

CHARTER OF RESPONSIBILITIES “LET’S TAKE CARE OF GREECE”

I start from today...

*The climate changes,
The atmosphere changes,
We also change.*

*We have solutions,
All together and individually...*

We are students of secondary schools from different regions of Greece. This Charter represents our contribution to the Children and Youth International Conference, in June 2010.

During this school year, we have taken care of diverse environmental issues, such as energy, water and desertification, forest ecosystems, the urban environment, and climate change.

We have become aware of the strong relationship and interdependence among all those themes and the global challenge of climate change, which affects all human beings, all around the Earth. Within a short period of time, the world will stop being as know it and impacts such as desertification, lack of water, and ice melting will be noticed throughout different regions of the world.

All research that we have developed, information raised and the extreme climate phenomena that we witness nowadays, as well as the human irresponsibility towards environmental protection, have made us very skeptical concerning our quality of life in the near future and life on Earth itself.

Before all such great environmental challenges that face our planet, we must all act before it is too late.

We want to live in a beautiful world.

We want to transform the current problematic society into a sustainable society, marked by social justice and quality of life.

It is for this reason that we assume our responsibilities as future citizens and

WE COMMIT OURSELVES TO

take action and implement initiatives in the areas where we live, at the individual and collective levels, in all matters related to the environment and our fellow citizens.

WHAT OUR RESPONSIBILITIES ARE – WHAT WE CAN DO

We should avoid isolating big words and theories.

We must start to act and to work in our daily lives.

We must adopt small changes of attitude, which can lead to great results.

We should start from our closest surroundings: our families, our homes, our schools, our neighborhoods.

1. We can save energy and water

We can stop wasting energy at home or at school by adopting simple measures: we save energy used in lights, when we use electronic and electric devices, when we use the heater, kitchen and cleaning appliances.

We try to improve the insulation of our homes.

We use public transport as frequently as possible, we travel short distances by bicycle or by foot, we take rides.

We protest against energy overconsumption in big cities.

We struggle for the use of renewable sources of energy.

We do not waste water in our homes, by changing our everyday habits related to personal hygiene and to cleaning services.

We support public action for better water management.

2. We can reduce pollution

We keep our cities and villages clean.

We do not pollute natural environments by throwing garbage and rubbish away.

When we find out about illegal waste dumps, we do not remain indifferent, but rather protest and request that the guilty ones are punished.

We require that treatment stations are constructed and their proper functioning is assured.

We try to convince agricultural workers not to use pesticides and fertilizers in an uncontrolled way.

3. We can take care of the natural environments

We wish to transform our schools, our neighborhoods, our cities into healthy places from an environmental point of view: we take care of existing green spaces and will cultivate plants in our gardens and our school. We organize and participate in planting and cultivation activities.

We take care of our forests and we regulate the uncontrolled dumping of rubbish, illegal deforestation and of fire threats. We help firemen and we will take part in voluntary groups to protect the forests.

We participate in reforestation of regions affected by fire.

We protect endangered species from illegal hunting practices.

4. We can recycle and reuse – to redefine our real needs

We should abandon the logic of overconsumption. We will buy only what is really necessary for us.

We will adopt in our everyday lives the triad: reduction – reuse – recycle.

We will not throw away what is not working: we will repair and reuse it.

We can separate our waste and recycle as much as possible.

We can change our eating habits and choose organic products.

We can choose products and wrapping that do not pollute and that save energy.

When we have the possibility, we change the domestic utensils for more ecological and less energy consuming and we will be attentive to its maintenance.

5. We can intervene against territorial authorities and public services

We can contact governmental authorities, to learn about their planning of environmental actions to face climate change and make our own propositions.

We request that the City Council implement a recycling system and everything required for better waste management. We ask the City Council to protect and to increase green spaces.

We demand that our regional City Council adopt the European Union Guidelines for all matters concerning waste management and nature protection.

We respect environmental protection laws and we protest when we see illegal and harmful actions to the environment.

We compel the State to protect the forests from illegal practices and intentional fire and we insist on punishment of the responsible ones. In this regard, we call for a more efficient police.

We pressure the State to promote ecological solutions, such as organic agriculture.

6. We can inform and raise awareness among others

We can be ambassadors of environmental protection ideas and of their incorporation into everyday practices, in the areas where we live:

- We can raise awareness and mobilize our classmates, our teachers, friends and neighbors, through discussions and actions in and out of school;
- We can create communication material, such as banners that we will display in every classroom, containing information on climate change and possible actions;
- We can make contact with other schools within our region and organize common awareness raising of the greater public, such as manifestations in the streets, and distribution of communication material;
- We can create our own blog so as to present environment information, good practices and our groups' ideas and actions.

7. We can assume future responsibilities

When we grow up, if we turn out to be teachers, we will be engaged in educating our pupils in a way that they can become conscious citizens and respectful to the environment.

If we become entrepreneurs, we will be committed to respecting the law so as to minimize the dangerous impacts to the environment.

If we become part of the City Council, we will be engaged in taking care of environmental issues in our regions.

Those who turn out to be policemen will be committed to defend environmental laws.

We will all take action for a better future!

We can make a difference

Greek colleagues
April 2010