

Jong, Jaap de (2005) (05)

Greeting speech to International Conference 'Navigation and Environment on the Danube', on 28 may 2005, in Dunapataj.

I am representing here the Dutch Foundation on Sustainable corporation, SDS. SDS is allied to the Dutch Green Party, GroenLinks. On behalf of GroenLinks SDS is executing the international corporation with Green Parties and Movements in the new and candidate member countries. I am also representing Anne de Boer as a member of the Green East West Dialogue, a platform on which green parties from the West and the East are working together within the framework of the European Green Party.

We are working together with Zöld Demokraták for more than a decade.

And the items of river problems have been an important item.

We organised conferences on this issue on both sides, as well in Holland with Hungarian guests as here with Dutch participation. Some of you will remember that the Dutch member of the European Parliament, Alex de Roo was last year the chair of a conference on the problems of the cooperation of Hungary and Slovakia on the Danube problems.

I am working as a volunteer as a councillor for the Green Parties. So, I am not an expert on the matters you are dealing with, during this conference.

But I am an expert in riding on the bike along the rivers of Europe. Last year I was biking from Germany down the Budapest along the Danube, and I have seen with my own eyes that there is still a lot to do.

Gyuri Droppa asked me to tell something about the so-called Dutch Polder model.

That model is the basis structure in our society as a cultural, social, and political way of behaviour. It is based on three things:

- 1) individual opinions, responsibility, and interests.
- 2) respect for others' opinions and interests.
- 3) always mutual consideration to look after satisfying solutions for all parties.

The root of this model goes way back to the Middle Ages.

In that period the level of the peaty soil was, due to agrarian exploitation, descending.

While, of course, the level in the rivers stayed the same.

To defend ourselves against the rivers we had to build dikes.

The origin of the poldermodel was that every farmer was responsible for the piece of the dike on his own land. But the whole system could only work on the condition that all the farmers agreed on how things had to be done.

Maybe the poldermodel can be an inspiration for you during this conference.

But I must stress one thing, the polder model is not looking for quick compromises, but we are working in three steps:

- 1) look for the shared interests and agree on those.
- 2) look for the realisation of individual interests which don't bother the other involved people.
- 3) and take a look for the way different interests can be handled in a for everybody concerned satisfying way.

I wish us all a very successful conference.

Thank you for your attention.