



Brussels Liaison Office
UNESCO Representation
to the European Union

United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



UNESCO
in Brussels

WORKING TOGETHER
ON THE FRONTLINE
OF PEACE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



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FOREWORD BY IRINA BOKOVA, DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF UNESCO

Both the European idea and the United Nations were born in the aftermath of the Second World War, inspired by the determination to build peace on new foundations of cooperation, respect and mutual understanding. This core mission remains sharply relevant today for both the European Union (EU) and UNESCO, and our cooperation has never been so vital for taking it forward.

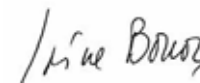
Our partnership builds on strong foundations. UNESCO and the EU seek to promote peace on the basis of solidarity, equality and human rights. Both organizations are committed to building a stronger, rules-based international order for more effective multilateral cooperation and more inclusive and sustainable development. UNESCO and the EU are working together to reach the Millennium Development Goals and the objectives of Education for All by 2015 and to set a new global agenda for sustainability in the century ahead.

At a time of great change when global governance faces new questions, I believe the partnership between UNESCO and the EU provides some key answers. This is why I opened a UNESCO Liaison and Representation Office to the European Union in early 2011. In October 2012, I signed a Memorandum of Understanding between the European Union and UNESCO, with Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, and Andris Piebalgs, Development Commissioner on behalf of the President of the Commission. This agreement sends a strong signal that the EU and UNESCO are moving forward together to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights and promoting good governance. The partnership seeks to enhance the dialogue, to strengthen cooperation and to foster

an exchange of best practices. Common strategic priorities are set out in areas of mutual interest, such as education and culture for development, water security, science, technology and innovation, maritime policy, freedom of expression and the right to information. This offers wider opportunities to address challenges, including through reinforced exchanges between EU and UNESCO at local, regional and global level.

This publication presents a snapshot of our cooperation in promoting quality education for all, in harnessing the full power of the sciences for sustainable development, in supporting cultural heritage and creativity and in protecting freedom of expression and the safety of journalists. I wish to thank the Government of Flanders for its support in underpinning this cooperation across the world. In all of this, we are guided by a shared mission to strengthen the foundations for lasting peace and sustainable development. The EU was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2012. This shows the thirst that exists for peace across the world and also the hard work that remains to meet this need. UNESCO and the EU are working together on the frontlines of peace, to promote human dignity and rights and to lay the ground for a more just and inclusive world.

Irina Bokova



Irina Bokova



FOREWORD BY CATHERINE ASHTON, HIGH REPRESENTATIVE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND SECURITY POLICY

With the setting up of the EU's new European External Action Service, our cooperation with UNESCO has gone from strength to strength. Education, Science and Culture form an important part of the EU's engagement around the world. We work together with UNESCO because we believe in the role these issues play in advancing international peace and prosperity. Education gives people the chance to fulfil their potential and work towards more stable societies. Science has the potential to tackle some of the gravest challenges we face today, from climate change to global pandemics. And promoting cultural understanding is at the heart of a peaceful coexistence between nations.

A recent focus of our cooperation has been education. Education featured as the main item on the agenda of September's 2012 meeting of EU foreign ministers. Together, the EU and its Member States are the biggest contributors to the Global Partnership for Education, where they work with UNESCO and other partners to support education in 48 countries. As a symbol of our commitment, the EU decided to allocate the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize money to conflict-affected children worldwide, giving them access to basic education through "EU Children of Peace" projects. Education is an important element of our human rights strategy, the silver thread that runs through our foreign policy. We all know how much talent is wasted and how much wisdom is lost when a society refuses to break with inequality. This is why the EU has worked closely with UNESCO on girls' education.

Culture and media freedom are just two of the many other areas where UNESCO and the EU work together. Together we invest in safeguarding cultural heritage in the Mediterranean. Our joint projects aim to increase media transparency and professional standards in South East Europe. The Memorandum of Understanding we signed last year will allow us to cooperate even more closely and to increase the impact of our actions around the world. We do this, for example, by stepping up the coordination between our EU Delegations and UNESCO field offices.



Catherine Ashton

Catherine M. Ashton

FOREWORD BY KRIS PEETERS, MINISTER-PRESIDENT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF FLANDERS

Flanders is one of the very few regions in the world that has a cooperation agreement with UNESCO. This has been a very deliberate choice for us, because we feel that UNESCO's mission is also our mission. Education, science, culture and communication, lie at the heart of UNESCO's mandate, but they are also policy fields in which the Government of Flanders has extensive or exclusive competences.

In today's world, water is increasingly becoming a source of possible conflict. The Flemish expertise in water management provides a valuable contribution to tackle climate change through our UNESCO scientific trust fund. By means of our other trust fund on heritage, we contribute to culture preservation and socio-economic benefits for Africa, to marine biodiversity and ocean conservation, and to living World Heritage cities. Throughout this brochure some examples of the cooperation between Flanders and UNESCO are highlighted.

We think that our involvement in UNESCO can also be an important lever for a culture of peace. Close to 100 years ago, Flanders witnessed one of the most violent conflicts in the history of mankind, as the First World War wrecked unthinkable havoc in our region. To this day, that dark era is a vivid reminder that we have to take a stand for human rights, respect for international law, cooperation between people, disarmament and multicultural integration. This is how we can secure a better future for the generations to come. We hope that Flanders Fields, where the atrocities of the First World War were at their worst, will be recognized as UNESCO World Heritage, as this would strengthen

the remembrance of that era.

The recent signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the EU and UNESCO offers possibilities for even closer and enhanced cooperation. Through the Belgian membership of the Executive Board, the Flemish Commission for UNESCO and the secondment of a staff member to the liaison office, Flanders has supported the UNESCO liaison office in Brussels from the start.



I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has been involved over the years in those UNESCO activities that were financed by the Government of Flanders, and I am looking forward to a continued and successful cooperation between Flanders and UNESCO.

Kris Peeters,
Minister-President of the Government of Flanders

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'K' followed by a smaller 'P'.

BUILDING GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS

UNESCO and the European Union

UNESCO and the European Union share the same values and goals, namely the promotion of peace and mutual understanding, and the recognition of human rights and fundamental freedoms as cornerstones of international cooperation and development.

On 8 October 2012, UNESCO and the European Union reinforced their partnership by signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the objectives of enhancing cooperation on areas of mutual interest, encouraging dialogue and knowledge sharing and improving best practices between both organizations.

This partnership will offer enlarged opportunities to address local, regional and global challenges, also through a reinforced dialogue between EU Delegations, UNESCO Field Offices and UNESCO's specialized institutes.



© The Council of the European Union – UNESCO Director-General, Irina Bokova meets European Council President Herman Van Rompuy on 16 February 2011 in Brussels

Belgium



© UNESCO/Michel Ravassard. The Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, and Kris Peeters, Minister-President of the Government of Flanders

UNESCO collaborates closely and frequently with the Belgian Federal State. On 3 July 2013, at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova signed with the Ambassador from Belgium the seat agreement of the UNESCO Liaison Office in Brussels. This means UNESCO is now officially established in the European capital.

Moreover, the UNESCO Liaison Office also developed a fruitful cooperation and partnership with the Belgian Technical Cooperation (BTC), to take a stand for teachers in developing countries.

As in Belgium the UNESCO competences have been mainly decentralized to the Communities and Regions, UNESCO works in close cooperation with their respective governments and Minister-Presidents, Kris Peeters for Flanders and Rudy Demotte for the Walloon Region.

Flanders

In 1998 the Government of Flanders signed a Cooperation Agreement with UNESCO, and Flanders has since then contributed financially to UNESCO Programmes through two Flemish Trust Funds to UNESCO: the Flemish UNESCO Science Trust Fund (FUST), with a focus on water and biodiversity programmes and the Flanders UNESCO Trust Fund (FUT) for the other policy sectors, with a focus on heritage programmes.

National Commissions

UNESCO works in cooperation with the National Commissions for UNESCO of the 28 EU Member States, and in particular with the Belgian Commissions, the Flemish Commission and the French-speaking and German-speaking Commission, in order to build a common advocacy strategy.

UNESCO Liaison Office in Brussels

On 16 February 2011, at the core of the European neighbourhood, the Director-General of UNESCO Irina Bokova created and inaugurated the UNESCO Liaison Office in Brussels in order to develop and strengthen cooperation with the European Union.

Under direct supervision of UNESCO's Director-General, the Office promotes UNESCO's mandate, programmes and activities, and works to strengthen relations with the European Union. The Head of Office acts as the representative of UNESCO to the European Union and to all other European partners.

The UNESCO Liaison Office is a member of the United Nations Team in Brussels (UNTB). The UNTB is in charge of expressing UN views on key issues that are on the European agenda, and of fostering cooperation between the UN agencies based in Brussels in order to better coordinate actions and develop joint UN strategies.



© UNESCO/Agence Mapez – Marie Paule Roudil, Head of the UNESCO Liaison Office in Brussels, Antonio Vigilante, Director UN/UNDP office in Brussels and UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova

Role of the UNESCO Liaison Office in Brussels

Advocacy and Outreach

The Office develops advocacy campaigns related to UNESCO's fields of competences, and spreads the key message of the Organization to give the European institutions and other partners a clear image of what UNESCO does.

Building partnerships

The Office identifies common areas of action between the EU and UNESCO with the objective of elaborating future cooperation and partnerships, contributing to the development of cooperation agreements and joint programmes.

Sharing information

The Office further supports UNESCO's expertise at the Headquarters and in the Field Offices worldwide, by providing analysis and advice on EU policies and programmes and by helping them to identify new partnership opportunities.

INTERVIEW WITH MARIE PAULE ROUDIL, HEAD OF THE UNESCO LIAISON OFFICE IN BRUSSELS AND UNESCO REPRESENTATIVE TO THE EUROPEAN UNION



The UNESCO Liaison Office in Brussels was inaugurated on 16 February 2011. To what extent has it strengthened UNESCO's cooperation with the European Union?

After the adoption of the Treaty of Lisbon in 2007, the action of the European Union on the international scene became very clear: as mentioned in article 21, the EU shall promote multilateral solutions to common problems, in particular in the framework of the United Nations.

Until then, the relationship between UNESCO and the EU was well-established and translated into the signature of joint projects. However the new dimension of the EU's external action convinced our Director-General, Ms Irina Bokova, that UNESCO's presence in Brussels was be-

coming increasingly necessary. Therefore she opened the UNESCO Liaison Office to the European Union in 2011. The Director-General's goal was to make the European institutions more familiar with UNESCO's mandate and to convince our European partners to integrate UNESCO's priorities into their external policies.

UNESCO's mandate might seem complex at a first glance, and especially to partners who have essentially been striving for an increased economic, social and territorial cohesion of their Member States into the EU. Yet, in the spirit of UNESCO's mission, the Treaty of Lisbon also states in Article 3 that the Union's aim is to promote peace, its values and the well-being of its peoples. With UNESCO's mandate to build peace in the minds of men and women by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture, it became obvious that both Organizations would do well to strengthen their cooperation.

This willingness to cooperate materialized in October 2012 when UNESCO and the EU signed a Memorandum of Understanding. This partnership agreement provides a solid foundation for fruitful cooperation in the future. Through the Memorandum of Understanding, UNESCO and the EU are increasingly encouraged to work together in areas of mutual interest.

In which particular areas does UNESCO seek to develop partnerships with the EU? How does it proceed?

UNESCO and the EU work together in fields such as education, culture, science and technology, water policy and freedom of expression. The Liaison Office tries to bring both Organizations closer together by identifying existing or future cooperation opportunities.

The past two years, in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, we gave priority to the promotion of freedom of expression and the fight against the illicit traffic of cultural goods. We recently reinforced our partnership with the EU to provide quality education to Syrian refugees in Jordan. This year, UNESCO took the lead of the UN International Year of Water Cooperation: together with the EU, we seek common intervention modalities to improve access to safe drinking water.

As Head of the Office, I am glad that the partnership with the EU is politically established, but I am even prouder of its tangible results, to which our host country and other European countries kindly contribute. I would also specifically like to thank Minister-President Peeters and the Government of Flanders, which through the secondment of a staff member and by providing funding for the interns in the Office greatly contribute to the functioning of the UNESCO Liaison Office.

Two years after its inauguration our Office can already boast about more than twenty projects in partnership with the EU, and many others are in the pipeline. I strongly believe the cooperation between UNESCO and the European Union can only grow in the years to come, and for this I would like to conclude with a quote from our Director-General Irina Bokova, from her address and vision 'A New Humanism for the 21st Century': "Education, science, culture and communication are pillars in the construction of a united human community and the foundations of sustainable development. There is no wiser investment than to place them at the heart of development. This is the challenge of the coming century, and the condition for building peace".

UNESCO – EU COOPERATION AROUND THE WORLD

All countries marked in blue have UNESCO projects undertaken in partnership and with the financial support of the European Union. On this map some of the specific countries where UNESCO-EU projects are being implemented are highlighted, as examples of the current cooperation. More information on these specific projects is given throughout this brochure.

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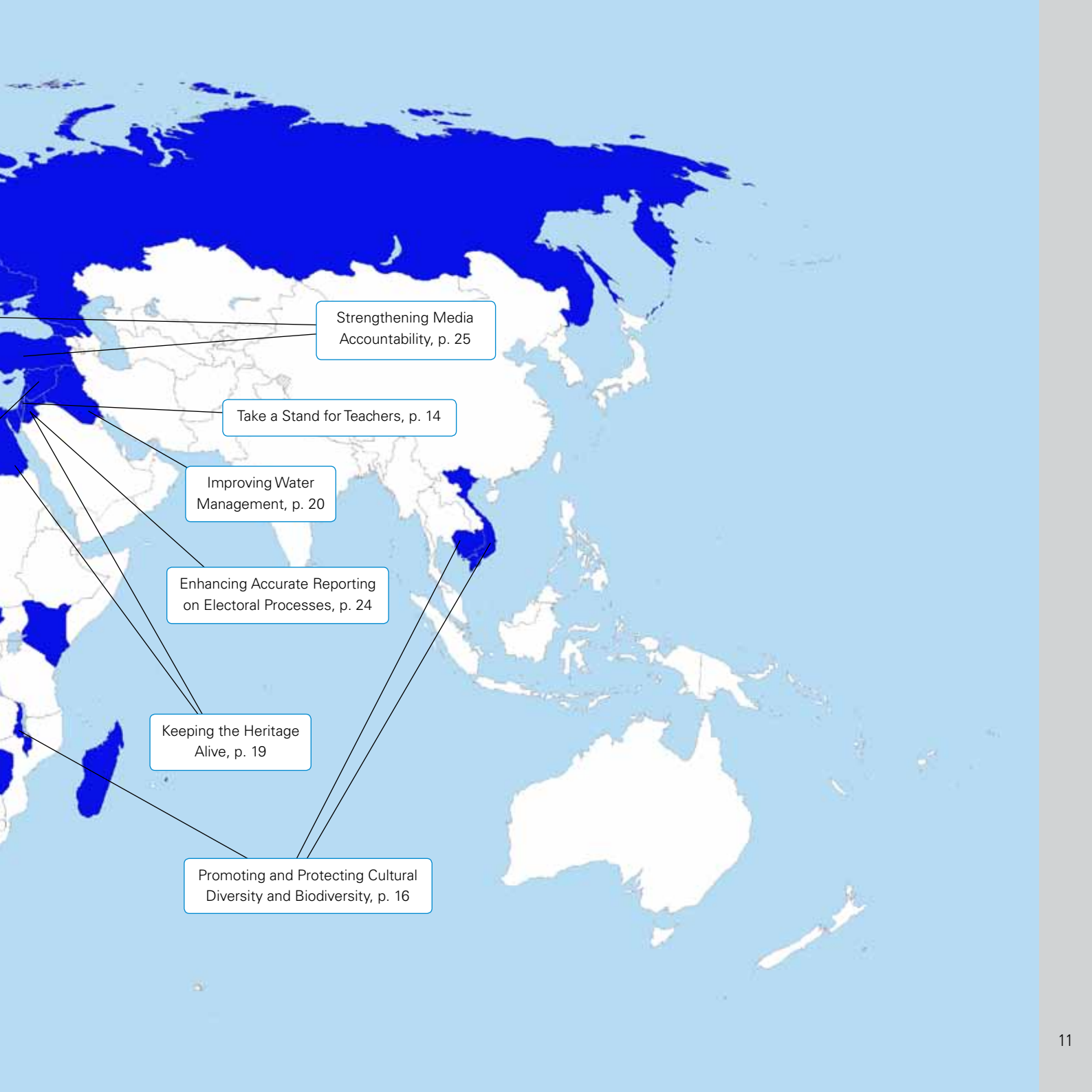
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BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION

No education for all without teachers for all

The International Task Force on Teachers for Education For All is an international alliance of various stakeholders, including national governments, NGOs, CSOs, academic institutions and UN agencies working together to address the 'teachers gap'. The Task Force, of which UNESCO hosts the Secretariat in Paris, intends to coordinate all international efforts and advocates for teacher-related issues by aligning policy, capacity and financial gaps. Together with the support of the European Commission, the Task Force also contributes to the organization of policy dialogue forums and conferences as an opportunity to share best practices.



© UNESCO, GMR Akash, Ms Shufiya Akter with 12 years old Laboni in class two at "Unique Child learning Center"



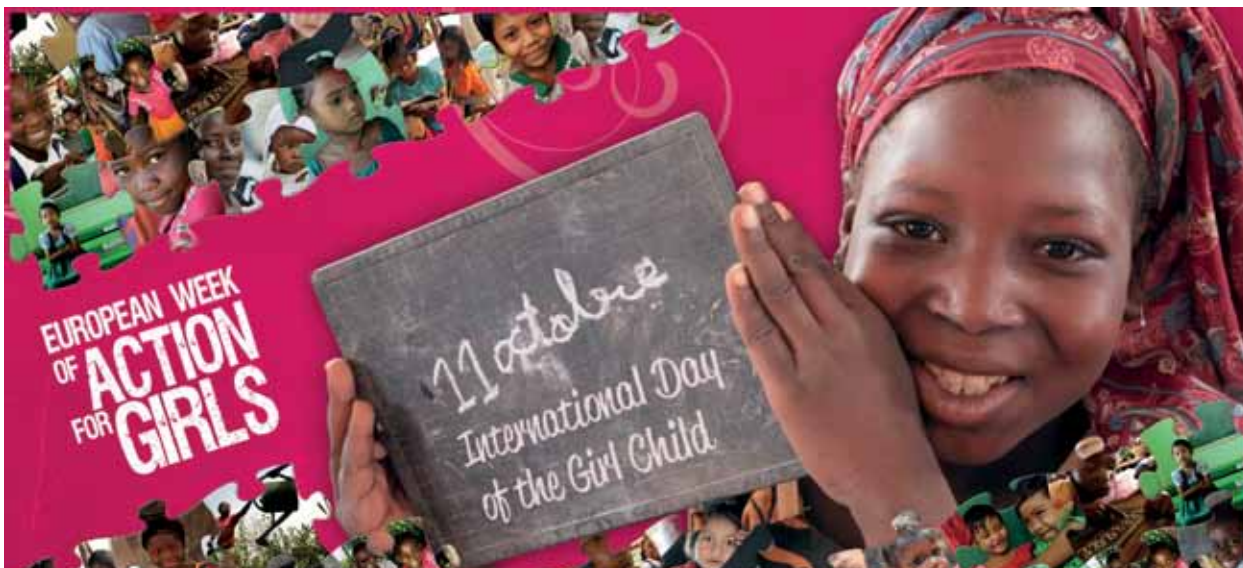
© Antonio di Vico. H.R.H. Princess Laurentien presents the "EU High Level Report on Literacy" to Ms Marie Paule Roudil, Head of the UNESCO Liaison Office in Brussels.

Advocacy: Tackling low literacy levels

With 775 million adults – 64% of which are women – still lacking basic reading and writing skills, literacy remains at the heart of UNESCO's actions.

In cooperation with Member of the European Parliament Marietje Schaake, the UNESCO Liaison Office organized an action-oriented meeting at the European Parliament to present the EU High Level Group Report on Literacy. H.R.H. Princess Laurentien of the Netherlands, UNESCO Special Envoy on Literacy for Development and Chair of the EU High Level Group on Literacy, presented the group's report which calls on all European Union countries to overhaul their approach to literacy.

Together with the European Commissioner for Education and Culture Mrs Androulla Vassiliou and UNESCO Representatives, H.R.H Princess Laurentien discussed the best ways to reduce the number of young people and adults who struggle with reading and writing, both in Europe and world-wide.



© Plan "Event flyer for the European Week of Action for Girls 2012", organized by Plan EU Office

Supporting quality Education for Girls

On the occasion of the first International Day of the Girl Child, UNESCO participated with other UN agencies in Brussels in the European Week of Action for Girls. This week was organized by the EU Office of the NGO Plan International, in order to raise awareness about enduring discrimination against girls and to mobilize stronger action for human rights. Being the leading agency of the Education for All (EFA) movement, UNESCO has placed gender equality at the heart of its work and is committed to ensuring that every girl has access to quality education.

"Gender disparities are most blatant during the transition from primary to secondary education and in the gender ratio among illiterate adults. We must target both points to reach those left behind while maintaining gains achieved at other levels of education."

Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO in the Girls' rights Gazette on the occasion of the International Day of Girl Child.

Advocating for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

Following the recommendations of the Shanghai Consensus elaborated on the occasion of the 3rd International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in May 2012, UNESCO underlined the essential role of TVET. The strategy aims at tackling youth unemployment and promoting economic prosperity and social cohesion. UNESCO facilitates the international and European debate on TVET and working skills in the post-2015 education and development agendas.

UNESCO and the EU: Take a stand for Teachers

In order for Palestine to improve its teaching profession and to achieve the Education for All (EFA) goals, UNESCO provided technical assistance in the formulation and official launch of the National Teacher Education Strategy (TES) in May 2008.

The Strategy aims at developing an adequate cadre of qualified capable teachers who are able to improve the learning opportunities for all students at Palestinian schools. The Quality Systems for Quality Teachers (QSQT) project was designed by UNESCO and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE) as the first project supporting the implementation of the TES, and was funded by the EU.



©UNESCO/Abed Alraheem Qusini

The project outlines three main components: improved management and institutional capacity of the teacher education system (for pre-service, in-service and career development); improved status and motivation of the teachers and enhanced relevance and coherence of teacher training and professional development.

The project, in its support to the MOEHE, helped impact on systemic level through effective implementation of appropriate policies. The project also supported the Ministry in initiating, driving, managing and monitoring a coherent teacher development system. It also helped strengthening the technical capacity of organizations, institutions and individuals to design, implement, monitor and evaluate relevant and high quality courses for teachers and other educators.

Among the main achievements the project contributed to the development of a Commission for Developing the Teaching Profession (CDTP) and towards the development of different Professional Standards and a Code of Conduct for teachers. It raised the awareness of the importance of the teaching profession and it improved the quality education for Palestinian children. Furthermore, thanks to the programme, 23 PhD students in the field of teaching received a scholarship.

CULTURE: A TOOL FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Recognized as a vector for social and economic development by the United Nations General Assembly's resolution 65/166, culture is from now on inscribed on the international agenda and into development policies. UNESCO's mission is to reinforce the protection and the promotion of tangible cultural as well as natural and intangible heritage as a driver for peace and stability in the countries and to foster cultural industries and creativity.

On the occasion of the 3rd Meeting of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Ministers of Culture on "No future without Culture," Ms Marie Paule Roudil delivered a message on behalf of UNESCO's Director-General Ms Irina Bokova. UNESCO recognizes that culture is a significant contributor to sustainable development and the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals. It supports the ACP countries to promote their cultural industries and aims at instigating the European debate on culture as an important sector in economic development models.



© Yvon Fruneau – Old Bridge Area of the Old City of Mostar-Culture, a bridge to development

UNESCO-EU Cooperation in the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural goods: a new initiative at the global level

Concerning heritage protection and the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural goods, UNESCO is in the core of an international network including international organizations and non-governmental organizations such as INTERPOL, World Customs Organization, UNODC or ICOM. Since 2009 and its participation in the Euromed Heritage IV Programme, UNESCO also works in close cooperation with the European Union on this topic.

In December 2011 the Council of the European Union recommended in its conclusions that " *the EU Member States cooperate more closely with UNESCO on preventing crimes against cultural goods by taking common action (consider shared training programmes, exchange of good practices, existing legal frameworks and participation in information and awareness campaigns)*". An ad-hoc working group was set up in Brussels to implement the EU Council recommendations.



Promoting and protecting cultural diversity

In 2005 UNESCO established the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. This instrument aims to ensure that artists, cultural professionals, practitioners and citizens worldwide can create, produce, disseminate and enjoy a broad range of cultural goods, services and activities. As a party to the 2005 Convention, the European Union and its 28 Member States are committed to promoting and protecting the diversity of cultural expressions and to strengthening international cooperation to achieve the purposes of the Convention.

The UNESCO/EU Expert Facility Programme to Strengthen the System of Governance for Culture in Developing Countries gathered 30 internationally-renowned specialists in the field of cultural policies and industries. The central objective of the project was to provide non-financial technical assistance to 13 developing countries party to the 2005 Convention.

The project was demand-driven: 13 beneficiaries were selected based on applications submitted to UNESCO outlining their needs and proposed activities. Each beneficiary created a national team to work hand-in-hand with the experts, ensuring that the policy elaboration process was nationally owned and led.

The experts accompanied these countries in their efforts to establish legal and institutional frameworks for the development of policies addressing the role of culture in social and economic development, particularly through cultural industries like arts and crafts.

The project achieved a wide range of positive results and identified a number of challenges, which are expected to be transformed into future opportunities.



© Avril Joffe EU-funded UNESCO technical assistance mission to Mauritius



© UNESCO/A.Giolitto, Jacmei Carnival 2011

Cooperation for safeguarding and promoting European Cultural Heritage

In 2012 UNESCO addressed the 5th European Heritage Days Forum in Nicosia (Cyprus) on the theme “Communicating Heritage”. UNESCO calls upon all peoples living in Europe to take an active part in the safeguarding and protection of their sites, and to stress the idea that cultural diversity and the identity of local communities are treasure troves that can be shared among all individuals and communities.

Culture: a vector for peace and security

UNESCO appeals to the international community to join forces to ensure the respect, the safeguarding and protection of cultural heritage in times of crisis or in conflict situations, and to prevent the looting of cultural objects.



© UNESCO/Francesco Bandarin – Old towns of Djenné (Mali)

Since the beginning of the armed conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic in 2011, UNESCO has expressed its concerns with the country’s cultural heritage and the risk of illicit trafficking of cultural property. With its international partners involved in cultural heritage protection, UNESCO is continuously working to safeguard cultural heritage in Syria including the six Syrian World Heritage sites inscribed on the List and address the issue of illicit trafficking of Syrian cultural property.

UNESCO is committed to help Mali rebuild the mausoleums of Timbuktu and the tomb of Askia in Gao (both were inscribed on the List of UNESCO World Heritage in Danger in 2012), and mobilize all its expertise and resources to safeguard the ancient manuscripts and prevent the illicit trafficking of cultural goods.

In close cooperation with the Malian national authorities, an Action Plan for the Rehabilitation of Cultural Heritage and the Safeguarding of Ancient Manuscripts was elaborated in 2013 by UNESCO and international experts, including the European Commission, followed by the launch of an expert mission in charge of setting up an assessment of needs.



© UNESCO/Ron van Oers – Ancient city of Aleppo (Syria)

Heritage recovery and cultural development in Cuba

The Project “Heritage Recovery and Cultural Development in Havana: Segundo Cabo Palace” is a multilateral cooperation initiative of UNESCO and the European Union that aims at restoring the Segundo Cabo Palace, an emblematic monument in Old Havana, and at strengthening cooperation between Cuba and the EU in the cultural field. The Office of the Historian of the City of Havana (OHCH) is responsible for the restoration of the building and its future cultural use. Indirectly, the project also contributes to improve the state of conservation of the World Heritage site of “Old Havana and its System of Fortifications”, inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1982.

This project is funded by the Thematic European Programme “Investing in People”, and will allow, following the complete restoration of the building, to set up a cultural centre on the relations between Cuba and Europe, thus contributing to the rapprochement of cultures and intercultural dialogue.

Novo Brdo medieval site in Kosovo

Before and during the conflicts in Kosovo, violent acts of intentional destruction took place throughout the region, causing immense damage to invaluable cultural heritage. Monuments of outstanding historical significance in Kosovo such as the Novo Brdo castle became the focus of the lack of intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding. Situated in a mountainous region southeast of Pristina, Novo Brdo was one of the most important medieval cities in the central Balkans. Its population was a multi-ethnic mix consisting of Serbs, Saxons, Albanians, Greeks, Jews, etc. The European Union signed a contribution agreement with UNESCO to protect the medieval site: in addition to urgent conservation needs that will undoubtedly be warranted, further archaeological exploration of Novo Brdo will yield extraordinary insights into the life of a typical medieval Balkan fortified city; uninhabited since the 17th century, the site has preserved unique historical information. Protecting cultural heritage will play a useful role in the re-establishment and maintenance of peaceful relations between different communities. The project is also intended to foster local sustainable development, improve the socioeconomic development of the area and raise public awareness.



© Office of the Historian of Havana – the statue of King Ferdinand VII is transferred giving room for works in progress

Since the adoption of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention in 1972, 962 cultural and natural properties with outstanding universal value were inscribed on the World Heritage List. 50 European states have ratified the Convention and 462 of these sites are located in Europe and North America; this corresponds to 48% of all world heritage sites.



©UNESCO - Novo Brdo Castle

Safeguarding living heritage in the Mediterranean region

UNESCO and the European Union launched the project “MedLiHer - Mediterranean Living Heritage” in 2009, in partnership with the National Commissions for UNESCO in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Maison des Cultures du Monde in Paris.

For four years, MedLiHer has carried out activities to build capacities of key stakeholders for the implementation of the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. As a result, the Mediterranean countries elaborated inventories of intangible cultural heritage, enhanced regional cooperation and developed an audio-visual documentation of intangible cultural heritage in the Mediterranean region, in collaboration with filmmakers and photographers from partner countries.



© Pottery Rachaya in the Beeka valley - Ministry of tourism Lebanon

UNESCO-Flanders Partnership for African heritage preservation

Through the general Flemish Trust Fund (FUT), Flanders provides seed money to start up challenging programmes with a view to attract additional partners and funding. Currently the EU and UNESCO are exploring to join forces on marine spatial planning, a spin-off of the marine programme that was set up with support from the government of Flanders and two private partners.



© UNESCO/Leila Maziz – National Park of Dzanga-Ndoki in the Central African Republic

The Africa nature programme is another example that receives pioneer funding from Flanders since it corresponds to the core of UNESCO’s mission. Africa remains underrepresented on the World Heritage List: less than 9% of all World Heritage properties are located on the continent; at the same time, 40% of the properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger are found in Africa. Currently, many natural properties in Africa are inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger and many sites are suffering various threats which could impact their Outstanding Universal Value (OUV).

The Africa Nature programme was designed to improve the management effectiveness of the natural World Heritage sites in Africa through targeted capacity building and knowledge sharing.

The programme will help site managers better understand and identify the challenges of site conservation, and provide them with up-to-date information and knowledge as well as targeted training. It will also enable them to exchange experiences on a number of key management issues.

The programme has a six-year time horizon as it wants to achieve tangible results; the start-up phase (2012-2014) will build the basis for the full development of the Africa Nature programme.

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS THROUGH NATURAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

Water Cooperation

Water has become a top priority for UNESCO. Thanks to its numerous programmes, chairs, centres and institutes dealing with water, UNESCO is now recognized as the leading UN agency in this field. Its activities encompass both saltwater and freshwater issues, and deal with questions such as free access to water, coastal zone protection, or tsunami-preparedness. 2013 was declared International Year of Water Cooperation by the UN General Assembly and the UN-Water partnership has designated UNESCO to take the lead of this international year.



Improving water management in Iraq

Building upon the baseline of existing knowledge about the hydrogeology of Iraq, UNESCO and the European Union are working together to conduct an Advanced Survey of Hydrogeological Resources in the country. The main objective of this programme is to improve the capacities and national knowledge for an integrated and sustainable groundwater resources management.

This way, UNESCO and the EU assist the Iraqi government in improving its capacities in the management of Iraq's aquifers and soils, to address water shortages and promote sustainable agricultural development. The survey employs advanced geospatial remote-sensing and exploration system techniques, and will identify shallow and deep aquifers, geologic properties, and general aquifer recharge dynamics. It will provide new data and interpretations of Iraq's hydrogeological resources, including maps and an interactive data management, plus field monitoring system for immediate and sustainable utilization of water resources."

Conserving forests and biodiversity in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Within the framework of the 10th European Development Fund (2009-2014), the European Union contributes to ERAIFT, a project that supports the national policy for the conservation and management of forests and biodiversity in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

ERAIFT is a regional institution for higher education created in 1999 that offers African students Masters and PhD degrees in the field of forest and biodiversity conservation. Over the first five promotions, 3 PhD and more than 100 Masters students were trained. ERAIFT is currently supporting 29 Master's students and 28 PhD candidates. It has developed a very efficient South-South Cooperation network with the Federal University of Para (Brazil), the Indonesian Institute of Sciences in Jakarta (Indonesia) and the University of Agriculture of Hanoi (Vietnam).



© Hubert Namuchibwe – ERAIFT. Traineeship of students from the 5th promotion of ERAIFT in Kimpese / Bas-Congo RDC



© Nuria Ortega , Garamba National Park, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Based in DRC, ERAIFT is undoubtedly international. Students come from Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Congo, Ivory Coast, Gabon, Guinea, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Chad and Togo. Professors of ERAIFT come from Belgium, Benin, Cameroun, Canada, the DRC and France. In 2013, ERAIFT went bilingual (French/English).

Preventing and Preparing for Disasters in South America

The UNESCO Office for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (OREALC/UNESCO Santiago) implemented tsunami-preparedness projects in Colombia, Chile, Ecuador and Peru (DIPECHO) with the financial support of the European Union.

These projects focused firstly on enhancing learning and community participation in the planning and preparedness for tsunami and raising awareness and resilience at the community level. Secondly they focused on strengthening the regional tsunami early warning system for the Southeast Pacific Coast.

Through the DIPECHO projects, more than 35,000 people – students, members of the coastal communities, staff of the local and national bodies in charge of disaster risk management, and professionals of the oceanographic and seismological institutes and of the Ministries of Education of the four countries – participated in workshops, courses and other activities on tsunami-preparedness and were able to improve their personal and technical competencies.

Among the key products of the projects are educational materials adapted to the national curricula for the four countries, a regional tsunami early warning communications protocol, updated national inter-institutional tsunami early warning protocols, and the installation of signage and sirens at the local level in selected communities in each of the four countries.

Networks of Mediterranean Youth

Through the NET-MED Youth Programme UNESCO and the European Union are working together to mainstream youth issues and priorities across national decision-making spheres in various European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)-South countries. The aim of this programme is to build the capacities of youth and youth organizations and promote their active engagement in revising relevant legislation, operationalizing national youth strategies when these strategies exist, ensuring that youth issues are adequately covered by national and regional media and identifying workable models for improving youth access to employment. The programme also aims at favouring regional exchanges of experiences and the cross-fertilization of tools and approaches, especially in the light of the recent geo-political developments in ENP South countries from 2011 onwards. It also envisages involving youth networks from EU countries in order to learn from the experience of these networks.



© OREALC/UNESCO Educational modules: "Tsunami risk management in educational institutions", developed by UNESCO for nursery, primary and secondary school education, with the support of the Disaster Preparedness Programme of the European Commission's Humanitarian Office (DIPECHO).

Current challenges in ethics and science

The World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology (COMEST) is an advisory body and forum of reflection set up in 1998. Composed of leading scholars from scientific, legal, philosophical, cultural and political disciplines from various regions of the world, the Commission is mandated to formulate ethical principles that could provide decision-makers with criteria that extend beyond purely economic considerations. COMEST works in several areas: environmental ethics, with reference inter alia to climate change, biodiversity, water and disaster prevention; the ethics of nanotechnologies; ethical issues relating to the technologies of the information society; science ethics; and gender issues in ethics of science and technology. Through its workshops, COMEST collaborates frequently with experts from the European Commission or Members of the European Parliament.

Responding to environmental change

The Flemish Trust Fund on Science (FUST) was created in 1999 to support the Rio Agenda on Sustainable Development by means of enhancing technology and innovation. FUST supports UNESCO water programmes to attain sustainable capacity building and strengthen knowledge transfer, based on real partnerships between donors, beneficiaries and research institutes.

For example, SPINCAM II (2013-2015) is the second phase of a project aimed at establishing an Integrated Coastal Area Management (ICAM) Indicator Framework in Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama and Peru with special attention for environmental and socio-economic conditions. Currently UNESCO and Flanders are exploring a possible collaboration with the EU PEGASO project which strives for a common approach for developing integrated coastal zone management in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.

SPINCAM was launched to improve the delivery of data and information on the status of coastal resources and their management for the use by all coastal stakeholders, both decision makers and civil society. SPINCAM increases the capacity of the South Pacific countries to respond to change and challenges in coastal and marine environments through improved mechanisms, whereby gender equality perspectives are strengthened. Regional and national information sharing mechanisms providing resources and contents on ICAM are developed, and the initiative might be extended to other countries of Latin America and the Caribbean in the years to come. Emphasis is made to ensure the sustainability of the SPINCAM system and networks beyond the end of the project, which will be implemented within another 3 year period (up to 2015).



© Rudy Herman, Las Cruces (Chile) Marine protected areas under pressure by growing urban development

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS THROUGH COMMUNICATION

Throughout its various programmes UNESCO promotes freedom of expression and media pluralism, and is committed to facilitate and strengthen knowledge societies in which universal access to information and promoting access to ICT for all are central objectives.

Building and strengthening knowledge societies

In an ever-globalizing world, knowledge, but also universal access to knowledge is crucial to all individuals. Therefore, one of the goals of UNESCO is to facilitate knowledge societies that are inclusive, equitable, open, and participatory. Open Access programmes provide an important tool to strengthen knowledge societies where all people can send and receive information without limits.

In the field of education, “Open Educational Resources” provides an opportunity for knowledge sharing in order to strengthen the quality of education and to achieve universal access to high quality education. As for new forms of media such as internet, where language is a primary vector for communicating information and knowledge, UNESCO encourages universal respect for linguistic diversity and multilingualism.

Enhancing accurate reporting on electoral processes

The Project ‘Enhancing professional and accurate media on the electoral process in Jordan’ funded by the European Union, has been launched in the framework of the reformed electoral process in Jordan and the 2013 parliamentary elections. The Project builds upon UNESCO’s two-decade experience and commitment in building the capacities of media sectors at large during elections in South-Eastern Europe, Middle East and Northern Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Building Media Capacity

In Zimbabwe UNESCO and the European Union are working together to build the capacity of the Zimbabwe Media Commission. This commission is a constitutional media regulator responsible for licensing media operations and enforcing good practices and ethics in the country. The main aim of the projects is to contribute to the liberalization of the Zimbabwe media sphere, by strengthening the capacity of the Zimbabwe Media Commission to fulfil its mandate of regulating the print media and develop the legal framework for guaranteeing press freedom and access to information.



© UNESCO/ Aurecrea (France)

World Press Freedom Day

Every year on 3 May, UNESCO, the sole UN agency with a specific mandate to defend freedom of expression and press freedom, takes the lead on World Press Freedom Day. This day is an opportunity to evaluate press freedom around the world, to defend the media from attacks on their independence and to pay tribute to journalists who have died while carrying out their work.

Safety of Journalists

As guaranteeing media professionals the right to work free from the threat of violence is essential for the full implementation of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, World Press Freedom Day in 2013 focused on the safety of journalists.

After all, the price paid by journalists is becoming heavier: in the past ten years, more than 500 journalists have been killed. UNESCO's Director-General Irina Bokova condemns all assassinations and violence against journalists and urges the competent authorities to investigate and punish these crimes.

UNESCO is also one of the driving forces behind the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, which aims to create a free and safe environment for journalists and media workers, both in conflict and non-conflict situations, with a view to strengthening peace, democracy and development worldwide. Its measures include, among other undertakings, the establishment of a coordinated inter-agency mechanism to handle issues related to the safety of journalists as well as assisting countries to develop legislation and mechanisms favorable to freedom of expression and information, while supporting their efforts to implement existing international rules and principles.

Strengthening Media Accountability

The EU-funded project "Media Accountability in South East Europe" aims to support UNESCO's promotion of freedom of expression and its corollaries, press freedom and freedom of information. The project has a two-fold overall objective: to continue to foster strong attention to these issues in South East Europe, through awareness raising and capacity building, and to strengthen media accountability and transparency in the beneficiary countries.

The project targets 300 journalists, media professionals, media owners, media freedom defenders and the public at large in these countries, and up to 70 independent media outlets and associations, journalism and communication educational institutions. Running from 2013 to 2015, this project expects to have freedom of expression, freedom of information and press freedom more broadly promoted and integrated into the policies of the beneficiary countries, and to enhance respect for internationally recognized legal, safety, ethical and professional standards in South East Europe.



© Poster of the 2nd UN Inter-Agency Meeting on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity - United Nations Office in Vienna (UNOV) 2012

WORKING TOGETHER WITH OTHER PARTNERS IN BRUSSELS

Besides partnering with the institutions of the European Union the UNESCO Liaison Office in Brussels is also working together with various other partners and organizations, with the common goal to promote peace and development.

The United Nations Team

In 2011 UNESCO joined the United Nations Team in Brussels (UNTB), which gathers at the moment 26 UN specialized agencies, funds and programmes. The UNTB is in charge of expressing UN views on key issues that are on the European agenda, and of fostering cooperation between the UN agencies based in Brussels in order to better coordinate actions and develop joint UN strategies.

UNESCO is involved in all activities set up by the UN Team in Brussels, such as:

- Organizing UN Day in Brussels. Since 2010, the UN Team in Brussels has yearly been celebrating the UN's birthday at the Grand-Place in Brussels. People are welcomed to come to the UN Information Village to learn about various aspects of UN activities and meet with the different UN agencies. For the second year in a row, the UNESCO Liaison Office in Brussels took part in this public event.



© UNRWA/Antonio di Vico. The Grand-Place in Brussels, inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1998 on the occasion of the UN Day

- Participating at the Millennium International Documentary Film Festival organized every year in Brussels. During this festival, documentary makers from all over the world come to present their documentary dealing with the Millennium Development Goals. In 2011 the documentary "Shooting with Mursi", directed by Ben Young, was awarded the UNESCO prize for Best Cultural Diversity Message.

- Participating at the CINE-ONU's movie screenings and debates organized by UNRIC in order to raise awareness about specific UN and UNESCO issues (for example Human Rights Day, International Literacy Day or World Environment Day etc...).



©UNRIC – Screening of the movie “The First Grader” by CINE-ONU, on the occasion of the International Literacy Day 2012



© EU – UN Partnership Report 2011

- Publishing the “UN/European Commission Partnership Report”, which highlights the concrete results achieved in the field of development and humanitarian assistance through the dynamic partnership between the United Nations and the European Union.

Other partners in Brussels

The UNESCO Liaison Office and Representation to the European Union also work as an active partner with other key stakeholders in Brussels, such as the ACP-secretariat, Delegations and UNESCO National Commissions of European Member States, NGO's and civil society actors and press and think-tanks in the EU-environment.



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

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