



GREENPEACE HUNGARY  
**PUBLIC BENEFIT  
REPORT 2018**



# Preface

János Bálint Mező,  
Executive director of Greenpeace Hungary



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Greenpeace Hungary works to make our country and the entire planet a cleaner, more livable place, in order to secure a safe future for our children and grandchildren.

We are independent and stand our ground. We fight to preserve our natural resources. All over the world, we put pressure on those governments and companies who do not meet their obligations to humankind and the Earth.

In 2018, in Hungary, we were working to

- make healthy, organically sourced food available to as many Hungarian children as possible;
- get rid of health-hazardous pollution of the air, the soil and our waters;
- eliminate the plastic pollution at home that is destroying our whole Earth;
- act domestically against global warming and convince the government to support the spread of clean and safe renewable energy sources;
- make our cities more livable.

In order to achieve changes at system-level, we also participate in the work of the National Environmental Protection Council. As a result of our proposals regarding environmental policy submitted through this body, environmental aspects may appear with more emphasis in draft bills. In 2018, we formulated such proposals in respect of air quality, and within that, especially regarding the reduction of particle pollution causing the death of tens of thousands of Hungarians, and with regard to restricting one-way packaging materials in order to reduce plastic pollution. In addition, in several instances we demanded more effective action by environmental authorities in order to block the destruction of the environment and we continue to work so that finally an act will stipulate the application of the 'polluter pays' principle.

“ We are grateful for the hundreds of thousands of Hungarians who have supported us, and without whom we could not have achieved our successes in 2018 either, and whose dedicated persistence enabled us to support our planet effectively, and within in it, Hungary. ”

János Bálint Mező,  
executive director of Greenpeace Hungary

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# Our campaign for a Hungary free from plastic pollution

We said no to plastic pollution in Hungary: we also demanded that Hungary takes steps in order to eliminate the global plastic pollution that has reached catastrophic levels. In our country, less than 40% of disposable plastic packaging and products are recycled, and there is no adequate regulation or incentive to restrict the use of disposable packaging and products. Our petition launched to restrain the use of plastic bags became the most popular of our environmental protection initiatives so far: within 120 days, we collected 120,000 signatures. By the end of the year, 150,000 people demanded the government's action with us. We continue the struggle!

## We cleaned up a section of the river Tisza

In the summer of 2018, we raised awareness of the responsibility of manufacturers of plastic waste. As part of the 'PET Cup' (*PET-kupa*), [Greenpeace-activists](#) organized the Hungarian leg of the garbage collection event, which was combined with the so-called 'brand audit' on the river Tisza, that was simultaneously undertaken in 42 countries. The international inspection has shown that, of the identifiable waterfront waste products, the most frequent ones are those of Coca-Cola, PepsiCo, Nestlé and Danone.



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## We sent the message from Heroes' Square: STOP PLASTIC

As a result of months of work to eliminate plastic waste, during the fall, the Ministry of Innovation and Technology prepared draft legislation for the amendment of the environmental product fee act. In our opinion, the proposed changes could have resulted in a significant decrease in plastic pollution in Hungary. To support the regulation's entry into force as soon as possible, at the request of the Ministry and a number of industrial players, we gathered the alternatives to disposable plastic bags, proving that solutions are already available.

We formed a 'STOP PLASTIC' human banner at Heroes' Square with hundreds of participants to show that the public supports the elimination of single-use plastic bags and expects the government to act as soon as possible. The pictures were circulated not only in the domestic, but in the global press as well.

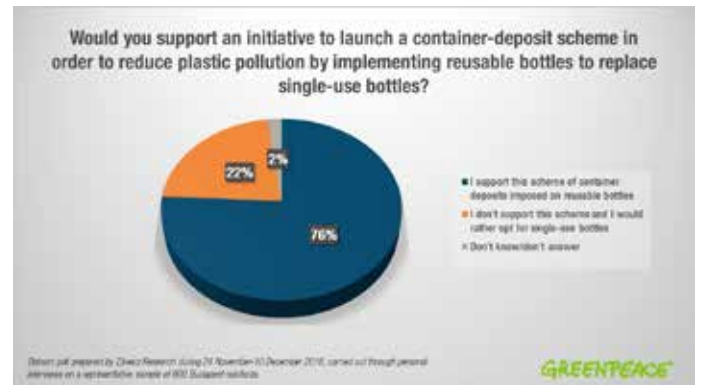
Our petition to eliminate plastic bags was signed by almost 120,000 people within 120 days. The record-breaking number of signatures was handed over to the Ministry as well. Despite all this, the government decided not to introduce the draft bill prepared by the Ministry to the Parliament – in other words, it is not taking action against plastic pollution. We continue to work towards the government finally taking action!



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## We have shown that people would prefer to pay a deposit on bottles

In December 2018, we carried out a representative survey in the capital city, which showed that two-thirds of the capital's population would choose refundable and reusable beverage packaging, which could reduce the amount of disposable plastic production.



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## Our campaign to facilitate the domestic spread of organically sourced food

For the past seven years, we have been working to expand organic agriculture as widely as possible. Our aim is to make food that is free from harmful chemicals available to the Hungarian population as well. Farming that respects the soil and the environment not only provides healthy food for us, but could be a solution to a number of environmental, social and economic problems that are also present in Hungary.



### We started a campaign for healthy school canteen meals

During our Eco-canteen campaign, we worked to increase the level of organically-sourced ingredients in kindergarten and school canteens, and to provide access to healthy food for all children, regardless of their social and welfare situation. Children are the most sensitive to pesticide residues in food. It is important that the food prepared for them is made from high quality, healthy ingredients.

This is in accordance with the action plan accepted by the Hungarian government, which requires that the proportion of organic ingredients in public canteen meals must be increased to 30% by December 2020. However, its practical implementation is still delayed.

The 2017 European Parliament study demands immediate steps, since it showed that the pesticide residues found in our food reduces our children's IQ. The petition launched with our eco-canteen campaign aims to help local governments and schools, and to urge the government to make healthy, organically sourced food available in as many kindergartens and schools as fast as possible. By the end of 2018, more than 14,000 people have joined our campaign. We continue the work.

## We supported the creation of eco-canteens with training materials

We have created a [publication showing the good examples](#) of healthy eco-canteens in Hungary and abroad that we distributed to nearly 3,200 local councils nationwide, offering our help in such development of public canteens.

Experts working in kindergarten and school catering have a tremendous opportunity in their hands: each meal is a good opportunity to introduce to children and popularize the food that is produced without destroying the environment and ecosystem as well as healthy eating, which, in turn, will have a positive influence on the eating habits of families. A further significant benefit of canteens based on organically sourced ingredients is their public and economic gain, as they provide value-adding work and a steady income to local producers and communities.

## We are making organic fruit available to children

In order to popularize organic food with children, on St. Nicolas day on December 6th have distributed organic fruits from Hungarian ecofarms to pre-schoolers and school children. Ecofarming is the only way of producing food that preserves the ecosystem of our Earth, which effectively helps to fight the global warming crisis and at the same time provides enough good quality food for humankind and our children.



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## We called attention to it: the solution to climate change is less meat consumption

We made available the [Less is More](#) international web page of Greenpeace in Hungarian as well, in order to help the effective personal fight against climate change with this, too. In our campaign, we call attention to the impacts of industrial animal husbandry, which are destructive to the environment and exacerbate the climate crisis, by presenting the results of several new scientific research projects.



Our aim is to help the Hungarian population take action against the climate crisis by watching what makes its way onto their plates as well. The production of all the meat that humanity consumes currently results in the emission greenhouse gases of the same amount as the whole transportation sector, that is, all airplanes, cars, ships, trains and trucks combined. Therefore, by reducing our meat and milk consumption, we may do a lot to combat the climate crisis.



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## Success: the EU prohibited the use of three bee-killer chemicals in the Union!

In April 2018, the majority of European Union member states voted for [an almost total prohibition of the use of three bee-killer insecticides](#). We also contributed to this achievement by our years of steadfast work: we started petitions, organized impressive actions and presented the latest scientific examinations on the subject ([Destruction of bees](#), [The burden of bees](#), [Poisons or bees?](#)).

We are proud that our international campaign contributed to the protection of bees. However, our work is not over, since the Hungarian government voted against the EU's prohibition of the chemicals. We will endeavour to ensure that the government does not try to find a way out of the prohibition and does not request case-by-case permits to use bee-killer neonicotinoids.

## We took a stand against the international treaties that threaten Hungarian agriculture and our health.

In 2018, together with the Hungarian Nature Protection Association and with the Protection Association (*Védegyület*), we fought against the drafts of those European Union free trade agreements that would jeopardize the EU environmental protection and consumer protection regulations already in place. These agreements would promote corporate interests instead of the rights of the member states' citizens to healthy food and a healthy environment.

In February 2018, as a result of our campaign work over several years, Hungary did not support the free trade agreement to be concluded with South American countries (Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay). In its argumentation, the government referred to those precise concerns that we ourselves have called attention to in respect of the free trade agreements planned between the European Union and the United States and between the European Union and Canada.







# Our campaign for the domestic spread of clean, sustainable energies

In 2018, we continued to work so that as many Hungarians as possible may have renewable energy resources available for them and that finally we, in Hungary, really start to build the energy system of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, based on renewables. This, however, is impossible with the planned Paks II Project, which, in addition, is also attended by huge safety and economic risks. Therefore, together with tens of thousands of Hungarian people, we demanded that the government stops the Paks II project and starts to create a clean and safe energy system based on renewables.

In the social media, we provide up-to-date information on the spread of renewable energy resources, trends in international energy prices and about defects and accidents related to nuclear power plants. We have written articles for leading newspapers and the news sites of Hungary while, in the [blog titled 'Paksaméta,'](#) we interpreted the current news related to the Paks project in professional analyses.

## On the anniversary of Fukushima, we reminded everyone that there is no such thing as safe nuclear energy

We published the results of the new measurements by Greenpeace in the evacuation zone around Fukushima. It turned out that the level of radiation still exceeds the international threshold value determined for the public several times over, and so will still not be possible to move back there for decades.

Therefore, on the anniversary of the Fukushima catastrophe, our message was "Nuclear energy is dangerous." There is no such thing as safe nuclear energy; the technology used in nuclear power plants poses a huge threat to our environment and health. The aftereffects of nuclear accidents may last for a minimum of decades and make our environment impossible to live in



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## We called attention to the nuclear waste from Paks II.

With dozens of canoeing activists, we floated a huge, inflatable “barrel of nuclear waste” along the Budapest section of the Danube to call attention to the problem of the spent fuel created by the use of nuclear energy, which will keep radiating for hundreds of thousands of years. There is no final solution for their ultimate disposal. Paks II is therefore not only unacceptable due to the project’s possible accidental risks, but it is also an extremely irresponsible investment.

## We demanded with tens of thousands of people: solar energy should be available for Hungarian households as well

Communicating the message of 34,000 people, we handed over our petition to the Innovation and Technology Ministry, which is responsible for climate and energy issues. Our demands are for the government to reduce the VAT on solar panels and solar systems from 27% to 5%, to reduce the high environmental product fee imposed on solar panels and withdraw the distributor’s capacity fee imposed on household power plants. Since our only chance to halt the climate crisis is by spreading renewable energies, we believe that the government in power at any time has the obligation to do all it can so that renewable energy resources are easily available to the Hungarian population.

## We rang the alarm bells: Hungary’s nuclear safety is in jeopardy.

We demonstrated: Hungary’s accomplishment in respect of nuclear safety is way below that of Finland. The Institute of Safety and Risk Sciences of the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences in Vienna (BOKU) prepared an analysis at the request of Greenpeace, in which it compared the official nuclear organizations of Hungary and Finland, as well as the related legislative system of the two countries.



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From the essay, it turned out that the Hungarian nuclear regulation and official practice breaches the requirements of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) or raises issues on 15 points, while only 4 aspects in Finland raised problems. We expect the decision makers to give satisfactory answers to the legitimate question of whether a higher level of nuclear safety can be guaranteed in Hungary. Without this, a plan for a nuclear power-plant construction project should not even come up.



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## Our message with the climate march was 0% CO<sub>2</sub> is the answer to the climate crisis

A few days before the UN climate conference in December (COP 24), we [organized a climate march](#) from the zero kilometre stone in Clark Ádám tér. With the symbolic place, the participants in the march sent the following message to the decision makers: our only chance to avoid the catastrophic effects of climate change is by reducing carbon dioxide emissions to zero and changing to renewable energies as soon as possible. Together with the participants of the march, we demanded urgent action from the Hungarian government: instead of postponing decisions, immediate, material steps need to be taken in our country as well.



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## We prepared a set of climate protection proposals

In order to facilitate our country's effective participation in the global climate protection collaboration, we delivered a detailed set of climate protection proposals to the Hungarian government. In them, we proposed that

- they eliminate measures restricting the use of wind energy;
- they support the population in becoming active energy producers (prosumers) instead of passive energy consumers;
- at least 35% of the final energy consumption should originate from renewable energies;
- we reduce our energy use by at least 30%;
- no lignite or coal-fired power plants should operate in Hungary after 2030;
- we reduce our pollutant emission by at least 55% by 2030;

We are convinced that Europe, and within that our country also, must have a leading role in avoiding a climate catastrophe.



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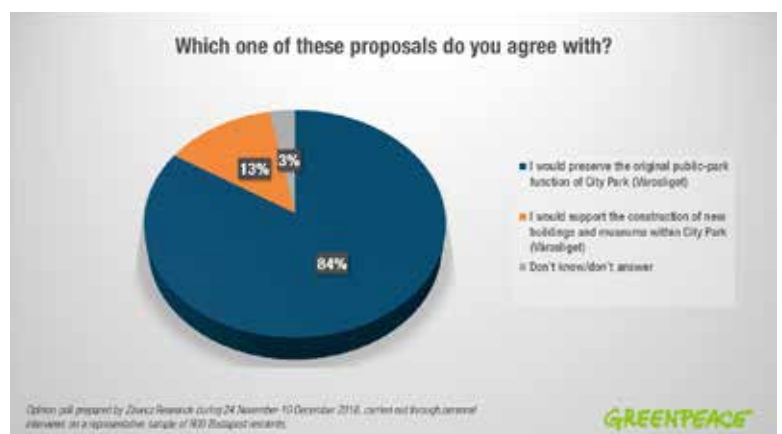


# Our campaign for livable cities

In 2018, we therefore worked for the reduction of air pollution in our cities and to convince the decision makers to create new and valuable green surfaces, as well as to protect the green areas that already exist. Trees, parks and woods are not only important in a city from an aesthetic aspect. We can breathe clearer air because of them, and they will make the extreme weather conditions (summer heatwaves, big amount of precipitation suddenly pouring down) that climate change brings about more bearable. A greater part of the Hungarian population, more than five million people, live in cities: we are convinced that they also have the right to a clean, healthy and livable environment and that public parks, tree-lined walkways and green islands are indispensable for this.

## We fought persistently for the protection of Városliget

At the request of the UNESCO Conservation Council, together with several preservation and environmental civil society organizations, we gave our opinions on the development plans related to Budapest; among them, the Liget Budapest Project in particular. At the council hearing, we presented our opinion, held in common with landscape architects, preservationists and other professionals, that the Liget Budapest Project would cause irreversible damage to the world heritage site of Andrásy út and its buffer zone.



We carried out a survey of whether the residents support building museums in the Városliget in the Liget Budapest Project. The results of the survey, which is representative of the capital, showed that the rejection of the project has been unaltered for three years, and the overwhelming majority of the residents oppose the construction of new buildings in the public park.

## Together with the local civil society, we ensured that the idea of the mobile dam planned to be established at Római-part will be revised

It is the result of our dogged work over several years together with the residents, experts and the local civil society organizations that, in 2018, the Assembly of the Capital voted to investigate a flood protection option that diverges from the track of the river bank as well. However, the fight to protect the Római-part has not yet finished. A decision was passed to examine the possibility of a fence track, which, however, would bring along significant natural destruction and protracted and very expensive expropriation litigation.



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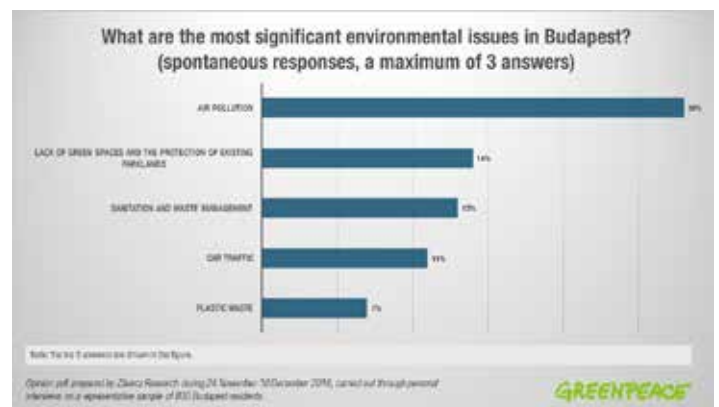
The solution would be the levee suggested by the civil society organizations: by strengthening the levee running along the line of Nánási út - Királyok útja, the valuable, natural condition of the Római-part could be preserved. We therefore actively supported the campaign of the locals this year as well: we provided logistic and communication assistance to the "To the banks, Hungarians! Together for the Római!" („Partra, magyar! Közösen a Rómaiért!") event in June that is creating a tradition from now on, and our experts participated in the panel discussion on the future of the Római-part.

## We declared war on air pollution

[At the beginning of the year we called attention to the fact](#) that, according to the report of the European Environmental Agency, we are among those countries within the European Union that are in the worst situation in respect of air pollution: in Hungary, nearly 12 thousand people a year die before their time merely due to particle pollution in.

In the spring, [we reported](#) that, due to severe pollution from airborne dust, a case has been initiated at the European Court against six countries; among them, Hungary. In this respect, we demanded that the government prohibit the residential use of lignite, which is seriously damaging to health, and that the authorities finally take effective action against illegal waste incineration.

[In a comprehensive study](#), we evaluated the performance of 13 European cities based on traffic, mobility and air pollution. Our examination showed that in those countries where car owners switched to bicycles or to pedestrian traffic in large numbers, this not only made the roads more safe, but the air also became cleaner. Budapest finished 9th among 13 cities. What we need most is to reduce air pollution and to make the roads safer; however, the bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure still also needs lots of improvement.



At the end of the year, [we made a survey](#) of what the residents of Budapest thought of air pollution. From the representative survey, carried out by the Závecz Research Market and Social Research Institute, it turned out that the people in the capital clearly find air pollution to be the gravest environmental problem. Of the people of Budapest, 72% listed air pollution as one of the three most important environmental issues in Budapest, while 40% mentioned the bad quality of the air expressly in the first place. Two-thirds of those asked would ban old gas-oil vehicles from Budapest in the interest of cleaner air.



# Our campaign for a poison-free Hungary

In 2018, we continued to work for the Hungarian people to be able to live in an environment free from poisonous materials. Within our program titled “Our poisoned heritage”, we demanded the cleaning of 30 illegal waste disposal sites and areas that have been severely polluted for a very long time. Based on a line of public reports, we measured the pollutions detrimental to the environment and health within and outside the country’s borders and demanded that the authorities take action. We continue to work to discover those responsible for the red sludge disaster in Kolontár.

## We demanded a draft bill for applying the ‘polluter pays’ principle

At the Parliamentary Ombudsman of Future Generations, we initiated and provided professional support to the drafting of a bill that would make the application of the ‘polluter pays’ principle more effective. In April, at the national meeting of domestic and Carpathian-basin environmental and nature protection civil society organizations (Zöld OT), we held a professional forum together with the Ombudsman, at which we introduced Greenpeace’s ‘Our poisoned heritage’ program of and described the draft bill. The National Meeting accepted a resolution regarding this topic, which it delivered to the newly-appointed minister responsible for environmental issues.



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## We successfully sued for the disclosure of the data that Budapest Chemical Works (Budapesti Vegyiművek) was keeping secret

In March 2018, [we won a law-suit with a final and enforceable decision](#) that the Baranya County Government Office was in breach of the law. The final and enforceable court decision of the Pécs Regional Court declared that the Government Office must disclose data of public interest; in our case, the information related to the pollution by the Budapest Chemical Works in Garé and Hidas. It is a significant success that, from now on, a final and enforceable court decision is available stating that it is not possible to withhold public interest environmental data from Hungarian citizens, journalists and civil society organizations.



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## We revealed covered poison storage sites

In October, we took samples from the water of the Danube next to the former [Óbuda Gasworks](#). The results of our measurements showed that certain pollutants considered as carcinogenic exceeded the permissible threshold values applicable to groundwater several hundred times, while other severe poisons exceeded such threshold value several thousand times. We demanded from the authorities and the leaders of the town that full remediation, which has been lacking for several years, start as soon as possible and that the authorities take action against illegal pollution pouring into the Danube. The impact of the measurements attracted great media attention.

It was also our independent measurement that showed that, in the public wells in the area of the Cséry neighbourhood of Budapest, boron and nickel with a carcinogenic risk are present in an amount exceeding the threshold values. The contamination has been known to the authorities for years, since it was exactly their inspections between 2014 and 2016 that demonstrated that the ammonium threshold limit was exceeded by 4,000 times. In the interest of protecting the population, we demanded that the capital's leaders arrange for the decontamination of the area, especially, since the pollution is largely attributable to the Municipality of Budapest's city cleaning company.

In 2018, we succeeded in progress finally being made in relation to the abandoned poison storage site in Kiskunhalas: [based on our reporting](#), interior minister Sándor Pintér initiated an investigation in September.



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# Volunteering

Our greatest strength is in the enthusiasm, knowledge, devoted help, energy and readiness to act of our volunteers. Without them, we could not effectively fight for the health and safety of Hungarians and for the natural heritage of our country.

## The number of our committed volunteers is ever growing around the country

By the end of 2018, the number of registered volunteers increased to 2,000, from whom the most active 400 have spent altogether more than 10,000 hours in volunteer work. We welcome volunteers from all over the country. Our biggest volunteer group operates in Budapest, but we have further active members in Székesfehérvár, Sopron, Eger, Veszprém, Gödöllő, Szombathely, Kecskemét, Debrecen, Pécs and in other smaller and bigger towns, villages and settlements.

## We protected our country from waste from the Danube to the Tisza

We started the year with a great paddle along the Danube. More than sixty of us got into canoes on the Római-part and we did not stop until we reached Budafok in order to draw attention to the unsolved problem of nuclear waste management.

In the summer, we participated in the Tisza 'PET Cup', the purpose of which was to clean the river; however, one could not just take part as one wished; the race could only be entered strictly on so-called PET-boats, built from waste collected from the floodplains of Tisza and from the towns in its vicinity. This time, 21 PET-boats lined up and performed the distance set. During the race, the boats collected more than 10 tons of additional waste, which were appropriately sorted at the end of the day. Our team also performed a so-called 'brand audit' at the last collection, which showed from which manufacturers most of the waste in the area had originated.

We were also present at the Sziget Festival, where we called attention to the importance of volunteering and of environmental protection. The islanders were enthusiastic to join our tent: they prepared pins, worked on creative recycling and painted individual t-shirts; what's more, they also tried out real Greenpeace-activist equipment, for example, full climbing equipment and chemical sampling clothing.



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## We took part in Greenpeace's international activities

Our volunteers participated in several international events from Austria to Bulgaria and from Poland to Belgium. In September, they helped to replant a forest, where the forest fires due to the summer dryness caused inestimable damage in nature reserve areas. The trees planted together with the Croatian Greenpeace-staff and with other local environmental organizations and individuals have been growing well since, providing more and more oxygen for our planet.

Together with many other Greenpeace offices and the Civil Right Defenders organization, we created the international project called 'European Changemakers', the aim of which is to provide active assistance to those young people who would like to do something for the protection of the environment.

In the project, hundreds of young Europeans, among them two dozen Hungarians, attended a summer camp in order to learn how to make public speeches, what constitutes a well-developed campaign strategy and how it is possible to combine activism with the arts.

We also created for them a [knowledge-base available online](#), where we have collected information regarding how they can step up for causes that are important for them more effectively: how to create a petition site, how to initiate a fundraising campaign and what makes a banner appealing.

Since climate change does not know borders, we drew attention to the importance of action with our volunteers in Hungary, too. In December, a few days before the UN climate conference held in Poland, we organized a climate march from the zero kilometre stone at Clark Ádám tér in Budapest, and we called attention to the fact that our only chance to limit the climate crisis is to reduce our CO2 emission to 0%.



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# Fundraising

## We are a politically and financially independent environmental organization

Our revenues come exclusively from private individuals and foundations founded by private individuals, primarily from Hungary and the Central Eastern European Greenpeace office. We do not accept any financial support from states, governments, parties or companies, either in Hungary or in other places of the world. This guarantees our total political and financial independence.

## From what resources do we operate?

The Hungarian Greenpeace is part of the Central Eastern European Greenpeace, including eight countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Poland, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia). Therefore, in addition to the Hungarian supporters, the more than 160,000 private donors supporting the Central Eastern European office of Greenpeace also contribute to our operation, and so Greenpeace Hungary also benefits from their donations.

Greenpeace Hungary received 207 056 000 forints in funding from the Central Eastern European Greenpeace office in 2018, which originates mainly from private individuals living in the region and from foundations established by individuals.

Currently, we have more than 7,000 active supporters in Hungary who contribute to our work with an average of 1000-2000 forints per month. The sum of donations from Hungary was 82,760,367 forints in 2018.

## Our domestic fundraising work and revenues in 2018

In 2018, our regularly donating supporters helped our environmental protection work with 60,564,273 forints. We collected altogether 6,895,319 forints from individuals offering 1% of their personal income tax for the year 2017.



In 2018, our donors supported the <https://jovovarosa.hu/> campaign launched in the previous year with 1,339,500 forints.

Based on our letters requesting donations from our supporters mailed in 2018, our organization received donations in an amount of 4,344,710 forints.

In 2018, we also started a so-called reactivation campaign. Within its scope, we contacted by telephone those old, regular supporters who do not donate anymore and asked them to recommence their donations if possible. The (one-time) direct revenue of the reactivating campaigns was 249,440 forints.

At mid-term, we started our <https://okosmenza.hu> on-line donation collection campaign. The purpose of the initiative is to make the publicly financed provision of meals in kindergartens and schools more healthy. As part of this campaign, on St. Nicholas' day, we distributed 1,000 pieces of fruit to children. The Hungarian population supported our program with 1,301,500 forints in donations in 2018.

We regularly informed those who are interested in our activity through different channels (Facebook, newsletter, Instagram, webpage) about our work and asked them to support our activity with their donations. This way, and by spontaneous bank transfers or spontaneous donations via bank-cards, our organization received donations in an amount of 3,353,482 forints.

In 2018, we participated in two charity running events. In the weeks prior to the race, our supporters undertook to run collected donations from their acquaintances. Our delegates raised a sum of 1,636,833 forints altogether to support our activity.



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For the support of our work aiming at the restriction of single-use plastics, we started an on-line donation collection campaign during the fall. This was supported by our donors with 3,075,310 forints by the end of the year.

Our domestic supporters contributed a total of 82,760,367 forints to our activity in 2018.

## We are an ethical charity collecting organization

Greenpeace Hungary Association is member of the [group of Ethical Charity Collecting Organizations having more than twenty members](#), and fully complies with the strict requirements included in the ethical code. All of this guarantees that we perform our work of collecting donations in a transparent way, outperforming the legal requirements.



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