

# Rio+20: Contribution by Czech Major Groups

Discussion of the Major Groups in the Czech Republic on the occasion  
of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development,  
Rio de Janeiro, 2012.

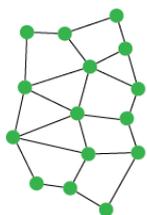
**Outcomes of the national process**

Edited by: Jana Dlouhá, Jiří Dlouhý



Environment Center  
Charles University  
in Prague





**MOSUR**  
MEZIOBOROVÁ SÍŤ  
UDRŽITELNÉHO ROZVOJE  
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This document is the outcome of the national conference “The Future We Want” held in Prague, March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012, and a public hearing held afterwards (see <http://mosur.czp.cuni.cz/> and <http://www.stuz.cz/>).

Organizer of the conference “The Future We Want” and the public hearing: Charles University Environment Center and the Society for Sustainable Living.

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INVESTMENTS IN EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT



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## Appeal

The engagement of the Czech Republic in policies that emphasise the principles of sustainable development and signing up to their fulfilment in practice increases its prestige and credibility; it contributes on the domestic front to the forming of a society-wide consensus on an ethical basis. We therefore want to call on the Czech government **to commit itself to fulfilling the outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference** in regard to the prepared Registry/Compendium of Commitments and namely the paragraphs that directly touch upon cooperation with civil society, and then subsequently **to undertake their gradual implementation within the conditions of the Czech Republic.**

The demands of Czech Major Groups toward the Czech government are:

- SD efforts in the Czech Republic are closely connected to democratic processes after 1989, and in recent times their contribution to developments in this area have been considerable. The Czech Republic should follow up on this tradition and realise that no country is so small that it cannot influence worldwide events. As part of the Rio+20 Conference it should advocate institutional progress at the level of the UN, and continue the support of such meetings in the past from Vavroušek and Moldan that lasted up to 2010.
- The Czech government should be aware, within the scope of the Rio+20 Conference, that it is representing *inter alia* the interests and visions of Czech Major Groups, i.e. the representatives of independent NGOs, Local Agenda 21, education institutions and initiatives, and the business sphere interested in developing the green economy, etc., which are legitimate components of democratic dialogue on the sustainable development of the Czech Republic and represent the significant long-term interests of the environment.
- The Czech government should start from the work that these Major Groups have undertaken in recent years in the field of sustainable development (SD), it should sign on to the continuation of this work, and it should accept this obligation as one of the commitments associated with the Rio+20 Conference.
- A condition for the further development of SD is a critical evaluation of the activities and the environment in which important SD actors undertake their work – the Czech Republic should heed the transparent and professionally supported assessment of all aspects of SD. The methods of communication among these actors should be similarly evaluated, and the democratic parameters of this dialogue should be monitored.
- On this transparent basis it is then desirable to engage in cooperation with foreign actors – to aspire to a role for the Czech Republic in international institutions or its engagement in networks of cooperation either at the government or non-government level.

- The basis for successful SD policies is primarily the creation of a vision and long-term planning, a comprehensive approach and overcoming ministerial “patch protection”; transparent conditions for the work of the NGO sector are necessary, it also means limiting negative features such as corruption and clientelism.
- Part of an active participation in the Rio+20 Conference includes commitments which the Czech Republic will accept and will implement on the home front. They should relate mainly to institutionally securing SD within the Czech Republic, including ensuring the continuity of existing institutions and their commissioned areas of responsibility, primarily the Government Council for Sustainable Development. In addition, it is necessary to ensure the participation of Major Groups in those bodies where discussions regarding proposed development strategies take place (expert and advisory bodies, the Government Council for SD, etc).
- As part of support for a green economy, the Czech government should create a policy framework and a specific institutional environment for the support of innovation in this area, and make instruments available in the field of regulation and financial incentives for the support of active economic entities geared toward green business.
- Limiting the negative consequences of human activity on the environment should remain the main motivation behind SD in the Czech Republic; to create the most effective strategy possible in this area, what is needed is close cooperation with the representatives of science and education and the expert public, and to strive after quality and universally accessible information regarding the environment, independent research, and educational development.

## Introduction

*Jana Dlouhá, Bedřich Moldan, Pavel Šremer*

A United Nations conference on the human environment took place in Stockholm in 1972. It was followed by the Earth Summit, the UN Conference on the Environment and Development in 1992. The third summit was the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002. An agreement on the three pillars of sustainable development was gradually arrived at and many different guidelines were accepted on how to tackle particularly unsustainable societal development at the global level. Despite all these and many other efforts, devastation of the environment and natural resources continues unabated on a global scale. As the last UNEP report stated, key indicators such as reduction in biodiversity, exploitation of natural resources and greenhouse emissions are increasing even faster than what would be expected from world population growth. This is the reason for the staging of this year's world summit: the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, which is taking place in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012. Representatives of UN member states will be in attendance, as will the leaders of world organisations, and the UN Secretary-General Ban-Ki-Moon, for example, has called the event a turning point.

## Rio+20 Conference: Principles and Opportunities

This year's worldwide Rio+20 Conference is geared toward to two important themes: the green economy in the context of sustainable development and alleviating poverty, as well as an institutional framework for sustainable development. The conference themes should preserve prosperity, but at the same time reorient economies so that they cause the least possible damage; changes in values need to be included and institutionalised within the social system. It is universally understood that nowhere in the world - and certainly not on the global scale - is the present nature of economic development of a sustainable character and that "something should be done about it". Specific solutions are sought primarily in the greening of the economy, i.e. a systemic restriction on their negative effects that would in addition support employment and create interesting work options. A green economy is therefore an opportunity for those who have the vision, the courage to carry it out, and who want to invest in the future.

The summit will be participated in by all world regions defined by the UN, and preparation is taking place under the leadership of the pertinent UN economic and social commissions, such as the Economic Commission for Europe. An important role is being played by practically all UN organisations and programmes, and the preparations are taking place at the national level in all states. The European Union has fully involved itself to the preparation of Rio+20: the European Commission has published several important documents, and the Council of Europe has approved them and emphasised its full support in the preparation and the expected outcomes of the summit, and is focused on both summit themes. In relation to the required transformation of the current economic model to a "green economy", it has submitted a road map with clearly defined recommendations for specific outputs. Of the cross-sectional issues, the European Union is focused on models of consumption and production, financial issues, subsidies, as well as collaboration on research, including development of the GEOSS system (<http://www.epa.gov/geoss/>). The specific areas that the road map looks at are: water, food and agriculture, energy, soil and sustainable land use, oceans, fishing, biodiversity, chemicals, materials and waste, and urban development.

Great importance is attached to linking all the Major Groups, which include the scientific and technical community, farmers, youth, local government representatives, NGOs and others. This is demonstrated in the conclusions of the UN DPI conference of NGOs that took place in Bonn in September 2011 and which passed the Sustainable Societies Responsive Citizens call. This states the necessity of engaging civil society, and makes demands and proposals in the areas of the economy, institutions, education and sustainable lifestyle. At the same time, it calls for the approval of 'Sustainable Development Goals' which sets targets in the areas of sustainable production and consumption, and emphasises living conditions, youth and education, climate sustainability, clean energy, maintenance of biodiversity, water, seas and oceans, etc. Further discussion is taking place on the pages of the initiative The Future We Want (FWW), where future visions are published and practical solutions are sought in the form of projects and case studies from around the world.

## **Czech Republic engagement**

The role of the Czech Republic in the international sustainable development agenda is internationally recognised – since the start of the 1990s we have played an active role in this sense, e.g. the 'Dobříš Process' of conferences of environment ministers began in 1991 with the first pan-European conference organised by the then Czech federal government minister Josef Vavroušek in the Czech town of Dobříš. During the preparation for Rio+20, our role was confirmed by the selection of Prof. Bedřich Moldan as its representative on the 10-member preparatory committee; our negotiators, led by Iveta Špaltová, secretary of the Working Group for Coordination of Preparations for the meeting of the UN Commission for Sustainable Development, and who works for Government Council for Sustainable Development, play an active role within the European Union. On the home front, however, there have been no practical preparations, and the Czech Republic has not prepared any commitments or strategies with which it would sign up to the Summit's mission. The activities that are linked to the preparation of the Summit stem from 'bottom-up' initiatives, such as the national conference called "Budoucnost, kterou chceme" (The Future We Want) organised by the Charles University Environment Center on 15 March 2012. The Czech Ministry of Environment did not organise any event aimed at engaging Czech organisations, business entities, state administration, the public, or even something that would raise understanding and awareness. The Czech Republic does not have any strategy in regard to a green economy; the only institutional provision for sustainable development at present is a reduction in existing institutions; public finance for the provision of programmes and projects for the environment have been cut back. Our participation in the Earth Summit will therefore be purely formal in regard to promoting the role of the scientific community, (side event Measuring a Green Economy: Insights into Beyond "GDP" Indicators organised by the Charles University Environment Center in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment and the EEA); the Czech Republic has no ambition to support any specific initiative at the meeting.

## **The initiative of Czech Major Groups**

In regard to the situation described above, we decided as representatives of major groups to organise such an initiative ourselves.

### **Where we're coming from**

The main documents created for Rio+20 include the [Human Development Report 2011](#) created by [UNDP](#), [Green Economy Report](#), which was drawn up by [UNEP](#), or the [Global Sustainability Report](#),

prepared by the [High-Level Panel on Global Sustainability](#) as part of the UN. In the preparation and then the drawing up of the final document with the nice title of The Future We Want, which is to be approved during the proceedings of Rio+20, a dialogue with important societal groups and the public has also played a significant role. A draft document ([Zero Draft of the Outcome Document](#)) was drawn up on the basis of contributions sent by [Major Groups](#); it was then redrafted as a [Compilation Document](#) and consequently became the subject of discussions between the representatives of individual countries.

Seeing that in democratic states great importance is attached to engaging significant societal groups, we also want to joint in these efforts. We are inspired by the Declaration of the Major Groups approved in Bonn in September 2011 (Declaration of the 64th Annual UN DPI/NGO Conference Chair's Text Bonn, Germany, 5 September 2011 [Sustainable Societies; Responsive Citizens; Sustainable Development Goals](#)), which in the section labelled 'RIO + 20 and Civic Engagement' calls on governments to cooperate with civil society, the private sector and international institutions on meeting the commitments of this Declaration (established prior to and as part of Rio+20).

*We hereby call upon governments to work in partnership with civil society, the private sector and international institutions to fulfil the commitments set forth in this declaration before and at Rio + 20...*

but it also requires that an annex to the final document is accepted that would include a commitment of individual countries to create a register of activities and pledges of main societal groups oriented toward worldwide sustainable development (+ monitoring and submission of overviews thereof

*...generate an appendix to the outcome document containing country commitments to form the foundation of a global registry of sustainability actions and major stakeholder commitments, which include robust monitoring and reporting provisions*

## **What we want**

At the present time, the document The Future We Want is based on preceding international initiatives which very briefly recapitulate them, although it does not attempt to reflect upon what specifically took place in individual areas (e.g. education, Agenda 21,...) and within regions. At the same time, significant changes have occurred since the last World Summit in 1992 in many areas, and this progress should be appropriately recognised, institutionally and otherwise, and should be the basis of further development. The way forward is not based on "discoveries" of new spheres that have until now not affected discussions on sustainable development.

Because Czech major groups have also done some work and also have very specific requirements of Czech politicians, we initiated discussions with their representatives – representatives of NGOs, local Agenda 21, educational institutions and initiatives, and the business sphere interested in developing a green economy – which brought about interesting stimuli for Czech initiatives as part of Rio+20. We have tried to demonstrate the benefit brought by Czech Major Groups and their willingness to engage further; we understand what obstacles there are to further work and we have outlined the options for future development that we see, and we would like to lead further dialogue about them. We present the results of this discussion in the following pages.

We therefore want to help the Czech government sum up what has been achieved over the last 20 years in the field of sustainable development, and at the same time show that we, the representatives of Czech Major Groups, can contribute to fulfilling the aims of Rio+20.

## **Sustainable Development in the Czech Republic: History and Perspectives**

In looking back at what the Czech Republic has implemented over the last 20 years of the aims of the ground-breaking Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, one can divide it into several phases. Both the state and the non-state sector engaged in the conference preparation - for example, the establishment of the Environment for Europe process, the work of Prof. Moldan on the conference preparatory committee for Rio, or the suggestions of J. Vavroušek regarding a more effective global system of environmental protection, such as the environmental pillar of sustainable development, or on the home front the introduction of a definition of sustainable development into Czech legislation (Act No. 17/1992).

After a promising start, however, there followed a period of inadequate implementation thanks to internal political developments - the break-up of Czechoslovakia and the government led by Vaclav Klaus, who viewed sustainable development as an unfriendly ideology. That's why during the period 1992-1997 the efforts to implement the results of the conference in Rio de Janeiro were headed mainly by the non-government and academic sectors. In answer to the outcomes from Rio, Společnost pro trvale udržitelný život (STUŽ, the Society for Sustainable Living) was established which organises seminars, conferences and projects in relation to issues of sustainability. A project called "A Sustainable Future for the Czech Republic and Slovakia" was implemented by a collective of authors led by RNDr. P. Nováček. The Charles University Environment Center was established under the leadership of Prof. Bedřich Moldan dedicated to issues of sustainable development. In 1994, the National Network of Healthy Towns was founded as the Czech answer to the WHO initiative involving urban sustainable development. At the start of 1997, there was a transfer of experience from Seattle (the Sustainable Seattle project) thanks to the conference "Urban Quality of Life Indicators" jointly organised with the Hradec Králové municipal authority, the American Peace Corps and STUŽ.

A change occurred in the next pre-EU accession period (from the Rio+5 conference in 1997 to the UN World Conference on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002), the term 'sustainable development' became a part of the government programme and the first sustainable development strategy was established. From 1997 to 2001, a large project called "Toward to the Sustainable Development of the Czech Republic: Creating the Conditions" was undertaken with the participation of many scientific teams, supported by the UNDP and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and coordinated by the Charles University Environment Center under the leadership of Prof. Moldan. The result was very useful analytical material on sustainable development, as well as the first version of a sustainable development strategy for the Czech Republic. As a completed strategy on the basis of a directive of the then Minister and as Czech preparation for the Johannesburg conference on sustainable development, a "Sustainable Development Strategy: From Economic Growth to Sustainable Development" was established in 2002 at the Ecological Institute under the leadership of Doc. J. Seják and Ing. I. Dejmal, although because of its radical aims it did not subsequently become a government document. A bill on sustainable development amending several laws was also drafted, although it remained in draft form only. The first introduction of Agenda 21 occurred in some towns, generally on the basis of using British experience.

In the implementation period after the Johannesburg summit, i.e. after 2002, three periods are discernible:

In the first period, lasting until 2007, there was a positive development both within the European Union when the Czech Republic had just acceded to the EU, and within the Czech Republic. In 2003, the Government Council for Sustainable Development (GCSD, Government Resolution No. 778/2003) was set up on the basis of efforts by the non-government sector (e.g. calls from the Johannesburg+1 conference in Olomouc) and enlightened government officials. The GCSD established working groups on issues of communication, strategy, indicators and Local Agenda 21 (LA21), and a Sustainable Development Forum was convened under the patronage of the GCSD. In addition, the Institute for Ecopolicy proposed, ministries drafted and the government approved the first official sustainable development strategy for the Czech Republic (Government Resolution No. 1244/2004) based on the Gothenburg Strategy of EU sustainable development. Codification of support for energy production from renewable sources (Act No. 180/2005) suggests that sustainable development had been taken into consideration. The Local Agenda 21 movement has expanded, methodology and criteria have gradually been designed for evaluating the focus of towns toward sustainability, and some towns have also contributed to drafting European urban sustainability indicators. The State Environmental Policy for the years 2004-2010 was also to have contributed toward sustainable development based on the EU Sixth Environmental Action Programme. In the field of education, a University Teachers' Forum for Sustainable Development was set up and is still operating today.

We could label the next period the period of preparing a new strategy, the Sustainable Development Strategic Framework, or adaptation to the refreshed EU sustainable development strategy from 2006, lasting from 2007 until 2010. During this period, some steps were taken leading to sustainability, e.g. support for renewable energy sources and support for energy savings (like the Green Savings programme). A Sustainable Development Strategic Framework (SDSF) was created and approved by the government (Government Resolution No. 37/2010). Within the non-government sector, the Rainbow Movement's "Big Challenge" was established, i.e. an initiative and proposed law on a 2% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in the Czech Republic according to the British model. The Local Agenda 21 movement finally obtained state support – an opportunity for financing projects and introducing procedures according to Local Agenda 21 methods in municipalities interested in their introduction. The range of LA21 criteria was also updated. An Education for Sustainable Development Strategy was established and subsequently an action plan as well after great controversy.

The last period from approximately 2010 coincides with the ignoring of sustainable development at the state level (unfortunately this led to the cancellation of the position of GCSD secretary, the implementation of the SDSF was only noted by the government so that individual ministries are not bound by it, and no further development of renewable sources was supported, etc). It was therefore left to non-governmental organisations and the academic sector to fight for sustainable development, e.g. the project "The Czech Republic Seeks a Future" (coordinated by civic organisation Glopolis), or the proposed alternative energy plan "Clever Energy" in 2010 (the proposed plan was created by several ecological NGOs in cooperation with the prestigious Wuppertal Institute in Germany). After publishing "An Energy (R)Evolution for Europe", Greenpeace is preparing another draft alternative plan with the German Institute for Aeronautics and Astronautics called "An Energy (R)Evolution for the Czech Republic". And this year a Regional Centre for Expertise in Education for Sustainable Development (RCE) will be established under patronage of the Charles University

Environment Center, Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem and STUŽ. There has also been established a Sustainable Development Platform as a network of NGOs and individuals with the aim of coordinating the efforts of the NGO sector regarding the direction of the Czech Republic in relation to sustainable development.

Overall, one can conclude that since the conference in Rio de Janeiro, the Czech Republic hasn't stagnated on an unsustainable path of development, as demonstrated by the activities described above, although a long journey still lies ahead of it in meeting the aims of a long-term sustainable future.

## **Rio+20 – Public Debate: Part I.**

*Jana Dlouhá, Pavel Šremer*

### **Non-government non-profit organisations (NGOs)**

Environmental NGOs experienced unprecedented growth in the 1990s – an element of open or direct democracy that was finally able to make a presence in the Czech Republic. The environmental theme was an important part of the transformation of society after 1989; environmental NGOs in this period were connected to a rich tradition in the area of environmental protection and have expanded the spectrum of their interests to the further topic of sustainable development; the area got legislative and institutional support, was included within the agenda of state administration and the groundwork was created for the support of independent activities. At the Ministry of Environment, an independent section was also quickly created focusing on education, enlightenment and public awareness, and cooperation with non-profit organisations. This section drew up a strategy of state support for ecological education in the 1990s, which was approved by Government Resolution No. 232/1992 – and on which basis to date the Ministry of Environment has been playing the role of the expert guarantor for environmental education, enlightenment and public awareness, and it also coordinates and monitors this area.

Since the fall of communism, these NGOs have also been significantly supported from abroad, either directly or under the influence of mainly the EU for the Czech Republic and its strategy, and institutional and legal instruments. In this manner Act No. 123/1998 Coll., on the right to information regarding the environment (as amended by Act No. 6/2005 Coll., on access to information regarding the environment), for example, was passed, and which corresponds to the requirements of the European Union and its harmonisation with the pertinent direction No. 90/313/EHS on free access to information regarding the environment. The financing activities of NGOs, primarily from the state budget and European structural funds (e.g. the Environment Operating Programme), are also associated with this.

Over the last 20 years, existing ecological organisations (e.g. the Czech Union of Nature Protectors, Brontosaurus) have evolved and changed greatly, various new initiatives have been established (e.g. the Society for Sustainable Living, Children of the Earth, the Independent Social-Ecological Movement, Revival, etc), and all have often gradually become specialised and professionally adept organisations which have a place in the democratic dialogue about the environment and sustainable development – representing the opinions of citizens and experts, and playing a role in connecting the public. Organisations have been established which are responsible for individual sustainable development themes, such as transport, energy, etc (Rainbow Movement, the Centre for Transport and Energy, Auto\*Mat), and the provision of legal services (Ecological Legal Service); apart from traditional organisations focused on protection of the environment and landscape, there are also new ones (the Society for Landscape) with responsibility for the Landscape Convention (CELNELC) or traditional forms of land management in the countryside (Veronica). The networks and partnerships of these organisations have significantly expanded (Green Circle, Pavučina – a network of ecological schooling centres). Overall, Czech non-government organisations have learned a great deal, they are able to undertake projects independently and form their own financial resources, and they are able to communicate at all levels and form partnerships within the Czech Republic, as well as internationally.

## **Environmental education, enlightenment and public awareness training (EEEE) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)**

Environmental education, enlightenment and public awareness (EEEE) these days comprises an integrated system: it has been developed into a collection of strategies and specific measures at the state administration level, new aims and approaches, corresponding methodologies and evaluative instruments designed for educationalists. The importance of environmental education is justified in the State Environment Policy of the Czech Republic, which became the starting point for drafting the State Environmental Education, Enlightenment and Public Awareness Programme in the Czech Republic<sup>1</sup>. In matters of EEEA, the Ministry of Environment collaborates with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport on the basis of an Interministerial Agreement on Cooperation in Environmental Training, Enlightenment and Public Awareness signed in 1999 as part of the Interministerial Environmental Education, Enlightenment and Awareness Working Group at the Ministry of Environment (its members are representatives of the Office of the Government, the majority of ministries, regional administrations, and others, e.g. the Agency for the Protection of Nature and Landscape of the Czech Republic and some non-profit organisations that focus on EEEA).

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) was shaped in the first half of the 1990s in connection with influence from abroad. It is tied to international commitments; the Czech Republic signed on to the ESD Strategy of the UN Economic Commission in 2005 and established a national ESD strategy in 2008 (approved by a government resolution in July of the same year under the name *The Education for Sustainable Development Strategy of the Czech Republic 2008-2015*). The action plan of the ESD Strategy is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, which in 2009 formed a Working Group for Education for Sustainable Development for this purpose at the Government Council for Sustainable Development and built an expert team which made significant contributions to the preparation of the document. This document was accepted by the Czech government in 2011 under the name “Education for Sustainable Development – Measures for 2011 and 2012 for the Education for Sustainable Development Strategy of the Czech Republic (2008-2015)”, although not a single Czech crown was provided for its financing.

The specific institutions and non-governmental organisations that endorse the ESD theme included the Society for Sustainable Living, the Pedagogical Research Institute in Prague, the National Institute for Further Education, the National Network of Healthy Towns, the Ecological Education Club, several ecological learning centres (the Tereza Association, SEVER) and organisations focusing on global development education (e.g. People in Need, the Society for Fair-Trade). An important trend seen in this area in recent times is the amalgamation of NGOs (oriented toward EEEA, distributing information, consultancies, as well as the activities of the non-profit sector) into nationwide thematic networks – e.g. since 1999 there has been a National EEEA Network which now has 102 registered entities from all regions of the Czech Republic. Education programmes for various target groups have taken place here; NGOs, however, have also been participating in the production of written texts for publication, learning aids and popularisation materials, and they are often linked to specific projects

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<sup>1</sup> This SEEEAP was approved by Government Resolution No. 1048 on 23 October 2000 as the fundamental supra-ministerial strategic basis for the long-term development of environmental education in its entirety: it sets goals and tasks, and specifies the means for achieving them; its outcomes affect everyone, its aim is to increase the responsibility of all parts of society, and it includes training and an advisory services. The advisory service was then excluded from the SEEEAP and is regulated separately by the Development Programme of Environmental Consulting in the Czech Republic for the years 2008-2013. The executive strategic documents of the State EEEA Programme comprise two-year action plans containing specific measures for given periods; the last Action Plan for the years 2010-2012 was approved by Government Resolution No. 1302 of 19 October 2009 and is tied to the preceding action plan.

promulgated, for example, by the Ministry of Environment. An important element is the gradual increase in the expertise regarding the main themes of ESD as well as in methodological conceptual issues: teacher information is provided at a high level by the magazine *Bedrník*; a critical and professional element was brought to the discussion on the nature of EEEA by the founding of the peer-reviewed electronic journal *Envigogika* in 2006.

There is a separate ESD story at the university level. The bases of the environmental fields have been shaped since the communist period and many have gradually evolved into separate disciplines, e.g. hygiene or the chemical environment, environmental economics, environmental law, etc. Numerous university institutes or departments have been established whose education is oriented toward an interdisciplinary context – e.g. the Department of Environmental Studies at Masaryk University in Brno, the Department of Social and Cultural Ecology at the Charles University Faculty of Humanities in Prague, the Charles University Environment Center, and Environment Faculty at Jan Evangelista Purkyně in Ústí nad Labem, among others. There are always people at the head of similar institutions who are able to push interdisciplinary themes in more and more specialised and competitive university education environments.

The dialogue about the nature of EEEA and ESD has been led inter-ministerially in the recent past and all important societal groups have been included in it – the organs of this dialogue, however, have practically ceased to exist in recent times. It is expected that the government will cancel its resolutions on EEEA, ESD and environmental consulting (EC) in connection with its political priorities and savings measures during the on-going economic crisis; the financial provisions in these area from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport ended in 2010, and at the same time it is planning to include the EEEA Action Plan (hitherto overseen by the Ministry of Environment) within the ESD Action Plan (overseen by the Ministry of Education) because of administrative savings. The Ministry of Environment, which until now has been the main supporter of ESD projects and ESD, disbanded the Environmental Policy Instruments Division in 2012 and has in practice given up the environmental education agenda and the systematic support of non-governmental organisations as such. Financial support for EEEA and NGOs by the Ministry of Environment is rapidly diminishing: the CZK 150m from the Environment Operational Programme (EOP) will not be used for EEEA; the Ministry of Education has not earmarked money for EEEA or ESD since 2010 (the Education for Competitiveness Operational Programme (ECOP) is allegedly sufficient); support for EEEA projects by the National Programmes of the State Environment Fund was about CZK 50m per year between 2006–2010, but the number of projects has constantly increased and is more than four times larger than in 2010 while the summary financial support had stagnated or even declined by the end of this period. In addition, the contact person for the UN Economic Commission has been removed and there is no replacement, which is a mark of the disinterest in ESD development process experience in UN Economic Commission and EU countries.

### **Plans and requirements of NGOs in EE and ESD – SWOT analysis**

The findings and conclusions of a debate held on the occasion of a [The Future We Want](#) conference (organised by the Charles University Environment Center on 15 March 2012 at the National Technical Library in Prague) and afterwards are summarized below in the form of an analysis of strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats (known as SWOT analysis):

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Developing new approaches, methods and disciplines,... growth in diversity and a competitive environment.</p> <p>Evolving refinement of NGO capability providing non-formal education programmes.</p> <p>Good legislative environment and institutional support for EEEA and ESD created in the past.</p> <p>Developing a system of evaluation geared toward goals in learning domains other than cognitive.</p> <p>Cooperation between separate NGOs and schools at various levels has evolved into a functional form.</p> <p>Publication media are being established, and they are increasing their level of expertise, capability and capacity (authors, reviewers), and engaging educators from the field of practice etc.</p>	<p>Financial problems are restricting further development in the area – overburdening of actors, non-conceptualisation of activities, lack of flexibility, little publicity.</p> <p>Lack of cooperation between EEEA, ESD and global education – the reason being the inadequate competence of officials who make the decisions (these areas are connected in the Vilnius Strategy).</p> <p>A lack of literacy in this area among the overall population – experts in the field of practice are unable to make decisions competently.</p> <p>The non-existence of institutional support and quality criteria for interdisciplinary education at the university level.</p> <p>A non-transparent environment in the overall system of education at all levels and in the Science and Research system (evaluation of quality is directed primarily toward demonstrating quantity of work, which places workplaces more oriented toward the humanities at a disadvantage in comparison to the natural and applied sciences in relation to university funding).</p>
Opportunities	Threats
<p>Support for interdisciplinary education and research, and openness toward the needs of society.</p> <p>The need to distinguish efficient, inexpensive and effective and projects from others</p> <p>NGOs have to be respected as equal partners in the dialogue, be part of creating an educational strategy, and influence the results of the decision-making process.</p> <p>Acknowledgement and emphasising of the non-substitutable role of environmental enlightenment and education for sustainable development in the education of people on this planet so that they are able to face present and future crises and challenges.</p>	<p>Interruption of the strategy implementation or cancellation of essential legislative instruments: the EEEA Strategic Programme, the National SD Strategy or the Framework Educational Programme.</p> <p>Abolition of state administration (Ministry of Environment, the environmental policy instruments division), networks of cooperation, and expert and advisory bodies that the main communication mechanisms between various groups.</p> <p>The conservative practice of the Czech teaching community – lack of a critical approach and reliance on authorities.</p> <p>The long-term underfinancing of education, changes in priorities with changing ministers, exhaustion and demotivation among many teachers creating an environment that complicates the implementation of EEEA and ESD programmes in schools.</p>

## Local Agenda 21 in the Czech Republic- From Rio to Rio + 20

Marie Petrová

### Rio de Janeiro 1992 - Agenda 21, chapter 28

Chapter 28 of Agenda 21 says, *“Many of the problems and solutions listed in Agenda 21 have their roots in local activities, so local authorities have a key role to play in making sustainable development happen. Local authorities [...] oversee the planning of housing and industrial development, set local environmental policies and help to implement national environmental policies. As the level of government closest to the people, they play a vital role in educating and mobilizing the public around sustainable development.”*

How has the Czech Republic coped with this challenge and voluntary commitment in the past twenty years?

### Josef Vavroušek

To begin with, we need to quote this name, which is part of Czechoslovak as well as global “sustainability history”. He was the first (then) Czechoslovak Minister of the Environment, a major Czech ecologist, journalist and politician of the late 20th century: Josef Vavroušek.

*“Josef Vavroušek was an outstanding person in the Czech and European context, integrating expertise, public work and the classic form of representative politics in an emerging open liberal civic society. He was prominently involved in laying the foundations of the Czechoslovak and Czech environmental legislation, and launched an important European political-environmental process by organizing the first pan-European conference of environmental ministers in Dobříš in June 1991; it has been known as the Dobříš process since. As the chief of the Czechoslovak delegation at the UN Conference on the Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992, he provided one of the first foresighted impulses for the deliberations on a functional reform of the United Nations. Through his founder activity in non-governmental organizations as well as in the academia, where he inspired the investigation into the social scientific context of sustainable development, Vavroušek encouraged public life and showed real, unbiased expertise embodied in five books, forty studies and a hundred and fifty journal articles.”*

Ivan Rynda, awarded the Josef Vavroušek Prize in 2002

### The Czech Republic and sustainable development

Then Czechoslovakia did not make any use of its position built by Josef Vavroušek. The government changed a few weeks after the Earth Summit, and so did the official attitude to sustainability, the environment and civic society. Less than three years later, in March 1995, Josef Vavroušek died in the mountains of Slovakia.

The idea of sustainable development was carried on by his colleagues, disciples and many more who have done a great deal of work in the field and awareness raising, including in periods when they were definitely not encouraged to do so.

Czechoslovakia split into two independent countries. Some of the political parties in the new Czech Republic professed sustainable development in principle, but mostly stayed at the declaratory level. None of the political entities showed a deeper effort to grasp the full context and work with it systemically. However, other players succeeded on a smaller scale: at the local level. Non-profit organizations played important roles in many areas. That also applies to Local Agenda 21. Together with them, several enlightened representatives of municipalities then implemented some LA21 activities, chiefly as pilot projects. The Ministry of the Environment supported such activities with minor grants and co-funding of some pilot projects, often from available sources abroad and in cooperation with partners abroad (e.g., the UK and the Netherlands). As early as the latter half of the 1990s, the MoE anchored Local Agenda 21 in the State Environmental Policy, thus setting at least a general framework for a vertical intelinkage between the national and local levels. Concerning methodology, Local Agenda 21 was picked up by the Czech Environmental Institute, a departmental allowance organization as part of environmental education, training and awareness raising. LA21 was seen with an emphasis on local populations' activity, their involvement in smaller projects and cooperation with NGOs. In the first decade after Rio, there was no systemic setting and evaluation. The goal was to have smaller outcomes and, above all, public participation, mostly done by NGOs. The path towards criteria and indicators that focused on the process aspects of LA21, which started in the second decade after Rio, was not accepted unanimously and came against the disapproval of some of the players both as a plan and during implementation.

## The academia

The academia has been one of the key spheres for spreading the idea of sustainable development and establishing frameworks for implementing it. Generalization is not in place; the "new" way of thinking has never been unfolded in a blanket fashion. While some universities (chiefly economic) have all but forbidden the term sustainable development, others have done a great job in the field over the past two decades. Here, one has to mention the Charles University Environment Center. Since its establishment in May 1992, the Center has dealt with education issues, taken part in research and other projects, and taken care of coordination in many issues concerning the environment and sustainable development within and without the University. Over time, funds from various grants have built the Center as an independent research collective focusing on sustainable development indicators, environmental economics and sociology, and education for sustainable development ([www.czp.cuni.cz](http://www.czp.cuni.cz)).

The Local Agenda 21 system built in the Czech Republic has always tried to make use of the expert potential of the academia. Only in the recent years has expert support made itself felt to any greater extent in LA21, though. Experts in the academia have cooperated with the best towns and cities. They have been involved in creating the methodology for evaluating the most sustainable towns and cities, including definitions of the indicators. The cooperation between the experts and municipal representatives has been mutually beneficial: the experts provide the municipalities with their knowledge and overview; the municipalities provide practical feedback for their theoretical conclusions.

## NGOs

The Local Agenda 21 topic has been grasped by NGOs, notably environmental ones. The environmental aspect was dominant in these activities in the 1990s. The emphasis was mostly on

involving the public in planning and decision-making. On the one hand, the NGOs tried to activate local populations using various methods; on the other hand, they tried to cooperate with municipal governments. In contrast, the public administrations were mostly in the role of giving auspices to projects with few exceptions. Thanks to the NGOs (primarily the Institute for Environmental Policy and, later on, TIMUR, see Part II. NGOs), municipalities have started to work with sustainable development indicators. However, the measurements taken were mostly a purpose for its own purpose for a relatively long time, not linked to any other work with the indicators that would make it possible to achieve partial changes and implement visions over time.

## Enlightened pioneers

There were a handful of enlightened politicians in the municipalities in the 1990s; despite the overall political trend, they were willing to see a long-term meaning and chance in the sustainable development concept. They understood that local public administration plays a cardinal role in LA21. These politicians, who took that path regardless of their political orientation back in the 1990s, have mostly been prominent figures on the municipal political scene to this day.

## Networking: Healthy Cities of the Czech Republic

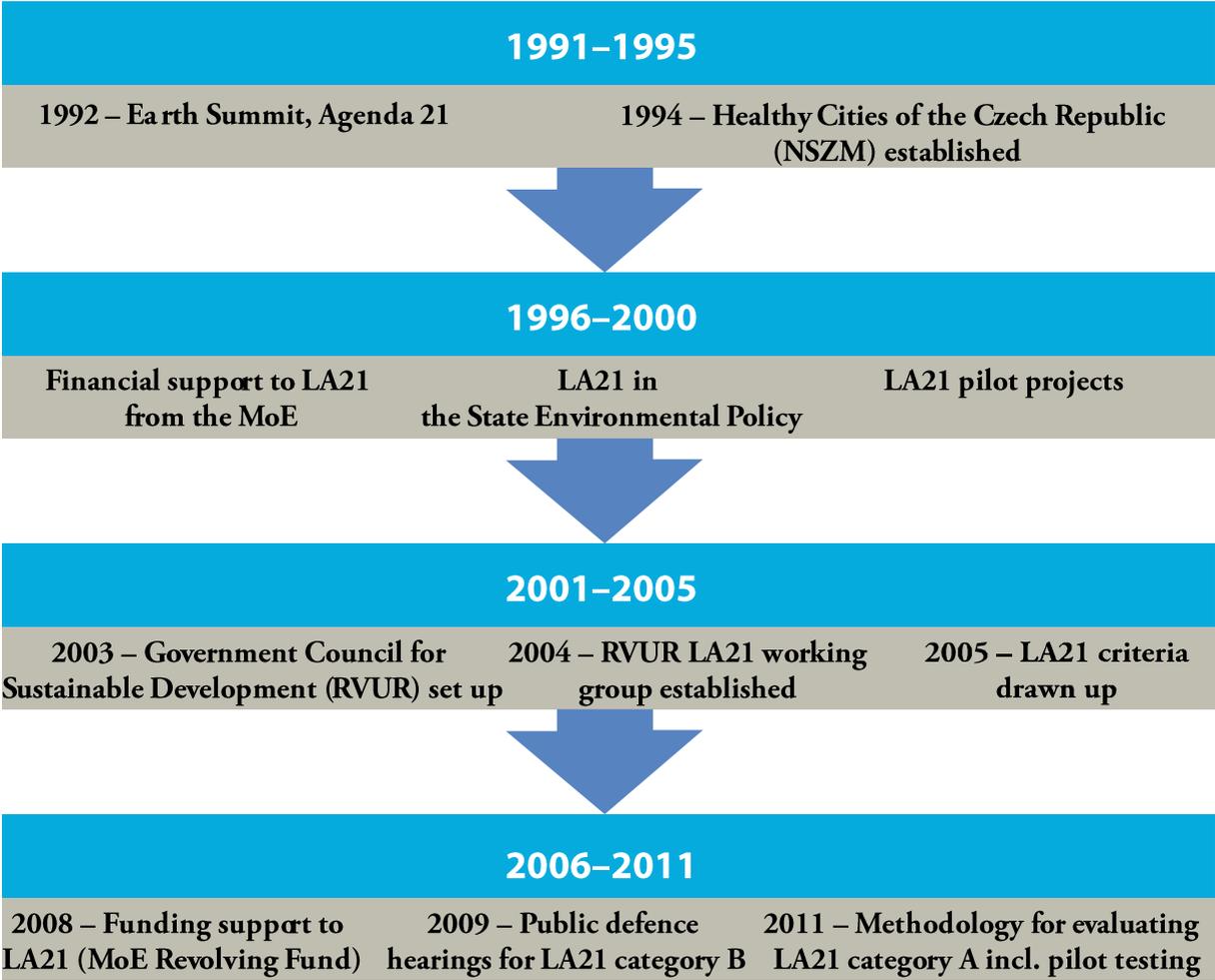
The Healthy Cities of the Czech Republic association of municipalities (villages, towns, microregions, regions) was established in 1994 as a member of the World Health Organization (WHO). The association has aimed at promoting local development that will lead to better quality of life and health of populations.

*“In 1998, the UN World Health Organization (WHO) initiated the international Healthy Cities Project, to which it invited major European capitals. Over the fifteen years of the project, 1300 Healthy Cities in 30 countries of Europe have been established. The project ideas began to be implemented in the Czech Republic’s cities and towns as well after 1989. Eleven active municipalities established the Healthy Cities of the Czech Republic (NSZM) association in 1994. The association has been open to all forms of municipalities since 2003. Today, the association comprises more than a hundred cities, towns, villages, microregions and regions.*

*NSZM has been awarded the EXPO 2000 World Project for its methodology. In 2003, NSZM received the Prize of the Minister of the Environment of the Czech Republic for its activity. In 2004, it received accreditation from the Ministry of the Interior as an Educational Institution for Public Administration. In 2006, it received the Prize of the Minister of the Interior for its DataPlán info system. The WHO ranks NSZM among the three most successful and proactive Healthy Cities networks in Europe.”* ([www.ZdravaMesta.cz](http://www.ZdravaMesta.cz))

NSZM has become the most important umbrella organization of practical implementation of Local Agenda 21 in the Czech Republic and a source of very valuable feedback for supporting LA21 at the national level.

## Chief milestones on the path to Local Agenda 21 in the Czech Republic



### Johannesburg and Local Action

The Earth Summit in Johannesburg 10 years after Rio came with a recommendation to shift from agenda to action, or, from Local Agenda to Local Action. In the Czech context, Local Action has meant specific smaller projects in the spirit of the motto “even small deeds are better than big words”, and Local Action is a more intelligible alternative for the Agenda with more tangible outcomes. The drawbacks were a lack of a systemic approach and the fact that the projects were created ad hoc, largely initiated and borne by NGOs. However, the group that began to form around the Ministry of the Environment in 2003 did not want to give up on the systemic approach. There were all the prerequisites for successful Action: political support, strategic integration, and communication with both the professional and general public. If we do not want to give up on these aspects and only implement small projects, Local Action has to become a necessary (but not sufficient on its own) component of the systemic approach of Local Agenda 21.

## Topics of the Year

The planned *NSZM Common Topics of Local Action* were the impulse for announcing so-called Topics of the Year for all the Local Agendas 21 in the Czech Republic under the auspices of the Government Council for Sustainable Development (RVUR) in cooperation and affiliation with its LA21 working group (see below). Government departments and expert partners were involved in nation-wide cooperation on the Topics. A micro team was set up for each topic, associating people from various entities interested in the issue in question. Sustainable Transport and Sustainable Energy were the most successful Topics.

## The Government Council for Sustainable Development

The Government Council for Sustainable Development plays an important role also for Local Agenda 21 in the Czech Republic. It was set up in 2003 as a “permanent advisory, initiative and coordinating body of the Government of the Czech Republic for sustainable development and strategic management. The Prime Minister shall be the Chairman of the Council; the Minister of the Environment shall be the executive vice chairman and the Ministers of Trade and Industry and of Labour and Social Affairs shall be the vice chairmen out of the power of their offices. The Council members shall include representatives of central state administration bodies, territorial self-governments, social partners, the academic community and the non-profit sector.” ([www.mzp.cz](http://www.mzp.cz))

In spite of its rather loose anchoring, the Council has existed to this day. It has not used its full potential: its voice is advisory only, thus not binding, but on the other hand, it is thanks to the Council that the Czech Republic has dealt with sustainability issues at all and has a Strategic Framework for Sustainable Development in force today. Local Agenda 21 is part of its implementation.

## LA21 working group

It was established in 2003 as a working body of the Ministry of the Environment; it became a working body of the RVUR in the following year. The idea was to set up an open discussion platform that would provide the Local Agenda 21 idea – quite freely interpreted until then – with basic criteria, some measurability, a methodological framework and settings of process and output standards. The group is composed of representatives of the central state administration bodies, Local Agenda 21 coordinators in municipalities and regions, representatives of the NSZM, the academia and NGOs. In addition to the official members, working group meetings can also be attended by guests interested in Local Agenda 21 in the Czech Republic. “The work of the working group will focus on finding ways of disseminating experience with implementing Local Agenda 21 to other municipalities, microregions and regions. The objective is for Local Agenda 21 to become a common tool in public administration and thus contribute to practical introduction of sustainable development principles.” ([www.ma21.cz](http://www.ma21.cz))

In the long term, proper setting of processes and political support have proven as necessary prerequisites for the systemic approach, strategic planning with the involvement of the public and, finally, for tangible (preferably measurable) outputs.

## LA21 definition

LA21 was defined by the working group in 2012 for the purposes of the Concept of Support to Local Agenda 21 in the Czech Republic as follows:

“LA21 is an instrument for improving the quality of public administration, strategic management, public involvement and building local partnerships with the purpose of promoting a systemic advancement towards sustainable development at the local or regional level.”

Self-governments that have already been implementing the Local Agenda 21 method in this country prefer to use their own definition of why they do so: “To do things right.”

### LA21 criteria

(see [www.ma21.cz](http://www.ma21.cz))

The LA21 WG drew up a set of twenty-one LA21 criteria in 2004. The set was tested on pilot projects and adjusted in the following year. The LA21 criteria were updated as of 1 January 2010 so that they are better suited for various types of municipalities; five sets were created: for small municipalities, town, cities with subdivisions, microregions, and regions. The LA21 criteria are now divided into four basic categories:

- *Category D: “START”* (“beginner” level of LA21; assumes organizational arrangement of the LA21 process);
- *Category C: “STABILIZATION”* (slightly advanced level of LA21; assumes active involvement of the public and political auspices for the LA21 process);
- *Category B: “MANAGEMENT SYSTEM”* (advanced level of LA21; assumes introduction and application of a municipality management system according to LA21 principles);
- *Category A: “LONG-TERM PROCESS”* (highest level of LA21; strategic and long-term development of the municipality with active public participation, based on sustainable development principles and aimed at improving quality of life of the local population).

These categories are preceded by the “zero” category of “Interested”, which includes all those interested in LA21 issues registered and is open not only to municipalities but also other entities actively involved in LA21 implementation, such as NGOs. Each of the categories has its own criteria and measurable indicators. A prerequisite for being recognized in a category is to fulfil and document all the LA21 Criteria it includes.

### LA21 database

a web environment for fulfilling and updating the LA21 Criteria - [www.ma21.cz](http://www.ma21.cz) Information about the LA21 database, run by CENIA (Czech Environmental Information Agency and an allowance organization under the MoE) on request by the Ministry of the Environment.

#### *Total municipalities registered in LA21*

<b>as of</b>	<b>number</b>
<b>30 May 2012</b>	157

#### *Municipalities registered in LA21 by category*

<b>category</b>	<b>number</b>
<b>Category B</b>	6
<b>Category C</b>	34
<b>Category D</b>	28
<b>Interested</b>	89
<b>others</b>	33

#### *Municipalities by type*

<b>type of applicant</b>	<b>no. of municipalities</b>
<b>region</b>	6
<b>small municipality</b>	55
<b>microregion</b>	10
<b>municipality</b>	84
<b>statutory city</b>	2

### **The Revolving Fund**

The so-called Ministry of the Environment Revolving Fund was open in 2008 in support of Local Agenda 21. Approximately CZK 45 million has been allocated under four calls in four years. Applicants were allowed to apply for grants to support their LA21 processes and outputs. The precondition was a systemic and interlinked setting and tangible measurable results. The evaluation system was set transparently. Among other things, a precondition for being awarded a grant was to advance one category under the LA21 Criteria. The Revolving Fund has increased the demand for Local Agenda 21 and helped increase not only the numbers of municipalities involved and an influx of new applicants, but also the quality of the processes and outputs of the advanced ones. The support to LA21 from the Revolving Fund was suspended in late 2011 due to budget cuts.

### **Good practice [www.dobrapraxe.cz](http://www.dobrapraxe.cz)**

An added value of every good process is the possibility to share it, thus spreading the good practice. Local Agenda 21 offers a great deal of inspiration in this respect. Healthy Cities (NSZM) takes systemic care that the good practice is not only spread accidentally (see also Networking above). "The Association has long been focusing on transferring good practice examples and experience among its members and supported their national competitiveness and ability to learn from those that have trodden the path. We have set up a clear and user-friendly **Good Practice Database**, where you can find selected examples in nine areas: public administration, the environment, health, free time, social issues, education, enterprise, agriculture and rural areas, and transport." These are original, uncommon and chiefly effective solutions. Municipalities, regions, NGOs, schools, local businesses and others invent projects and implement activities that help improve their services, save

money or raise the awareness of a certain topic: simply put, they contribute to quality of life. They thus bring numerous innovative, remarkable and practical solutions to various problems.

### **LA21 methodology A – expert cooperation**

The methodology was drawn up in 2009-10 by an expert team in coordination cooperation with municipalities. Pilot testing took place in 4 municipalities in 2011. The objective of the evaluation system is to set up a standardized process for evaluating sustainable development at the local/regional level that will make it possible, in the long term, to monitor and compare the quality of development in municipalities both comprehensively and in component areas. The evaluation can also be viewed as examination of the municipality's contribution to the priorities and goals of the Strategic Framework for Sustainable Development of the Czech Republic. The evaluation is done by the applicant (municipality, region or another applying entity) and an expert review team. It integrates communication and ongoing consultation between the applicant and the review team under the RVUR LA21 WG. The evaluation process has to be open to participation of all the relevant partners. The full wording of the methodology, including the indicators and questions, is attached and found at [www.ma21.cz](http://www.ma21.cz)

### **Issues evaluated**

1. Public governance and territorial development
2. Environmental quality
3. Sustainable consumption and production
4. Transport and mobility
5. Population health
6. Local economy and enterprise
7. Education and training
8. Culture and local traditions
9. Social environment in the municipality
10. Global responsibility

The issues are based on the Aalborg Commitments and have been adjusted for the needs of the evaluation of LA21 Category A. However, they are not only intended for applicants for the highest category (where they are evaluated expertly), but for LA21 implementation at all levels.

### **Leaders: pilot testing and achievements**

Four towns that are currently at the top of Local Agenda 21 in the CR – Chrudim, Kopřivnice, Litoměřice and Vsetín – made pilot testing of the above evaluation methodology for sustainable development in 2011. These towns have long been “treading the path” of new approaches and solutions and have been a source of inspiration and good practice to others. The four towns are examples of systemic setting of management and coordinated interdisciplinary cooperation as well as in component areas, such as energy.

The town of Chrudim deserves a special mention: it has been long achieving great success in the world-wide competition **LivCom Awards**.

More at [www.chrudim.eu/zdrave-mesto/livcom.html](http://www.chrudim.eu/zdrave-mesto/livcom.html), <http://www.livcomawards.com/>

### **LA21 support policy in the CR**

In January 2012, the Government of the Czech Republic passed the Local Agenda 21 Support Policy and Action Plan for 2012-13. The purpose of the policy is to establish a national systemic framework for coordinated support and development of LA21 in the CR. Among other effects, the implementation of the policy should increase support to LA21 processes from the political representation. Its development was coordinated by the Ministry of the Environment; the contents of the policy are based chiefly on the outputs of the discussions within the RVUR LA21 Working Group. The policy includes an Action Plan for 2012-13, which contains concrete activities and responsibilities for the period stated.

### **LA21 as a method for public administration quality**

Since 2006, implementation of Local Agenda 21 as a method for public administration quality pursuant to the official set of LA21 Criteria has been included in the “Statutes of the departmental prizes of the Ministry of the Interior for quality in territorial public administration”. Municipalities that have achieved categories C and B are awarded with the bronze and silver prizes, respectively, every year.

### **Anchoring in policy documents**

Strategic Framework for SD, State Environmental Policy, Local Agenda 21 (LA21) Support Policy until 2020 and Action Plan for 2012-13 (MoE); Regional Development Strategy for 2007-2013 (MRD); Smart Administration Implementation Strategy for 2007–2015 (Mol).

### **International cooperation**

The Czech Republic cooperates mainly with the ICLEI. Since 2006, its representative has been a member of the LA21 European Roundtable – an international platform that associates representatives of European countries (not only EU) dealing with support to Local Agenda 21. Meeting participants exchange experience, disseminate good practice and seek for paths of possible joint support to sustainable development at the local level. Inspiration and experience from abroad are thus applied in further policy work or information and findings are shared directly with municipalities. The Aalborg Commitments have become inspiration for the LA21 evaluation system in the CR in this way, for example (see Issues evaluated above).

### **SWOT analysis**

The findings and conclusions that the LA21 WG made while developing the policy paper are summarized below in the form of an analysis of strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats:

Strengths (S)	Weaknesses (W)
<p>S1: Existing structure for LA21 at the national level (RVUR LA21 WG)</p> <p>S2: Functioning methodological support (LA21 Database, etc.), system of LA21 Criteria and LA21 quality recognition (Mol Prize for quality in public administration)</p> <p>S3: Model systemic support to LA21 at the regional level (Vysočina Region)</p> <p>S4: Existing nation-wide association of several dozen advanced LA21 (NSZM), and existing NGOs dealing with supporting LA21 and sustainable development at the local level</p>	<p>W1: Insufficient public awareness of LA21 and sustainable development issues</p> <p>W2: Insufficient political support at the national, regional and local levels (underestimation of importance of LA21 method for public administration)</p> <p>W3: Limited funding, its inadequate orientation (allocation of subsidies not linked with local development quality as represented by LA21) and difficult to achieve and non-systemic use for LA21</p> <p>W4: Low level of departmental LA21 activity outside MoE, MRD, Mol, MoH and MoEYS</p>
Opportunities (O)	Threats (T)
<p>O1: Transfer of LA21 into practice and demonstration of real-world positive impacts</p> <p>O2: Utilization of operational programmes in 2014-2020 and other major sources for funding LA21</p> <p>O3: Systemic support to LA21 at the national and regional level and further development of cooperation among LA21 implementing entities (both nationally and internationally)</p> <p>O4: Achievement of a broad political support to sustainable development issues as a cross-section society-wide topic</p>	<p>T1: Deepening general passivity of the population and its indifference to public issues</p> <p>T2: Unfavourable economic trend and related cuts of funding from public budgets</p> <p>T3: Formalization of some LA21 without impacts on real municipal development (mere reporting as an effort to get money)</p> <p>T4: Failure to understand the systemic foundation of LA21 as a tool for sustainable development (municipalities focusing only on component activities out of context)</p>

### ...Where to go from here

Local Agenda 21 enjoys a good systemic setting in the Czech Republic at the moment, and the number of municipalities interested is growing slowly but steadily. The current crisis and the associated cuts have affected this area. Funding for LA21 from the Revolving Fund has been suspended (see above), and the staff executing the agenda has been cut down not only at the central state administration level. In spite of that, LA21 is constantly rising in this country, largely thanks to Healthy Cities CR – not only the active association members, the actual LA21 implementing entities – politicians with a vision, able coordinators and all the local team members. In addition, the NSZM office is to be thanked: in an economical mode yet absolutely professionally, it develops projects and allows training and discussion events and other activities. Thanks go out to others as well: experts in the academia, NGOs, and helpful representatives of the governmental departments.

Local Agenda 21 is a brand with a good renown in the Czech Republic at present.



*Ing.arch. Marie Petrová,  
Executive Secretary of the LA21 WG  
Ministry of the Environment*

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Koncepce podpory místní Agendy 21 v ČR a Akční plán pro období 2012 – 13 (2011), kolektiv autorů,  
Praha: MŽP

Metodika hodnocení kategorie „A“ místní Agendy 21(2012), kolektiv autorů, Praha: MŽP

All of the above texts are available in full from [www.ma21.cz](http://www.ma21.cz)

### **Internet information sources**

*LA21 information portal*

<http://www.ma21.cz>

*Official LA21 register for the CR*

<http://ma21.cenia.cz>

*Healthy Cities CR*

<http://www.ZdravaMesta.cz>

*Charles University Environment Center*

<http://www.czp.cuni.cz>

## Rio+20 – Public debate: Part III

Lenka Parkánová

### Responsible enterprise and local economic systems as one of the pillars of green economy

*“Green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty reduction”* is the name of one of the crucial chapters of the final paper for the Earth Summit on sustainable development in Rio in preparation. The UN defines and promotes green economy as part of the journey towards sustainable development as follows: It should be an economy contributing to human welfare in a way that succeeds in tackling the problem of finite natural resources, does not harm the environment, and even reduces environmental risks. At the same time, a green economy should be socially beneficial. Investment in efficient and economical technologies, investment reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preventing ecosystem loss, investment that brings new opportunities of course. In a nutshell, that is the vision of an economic system brewed in the UN as well as the European Union, which has decided to be the leader in green innovation. This definition of the green economy concept puts the sustainable development ideas in an “economic framework”, which is still reinventing itself.

### UN Green Economy Initiative

According to the UN, a green economy cannot be seen as a system of rigid rules but rather a framework for decisions by institutions and economic entities at all levels, the concrete appearance of which follows from the local conditions. The development of green economy should be an important ingredient in the recipe for sustainable development for every country regardless of its degree of advancement.

The UN Global Compact initiative is in this spirit; it tries to develop and promote adequate practices in the business sphere and share new experience in the human rights, labour and environmental areas. The platform is a room for cooperation of the private sector with the UN organizations and other relevant non-profit organizations such as the International Labor Organization and the World Business Council on Sustainable Development. The main objective of this cooperation is the promotion of nine principles of sustainable enterprise throughout the world.

#### **Human rights**

Principle 1 – Businesses should promote and respect protection of fundamental human rights;

Principle 2 – make sure they are in no way involved in violating them.

#### **Work standards**

Principle 3 – Businesses should respect the freedom of association and recognize the right to collective bargaining;

Principle 4 – eliminate any form of forced labour;

Principle 5 – not tolerate child labour;

Principle 6 – eliminate discrimination at work.

## **The environment**

Principle 7 – Businesses should promote environmental protection;

Principle 8 – encourage initiatives promoting responsible attitudes to the environment;

Principle 9 – support development and dissemination of environmentally friendly technologies.

## **The Czech Republic on its way to responsible enterprise and local economy**

### **Social responsibility of businesses**

The Czech Republic has seen long-running efforts for support and further development of responsible corporate attitudes. CSR – corporate social responsibility – is the most common term. This is voluntary integration of social and environmental aspects into everyday business operation, while the necessary change process involves cooperation with stakeholders, who include not only business partners but also local authorities, NGOs and the local community. NGOs that actively cooperate with the businesses on developing their social responsibility, such as the [Nadace Partnerství](#), [Byznys pro Společnost](#), [Business Leaders Forum](#) and others, play an important role in developing CSR. The establishment of equal partnerships between the corporate and the non-profit sectors seems to be mutually beneficial. Adopting some corporate organizational strategies may be beneficial in terms of effective management of NGOs. On the other hand, the NGO sector plays an important role in the process of creation and coordination of meaningful projects in companies which have adopted the social responsibility strategy. Development, implementation and reflection of methods for evaluating corporate social responsibility, such as the GRI, can contribute to the growing quality of socially responsible corporate strategies. This method has already been applied and further developed in the Czech Republic.

However, it is appropriate to take into consideration the limitations of the corporate social responsibility concept. The problem is greenwashing: an effort to present a responsible image of a company on the outside which is not based in any real activities. So-called watchdog organizations play an important role in identifying and preventing greenwashing: they keep a watch on (not only) corporate activities and adherence to law in business. The Environmental Law Service is an example. In addition, keep in mind that the social responsibility of companies is a strategy that aims at improving existing corporate practice, but it does not have an ambition to deal with any new setup of an economic system that would embody the sustainable development principles.

### **Small and medium-sized enterprises and local economy**

The issue of responsible corporate attitudes is increasingly associated with large entities in the Czech Republic while less attention is being given to small and medium-sized enterprises and their role in the local economy. The cumulative economic, social and environmental impact of the activity of small and medium-sized enterprises is large, both in the positive (employment) and negative (pollution) sense. Developing cooperation with the key economic category, whether by government institutions or NGO sector entities, should be one of this country's economic development priorities. Examples of such cooperation may be support to introducing quality environmental management systems in small and medium-sized enterprises and setting an appropriate environment for establishing small and medium-sized enterprises that are interlinked with the community and minimize their environmental impact. Social enterprises are small economic entities that emerge and evolve based on the so-called triple bottom line concept: economic, social and environmental. Social enterprises (alternatively called socially beneficial companies) play an important role in local

development; they can bring job opportunities to regions with high unemployment. Social enterprises create job opportunities for persons with medical, social or cultural handicaps. Their profits are largely reused for growing the enterprise. An example of a Czech social enterprise that contributes to the growth of the local economy and employment and also has a positive effect on preserving biodiversity in the landscape, is Moštárna Hostětín. Some social enterprises can be one of the foundation stones of sustainable economic systems, which emphasize local production for local consumption, local monetary circulation and enterprise with a social and environmental dimension. The social enterprise concept is developed, among others, by [HUB Praha](#), [P3 – People, Planet, Profit](#) and [Nová ekonomika, o.p.s.](#)

## Outcomes of the debate on responsible business in the Czech context

The debate on responsible business and developing local economies was launched by the Future We Want conference organized by the Charles University Environment Center in March on the occasion of the Rio+20 Summit. The debate section focusing on green economy and enterprise brought together representatives of both small and large businesses and other representatives of organizations that deal with social and environmental issues within corporate practice in this country. They discussed the current initiatives, good practice examples, opportunities as well as barriers to developing the green economy in this country and measures that could remove the barriers. The table below presents a brief summary of the debate that took place as part of the conference.

<b>What we do already (experience, good practice)</b>	<b>What we could do (future plans)</b>
<p>the Global Compact initiative under Rio+20 – an effort to link business with environmental and social issues and interconnect businesses</p> <p>corporate social responsibility</p> <p>existing examples of social enterprise as a way to promote local, socially and environmentally friendly economy</p>	<p>motivate businesses for systematic work on their environmentally and socially friendly strategies, develop CSR</p> <p>support development of local economy and social enterprise, which respect the finiteness of natural resources</p> <p>educate investors on green innovation</p> <p>continue to influence the market with our ethical approach</p> <p>involve subcontractors more in the chain that is beneficial to sustainable development</p>
<b>Barriers (what hinders our activities)</b>	<b>Needs (strategies, policies, system measures that would support us)</b>
<p>inertia in the established business practice and reluctance to change established stereotypes</p> <p>non-transparent relationships with stakeholders</p> <p>economic crisis and the associated tendency to invest less in environmentally and socially friendly innovations</p> <p>administrative approach instead of flexibility and innovation</p> <p>problematic interpretation of the environmental law – emphasis on reporting and obligations instead of a proactive, innovative approach</p>	<p>transparent laws and corruption-free environment</p> <p>societal demand for environmentally and socially friendly economic approaches and business strategies from consumers, businesses, governments and international institutions</p> <p>platforms for convergence of the private and governmental sectors</p> <p>continued cooperation on commenting on the legislative base</p> <p>revival of the Government Council for Sustainable Development</p> <p>expert debate on the contents and direction of green economy, refinement of the concept, definition of green economy indicators and methods of evaluating it</p>

The following entities were involved in formulating the debate outputs: CUEC, Hotel Adria, UN Information Centre in Prague, P3 – People, Planet, Profit o.p.s., Skanska, Šance pro budovy.

## Conclusion

*Jiří Dlouhý*

The state of the environment has far-reaching impacts on people's lives (primarily in less developed societies), and their activities (and not only economic). Conversely, they are the very activities at the local, regional and global levels that fully shape the (non-)sustainable parameters of the future development of human society. The Rio+20 Conference, from our point of view, should take both ends of the problem and dedicate sufficient attention to how and by whom daily practice is created at all levels.

Internationally, the background for the worldwide Rio+20 Conference was prepared in close dialogue with important social groups and the public. Discussion about the final form of the concluding document, however, was mainly led by the official representatives of individual states and international organisations, i.e. those groups which are most concerned and which have not had too much influence on it. And at the same time a parallel "public hearings" process took place whose results in the form of suggestions and case studies from around the world are presented at the web site <http://futurewewant.org/> and will be presented at the conference as well. However, implementation of the aims of the conference and sustainable development as such is not possible without bringing in all important social actors and the dialogue associated with it; this requirement is based on democratic principles of the equality of all population groups and their active participation in political processes.

We also want to emphasise that it is necessary to create a suitable framework for sustainable development policy. Specific goals, however, cannot now be achieved "top-down" only, i.e. by a simple adjustment of the institutional environment or the modification of economic conditions. Accepted strategies create an environment in which the activities of public administration, NGOs, educational institutions, businesses and individuals should have a place; nevertheless, this environment means nothing if there is no "bottom-up" initiative. Existing initiatives therefore should be sufficiently recognised and conditions created in the future for the establishment, development and expansion of others. Existing potential and experience should be used as much as possible when seeking new goals and strategies for sustainable development, e.g. in the field of economics.

### **In relation to this, we add the following:**

The benefit from the engagement of Czech Major Groups has not been sufficiently assessed and their role in the future is not adequately emphasised either. It is in the future that it is necessary to link the work already undertaken by NGOs, educational institutions and other entities, and confirm, expand and continue it further. The requisite institutional, human resource and other support has been created within the conditions of the Czech Republic, but it is presently being systematically taken apart.

The over-discussed green economy is understood as an innovative system of measures. It is nevertheless necessary to discuss its specific content and look for what it can specifically be built on and where it should lead us. It is also important to consider the wider social context of a green economy, such as its social impact.

Czech Major Groups insist on continuing already initiated development in the direction of sustainability and on preserving the requisite structures and institutions. They emphasise democratic principles of society-wide dialogue which of necessity must develop around sustainable

development. They point out that accessibility of information and the necessity of actively removing communication barriers and creating structures in which required changes of opinion can take place (intersectoral working groups, advisory bodies, expert teams, etc) play a role in this dialogue. These democratic principles, which appear among the future strategic aims of the [final document](#) prepared for negotiation at the Rio+20 Conference (e.g. paragraphs 17–22, 44, 59–63, 98–101, 118–120), should be understood as a condition for the success of the sustainable development strategy, if not directly as its definitive characteristic.

Representatives of Major Groups from the Czech Republic emphasise the following: we need strategic and policy frameworks which Rio+20 should create – such frameworks have in the past often not been perceptibly beneficial to us in the non-government sector as they have tended to be rather abstract tools created at the global or national levels, but on the other hand we recognize that they have the potential to open up the space for our practical activities that take place within them. At the same time, however, we have to be part of the dialogue about this framework that should take place at all levels (local, national, intergovernmental...). On our part, we offer many years of experience whose continuity should be maintained and should be built upon; however, we also want to show the present barriers to our work and mainly to our needs. We have therefore prepared (briefly and certainly incompletely) an overview of the activities of our organisations and their needs from the point of view of the creation of strategies, policies and binding documents which would create the conditions for systematic activity directed at sustainability. A summary can be found in the following table.

### Assessment of the situation in the Czech Republic by Major Groups (according to the conclusions of a public discussion)

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>The high professional level of NGOs, monitoring of world trends in areas they are focused on, and in regard to democratic dialogue fora.</p> <p>Connecting the NGO sphere with science and research, engaging students in NGO activities, promulgating research themes (e.g. thesis work) in cooperation with NGOs.</p> <p>It has been the habit so far to ensure the participation of representatives of Major Groups in expert groups, advisory bodies, government councils and their committees.</p> <p>Effectiveness and self-reflection: NGOs set specific goals, they have clear and measurable outputs, and they evaluate their own activities (self-assessment).</p> <p>There is the ambition: to have a more significant impact on domestic sustainable development policies in key areas (energy savings, land protection, monitoring and indicators, education, Local Agenda 21); to expand cooperation with businesses and create the opportunity for environmentally responsible behaviour among companies and independent evaluation of it.</p> <p>Other specific efforts: provide communities and towns in the Czech Republic with quality tools for managing environmental</p>	<p>Financial limitations – they play an important role in NGO requirements; project financing means uncertainty and administrative burden; has been limited in recent times.</p> <p>SD is generally perceived as an ideology. Systematic discrediting of the term “sustainable development” is the rule among politicians and by some economists and independent media.</p> <p>The Czech Republic is among those countries which do not feel responsibility for big themes (“global climate change”) and does not move in the direction of deeper innovation: existing energy strategies<sup>2</sup> are more or less Potemkin villages in relation to the EU (because they are based on European action plans while lacking any national elaboration) – they are not actively implemented, and sometimes government decisions go directly against them, e.g. in photovoltaics.</p> <p>Democratic methods of governing are not fully embedded:</p> <p>24 % of the population is open to authoritarian methods of government</p> <p>Indifference, little participation in decision-making processes (but 84% of people want to make decisions about local issues at the local level)</p> <p>Lack of a culture and practice in monitoring and evaluating policies at all levels of administration.</p> <p>Czech Major Groups were not included by the Ministry of Environment</p>

<sup>2</sup> National Action Plan of the Czech Republic for Energy and Renewable Sources for 2010-2020, and the Environmental Technology Assistance Programme (ETAP) in the Czech Republic – this was approved only for the years 2005-2009 and was updated in July 2009.

<p>protection and planning sustainable development (indicators, reporting); develop cooperation with other actors (NGOs, schools, businesses, public administration) in the Czech Republic and potentially abroad as well (V4 region, EU).</p>	<p>in the preparation of strategies and commitments for the Rio+20 Conference, for participation in the conference, and their engagement was not considered for meeting the outcomes of the World Summit.</p>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p>	<p><b>Threats</b></p>
<p>A change in the political climate in the country from cynical materialism, pragmatism, corruption and abuse of power and public funds to private goals aimed at a return to honour, culturedness, and defence of public interests of high state bodies to towns and communities, and from state representatives and the police to the courts.</p> <p>A high quality and binding state sustainable development policy, superior to sector strategies. The introduction of regular monitoring indicators to policies and strategies at the national and local level, and the introduction of regular environmental reporting to policies and strategies at the national and local levels.</p> <p>Elimination of clientism and corruption, and improved governance, which are the key conditions of a sustainable society. Maintenance of the principles of subsidiarity; overcoming “patch protection” among ministries and improved coordination.</p> <p>A stable and adequate percentage of the public budget for the support of culture, environmental protection, and the NGO sector, and transparent and stable rules for provision of grants and other forms of public assistance for NGOs.</p> <p>Greater acknowledgement of the role of non-government and non-profit organisation in the area when they often focus on themes that are otherwise neglected in state policy.</p> <p>Greater emphasis on EU bodies for enforcing room for the NGO sector, its participation in decision-making, the right to information and court protection from chicanery in the sense of the Aarhus Convention as a condition for the granting of support from all EU funds.</p> <p>A systematic and long-term strategy for the management of democratic dialogue with NGOs, ensuring their participation in expert and advisory bodies, and systematic development of communication tools.</p> <p>Cultivation of cooperation between the non-profit sector, government departments, agencies and the commercial sphere.</p>	<p>A lack of understanding of the principles of democratic dialogue, misunderstanding of the term “public interest”, non-consideration of legitimate long-term interests, e.g. of future generations.</p> <p>Sustainable development is not ensured institutionally (in some states they have a separate ministry or agency), and in addition there is a reduction of activities of the single coordinating Sustainable Development Council (it met once after than a year). It is necessary at a minimum to at least implement the Strategic Sustainable Development Framework from 2010 pursuant to the implementation part of the Strategy, as well as the proposed implementation that the government noted only without a binding commitment; in other words, the implementation has been ignored to a considerable extent.</p> <p>Bureaucracy, formalism, red tape, a disorganised system (informational overload), and non-transparency.</p> <p>The low literacy of politicians, and unwillingness to communicate by the Ministry of Environment, public administration institutions and lobby groups.</p> <p>Associated manipulation of public opinion with the use, for example, of incorrect methods of public opinion surveys and scientific findings that have not been properly reviewed, etc.</p> <p>An ethical approach and ethical themes in practice are neglected.</p> <p>Little engagement and support by the public. Existing prejudices and stereotypes in society that are reproduced through the media.</p> <p>Chaotic state policies in the field of sustainable development and environmental protection, and a non-functioning institutional framework (a non-functioning Government Council for SD).</p> <p>The persistent latent aversion of the present political establishment in the Czech Republic to non-government civic activities, demonstrations of discontent with government policies, and the promotion of environmental and human rights themes in public discourse.</p> <p>Close and systematic cooperation between the state and the non-profit sector is lacking – information that the non-profit sector collects has no weight with state representatives.</p> <p>Non-profit organisations have an unclear position and there is an ambivalent attitude toward their activities in the field of environmental protection and sustainable development.</p> <p>Clientelism, which operates throughout society.</p> <p>The low capacity of human resources stemming from a lack of financial means (fewer possibilities of receiving a grant) is one of the internal barriers.</p>

The outputs are the results of a public debate that took place as part of a public hearing and conference called [The Future We Want](#) in the Czech Republic; it included all the suggestions sent in the form of separate contributions (and which are published in this publication).

## Appendix

We maintain and improve an EMS system under EN 16001 and an Energy Management System under ISO 50001; we certify SA8000 mostly with a focus on human rights and work conditions for both Skanska's employees and those in our supplier-client chain.

We communicate the environmental impacts of our activities.

We publish case studies on sustainability.

We are a member of the Business for Society platform – forum of responsible companies. We have participated in authoring the handbook "From first steps to a comprehensive strategy – The company and the environment".

We are a member of the [CZGBC](http://CZGBC).

Our activities are hindered by:

- Non-transparency.
- Administrative approach.
- Problematic interpretation of the environmental law – emphasis on reporting and obligations instead of a proactive, innovative approach.

[www.skanska.cz](http://www.skanska.cz)

We could:

- Involve our subcontractors more in the chain that is favourable to sustainable development.
- Continue to influence the market with an ethical attitude.
- Educate investors in green building issues.

[www.skanska.cz](http://www.skanska.cz)

We have the following needs:

- Transparent laws and corruption-free environment.
- Platforms for convergence of the private and governmental sectors.
- Continued cooperation on commenting on the legislative base.
- Revival of the Government Council for Sustainable Development.

• [www.skanska.cz](http://www.skanska.cz)

Skanska a.s., Contact:

Karel Fronk, [Karel.Fronkk@skanska.cz](mailto:Karel.Fronkk@skanska.cz)

## Municipality of Kopřivnice, [www.koprivnice.cz](http://www.koprivnice.cz)

The town of Kopřivnice is located in the Moravian-Silesian Region, in the foothills of the Beskydy. Its modern history is inseparably bound to the TATRA automobile manufacturer and many companies in the automotive industry are headquartered in it today.

The earliest activities related to Local Agenda 21 in Kopřivnice date back to the 1990s. Involving the public alongside strategic planning and participation of the public, private and non-profit sectors in the urban development have been the cornerstones of its sustainability.

Being a member of the “Healthy Cities in the CR” association and in line with sharing these municipalities’ priorities, we became involved in 2011 in intense work toward the common goal: sustainable urban development. [www.koprivnice.cz](http://www.koprivnice.cz)

Barriers include little support and lack of a systemic approach of the government to sustainable development issues and to municipalities striving for a proactive approach to the benefit of SD. Another obstacle is the mistrust towards public administration generated by the media, negatively affecting the citizens’ willingness to be involved in public affairs.

Within the CR, we want to be a sustainable town with firm foundations for social stability, good environment and a strong economic potential.

We want to continue building on the principles of partnership, public participation and common sense.

We will continue the strategic urban management with an active participation of our partners in the planning and decision-making processes, thus promote the sense of belonging of our citizens to Kopřivnice, the place where they live.

Cities and towns need real and quantifiable benefits from promoting the sustainable development principles and implementing Local Agenda 21 as a tool for achieving the common goal.

We are aware of the basic economic factor, that is, the limited funds. What might help would be, e.g., a system of bonuses to sustainable towns when evaluating funding applications or a link between implementation of LA21 principles and allocation of subsidies.

Municipality of Kopřivnice, Dagmar Rysová –  
Guarantor of the Healthy City and Local  
Agenda 21 project; Ivana Rašková –  
Coordinator of the Healthy City and Local  
Agenda 21 project; e-mail:  
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CENELC.CZ focuses on promoting implementation of the European Landscape Convention (CETS No. 176), and promotes the principles of subsidiarity and sustainable development of cultural landscape.

We have both positive and negative experience with landscape and can learn from past mistakes; we also need to know and apply new findings, examples, political and strategic measures. The loss of natural awareness of landscape has to be supplanted with education.

[www.cenelc.cz](http://www.cenelc.cz)

We lack exchange and coordination among countries, regions, universities, NGOs, and connection and cooperation among the levels – nationally and internationally

- \* in the Czech Republic, the Government lacking interest is an obstacle; the governance disrespects subsidiarity
- \* poor coordination among different government departments (departmentism)
- \* differing expectations of public power and the public
- \* differing views of experts and users
- \* difficult relation between deliberative and representative democracy
- \* lack of organized stakeholder involvement (some do not get involved)
- \* public indifference to landscape issues
- \* landscape seen as obstacle to development
- \* participative research in not followed by implementation

We cannot exist without landscape and (cultural) landscape is nothing without us.

(European) landscapes are threatened by economic development, urbanization, agricultural intensification, soil abandonment, climate change, fires, deforestation, fragmented transport networks, mass tourism (e.g., along coasts and protected areas) and war zones.

Urbanized landscapes are very dynamic, complex and multi-function. Urban spreading is a major type of change in land use that affects Europe (and other continents) today.

In near future, more than 60% of the planet's population will live in urban areas.

The landscape is our identity: it defines the spiritual dimension of humanity. We need to take joint care of the landscape.

The landscape is a platform for education (learning through the landscape). We need a common understanding, finding the answer to these questions:

Can we meet all our requirements/needs in the same place at the same time?

What is „easy“ to achieve yet favourable to sustainability (future)?

What is more/most important to us?

What is most important to landscape?

How to protect landscape so it can fulfil its vital roles in future as well?

CENELC.CZ, Contact:

Martin Stránský, [stransky.martin@cenelc.cz](mailto:stransky.martin@cenelc.cz)

The CUEC is a stand-alone institute of Charles University focusing on university-level research and teaching and providing information services on the environment and sustainable development. It develops new disciplines such as environmental economics, indicator and social metabolism research, new approaches and evaluation in education, etc. We focus on interdisciplinary working methods, cooperation networking across academic borders, and seeking innovation potentials in various disciplines.

CUEC: [www.czp.cuni.cz](http://www.czp.cuni.cz)

CUEC

The CUEC establishes numerous international contacts, which is a potential for its future growth – we follow the latest global trends in education and research and are involved in international cooperation networks, whose experience we replicate in the Czech Republic. Our cooperation networks with Czech universities, research institutions and the non-academic sphere promote a new culture of science and education open towards society.

CUEC

Project financing difficulties are the main barrier to the Center's future growth – be it the unclear and changeable grant sources, sometimes following political priorities of the Czech Government or the EU, the heavy paperwork load associated with their implementation, or the impossibility to achieve a connection between research and other issues,

CUEC

The principal need of the CUEC is a transformation of the institutional environment: setting of such conditions that would support interdisciplinary teaching and research, innovations and their promotion at Czech universities, and open up room for a dialogue with society (beyond the academic discourse). Ideally, this transformation should be reflected in the organization of each university institution, affect the possibilities for changing its professional and logistic functioning, change the methods of evaluating its achievements, and have tangible results in funding. This would achieve university institutions more open to (the needs of) society.

CUEC

Charles University Environment Center,

Contact:

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**Czech Association for Environment, [www.csvts.cz/cspzp](http://www.csvts.cz/cspzp)**

The CAEC is a non-governmental, scientific and technical civic association whose primary mission is to promote the importance of environmental care through information and educational activities especially for the needs of economic sectors and the public administration sphere. The CAEC is member of the Czech Association of Scientific and Technical Societies, headquartered in Prague, and the European Network of Environmental Professionals, headquartered in Brussels.

[www.csvts.cz/cspzp](http://www.csvts.cz/cspzp)

The CAEC intends to continue providing objective information and organizing discussions on major environmental issues, on which the professional and lay public may have differing opinions (environmental impacts of nuclear energy, environmental sanctions, photovoltaics, RES, etc.). We want to expand our educational activities to the high school and university sector. The CAEC intends to intensify its cooperation with the ENEP, chiefly by participating in its working groups, because the ENEP is a major consultant to the European Commission, meaning it provides room for defending and promoting the Czech Republic's positions in the EU.

CAE

The costs of our seminars, conferences and other educational activities are mostly covered from participation fees, and from CAEC membership fees where applicable. Larger involvement of students should be made possible by a subsidy from the MoEYS or the MoE. Our involvement in the ENEP working groups, of importance to the Czech Republic, should also be supported with funding from the central public administration bodies to cover the necessary travel expenses.

CAE

The CAEC recommends striving for increased general awareness among politicians, the media and the public of the positive attitude of most businesses to environmental protection. Unlike the negative examples, both politicians and journalists ignore the positive examples, which are much more numerous.

CAE

The core of EkoFutura's work is to spread the ideas of sustainability – Ethically-Ecologically-Economically – among the general public, primarily through saving the only well-established popular scientific environmental magazine in the Czech Republic with 22 years of tradition. The EKOfutura envi-magazine focuses on 3 basic groups of issues: Social responsibility, environmental management, business ethics; Environmental aspects in science, research and education; Environmentally friendly and money-saving products and services (new technologies, RES, green building, transport, water and waste management, eco agriculture, etc.). It responds to one of the most current requirements of today: to live economically and ecologically. Thanks to first-class, scientifically knowledgeable authors, it popularizes latest findings in all disciplines; it describes environmental projects all over the world, activities of socially responsible companies, events, etc.

1<sup>st</sup> goal, ideological: Fill in the gap in general public information, so noticeable in sustainability sphere; reinforce the ethical awareness and use the environmental context to bring current, scientifically verified information and thus establish people's conscious relationship to both the environment and society.

2<sup>nd</sup> goal, practical: Continue to expand the magazine in periodicity, pages, frequency of updates of its web version (i.e., increase reader attractiveness); organize educational-motivational events and contests for students and raise their importance to the international level; staff the editing and management; be involved in major environmental events domestically and abroad, cooperate creatively with other media (television etc.).

I have been working without an income for the 6<sup>th</sup> month, 16 hours a day, no free time, and it's having an impact on my health. I have applied for 2 grants, failed. The only effect was a delay in the publishing, because I have no time to spare and filling the application forms is a job for the fittest. What keeps me going is the increasing numbers of subscribers, positive feedback and good author base. The advertisements have earned for the publishing, but not for my expenses and work. I do several people's work and there's so much that ironically, I have the least time for fundraising and making new contacts. The project has devoured my financial reserves, I'm having existential worries. The plus is that it has attracted a few student volunteers, whom I take along to events, edit their manuscripts, and teach them about the media. All of this is under endless stress; I still give much more than I get. I expected to see more such enthusiasts in the sector and thought there would be more mutual support and cooperation...

We know about massive grants going to fictitious ecological projects, whereas this tangible project only receives empty phrases from officials. The fundamental defect is society-wide, systemic, related to the functioning of the power structures. There is a lack of communication on the part of the MoE, which should naturally register environmental organizations and media. I'm not aware of any chance to become part of a logical, meaningful system or an entity that would help with concrete action.

Another thing: The European Environmental Press Association has rated our magazine as the best environmental magazine in the CR. But the membership requires an annual fee equal to the price of a full-page advertisement. I cannot afford to pay that, so I had to decline the prize. The French didn't understand (they have a much bigger market which takes even expert media to different amounts). Small countries cannot have the same rules and rating indicators.

The biggest obstacles are red tape, formalism, paperwork, system chaos (and information overflow) and manipulation (opening a grant competition so late that only those informed in advance can make it). EkoFutura was meant to be a solution (but it's stuck in a vicious circle).

EkoFutura, o. s./EnviMagazin EKOfutura  
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**Envigogika, CUEC, [www.envigogika.cuni.cz](http://www.envigogika.cuni.cz)**

Envigogika is a reviewed journal published purely electronically since 2006. It was established to support the emerging discipline of environmental education and expert dialogue in the area. It published original scientific papers and improves communication with practical teachers and lecturers by bringing important experience, information and inspiration: it has published 60 reviewed papers and about 150 papers in other categories so far. A community of experts responding to current issues in education, Education for Sustainable Development strategies, etc. has been forming around Envigogika.

[www.envigogika.cuni.cz](http://www.envigogika.cuni.cz)

The plan for future growth is to make an English version of the journal, for which we are searching for foreign members of the editorial board, reviewers, etc. In the CR, we will continue to establish our loyal writing and reviewing community, one built on the principles of mutual respect and critical dialogue; we intend to hold events that demonstrate (professional) writing possibilities and techniques and thus train and recruit new authors.

There are rather endless possibilities to improve electronic texts formally (printable pdf versions of papers, media use, etc.); but it all depends on capacity

The journal is funded with grants and has a limited number of editors; work on the texts is thus often not systemic. The circle of authors is relatively narrow, which more or less matches the size of the expert community in the CR; the problem is to get quality reviewers who would improve the professional quality of the papers. The electronic environment is a good tool for an up-to-date and interactive publishing process, but has its drawbacks: if the editing system has to be updated, unpredictable changes take effect.

Like every expert publishing medium, we need predictable and stable conditions for acknowledging results of R&D, which is the greatest “value added” for authors who decide to publish through us. The Czech teaching community should continue to increasingly recognize the need for a broad and critical expert dialogue reflecting typically Czech experience and foreign resources. We cannot expect any systemic funding support to publishing media, but setting transparent and clear requirements for grant awarding in the area should be part of the R&D policy.

Envigogika, CUEC, Contact:

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Fórum 50% is a public benefit corporation that strives for equal representation of women and men in politics and decision-making in general. We organize: 1. Awareness raising and education for the public (seminars, conferences, roundtables); 2. Campaigns for active electorate and support to women with preferential votes; 3. Lobbying for higher representation of women in politics – promoting gender quotas for election tickets; 4. Training, meetings and networking for women politicians and active women; 5. Training for political parties on equal opportunities; 6. Public information – press conferences and releases, website [www.padesatprocent.cz](http://www.padesatprocent.cz), journal papers, analyses of election tickets and results, commissioning of opinion polls; 7. We are member of the Government Board for equal opportunities for women and men, its Committee for equal representation of women and men in politics and decision-making and Committee for institutional arrangement of equal opportunities for women and men; the Fórum manager is the chairwoman of the Czech Women's Lobby; we are part of the Social Watch coalition and a Green Circle sectoral platform.

The greatest obstacle to us is the constant uncertainty concerning the funding for our operations. We depend on foreign resources from private foundations, but those do not promise long-term sustainability: many foundations are shifting their focus further “east”. There is an absolute lack of systemic support to equal gender opportunities by the State; non-profits that deal with the issue practically have no access to money from European and State funds. We run against prejudice and stereotypes in society, reproduced by the media.

Fórum 50%, o.s., Marcela Adamusová,  
[adamusova@padesatprocent.cz](mailto:adamusova@padesatprocent.cz)

We want to achieve at least a 30% representation of women at all levels of politics. To that end, we want to: 1. Achieve adoption of gender quotas for election tickets; 2. Support mutual cooperation among existing women politicians, promote mentoring; 3. Undermine gender stereotypes and established division of labour by the gender; 4. Support adoption of the *European charter of equality of women and men in local life* by as many Czech municipalities as possible; 5. Promote international cooperation and experience exchange.

The gravest need currently is for a change in the government's attitude to equal opportunities issues. 1. Closer and more systemic cooperation between the government and the NGO sector: information collected by the NGOs (e.g., monitoring of international commitments) does not reach the government representatives. 2. Funding support to equal opportunities for women and men in a broader context: both thematically (not focused almost exclusively on the labour market) and concerning the type of activity (advocacy, watchdogs, think-tanks, etc.). 3. Handle equality of women and men at all levels of decision-making, incl. regional and municipal (e.g., using the European charter). 4. Assure continuity of organizations by means of institutional support.

**Caritas Czech Republic (Caritas CR), [www.caritasczech.org](http://www.caritasczech.org)**

Caritas CR is a non-governmental non-profit organization active in the Czech Republic mostly in the social and health areas and implements humanitarian and development projects in a number of developing countries.

In its work abroad, Caritas CR also focuses on areas directly or indirectly related to global climate change: we support sustainable and eco-friendly agriculture, construction materials and techniques, help prevent natural disasters and reduce the risk of desertification, and teach sustainable water management. In its humanitarian and development work, Caritas CR acts to minimize the environmental impacts of its work.

Caritas CR participates in the project Sustainable Technologies in Development Cooperation:  
[www.udrzitelnost.cz](http://www.udrzitelnost.cz)

Caritas CR is most hindered in its work to prevent global climate change and adapting to its consequences to the extent it deems necessary by the existing system of project funding that result in the organization's activities largely being determined by the strategies and plans of donors, who sometimes favour other issues.

Caritas CR has the potential to progressively get involved in activities aiming at influencing the political strategies of the CR, the EU and the international community as a whole that affect the situation in developing countries, including strategies related to the global climate change process.

Such activity of Caritas CR will quite naturally complement its activities carried out in those countries and contribute to tackling the primary causes of some of the problems the effects of which Caritas CR is currently mitigating.

Therefore, involvement in activities influencing policy is among the long-term priorities of Caritas CR.

The principal need is sufficient resources for funding preventive and adaptation measures in developing countries to an extent that global climate change issues can be adequately reflected in the development and humanitarian work.

Other needs include:

- Support to Caritas CR work by the public;
- The Czech Government recognizing its responsibility arising from global climate change.

**Caritas Czech Republic (Caritas CR),**

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**NGO IMAGION AMAZONIA, [www.imagion.info](http://www.imagion.info)**

In the city of Pucallpa in Amazonia, we educate children in an entertaining form towards a favourable attitude to the wild Amazonian fauna. Our work is intentionally aimed at the poor and peripheral areas of the city, where the community continues to expand into secondary jungle, or often – without an exaggeration – into a semidesert. The NGO IMAGION AMAZONIA intends to obstinately and continually pierce through the locals' indifference to the natural environment.

IMAGION AMAZONIA: [www.imagion.info](http://www.imagion.info)

We have 3 main objectives.

1. Continue our educational activities for all the children right in the street or another public space and involve students, including Czech ones, in these activities over time.
2. Set up a base and an international “think tank” with an environmental programme of its own choice in our little congress centre.
3. Achieve local politicians' support to turn Pucallpa into a “model city for teaching children favour towards nature”.

IMAGION AMAZONIA

Funding and entrenchment of the UN mostly. One month's salary for a mid-level UN official keeps my project going for a year with 1 ½ wages, serving directly and live in a way that can be seen: right in the streets, with about 10,000 children in total. We need people willing to fight for biodiversity and sustainability in tropical ecosystems and cities, not in skyscrapers in New York and Montreal.

IMAGION AMAZONIA

I think we need to be able to tell effective, low-cost and efficient projects apart from others. I think this one is like that. But, I have approached 2000 Czech primary schools with the rather attractive offer under this project, and not one has replied. What to do? Not give up.

IMAGION AMAZONIA

NGO IMAGION AMAZONIA, Contact:  
Jiří Kmínek, [Kminek.Jiri@seznam.cz](mailto:Kminek.Jiri@seznam.cz)

Contribution to public debate in preparation of Rio+20 Earth Summit

**Klub ekologické výchovy o.s. (Ecological Education Club), <http://kev.ecn.cz>**

Klub ekologické výchovy o.s. (abbreviated to KEV) is a professional association of teachers and schools for environmental education and its history dates back to 1995. At present, the association has 283 collective (entire schools and research institutes and universities) and 35 individual members in the CR.

Doc. RNDr. PaedDr. M. Švecová, CSc. is currently the chairwoman of KEV. It was founded by PhDr. RNDr. D. Kvasničková, CSc., decorated with the UNEP Global 500 Award.

<http://kev.ecn.cz>

Traditional KEV activities include the nation-wide literary and art competition open for primary and secondary school students on various sustainable development issues. Our environmental conferences focusing on support to student research activities are on a supraregional nature: they include presentations by schools abroad.

Many of our events are organized in cooperation with the Czech UNESCO.

KEV is an education institution accredited by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) and holds many annual seminars, workshops and conferences for primary and secondary school teachers, focusing on environmental education; we head and participate in projects involving KEV network schools not only as pilot schools but also as project partners. The purpose of these activities is to improve the quality of school equipment for environmental education. Schools with a pro-environmental tradition are becoming Centres of Education for Sustainable Development in cooperation with regional authorities.

An important target group is mid-level EE managers in schools, emphasizing improvement of managerial skills of EE coordinators. We hold annual coordinator meetings (in 8 regions in 2012).

All KEV activities are based on legislative documents, whether the National EE Scheme, the National SD Strategy or the Framework Education Programmes. KEV members are actively involved in drawing up these documents and are members of working groups of the MoEYS, the Education Research Institute and regional EE boards (Prague and Central Bohemia).

KEV is also represented in the Czech UNESCO Committee.

<http://kev.ecn.cz>

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The basic platform for cooperation is three public sector institutions that focus on research, teaching and practical applications of sustainability/security in the various places. The nature of the underlying discipline – Geography – leads to the need to link approaches and positions of natural and social sciences in the focus, which although being somewhat professional is not so strictly defined but rather tends to a thematic, problem-oriented grasp of the issues in question. The transdisciplinary approach builds on a deep knowledge of the territory, identification of players and networking following the MAS model: political representation, NGOs, public sector/citizens.

Our experience aims towards developing the dialogue between the world of science and its application with the needs of those affected by its consequences. We do so in our activities focused on intensive field and project teaching, integration into the sustainability discourse in primary, secondary and college teaching practice and using the LENSUS scheme connected to establishing international cooperation. Our field work is based on the understanding the institutes are regional hubs of erudition, mostly focused on handling sustainability issues in example areas, involving owners, users, decision-makers and stakeholders as part of territorial public administration represented by goals and measures of regional development programmes with microregional development and MAS schemes.

The difficulties that our practical work comes across include the current setting of R&D, which focuses rather towards reporting quantitative performance, putting the more humanity-oriented researches in the shade of natural science and applied disciplines within university funding schemes.

Another major problem is the conservative practice of Czech geography teaching. We see this problem in a discourse restriction of what geography teaching is and should be.

Important needs include the development and anchoring of the role of a regional educational institute (primary, secondary school, college) in the domestic institutional environment, which is capable of creating its own autonomous version of the attitude to studying the environment in which it is rooted. The purpose is to open a discourse concerning sites and topics, create a civic society starting with children/pupils/ students while being able to detect deficiencies by applying a transdisciplinary approach to studying landscape ecosystems – basic spatial substance-energy units while distinguishing their assets-stock-yield-income syntax in the production practice in a social context, leading to proposals for a solution and search for a consensus.

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## Social Watch Coalition, [www.socialwatch.cz](http://www.socialwatch.cz)

Social Watch is an international network of civic associations established in 1995, striving for eradicating poverty and its causes, ending all forms of discrimination and racism, assurance of just distribution of wealth and fulfilment of human rights. The Czech Social Watch coalition was set up in 2008 and it deals mainly with poverty and social rights, development cooperation, gender equity, the environment, migrants and minorities. The establishment and growth of the coalition was made possible by a European project in which its member organizations did both research and professional work (writing national monitoring reports for the Czech Republic for the Social Watch international annual report, focusing on the gender inequity and poverty situation in the Czech context), education through seminars, and campaigns and lobbying. The Czech Social Watch includes the Ecumenical Academy, Gender Studies, Fórum 50%, Trust for Economy and Society, NESEHNUTÍ, Masaryk Democratic Academy, and Eurosolar.

The weakest point of the coalition is insufficient funding sources and time and staff capacities. After completion of the pilot project, we have not found more resources so that the activities are severely limited and done purely on a voluntary basis. This results in more problems such as low capacity of action (cannot respond to current issues flexibly), lack of a concept for work with target groups, etc. Despite the high professionalism of the members, the coalition is little known in the Czech context so far. Another obstacle is that issues that we deal with are under strong pressure by various interest groups (industrial lobby, multi-national corporations, etc., and some (e.g., gender equity) are publicly perceived as controversial. Our position is further made difficult by the current political situation in the country, emphasizing budget cuts but neglecting the “human” dimension of the reforms and their adverse effect on some population categories.

In future, we would like to expand the coalition with more member organizations and intensify our cooperation with other organizations, including international. We want to upgrade the coalition’s PR, chiefly through its website and the social networks, via which we would like to flexibly react on current issues and cases. We would like to intensify our lobbying activities and continue the regular and long-term cooperation with the political representation (maintaining the coalition’s strictly impartial stand).

Generally speaking, we would need more support to education, including educating adults about sustainable development in both the economic and social sense, and more recognition for the role of NGOs in this area, which often deal with issues otherwise neglected in government policy. The work of the coalition and its member organizations is mostly dependent on project funding. Developing project applications is often very time and capacity-consuming, also due to excessive red tape, in both national and European-level projects. Despite the quality of the project applications submitted, their success is limited given the very limited funds. Recognition of the important role of the non-profit sector by the government, more funding support and reducing the red-tape and administrative obstacles would empower many of the organizations.

Social Watch Coalition,

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**SRAZ Association, Toulcův Dvůr environmental education centre,  
[www.sdruzenisraz.cz](http://www.sdruzenisraz.cz)**

SRAZ Association works in the Toulcův Dvůr environmental education centre in Prague, developing various educational programmes for children, youth and adults. We enable both the healthy and handicapped to become involved in interesting activities leading one to responsible conduct towards others, animals and nature, contributing to a healthy lifestyle and offering space for meetings and mutual understanding. For example, we do environmental education programmes for schools, seminars for students, adults and experts, events for the public, free-time clubs for children, hippotherapy, and farm work therapy. We also breed autochthonous races of farm animals.

SRAZ: [www.sdruzenisraz.cz](http://www.sdruzenisraz.cz)

We would like to capitalize on our experience with considerate handling of animals, nature and ourselves by developing new teaching methodologies focused on caring for domestic and farm animals and riding. We would like to continue improving our educational activities following the principles of effective environmental education and in line with the latest trends in welfare breeding.

SRAZ

The chief need of our organization, which runs environmental education for school collectives and the public, hippotherapy and social employment, is to ensure constant funding. We lack a stable contribution from public sources that would partially cover the basic functioning of our organization and reduce the excessive paperwork. Since we deal with developing ethics and environmental sensitiveness towards nature, we lack clear support by governmental documents.

SRAZ

Barriers include difficult acquisition of funds for our public benefit activities. Another obstacle is the very time-consuming project administration work and frequent reluctance of some public administration institutions to communicate with NGOs.

SRAZ

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**Society for Sustainable Living, [www.stuz.cz](http://www.stuz.cz)**

1. We associate people with a common view of the need to bring people and the economy to a trajectory of long-term sustainability of living.
2. We organize regular awareness-raising seminars for our members and the public on various current topics, excursions and trips; we organize and co-organize conferences on SD and participate in those organized with similar programmes by others.
3. We organize the SD Platform, associating environmental as well as economic and social NGOs with the aim to cooperate on a balance of all the three pillars of sustainability.
4. We comment on policies, strategies, plans, land use plans and projects (SEA, EIA) in preparation from the SD perspective.

SSL, [www.stuz.cz](http://www.stuz.cz)

1. Continue everything we have done so far (see “What we do”).
2. Recruit as members more involved people of various professions and skills and expand our regional branches and task forces to cover the whole country and the international context and the full breadth of the SD issues.
3. Where the SfSL enters political debate, it should be considered an equal “player” whose opinions are respected, are part of the decision-making process and influence its results.
4. If 2 above is met, then apply for projects on the announced topics that match the principles of sustainable development, ensure paid consultancy and acquire more funds and resources for the organization’s work and professional base.

SSL

1. Activity funding uncertainty resulting from non-transparency and subjective decisions on subsidy allocation, impossibility of long-term activity and growth planning.
2. The resulting inability to keep up a publicly accessible information centre and a functioning library.
3. Lasting latent dislike of the CR’s current political establishment for NGO and civic activities, expressions of disapproval of governmental policy, and promotion of environmental and human rights issues in the public discourse.
4. Purposeful disrepute of the term “sustainable development” by politicians and some economists and dependent media.

SSL

1. A change in the political climate in this country from cynical materialism, pragmatism, corruption and power and public fund abuse for private purposes towards a restoration of honour, culture and protection of public interests by the supreme government bodies all the way down to municipalities, public prosecutors, police and courts.
2. A stable and adequate percentage of public budgets for support to culture, environmental protection and the non-governmental sector, and transparent and stable rules for allocating grants and other forms of public support to NGOs.
3. Systemic and long-term strategies for running a democratic dialogue with NGOs, assurance of their presence in expert and advisory bodies, systemic development of communication instruments.
4. More emphasis of the EU bodies on winning space for the NGO sector, its participation in decision-making, right to information and court protection from bullying as per the Aarhus Convention as a precondition for allocation of subsidies from all EU funds.

SSL

Society for Sustainable Living,

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**Team Initiative for Local Sustainable Development, TIMUR**

**www.timur.cz**

TIMUR is an NGO/think tank focusing on assessing sustainable development indicators, primarily at the local and regional levels. In our more than ten years, we have cooperated with over 50 municipalities in the CR. We also monitor and popularize the environmental and carbon footprint at various levels (municipalities, regions, schools, businesses) and develop reports on urban environment.

We have an ambition to have more influence on domestic sustainable development policy in key areas (energy efficiency, territorial protection, monitoring and indicators, education, local Agenda 21). We want to expand our cooperation with businesses and create opportunities for environmentally responsible corporate behaviour and its independent evaluation. We want to continue providing Czech municipalities with quality tools for environmental protection management and sustainable development planning (indicators, reporting). We want to develop our cooperation with other stakeholders (NGOs, schools, businesses, public administration) in the CR and, prospectively, abroad as well (V4 region, EU).

The greatest obstacle is the low “societal demand for sustainable development.” This results in a chaotic state policy on sustainable development and environmental protection and the dysfunctional institutional framework (non-functional Government Council for SD). There is a lack of culture and practice of monitoring and assessing policies at all levels of administration, connected to the persevering disapproving view of any kind of planning. NGOs are in an unclear position, which is related to the ambivalent approach to their activities in environmental protection and sustainable development. Another obstacle is the clientelism across the society. Major internal obstacles include a lack of funds (few grant opportunities) and low human resource capacity.

What matters is a culturing of the cooperation between NGOs and government authorities and agencies and the commercial sphere. Another need is a long-term concept for NGO funding support to assure public benefit work for the environment and SD. As for sustainable development, we need good and binding national SD policy above the sectoral strategies. This must be enhanced with regular monitoring of indicators and regular environmental reporting in national and local policies and strategies. That cannot be done without eliminating the clientelism and corruption and improving the governance, key conditions for a sustainable society.

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# “The Czech Challenge: Truth for the Future”

## The Message

*The main motto “We don’t need to know much more, just work more” was declared already at the UN Environment Conference in Nairobi.*

The text below is entirely in line with the thoughts behind the speeches delivered at the conference Face of Our Earth: The Home Landscape in 2008. We just have not been able – or willing – to reach down to the bottom of the issue/thought and have only searched for the core of the problem in its consequences rather than its causes.

This is a challenge to the whole community of enlightened people, for whom it might bring an impulse to start coping with the unrestrained and self-destructive factors of human society development. Such thoughts (and actions to follow) might help in the decades to come to remedy the still reversible damage done to nature, this Earth. Here we present a selection of them:

## “The Czech Challenge: Truth for the Future”

- Let us stop repeating mistakes that we know endanger the essence of sustainable living!
- Let us start raising our children, grandchildren and next populations from the very birth for modesty, thriftiness and reducing the material and spiritual consumerism!
- Let us explain to them that excessive accumulation of possessions too means a degradation of the natural wealth!
- Let us explain that manual and mental work is an equal and unsubstitutable part and purpose of human existence and that parasitizing on the creative work of others leads to self-destruction of human individuals and entire civic communities!
- Let us teach ourselves and the generations to come to foresee the future consequences of our decisions today and in future, to not cause more problems than we can solve in our lifetime. Let us honour the precautionary principle! Let us stop being a shame to our species, the Homo sapiens, or “wise man”. The way we behave today, we are not very wise at all.
- ...<sup>i</sup>

We invite you who wish to endorse this challenge to complete it and live it – to adopt this challenge as your document in the spirit of **Ivan Dejmal’s legacy** and become its bearers and spreaders. This challenge has already been included in the proceedings of the conference Face of Our Earth: The Home Landscape in 2008.

Petr Pakosta, Hora Svaté Kateřiny. The author has been, or currently is, a miner, a teacher, a mayor and deputy mayor, and a member of the local government in a borderland municipality; a friend and colleague of Ivan Dejmal, Jarda Stoklasa, the sociologist Bohuslav Blažek and others.

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<sup>i</sup> five more challenges in the original version

## Several comments on Education for Sustainable Development (Anna Polášková, [polaskova@faf.cuni.cz](mailto:polaskova@faf.cuni.cz))

In the recent decades, we have seen a cardinal change in the need for a person to know and be able to do in order to find an application and niche in life – a home, a meaningful profession and mission.

**An inflexible education system** fails to result in personality and specific talent development. The result is a moderately literate human monoculture, blindly imitating isolated superficial and dubious behaviour and life patterns.

In both nature and human society, monocultures are uneconomic, vulnerable and dangerous to all that is unique and different, for biodiversity. Spreading such pseudo education throughout the world cannot lead to sustainable development.

### Education for sustainable development:

- 1. Support specialization very early on based on the child's abilities and the community's needs.** Poor countries do not need more literate soldiers but rather a division of labour and a complex system of various professions that leads to a rational utilization of resources, as the history of Europe has shown. A teacher should primarily teach **logical, rational, independent and creative thinking** and help choose a profession.
- 2. Require constant education for teachers, ideally complemented with practice:** Most youth today are capable of fast, creative and abstract enough thinking thanks to the information technologies. It is likely, and proven on many examples, that teachers who have gone through several years of practice and continue to educate themselves can mediate the children today much better and practical knowledge and life attitude, chiefly in technical disciplines, that a self-satisfied “professional pedagogue”, who has spent all their life between the age of six and retirement at school. However, basic teaching skills are a precondition for any successful practical teacher.
- 3. Defend true democracy:** Raising or lowering some professions, or even professional categories, in rank is a defiance of democracy, bullying and unacceptable interference with the sustainable organization of society. Today, this stratification starts at school with an inappropriate attitude of some teachers.
- 4. Never give people capable of work anything for free:** Bind the provision of any allowances and donations to responsibilities corresponding to the abilities of the beneficiary. Receiving life necessities without having to do any work is essentially a negation of the fundamental human quality: the creative potential, and destruction of the nature of human existence and true happiness. Plus, **parasites must not be supported regardless of their origins.**
- 5. Revise the ban on child labour in Europe:** Of course do not permit labour to the detriment of development and education, but several hours of manual or craft work per week would help Europe, in particular, keep its fast disappearing traditional work skills and family and social cohesion.
- 6. Increase support to amateur sports and culture,** which are the foundation for the development of (not only) the young generation. Teachers and other leaders of **out-of-school** activities (not only top-level) should be recognized and duly rewarded.
- 7. Support the system of “second choice” of study and profession instead of extending the basic universal education.** Many people will only find out in time what knowledge they really require for their application in life. Renewal or a radical change of professional study, especially at a higher age, is the only solution to the disproportion between the ageing population and the accelerating and changing requirements of technical development. Improve access to education regardless of age, and make a reasonable solution to co-financing by students and the state.
- 8. Support ongoing lifelong education also in practical disciplines:** Human intelligence developed in a world without computers. Even in an advance society, one needs to develop one's dexterity and specific skills. Revive the declining apprenticeship system and teaching of practical craft and profession even for older applicants.
- 9. Support a gradual, not one-off retirement and gradual reintegration of women on maternity leave.** This means enable these groups to take up more education and, above all, part-time work, support the mutual employment system (such as in France), require the participation of both parents in upbringing, and boost intergenerational cohesion.
- 10. Environmental education** should aim towards interest and responsible attitude to one's existential environment, both immediate and broader.  
Find **forms of direct contact with nature and one's own familiarity with the valuable components** of the surrounding country, plants, animals and birds as its natural and necessary components, **and with agriculture**, on which our civilization is grounded.  
Inform about the **impacts of modern civilization and national and international legislative and voluntary activities aimed towards sustainable development.** The general ignorance and lack of knowledge in the environmental sphere are beyond belief.  
**Correct non-scientific fallacies and** hearsay a warn of real dangers.  
Only a personally involved teacher may lead their pupils and students, who often lack examples in the family today, to a responsible attitude to both nature and society.