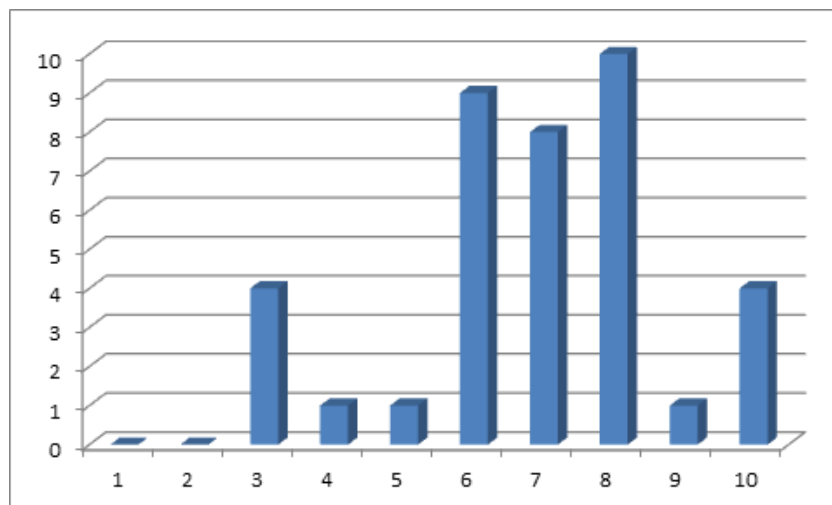


EIONET Workshop: All day green day

We have organized an informal conversation on the transformation of the society, on the change of environmental preconceptions. The event on the 27th of November 2019 in the Cupola Hall of the Ministry of Agriculture is reported here – without even trying to include all details. Opinions do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Ministry.



Our previous hypothesis was that besides the 11 global megatrends (which have been introduced in 2015 by EEA <https://www.eea.europa.eu/soer-2015/global/action-download-pdf>) there is one more, which is the positive shift of the society. Our EIONET Workshop aimed to confirm this hypothesis – or to deny it. The opinion of the participants, as the graph shows, is not too sharp, but works as a sign: the majority agreed with the hypothesis.



Opinion of the participants (1: does not agree at all; 10: absolutely agrees)

1. Mr Gábor Bartus: “abundance of information does not make us wise”

Mr Gábor Bartus, secretary of the National Council for Sustainable Development (<https://www.nfft.hu/web/ncsd>) stated that sustainability approach of the society is not enough for changing the trends. The IPBS report tells about the devastation of natural resources. Ecosystem services also decrease, but that trend is not spectacular yet. The whole process looks alike the JENGA game where little pipes are pulled out, and all looks to be all right, until certainly the whole tower just falls down. We do not know that in the ecologic system which little stone will trigger the fall of the whole system.



Resource: <https://www.parlament.hu/web/nfft>

In education the environmental education is very popular even at universities. At business models sharing economy appears, first of all at IT and mobility sector. One can borrow clothes and tools too. So we look to be smarter at the use of environment, but still, the overuse of natural resources is going to grow.

In Hungary all is going to a wrong direction. Considering the soil sealing after Greece and Slovakia Hungary is the third worst in EU. Efficiency of raw material use is worst and worst. The CO₂ emission, which showed a decreasing trend for some years, is now growing again since 2013. Environmental load is increasing.

What is the solution? Awareness is not enough as most of the people are motivated by the prices. Presently prices and awareness do not go to the same direction. For achieving a critical level the activity of civil organizations is needed to enforce the changes.

There was a question from the audience if we could motivate the national government to launch national consultation on sustainable development? Mr Gábor Bartus answered that the government has power for radical changes, as it has been spectacular in the taking in of refugees. The government definitely could transmit notable information. The similar should be done in the case of sustainability. Measures done should enhance the conservation of natural capital, which is on the other hand a duty of the government by the Hungarian Constitution (Alaptörvény P) cikk).

Abundance of information did not make us wiser. In the National Curriculum (Nemzeti Alaptantervben) it is targeted to have sustainability education. Still, general education has low efficiency; it is a question how about green education?

Other participant in the audience mentioned the 2019 Budapest Danube Day event, which showed clearly that green thinking is more and more popular among youngsters. They are the ones who will be able to make changes. Mr Gábor Bartus agreed, and stated that he also sees the activity of the younger generations. In the same time he raised the question if it is only the elite what is visible? How much general is this "green" interest? And, do we have enough time to wait for these generations, to become the majority?

It is also notable, he stated, that awareness of the youngsters do not always have a knowledge background. A recent survey showed that 50% of the interviews young had no any idea on what he or she could do for saving energy.

2. Viktória Doró: "How to match knowledge and curiosity?"

Viktória Doró, environmental journalist stated that when we write about environmental issues, we have to be credible and backed with knowledge. Children are open minded, they have great amount of information, but it does not shift into the practice!

Change is at our door. Climate Strikes attract crowds, and by now the young ones have access to the leaders of the Earth.

The PET CUP (<https://petkupa.hu/eng/>) has a four years long history now, but in 2019 it had a great explosion: several tender came out as winner, and some notable companies appeared as well as partner. All this showed that environmentalism needs spectacular, fruitful projects, which are also valid on abroad. Participants invest huge work, but still they do enjoy it. Notable firms ordered team building trainings. certain products are planned to be produced from the waste collected.



Resource: <https://petkupa.hu/eng/>

At several organisations the issue for 2019 was climate anxiety (<https://wwf.hu/archiv/klimapara-te-is-szorongsz>). Actually the real problem is with those one who do not have anxiety, as they do not perceive the trends. After the period of grief the activism comes. It is already here in many cases: there are new and new groups organizing tree plantings.

Building bridges among citizens and experts, connecting knowledge and curiosity – this is our task.

3. Márton Veszprémy: “Society is ready to get greener”

Fridays for Future (<https://www.fridaysforfuture.org/>) is not an expert group, it is a student movement. Society is ready to get greener. Last global climate strike had events in 17 hunraian vcities, the one in Budapest had some 6-10 thousand participants.



Photo: <https://climenews.com/tobb-ezer-ember-a-budapesti-klimatuntetesen>

They also face failures: the regular Friday demonstrations are attended by very few, people has apathy and are afraid of being active in public life. The education system is rigid, malevolent, built on fear and expects

passivity. The green issues are not independent from the state of democracy and society. But still, the society is getting greener and greener, at least in the common talk.

Achievements they also have: in the focus of election the green issues also appeared, however, the political frame is unfavourable, malevolent (veto to the EU 2050 targets, no independent environmental ministry, no climate emergency etc.). Yes, there is an awareness raising, but it is not enough for managing systemic problems. We need pressure onto the decision makers, but definitely on a peaceful, legal and impartial way.

4. Réka Könczey: “people are waiting to something happen”

Réka Könczey stated that recently the situation is good for change, society is open-minded, so certain elements can be changed. Young’s are easy to be changed, however, adults also are more sensitive to changes in certain moments of life, as birth of children, change of job, retirement etc.

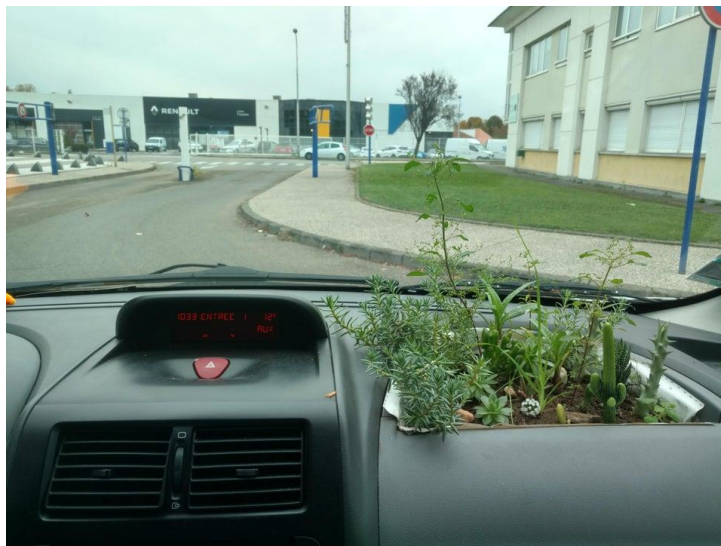


Photo: https://www.reddit.com/r/mildlyinteresting/comments/9u80a6/my_friend_has_plants_in_his_car/

Digitalization is a new challenge. The success is a notable fitness-element; reinforces the activity that brought the success. The digital experience misuses this on purpose. Digital presence gives easy success and blacks out ability of activity in all other areas of the real world.

Misbeliefs we have a lot. One of them is that all is good what is old. This is only true in stable environment.

5. Albert Ferenc Szigeti: „Bee responsible!”

Szigeti Ferenc Albert introduced the urban bee keeping practices from the city of Ljubljana. The practice has diverse benefits: enhances local ecosystems, environmental awareness raising, etc.



Street in Ljubljana: no car traffic, no lanes, but rules to respect



Bee responsible!



Beehives are now part of tourist sights. The environment on cities is surprisingly diverse, and, is cleaner than the agriculture lands that are full of chemicals. Thus honey produced in Ljubljana meets all the strict regulations. The initiative is within the frame of URBACT (<https://urbact.eu/>), and Budapest 12. district also joined. The “show beehive” is at the Barabás House (<https://barabasvilla.hu/>). In cooperation with the water utility, certain areas are not mowed but just kept as bee grazing-land. The initiative also involved kindergartens, for making children more sensitive to ecological issues.



„Programs, shows on bees for children and for adults”

6. Zsolt Pirger: “by 2030 among the men the infertile will be in majority”

Different medicines get into waste water, but most of them pass all treatment, thus ends in our surface waters. It is also true to our beloved lake, the Balaton. Actually, fishing also represents notable load; new and new hormones appeared in bait products.

At popular festivals the load is even bigger. The “Zamárdi Sound” festival had 160 thousand visitors in 2019. In that time cocaine, ecstasy and other synthetic drugs also were found.



Photo: zamardi.hu

Birth control medicines also have proven effects on water ecosystems. And, effects are also true to humans. In the period 1973-2011 number of sperm decreased by 60% at Hungarian man, most dynamically between 1996 and 2011. The reason is the environmental load: certain chemicals destruct endocrine system. If business continues, forecasts states that by 2035 the infertile man will be in majority.

7. Anikó Haraszti: “the ones who’s consumer decisions are stipulated by external values, will consume more”

Association of Conscious Consumers (<https://tudatosvasarlo.hu/tve/association-of-conscious-consumers>) after spending years for raising awareness, recently made an experimental study if basic values can be modified by common learning methods. They are now member of the Global Action Plan network that enhances trainings with the message that less consume does not necessarily mean a lower position. The change of values was a common learning with a group of 18-30 years old adults. Main question was if the value chain can be modified and is yes, could it be measured.



Resource of photo: <https://www.globalactionplan.com/2018/07/19/goals4good/>