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## Europe-wide Green Week– Budapest hosted an international conference

On 17 May 2011, the European Commission and CEEweb for Biodiversity held an international event on resource use and resource efficiency. All sectors, including academia, civil organizations, business and decision-makers, must face with this urgent issue. Therefore, the presentations and discussions of the conference evaluated the difficulties and the opportunities of the recent situation in order to turn with a common viewpoint towards the main actors of the economic and political life at national and EU levels.

Resources are the bases for our boosted production and consumption. Our extraction of these materials rose to a level where it is needed to search for new alternatives and replacements, and to reduce our everyday-life consumption. Our unsustainable habits to consume enormous amount of resources not only trigger economic and environmental problems, but they also lead to severe social impacts. As an answer to this difficulty, many end-of-pipe solutions have been born, however there are few examples, which in fact focus on the input side. With occasional campaigns, we can only mitigate the symptoms: What we really need is to form global recommendations in order to take efficient steps both on the short and on the long run. We have to reduce our resource use! As Dr. Erzsébet Gergely (Ministry of Rural Development, Hungary) put it 'We had lived up our natural capital for the given year by August 21, 2010, therefore in the rest of the year we were using up the reserves of the future. This is similar to the situation, when a family spends its over-head money in advance. If we overuse our planet's resources, we destroy the rehabilitation potential of the natural systems, thus demolishing our fundamental capital.

The invited guests of the conference elaborated on the resource reserves of the Earth, the level of the global and national consumption and the expected increase while providing also potential answers within the frame of sustainability and renewal. The most well-known example of the probable solutions is the initiation of the quota system proposed by the Hungarian National Society of Conservationist, Friends of the Earth Hungary, which has been dealing with this issue in numerous campaigns and which has become famous under the name of Climate Bill. In relation to this, Iván Gyulai's natural resources' quota system was also presented. The depicted scheme shows a complex system that tackles together the environmental harmful activities and classifies the consumers based on their energy use applying a so-called quota-quota money system.

According to Klara Hajdu, Secretary General of CEEweb for Biodiversity: "We must realise that bold steps are needed to cap our resource use in Europe. Otherwise the European targets on resource efficiency and biodiversity will not be met and with an increasing Ecological Footprint we are putting people's wellbeing at risk, both in Europe and the world."

Robert Konrad, Head of Communication of the European Commission` Directorate General for Environment, outlined a Roadmap to Resource Efficient Europe to be adopted this September. The roadmap will introduce main resource efficiency challenges as well as vast array of opportunities for growth and jobs with less waste, a cleaner environment, and better, more sustainable choices for consumers.

The organizers welcomed that the participants had such diverse backgrounds, thus an active debate could have been formed between the representatives of the governmental and civil sectors. In the very near future, CEEweb will represent the resource quota system of Iván Gyulai in international forums and for the international decision-makers.

CEEweb: Resource Cap Coalition

[http://www.ceeweb.org/workingareas/resource\\_use/index.htm](http://www.ceeweb.org/workingareas/resource_use/index.htm)

For more information, please contact:

Klára Hajdu, CEEweb, General Secretary, +36 1 398 0135, [hajdu@ceeweb.org](mailto:hajdu@ceeweb.org)

Veronika Kiss, CEEweb, programme coordinator, +36 1 398 0135, [kiss@ceeweb.org](mailto:kiss@ceeweb.org)