

Report on the Activities
of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat in Europe
as the members of the GPH Board of Directors
delivered on their last Meeting
in Brussels, Belgium, on 4th of March 2009

Concerning the main theme of the meeting, “**The initiatives of the National Parliaments and Governments in order to fight climate changes**”, various members of the board had interventions to present the situation in their countries.

Senator Igaş said that in Romania, the Government subsidises 50% of the expenses due to thermal rehabilitation of the buildings, upon request from the owners. Mr. Denes Seres mentioned the “Green House Project”, an initiative of the Romanian Government by which the state subsidises the costs of installment of renewable energy systems; he also mentioned the possibility for investors to pay less taxes in case they choose to raise a “green” building. Also, Mr Seres talked about the draft law on protection of green spaces, presently in examination by the Committee on Public Administration and Ecological Balance of the Romanian Chamber of Deputies.

Hon. Jerko Rosin from Croatia, made reference to the issue of **solidarity** – global crisis easily oversteps boundaries; global problems thus need to be tackled through solidarity.

Legislative work in Croatian Parliament has lately been intense: many new laws have been aligned with the EU, and many country-specific laws have been enforced (i.e. concerning rural and island areas). On the issue of energy, not only do we need more energy, but lower energy costs needs, too. To finish,

he pointed out that often the Parliament is opposed by ecological organizations which do not agree with the proposals, while they don't suggest any other alternatives – for examples, these organizations do not agree with wind mills, because they hurt birds.

Dr Anneke Assen reported that the Government in Netherlands is subsidizing “sustainable construction”, including the renovation of the existing stock. Subsidizing is also done through taxing policy – sustainable building is subject to lower taxation.

Hon Peter Götz talked about the new ecologist projects actually on debate in Germany. New environmental regulations in Germany – some of which are still not enforced – are dealing with relationship between financial crisis and energy efficiency, and between crisis and climate change investments and programs. Those programs are handled by German cities, municipalities and Landers, and foresee allocation of approx. 10 billion Euro. He talked about the construction of malls (big commercial centers), which will no longer be allowed to extend within the cities.

All the participants agreed on the fact that climate changes are perhaps the most difficult challenge facing humanity. The economic crisis presently on stake will pass after a certain period of time, but the real challenges – climate change, peace and security for the people – are the real issues at stake.

At the same time, the participants agreed that the city pollution can be stopped only by reducing the population, by making better conditions for the people living in rural areas – a better infrastructure, so they no longer migrate to the cities.

The meeting ended with **an important conclusion** which prevails that *climate change, peace and security for the people are **the real issues at stake***, in the context of the actual

situation of economic crisis which will pass after a certain period of time.

To **double the stake** the participants agreed that city pollution has an end only by reducing the population, by making better conditions for the people living in rural areas. **A BETTER INFRASTRUCTURE means NO MIGRATION TO THE CITIES!**

It was also brought to light the findings of the comparative study, Western European countries versus Eastern European countries. *Eastern European countries have more privately owned housing whereas Western European countries have less private ownership. As a result it is **EASIER TO REGULATE AND ENFORCE CERTAIN LAWS.***