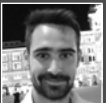


# Regional Economic Policy and Self-Sufficient Economies in the Shadow of Climate Change



\*

PÉTER  
KEREKES

One of the defining processes in the world market economy transformed by globalization is the appreciation of localization. The intensification of regionalization processes also means that communities seek solutions to economic challenges locally by trying to create self-sufficient economies by relying on locally available resources. The European Union (EU) is placing an increasing emphasis on regional development and economic policy. In addition to the Member States, the EU also provides significant support for regions and cities in order to promote local cooperation and local self-sufficiency, such as in Brandenburg. There are many positive developments in Brandenburg, but there are still only partial results in creating a self-sufficient region and in bringing East German regions economically closer to the developed West German regions<sup>1</sup>. It can also anticipate a trend that will lead to the creation of a *Europe of the Regions*, replacing the *Europe of the Member States*<sup>2</sup>.

There are several reasons why the EU supports the regions. One of the main reasons is to catch up with less developed regions. The second main reason is security policy, and the third main reason is climate change. Although self-sufficiency as a cause is rarely used as an argument, it can be concluded from the efforts that the EU, due to the vulnerability of certain territories, with its support, seeks to improve the self-sufficiency of the regions. These territories for support are either underdeveloped, on the fringes of the EU, or threatened by climate change.

<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/hu/newsroom/news/2018/05/05-11-2018-eu-cohesion-policy-post-2020-supporting-new-and-traditional-demands](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/hu/newsroom/news/2018/05/05-11-2018-eu-cohesion-policy-post-2020-supporting-new-and-traditional-demands)

<sup>2</sup> Imre, L. (2003) "Verseny és területi fejlődés Térségek Versenyképessége Magyarországon", [in]: JATEPress Szeged.

”

## THE EUROPEAN UNION (EU) IS PLACING AN INCREASING EMPHASIS ON REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC POLICY

First, we may think that the concept of globalization-localization is one based on an opposition, or two kinds of the same economic process. However, the reality is that localization is part of globalization<sup>3</sup>. This phenomenon, or economic process, can be observed primarily in knowledge-based advanced economies-such as the United Kingdom, the United States of America, or the European Union.

The main motivation for the resurgence of regional economic policy is to gain a competitive advantage in the global market, in local activities where companies can gain a market advantage<sup>4</sup>. These market advantages are concentrated in a specific geographical territory (for example, Blue Banana Zone in the European Union, Silicon Valley). These market benefits are often linked to a locality or a city.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Nemes N. J. (1987) *A regionális gazdasági fejlődés összehasonlító vizsgálata*, Akadémiai Kiadó Budapest.



## THE REALITY IS THAT LOCAL- IZATION IS PART OF GLOBALIZATION

It has been accepted that globalization results in a reorganizing of a regional division of labor as companies relocate certain activities to less developed regions. These activities usually entail a lower competitive advantage in the production chain (for example, an activity that can be performed without knowledge). Trends that emphasize the crucial importance of geographical concentration/deconcentration soon became popular in economics, but this concentration is not observed for all activities, only for companies engaged in traded activities that want to benefit from local advantages<sup>5</sup>.

Although the trend is good, and fundamentally globalizing market economy processes also contribute to the development of regional economic policies, we cannot ignore the following two important findings on this topic:

1. **Regions compete with each other** (for example, for workers, for knowledge, with better quality cheaper locally produced products in order to protect markets from non-locally produced

products) **and only those regions or self-sufficient communities that operate according to or develop an appropriate strategy will be successful in the long run.** Territorial units are competitive if their economy is open and their per capita income is consistently high and growing. As well as a high and non-declining employment rate, i.e. broad sections of the population are expected to benefit from this income<sup>6</sup>. In the case of self-sufficient communities, self-sufficiency can only be achieved if these communities remain competitive with the external market. In the event that the self-sufficient community is unable to compete with the non-community market, their self-sufficiency cannot be achieved in part or in full because the external market controls the self-sufficiency market because it can provide a service to local communities at a lower price and better quality. If the local community pursues an overly protectionist economic policy, it can lead to a kind of isolation that can negatively affect the local community. A good example of this is the Brexit referendum. Britain has also left the common market with its exit from the EU, partly to protect its internal market. The exit had unexpected negative effects on the country's population. The prices of certain products have risen or there has been a shortage of goods, there has been a shortage of labor in some sectors, and trade with the European Union has become more difficult and costly<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Imre, L. (2003) "Verseny és területi fejlődés Térségek Versenyképessége Magyarországon", [in]: JATEPress Szeged.

<sup>7</sup> BBC.com (2021) "How Serious Is the Shortage of Lorry Drivers?". Available [online]: <https://www.bbc.com/news/57810729>

**2. Although the regions are competing with each other, among others, because of climate change, they will sooner or later have to coordinate and work together along certain points.** Regardless of motivations and whether external or internal influences trigger regional development, the impact is either caused by multinational corporations or local communities. By companies – in order to gain market advantage in return. By local communities – to improve the living standards of the local population, creating jobs, halting negative migration/depopulation trends, or achieve independence from the global market economy. Global climate change is affecting areas and the people who live there, which everyone needs to take into account. An important aspect for companies is design capability. When planning, they must take into account local specific economic, legal and political cultural aspects, and the degree of market advantage, as well as the negative effects of climate change. This is no longer a negligible aspect, especially when it comes to a large investment that pays off in the long run and is difficult to move (such as setting up a factory). For local communities, this is important, especially if they are self-sufficient, because climate change is affecting, among other things, residential areas (the Netherlands is a good example, due to rising sea levels, without major investment, the territory becomes uninhabitable), and economy, such as local agriculture.

To sum up the findings, although regions and local communities compete with each other (either for external capital, or to protect the internal market from the external market), because of global climate change, they need to work together to rival with

each other. In order to work together, actors need to agree on points that may limit themselves or reduce their market advantage due to environmental change. Cooperation can also be mutually positive in some cases, for example when self-sufficient communities trade with each other to deal with the climate crisis, one providing knowledge and the other the raw material of the product. So, these measures should focus on combating climate change. The measures do not necessarily only harm local communities or companies. For communities, fighting climate change can also lead to the creation of new jobs, new businesses for companies, such as the recycling business, and technological advances can also mean spending cuts.



IN THE CASE  
OF SELF-SUFFICIENT  
COMMUNITIES,  
SELF-SUFFICIENCY  
CAN ONLY BE  
ACHIEVED  
IF THESE COMMUNI-  
TIES REMAIN  
COMPETITIVE  
WITH THE EXTERNAL  
MARKET

**THE UNITED NATIONS  
INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL  
ON CLIMATE CHANGE REPORT  
AS A STARTING POINT FOR SHAPING  
REGIONAL ECONOMIC POLICY  
AND SELF-SUFFICIENT ECONOMIES**

The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) issued its sixth assessment report on climate change in August 2021<sup>9</sup>. The last time such a comprehensive study has been conducted was eight years earlier, and there was nothing surprising in the study about the scenarios for our future. Scientists are recording change in every climate system and we are experiencing these changes as a result of an increasingly extreme climate.

The key message of the report is that, although the changes are irreversible, their intensity can be mitigated by reducing CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gas emissions to significant and sustainable levels through various measures. Thanks to the transformation of industrial production, certain effects could be felt after a short time such as the reduction of air pollution, but it would take decades for the processes to stabilize<sup>9</sup>.

The recently published study is the first part of the 6<sup>th</sup> IPCC Assessment Report, which looks at the physical foundations of climate change. Recent research shows that if we do not reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions radically and drastically, the 2° C warming limit will soon become unattainable, with the result being that the signatory member states will not be able to meet the common targets

---

<sup>9</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2021) *Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis*. Available [online]: [https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/downloads/report/IPCC\\_AR6\\_WGI\\_Full\\_Report.pdf](https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGI_Full_Report.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> International Energy Agency (2021) "Global Energy Review", [in] *Global Energy Review*, flagship report, April. Available [online]: <https://www.iea.org/reports/global-energy-review-2021>



THE KEY MESSAGE  
OF THE REPORT  
IS THAT, ALTHOUGH  
THE CHANGES  
ARE IRREVERSIBLE,  
THEIR INTENSITY  
CAN BE MITIGATED  
BY REDUCING CO<sub>2</sub>  
AND OTHER  
GREENHOUSE GAS  
EMISSIONS

set by the Paris Convention.<sup>10</sup> If current trends continue, we will exceed this previously mentioned degree of warming within twenty years.

The study also highlights the fact that the local impact of climate change will be very different from region to region. On land, global warming will be higher than the global average, so there is still a risk of desertification in many residential areas. Moreover, in the Arctic, global warming will be more than double the average<sup>11</sup>.

Based on the model estimates presented in the report, the cold seasons in all regions of the Earth will shorten while the warm

---

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.



OCEAN  
AND TERRESTRIAL  
WARMING WILL  
HAVE A NEGATIVE  
IMPACT ON HUMAN  
NUTRITION,  
SO NOT ONLY  
CAN CERTAIN  
AREAS BECOME  
UNINHABITABLE,  
BUT FOOD  
PROBLEMS CAN  
ALSO ARISE  
FOR THE POPULA-  
TION

seasons will lengthen in the coming decades, and this will also affect our daily lives. According to IPCC experts, warming will significantly melt the hitherto permanently frozen soil on Earth, remove large areas of winter snow cover, ice fields and glaciers, and completely melt the Arctic Sea ice in summer. As a result, viruses not yet known to us could melt away, and more and more epidemics will weigh on humanity.

Furthermore, this process also exacerbates the negative effects of climate change.

Ocean and terrestrial warming will have a negative impact on human nutrition, so not only can certain areas become uninhabitable, but food problems can also arise for the population<sup>12</sup>.

The report was prepared by more than two hundred scientists and adopted by 195 countries. The report highlights the need for action to avert a humanitarian and climate catastrophe. In order to really bring about change, a change of attitude must occur. As the study has pointed out, the negative effects of climate change are a cause for concern and will prompt immediate radical change for all of humanity. This action, however, will not achieve its goal without a radical change in our economic culture, society as a whole, and individual attitudes.

#### **ERICH FROMM'S PROBLEM FORMULATION**

It is worth dealing with the works of Erich Fromm because several of his thoughts are related to the topic of the study. He was a social psychologist humanist philosopher of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Fromm believed in people and believed that any change in our world, our economy, our society, and our culture should start with people.

In *"To Have or to Be?"*, Fromm criticized, among other things, the globalist market economy based on incessant consumption. Basically, he believed that a kind of change of attitude was needed in order to improve the mental state of individuals and make society healthier. He was building on his previous work, he largely deals with this topic in his writing, as *"Escape from Freedom"* (1941) and *"Psychoanalysis and Religion"* (1950). Erich Fromm starts from the idea that the character structure of the average individual and the socio-economic

---

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.



## THE GLOBAL MARKET ECONOMY MUST BE REPLACED BY AN ECONOMY OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

structure of the society around them interact in “*To Have or to Be?*”.

Culture has a shaping power and has an impact on the individual and society. Thanks to the shaping force, certain social orders are consolidated, which stabilizes the social order. Under certain circumstances, these solidified elements can function as *explosives* in society<sup>13</sup>. In Fromm’s opinion, a good example of this phenomenon is the social effects of the First World Economic Crisis on the global world. A result of which, a significant portion of the citizens of the West have lost a secure existence. In Europe, as a consequence of the crisis, the popularity of partisan extremist political parties increased, and (in part because of this) the Nazi party was able to gain power. The social crisis culminated in World War II.

According to Fromm, the relationship between social character<sup>14</sup> and social structure is never static, as these two elements represent a never-ending process.

---

<sup>13</sup> Fromm, E. (2013) *To Have or To Be?*, reprint edition, United Kingdom: Bloomsbury Academic.

<sup>14</sup> A definition created by Erich Fromm, which means the result of the interaction of individual mental structure and socio-economic structure.

A change in either of the two factors results in a change in both<sup>15</sup>.

Many may think that the political and economic structure needs to be radically changed first, leading to a change in the mentality of individuals. Those people, however, ignore the fact that the new political elite has old character instincts and will seek to restore the old social order. A good example of this phenomenon is the political, social, and economic processes in Hungary. After the change of regime in 1989-1990, social processes began that saw Western-style *free*, democratic, and multi-party systems as examples.

### THE HUNGARIAN EXAMPLE

By 2008, Hungarian society, politics and the economy had gone through a crisis, the result of which was that in 2010, the second government of Viktor Orbán, by a two-thirds majority, was empowered by voters to form a government. By 2021, FIDESZ had consolidated its power, built the System of National Cooperation with its own media empire, and, according to the Freedom House report, severely undermined democracy, freedom, and the rule of law in Hungary<sup>16</sup>.

Although for an outsider the situation of Hungarians may seem daunting, the Orbán System is more like *goulash communism* evoking the Kádár era rather than a hard dictatorship such as in the Middle East or the Far East. Even today, political scientists in Hungary are debating a lot about where Viktor Orbán’s system could be classified, how can this system be defined or categorized? It, therefore, seems that Hungary is a so-called *hybrid regime* or electoral autocracy.

---

<sup>15</sup> Fromm, E. (2013) *To Have or To Be?*, reprint edition, United Kingdom: Bloomsbury Academic.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

This *mixed system* could also be called a *soft authoritarian system*, which means that it does not yet have the characteristics of a dictatorship but has already moved away from Western-type democracy and forms a new category based on its criteria<sup>17</sup>. This example is a good illustration of the fact that the Change of Regime alone did not result in a change of mentality in individuals and the political elite. FIDESZ, which came to power by an overwhelming majority in 2010, has continuously transformed political culture and political systems in such a way that the Republic of Hungary, close to Western-type liberal democracies, moved away from this political system and created a soft autocracy in Hungary. This system could in many ways remind people of the decades before the change of regime.

This takeover, or consolidation of the system, which can also be considered a victory, actually means the defeat of the elite. Staying with the example, FIDESZ took over the power in 1989-1990 and attempted to catch up with Western countries in all respects. The party abandoned this endeavor and began to build a different system, different from the Western one. Although FIDESZ has been winning the elections with an overwhelming majority since 2010, one cannot call them a winning party because they were unable to carry out their original goals and plans.

### ANOTHER GROUP, AND FROMM'S POSITION

Fromm believed that the other extreme was represented by those who argue that the nature of man must be changed first, that is, his consciousness, values, charac-

<sup>17</sup> See: Freedom House (2021) *Freedom in the World 2021*. Available [online]: <https://freedomhouse.org/country/hungary/freedom-world/2021>; Bozóki A. and D. Hegedűs (2017) "Hibridizáció", [in]: *Politikatudományi szemle*, Vol. 26 [in Hungarian]



WHILE IT IS  
TO BE WELCOMED  
THAT THE EU'S  
REGIONAL  
POLICY  
ALSO INCLUDES  
TARGETS  
FOR MITIGATING  
THE NEGATIVE  
EFFECTS OF CLI-  
MATE CHANGE,  
THE EUROPEAN  
UNION DOES NOT  
PAY ENOUGH  
ATTENTION  
TO THESE TARGETS

ter, and only then can a social change be brought about. Referring to human history, he finds that such claims are false, and that purely psychological changes have always been limited to the private sphere or small groups, or that aspirations have been utterly ineffective if, in addition to voicing spiritual values, they have been the opposite<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> Fromm, E. (2013) *To Have or To Be?*, reprint edition, United Kingdom: Bloomsbury Academic.



According to Erich Fromm, the correct starting point for solving the problem is that a fundamental change in human character structure can save us from a psychological and economic crisis that results in a decline in the attitude of possession in favor of a life-centered approach to this, suffering society, and its members. We thus need to eliminate the root causes.

Furthermore, he believed that the creation of a *new man* could be facilitated by a *new society*, which was also his task. This new society, and new people in society may be able to solve the global problems facing humanity, such as the climate catastrophe. According to the philosopher, the new person must have the following traits:

*• Ability to give up all forms of possession for the sake of a full existence.*

*• A sense of security, a sense of identity and self-confidence based on believing in who we are, which also builds on the need for human relationships, interest in the outside world, love, solidarity with the outside world, rather than possession at all costs we would like and exercise control over the world and thereby become servants of our property*

*• Adoption of the fact that nothing and no one outside of us give meaning to our lives, but that this radical independence and of authenticity (no thingness) condition can be dedicated to the love and distribute posts fullest activity.*

*• Ability to be fully present where we are.*

*• To find joy in giving and sharing what I have, rather than accumulating and exploiting others.*

*• Love and humility for all manifestations of life and the awareness that neither things,*

*nor power, nor the dead are sacred, but only life and all that promotes its growth.*

*• Strive to reduce our greed, hatred, and illusions as much as we can.*

*• Be able to live a life without worshipping idols and having no illusions because we have reached a level of development at which man no longer needs illusions.*

*• Strive to develop our ability to love and the ability to think critically and without emotion.*

*• Overcome our own narcissism and accept the tragic limitations of human existence.*

*• To be aware that the highest goal of human life is the full development of one's own and fellow human beings.*

*• Know that discipline and recognition of reality are needed to achieve this goal.*

*• To know that only growth within the system is healthy, and to know the difference between "system" as an attribute of life and "order" as an attribute of lifelessness, the dead.*

”

THROUGH  
INVESTMENT,  
AND THE OPERA-  
TION OF NEW  
SYSTEMS, NEW JOBS  
ARE CREATED



PROMOTING  
INFORMATION IS ES-  
SENTIAL  
FOR THE AVERAGE  
CITIZEN TO UNDER-  
STAND THE PROB-  
LEM AND TO TAKE  
ACTIVE ACTION  
TO ACHIEVE  
COMMON GOALS

- *Developing our imagination, not only to escape intolerable things, but to anticipate real opportunities, which is to eliminate intolerable circumstances.*
- *Others should not be deceived, but we should not be left to fend for ourselves, we can be innocent, but by no means naive.*
- *We need to know ourselves, but not only the conscious but also the unconscious self - the knowledge of this is dormant in all of us.*
- *To feel one with all living things and thus give up the goal of conquering, subjugating, exploiting, raping and destroying nature, instead trying to understand it and cooperate with it.*
- *To know that freedom is not arbitrariness, but a chance to be ourselves - not as a set of unbridled desires, but as a delicately*

*balanced system that faces the alternative of growth or decline, life or death at all times.*

- *Know that evil and destruction are necessary consequences of unrealized growth.*
- *To know that there are few people who have attained perfection in all these qualities and, moreover, do not desire to "achieve a goal," recognizing that such an ambition is only another form of greed and possession.*
- *To be happy in the process of incessantly growing vitality, whatever the farthest point that fate allows us to live, because if our lives are as full as possible, it is so satisfying that there is no worry about what is and what is not we could achieve."<sup>19</sup>*

It has already been mentioned that society and the individuals within it are connected to each other, and in order for society to facilitate the creation of new people and for change to take place, we need to build a new society. According to Fromm, coming to awareness as the first task to attempt to create such a society is difficult. These difficulties were identified by *To Have or To Be?* in writing:

- *The question of how to maintain the industrial mode of production without ending with total centralization, that is, the already known fascism, and, even more likely, technocratic "smiling fascism", must be resolved.*
- *Planning in a macroeconomic framework, abandoning a completely fictional "free market economy", should be combined with widespread decentralization.*

---

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

- *The goal of unlimited economic growth should be abandoned or replaced by selective growth to avoid a possible economic catastrophe.*
- *It would be necessary to create suitable working conditions and a completely different attitude to work, so that it is no longer stimulated by material gain but by other, spiritual pleasures.*
- *At the same time as supporting scientific progress, the requirement that human application should not endanger human existence should be met.*
- *The conditions should be created for man to experience prosperity and joy, which would allow him not to seek the maximum of pleasures.*
- *It is necessary to create security of existence, avoiding dependence on bureaucracy.*
- *The possibility of "individual initiative" should be shifted from the economy to other areas of life."<sup>20</sup>*

Erich Fromm believed that the creation of a new society was possible, and one of the conditions was that the branches of the social sciences that deal with the creation of a *new society* should also take precedence over the natural sciences<sup>21</sup>.

Change is, therefore, possible, but as a first step, it is necessary to create a new philosophy trend that can be used in practical life and can offer a real solution to humanity's current problems, namely the global climate crisis, inequality and over-interdependence in the economy.

---

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.



## GREATER SUPPORT FOR EDUCATION AND RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT IS ESSENTIAL TO REPLACE A CULTURE BASED ON ECONOMIC CONSUMPTION WITH A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC CULTURE

### MUCH NEEDED CHANGE OF MENTALITY RECOMMENDATIONS

The SARS-CoV-2 pandemic has made humanity aware of how fragile the global market economy is. Among other things, a good example is the ocean trade and transport of goods, which has become difficult due to restrictive measures. Thus, the global market economy must be replaced by an economy of sustainable development.

This shift can only come about if local communities come together and try to achieve a change in economic culture locally, at the regional level. Switching will not only make humanity less vulnerable to a potential global pandemic, but will also mean that emissions, in general, will be

radically reduced by significantly shortening supply chains. This change can only be achieved if governments and companies are involved and work together to develop a sustainable model with the involvement of experts.

The European Union, in a spirit of solidarity, supports local communities. Grants are targeted at all regions and cities in the EU. These grants are intended to promote economic growth, job creation, and a better quality of life through investment. The latter includes support for renewable resources and sustainable development. Regional strategies give priority to, among others, saving the seas<sup>22</sup>, preserving environmental and cultural heritage<sup>23</sup>, curbing forest fires<sup>24</sup> and promoting sustainable development<sup>25</sup>. While it is to be welcomed that the EU's regional policy also includes targets for mitigating the negative effects of climate change, the European Union does not pay enough attention to these targets. As climate change, in the absence of action, will have a significant negative impact on the lives of EU citizens in the near future, and by extension on our daily lives, it would be worthwhile developing separate regional strategies to tackle the problem and prioritize it at a regional level. Furthermore, achieving the targets set in the 2020 climate change and energy package (the so -called "20-20-20" targets) is

<sup>22</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on an EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. See: COM (2009) 248 final, June 10.

<sup>23</sup> Communication from the Commission COM (2015) 366 final – *Towards a More Prosperous Alps*.

<sup>24</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a European Union Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region. See: COM (2014) 357 final, June 17 .

<sup>25</sup> Joint Communication JOIN (2016) 21 final – *An Integrated Policy for the Arctic in the European Union*.



## FOR LOCALIZATION PROCESSES TO BE TRULY SUCCESSFUL GLOBALLY OR IN CERTAIN AREAS, CLIMATE CHANGE MUST NOT BE IGNORED

not enough to mitigate the effects of global climate change<sup>26</sup>. In this way, it would be useful to set higher goals for the European community, which is definitely worth supporting as a matter of priority.

The European Union is also addressing the problem at regional level, but the problem can only be interpreted globally. For example, as a result of global warming, not only will the average sea temperature rise, but due to the melting of Arctic ice, sea levels will rise. If the EU were to better support self-sufficient economies and regional independence, it could reduce Member States' vulnerability to the climate crisis. A good example of this is the Netherlands or the Baltic countries. These countries are seriously threatened by rising sea levels, which could make their territory uninhabitable. Not only will territories become

<sup>26</sup> Directive 2009/28 / EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of April 23, 2009, on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources and amending and repealing Directives 2001/77 / EC and 2003/30 / EC.

uninhabitable, but these processes will, among others, affect sea currents, including the entire Earth.

According to the 2021 report by the International Energy Agency (IEA), the energy boom following the COVID-19 pandemic is producing the second largest annual increase in CO2 emissions ever recorded. The publication highlights that a significant portion of the growing greenhouse gas emissions is not produced by developed countries, but by developing countries and China<sup>27</sup>.

These examples also illustrates that it is worth addressing this issue globally. Of course, this does not mean that regional action is in vain, but on the contrary. Only regional action can solve the problem and reduce CO2 emissions – such an approach makes sense, but it can achieve real results if it is done in a coordinated manner, taking into account a global natural change.

The IEA report also draws our attention to the fact that the transition has significant potential for economic growth as well. Through investment, and the operation of new systems, new jobs are created. This remark is particularly conducive to the European Union's regional policy efforts to develop the economy and create jobs<sup>28</sup>.

Changing our consumption patterns is also essential to mitigating the effects of climate change. Here, first and foremost, consumer behavior change is what can promote change. Sustainable development, as a shift in economic culture, is threatened by excessive consumption. On the one hand, by changing attitudes, companies are forced by consumers to change their

business policies. On the other hand, by reducing consumption, emissions can be significantly reduced. Conscious consumer behavior, with individuals consuming goods according to their needs, is essential to curbing climate change. This mentality helps to change consumer behavior, and it can be encouraged through various educational programs and recommendations.

Promoting information is essential for the average citizen to understand the problem and to take active action to achieve common goals. Creating full-fledged objective orientation may not be limited to a particular area, so this endeavor requires more decisive action against the so-called fake news and misinformation. Some minor steps have so far been taken in this regard,



REGIONALIZATION  
BASED ON ESSEN-  
TIALY SELF-SUFFI-  
CIENT ECONOMIES  
CAN ONLY BE  
DISCUSSED  
IN CONJUNCTION  
WITH GLOBAL  
CLIMATE CHANGE,  
AS THE PROBLEM  
IS GLOBAL

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.iea.org/reports/global-energy-review-2021>

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.



THAT GLOBAL  
CLIMATE CHANGE  
IS VERY MUCH ABLE  
TO HAVE A LOCAL  
IMPACT  
TO AN EXTENT  
THAT ALSO HAS  
A SIGNIFICANT  
IMPACT  
ON THE DAILY LIVES  
OF LOCAL PEOPLE

but this issue calls for stronger action on social networks for success<sup>29</sup>.

Greater support for education and research and development is essential to replace a culture based on economic consumption with a sustainable economic culture. Here, too, a change of approach is needed, and a smaller percentage of the technological advances created by science should be put at the service of consumption. We should prioritize the scientific areas that serve to mitigate climate change. Developing and supporting education, in addition to increasing the level of general education among people, promotes social mobility and reduces the social gap.

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/hu/headlines/eu-affairs/20170331STO69330/video-harc-a-felretajekoztatas-es-az-alhitek-ellen-a-kozossegi-oldalakon>

Reducing the gap between poorer and richer countries is crucial in the long term to truly address the negative effects of human-induced climate change. This can be achieved if richer countries support the development of poorer countries. In this case, development must take place in a sustainable way in which the countries ensure that development takes place without significant CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and that it does not result in additional emissions. Instead, development must lead to the above-mentioned reduction of greenhouse gases.

### FINAL REMARKS

To sum up, I am fundamentally skeptical that a regional approach based on self-sufficient economies will be implemented globally in practice in the near future. Although globalization facilitates this process, we can only see the progress of regionalization in more developed, richer countries. However, the trends for regionalization or the self-sufficient economy may, at one point, come to the fore in some areas of the EU economy.

For localization processes to be truly successful globally or in certain areas, climate change must not be ignored. There clearly exists a significant connection between economies operating in different areas, which involuntarily influence each other by emitting greenhouse gases. Regionalization based on essentially self-sufficient economies can only be discussed in conjunction with global climate change, as the problem is global.

In order for humanity to truly be able to deal with this problem, we need a kind of economic-cultural change, which can be based on a change of attitude. Needless to say, there already are efforts to mitigate the negative effects of climate change. However, this means, first and foremost, formal cooperation between countries (think, for

example, the Paris Climate Agreement). Some countries (such as the Netherlands or Germany) are making more serious efforts to mitigate the problem and achieve the goals they have set, while other countries (such as China or India) are making less of an effort to address the global problem. Countries that are the largest emitters of carbon dioxide (such as China, the US, or India) should radically reduce emissions in order to mitigate climate change.

A change of attitude would be of great importance for regional policies and for self-sufficient communities, as global climate change has a local impact. There already are countless examples of this phenomenon. Including an unusual climatic event in July 2021, i.e. snowfalls in southern Brazil<sup>30</sup>, or the "Dél-Alföldi Régió" in Hungary- a country which is beginning to desertify<sup>31</sup>. Another example is the situation in Madagascar. The island country has not had enough rain for four years, and tens of thousands of people are starving because they do not have access to basic foodstuffs

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/business/environment/seeing-snow-first-time-62-brazilians-revel-icy-snap-2021-07-30/>

<sup>31</sup> Part of this region is called "Homokhátság". This territory is not a densely populated territory, the people living there are mainly engaged in agriculture and grow fruit on small farms. These small farms supplied the territory with cheap, fresh and good quality fruit and vegetables. Due to climate change, the area is suffering from drought and is threatened by desertification. Farmers are unable to irrigate their farms as a result of radical negative groundwater levels, so they are forced to give up their activities or switch to livestock farming. This process also reduces the self-sufficiency of the territory, as change has an impact on crop yields and thus on the nutrition of the population. Another example is the situation in Madagascar. Madagascar has not had enough rain for four years, and tens of thousands of people are starving because they do not have access to basic foodstuffs due to extreme drought. This process also reduces the self-sufficiency of the area, as change has an impact on crop yields and thus on the nutrition of the population. See: *Baon.hu* (2019) "Vízvisszatartással mentenék meg a Homokhátságot". Available [online]: <https://www.baon.hu/kozelet/helyi-kozelet/vizvisszatartással-mentenek-meg-a-homokhatsagot-1876435/> [in Hungarian]



TO RADICALLY  
REDUCE CARBON  
EMISSIONS LOCALLY,  
IT IS NECESSARY  
FOR GOVERNMENTS  
TO TAKE CLIMATE  
CHANGE MORE  
SERIOUSLY  
AND ADHERE  
TO THE GOALS  
THEY SET  
THEMSELVES

due to extreme drought<sup>32</sup>. This process also reduces the self-sufficiency of the area, as change has an impact on crop yields and thus on the nutrition of the population. According to the United Nations, Madagascar may be the first country whose inhabitants

<sup>32</sup> According to the IPCC report, water scarcity periods in Madagascar have increased in recent years and are expected to increase as climate change progresses. Although the situation in Madagascar is shocking and tragic, but not hopeless. Chris Funk believes the short-term solution to the problem could be to make water management more efficient by Malagasy authorities. After all, we are already able to predict often if more than average rainfall can be expected, and so farmers can increase their yields with the help of technology and information. See: *Qubit.hu* (2021) "Madagaszkáron Már Sáskákat és Kaktuszleveleket Esznek, hogy Túléljék a Klímaváltozás Okozta Éhínséget", August 25. Available [online]: <https://qubit.hu/2021/08/25/madagaszkaron-mar-saskakat-es-kaktuszlevelet-esznek-hogy-tuleljek-a-klimavaltozas-okozta-ehinseget> [in Hungarian]

”

LOCAL  
COMMUNITIES  
SHOULD STRIVE  
TO MAKE THE AREA  
THEY LIVE CARBON-  
NEUTRAL  
REGARDLESS  
OF WHICH REGION  
THEY LIVE IN

experience hunger directly caused by climate change, so that this country, compared to developed countries, has no significant greenhouse gas emissions<sup>33</sup>.

These examples show that global climate change is very much able to have a local impact to an extent that also has a significant impact on the daily lives of local people. This also means that some regions, or self-sufficient economies, may be affected to such a measure that they not only lead to a competitive disadvantage in these areas, but also to a reduction in the living standards of the population.

Nevertheless, Chris Funk, a climate researcher at the University of California, Santa Barbara, also drew our attention to the fact that there is some solution to the problem that, even though it may not solve the global problem, it is able to mitigate the negative effects of climate change locally.

One important element of the *fight against climate change* is for local communities to find solutions to the environmental problems that affect them by working to make the area carbon neutral while solving the problem. To radically reduce carbon emissions locally, it is necessary for governments to take climate change more seriously and adhere to the goals they set themselves, to help each other. Meanwhile, different communities must act together against climate change.

Local communities should strive to make the area they live carbon-neutral regardless of which region they live in. They should also support other regions in order to preserve their habitat. This requires a high degree of cooperation between the regions. As such, the horizontal arena needs to be strengthened in order for this wide-reaching cooperation to truly work.



\*

PÉTER  
KEREKES

.....  
A graduate lawyer and a political science student at the University of Szeged. He has formerly worked at the Law Office, the Republikon Institute in Budapest, and for a political party. His main areas of interest include politics and social sciences

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.