Innovation, project proposal**
The CA Leadership Team supported Leuphana University in the development of a 20-partner project proposal intending to contribute to the policy environment. The project SUCCESS: SUSTainability governance by CommuniCation with and Empowerment of Society through Science indicators for Responsible Research and Innovation was submitted to HORIZON 2020, SwafS-23-2017: Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) in support of sustainability and governance, taking account of the international context.

Building on the CA conference 2016, the project proposed aims to:

- Review fundamental concepts of responsible research and innovation (RRI), science for sustainability, sustainability governance and their interlinkage
- Analyse research related to sustainability governance and RRI with the focus on the relevance of science for sustainability in indicator sets used on international and European levels
- Develop methods for face-to-face participatory workshops in 15 partners' national contexts to reflect on various perspectives and demands of wide range of stakeholders concerning RRI
- Revise scenarios for theoretical indicator principles and analyse stakeholders' visions and needs for participative indicator development

- Test and probe developed indicators/indicator set based on case studies assessing feasibility of indicators for RRI and Sustainability Science in selected European countries

Despite a high evaluation score the proposal was not recommended for funding. CA will aim to support Leuphana University in finding an alternative avenue for the valuable work done on this proposal.

Representation in groups, committees and events:

- **Ubuntu Committee of Peers for the Regional Centres of Expertise (RCE)**

Since the establishment of the first RCEs in 2005, COPERNICUS Alliance has been a member of the Ubuntu Committee of Peers for the Regional Centres of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development. This Committee is coordinated by the RCE Service Centre at the United Nations University – Institute for the Advanced Studies of Sustainability. The CA President represents the CA in the Committee. In 2017 the Annual Meeting of the Ubuntu Committee took place in Tokyo, Japan in the forefront of the 11th Global RCE Conference.

- **Steering Committee of the United Nations Economic Council for Europe (UNECE) Strategy for ESD**

The Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development of the UNECE (including its members and observers) reviewed implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development and in 2016 developed the Future Implementation Framework for this Strategy; in 2017 it finalized its Format for reporting on the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development 2017–2019 (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2018/4). COPERNICUS Alliance, as an NGO, is involved as an “Observer” in this work of the Steering Committee. CA strives to support implementation of the document, and reflect upon the activities behind the process.

- **Representation at The European Environmental Bureau**

EEB is the largest network of environmental citizens' organisations in Europe. It currently consists of around 140 member organisa-

tions in more than 30 countries, including a growing number of European networks, and representing some 15 million individual members and supporters. Jiri Dlouhy is a member of the EEB Board represented CA at the EEB 2017 – Annual conference: Protecting the environment in a new Europe (Edinburg, 6th November, 2017 – <http://eebconference.eu>). More information at the EEB website: <http://eeb.org>

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

→ Project Proposal ERASMUS +: University educators' Resources for innovation towards SUSTainability Science (URSUS)

The objective of the project was to:

- explore and delineate links between sustainability science and education
- develop resources for university teachers (MOOC)
- include these principles in teaching/practice
- implement these resources in partner universities

Project Partners included the following:

- Charles University, Czech Republic
- Open University of Netherlands,

- Universität für Bodenkultur Wien (BOKU), Austria
- University Warsaw, Poland
- Associated partners:
- University of Zurich, Switzerland
- Ecocampus, Belgium
- University of Hamburg
- Leuphana University of Luneburg
- International Association of Universities

Further opportunities to develop this work will be sought.

→ Micro Funds

Three awards of up to 1,000 EUR each were made to the CA members:

- **Open University of the Netherlands**, European Virtual Seminar professional development meeting, Maastricht, 6-7th April 2017
The meeting was hosted by the Maastricht University Graduate School of Sustainability Science, and was attended by colleagues from two CA member institutes and colleagues from Oldenburg University and the University of Vechta. Particular attention was paid to the development of ESD competences of tutors through participation in EVS, based on the UNECE (2011) competence



framework. The participants concluded that EVS is an effective opportunity for developing a range of ESD competences, especially for junior university staff. Participating CA members: Open University of the Netherlands, University of Graz.

- **Vienna University of Economics and Business, CASE project final event, Vienna, 9th November 2017**

This Micro Funds supported the final event of the Competencies for a Sustainable Socio-Economic Development (CASE) project. CASE aimed to provide innovative teaching for sustainable entrepreneurship and stronger collaboration between universities and companies. The final event, held on 9th November provided participants with opportunities to explore innovations for entrepreneurial education and ESD competences, experience innovative learning and teaching methods and tools, explore a new master curriculum for sustainability-driven entrepreneurship. Participating CA members: WU Vienna University of Economics and Business, University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna.

- **Charles University, European Virtual Seminar staff support (winter semester 2017-18)**

A Micro Fund was awarded to support the participation of Charles University staff to

teaching on the European Virtual Seminar (EVS). EVS is a web-based course, jointly organized and offered by 10 universities across Europe. In EVS international, multi-disciplinary student teams conduct case studies in European sustainable development, coached by tutors and experts. EVS has been repeatedly acknowledged as good practice in many respects including professional development of university teachers. Participating CA members: University of Bucharest, Charles University, University of Graz, University of Maribor, Open University of the Netherlands.

OUTREACH

- **Hamburg Sustainable Development Summit**

In 2017 COPERNICUS Alliance joined forces with HOCHN (a network dedicated to embedding sustainability in German higher education institutes) and the European Postgraduate Sustainable Development Symposium (an interdisciplinary network of early career-stage researchers dedicated to sustainable development) to co-organise the Hamburg Sustainable Development Summit, hosted by the University of Hamburg. The Summit brought together three annual events:

- COPERNICUS Alliance European Network on Higher Education for Sustainable Development Conference 2017



- 7th European Postgraduate Sustainable Development Symposium (SDS)
- HOCHN Sustainability at Higher Education Institutions Network Day

The coming together of three networks created an opportunity for the rich cross-fertilization of ideas. A highly interactive and creative programme was structured around 5 topic rooms: Education for Sustainable Development, Reporting and Governance, Steering our cities towards sustainability, Higher Education Institutions – Aims, Agendas, Actors, and Methods and Perspectives for Transformational Processes. Information about the event programme, presentations, topic room summaries and other documentation can be found at <https://www.hsds.uni-hamburg.de/>

PUBLICATIONS

- **International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education Special Issue**, Professional Development in Higher Education for Sustainable Development <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/toc/ijshe/18/5>

CA contributed to reviewing the Special Issue of the International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education which includes pioneering experiences across the world in the training of higher education academics in Education for sustainable development (ESD). The articles showcase good practice and illuminate pathways to address some of the current ESD staff development challenges such as:

- Development of professional capabilities/competences
- Methods that support critical reflection and individual change
- Development strategies that support the development of academic leadership skills and institutional change and learning

The special issue was published in 2017 and can be accessed at: <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/toc/ijshe/18/5>.

- **Higher Education Policy Journal Special Issue**, Higher Education and Research for Sustainable Development: A New Academic Discipline?

Higher Education Policy is a peer reviewed journal with small impact factor (0,577), closely affiliated with IAU and CA – disseminated to all the member institutions, currently more than 600 HEIs all over the world, so

that the impact of the published articles on higher education policies is anticipated. The special issue will be published in 2018, and two prizes each worth 2000 EUR will award the work of one IAU and one CA member.

- **Journal of Cleaner Production**, Dlouhá, J., Henderson, L., Kapitulčinová, D., Mader, C. (2017). Sustainability-oriented higher education networks: Characteristics and achievements in the context of the UN DESD. *Journal of Cleaner Production*.

The article is a qualitative analysis of responses of 25 HE networks for sustainable development

And concludes that

- Higher Education (HE) networks are important actors in sustainability transition.
- Synthesising the efforts of individual HE institutions, HE networks actively shape education for sustainable development (ESD) policies.
- The networks' impact is associated with social capital generated through cooperation.
- The analysed networks have contributed to all of the reported outcomes in HE within the UNESCO Decade for ESD.

The article can be accessed at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2017.07.239>

COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS

- **CA website**

The website has been completely redesigned to create a more accessible, friendly platform in line with CA values.

- **CA Newsletter**

The COPERNICUS Alliance newsletter is sent to all network members and colleagues from across Europe active in the field of ESD. The newsletters provide information about the activities of the Alliance and its members, relevant news and resources of interest to members. The newsletters also feature a profile of a member institution and the colleagues who work on COPERNICUS Alliance issues from that institution. As in 2016, there were 5 issues in 2017.

- **CA Charta Redraft**

The process of redrafting the CA Charta was put on hold after initial phases of investigation were completed, and will be offered to the next Leadership Team for continuation.

6 | *looking ahead to 2018*

SUMMARY OF FUTURE PLANS

As in this and previous years, COPERNICUS Alliance will be active in all its fields of concern: networking, policy and representation, professional development, and outreach. It will continue to build partnerships, communicate with CA members, other institutions and actors in society, utilise resources developed by CA members, and negotiate higher education policies in different contexts of the higher education system with the aim to achieve maximum impact and support sustainability transformation.

Networking

- Activities will be realized in a context of wider cooperation and coordinated with other existing networks, in particular CA will be engaged in joint activities with IAU:
 - CA is discussing cooperation in the IAU Cluster on Higher Education and Research for Sustainable Development (HESD) to work together towards achieving Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals.
 - Award ceremony at the CA Conference 2018 to present prizes to the authors of the winning entries of the Higher Education Policy Journal Special Issue, Higher Education and Research for Sustainable Development: A New Academic Discipline?

Policy and representation

- Partnership with Higher Education Sustainability Initiative. Presence of HESI at UN High Level Political Forum 2018
- In 2017, CA was involved in the work of UNECE only virtually as there was no opportunity to participate at the meeting. However, comments on the Reporting Format (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2018/4) have been delivered to the Secretariat and the work will continue in 2018.

- Continuing involvement in the important international organizations and networks (UNECE, UNESCO and other)

Professional development

- **Micro Funds:** In 2018, we will be able to fund up to six projects, awarding each with up to 1,000 EUR. There are three calls for proposals to apply for the fund:
 - 1st call deadline: 28th February 2018
 - 2nd call deadline: 30st June 2018
 - 3rd call deadline: 30th September 2018
- The CA Secretariat will explore the options for capitalizing on the work done on the University educators' Resources for innovation towards SUsustainability Science (URSUS) project proposal to the **ERASMUS+** programme, which was dedicated to professional development of ESD staff at higher education.
- **Higher Education Policy Journal Essay prizes:** The special edition of the Higher Education Policy Journal "Higher Education and Research for Sustainable Development: A New Academic Discipline?" will be finalised and published in 2018. Two Prizes, each awarded with 2 000 EUR, are being offered to promote research in the field of higher education policy by recognizing outstanding work by two scholars: one from IAU and one from CA Member Institutions or Organisations.

Outreach

- CA is in discussion with the European Environmental Bureau to explore potential for synergy by strengthening the theme of education for sustainable development in higher education in the framework of EEB's significant work in the European policy field.

- Based on the initiative of Ingrid Mula, the call for papers for the MDPI journal “Sustainability” focusing on the “Competencies in Education for Sustainable Development” is in progress during 2018. An article on SDGs related competences on HE level under preparation by the five of COPERNICUS Alliance members.

Leadership Team and Advisory Board elections

The year 2018 will bring to a close the second term of the current Leadership Team and elections for President and Vice-President will be held in October 2018.

CA members will elect the new Leadership Team members at the CA Annual General Meeting in Brussels on 16th October, on the occasion of the Future Forward Summit, 17th – 19th October.

The period of engagement for those Advisory Board members serving since 2014 comes to a close in 2018. The new Leadership Team will be involved in the nomination process for new Advisory Board Members.









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