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Rome Declaration on Geographical Education in Europe IV EUGEO Congress 2013

Geographical education provides students with essential capabilities and competences needed to know and understand the world. Responsible and effective uses of geographical information are vital for the future of Europe. Therefore, all European citizens need to understand how to deal with it. Geographical education provides them with the knowledge and skills to do this. For example, an appropriate use of geospatial data and technologies is necessary to help analyse and address problems related to water, climate, energy, sustainable development, natural hazards, globalisation and urban growth. Most of these big issues also have a distinct European dimension. Geography also deals with the daily living environment of citizens where issues such as housing, employment, transportation, provision of services and green spaces are important. These must all be addressed but in an integrated way, which only the study of Geography provides. Geographical knowledge is indispensable for well informed citizens, successful businessmen and policy makers.

The representatives of the Italian Association of Geography Teachers (AIIG), the Association of Geographical Societies in Europe (EUGEO), the European Association of Geographers (EUROGEO) and the International Geographical Union (IGU), gathered for the congress session "Geography education's challenges in response to changing geographies". In this declaration, we underline clearly and strongly that the teaching of Geography in schools is fundamental for the future of Europe.

With this firm conviction, we are committed to take initiatives in the countries of Europe and with the relevant European institutions to provide standards and guidelines that will help authorities develop relevant syllabuses and school curricula, methods and approaches in Geography that:

- apply geographical knowledge, skills and understanding to the main issues linked with processes of change in society, nature and environment at local, national, European and global levels; and
- highlight the educational values and the role of geographical education in a changing world.

We urge those responsible in European governments and educational systems:

- to recognise the educational value afforded by the study of Geography as an essential school subject; and
- to acknowledge its strategic role for realising active citizenship and balanced social, economic and environmental development.

We therefore request that:

- sufficient time for the teaching of Geography is allocated in curricula for primary and secondary schools;
- the teaching of Geography is limited to teachers with a qualified training in Geography and Geography Education.

Gino De Vecchis, President of the Italian Association of Geography Teachers (AIIG)

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Joop van der Schee, Co-chair of the Commission on Geographical Education of the International Geographic Union (IGU-CGE).

Rome, September 5th 2013

