



# THE INSTITUTIONS OF SUSTAINABILITY IN HUNGARY



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# FOREWORD

With the news on the impacts of climate change, the destruction of our natural environment, the significance of a stable population, wasteful consumption, the challenges of our education and health care systems becoming common, it is already obvious for everybody why addressing the issue of sustainability and prioritising the values promoting sustainability is of paramount importance.

Educating people about sustainable development is also essential requiring the improvement of the quality of basic education, the integration of sustainable development into the existing educational structures and the development of special training programmes. We want to make people sensitive to the changes in the environment and the society.

By the definition of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals by the international political community and the development of the National Framework Strategy on Sustainable Development, the global and the national objectives and tasks have been identified. These objectives will not be achieved and these tasks will not be completed without well-functioning institutions.

The institutions of sustainability have diverse responsibilities: they must give warning if we are heading towards unsustainability, give advice on sustainable social and policy solutions,

provide data on the state of sustainability and protect the constitutional limits of sustainability, even through the annulment of laws and regulations, if required. By protecting sustainability, we safeguard the possibilities of the future and increase the potential alternatives of development and as such, sustainability is in everybody's best interest.

This publication is designed to present the multifaceted institutional network working to promote sustainability and the sophisticated system of the distribution of the associated tasks that has evolved in recent years. However, the availability of this institutional system also imposes a number of tasks and responsibilities on us, the users of these institutions: we must take advantage of the opportunities offered by these institutions, must follow their advice and must operate and use them in a responsible and effective manner!

DR. ÉVA SÁNDOR, NÉE KRISZT  
university professor  
member of the National Council for Sustainable Development

According to the ancient Roman wise saying “*qui vult finem, vult media*”, who he desires the end, likewise desires the means (to that end). The development strategy devised and managed by the National Council for Sustainable Development is the definition and the confirmation of our most important common goals. We want to develop, i.e. enhance the quality, improve the state and the condition of ourselves, our communities and our living environment; and we want this improvement to be lasting, safe and permanent. The very first interim stage, milestone of this sustainable development should be the prompt identification, interruption and reversal of dangerous, unstable economic and social situations.

The present publication of the NFFT introduces the institutions that the public will appointed in recent decades to promote and maintain a decent quality of life for humans and in particular the natural conditions of our lives. Their establishment is the result of a remarkable development; we have every right to be proud of and content with the “toolbox”, means that we can take advantage of in Hungary if we want to personally act in favour of sustainability: if we really want to do “our part”.

While reading this publication makes you realise what opportunities you have and that you are not left to your own devices in unfavourable—or directly dangerous and unlawful—situations, it also reveals the degree of your commitment. Because: „*qui non vult media, non vult finem*”—he who does not use the means, does not take advantage of the opportunities, i.e. does not operate, stimulate and improve the domestic institutions of sustainability, is not committed to sustainable development! This publication is hoped and designed by the NFFT to not only inform but also promote communication, connect people and the institutions and the encouragement and increase of the precise, targeted and efficient “deployment” of our means and tools. A special thanks for it to the originator of the idea, the authors and the editors.

JÁNOS ZLINSZKY  
associate professor  
member of the National Council for Sustainable Development





*“We are aware that warmer and colder periods alternated on Earth during its long history but human activities have by now caused global warming to happen at a rate 20 times faster than any other time in the history of Earth. This makes more and more people ask the question of how we can save our planet. However, the question, I believe, we should be asking is this: How can we save the human civilisation? How can we prevent a climate disaster that threatens us all? How can we prevent a situation that has already happened once in the history of our planet? [...]*

*There is no right or left wing, there is no ruling or opposition party in climate change. If there is one issue where we need to reach a—do not fear the word—national consensus, it is without doubt the one discussed here. Environmental sustainability must be important to each and every citizen in our country. [...]*

*Today, we still have the chance to turn need into an opportunity. If we adapt in time, if we change our consumption habits, if we treat our natural environment in a respectful way and if we only want to use and not abuse it, if we utilise climate-friendly technologies if we modernise our agriculture and industry by always ensuring the protection of the soil, water and air, it is certain that we will not fail.”*

Speech of President of the Republic JÁNOS ÁDER  
at the opening of the parliamentary debate of  
the second National Climate Change Strategy  
(October, 2 2018)





In September 2015, the member states of the United Nations unanimously adopted the Sustainable Development Framework (2030 Agenda) including its 17 global goals and the related 169 targets.

Hungary was playing a key role in the development and adjustment of the 2030 Agenda from the start.

While the pathway to sustainability is defined by the same principles at a global level, the adaptation of the SDGs is

not an automatic process for the countries. To promote the correct implementation of the global goals, a method interpreting the national implementation and seeking harmony with the national interpretations of sustainability needs to be identified. There is a relatively strong correlation between the national sustainable development goals/tasks and the roughly 80 SDGs relevant in Hungary.



End poverty in all its forms everywhere.



End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.



Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.



Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.



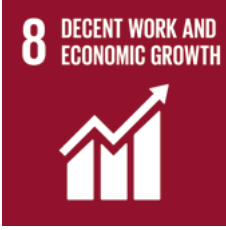
Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.



Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.



Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.



Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.



Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation.



Reduce inequality within and among countries.



Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.



Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.



Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.



Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.



Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems.



Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.



Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development.



# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT POLICY IN HUNGARY AND THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK STRATEGY ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (NFFS)

While human actions are usually focused on finding short term solutions for present problems, the alternatives chosen to reach a goal also have long term—at times favourable but often adverse—consequences. These often-times unplanned impacts may not necessarily remain within the borders of one country and may have regional or global consequences. The results of these decisions affect the relations between various social groups—and the related countries internationally. They will experience different consequences and the impacts will be passed onto future generations.

Tackling problems and achieving growth by burdening future generations may take several forms including the depletion, contamination of environmental resources, indebtedness, the demographic deficit caused by ageing populations and dependence caused by infrastructure investments planned for very long term use (the problem of “locking in”). In the meantime, problems within a generation are usually caused by increasing differences in access to environmental resources required for fair living conditions.

The principles to identify the transition to sustainable development are the same globally but there is no single formula, which means it is our responsibility to determine the road map and the strategy to sustainable development for Hungary. The base points of this road map are determined by the National Framework Strategy on Sustainable Development (NFFS).

Hungary’s first long term framework strategy helping set

the Hungarian society on a sustainable path was adopted by the government in June 2007. The strategy was developed with respect to the guiding principles and headline objectives defined in the EU’s Sustainable Development Strategy. Considering both the domestic and global trends and conditions, the strategy outlined a means and reform system based reflecting a sustainable vision for all social, economic and environmental areas.

Following the establishment of the National Council on Sustainable Development by the Parliament in 2008, a resolution on the renewal process of the strategy was also adopted.

The effective national core document of sustainable development, the National Framework Strategy on Sustainable Development 2012–2024 (NFFS) was adopted by the Parliament in 2013. The NFFS was developed between 2009 and 2012 based on broad public consultation taking into account the recommendations of interested citizens, the representatives of the scientific community, businesses, minorities, civil organisations and religious communities.

Although it had been adopted two and a half years earlier, the framework strategy integrates the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals as well. Although at times in a different structure and with a different wording, Hungary’s framework strategy includes all of the UN’s goals and targets whose global implementation can be effectively supported by Hungary. Meanwhile, the NFFS also concerns sustainability areas, for which there are no UN goals but are essential for the long such as the sustainability objectives

related to demographics. The assessments of the NFFT’s biennial monitoring reports on the state and trends of sustainability in Hungary based on the objectives and tasks of the Hungarian framework strategy are also presented in the structure of the UN SDGs.

In order to achieve a sustainable society, national resources essentially required to be preserved and improved. NFFS applies four key national resources, 34 strategic goals and 77 associated tasks (targets).



As people are a country’s most important resource, the framework strategy first and foremost defines comprehensive objectives in the area of demographics, health, knowledge and social cohesion. The tasks associated with these objectives focus on creating a society of healthy people possessing the skills and knowledge to address modern challenges, maintaining a stable population and gradually reducing exclusion.

Social resources are essential for a good quality life but are also crucial for the efficient use of the other resources. The shared cultural heritage, the moral norms, the relationships between people and the associated institutional systems are a foundation on which a culture with positive values, moral norms and attitudes may be built. To cultivate social resources, effective employment, the strengthening of the infrastructure of trust and family values, the nourishment of our heritage and the improvement of the cultural services are essentially required.

The quantity and quality of the natural resources fundamentally determines the limitations of a society. The ecosystem services provided by the natural resources offer direct and indirect benefits for societies. The framework strategy defines the preservation of biodiversity, the protection of the natural resources and the reduction of negative environmental impacts as an objective and urges to treat renewable resources in a reasonable and careful manner.

Economic resources are the foundation of a society’s wealth. The chapter emphasizes the importance to maintain an adequate level of sovereignty in economic policymaking and defines comprehensive objectives to promote the selective growth of financial capital and the replacement of the amortisation of community capital assets. An important task is to strengthen entrepreneurial mentality and innovation, expand employment, strengthen the entrepreneurial layer, gradually increase domestic capital investments and reduce the foreign exposure.

Pursuant to resolution No. 18/2013 (28/03) of the Parliament, the state of our national resources must be monitored, the results achieved must be evaluated and reported to the Parliament every two years. The preparation of the monitoring reports is a complex process, which involves a high number of contributors (NFFT, ministries, non-governmental organisations, other stakeholders). They are designed to update the public on the sustainability transition, on which areas have improved substantially and which areas require more intense efforts. Since the release of the NFFS, two Monitoring Reports were written in 2015 and 2017. The NFFT’s biennial monitoring reports represent the link between the SDGs and the national goals as well as their levels of implementation.



# THE INSTITUTIONS OF SUSTAINABILITY

## Government

Ministry of Agriculture  
Hungary Helps  
Ministry for Innovation and Technology  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

## Government background institutions

Central Statistical Office  
National Council for Environmental Protection

## Independent national institutions

Constitutional Court  
State audit Office  
Ombudsman for Future Generations  
Fiscal Council  
Hungarian National Bank

## Parliamentary institutions

Committee on Sustainable Development  
National Council  
for Sustainable Development

## Non-governmental organisations

Roundtable of Hungarian Civil Society  
Organisations for the Sustainable  
Development Goals  
Business Council for Sustainable  
Development in Hungary  
V4SDG



# THE INSTITUTIONS OF SUSTAINABILITY

## FUNDAMENTAL LAW

Hungary's constitution was renewed and replaced by the Fundamental Law, the code of fundamental rights and obligations, in effect since April 25 2011.

Hungary's Fundamental Law addresses the protection of the interests of future generations and the principles, rights and obligations concerning sustainable development in the most complete way to date. This makes it one of the most remarkable constitutions of the world in that aspect and lays a significant amount of responsibility on the Hungarian political community.

The preamble of the Fundamental Law, the National Avowal is unambiguous: "We commit ourselves to promoting and safeguarding our heritage, [...] all man-made and natural assets of the Carpathian Basin. We bear responsibility for our descendants and therefore we shall protect the living conditions of future generations by making prudent use of our material, intellectual and natural resources."

Article P) states that "Natural resources, in particular arable land, forests and the reserves of water; biodiversity, in particular native plant and animal species; and cultural artefacts, shall form the common heritage of the nation, it shall be the obligation of the State and everyone to protect and maintain them, and to preserve them for future generations." Paragraph (1) of Article 38 lays down that "the property of the State and of local governments shall be national assets. The management and protection of national assets shall aim at serving the public interest, meeting common needs and preserving natural resources, as well as at taking into account the needs of future generations."

To complete the above obligations, Article XXI focuses on

the human aspect: "Hungary shall recognise and endorse the right of everyone to a healthy environment." Article XX states that "everyone shall have the right to physical and mental health." "Hungary shall promote the effective application of this right through agriculture free of genetically modified organisms, by ensuring access to healthy food and drinking water, by organising safety at work and healthcare provision and by supporting sports and regular physical exercise as well as by ensuring the protection of the environment."

This long term approach aiming to protect future generations from debt is not only reflected in provisions addressing the condition of the environment or the health of people but also the sustainability of public finances. Paragraph (4) of Article 36 defines a debt limit by prohibiting the adoption of an act on the central budget as a result of which government debt would exceed half of the total gross domestic product (GDP).

Article Q) defines Hungary's related international responsibility: "(...) to achieve the sustainable development of humanity, Hungary shall strive for cooperation with all the peoples and countries of the world."

The National Framework Strategy on Sustainable Development adopted by the Parliament in March 2013 (which can be identified as the domestic implementation plan of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals) defined its values and general objectives, the tasks to be completed to ensure that Hungary is able to safeguard the interests of future generations, to protect and efficiently foster our national resources as instructed by the Fundamental Law.

## CONSTITUTIONAL COURT

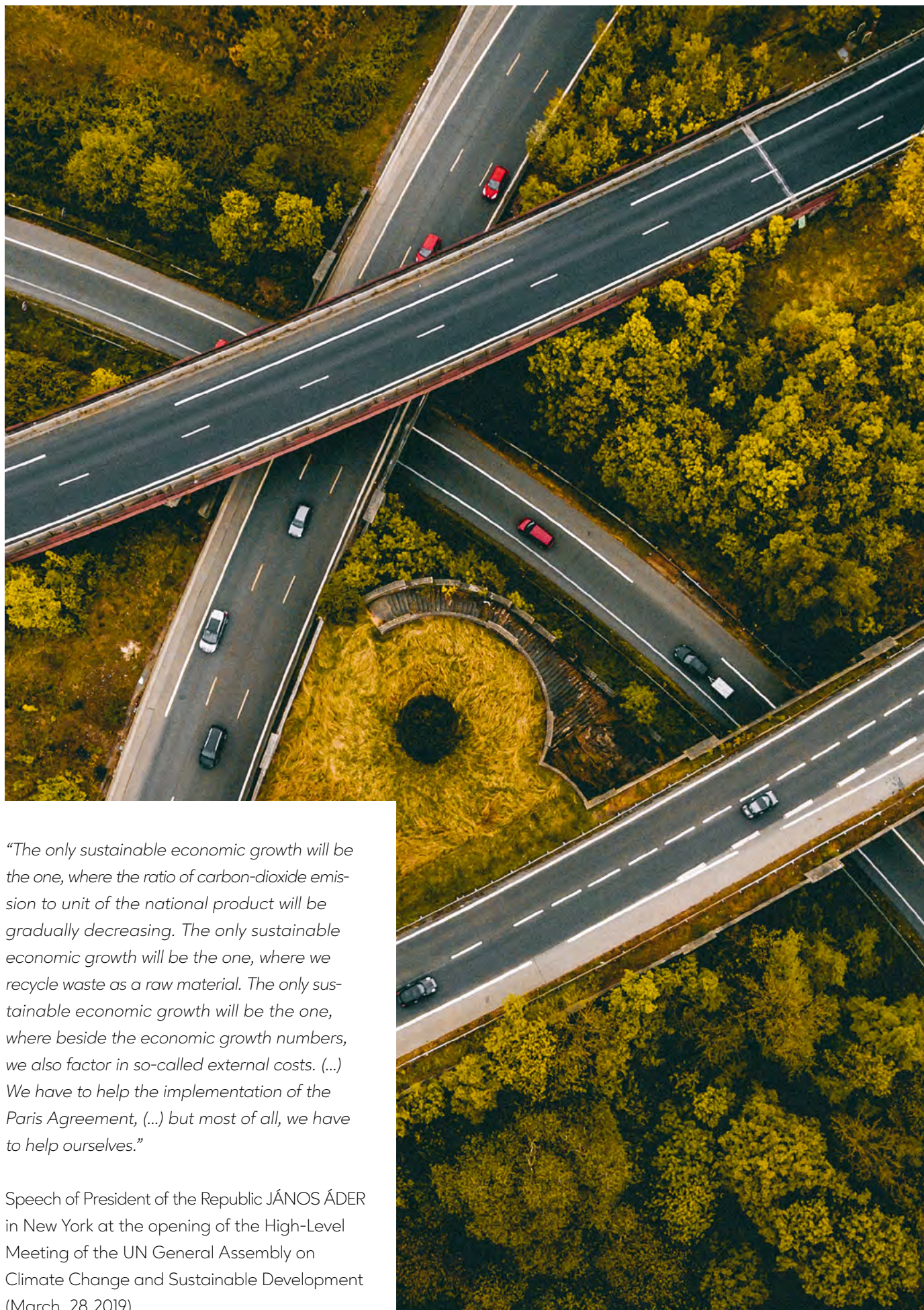
The Constitutional Court is an independent national institution, mandated to protect the Fundamental Law of Hungary and authorised to (fully or partially) annul laws not in compliance with the Fundamental Law.

The mandate of the Constitutional Court is consistent with respect to natural and cultural resources forming the common heritage of the nation where paragraph (1) of Article P) of the Fundamental Law clearly determines the behaviours expected to protect such resources: protection, maintenance and preservation for future generations. When paragraph (1) of Article P) of the Fundamental Law expressly specifies the obligation to preserve the common heritage of the nation for future generations, it also requires legislation in a general sense to not only consider the individual and shared needs of the present generation but also to provide for the living conditions of future generations when adopting new laws as well as to assess the potential impacts of a decision based on the preventive and precautionary principle and the available most advanced scientific evidence. This means that the preventive and precautionary principle (along with the polluter pays principle set forth in the Fundamental Law) will be considered from the aspect of constitutional law and will be applied by the Constitutional Court both for lawmaking and law enforcement. According to the Constitutional Court, lawmakers may only be able to meet these requirements if they make their decisions based on long term considerations transcending government cycles.

Paragraph (1) Article P) of the Fundamental Law is not purely a state objective: it equally contains a guarantee for the right to a healthy environment as a fundamental human right set forth in paragraph (1) Article XXI and a sui generis obligation requiring the protection of the common heritage of the nation that should be applicable not only for paragraph (1) Article XXI but in a general manner. As an example, the Constitutional Court P) defined the obligation to preserve biodiversity concerning Natura 2000 sites based on paragraph (1) Article P) of the Fundamental Law stressing specifically at the same time that the obligation to preserve biodiversity is not only required by the Fundamental Law but also by peremptory norm in international law reflecting the will of the international community as a whole.

It is not only the state but "everyone" including the civil society and every citizen that is responsible for the protection of the resources forming the common heritage of the nation. This requires all natural and legal persons to be familiar with and fulfil all applicable laws and regulations while lawmakers must provide all responsibilities that are otherwise protected by universal eligibility with legislative and organisational safeguards. However, the obligation must be fulfilled not only by lawmakers but also by law enforcement: when competent authorities make decisions on environmental or nature conservation matters, the aspects of environmental protection and nature conservation should not be inferior to other (such as exclusively economical) aspects.





*“The only sustainable economic growth will be the one, where the ratio of carbon-dioxide emission to unit of the national product will be gradually decreasing. The only sustainable economic growth will be the one, where we recycle waste as a raw material. The only sustainable economic growth will be the one, where beside the economic growth numbers, we also factor in so-called external costs. (...) We have to help the implementation of the Paris Agreement, (...) but most of all, we have to help ourselves.”*

Speech of President of the Republic JÁNOS ÁDER in New York at the opening of the High-Level Meeting of the UN General Assembly on Climate Change and Sustainable Development (March, 28 2019)

# OMBUDSMAN FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

As part of the single ombudsman system, the Ombudsman for Future Generations is the deputy of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights responsible for safeguarding the interests of future generations.

The Fundamental Law of Hungary introduced in 2011, which adopted the fundamental right to a healthy environment, physical and mental health (Articles XXI and XX) from the previous Constitution in a nearly unaltered form, significantly increased the number of provisions promoting the interests of future generations. The National Avowal highlights our responsibility for our descendants and Article P) requires the State and everyone to protect and maintain our shared—natural and cultural—heritage and preserve it for future generations. The main responsibility of the Ombudsman is to protect and promote these constitutional values.

Based on general conclusions from investigations of individual claims received and on the dialogue with public administration institutions, professional, scientific, economic and social organisations, the Ombudsman monitors and assesses the representation of the interests of future generations and the condition of the nation’s shared natural and cultural heritage. The ombudsman regularly shares his findings with the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights, relevant institutions and the public and gives warning when the rights of a larger group of natural persons—of future generations in particular—are threatened to be abused.

Every aspect of the Ombudsman’s work is closely associated with sustainability as the representation of the interests of future generations is an essential part of sustainability. As a key component of his activities, the Ombudsman provides feedback on and reviews the government’s professional strategies and plans and draft laws relevant to the protection of a healthy environment and the country’s shared natural and cultural heritage. This includes close

monitoring of the implementation of the National Framework Strategy on Sustainable Development. Based on either his general investigation findings or as part of his activity to provide feedback, the Ombudsman, if required, may advise the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights to report legislative anomalies to the Constitutional Court or the Curia. The Ombudsman may also propose the adoption or amendment of legislation affecting the rights of future generations. Based on his proposal, the Commissioner may act as intervenor in litigations concerning the judicial review of administrative acts related to the condition of the environment.

In order to assist the resolution of major environmental conflicts or to protect the various elements of the country’s shared heritage, the Ombudsman may issue position statements. Key position statements regarded the protection of underground water and soil, the waste management public service and the restructuring of the system of environmental protection authorities. The Ombudsman has found that one of the most severe environmental problems in Hungary is air pollution of high risk for human health. As a result, he is strongly committed to initiatives to reduce air pollution caused by inadequate household heating practices and transport.

He is also highly dedicated to reducing the noise caused by open air events and air traffic, to protecting the environment in residential areas, green surfaces and the natural heritage and to granting access to environmental information. One of the important responsibilities of the Ombudsman is to internationally represent and promote the benefits of Hungary’s institutional system supporting the interests of future generations. This partly includes his role as the secretary of the Network of Institutions for Future Generations, which brings together and coordinates the cooperation of a number of national institutions recognised by the UN representing the interests of future generations.



# PARLIAMENT

The provisions protecting national resources and the fundamental values related to the transition towards sustainability were laid down by the Parliament in the Fundamental Law. This definitely requires the Parliament to consider the aspects of sustainability in its legislative activities. Sustainability is an approach and horizontal principle that must be incorporated into all laws and regulations.

The work of the members of the Parliament in this area is supported by numerous institutional solutions. The national sustainability objectives and tasks are defined in a comprehensive manner and for the long term by the National Framework Strategy on Sustainable Development adopted by the Parliament in 2013.

The National Council for Sustainable Development (NFFT) as the Parliament's advisory and interest reconciliation body and the Committee on Sustainable Development (FFB) as the Parliament's standing committee highlight the representation and the promotion of the sustainable development goals by providing professional review of the draft bills, plans and programmes submitted to the Parliament. As a result, members of the parliament can change the proposed legislation to promote the values of the transition towards sustainability. By the establishment of the NFFT, Hungary's Parliament has its own sustainable development advisory and interest reconciliation body, which is quite unique even globally. This allows the legislation to benefit from the sustainability knowledge acquired by civil organisations, local governments, churches, the scientific community and economic players in the most efficient manner.

The Parliament is also committed to contributing to the international goals of sustainable development on a national level. The members of the parliament monitor the implementation of the UN's 2030 Agenda and were involved in the preparation of Hungary's voluntary national review (VNR).

The members of the Hungarian parliament are also actively involved in the sustainability development work of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is the single global organisation of the parliaments of sovereign states, the forum for inter-parliamentary exchange and dialogue, which has been working to establish peace and cooperation among people since its foundation in Paris in 1889 through strengthening representative institutions. The IPU's mission is to develop parliamentarism, parliamentary institutions in order to promote democracy across the world. The IPU performs a broad range of tasks and apart from political and security matters, it also addresses human rights, regional, environmental, demographic and health issues and has a standing committee on sustainable development, finance and trade.

The IPU also produced a self-assessment toolkit for sustainability allowing parliaments to assess how effectively the UN's SDGs are integrated through legislation. The sustainability self-assessment system addresses questions on the parliamentary work related to awareness raising forums and activities connected to the Sustainable Development Goals as well as their integration and implementation. An important element of the self-assessment system is the issue of SDG related debate forums and parliamentary responsibilities as well as the assessment of the national coordination mechanisms of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Hungarian Parliament is one of the participants of this IPU programme.

All these institutions enable the members of parliament to more and more frequently refer to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and the national Framework Strategy in the parliamentary debates.



## COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (FFB)

The Committee on Sustainable Development (FFB) is a standing committee of the Parliament, established in 2010 as the successor of the former Environmental Protection Committee. The Committee on Sustainable Development makes proposals, provides feedback, makes decisions in specific matters and is involved in the oversight of government work.

The scope of the FFB includes environmental protection, nature conservation, climate policy and environmental health. Additionally, other roles and responsibilities related to sustainable development such as protection against radioactive pollution, energy efficiency and renewable energy sources, chemical safety, territorial development, environmental safety and environmental aspects of transport are also assumed by the FFB.

Apart from environmental protection and nature conservation, the committee also addresses the issue of sustainable land use and the sustainable management of the natural resources in general and is proactively involved in the key areas. Regarding the implementation of the National Framework Strategy on Sustainable Development (NFFS), the Committee on Sustainable Development works in close cooperation primarily with the National Council for Sustainable Development (NFFT) and it usually collaborates with the Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental

Rights and the National Council for Environmental Protection with respect to sustainability issues.

One of its tasks is the assessment of alternatives in energy policy, which are ultimately connected to climate change. Another key area is poverty and socio-economic processes potentially adversely affecting social justice. The Committee on Sustainable Development contributes to the achievement of the domestic sustainable development goals, in particular by making proposals to government organisations.

The FFB plays a key role in law-making. Its responsibilities related to oversight functions include hearings of the competent ministers. Its important tasks related to its diplomatic responsibilities include the maintenance and development of international relations as well as the organisation of international conferences.

The FFB's international relations and activities concerning the European Union involve liaising with partner committees mainly from neighbouring countries and other EU member states and participation in EU consultation procedures.





# NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (NFFT)

The National Council for Sustainable Development (NFFT) is the Parliament's independent advisory body focusing on the issues of sustainable development. It works to raise awareness about and promote sustainable development, participates in consultations related to draft bills and provides feedback on draft legislation concerning sustainability.

The National Framework Strategy on Sustainable Development (NFFS) was completed in 2013 and adopted by the Parliament with a resolution. The NFFT publishes a Monitoring Report every two years to inform the public and the Parliament on the implementation of the Framework Strategy including the SDGs.

The president of the NFFT is the incumbent speaker of the Parliament while its members are the social groups included in the Parliament's relevant resolution. The composition of the NFFT is largely varied including representatives of political parties, the scientific community, economic interest groups, civil and religious organisations. The NFFT's work is supported by the Secretariat and the working committees including NFFT's members and experts mandated to perform the professional review of NFFT's matters, provide professional opinion on certain issues and make proposals regarding areas relevant for the NFFT.

The NFFT's work is based on an approved yearly work plan. The NFFT has four meetings every year while the working committees meet as frequently as required by their responsibilities. The NFFT regularly organises round table discussions and conferences addressing the various areas of sustainable development. One of NFFT's priorities is to promote an attitude change in all the segments of the society. Apart from extensive press coverage, the NFFT releases many publications and working papers to help

the wider public and professional organisations inform about sustainability.

The agenda of the NFFT's meetings regularly includes the discussion of widely relevant topics followed by the adoption of a statement. In its opinion on the negotiations on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) in 2015, the NFFT stressed that the agreement must not be signed unless the international negotiations provide for the efficient control of the environmental pollution caused by transport and the harmonisation of TTIP and the UN's SDGs. In relation with the draft law on the determination of the exercise of the property rights of protected land, submitted to the Parliament in 2015, the NFFT reminded that some of its key components related to sustainable development do not comply with the Fundamental Law and the NFFS's objectives.

The NFFT regularly discusses the policy strategies devised by the government during their preparation process. In recent years, the NFFT has made recommendations on the promotion of sustainability in various government strategies including in the field of demographics, education, health, climate protection, energy, electromobility, territorial development, agriculture, nature conservation and the circular economy.

The NFFT has been actively engaged in the global but most importantly the European sustainability cooperation since 2009. Being active in a number of prominent international organisations (EEAC, ESDN), NCSD is working to encourage cooperation between the member states to promote sustainable development. The NFFT is responsible for the coordination of the European Sustainability Week in Hungary.



# MINISTRY FOR INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY (ITM), STATE SECRETARIAT FOR SUSTAINABILITY

The State Secretariat for Sustainability is one of the nine state secretariats of the Ministry for Innovation and Technology being one of the key government bodies responsible for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Hungary. It is mandated to help and prepare the society and the economy for the transition to sustainability.

The organisation has two deputy state secretariats each including six directorates. The Deputy State Secretariat for Environment and Energy Efficiency Operational Programmes is responsible for managing the use of European Union funds in the 2014-2020 cycle available for major environmental investments (ground water, floods, drinking water, wastewater, waste management, nature conservation, renewable energy, energy efficiency, awareness).

A key priority for the Deputy State Secretariat for Sustainable Developments is to enable the transition to the circular economy by providing the necessary laws and regulations, developing strategies and supporting projects. To make Hungary cleaner, it develops regulatory standards for waste management, supports the elimination of illegal landfills, the collection, pre-processing and recycling of products for which an environmental product fee is payable and the development of the waste management sector. Through its awareness campaigns, the State Secretariat for Sustainability directly contributes to the promotion of environmentally conscious behaviours defined in the NFFS.

The organisation is involved in the planning of policy programmes to promote the use of renewable energy sources and to improve energy efficiency and conservation and is responsible for their implementation.

The deputy state secretariat is committed to certain sustainability measures such as the promotion of electromobility including the constant expansion of the charging infrastructure and the applications supporting the purchase of electric vehicles. A legislative regulatory concept on sustainability is currently being planned together with a government sustainability action plan including the identification of sustainable development goals to be achieved in Hungary by 2030. A so-called sustainability guide is also being prepared for towns and villages, which will help local governments introduce innovative, sustainable smart solutions (e.g. smart testing).

The vision of the State Secretariat for Sustainability is to promote a sustainable social and economic environment and to develop and implement sustainable systems, infrastructure and solutions. It is committed to contributing to Hungary being one of the EU's five most liveable countries by 2030, improving living standards and creating a clean, safe and liveable country where people like to live and work.



# MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, STATE SECRETARIAT FOR ENVIRONMENT

The Ministry of Agriculture is the organisation within Hungary's government system responsible for land related matters. Its main role is to support and control the farming industry, agriculture related rural development, food processing, sustainable fish and wildlife management, forest management, land matters, land registration, cartography, environmental protection and nature conservation as well as to oversee the entire food supply chain and to achieve and maintain food security.

The essential conditions required to improve people's quality of life, to promote the constitutional right to a healthy environment and to ensure social and economic growth are the long term sustainable use of the natural resources, the improvement of the quality of the environment, the preservation of the natural heritage and a stronger environmental safety, which are the key action areas of the environmental protection policy.

A co-chairman of the National Council for Sustainable Development (NFFT) is the minister of agriculture delegated by the government represented by the state secretary for environment (KÖÁT). Environmental protection and nature conservation have been managed by the ministry of agriculture since 2010 and the State Secretariat for Environment (KÖÁT) currently has two main organisa-

tional units: the Deputy State Secretariat for Nature Conservation and the Deputy State Secretariat for Environmental Protection.

The State Secretariat for Environment also works as the government coordinator of the tasks related to the National Framework Strategy on Sustainable Development (NFFS). The KÖÁT is required to provide a summary of the government actions to implement the NFFS to the Parliament every two years through the NFFT. The Environmental Development and Strategy Directorate within the KÖÁT is mandated to perform specific tasks related to the NFFT and the NFFS: as a functional task, it is expected to liaison with the NFFT; to coordinate the national and international responsibilities of the Ministry of Agriculture related to sustainable development in particular the tasks concerning the implementation, revision and renewal of the NFFS. It is also responsible for the technical tasks connected to the EU's sustainable development strategy and the EU's Environment Action Programme. Furthermore, the KÖÁT coordinates the responsibilities related to the bodies of the UN's Environment Programme, the OECD's environment and sustainable development organisations and the UNECE's Committee on Environmental Policy and Environmental Performance Review Programme.



# MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE, UN DIRECTORATE

The UN Directorate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (KKM) is part of the central public administration. Its responsibilities include the national delivery of the sustainable development goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted in 2015.

Hungary was playing a key role in the development and adjustment of the SDGs working as a co-chair of the UN's Open Working Group in 2014. The UN Directorate coordinates the government responsibilities related to the implementation of the SDGs in Hungary while the coordination of the delivery of the goals is overseen by the Deputy State Secretary for Migration Challenges of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The UN Directorate manages the work associated with the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals while the competent ministries are required to deliver the goals. The implementation related to the foreign relation aspects of the UN's 2030 Agenda is the responsibility of the Directorate of International Development within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The UN Directorate also contributes to the fulfilment of the domestic sustainability goals. In harmony with the NFFS's goals, it contributes to the international processes promoting sustainable development through its active involvement in foreign policy.

The UN Directorate's coordination activities regarding the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Hungary had many results. The UN document containing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was translated into Hungarian with the involvement of all affected ministries and includes the official Hungarian versions of the sustainable development

goals and targets. The competent ministries and persons to be involved in the implementation were identified, the structure of the cooperation with them was defined, and relations and the collaboration with the other affected parties was established. As part of the latter, the government attended many events organised by the civil sector to ensure all the stakeholders are provided with constant information on the implementation. Hungary's first voluntary national review describing the progress made implementing the 2030 Agenda in Hungary was prepared and presented at the UN's 2018 High-Level Political Forum. The report was compiled by the UN Directorate in cooperation with the competent ministries.

The report reviewing the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in Hungary offered an excellent opportunity to examine national policies and strategies with respect to the SDGs and to assess how much progress Hungary had made in delivering these goals. The report highlighted national policies and strategies that contribute to the implementation of the SDGs in a significant manner. Good practices were also presented in the report.

To prepare the voluntary national review offering the fullest picture possible, the UN Directorate partnered with the Central Statistical Office, the National Council for Sustainable Development, the Office of the Ombudsman for Future Generations, the Business Council for Sustainable Development in Hungary, the Roundtable of Hungarian Civil Society Organisations for the Sustainable Development Goals and the UN Youth Delegate of Hungary.

# NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (OKT)

The establishment, the roles and responsibilities and the operating rules of the National Council for Environmental Protection was provided for by section 45 of Act LIII of 1995 on the General Rules of Environmental Protection. The Council makes proposals to, advises and provides input to the Government regarding the analysis of assessment of draft legislation and other laws and regulations, national and regional concepts and economic regulators related environmental protection, provides input on the draft version of plans and programmes with significant potential environmental impact and their environmental assessment and makes recommendations to the Government to improve the efficiency of environmental protection and nature conservation.

The OKT normally has one plenary session every month but in order to be able to adjust to the varying pace of the government's operations, it has standing committees addressing key areas in the sectoral programmes of economic development and the synergies of environmental protection and nature conservation. Environmental social organisations, professional and economic interest groups and the representatives of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences appointed by the MTA's president for this role within the scientific community, academics, university professors and leaders of research institutes are represented in the OKT in equal portion. The OKT's co-chairman is the minister in charge of the environmental protection and conservationist public administration or the state secretary delegated by the minister responsible for environmental issues (as well). The OKT has a work relationship with the Committee on Sustainable Development of the Parliament.

The OKT's activities have three main pillars: (1) providing input on laws and regulations; (2) providing input on "various plans and programmes", primarily on infrastructure investments (Strategic Environmental Assessment) and (3)

making recommendations on the (institutional) development of environmental protection and nature conservation, in particular in the field of R&D and information technology.

Since its establishment 23 years ago, the OKT has addressed and developed positions and recommendations regarding nearly all the areas of environmental protection and nature conservation and released position papers based on the analysis of environmental protection and economic development as well as the sustainable use of environmental and natural resources.

The relationship between the OKT's member groups and the organisations, institutions delegating them reflects the nature and the organisational structure of the various member groups. The representatives of the economic organisations regularly report to the Environmental Committee of the Confederation of Hungarian Employers and Industrialists while civil organisations present their activities to the delegating bodies at the annual conference of environmental protection and nature conservation organisations. Additionally, the participants of the monthly meetings of environmental organisations are constantly informed on the Council's activities and opinions issued and feedback on the various concepts is continuously sought from the experts of the movement. The representatives of the scientific community and MTA's Presidential Committee of Environmental Sciences have strong personal ties with many of OKT's members being on an MTA committee or sub-committee. The OKT works together with the National Council on Sustainable Development (NFFT) in a natural and institutionalised way. Since its establishment, the OKT has been part of the cooperation that is the network of environmental and sustainable development advisory councils from many EU member states (European Environmental & SD Advisory Councils [EEAC]).





## CENTRAL STATISTICAL OFFICE (KSH)

## HUNGARY HELPS

The Hungary Helps Programme is a framework programme of the Hungarian government launched in 2017 coordinating Hungary's engagement and assistance in the source countries of migration across the world. It organises the tasks related to ongoing and future assistance to fight poverty and to promote human and minority rights, international security and stability.

The Hungary Helps Programme is one of the most important pillars of government action to implement the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and targets requiring the cooperation and unity of all the countries in the world.

The Hungary Helps Programme ensures that our humanitarian policy and assistance is coordinated and efficient in the various areas. The key objectives of the framework programme support the global implementation of the SDGs. By providing the opportunity for everyone to live in their home country ("the present global migration crisis needs to be addressed at its root cause: assistance must be offered in the crisis area and the problems should not be brought here, that is the root causes must be eliminated so that the affected people may live in peace and security once again"), it contributes to ending poverty and delivering the global goals of decent work and economic growth.

In the last decade, the global inequalities showed contrasting

trends with the inequalities growing in regions with poorer economic performance. By working to identify the causes of the problems, the Hungary Helps Programme contributes to reducing the inequalities within and among the countries.

It is a global desire to make societies more peaceful and inclusive by ensuring access to fundamental human rights, the rule of law, justice and transparent, efficient and accountable institutions. While several large regions have experienced improvement in this area in the last decades, there are still many countries where armed conflicts and violence often occur reflecting the poor quality of the above institutional system. The Hungary Helps contributes to preserving the religious and ethnic diversity of the crisis areas and to the implementation of the SDGs aiming to achieve peace, justice and establish strong institutions by supporting Christian communities ("Christianity is the most persecuted religion in today's world and as Hungary is a community based on Christianity, we need to help Christian people in the first place").

In addition to ensuring peace, safe institutional systems and human rights, this goal also includes the reduction of crime (in particular terrorist financing, money laundering and corruption) and while some improvement has been seen in recent years, there is still a lot to do.

The Central Statistical Office (KSH) is a professionally independent government office with a long history. Its role is to plan data collection, to collect, process, store, analyse and publish data and the protection of individual data. The KSH delivers data to the Parliament and public administration, social organisations, advocacy groups, local governments, public bodies, the scientific community, economic organisations, the public and the media as well as to international organisations and foreign users. Official data on Hungary's social and economic status and demographics are published by the KSH.

The KSH's sustainable development related activities have three main areas: the compilation of the publication The Indicators of Sustainable Development for Hungary and the determination of the indicator system, collection of data related to the UN's SDGs, the development of domestic indicators and coordination of data collection and thirdly, the identification, strengthening and supporting the use of relations between sustainability and sectoral statistics. The KSH directly contributes to the delivery of the sustainability strategies within the domestic sustainability goals and to the cooperation between the civil, business and scientific community.

The KSH has published the indicators of sustainable development every two years since 2007. The first three volumes were based on the indicator system of Eurostat. In the following editions, the indicators were thematically divided based on the three key dimensions (environment, society and economy) and later were arranged according to the 4 resources in the NFFS (people, society, environment

and economy) including both assessed and unassessed, so-called context indicators.

The core activities of the KSH entail data collection in association with the SDGs and the development of domestic indicators. Through coordinating the SDG experts of the ministries and their background institutions, the KSH is also involved in the implementation of the SDGs. Through its data supply activities, it is engaged in the international data transfer and supports the data transmission between the members of the Official Statistical Service and other official sources of data and the UN's specialised agencies. The KSH co-chairs the High-Level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building set up by the the United Nations Statistical Commission. The KSH also participates in UNSD's expert group in charge of the technical and methodological development of the SDGs.

The KSH started its domestic activity related to the SDG indicators in July 2015. At present, indicators are available for around 75% of the SDG targets in Hungary. In 2017, the KSH released an online publication including the SDG indicators that are most relevant for Hungary and are measurable. A new database was created for these data with a brief description and analysis added.

One of the top challenges for the next period for the KSH is to ensure that the indicator systems are implemented for Hungary to the largest possible extent and facilitate that the various initiatives are statistically coordinated (KSH publications, national framework strategy and UN SDGs).



# THE HUNGARIAN NATIONAL BANK (MNB)

The Hungarian National Bank (MNB) is Hungary's central bank, which is responsible for the country's monetary policy, the stability and monitoring of the system of financial intermediaries and supports the Government's economic policy including sustainable development and convergence with all the means at its disposal. The MNB is part of the European System of Central Banks and the European System of Financial Supervision. The MNB's primary mission is to establish and maintain price stability while also increasing the resilience of Hungary's financial system. Through ensuring price and financial stability, the MNB is able to mitigate the cyclical fluctuations of the economy and minimise the welfare losses caused by such fluctuations. The MNB contributes to promoting sustainability primarily by fulfilling these mandates.

The MNB's core activity supports the achievement of the objectives of the National Framework Strategy on Sustainable Development both directly and indirectly. The reform of the monetary policy started in 2013 resulted in a much more active, innovative central bank able to effectively respond to the structural challenges of the global crisis which began in 2008, that, apart from ensuring price and financial stability, constantly and sustainably contributes to economic growth and Hungary's successful convergence. The MNB is also active in educating the public and improving the financial awareness and economic competence of the community, which is also one of the objectives defined by the Framework Strategy. The MNB's wide range of social responsibility programmes mainly focus on education, research, scientific activities, financial awareness raising, culture and charitable donations with special emphasis on obtaining knowledge, creating and preserving values.

The most important success in economic policy in recent years for sustainability is that the fiscal and monetary policy reforms introduced after 2010 and 2013 respectively established the foundations of the country's successful convergence. The constructive harmonisation of the two main branches of economic policy resulted in an economic model which simultaneously enables macro-financial balance and dynamic economic growth. Some of the most notable successes related to sustainability include that the EU closed the excessive deficit procedure for Hungary 9 years after the country's entry in the EU, the bank set the debt-to-GDP ratio and the net external debt of the national economy on a steadily decreasing path, avoided the credit crunch by the provision of central bank loans to SMEs, thus the recovery process not relying on borrowing causing significant growth loss, completely eliminated foreign exchange loans for retail customers and significantly reduced the external vulnerability of the national economy by improving internal financing sources. All these positive macro-economic conditions and processes stimulate the growth of investments and business innovations improving Hungary's productivity and sustainable economic performance.

The MNB also supports the successful convergence of Hungary's economic policy by providing competitiveness analyses and recommendations relying on the Bank's enormous economic expertise and analytical capacity. As competitiveness has fundamental sustainability prerequisites, MNB's competitiveness analyses and recommendations contribute to the implementation of the Framework Strategy in many ways.

The first major milestone of the competitiveness related

work was the publication of the monograph, commissioned by the Prime Minister, Competitiveness and Growth in 2016, and international good practices along with 50 recommendations to improve competitiveness. In 2017, the MNB published its Bank Competitiveness Index assessing the competitiveness of Hungary's system of financial intermediaries against the EU and the Competitiveness Report, which was the first publication to provide a comprehensive and unbiased view on Hungary's competitiveness. In autumn 2018, the MNB defined the macro-economic conditions required for Hungary's successful convergence in the Growth Report. Based on that, the MNB compiled a 330-point Competitiveness programme in February 2019. The objectives and recommendations of the programme are in many aspects in agreement with the Framework Strategy and the findings of the Monitoring Reports tracking the implementation of the Framework Strategy with the exception that the MNB mainly focuses on the economic and human resources closely associated with its own activities.

"The MNB defines competitiveness as economic conditions conducive to sustainable convergence, i.e. the aggregate level of all factors underlying long-term development. In the MNB's approach, a national economy is competitive if it utilizes its available resources optimally to attain the highest possible, but at the same time sustainable level of welfare. Apart from macro-financial balance and the stability of the real economy, the competitive functioning of the economy requires a corporate ecosystem based on innovation and renewal, good institutions.





# THE STATE AUDIT OFFICE (ÁSZ)

The State Audit Office (ÁSZ) is an independent national organisation fundamentally mandated to oversee the execution of the central budget, the management of public finances, the use of public funds and the management of Hungary's national assets. The mission of the ÁSZ is to promote the transparency of public finances, the efficient and reasonable use of public funds and assets and support good governance through its financially sound and valuable audits. In order to enforce the principles defined in the Fundamental Law, the ÁSZ puts emphasis on the responsible and diligent management of public funds and public property, the accountability, transparency, the exemption from material errors and the prevention of the loss of assets.

Through this role, the ÁSZ may play a central role in supporting the delivery of the provisions of the Fundamental Law related to future generations and sustainability as well as the National Framework Strategy on Sustainable Development (and consequently the UN's SDGs).

A cornerstone of natural-environmental sustainability is the long lasting, non-exhaustive use of natural habitats classified as the traditional components of a country's national assets (rivers, lakes, forests), protected areas (National Parks) and promotion of conditions allowing the renewal of the natural capital. The gradual depletion of the natural capital is also the loss of the national assets the prevention of which is one of the State Audit Office's key responsibilities.

Often times, the development, increase of human, social and economic resources is the outcome of government programmes, i.e. it depends on the allocation, use of budgetary funds. To ensure compliance with the requirement of responsible management of public funds, the State Audit Office should review the use of public (government and local) funds to check whether the various developments, demographic, education, health, social and other public sector spendings promoted the welfare of future generations

and the growth of our national resources to a sufficient extent.

As a cornerstone of its independence, the ÁSZ autonomously develops its audit rules and methods. It constantly renews its audit methodology based on practical experience and international methodology improvements, standards and recommendations. Hungary has been a member of INTOSAI, the international organisation of supreme audit institutions since 1968. At its congress in Budapest in 2004, INTOSAI adopted a recommendation to integrate the principles of sustainable development into the work of audit organisations. The audit institutions agree that the national budgets could also be audited based on the criteria of sustainability. The implementation of national sustainability strategies and action plans is financed from government funds and their use is reviewed by the audit institutions. The efficiency surveys of the audit institutions could also examine whether the implementation of strategies, programmes and investments financed from government funds considered the restrictions and principles of sustainability.

The State Audit Office contributes to the improvement of Hungary's sustainability performance not only through its audits but also its surveys. In the past years, the State Audit Office has studied options to more efficiently use human and economic resources in particular by examining the recording efficiency related to the national assets, analysing the sustainability of the public debt reduction trajectory, reviewing the options to raise the activity level of the presently inactive part of our labour force or by analysing the efficiency improvement of education, research and development and innovation.

## FISCAL COUNCIL (KT)

The Fiscal Council of Hungary (KT) is an independent institution supervising the preparation process of the central budget in Hungary. It was created under the Act on Cost-efficient State Management and Fiscal Responsibility adopted in 2008. Its role is to present the potential budgetary impacts of economic processes and parliamentary decisions based on its own analyses.

The Fiscal Council was established to promote the creation and maintenance of the discipline, transparency and long-term sustainability of fiscal policy and to foster the long-term competitiveness of Hungary through fiscal means, in consideration of the requirement of justice between present and future generations and the expected growth of public expenditures owing to the ageing of society in the forthcoming decades. The Fiscal Council contributes to the achievement of domestic sustainable development goals, including in particular the monetary conditions of prudent fiscal management preventing indebtedness and budgetary deficits.

The Fundamental Law adopted in 2011 and the law on Hungary's economic stability adopted at the end of 2011 assigned additional responsibilities to the Fiscal Council established in 2009.

One of the Council's critical and extremely responsible tasks is to comment on the draft (and the amendment) of the Act on the Central Budget and to grant its preliminary consent to the closing vote on the act if it finds that the provision regarding public debt in the Fundamental Law may be met. Every six months, the Fiscal Council comments on the execution of the Act on the Central Budget and changes in public debt. Additionally, it is authorised to comment on any issues concerning the planning and execution of the central budget, the use of public funds and the state of public finances. As part of its latter responsibility, it constantly assesses compliance with EU requirements.

The Fiscal Council also regularly reviews the implementation of sustainability. As an example, it organised a workshop on the relationship of sustainable development and budgetary policy in 2018 discussing the topic and opportunities of further research. The Fiscal Council indirectly and significantly contributes to increasing the information available on sustainability by regularly commissioning analyses to assess and make recommendations on specific types of our national resources including in the area of health (human resources: health) in 2018.



# THE BUSINESS COUNCIL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN HUNGARY (BCSDH)

The Business Council for Sustainable Development in Hungary (BCSDH) is the national partner organisation of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD). The WBCSD is a CEO-led business organisation founded in 1992, located in Switzerland, working with more than 200 corporates in over 70 countries all over the world. The Hungarian organisation was founded in 2007 and currently has 87 corporate members generating nearly 30% of Hungary's GDP. Moreover, BCSDH's member organisations employ over 7% of all the workers employed in Hungary.

The mission of BCSDH is to actively encourage its member organisations to incorporate into and apply the three pillars of sustainable development: the principles of economic effectiveness, ecological balance and quality of life in their operations improving their competitiveness through new and innovative solutions and simultaneously contributing to the sustainable development of the Hungarian economy and society.

The BCSDH's goals include:

- To participate, as a credible and authentic business forum in the dialogue and cooperation with other business, civil and governmental organisations on sustainable development issues relating to the corporate sector.
- To promote the changes in the policy, legal and economic framework for favouring and supporting those companies, products, services and technologies, which contribute to the sustainable production and consumption.

- To provide forum for the introduction and exchange of experiences in the field of business sustainability results and best practices, as well as to the elaboration of member projects.
- To spread and to communicate the members' voluntary environmental or social projects, actions, success stories towards key decision-makers, the business community and the general public.
- To actively and constructively participate in the dialogue and cooperation on sustainable development issues related to Hungary with the government, civil organisations, scientific institutions and other business, trade and advocacy organisations.
- To raise awareness about corporate sustainability towards all business actors and the future managers, economists and engineers, through seminars and lectures.

One key and ongoing programme of BCSDH is the Innovation for Sustainable Corporations – Action 2020 Hungary resulting in over 100 business solutions developed in 5 focus areas (climate protection, sustainable lifestyle, employment, water and food) and the Hungarian Circular Economy Platform founded on November 29 2018.



## V4SDG

The V4SDG – Visegrad for Sustainability is the first and only youth-led initiative actively promoting sustainable development in the countries of the Visegrad Four: Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary.

The V4SDG's mission is to raise sustainability awareness in the V4 countries in order to help them become one of the competitive leaders of sustainable development through their cooperation. Its goal is to promote action to implement the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the four countries both at individual and institutional level by strengthening and connecting the key players of sustainability.

In Hungary, the organisation works partly to raise awareness and organises educational sessions, workshops and debates, participates and presents in forums aiming to clearly define sustainability and to inform the largest possible audience. The V4SDG's other local activities include cooperation with businesses through consulting projects and events and consultations with government actors on issues related to sustainable development. At the V4 level, the V4SDG held or will hold a conference in all four capital cities in 2018 and 2019 designed to identify

the most relevant sustainability issues of the region, connect the different sectors and actors of sustainability and develop potential solutions with the participants. The two forums in Budapest and Prague in 2018 offered an extraordinary opportunity to understand the sustainability progress of the four countries and to build a network and the conferences to be held in Warsaw and Bratislava in 2019 are expected to be equally successful. After the international conference in Budapest in 2020 following the four forums, the V4 actors may commit to the V4 Sustainability Vision, which may become an ambitious and feasible sustainable development solution database through cooperation with the governments.

As the sustainability solutions and the network of the V4 play a key role globally as well, the V4SDG has been building strategic partnerships with international organisations and has been actively involved with the following ones: European Partners for the Environment (EPE), Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) Youth, International Coalition on the Greening the Belt and Road Initiative (UN Environment and the Government of China), United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth.





*"Its extreme greediness made humankind take more from nature than it had right to. More than what nature can tolerate and regenerate. In the last 50 years only, we have used more energy and natural assets than in the history of man before that time. What is certain is that this must come to an end."*

Speech of President of the Republic JÁNOS ÁDER at the inauguration session of the National Assembly (May, 8 2018)

# ROUNDTABLE OF HUNGARIAN CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

There have been enormous efforts made in the past to establish societies and international cooperation adhering to the principles of sustainability. Before its adoption, no other plan or programme reflected such commitment and broad political support to achieve these ambitions. The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals forming its backbone express our important present aspiration to also have a future.

The SDGs were designed to allow governments, the scientific, economic and civil communities to work together to achieve them. We founded this roundtable to contribute to the successful implementation of the SDGs with the means of civil organisations. We hope others will follow suit.

The Roundtable was established by 11 Hungarian organisations in October 2017 to meet the following objectives:

- to promote familiarity with the UN's SDGs in Hungary and represent them in social communication and public discourse;
- to monitor the implementation of the SDGs in Hungary, provide recommendations to the government and social players;
- to facilitate structured dialogue between government and non-governmental organisations;
- to promote information exchange between the members, help learn about the members' related efforts and activities.

Since its establishment, the Roundtable created the [ffcelok.hu](http://ffcelok.hu) website, which is the first Hungarian-language website focusing specifically on the 2030 Agenda. The website uses 80 indicators to present the progress Hungary has made to implement the SDGs and lists the nearly 100 civil organisations making a commitment to contribute to the goals through their activities.

The members of the Roundtable have started collecting good practices and developing recommendations in their own fields of expertise. These good practices and recommendations will be published on the website and are intended to support the government and set examples for other sectors. They may help start a dialogue within the Roundtable and the civil sector on how the goals may be achieved in a systematic manner promoting each other's activities.

The founders of the Roundtable: CEEweb for Biodiversity, DemNet Foundation for Development of Democratic Rights, HAND Hungarian Association of NGOs for Development and Humanitarian Aid, KÖVET Association for Sustainable Economies, Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta, Hungarian Anti Poverty Network, National Society of Conservationists, Hungarian Climate Alliance, Batthyány Society of Professors, Védjegylet, WWF Hungary.



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