

LAUDATION

on the occasion of bestowing the

JUSTITIA REGNORUM FUNDAMENTUM AWARD

on Iván Gyulai

"If, at the end of each and every month, the postman brought us an invoice issued by Mother Nature and we had to pay the bill, we would certainly think twice about how to handle her gifts to us." We could say that this sentence alone makes Iván Gyulai worthy of the Justitia Regnorum Fundamentum Award. This single sentence summarizes the greatest danger mankind is facing today and gives us directions as to how to avert it.

Using a term borrowed from István Bibó, we could call Iván Gyulai a "perceptive realist". He represents a rare type of humans, who is brave enough to face the gravity of the situation with no compromise but also level-headed enough to prudently but steadfastly tread along a seemingly impassable road. He is not afraid to point out that the situation is almost hopeless, so let us step up to the challenge! As far as work is considered, he is not picky.

It is him who, with unshakable stubbornness, makes politicians, high-ranking government officials and business tycoons face the seriousness of the situation in the National Council for Sustainable Development. Pointing out that we are using up the fundamental natural resources of life on Earth. Emphasizing that we bear responsibility for our grandchildren's future. And Iván Gyulai is achieving results even without raising his voice. He is the author of standard works in the field of ecology. Of groundbreaking analyses laying the foundation for the national strategy of survival. Of a program initiative for sustainability. In addition to all this, he participates in the voluntary activities of the Miskolc Branch of the Hungarian Network of Eco-counselling Offices, aimed at redressing the environmental complaints of the people of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County. In a God-forsaken village he teaches the proper ways of heating to those whom poverty has prompted to revert from gas to wood heating.

Everyone who loves nature and wants to protect the environment should learn from Iván Gyulai. First: what many people are prone to call environmental protection is in fact but an act of compensation, where the local utilization of resources in one place results in the deterioration of the environment in others. As long as we fail to treat the causes, the effects will regenerate in an ever-growing range. Mother Nature is patient, environmental impacts tend to manifest themselves with a delay. For instance, the flood-relief works on the Tisza river were considered back then as the sole instrument of progress; it would become clear only much later that it facilitated the desertification of significant parts of the Great Hungarian Plain.

Iván Gyulai has been experimenting with the concept of sustainable village since 1993. With his own words: "We have made an attempt to ... preserve organic culture for the post-globalization era, give an alternative to the dominant concept of development, replace poverty-induced sustainability with awareness-driven sustainability."

But he had to realize that local possibilities are also defined by global events. One cannot act locally without answering the fundamental questions. That is why he tries to demonstrate that speculative economies should be replaced with economies catering to real human needs. Campaign-driven, short-term policies with community-centered public life, based on strategic planning. The dominance of property with the priority of spiritual values.

Iván Gyulai has presented three scenarios. First, the scenario of a cataclysm. Second, using technical tricks in order to gain time. And third, the scenario of real sustainability. Mankind's current behavior may be not enough even to gain time; knowledge is often reduced to the know-how of conquering nature. He emphasizes that "without moral development, knowledge will only result in bombs or genetically manipulated organisms".

"It is not enough to keep repeating that environmental education shall be started in kindergarten, there must be changes in the society's system of values, in regulations, in political thinking and even on the shelves of the department stores", he points out. Iván Gyulai probably feels the best among his bio-plants in Gömörzölös, but he does not avoid the limelight, either, if standing in it may, even by a single step, further his cause. But we know that he hates to be in the center of attention. Therefore, Iván, please take the attention we are paying you today as a chance to serve. And although today we are speaking about you, at the same time we promote and serve our common cause.