

Minutes of the Workshop “Sustainable Lifestyles in Europe” (Vienna, Nov 13/14, 2004)

1. The Past

The participants present their groups; with discussion.

2. The Present

The participants express different aspects in motion:

- Relation of paid staff and volunteers in their organisations
- Relation of focus on individual behaviour and focus on structural changes
- Relative importance of solidarity, ecology and lifestyle for themselves...
- ...and for their organisations

Three workgroups (two in English, one in German) on “What does ‘sustainable lifestyle’ mean for us?”. Presentation of the flip chart papers and discussion.

(Flip charts contents see attached photographs made by Klaus)

3. The Future

Brainstorming on possible common goals; afterwards each participant can choose the three items most important for him/her. (Results: see Annex).

Discussion, concentrating on three “clusters”:

- Journey to sustainable initiatives – eco tourism; meeting again
- “Eco-appeal” for young people; bridging the generation gap, the social gap
- Social marketing, communication; sustainable consumption

What should be the next step? Several proposals:

- Three subsequent workshops in different places (among them: Sofia) on partial aspects of sustainable lifestyles, afterwards major workshop in Vienna to sum up the results
- A newsletter of the work of the different organisations concentrating on “good news”
- Website with names and short presentation of the organisations
- Lectures of interested organisations in Croatia
- Developing a new project for “Interreg” together with “Waste Watch” following their present project (2005-08)
- Participation in the project “Sustainable Consumption in Croatia”
- “Hands on”-meeting, preferably in Brdarka (SK), combining discussions with baking bread, playing “farmers’ golf” (Bauerngolf) and working in the field/garden
- Another workshop to concentrate on developing strategies and projects for sustainable lifestyles, especially sustainable consumption and production.
- Developing projects for the UNEP decade on Education for Sustainable Development

4. The Results

After intense discussions, the following procedure was agreed upon:

A common website shall be established to

- give all participating groups a chance to present them shortly (a few sentences) plus links to their websites
- facilitate the development of concrete projects (ideas and proposals) by structuring discussions on three cross-cutting issues where the participants of the meeting should have equal opportunities to add web pages
- allow non-participants of the workshop to be involved in the discussion process (“forum”).

The cross-cutting issues that were chosen (responsible “moderator” for each issue in italic):

- Communication, networking and education for sustainable lifestyles: *Kristina, Doreen, Sanja, Dan, Jiri*
- Urban aspects of sustainable lifestyles: *Doreen, Lucia*
- Rural aspects of sustainable lifestyles: *Marina, Radovan, Tibor*

The electronic discussion is hoped to lead to one or several concrete project proposals. As soon as it seems to be useful (in the course of the discussion), another **meeting** will be organised. Here, Brdarka (SK) is a good possibility, but the actual place and time will be selected in the discussion according to needs (like size, traffic situation, need of conference and office equipment, ambiente, ...) still to be defined.

For the technical aspects of the website, a workgroup is formed consisting of Sanja, Kristina, Marina, Jiri and Dan. The website should be usable by Jan 15, 2005.

5. Additional Comments and Proposals

I sent the concept of the minutes (that was written by me – Dan – in accordance with Katharina and Klaus) to Doreen, Kristina, Sanja, Jiri and Marina. During reviewing the concept, some additional remarks were made¹:

- I wanted however to share an idea that came to me while I was travelling (and I couldn't sleep :)) - that's why I'm replying to all of you, hope you don't mind.
I thought that it might be good to already give a name to our mutual work that will appear on our website or anywhere else we talk/ write about it. I was thinking about European Initiative for Sustainable Lifestyles, or **Initiative for Sustainable Lifestyles in Europe (ISLE)** :)... It can be a matter of discussion of course.
I think that giving an official name to what we are doing and what we are about to do might be useful first of all as a good reference when we fund our projects - as partners in mutual projects or in our organizations. Also it can be a good motivation for others to join in cause it looks more structured that way. Further more, since we tend to have sort of an umbrella for different projects and initiatives at European level, this ISLE gives the opportunity to many partnerships and initiatives to develop independently but also can refer to the Initiative and ISLE would be sort of an information center where everyone posts reports and also ideas - just as we agreed at the workshop.
Anyway, my idea gives nothing new on the "content level", but represents a technical suggestion in order to capitalize our work (present and future) in the best possible way cause I think we really have potential to make changes on European level. (Sanja)
- I agree with Sonja that it would be good to have a name for our initiative. I did a small search on the web to see if something similar exists already, but I was not able to find it. Maybe somebody

¹ A text change of chapter 4 proposed by Kristina has already been performed.

could do a bigger search – just to be sure that we are not duplicating things or making unnecessary competition. I like the name, I vote for Initiative for Sustainable Lifestyles in Europe (ISLE).

Afterwards we should discuss procedures on how to involve new members if somebody expresses a wish to join (I do not think the initiative should be exclusive to the participants of the first workshop). (Kristina)

- I agree with Kristina about the change of wording she suggested, and on how to agree new participants in the group.
I also agree with Sanja's very creative name for the group. I have also done a websearch for ISLE and have found nothing that already exists. However, I think a full search should be done before it is decided upon. So, Sanja's difficulty sleeping allowed her to think laterally! (Doreen)

- I'm glad that everyone agrees on everything :) and I just wanted to say that I also agree with Kristina. Maybe we could invite others to write about their projects, call for partners etc. and then invite them to join our next meeting. I can't now remember of some criteria at this moment... Should we define who and how will be made the research to check if something similar as ISLE already exists? I can browse through Google. If someone knows about some directory of NGOs or civil initiatives on European level, where we could also check this - great. (Sanja)

- Driving home I realised that we had never before noticed the discrepancy between people among us that wish to experience sustainable lifestyles and community for themselves - and those who wish to enable as many other people as possible to do so.
I belong to the second group. But I understood now that I should appreciate and value the other approach more than I did - one group is useless without the other, and best for personal balance might be to incorporate at least a small percentage of the other position in one's own life.
I am afraid that some participants of the meeting preferring the first option might be a little bit disappointed with the outcome since there is possibly not enough for them in the future plans. Maybe this is something we should discuss openly when the "forum" is opened. (Dan)

- I'm happy that the workshop gave you some new insights as well. Maybe we could use this split approach – talking and doing – to develop a better model for future ways of working. I think we've been discussing environmental issues for far too long (and I've only been doing it for 12 years!), and it's time some talkers started doing. I'm definitely a talker, having focused on policy for the 12 years I've been working in environmental issues. The opportunities to keep talking will only increase in future as we have more Directives and therefore legislation, initiatives, objectives, plans, programmes, etc. to occupy us. I guess I've got feet in both camps, but most experience in the first.
It would be a good discussion topic for the forum, and one I would like to provide comments on. (Doreen)

6. Useful information

There are some informations I received in the last days that I wish to share:

- Maybe you could include into the e-mail you send to the workshop participants with the minutes the link to the website of the Green Pack where everybody could take a look at the interactive contents of the CD-ROM: <http://greenpack.rec.org/>
Please use the FLASH site. On the turning wheel you can choose Consumer Society (symbol of shopping cart) – that is the most relevant to sustainable lifestyles. (Kristina)

- In the internet I found that there is a similar forum in Catalonia, description below. (Anna)
Moviments.info
*It is a web of resources for the social change, which collects all the usefull information of social movements of the catalan territory.
moviments.info informs and makes easy the access of tools, groups, projects, struggles and working campaigns, and constantly update.
Some of the communication means that you can already find are as follow:
- A directory of more than 2700 catalan groups. Each group has access to its data to enlarge them or to make changes. A code system will make the searching easier.
- A place to work together and update projects and useful resources. It is the part of the wikis.*

- The news section recollects the new events of the campaigns, resources and projects elaborated by groups that are working for the transformation of society.

- The digital version of the book *Useful guide 2003 for the social change*. (*Guia útil 2003 per a la transformació social*)

e-mail: info@moviments.info

Web: www.moviments.info

➔ What I forgot to mention at the workshop: There is a conference in Bratislava next weekend "Looking for a different Europe". Katharina, Susanne and Klaus of SOL will chair two workshops at that meeting. If you are interested, you find more information on www.attac.at/index.php/bratislava (Dan)

Annex: Voting on common goals

Meaning of the abbreviations: Country code (if there was only one person from that country) or country code followed by the initials of the voting person (see list of participants). [*written by Klaus*].

Sustainability management	D, BG
Eco-Labeling	A-PB, A-SS, HR-MB
Journey to sustainable initiatives – eco tourism, meeting again, tournament "Bauerngolf"	SK-TG, BG, A-SW, RO, SK-RT, A-SK, A-GG, HR-SB, A-HF
Support of local authorities for systematic change	H
Eco-appeal for young people, bridging the generation-gap and the social gap	A-HF, CZ, RO, HR-MB, H, SK-TG
Reconnected with nature	-
Social marketing, communication	A-PB, SK-AN, GB, A-SS, SK-TG, H, HR-SB, A-DJ, D, A-KC, RO,
Practical manual work	-
Unarmed neutrality (Costa Rica)	-
Exchange of knowledge & experience	BG, SK-RT
Sustainable consumption (definition)	A-PB, A-KC, A-SS, GB, HR-SB, A-SK, A-GG, A-DJ
Organical farming	CZ, RO, HR-MB, A-HF
Discrepancy between sustainability & free market economy/growth ideology	A-SK, SLO, A-GG, A-KC, A-SW
Networking & empowerment of civil society	SLO, D
Holistic approach – fragments	SK-AN
Sustainable companies, actions & directives for management	BG, A-SW
Monitoring by civil society, lobbying	-
Home-made products	SK-TR, HR-MB
Improving the understanding of the current situation – change	SLO, SK-AN
Personal ecology – individual responsibility	GB, A-DJ, CZ, HR-SB, HR-MB