

**SCIENCE AND EDUCATION POLICIES**  
**International Conference for the Central and Eastern Europe,**  
**Balkans, Caucasus and Baltic States on**  
*18-21 September 2008, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova*

## **FINAL COMMUNIQUÉ**

As a follow-up to the International Conference of the Academies of Eastern and South Eastern Europe on “*Global Science and National Policies: the Role of Academies*”, organized by the UNESCO Office in Venice (BRESCE), the UNESCO Office in Moscow and the International Council for Science (ICSU) hosted by the Academy of Sciences of Moldova in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, 4-5 May 2007, the International Conference for the Central and Eastern Europe, Balkans, Caucasus and Baltic States on “*Science and Education Policies*” was held in Chisinau, from 18 to 21 September 2008. The Conference was organized by joint efforts of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova and the Ministry of Education and Youth of the Republic of Moldova, with the support of the UNESCO Office in Moscow, Central European Initiative, the U.S. Civilian Research and Development Foundation (CRDF), Office of Naval Research Global (ONRG) and Moldovan Research and Development Association (MRDA), among others.

This event, officially included in the Calendar of Events of the Moldovan Presidency to the South East European Co-operation Process (SEECP), brought together key leaders and policy makers at the highest levels in science and education: Presidents of the Academies of Sciences and Ministers of Science and Education, participating or represented, as well as representatives of international organizations from the above-mentioned regions, including representatives of the European Commission and experts from the United States.

The programme of the Conference addressed several challenges affecting science and higher education policies today, mainly: strengthening international impact of national research and education programs; strengthening research in higher education; developing a knowledge-based economy; stemming and reversing brain drain.

Following the presentations and discussions held during the sessions addressing the above themes, the participants agreed that:

1. An increased attention to the synergy between research and higher education in developing national science and education policies plays an essential role in the building of a sustainable knowledge-based economy;
2. Excellence in knowledge management can be acquired only by strengthening the international impact of national research and education programs, by fostering international cooperation at bilateral and multilateral levels;
3. The topics of interest and the problems faced are similar across the regions targeted by the Conference, and that great benefit could be obtained from exchanges of best practices, benchmarking activities, joint actions and programmes for regional cooperation, horizontal support activities with considerable regional relevance and other actions which require cooperative efforts;
4. A stronger link between the education field and that of research-development-innovation will result in a qualitative improvement of the process of education, increasing the access of students and academic staff to the state-of-the-art scientific investigations and creating opportunities of operative orientation of the education towards the tendencies of development of science at an international level;

5. A robust and healthy science community, capable of solving problems of global importance, can be acquired only in the case when research and education work hand in hand;
6. Informal science education is as important as the formal one, which would enable the society to make proper use of the scientific knowledge as well as to face threats associated to it, especially in nuclear physics, biotechnology, nanotechnology, thus to preserve not only the environment but also many human lives;
7. Interdisciplinary education and, consequently, research can't be avoided in the generation of new knowledge today, therefore fostering interdisciplinary communication and building bridges across sectors and disciplines is imperative;
8. The connection between the higher education and science is primarily established by the legal framework. The research activities within the faculties should be supported, strengthened and enhanced;
9. The young generation of scientists plays a crucial role in fostering the knowledge society and therefore their implication in the processes of decision and policy-making is of great significance;
10. A special focus in developing science and education policies needs to be placed on high skilled mobility issues, encouraging on the one hand international mobility of talents and on the other mitigating the negative effects of "brain drain";
11. Participants attested positive changes in the national education systems, after the adoption of the Bologna Process principles and welcomes the reforms launched in the education field of the Republic of Moldova.

The participants acknowledged that a specific comprehensive programme of actions related to science and education management is necessary both at national and regional levels. In conclusion, the participants asked UNESCO, the European Commission and other international organizations, as well as national authorities, to consider the following recommendations in developing science and education policies:

1. Open up national programmes and institutions to participants from other countries, thereby encouraging own researchers to compete and collaborate with the best talents;
2. Create and support specific incentives in national research funding schemes for engaging researchers in cross-border research cooperation;
3. Reinforce research cooperation agreements with third countries and international organisations to exchange best practices, identify common priorities and potential benefits, and jointly define and implement research and education programmes;
4. All stakeholders involved, especially national governments, should give a high priority to human capital improvement by means of education, and assurance that knowledge is engaged in all fields of national economy and that easier access to scientific information is provided;
5. Promote the development of centers of excellence for scientific research and education and frame the conditions for innovation and high tech entrepreneurship, therefore making the country attractive to highly skilled workers, both within the country and from outside;
6. Contribute to regional, supra-national centers and networks to increase priority setting;

7. Collaborate to ensure that the economic and intellectual benefits arising from the growing international mobility of researchers and students are enjoyed by all who have contributed to its realization, make existing rules and procedures for international cooperation of scientists more simple;
8. Support the creation and maintenance of intellectual/scientific diaspora networks and cooperative projects between expatriates and their home country, expand virtual and distant learning opportunities and promote real and virtual return of talent programmes;
9. All stakeholders, especially national governments, should play specific attention in policy making to programmes and measures to stimulate young people to enter the field of research and education;
10. Undertake measures of substantive inclusion of the business sector in financing of the research by using the scientific knowledge and results in their own spheres and of course, raising the state participation in the funding process of research and development in higher education;
11. Formulate conditions and mechanisms to encourage innovative entrepreneurship initiatives, initiate measures (establishing a framework agreement) for commercialization and transfer of intellectual property rights, as well as strengthen regional know-how exchange and joint trainings on developing transfer of technology skills;
12. Support awareness raising and encourage the building of bridges between knowledge and its perception by the general public, as well by the national decision-makers;
13. Acknowledge the role of national academies, along with research councils and foundations, in science policy and in contributing to the creation of the knowledge-based society;
14. Convene joint meetings of decision-makers with science and education representatives on a regular basis and enhance communication in the intervening period, both at national and regional levels.

This document constitutes a contribution of the Central and Eastern European countries, Balkans, Caucasus and Baltic States to the World Conference on Higher Education (Paris, July 2009) and World Science Forum (Budapest, November 2009).