



ΜΑΡΙΟΛΟΠΟΥΛΕΙΟ - ΚΑΝΑΓΚΙΝΕΙΟ ΙΔΡΥΜΑ
ΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΩΝ ΠΕΡΙΒΑΛΛΟΝΤΟΣ

«WE WERE AWARE OF THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND WE WERE WHISTLING NONCHALANTLY.... »

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It is a fact that today, more than ever, our planet is experiencing dramatic changes like the ones that not only we but also other countries of the Mediterranean have experienced recently. We are living through a series of crises, the so-called «Permacrisis». It began as a financial crisis, it was succeeded by the pandemic and the war in Ukraine, culminating in the extreme weather events of climate change.

The ever-accelerating climate change did not come about alone. It has affected Biodiversity with the extinction of species, it has caused atmospheric pollution as well as water and soil pollution. It has caused serious problems in agriculture and health.

Massive fires, water scarcity and deforestation, as well as the nuclear threat, have fueled the concern and interest of the global community, but is this enough?

It seems that while the information about what is happening is there, it has unfortunately proven to be insufficient for the timely response to the catastrophic consequences. It is plainly obvious that not only the knowledge and understanding of these phenomena is required, but also the development of a strategy that will be based on interdisciplinary cooperation in order to achieve their effective management. Where we stand now it does not suffice to be informed that extreme weather events are imminent, we must be aware and trained on how to protect ourselves. It is imperative that we develop mechanisms of awareness and therefore Adaptation to the burdened situation, something which Greece is already doing with the LIFE_IP ADAPTIN.GR Program.

The soft policies followed in the past decades have unfortunately produced no substantial results. In addition to Climate Change, we are burdened with Chemical

Pollution and the reckless use of Radiation, with their scientifically documented effects on health, such as cancer, infertility, stress and other diseases that are due to the debilitation of our immune system and make us susceptible to infections, with the latest example being the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is a fact that many of the present-day threats have been known and documented by scientists for several years now and they have been communicated to the respective political leaders. However, it is unfortunately constantly proven by the facts that the messages have not been utilized and they have not been integrated in the implementation of their programming, which has had tragic results.

Perhaps due to its short-lived nature, politics should acknowledge its weakness as it regards its effectiveness and leave its strategy formulation and implementation to long-term planned intervention actions with more stable public structures of supervised collaborative power. The structures of the power model so far do not seem to give the time necessary to develop a strategy of adequate prevention mechanisms. It is difficult to detect feasible solutions in long-term planning and this is because, subconsciously, those who plan them imagine themselves staying in power “perpetually”. At the same time, forward-looking planning completely ignores basic concepts of shared ownership of the planet... Who really owns the air we breathe or the stratosphere?

We have recently had the horrible experience of Daniel’s advance sweeping the Mediterranean. A strong protest of nature. The truth is that the typhoon knows no state borders or unfulfilled political commitments. It seems that any “Adaptation” we plan through European Programs pales in comparison to the uncontrollable forces unleashed by nature. Isn’t it time for us to think seriously and take another bold step towards the so-called “Mitigation” by reducing our carbon footprint and developing a strategy to raise the awareness of those who make decisions and those who implement them?

The recent disaster has caused us to panic, not unreasonably. We had not had an experience of similar extent. The priority from the first moment was to save those trapped as well as vulnerable groups from possible drowning and calls were heard for bread and water. In the subsequent priorities, however, no strong voice was heard of the need to implement measures of protection against the spread of infections but also against the exposure to chemical pollutants of agricultural origin brought about by the extensive use of pesticides in the Thessalian plain. Spraying against mosquitoes addresses only a small part of the problem concerning the spread of Hepatitis.

Immediate removal of the population, if possible, would be desirable but also the extensive use of chemical toilets that could be distributed to those who remain

would help limit the biological pollution from human waste and would limit the communicable infections.

The great hidden wound, though, is the exposure of the population and the pollution of the water table by pesticides. Here it is already late, the “soup” of pesticides cannot be contained and the only thing left is to inform the population so that they can protect themselves with their own actions and individual effort in order for them to be aware of the medical impacts of pesticide effects, given that they act as Endocrine Disruptors with a lot of impacts on health. It goes without saying that the exposed population should be under regular medical monitoring, more frequently than annually, so that we can avoid the worst.

The recent events were probably our most tragic experience of Climate Change. It was not just a bell but the ringing of multiple bells together. And now what? Studies, forecasts and promises, or perhaps action and conversion of the existing information into knowledge and awareness so that there is sensitization and primarily mobilization towards the right choices and directions by charting a strategy that is feasible, humane, with a multiplicative benefit.

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