

# ISTANBUL CONCLUSIONS

We, the participants of the SEE Regional Forum of UNESCO Chairs & UNITWIN Networks (Istanbul, Turkey, 12-13 June 2013), co-organized by the Turkish National Commission for UNESCO and the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, Venice (Italy), reaffirm the role of UNESCO Chairs / Networks / Category 2 Centers as sustainable poles of innovation and excellence in higher education for reinforcing our cooperation in the following domains of action:

## **Information and communication**

- Introduce a regular system of exchanging information and data to improve communication, cooperation and coordination between UNESCO Chairs / Networks / Category 2 Centers
- Use existing models such as OpenAIRE (Open access Infrastructures for Research in EU); Living Labs in Europe; and SMART Specialization to share research in the Region to contribute to the emergence of an integrated area of knowledge;
- Clarify communication channels between the Chairs, the National Commissions, the UNESCO Venice Office and UNESCO HQ as well as their respective roles;
- Promote the role and visibility of UNESCO Chairs / Networks / Category 2 Centers as think tanks and bridge builders between the academic world, civil society local communities, research and policy-making.

## **Networking and partnerships**

- Recall the role of National Commissions in facilitating the process leading to the identification and creation of Chairs, as well as in promoting the activities and achievements of Chairs;
- Initiate and strengthen intersectoral approaches to research and partnerships with public/private sectors, key civil society partners and NGOs, emphasizing innovation and business opportunities;
- Expand collaboration between the Chairs network with other centers and networks of excellence;
- Encourage cooperation with the less developed countries in order to share knowledge and information.

## **Fundraising**

- Enhance cooperation and coordination amongst UNESCO Chairs / Networks / Category 2 Centers in the preparation and submission of EU-related and other funding projects and proposals;
- Raise awareness of ministries, national, regional, international funding and development agencies about the role of UNESCO Chairs in encouraging inter-university cooperation and strengthening educational and research capacities.

## **Transdisciplinarity**

- Use Chairs as facilitators that bring together innovative multi and trans-disciplinary groups of professional and academic groups to address emerging regional priorities and global challenges;
- Reaffirm and adopt a human rights-based approach to all programmes and activities;
- Reinforce multidisciplinary approaches to peace and sustainable development, underlining the ethical dimensions within all avenues of action.

## **The way forward**

- Reinforce the role of Chairs in the upcoming discussions on the post-2015 UN

- Development agenda;
- Use Chairs as a model for implementing the new European Research Area (ERA) Chairs initiative at the EU level;
  - Create a comprehensive portal/database hosted by the UNESCO Venice Office on SEE UNESCO Chairs / Networks / Category 2 Centers to be used as a platform for the dissemination of information on ongoing and future activities and programmes (events, open calls, funding opportunities, exchanges, scholarships, updated annual reports, etc.);
  - Organize thematic UNESCO Chairs/UNITWIN Summer Schools on innovative topics of common interest to mobilize partners as well as develop further interaction amongst Chairs, with the support of UNESCO National Commissions;
  - Build alliances by developing joint academic research and education programmes (Masters, scholarships, courses and trainings, open access education, etc.) amongst UNESCO Chairs;
  - Organize regional meetings of UNESCO Chairs / Networks / Category 2 Centers to allow regular exchange and facilitate cooperation;
  - Request the designation of thematic contact points at UNESCO for UNESCO Chairs.

Istanbul, Turkey

13 June 2013