

Report
of study visit

22 Sept- 02 Oct

2017

Visited countries: Poland, Czech republic, Hungary, Slovakia

AWHHE

Polish Ecological Club Gliwice (PEC) (www.pkegliwice.pl) in cooperation with Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment NGO (<http://awhhe.am>), SOSNA association www.sosna.sk, Humusz Waste Prevention Alliance www.humusz.hu and Sdruzeni SPLAV www.sdruzenisplav.cz was starting a new project titled “Cooperation for Sustainable Resources Management of Armenian Cities and City Areas” and its kick-off meeting held in Poland, Gliwice. PEC is supporting sustainable development, saving and improving the quality of environment and protecting human life and health.

According to the study-visit program the group from Armenia was hosted by few farms, NGOs and companies in a few countries. It was nicely organized full program with its complete information and different activities.

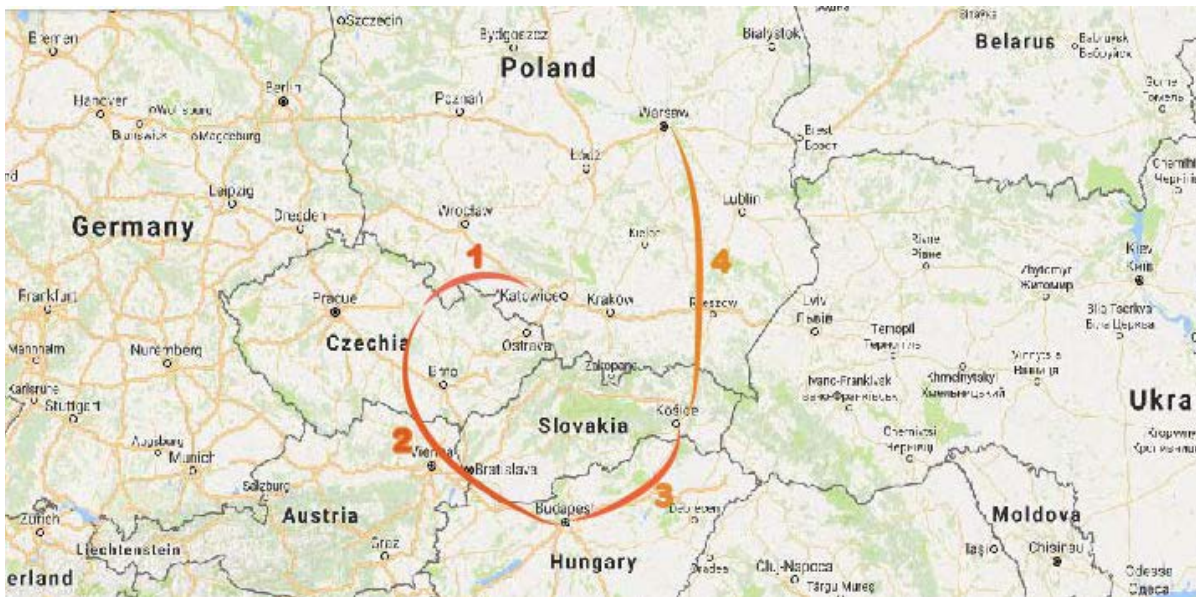


Figure 1. Trip draftly in lines.



Figure 2. Our group with Maria at Organic Fair in Gliwice

September 23rd the first place to visit was

Organic Fair in Gliwice organized by Polish Ecological Club (Fig.2). There were presented 57 companies with their various organically

produced products. Many small producers, simple farmers and already developed companies were shown their organically certified products and creations. The bee products were met more often like honeys of different origins, bee wax, bee pollen, bee bread, bee jelly etc. There were presented various types of organic breads, chocolates, dairy products, organically certified processed meat, species, fruits, vegetables, juices etc (Fig.3). Each participant had something to offer



Figure 3. Organic juices.

to taste, buy and know. Among presented companies there were Ekoflorka

(<http://www.ekoflorka.pl>), producer of the tastiest organic chocolates, Miod Ekologiczni (Ecological Hone, <http://www.miod-ekologiczny.pl/>), eko Spizarnia (<https://www.facebook.com/ekoSpizarnia/>), a Health Food Shop in Gliwice, Gospodarstwo Ekologiczne Sokol (<https://www.facebook.com/GospodarstwoEkologiczneSokol/>) Agricultural service, Ecological Honey (<http://www.miod-ekologiczny.pl/>), with its bee products and so on.

Information and overview gotten there can give us new ideas for making more interesting and dense projects in the future.

After enjoying the tastes, flavors and beauties of Organic Fair our group was at **kick-off meeting in PEC office**, where held a discussion about the



Figure 4. Maria and Lusine are discussing the strategy of the project at PEC office

base elements for the project, main activities



Figure 5. Kick-off meeting at PEC office, Gliwice.

and other project planning activities and of course the problems which have been faced so far. Among main activities there were discussed (Fig. 4, 5) mainly about material preparation on waste management, separation, composting

and organic gardening for kids and adults separately. Hopefully before the end of the year we are going to translate supplied materials into Armenian and print it. Also, there was discussion about preparation of materials about organic gardening for farmers. Training activities and workshops will be held by Armenian activists and trained trainers and of course by partners. Few problems were discussed about financing, contracts, content of materials and workshops.

September 24th we were at **Gliwice Radio Tower** (Sendeturm Gleiwitz),

which has 118 m high, known for its wooden construction of impregnated larch linked by brass connectors (Fig.6). A ladder with 365 steps provides access to the top. It is the tallest wooden structure in whole Europe.

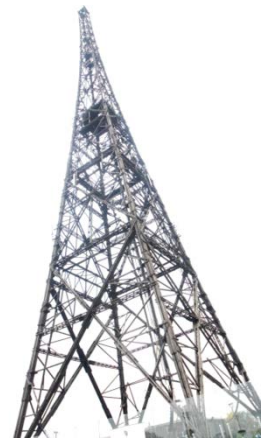


Figure 6. Gliwice Radio Tower (118m, wooden).

Afterwards we were visited **Tarnowskie Góry** town, where were mainly mines (Tarnowice, name of a local village; word góry -"mines" (old Polish).

Silver mine (Fig. 7) was the place of our visit, where the guide introduced us with the work system and silver cleaning procedure.



Figure 7. Few members of our group in Silver mine.

The area which was previously busy with mines now has museums, greened territories. It was explained by guides all procedures, human management, difficulties, problems and complete lifestyle of the miners.

25th of September started with trip to the **organic farm**

Ecostyle (<http://ekostylsliczni.pl/>) of Iwona and Janusz Sliczni located in Gorzow Slaski gmina, Poland. There were nicely organized farm where was possible to see the chain of whole organic system (Fig.8). They lived their life in this organic environment about 26 years and have much to share. Janusz explained us how they started and were able



Figure 8. David Yesayan at Eco-style farm.

to manage the farm. Through workshops, seminars and conferences they are trying to pass their passion for organic farming to others. Higher education and many years of agricultural practice in an organic farm guarantee successful workshops and lectures from Janusz and his wife. During lectures on the farm family provides a room with kitchen facilities and multimedia equipment to help with any presentation and workshop. Daughter of family was founder of seminar room and small family hotel as well (www.Debina30.pl), guests of the hotel have opportunity to experience bio-life during their stay. There is a great opportunity to spend leisure time in harmony with nature in this farm for tourists, because they can meet many animals and pets living happily and organically. In the hotel the room system was accomplished with nice idea: instead of numbers they had names of their farms animals and pets, and that was not all- inside each guest room there were photos from different episodes of life from the one with which name the room was called. Bakery was in the yard of the farm near the house, which was working under the supervision of the son of the family. They were producing whole grain bread generally and they carrying out workshop of bread backing. In a word, being at Eco-style organic farm for few days it could give one wide overview about organic agriculture chain and its pleasures.



26 September the morning of our group started with **Czech Republic**, where we arrived previous night. The first visit was trip to the agricultural **Farm Tichý** (headquarter at Záměľ) (<http://farmatichy.cz/>) (Fig.9). Since the very beginning it was milk tasting welcome and afterwards we were introduced by the owner. The farm is busy mainly with plant and livestock production. School teaching also included in farm's activities.

Figure 9. Our team with Czech colleagues in the Farm Tichý.

Currently this farm manages 720 ha of agricultural land. It has cultivation of traditional market crops - wheat, barley, rape, oats, triticale, sunflower, soybean, lentil, etc. It produces its own



Figure 10. Red-breasted cattle at the Farm Tichý at automatically feeding system.

forage with cultivation of maize for silage, alfalfa and clover for sowing. Grasslands are used for hay harvesting and pasture grounds. As a stock production are red-breasted cattle with market milk production. They kept in special way: firstly the smallest ones should pass acclimatization

outside. Secondly they are transferred to the partly open environment. Farm has almost 300

dairy cow's capacity lying boxes (Fig.10). Average milk production is about 6600l milk/unit. Surroundings of Záměľ there are grazing areas as well.

The trip continued to the **Farm Brocná** (SkuhrovnadBěľou), where plant, animal production and the biogas production as well was presented by the owner during the tour around (Fig. 11). The biogas was produced via usage of the local own animals manure, agricultural waste, which was



Figure 11. At the biogas station at the Farm Brocna.

pressed to take liquid part out from the mass at the first place. Answers to our questions were given by the owner and detailed explanations were presented to us. There was nice experience to learn a lot from the company.

The next stop in Czech Republic was at the family **farm Dagro** ((Bělá u Liberka) <http://www.d-agro.cz/>) history began on thirteen hectares of land with 17

hads of Scottish cattle and five sheep of the Suffolk (Fig. 12). The D-agro company operates in a quiet environment of the Orlické Mountains in Bělá u Liberka. Today, the company manages almost 100 hectares of agricultural



Figure 12. at the farm Dagro.

land of predominantly permanent grassland and has over 50 cattle, few sheep, dice and horses of the breed of the Fjord horse. The farm is located at the place of the newly reconstructed former cow farm in Bělá.

Fruit orchards Synkov (Synkov, Slemeno) was the 4th during that day to visit. Information was



Figure 13. Picked apples at the sorting section of Synkov fruit orchard

about production, harvesting, general marketing and management. Generally about 11 varieties of apple (among them there were Golden delicious, Gala, Topaz, Rubin, Jonagold, etc.), 3 varieties of pear (Bohemia, Dicolor and Lucasova) and 2 varieties of potatoes (Marabel and Laura) were under cultivation. They have special grading section and fridge section (Fig.13).

We have been at the market of the orchard, where the main products were apples and potatoes at the moment.

Nice and tasty apples were given all visitors from our side as a surprise gift at the end of our excursion (Fig. 14).



Figure 14. Participants of our group at the Synkov orchard with gifts.

The trip continued at The Local Action Group (LAG) office in RychnovnadKněžnou of **SPLAV** association (<http://www.sdruzenisplav.cz/>), where there was presented their activities and scheme of the projects. SPLAV links local action groups from all EU countries to the same goal - to stimulating and exploiting the potential of their regions for their sustainable development. The forms that LAGs work on are projects, cooperation and support of appropriate projects, providing information and good practice, education in the field of rural development and fulfillment of public administration tasks. Nowadays the Association has 51 members.

The meetings over at the Restaurant and shop Bio Beseda (RychnovnadKněžnou), where was the nice and various products presentation from the organic labels.

27th of September we met with the members of **Humus Association** (<http://www.humusz.hu/>)

at Budapest, Hungary. The association were instead of previous kindergarten and members tried to make everything according to their propaganda principles of waste reduction (Fig.15). In the yard there was a community composting site, which has access for public from surroundings. It was one of the way to show and manage the waste and to promote its possible positive



Figure 15. Meeting at Humus association.

influences as own example. There were explained about association activities and projects, also the ascent was on waste management and re- usage of products and materials. For example, in Hungary every person contributes around 500 kg annually to pollution and this number grows every year. And Humus work on public awareness and doing actions of waste management. Humus has 13 member organizations now and they are welcoming all the private and public sectors to become a member whenever there is an agreement among their principles of waste prevention, sustainable consumption and production. Humus provides background materials, tools, professional help, also common campaigns and programs for Null Waste Network. At

Humus network there is not only staff and professionals but also many volunteers which support the idea of waste prevention and reduction and many other principles of Humus association.

Urbán Csilla not only introduced their association but with her colleagues took us to the waste management company and introduced how the company is sorting out the waste and trying to reuse or give the second life to the things and materials which were used once and not necessary anymore to the previous owner.

Afterwards we had very nice and fruitful city trip in Budapest which gave us to have an idea about culture and art as well beside the waste management.

28th of September there was complete day for city tour were our group members enjoyed of the beauties of Budapest (Fig.16).



Figure 16. The beauty of Budapest.

29th of September after breakfast at Humus association we started our trip to the Slovak Republic (Družstevná pri Hornáde) and were hosted in Sosna Ecocenter (<http://www.sosna.sk/>) by



Figure 17. Introduction to drier, its more functions.



Figure 18. Our group at Sosna Ecocentrum with founders Stefan and Silvia.

Štefan Szabó and his wife Dr. Silvia Szabóová (Fig. 17,18). There was an introduction of their activities on environmental education, organic gardening and local sustainability. SOSNA built its Ekocenter with the Natural Garden, which represents a unique inspirational example of an independent education center in Slovakia aimed at disseminating the principles of sustainability and local self-sufficient approaches. The interest of the public in the themes of such practical skills in organic agriculture, self-building of low-cost energy-saving facilities, or building of free-source natural materials shows that this approach still has free space to be developed and introduced to public. Annually, about 2,000 visitors of Ecocentrum are getting familiar with inspiration for a more sustainable and independent life, and dozens of graduate students get interested to get new skills in organic sustainable management of energy. Sosna regularly organizes cultural and artistic events where the public attracts in an attractive way serious environmental and social issues.

Stefan and Silvia took us to the **organic farm** Svetobor (about 40 km from Košice) with high quality standards, where the main interesting thing was that they involve the most vulnerable part of society, such as gypsies, poor people and mentally not

healthy people as well into agricultural activities (Fig. 19). People



Figure 19. Lusine Nalbandyan translating the introduction about organic farm.

with mental disabilities who were at hospitals, where involved in agrotherapy to live and have nice environment to be healed or to be helpful for themselves at the first place. The farm has different vegetables which were friendly grown close to each other in few rows with no usage of chemicals.



Figure 20. Demonstration of piece of culture.

We also had chance to be present at a celebration with Slovak national dresses and customs (Fig.20). There were traditional bread making, honey production, weapons, lifestyle, etc. It was very nice leisure time and we saw in a draft some examples of cultural treasures.

30th of *September* at Košice we had city tour (Fig.21, 22) walking and taking photos around the city and enjoying of course the traditional trdelnics.

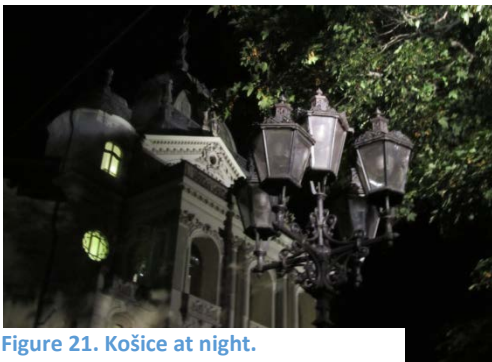


Figure 21. Košice at night.

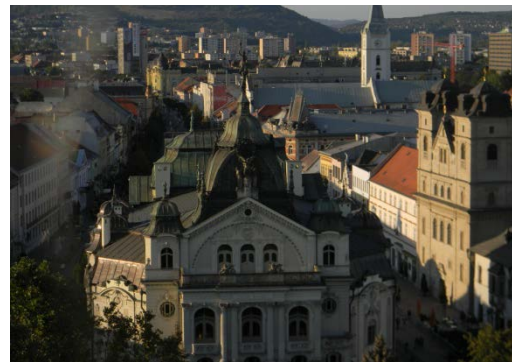


Figure 22. A sunny afternoon at Košice.

1st *October* was departure to Warsaw, Poland, were in the evening we had very well organized and nice good bye dinner at the restaurant by Maria.



As a conclusion of our study visit tour we can summarize that it was useful, functional, applicable and very well organized visit and for sure will have its positive and energetic influence on future collaborations and successful implementation of the project.

On behalf of the Armenian delegation we would like to all organizers to express our deep gratitude for a very interesting and well organized study trip.