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ekopolis



**VÝROČNÁ
SPRÁVA
2020
ANNUAL
REPORT**



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ANNUAL REPORT 2020 VÝROČNÁ SPRÁVA



ENVIRONMENT



SMART
CITIES

CIVIL
SOCIETY



BY
BICYCLE!



DEAR FRIENDS

Within a few months, the covid pandemic profoundly affected human health and lives, our thoughts, and our quality of life all over the world.

Significant for the recent months is that science has responded very effectively and incredibly quickly. Within one year of the spread of coronavirus, we have several effective vaccines, and medicine is saving millions of people who would not otherwise survive. However, it is also demonstrative how we react to a tense situation as individuals and as a society – we are seeing more human scrubbiness than maturity of statesmen from the upper floors of the state governance. Anxiously, many people are more attached to gossips and myths than to information from credible sources. We are seeing an enormous dedication of thousands of people who, even knowing the risks to their own health, help as best as they can, but also the egoism and ruthlessness that cost others their lives.

One would say that this is nothing new, the history repeats itself. But it is not so! This crisis is the first one to hit people across the planet in a such a short period of time. It is the first one that we must address together as humanity. And while it seems that science did its part in this test, the society has not yet done so. But, the prospects are not hopeless!

Does it remind us of anything? At Ekopolis, we think that other great challenges of our common future - man-made climate change, loss of biodiversity or the quality of the environment in which we live - can have solutions! These are depending mainly on accepting responsibility for the future, goodwill and the ability not to care only for one's own comfort.

We offer and support some of those solutions ourselves, and we are keen to cooperate on others. This was also the case in 2020. Read about them in our annual report.

March 2021, Peter Medved'

TOGETHER FOR PEOPLE, NATURE AND FUTURE.

The Ekopolis Foundation began supporting environmental projects in 1991, originally as a joint program in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, and later in 1993 as a foundation operating in an independent country. Since its establishment, we have supported more than 3474 projects of non-governmental organizations, local governments and civic initiatives in the amount of more than € 21 mil. 29 years is a long journey, which over time has evolved in terms of content and range of topics as well as activities that we deal with. We are conquering this path thanks to our vision - a country where people are aware of their responsibility for the country and development of the environment. It is the citizens who are involved in improving civil society, have the guts to take a critical stance and act in such a way that future generations have a quality life. Through grant programs, we try to bring new ideas, innovative programs and, above all, local solutions to today's environmental problems to the company. We support projects and activities of non-governmental non-profit organizations in cities and local communities

throughout Slovakia. However, we are aware that the real value and benefits of these projects for people and the environment are incalculable.

In 2020, we supported 111 projects, total in € 1 289 861,59.

Together with the foundations in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Romania, we are members of an international consortium Environmental Partnership Association, also we are a member of the European Greenways Association, an association that is dedicated to the creation, promotion and propagation paths for non-motorized transport in Europe. We belong to Civilscape, an international network to support the implementation of the European Land Convention, and we are partners in the Fair Trade initiative, which promotes fair trade ideas.

OUR PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS ENVIRONMENT



GREEN BELT

- The Green Belt grant program supports active citizens and the sustainable care of environmentally valuable local sites that serve the general public, promote nature conservation and sustainability.
- In the 14th year, the commission assessed 179 applications received, from which it selected 11 projects with direct support. For the first time, the public also decided on another 12 successful applications in online voting, and a total of 19,114 votes were received. Thanks to the support of SLOVNAFT, projects were supported in 2020 in the total amount of € 60,000.
- **TOP Project in 2020: The amount of greenery planted in the locality, the construction of a beautiful wooden viewpoint with a panoramic view of the Muránska plain, the Low Tatras and Klenovský Vepor, the number of participating volunteers and interested organizations and the enchanting scenery of the surrounding nature. This makes the project of the Field Information Center in Muránská Planina in the Burda saddle the best project of the Green Belt program in 2020. A considerable effort cost the volunteers almost 470 hours worked.**

GOOD NEIGHBOUR

- The Good Neighbor grant program is aimed at supporting the cooperation of active citizens, maintaining and developing good neighborly relations in the urban areas around the Slovnaft refinery - Vrakuňa, Podunajské Biskupice, Rovinka and, most recently, Ružinov.
- There were 22 grant applications for the Good Neighbor program and 12 of them were supported.

TREE OF THE YEAR 2020

- The aim of the competition is to draw attention to the beauty and value of trees and to arouse people's interest in the environment. The prestigious Tree of the Year poll celebrated its symbolic maturity. Even in 2020, we were looking for the most interesting stories from all over Slovakia.
- **As many as 24,839 votes decided on the final ranking in this year's Tree of the Year 2020 poll. The winner was the Ancient Oak from Drnava with 5,246 votes.**

18TH ANNIVERSARY

- *"Our competition has reached its imaginary maturity and we probably will not find a more appropriate way to celebrate it. We have decided to leave a vivid memory for future generations in the form of a family alley of trees in Kopčany, which may remind people in years to come, that this is the environment that needs to be protected,"* said Peter Medved', director of the Ekopolis Foundation.

FOR WATER COMPETITION

- The aim of the competition is to contribute to responsible and efficient water management through environmentally friendly measures. The competition was held under the auspices of the Minister of the Environment Ján Budaj.
- *"Responsible water management is one of Nestlé's priority areas, to which we pay special attention as part of our social responsibility. The For Water competition is a unique way to raise awareness of responsible water management while offering cities and municipalities effective and original solutions. Last but not least, the competition allows us to support young people with a sincere interest in environmental protection,"* said Ľubica Novotná, corporate affairs manager of Nestlé Slovensko s.r.o.
- Two excursions took place as part of the FOR WATER competition - the first was a professional excursion by the Danube on the topic of water protection and the second focused on water management in the built-up area in places of good practice around Banská Bystrica, Zvolen and Banská Štiavnica.

LIVING TRAILS

- 13th year, 45km of marked hiking trails, 62km of cycling trails, 15 new or renewed wells were added. A total of € 10,000 was redistributed.
- The aim of the program is to support the sensitive renewal of the Slovak landscape and increase its

recreational and educational functions. Since 2008, financial support has focused on the renewal and improvement of tourist marked trails and public spaces used by tourists.

- **In 2020, thanks to grants, 7 different sites were restored, with support focused not only on restoring hiking and biking trails, but also on creating new or revitalizing existing wells along the sidewalks.**

KELT HELPS NATURE

- The Kelt project helps nature creates a community of people who like to go to nature, spend time here and like to meet for barbecues and picnics.
- in 2020, new places for grilling and barbecuing were added on the popular Partizánská meadow in the Municipal Forests in Bratislava and in the sought-after Hidepark in Nitra.
- *"We are looking forward to continuing the success of the past years of the Kelt Helping Nature project this year as well, and thus continuing the revitalization of picnic sites and fireplaces in Slovakia. It turns out that the support of similar projects makes sense, especially this year, when tourists prefer a holiday in Slovakia,"* said Radoslava Stratená, brand manager of the Kelt brand.

PROTECTION OF BIODIVERSITY IN VEOLIA SLOVAKIA AREAS

- Restrictions due to the coronavirus pandemic also affected the Biodiversity Day, which takes place every May in the area of the wastewater treatment plant in Rakytovce for pupils from Banská Bystrica and Zvolen schools. Nevertheless, the organizers of the event decided to bring the natural diversity closer to the children - in the form of an interactive map of the WWTP area, which will show them real measures directly in the area and at the same time educational content focused on natural diversity.
- The biodiversity in the area will not stop surprising - an ornithologist counted up to 39 bird species. This is due to the riparian vegetation of nearby Hron, but also due to the project to support biodiversity, which the company is implementing.

BIODIVERSITY TO SCHOOLS

- The Biodiversity to Schools project will support the change of school premises towards an increase in diversity leading to a better microclimate in the school premises and the creation of an interesting educational space for pupils.
- **Within the program, short video demonstrations were created from places of good practice in schools, which managed to successfully implement their own project.**

LIFE BOOGI BOP

Design of corporate premises supporting biodiversity. Biodiversity Oriented Premises (BOPs) support local plant and animal species, become part of the green infrastructure in the area and are more attractive to employees and visitors to the company.

- *"In 2020, several companies showed interest in learning about the possibilities of supporting biodiversity directly on their premises. Therefore, we fulfilled the key activity of the project more significantly. After site inspections, we prepared reports to the companies assessing the potential for biodiversity support with proposals for related elements and modifications. There were 12 such reports last year, while in up to 6 cases the cooperation continues with the planning of specific changes. The most frequently planned modifications are the planting of original woody plants, the creation of flower meadows and smaller so-called biodiversity areas with various elements that support the diversity of life of native species of plants and animals,"* said Štefan Jančo, program manager of the program.

TESCO AREAS FAVORABLE TO BIODIVERSITY

- The project aims to improve the conditions for biodiversity at four selected Tesco department stores.
- Tesco cares about beautifying and enhancing the immediate surroundings of the stores it operates in Slovakia. In such selected areas, it combines the support of biodiversity with the aesthetics of natural design. The

changes will benefit nature, please visitors and bring them interesting information.

- Emphasis will be placed on the protection and promotion of native plant and animal species. The changes will help to functionally improve the environment of 4 stores: in Humenné, Partizánske, Prešov and Trnava.
- In the event of successful implementation, the surroundings of Tesco stores can become part of the international concept Biodiversity Oriented Premises (BOP), which is being developed in the Slovak environment by the Ekopolis Foundation thanks to the EU LIFE BooGI-BOP project.

DARE 2 CONNECT

- A project aimed at supporting the ecological connection of the Danube region along the European Green Belt through Natura 2000 sites.
- *"Ensuring the country's permeability means creating new and protecting existing elements of green infrastructure. Their connection by biocorridors will ensure better stability of the country, which also means a healthier environment for us humans. As part of an international project, a total of 12 partners from 8 countries, maps the interconnection of protected areas of the Natura 2000 network along the so-called European Green Belt. In Slovakia, together with colleagues from the State Nature Protection of the Slovak Republic, we focused on a unique area between*

the Morava River and the Little Carpathians. In the autumn of 2020, we presented the completed results of the field mapping to experts, representatives of local governments and ministries. Proposals to improve the landscape structure will be the basis for the territorial system of ecological stability of several districts," said Martina Paulíková, program manager of the project.

PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE WATER MANAGEMENT - IKEA

- An important issue of human survival is the protection of natural habitats as a source of environmental goods and services. It is necessary not only in an undisturbed landscape - the protection and restoration of natural sites is essential in a heavily urbanized and industrial environment, as well as the restoration and creation of new ecosystems. As part of a joint project with IKEA Components, in In 2020, we completed the assessment of the state of biodiversity in the IKEA complex, as well as in the vicinity. Subsequently, we prepared a management plan for wetlands created on an area of almost 5,000 m² during the construction expansion of the plant and also showed examples of measures, e.g. removal of invasive species of herbs or planting of huts for umbrellas.

OTHERS PROGRAMMES:

CLEAN ADVANTAGE PROGRAM

- Clean Advantage is a program of Green Print company, that supports tree planting, landscape cleaning, school projects and other environmental initiatives around the world. In Slovakia, we selected two projects for support. Civic association Tatry from Liptovský Mikuláš took care of beautifying the neglected part of the cycle path on the Váh embankment, where they planted tree lines behind a complex of garages connected to the already existing greenery. Volunteers from the Basic Organization of the Slovak Union of Gardeners Horné Orešany planted alley along the way from the village to the Benedictine monastery, which created a new element in the country and a rest area for residents and visitors.

INSPIRING WORLD CAMPAIGN 2020

- This initiative is the result of cooperation with the C&A Foundation and has three main activities. These are measures for more biodiversity in different environments. In 2020, we managed to support beautifying of the greenery within the premises of the J. Kráľ Grammar School in Zlaté Moravce and to create "Eco-Lab" - an interesting tool for environmental education usable at larger and smaller events for schools or the public. However, those were not feasible in 2020, so we believe that you will meet the "Eco-Lab" at our events in the future.

BIODIVERSITY IN THE CITY

- In cooperation with Deutsche Telekom Services Europe Slovakia s.r.o. we supported the creation of the Living Wall - an element that will improve the conditions for biodiversity but also fit well into the urban environment in Nová Cvernovka in Bratislava. Although the original plan to combine the project with a joint volunteer event was thwarted by the corona pandemic, the result is great thanks to the team from Cvernovka.

INSPIRING FOR BIODIVERSITY

- The project is supported by the Erasmus + Program and aims to create innovative adult education tools in the field of biodiversity.

GREENING OF MOUNTAIN HUTS IN NATIONAL PARKS OF SLOVAKIA

- Project is focused on the greening of mountain huts in national parks in cooperation with the KOOR company

EKOALARM

- introduction of separate collection in schools and raising awareness of proper sorting and waste prevention.

CIVIL SOCIETY

ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND - SLOVAKIA



Active Citizens Fund – Slovakia (ACF) is a grant program aimed at strengthening civil society, promoting active citizenship and improving the position of vulnerable groups in Slovakia.

- ACF supports Slovak civic organizations in involving citizens in decision-making and public policy-making, in seeking to create better conditions for good governance, in protecting human rights and providing civic education, and in improving the position of vulnerable groups in society. Special attention is paid to young people and their participation in public events.
- The Active Citizens Fund is part of the financial assistance of Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway to the 15 Member States of the European Union. ACF in Slovakia is managed by the Ekopolis Foundation in partnership with the Open Society Foundation of the Carpathian Foundation.
- In the period 2018-2023, the ACF will distribute a total of 7.7 mil. EUR for projects of Slovak civic organizations and will provide other support activities, e.g. training in project management, organizational development and self-financing.
- In 2020, we supported 61 projects within the second call.
- All informations on www.acfslovakia.sk

PROGRAMME OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE ROMA COMMUNITY

- The program for the development of Roma communities is implemented by the Ekopolis Foundation in partnership with the Carpathian Foundation. The aim of the program is to draw attention to the challenges facing our society: the deterioration of the situation of the Roma minority in terms of access to employment, housing, education or health care, as well as growing anti-Roma sentiment within the majority society.
- The program supported two projects in 2020 with special financial support in response to current anti-pandemic measures in connection with COVID-19. It is the organization Hope for Children from Banská Bystrica in the Community Nursery project is being developed with the amount of 450 euros. The second supported project entitled Improving the position of Roma women and increasing health literacy was the civic association Community Center for the Lesser from Veľký Krtíš, in the amount of EUR 500.

EUROPE FOR CITIZENS - RECLAIM OUR CIVIC SPACE!

- The Europe for Citizens project and the Reclaim Our Civic Space! initiative address the trend of reducing the space for NGOs in Central European countries. Through this initiative, together with partners from seven countries (Poland, Czechia, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Norway), we want to help connect

organizations interested in this phenomenon, provide them with more information from home and abroad, as well as teach them skills on how to cooperate and how to deal with the problematic situation in respective countries.

- Under the auspices of the President of the Slovak Republic Zuzana Čaputová, the Public Defender of Rights Mária Patakyová, the Chairman of the Banská Bystrica Self-Governing Region Ján Lunter and the Mayor of Banská Bystrica Ján Nosko, the seventh annual International Human Rights Discussion Forum "HUMAN FORUM - Democracy in Threat?" took place on 25-26th November 2020.

SMART CITIES



REVITALIZATION OF PUBLIC SPACES IN B. BRAUN AREA

- Revitalization of areas near dialysis centers. The aim of the project is to make the spaces around facilities more attractive for seniors and clients with a mild mental handicap.

BY BICYCLE!



NATIONAL PLATFORM FOR NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORT SUPPORT - CYCLOPLATFORM

- In the project, we focus on creating a platform for communication and cooperation, coordination of

activities, exchange of experience and know-how between non-governmental non-profit organizations and at the same time between them and public administration. The aim of the platform is to create a mechanism for their cooperation.

SABRINA

- A project focused on safe cycling roads in the Danube region, which is supported by the European Regional Development Fund.
- The Ekopolis Foundation is one of 11 regular and 4 associated strategic partners.

OUR OTHERS PROGRAMMES:

- Cyclist Welcome
- Greenways
- Photo competition Bike to Work as part of a nationwide campaign

OUR OTHERS ACTIVITIES:

- Cycling organizations call on the government to increase support for cycling, pedestrian and public passenger transport
- A day without cars in front of Point shopping center in Banská Bystrica
- Cycling workshops: Consult a Dutch cycling expert

Výročná správa Nadácie Ekopolis

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Vydala Nadácia Ekopolis

Komenského 21

974 01 Banská Bystrica

Jazyková úprava: Martina Ragalová, Róbert Vancel

Grafická úprava: Pavel Sokol, STUART, s. r. o.

Tel.: +421 48 414 52 59, 470 10 91

E-mail: ekopolis@ekopolis.sk

www.ekopolis.sk





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ekopolis

Nadácia Ekopolis
Komenského 21
974 01 Banská Bystrica

Tel.: +421 48 414 52 59
E-mail: ekopolis@ekopolis.sk
www.ekopolis.sk