



## Polis – International Network in Environmental Education

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Polis – International Network in Environmental Education is a non-profit organization registered under Greek law since 1996. Its activities relate to research, training and action for Environmental Education, through networking, organization of awareness raising events, production and editing of educational material.

Polis has been editing the international liaison bulletin “Dialogues for Environmental Education” (1996-2001), distributed in 60 countries, and has also edited various books on methodology addressed to educators and story books for children, translated in various languages. Polis has participated in various research and training Environmental Education and Sustainability Education projects supported by the European Union, under the SOCRATES, COMENIUS and ECOS-OUVERTURE programmes.

Between 2005 and 2010, Polis participated in the project of the “Charter of Human Responsibilities”, an international process for debate and sensibilization on the value of responsibility, initiated by the Swiss “Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation”, in collaboration with a network of non-governmental organizations from 16 countries, in every continent. In this framework, Polis organized –among others– in 2007-2008 a series of traveling art exhibitions and parallel events in Greece and in France on the theme: “environment: common good – common responsibility”, as well as (2008-2010) a project for the creation of educational material for children, produced by educators associated to youth from various countries.

Since 2010, Polis has been facilitating the thematic network on Environmental Education of the “Ethics and Responsibilities Forum”.



The **Forum of Ethics & Responsibilities** (FER) is made up of 17 professional and thematic networks and organizations, working at an international level, aiming to introduce the concept of **Responsibility** into international debate in order to face the current multiple crises (environmental, economic, finance, and social).

The FER partners’ actions aim to promote **cultures of responsibility** in every field of human activity. It has become urgent to have “Responsibilities” recognized as equally important as “Rights”, hence to claim an internationally acknowledged reference text alongside the two existing “pillars” on which international life is based—the Charter of the United Nations (1945), for peace and development, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948): a third “pillar,” so to speak, explicitly setting out universal principles of human responsibilities, to serve as a basis for generating national and international law.

Through their own professional and social activities, each in his or her region of the world, partners of the Ethics & Responsibility network are circulating and debating the idea of a “Charter of Human Responsibilities”, that could become the third international “pillar” that will set out the universal principles of human responsibilities, to serve as a basis for generating national and international law, as has been the case for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

This project was initiated by the Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation.  
(<http://www.fph.ch/>)

<http://www.ethica-respons.net/>

## Our vision

*In January 2012, the United Nations elaborated, on the basis of the submissions transmitted by governments, the “zero draft”, which was the starting point for the coming negotiations in the perspective of a Final Declaration at the UN Conference “Rio+20”. The “Ethics and Responsibilities Forum” has carried out a critical review of each article of the “zero draft”, proposing amendments based on an alternative vision. This document, called “alternative zero draft” has been elaborated (May 2012) on the basis of the following principles:*

«Thanks to the experience of more than 10 years of reflection and action with its partners the “Ethics and Responsibilities Forum” has taken the initiative to write and “alternative zero draft” (AZD). The aim of this AZD is to propose a coherent and global vision on the major issues of the Rio Conference, an ambitious vision which allows **questioning the current model of development**. Thus, the AZD keeps the same structure as the official draft zero written by the United Nations, but its amendments are geared by the agenda for the “Great Transition”. Like the initial Draft Zero, this document is an open proposal requiring to be enriched by the contributions of all those who want a new start for the next 20 years.

### 1. Renewing the political commitment

The Alternative Zero Draft takes for granted the fact that we should not only renew the political commitment, as proposed by the UN agenda, but also acknowledges the limits and contradictions of the concept of sustainable development, the way it has been agreed upon twenty years from now. The AZD calls for the need for a new development paradigm, far beyond the concepts of sustainable development or green economy, as well as for the need to found the Great Transition on an ethics of responsibility and to reform the international law according with this principle.

### 2. Reforming the production and consumption patterns

The Great Transition also entails a major reform of our current production and consumption patterns which are linked to the

aggravation of inequalities, to the growing use of fossil energy and non-renewable natural resources, and finally, to the degradation of ecosystems. Rethinking the production and consumption patterns is the alternative of our proposal to the UN limited concept of “green economy”. We insist on the key role played by the territories and local governance in the transition towards sustainable production and consumption patterns, and on the importance of the principle of ecological justice and equal access to energy resources.

### 3. Reforming systems of governance

Our current governance model, based on the segmentation and fragmentation of problems and skills is inappropriate to solve systemic problems, as highlighted by current crises which are at the same time economic, social, sanitary and environmental. In consequence, the “Ethics and Responsibility Forum” underlines –among others– the importance of establishing a multi-level governance, based on the cooperation of all international actors involved in the Great Transition on the principle of active subsidiary, in order to manage our social and environmental challenges.

*Finally the Rio+20 Conference took place. No wonder that among some 50.000 world wide representatives of civil society there was great exasperation and anger about the absence of political will of governments to move beyond their national interests, the total incapacity of the UN-system to take far-reaching decisions, and a final Declaration of the Heads of State that shows that another historical moment had dramatically been missed.*

*In spite of positive reactions to our proposal for a «Charter of Human Responsibilities» from various governments, there has been no word about it in the final declaration. And neither were numerous proposals from other civil society groups. But we succeeded in bringing the Charter idea at a much higher level of international life. Now we have to build on what we achieved, not losing the momentum. Rio+20 showed more than ever before that **our plea for Responsibility as a key-challenge for the 21st century and the need for an international instrument serving as a basis for international law, is a painfully relevant one.***