



Latvia

Dr. Tatjana Koke
Minister of Education and Science



Tatjana Koke – the Minister of Education and Science since December 2007, prior to that she held the position of the Parliamentary Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Science. T.Koke is a professor of adult education at the University of Latvia, Corresponding Member of the Latvian Academy of Sciences, member of Doctoral Council in Pedagogy at the University of Latvia. She is a Member of the UNESCO's Council of International Bureau of Education and during 2006-2008 was the Vice-President of the Council. T.Koke has been executive director of the Advisory Council "Education for All" at the UNESCO Latvian National Commission; State Minister of Higher Education and Science, as well – has held different positions in education in national and international levels. T.Koke is a member of Springer editorial board. Her research interests are focused on democratization of education system in the context of

lifelong and life wide learning and on aspects of developing learning society. Under T.Koke's supervision 11 students have earned their PhD degree in pedagogy. She has been a guest lecturer at different universities in Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Lithuania and Switzerland. As a key note speaker she has been invited to conferences held by UNESCO, Association for Teacher Education in Europe, Children's Identity and Citizenship in Europe and other. T.Koke has published 57 scientific articles, 22 theses and two monographs.

From Regional Preparatory Conference in Riga to the 48th Session of ICE

My state – Latvia in February had the honour to host the Regional Preparatory Conference "Inclusive Education – from Policy Dialogue to Collaborative Action" for the 48th Session of International Conference on Education. The results through and through convinced that the exchanges of ideas, experiences, approaches and solutions on raising efficiency for inclusion within the Riga conference have sustained the common platform for the region of Europe and North America within the global family of UNESCO.

I would not mistake, saying with certainty, that every one of us and UNESCO overall – at the heart of our education systems have envisaged the goal to build learning or knowledge society. By all means learning society is a progressive goal providing advantages for people, like – wider access, higher rate of participation, stronger innovation possibilities, etc. Nevertheless, we should confess that learning society hides also major threat by widening the gap between those who can initiate and enjoy these developments and those who lag behind, thus extending marginalized groups of people whose life standards and quality would decrease.

Therefore, the Riga conference had strengthened visibility and impact on questions of inclusive education in general and in particular – for the 48th session of the International Conference on Education, paying special attention to the broadening of the concept of inclusive education and contributing to international efforts to reach quality education for all. As a professor of pedagogy, I strongly believe and promote the idea that every person is a true value. Life wide and



lifelong inclusion and inclusive society starts at inclusive school and the ideas of inclusion are put into effect by accomplished teachers. Nevertheless, strong support should come from politicians; policy and decision makers; entrepreneurs and society – on the whole.

The cornerstone for fulfilling these tasks is to integrate and broaden both – concept of inclusive education and its practical implementation; to develop openness to diversities at all levels and implement humanistic approach by improving legislation, providing assistance, helping and more so encouraging those who are in utmost need for support. And we all together will experience evidence-informed policy making and the inclusive education as the real way to the future!