

## **General Report, Conclusions and Policy Recommendations**

**Conference on Environmental Education and Training in Europe,  
organised by the European Commission, Brussels 3 - 4 May 1999**

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## **1. Background**

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This is a report on the services rendered to the European Commission under the service contract B4-30404/99/2348/MAR/B4. The Services have been provided by SME MilieuAdviseurs and consist of the following general report of the conference “Environmental Education and Training in Europe”, organised by the European Commission, Brussels 3 - 4 May 1999.

Since many years DG XI - the Directorate General on Environment, Nuclear Safety and Civil Protection - of the European Commission has invested considerable money, effort and time in the stimulation and co-ordination of activities in the field of environmental education and training (EE&T) in the Member States of the European Union. On the doorstep of the new millennium the Commission liked to review its efforts and policies, to learn from the past, to continue standing successful support and to explore new challenges for its role in the future in the field of EE&T in Europe.

In order to avoid decision making behind desks, the Commission had called for a Conference on EE&T, held in Brussels on 3 and 4 May 1999. The initiative had been taken by DG XI with the active involvement of the Standing Working Party of national experts in the field of EE&T. The initiators hoped and expected that a dialogue with a broader constituency would add value to their discussions so far.

The objectives of the conference were to:

- put the opportunities of EE&T on the agenda of decision-makers within the European Commission and national Governments
- exchange information on present and future roles of EE&T in Member States
- discuss in that light the added value of activities by the European Commission
- explore new challenges for the role of the Commission
- stimulate networking and informal contacts among experts from the Commission and Member States

The Conference provided a two day event, in which more than 130 experts participated. The participants came from among the members of the Standing Working Party on EE&T, other DGs and Programs of EU, governments of accession countries, academia, international organisations, NGOs and the private sector.

For this conference the Commission had published a update on its EE&T activities, “Environmental Education and Training: Selected Projects”. It also had commissioned a special background paper, prepared by SME MilieuAdviseurs which provided the participants with a synopsis of the state of affairs in the field of environmental education and training in Europe, a clarification on the different visions and highlights in the professional discussion on the role of EE&T in the light of sustainable development, first ideas about desirable perspectives for EU activities and potential tracks for the immediate future.

Apart from the background paper the Commission had called for papers on the theme of the conference and a great number of papers by experts from the European countries were made available to the participants. Some of the papers were presented during the conference, either as key note speech, or as a short communication, after a key note speech.

## 2. General Report of the Conference

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### Session I: the Community Policies

The first sessions was chaired and inaugurated by **Mr James Currie**, Director General of DG XI of the European Commission. In his opening remarks **Mr Currie** stressed the importance of EE&T to support policies of environment and sustainable development. To realise environmental literacy of citizens and to change attitudes and behaviour, education and training are important policy tools next to legislation and economic instruments. Therefore the key to success lies in the mix of instruments and co-operation between sectors and organisations.

In this respect **Mr Currie** observed that the objectives of environmental education have developed over the last decades from being focused only on nature to wider concepts as sustainable development and society. It has broadened its scope from students to all citizens. And most importantly it has taken into account the link with economy.

Over the last decade the European Commission has supported these developments by furthering co-operation between experts, by establishing real links between various important Commission Programs and EE&T initiatives, by stimulating dialogue and debate in the field and by exploring needs and demands within the Member States to think for the future. It is in this same spirit - **Mr Currie** concluded - that the Commission has called for this conference: to review its policies, to learn from the past and to explore future perspectives and activities, which would complement initiatives of Member States.

After the opening speech, the actions of the Community in the field of EE&T, especially those of DG XXII, DG XI and DG V were presented by **Mr Andres Hingel** (DG XXII) and **Mr Eusebio Murillo** (DG XI). They presented the formal framework in which Commission activities had taken place and the relevant Commission Programs, such as Leonardo (professional training in environmental management or environmental matters such as water or waste management), Socrates, Comenius (e.g. networking between schools on environmental themes and projects), Erasmus (e.g. higher education projects on environmental curricula and networking between universities) and the activities of the European Social Fund.

The end of the first sessions was chaired by Mme **Costanza Adinolfi**, Director DG XI/B. She introduced the background paper prepared by SME MilieuAdviseurs - Institute for Environmental Communication - The Netherlands. **Mr Hesselink** (SME MilieuAdviseurs) then presented the background paper. He gave an update on the framework of the mandates within which the Commission can and has been operating in the field of EE&T. He also gave a short overview of accents and priorities within the activities of the Commission so far.

After this introduction he dwelled more extensively on the professional discussion in the field of EE&T in Europe. He described the trends in context, target groups objectives, contents and methods of EE&T, which manifested themselves in the various activities, literature and discussions in the different member states.

An important part of this key note speech was formed by the conclusions from a quick scan, executed by SME MilieuAdviseurs among members of the Standing Working Party and other experts in the field of EE&T. The quick scan brought to light opinions and perceptions in the field on the achievements of the Commission, the strong and weak points of policies and actions, and opportunities and threats for future activities. **Mr Hesselink** illustrated these points with quotes from respondents.

Achievements of the Commission were perceived by respondents to be especially positive in its capacity to convene, to stimulate exchange of experience and to provide financial support for innovative projects. Comments were made on the degree of visibility of the achievements throughout Europe.

As strong points were mentioned the opportunity for networking, the exchange of experience, the stimulation of policy development, and the stimulation of professional development. As weak points were perceived that the required shift were not made (compared to the general trends in the field), the methods and procedures of exchange, the lack of integration, the transparency of funding procedures, the lack of strategy and political back up.

Opportunities for future actions are to be found according to the respondents of the quick scan in the European dimension, the stimulation of member states to invest in EE&T, the development of EE&T as a policy instrument, integration and the creation of networks. As threats the following issues were seen: confusion in the discussion, isolation and bureaucratic barriers, too many priorities and too little choices and insufficient resources.

Based on the trends in the professional discussion and a SWOT analysis, **Mr Hesselink** ended his presentation by putting forward some first ideas for a desirable role for the Commission and potential future actions. He identified four roles for the Commission: management of networks, stimulation of innovations & professional development, assisting external integration of EE&T and establishing minimum standards and guidelines.

The presentation of the background paper was followed by three communications from the perspective of an international organisation (UNESCO), a Member State (Germany) and one of the accession countries (Poland)<sup>1</sup>. In these interventions it was stressed that the Commission should mobilise resources and political support for EE&T and play a role in CSD, co-operate in the UNESCO database of innovative practices and focus the European dimension of EE&T on production and consumption. The need for and some ideas on the development of indicators for education for sustainable development were presented, the Commission was asked to promote these in a European dimension. Finally from the perspectives of accession countries some needs were highlighted, e.g. proper legislation, investment in people, external integration, the involvement of regional and local authorities, standardisation of EE&T qualities and the exchange of good practices.

In the discussion on the background paper with the floor, participants all expressed their support for the analysis and recommendations made in the background paper. Some remarks were made on the suggested role for the Commission to establish minimum standards. It was suggested to only speak of establishing guidelines, as the role of the Commission in this field is only complementary. The need of sub committees for the working party was highlighted by several participants. Some participants asked for a role of the Commission in the development of a European definition of sustainable development. Many of them saw the network management role of the Commission as vital and asked for a more demand oriented way of playing this role. Some asked for more interaction between the Commission and national initiatives and asked for guidelines for good practice in EE&T. In a first reaction the chair, **Mme Constanza Adinolfi**, welcomed support for the ideas of background paper and the suggestions from the floor and revisited some of these suggestions in the light of the mandate and concrete possibilities of the Commission.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that in the first session (which dealt with very general issues), we decided to include very general papers. So, I would say that the first one was from UNESCO, the second from the University of Berlin (rather than Germany, and furthermore we choose this intervention because of its links with CSD), and finally the third one was on the situation in Eastern Europe, but it was presented by ETF (European Training Foundation of Turin) and was about a general overview of the situation of training in that part of Europe.

## Session II: Environmental Education

The second session was chaired by **Mr Domenico Lenarduzzi**, director of DG XXII/A. The session started with a visionary key-note speech by **Mr Stephen Sterling** on “Issues within, and challenges beyond environmental education”. **Mr Sterling** put forward a framework of thoughts on the role of environmental education in the change of people’s behaviour towards sustainable development. He asked the question how can education and society change together in a mutually effective way so as to realise sustainable development. He dwelled on the different forms of education and the paradigms beyond them. He looked into which changes in sustainable development really resonate in education policies. He analysed the need for co-operation between sustainable development practitioners and environmental educators. And most importantly he called for environmental education to leave its “box” and isolated position and work towards external integration.

**Mr Sterling’s** key note address was followed by a short communication from the perspective of academic research, in which the need for a role of the Commission to enable and promote research on EE&T was highlighted as well as a role to provide links between research and policy. The discussion with the floor on the keynote address brought to light a general support for the ideas put forward.

The session continued with a short view of the situation on EE&T in three Member States: Sweden, Germany and Austria. **Ulla-Stina Ryking** stressed the importance for the further development of EE&T of the concept of life long learning, from childhood through the educational structures of all levels and sectors. **Norbert Reichel** stressed the key role of environmental education to realise education for sustainability. He reflected on the ambitions of EE&T and stressed the impossibility to change behaviour with knowledge. He put forward dimensions of action, participation, empowerment and local agenda 21 as important steps to go beyond traditional education and to give form to education for sustainable development. **Franz Günther Pfaffenwimmer** highlighted the role of NGOs in the development of environmental education and the opportunities of the concept of ecoschools.

After a short communication by prof. Scoullou, reflecting the results of the UNESCO Thessaloniki Conference and the various paradigms put forward by **Mr Sterling**, participants from the floor discussed the various points made so far by **Mr Sterling** in his key note address and the three representatives of Member States. This discussion was then followed by a contribution from the “non-institutional” sector, represented by **Mr Peter Martin** (WWF UK). **Mr Martin** made a critical analysis of the role of NGOs in environmental education in the light of the absence of concrete results and improvements towards their objectives in the state of the environment and sustainable development. He concluded that so far NGOs had done their work in the absence of concrete contributions of the system, focused on issues and symptoms. He pleaded for more capacity building and professional development of NGOs so that they could focus on targets and sectors with more impact than only the formal education system: the private sector and local communities. EE&T could contribute to make better decisions on consumption and lifestyle. A shift should be made from teaching to empowerment, from the ecological imperative to the educational imperative, from a spare time activity to lifestyle activity in general. He envisaged a special role for the Commission to stimulate such a professional development.

This contribution was followed by the presentation of three educational projects supported by the European Commission: “the development of environmental awareness through literature and media education (University of Bath - Department of Education, UK),” “Environmental Education in Secondary Education, educational material: module energy” (Local Union of Municipalities of Kephallonia and Ithaka, Greece) and “A.M.U.L.E.T.O., a COMENIUS project for the protection of environment of different EU Countries” (ITC “A. Lunardi”, Brescia, Italy). After these presentations, two short communications were made on a Portuguese student’s personal views on environmental education and a project in the UK on modules for primary schools on environmental citizenship. The session ended by discussion with the floor and first conclusions by the chair, **Mr Domenico Lenarduzzi**.

### **Session III: Environmental Vocational Training**

The third session was opened and chaired by **Mr. Karl Johan Loennroth**, director DG V A ( Employment strategy and European Social Fund development). He introduced the three speakers on vocational training, two of them representing the private sector: **Mr. Hans Christian Lillehagen** (Foundation for Business and Sustainable Development) and **Mr. Harald Frostling** (UNICE - Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederation Europe) **Mr. Antonio Giacchè** represented trade unions (CES, European Confederation of Trade Unions). These speakers highlighted the commitment and contributions of their sectors in the field of environmental training in Europe. They made the necessary links between social and economic developments and sustainable development, in which vocational training could play an important role.

The presentations were followed by a communication on a IUCN in service training project for government communicators in the framework of the Pan European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy.

After a short time to discuss the information brought about, the chair gave the floor to **Mrs Francisca Arbizu** (Ministerio de Educación y Cultura, Spain). She gave an expose on the situation of environmental vocational training in the Member States and compared the different legal frameworks and analysed opportunities for complementarity by the Commission.

This exposition was followed by a short explanation on a Danish project which tries to integrate environmental training in a broader context, that is the employment.

The Chair then brought to the attention of the participants the possibility to witness the life demonstration of an environmental education project, supported by the Commission, during the coffee break.

After the break three Training projects, supported by the Commission, were presented: "Promotion d'une formation et d'un enseignement de niveau postuniversitaire dans le domaine de la gestion environnementale"(European Association for Environmental Management - Italy), "Energy and the Environment with women as Designers (Centrum for Arbetslivutsutveckling, Hogskolan I Halmstad - Sweden) and "Formation de nouveaux acteurs professionnels pour le développement durable en milieu rural" (Centre Public d'Aide Sociale de la Ville de Durbuy (CPAS) - Belgium). The discussion clarified issues brought forward by the different presentations

Two communications finished the informative part of this session. One on a Spanish example of cooperation to establish environmental management training for small and medium size enterprises, an other one coming from the Regional Environmental Centre of Budapest, which talk about the training needs of countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

. The session was closed by a short summary by the chair **Mr. Karl Johan Loennroth**.

### **Session IV: Perspectives for the future**

The last session was chaired and introduced by **Mrs Constanza Adinolfi** (DG XI). She introduced the last keynote speaker, **Mrs Rosamund Thomas** (Centre for Business and Public Sector Ethics, UK). **Mrs Thomas** presented the participants with reflections on "Environmental Ethics - Corporate and Social Responsibility for the Environment". Through her keynote speech **Mrs Thomas** provided the last session of the conference with a wider framework of thinking in which the theme of EE&T could be placed. She dwelled on the concept of ethics and gave concrete examples of the development environmental ethics within Europe. She outlined the consequences for education and training and presented a new methodology and approach, required for corporate and social responsibility for the environment. She illustrated her line of thinking with recent concrete examples of actions by corporations and governments. She concluded by outlining the need for innovation and flexibility in EE&T.

In the discussion following this last key note speech, the analysis and recommendations met with approval from several speakers from the floor. After an in depth exchange of views the chair then gave the floor to **Mr Hesselink** to present his conclusions of the conference.

He started by inviting participants to reflect on their main conclusions and recommendations for a first and most important action. This led to several interventions from the floor stressing the importance of the initiative of exchange of experiences and brainstorming on future perspectives for EE&T, taken by the Commission. As a first follow-up action some participants asked for a work or action plan on EE&T in Europe.

**Mr Hesselink** then presented his own perception of what the conclusions of this conference could be. He stressed the overwhelming appreciation and support expressed in different forms during the four sessions for the initiative of this conference. A clear signal that the Commission was right on track in its role of networker and in its role of stimulating innovation and professional development. He also noted that the abundance of excellent papers and presentations called for an wider (internet) distribution within Europe. It was definitely from the many interventions clear that the Commission has to play an important role in the field of EE&T. He had noted with satisfaction that the roles he had outlined were acknowledged by the majority of speakers, who had come up with valuable improvements, suggestions and additions.

**Mr Hesselink** outlined an immediate demand from participants for follow-up in general and more specific in the field of vocational training. A demand for an European initiative for IT exchange of information and data on EE&T. More clarity on the role of the Commission in the field of EE&T. A strategy and workplan (especially with regard to integration and interaction with initiatives in Member States). And a redefined role for the standing working party.

He then listed the various suggestions and additions made by the participants in the action lists for the various desired roles of the Commission (see the Chapter Conclusions). He concluded by reminding participants of the point of “too many priorities and too little choices” from the SWOT analysis of the background paper and pointed out the enormous challenge for the Commission to make these choices in the next short term. He concluded by thanking participants for their suggestions and contributions and the Commission for the honour of being asked to present the background paper and conclusions for this Conference.

In the discussion following **Mr Hesselink's** perceptions of what the conclusions of the two day conference should be, participants expressed support for the views put forward in the background paper and the conclusions as presented by **Mr Hesselink**. They stressed the potential of the Commission to promote EE&T. The need for external integration and co-operation with other DGs was again made explicit, as was the need for an action plan and sub committees for the working party.

In her concluding remarks, the chair **Mrs Costanza Adinolfi**, explained that the Commission was satisfied with the results of the Conference. The objective of exchange of experiences and networking was clearly met. This she pointed out was a most important issue for the Commission as communication is a two way process and the Commission needs as much information and action from the Member States as vice versa. She called for a more intensive bottom - up communication to help the Commission to fulfil its complementary role more effectively.

**Mrs Costanza Adinolfi** further noted that the other for her important objective - to provoke a discussion on future perspectives and actions to be taken - was definitely realised in this Conference thanks to the many contributions by experts from all over Europe. She recalled for the sake of the participants the mandate given to the Commission by the 1988 Resolution and reminded participants that expectations for future perspectives had to be seen within that Mandate. She outlined that the next Environmental Action Plan would be an important milestone for actions by the Commission.

Summarising the achievements of the conference, **Mrs Adinolfi** called for active partnerships and networks in the field of EE&T with the member states and the organisations represented in the Con-

ference to realise the ambitions expressed by the participants. **Mrs Adinolfi** closed the Conference by thanking the organisers, the various speakers and the participants for their contributions and wished all of them success with their activities in the field of EE&T, assuring them of the Commission continued support in this endeavour<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> One thing that should be much more stressed of Mrs Adinoli's conclusions is the emphasis she put in the real participation and cooperation of Member States. Two main reasons for that: first of all the issue of the Commission's competencies, linked to the more general issue of subsidiarity. Secondly, the fact the EE & T actions should be implemented at the closest level to the citizen, so to allow a direct and democratic control over all the processes. This kind of argument has to be included in the conclusions, also because during the Conference many of us had the impression that in particular people coming from national administrations tended to "overload" the Commission with too many expectations. It should be said more clearly that in this kind of game everyone has to play his own role.

### 3. Conclusions on future role of the Commission

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Type of role	Potential activities
<b>Management of networks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make an inventory of existing networks, relevant institutions and persons, divided in different fields of interest.</li> <li>• Develop a system of relation management.</li> <li>• Linking institutions, people and projects: organise and facilitate meetings, workshops, congresses and bilateral contacts</li> <li>• Publish (on internet) an overview of ‘Who is Who’</li> <li>• Communicating project results (multiplier effect: disseminating results and effects in Member States and EU and globally)</li> <li>• Cutting edge use of IT for communication</li> </ul>
<b>Stimulation of innovations &amp; professional development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a complete overview of EE&amp;T achievements in different Members States and in different fields of action.</li> <li>• Make project results, knowledge and experience accessible by publicity and IT-solutions (for instance through databases, CD ROM, internet sites).</li> <li>• Develop a EU web site to make project information accessible and facilitating professional interaction.</li> <li>• Make overview of environmental courses accessible through internet site.</li> <li>• Establish links between the EU site/EU network and other relevant sites and networks</li> <li>• Organise summer schools, workshops and congresses.</li> <li>• Create subcommittees of the Working Party concentrating on specific subjects and targets.</li> <li>• Publish a regular newsletter illustrating the state of the art.</li> <li>• Support (the dissemination of results of) cutting edge projects.</li> <li>• Support professional development of NGOs through workshops</li> </ul>

<b>Type of role</b>	<b>Potential activities</b>
<b>External integration of EE&amp;T</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make an inventory of sectors relevant for EE&amp;T.</li> <li>• Develop relationships with other DGs and start co-operating on a practical level.</li> <li>• Create EE&amp;T-subcommittees in relevant programmes of other DGs.</li> <li>• Develop EE&amp;T as policy instrument with practical use for other sectors.</li> <li>• Develop tools to integrate EE&amp;T in curricula and in vocational training.</li> <li>• Prepare for CSD: use EC know how to support process</li> <li>• Link environment with employment policies and institutions</li> <li>• Provide assistance to Accession Countries to accelerate professionalisation of EE &amp; T</li> <li>• Put emphasis and focus attention on Vocational Training in the Environmental Sector</li> <li>• Use opportunities to integrate EE &amp; T in agricultural education</li> <li>• Use policy laboratory of European Association for Environmental Management Education (EAEME) for generating and testing ideas</li> <li>• Transfer of experience into development projects</li> </ul>
<b>Establishing minimum 'standards' &amp; guidelines</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarify concept Education for Sustainable Development and formulate added value of EE&amp;T for SD</li> <li>• Develop indicators for Education for Sustainable Development and monitor progress</li> <li>• Formulate EE&amp;T 'standards' based on an assessment of the state of affairs in Member States and on the state of the art of the profession.</li> <li>• Carry out activities to make these standards known and respected in Member States and relevant sectors in the EC as useful and important guidelines.</li> <li>• Develop European master in environmental management</li> <li>• Develop standards for Ecoschools</li> <li>• Environmental Management Systems in SMEs</li> </ul>

### **3. Policy recommendations**

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#### **Short Term Recommendations (May 1999 - September 1999)**

1. Make the background paper, conference report, conference papers and overhead transparencies of speakers available on the internet site of DG XI.
2. Communicate before summer a short report on the conference and the address of the internet site to participants of the Conference.
3. Stimulate the follow-up of the discussions on EE&T and sustainable development by co-operating with existing and relevant internet discussions in this subject (e.g. the Dutch Government initiative as a follow-up of the Soesterberg Conference).
4. Design a special EE&T internet site of DG XI, which provides a user friendly system for exchange of experiences, innovative projects and other data in the field of EE&T. Make sure the site is renewed every 14 days and is managed by an EE&T expert with the guidance of a specialised editorial committee. Make sure the necessary links are made with relevant sites of UNESCO and other international organisations in the field of EE&T.
5. Create an internal workplan on priorities in activities in the field of EE&T for the near future, with clear tasks, responsibilities and accountabilities.
6. Make a calendar of events and activities in EE&T where presence of the Commission is useful.

#### **Long Term Recommendations (September 1999 onwards)**

1. Integrate and clarify the role of EE&T in the next Environmental Action Plan.
2. Establish small subcommittees to the Standing Working Party as sounding boards for the activities of the different roles of the Commission. In doing so make a clear distinction between environmental education and environmental training. Ask the Standing Working Party to nominate the members of these sub committees from among participants of the Conference and other relevant actors during its next meeting. The members subcommittees do not have to be selected on criteria of regional representation, but on expert qualifications.
3. Organise a special brainstorm session in October with the Standing Working Party on the outcomes the Conference, the internal priorities of the Commission and the first ideas on integration and clarification of the role of EE&T in the next Environmental Action Plan.
4. Formulate a special program to assist accession countries in the field of EE&T.
5. Formulate specific action plans for the various roles of the Commission in the light of the role clarified for the next Environmental Action Plan. Use existing networks and organisations for the implementation of the action plans.
6. Organise a yearly conference alternately on environmental education and vocational training, focussed in an interactive way on innovation, exchange of experiences and networking; communicate the papers and results in hardcopy and on internet.

## Sheets: 'Conclusions of the Conference'

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### 2 Questions

- The main conclusion I draw from this conference is: .....
- Thus the first thing I would do if I was in charge, is:.....

### First conclusions

EE&T in Europe  
Brussels, 3-4 May 1999

### Observations

- Appreciation for EC initiative
- Need for networking of key actors in EU
- Need for dialogue and exchange of info on various levels (time!)
- Appreciation for visibility EU Projects
- Opportunities to use IT tools
- Emerging market orientation of EE&T

### Demand for ...

- follow-up (in general; specifically vocational training)
- conference presentations on IT
- EU IT for exchange of info and data
- clarity on role EC DG XI EE&T
- clarity on TOR Standing Working Party
- EE&T strategy & workplan (integration)
- State of affairs member states (EC)

### General conclusions

- shared recognition for added value of EC in EE&T
- Some looking to EC to take leadership role
- Recommendations conference & background paper can be starting point for repositioning EC in EE&T

### Suggestions for Network Management

- Who is who
- Linking people, projects & sites
- Communicating project results (multiplier towards EU and globally)
- Cutting edge use of IT for communication