



**Magyar  
Természetvédők  
Szövetsége**

Föld Barátai Magyarország



**Reflex**  
Környezetvédő  
Egyesület

*Climate justice awareness  
raising in Hungary  
and in Slovakia*





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## 2 *Introduction*



*Global warming – pictures of change  
Photo and short film competition  
Tibor Viktor Éles / Global*

*The impacts of climate change are far greater than just environmental problems, they have grave social and economic implications. In the framework of this project the partner organisations were to raise awareness about climate change in Hungary and in Slovakia, focusing on key target groups such as local communities, municipalities, students and decision makers, including the wider public. Solutions were examined in the CEE region at the local and national levels. This publication presents the activities and outcomes of the program.*



## *Reflex Environmental Association*

“Our Association was born from awareness and needs. The word ‘environmental protection’ suggests a defensive attitude but – since time is up – this does not apply to our work method. Since we have already become aware of the problems and of their reasons, we want to provide forum for opinions, proposals and environmental-social reform activities of experts and lay people.” This is a quotation from the manifesto compiled at the foundation of the Association in 1987.

Nowadays Reflex has become a distinguished NGO in the Hungarian green movement. At the local and regional levels it deals with traditional green NGO issues but regarding the issues of climate protection, public participation, ecological consumer protection it has also a national role. They have about 250 individual members from which 20–25 contribute to implementing the aims most actively. The 7 staff and 10–12 experts are based in the office in Győr and in the Educational Centre in Pápateszér.

## *National Society of Conservationists – FoE Hungary*



The National Society of Conservationists (NSC) – Friends of the Earth Hungary has more than 100 local environmental and conservation organizations, whose main aim is to protect nature in its whole integrity and to promote sustainable development. The NSC, founded in 1989, fights for the protection of our natural heritage and for the prevention of environmental burdens in each county of Hungary. The Society co-operates with international organizations, especially with the Friends of the Earth network, playing an important role in Europe’s and the world’s environmental non-governmental collaboration.

The NSC is an organization with radical principles. It wants to draw the attention of decision-makers and citizens to the environmental problems through community actions, sound professional events, in-depth studies and publications and targeted lobbying activities. It does not believe in technical or superficial political solutions. On the contrary, it believes in the need of the radical transformation of our thinking, our moral, and with it of the whole production and consumption system.

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In its campaigns, NSC specifically concentrates on the mitigation of the effects of climate change, the integration of the sustainable viewpoints to sectoral policies, the support of GMO-free and environmentally friendly agriculture, the opposition of harmful infrastructure and industrial investments, the exposure of environment damaging and green-washing giant corporations and banks, and the environmental education of citizens with particular focus on the youth.



### *Ipeľ Union*

The Ipeľ Union was founded in December 1992 in Ipolyság region, Slovakia. The aims of the union are the protection and revitalization of the valley's environmental and cultural values, the assistance in the solution of the prevailing ecological problems and the creation and implementation of the long-term sustainable development strategy for the region. The Union works on the entire catchment area of River Ipoly in close cooperation with domestic and foreign non-governmental organizations, institutions, governments, professionals and the public.



### *E-misszió Environmental Association*

The Association was founded in 1986 as a grassroots NGO initiative. Its main activities include environmental education, nature conservation practices, public environmental advocacy and awareness raising about waste management, climate protection and energy efficiency. The Association also deals with consumer protection, promotes local products and organic food and participates in landscape rehabilitation programs and professional networks.

The Association has 200 volunteers and members, and more than 10,000 people use its services all over the country. Its delegation and development work effects thousands of people. The 18 full-time staff is helped by 20–30 long-term volunteers.

## *Ecological Institute for Sustainable Development*



The aim of the Institute is to spread the idea of sustainable development, to develop the ecological culture, to educate for a global approach and through all this to compile the practical base of sustainability and help its implementation. Main activities include assessment of environmental impacts, planning and implementing land management systems suitable for concrete conditions, ecological awareness raising and consumer protection. The 11 staff member work in the office in Miskolc, covering northern Hungary.

## 1. Climate protection locally-cooperation with local communities and municipalities

*The Reflex Environmental Association has been working together with the Austrian organization of the Climate Alliance since 2004. The collaboration has pointed out the importance of the local initiatives' role in climate protection.*

### 1.1. Survey on municipalities

A survey was compiled as a basis for future co-operation consisting of two phases. As a first step, 500 local authorities, municipalities were contacted by post in order to examine on a questionnaire how open municipalities are for co-operation. The completed forms were sent back by 119 municipalities. The 20% response rate was well above our expectations.

During the interviews, the representatives of the municipalities informed us about the local climate protection and environmental programmes, developments, the characteristics of the settlements in relation to climate protection and about the framework and conditions of the cooperation.

We have concluded from these interviews that only a limited number of pilot development projects could be identified this way in Hungary and Slovakia. Obviously, many such projects are not related to local governments and often municipalities do not even know about them. However, we find it very important to systematically collect and present information about such development projects and inform the public about them. Therefore, later on we wish to expand our activities and carry out inquiries among other sectors as well.

In the studies we gave priority to four areas:

- the energy sector, including the details of energy consumption, energy efficiency and renewable energy;
- transport, local environmentally friendly options for local public transport, bicycle transport and touristic aspects of transport;
- trade, including trade-related transport, local products and the possibilities of local markets;
- and the details of waste management.

Data were collected on those indicators that reveal the needs and can later serve as the groundwork for an integrated environmental protection development based on geographical areas. According to the interviews, almost all of the settlements confirmed their interest and willingness to co-operate in a future network.



## 1.2. Project developments

With the assistance of the Alliance's professionals and social NGOs, we took part in the preparation and implementation of 15 Hungarian and 5 Slovakian projects by developing collaboration with the local municipalities. Concerning the financial resources, we submitted applications to the Ministry of Rural Development and the Ministry of Environment and Water at the national level, and for EuropeAid and IEE at the international level.



*Presentation at the Austrian study trip*

## 1.3. Study tour

As a part of the project, a study trip was organized to learn about the model projects in localities that joined the Austrian Climate Alliance. The study trip was publicised on a mailing list among the municipalities. Eight local councillors, staff members and volunteers of the Reflex Association and the NSC-FoE Hungary participated in the study trip, where numerous good practices and examples were demonstrated by the Austrian hosts.

## 8 *1.4. The Hungarian Climate Alliance*

Experience shows that Hungarian settlements have limitations in terms of experts and initiatives to establish climate protective activism. This inspired us to analyse the opportunities to eliminate these difficulties when establishing the Hungarian network. The social and environmental organizations have developed national networks: many of them have become institutions and have professional background as well. Consequently, in the Hungarian network these NGOs also play an important role in addition to the representatives of the municipalities. These organizations have sufficient professional background to help the local authorities and communities on a certain area.

In April 2009, in relation to the climate protection activities of the Mediawave Festival, 5 local governments and 9 NGOs held the ceremonious opening of the Hungarian Climate Alliance statutory meeting. The alliance was registered as a non-profit organization half a year later after the necessary amendments. Since the end of 2009 the background of the European and Hungarian cooperation were presented and the opportunities of the local collaboration were analysed on various local municipality forums, organized by the participating NGOs. In 2010, the website of the alliance and the introductory publication were launched ([www.eghajlatvedelmiszovetseg.hu](http://www.eghajlatvedelmiszovetseg.hu)).



*Street action in Szombathely*

## *2. Raising public awareness*

*Public awareness was mainly raised by local actions organized by partners, often as part of local activities/festivals. A public campaign was linked to the actions, which people could follow up and join on the project website. It was also promoted by two video clips.*

### *2.1. Opinion poll*

In May 2008, a representative opinion poll (N=1000) was carried out about climate awareness at the national level. The results show that the Hungarian population was aware of the direct causes and effects of climate change, however, the indirect environmental, social and economic effects were not perceived entirely, especially not at the global level. Among the climate-conscious household investments those steps were popular which resulted in immediate financial pay-offs, and which required rather behavioural change instead of significant financial investments. The environmental organizations were expected to disseminate information and lobby. The results of the research confirmed the objectives of the project. Due to the high level of interest, the poll was repeated at the end of 2009. Comparing it to the results of 2008, the public paid more attention to the global processes but e.g. the rising energy prices were comprehended as less interlinked to climate change. In 2009, energy saving household investments became more popular.



*Street action in Slovakia*

## *2.2. Street actions and advocacy*

A specific exhibition was organized for the action tour. The exhibition provided practical information about climate justice and energy saving households on 10 posters. Besides, a bike storage, table games on climate change, giant postcards for signature, a photo wall and the statue of the 'Last Snowman' spiced up the exhibition. In the autumn of 2008 and 2009 actions were held in the following cities and towns: Budapest, Veszprém, Nyíregyháza, Miskolc, Debrecen, Győr, Szombathely, Békéscsaba, Szeged, Szolnok, Röske. During the action days, local activists informed the public about climate and energy issues. Due to the success of the exhibition, other actions called for the materials as well, for example the Car-Free Day festival of Budapest and the Sustainable Day, etc.

In Slovakia, the first action tour was organized in May 2009 at four locations: Ipolyszalka, Ipolyszakállos, Ipolynyék and Ipolyság. The street actions of 2010 were adjusted to the harvesting and autumn cultural festivals. As a result, the four locations became the hosts of one of the biggest events in the region known as Hruso Parade, the harvesting festival of Ipolynyék and Ipolyszalka and the Hont Days of Ipolyság, which are all annual cultural festivals.

The project partners remained active after the actions and disseminated the topic via public advocacy at least once a week in 8 Hungarian and 1 Slovakian towns: Veszprém (Csalán Association), Nyíregyháza (Young Botanists' Circle), Miskolc (Holocén Association.), Debrecen (Green Circle), Győr (Reflex Association), Szombathely (Kerekerdő Foundation), Szeged (Csemete Association), Túrkeve (Nimfea Association); Slovakia: Sági (Ipel Union). For the advocacy staff annual preparatory trainings were organized.

## 2.3. Media work

In order to enhance the public campaign, two short but provocative TV spots were created about environmental justice and sustainable consumption:

'Don't waste – live more!' and  
'Don't waste – live better!'

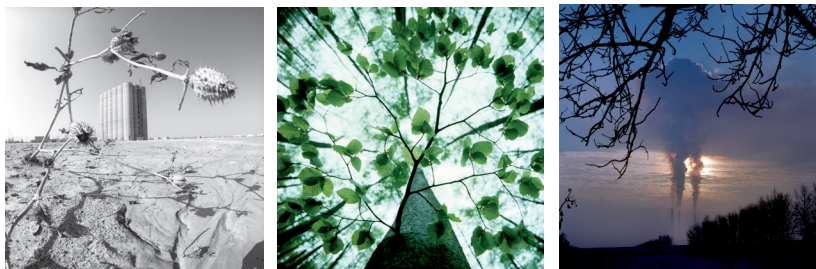
Approximately 2 million people have seen the short movies on the national cable TV channel (Hálózat TV). Besides, the videos are also available on YouTube:

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K8axtn-9KIM>,
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5uegQLVfPhM&NR=1> .

In relation to the project's activities, intensive media campaigns were carried out in the form of press conferences and press releases on the project events. The campaigns received altogether 300 coverages on newspapers, periodicals, radios and on the internet. This great media attention shows how extremely relevant the topic is.

The website of the project ([www.eghajlatiado.hu](http://www.eghajlatiado.hu)) is continuously being updated, and thus has become a thematic web-page.

Those who are interested can read about climate protection in practice, download practical guidelines and additional materials (materials on energy saving and renewable energies), and can follow the events of the project. In addition, many have visited the sub-programmes that focus on the municipalities and schools.



*Global warming – the pictures of change Photo and short film competition  
Pictures of Albert Kozák, competition winner*

## 2.4. Festival on climate justice

The MEDIAWAVE International Film and Music Festival in Győr is amongst the most significant cultural events in the region which chooses 1-2 themes each year. In 2009, one theme was climate justice within the climate protection issues. Co-operating with the festival organizers we determined the theme-related programs, events together, also involving the representatives of the Municipality of Győr-Moson-Sopron County.

In order to draw attention to the theme, a call was published for photos and short films about climate change, for which 35 applicants have sent 200 works. Selecting from these, 46 photos were shown in exhibition during the festival and 4 short films were screened in the intervals between films.

Another awareness raising tool was the Ice Cube action at the festival venue. This action of the Hungarian Climate Alliance meant insulating a 2 m<sup>3</sup> ice cube with insulation material, according to the building engineering standards of passive houses. Climate justice related messages were placed on the cube, which was being painted by students during the festival with climate-linked paintings.

On the 'Picnic' day of the festival several green NGOs presented their activities at stands on the riverside beach. The climate conference and the statutory meeting of the Hungarian Climate Alliance were accentuated events.

## 3. Educative school activities

*The focus of our school activities is a competition-series, in which the participating student groups studied the various problem areas of climate change based on which they compiled a practical proposal package for their own schools.*



*Announcement of results of the Climate Watch program, with the finalist groups*

### 3.1. 'Climate Watch' student competition

In October 2008 a 4-round competition, named Climate Watch was launched nationally for voluntary teams of 10-14 year-old students. The aim of the program was to boost students' knowledge in terms of energy consumption, energy efficiency and energy savings, and to inform them about the adverse effects of energy production. Furthermore, the competition also aimed to tell children what they could do to contribute to the solution. We managed to reach 2500 schools and as a result, a high number of teams (435!) registered.

In the first round, the teams prepared paintings and drawings related to the topic of climate-friendly households. The most creative ones are published in the gallery on the website ([www.eghajlatriado.hu/index.php/galeria](http://www.eghajlatriado.hu/index.php/galeria)). In the second round, the students measured the ecological footprint of their school in addition to other interesting calculations. Based on these calculations, the teams created a practical proposal pack on how to reduce the students' and the school's fossil energy consumption (e.g. transport, school canteen with local products, energy-saving devices). In the last round, the school groups worked out and realized a creative mini school campaign on climate protection that potentially involved the whole school. The campaign was dedicated to raise awareness about climate-friendly solutions.

In connection with Earth Day on April 24, the best 12 teams presented their materials and videos of their campaigns in the grand hall of the Hungarian Natural History Museum in the closing event. Within the frame of various games, the groups had challenged each other for the first place since the 3 best teams won a summer eco-camp week in Márokpapi. Of course, each group received prizes: environmental publications, posters and materials. The Slovakian Climate Watch and related activities took place in 2010 in which the Hungarian experience and materials were also integrated.

Our partners held presentations in connection with the Climate Watch at 16 Hungarian schools in 2009. The presentations were mainly about climate protection, development issues and about climate justice, also including the calculation of ecological footprint.



*Drawing from the Climate Watch competition*

### 3.2. *Educative materials*

The teacher's handbook and the student leaflet, which also included the best drawings and materials of the Climate Watch, were sent to the participating schools and groups. In addition to this, the materials were also disseminated among Hungarian and Slovakian students and teachers.



*Climate Watch - Teacher's handbook*



### *3.3. Educational centre developments*

*Within the framework of the project, various developments were carried out in the educational centre of the Reflex Association in Pápateszér and in the educational centre of the Ipel Union.*

In Pápateszér, the centres' facilities were amended by obtaining more bicycles, enabling students to explore the natural and cultural heritage of the region. Besides receiving 15 bicycles, the most significant improvement was the construction of the bicycle storage. Furthermore, the centre constructed a nature trail on 2 hectares, demonstrating the local values as well as the issues of climate protection and global justice.

According to the planned investment, the construction and refurbishment works of the educational centre of the Ipel Union were realized. On the area of the Centre, 5 accommodative facilities and one main building were constructed. Besides its educative function, the building also operates as a display of practical environmentally friendly and energy saving technologies. The project investments included the construction of an infrared heating system in one of the double wooden buildings, which can save 30-40% of energy.



*Bicycles and bike storage realized in the framework of the project*

## 4. Policy activities

*Coordinated by the Ecological Institute, two policy studies (a sectoral and an operative study) were written. Both of the studies can be downloaded from the [www.eghajlatriado.hu](http://www.eghajlatriado.hu) website. In relation to the studies, 3 policy forums were organized for the decision makers.*

### 4.1. Studies

**The sectoral study** analyses the Hungarian climate, energy and development policies, and the need to consider the sustainability and climate justice aspects in these policies. The study materials also suggest the renewal of the tax system through a complex economic tool, the quota system. In summary, the study recommends the integration of global climate justice to key Hungarian policies.

The climate-energy chapter was prepared for the National Climate Change Strategy and for its programme, the National Climate Protection Programme and the Hungarian Energy Policy Concept (2008-2020). The Climate Bill, proposed by the experts of the NSC-FoE Hungary (the concept is on the website and in the study), attempts to ensure the coherence between the climate and energy policies, to reduce energy consumption and to inspire a low carbon society. In the study, the efficiency, applicability, and the national and international examples of the carbon calculator (tag informing about the energy footprint of the product) are also explained in details.

The development policy section discusses the National Development Policy document from a climate justice perspective. As the new regulation was just being prepared, the recommendations could only assess this document and not the actual strategy.

**The operational program study** analyses the Transport Operational Programme, the New Hungary Rural Development Plan and the Environment and Energy Operational Program from environmental and climate perspectives as these documents are the most relevant for the project. Besides, the methodology of the sustainability analysis (SEA) for larger projects can also be found in the study.



*International climate conference in the Hungarian Parliament*

## *4.2. International conference*

On October 1. 2009, the NSC-FoE Hungary organized a climate justice conference in the Parliament Hall titled 'Climate Bill – the answer to the climate, social and economic crises'. All stakeholders were represented including the ministries, local authorities, scientific associations, trade unions, companies, NGOs and the media – altogether 250 participants. The keynote speakers were István Láng (Associate President of the National Council for Sustainable Development), Tibor Faragó (State Secretary in the Ministry for Environment and Water) and Irineu Laureano Rodrigues (Coordinator of Indigenous Organisations of the Amazon Basin, the executive member of FOIRN). The latter held a compelling presentation about the right to climate justice titled 'The visit of the Amazonian indigenous people to the Hungarian partner of the Climate Alliance'. The following panel discussion was about the recommendations concerning the Hungarian climate policies, then about awareness raising and adaptation opportunities, which was discussed actively with the audience. The summary of the project can be read on the project website.

## 5. Experience sharing and dissemination

*In the project the focus was set mainly on the knowledge of existing new practices, therefore consulting organizations were involved including the Dutch Milieukontakt and the Austrian office of the Climate Alliance. Furthermore, the obtained experience from the project is to be disseminated on a wider scale.*

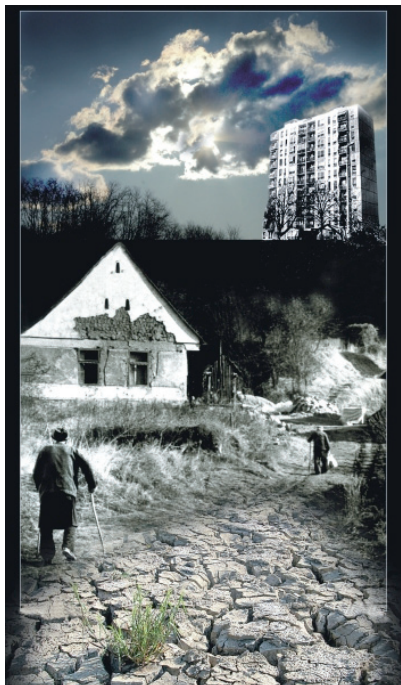
### 5.1. Sharing European experience

In July 2008, the project partners (Reflex, NSC and representatives of the implementing organizations) organized a 5-day capacity building study trip to the Netherlands. Participants met Milieukontakt and other active organizations involved in climate protection and climate justice. The Dutch organization was regularly consulted and its experts visited the project partners many times during the project.

The already existing connection with the Austrian office of the Climate Alliance has been further strengthened. They assisted in the foundation of the Hungarian Climate Alliance and we also had a chance to join more European programmes. Besides ensuring the professional background of the study trip, project partners also participated in additional common programmes both in Austria and in Hungary, which were evidently aided by the geographical proximity.

### 5.2. Organizational development

In September 2008 and February 2009, capacity development trainings were held for the project implementing organizations in Budapest. In the first training, the methods of raising awareness among the public and local authorities, the Climate Watch, the topic of environmental justice and efficient communication issues were discussed along with the experience from the Dutch study trip. The second training was about the experiences from previous years, where the issues of the Climate Alliance foundation, the actions, the advocacy experiences and the status and challenges of the EU and national climate policy were discussed. To meet the needs, an additional training was held for the organizations in September 2009. This training dealt with the outcomes of the two studies and the related policy tasks.



*Global warming – pictures of change  
Photo and short film competition  
Zoltan Ritzel – Village sentenced to death*

### *5.3. Closing event – CEE training*

As the closing event of the project, NGOs active in the climate protection were invited from the region, from Austria, Slovakia, Ukraine, Romania, Serbia and Hungary to the CEE training. Besides sharing experiences and results of the project, the main focus was to set the basis for possible future co-operation in climate topics. According to this the areas, responsibilities and sources of funding for this co-operation were drafted.





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