

# REPORT

## Sustainable consumerism – the way forward?

Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> of September 2018, 16:00-17:30  
European House, Jungmannova 24, Prague 1

- **The sixth debate of the cycle Prague Climate Talks took place on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> September in the European House. This project is co-organised by EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy and Glopolis, in cooperation with Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung Prague and under the auspices of the UN Information Centre Prague.**
- **The topic of the sixth debate was “Sustainable consumerism – the way forward?”. We welcomed three distinguished speakers: Josephine Mylan (University of Manchester), Jana Půlpánová (Envirostyl) and Roman Bojko (IKEA). Our Christian Kvorning Lassen moderated the debate.**

**Josephine Mylan** was the first to take the floor as she opened the debate on academic level. At first, she outlined the development of sustainable consumption as a point of interest, highlighting the development after 2002 when national governments started to get involved and linked consumerism to sustainability. Then she provided two dominant approaches to thinking about sustainable consumerism: 1) to keep consuming, but switch to buying green products, therefore changing within the existing rules and institutions or 2) the so-called revolutionary approach, which is based on getting completely rid of the existing structures and adopting new values and lifestyles. As for the question: “Can we as consumers change the world?”, she answered “No.”, adding that although we have a role, we

are just one small group in the system and more action towards any change should come from the governments.

**Jana Půlpánová** began her presentation by introducing herself and her work. She defined herself as environmentalist, vegan, minimalist and zero-waster. Her presentation focused especially on changing attitudes towards consumerism and how everyone can reduce their impacts on the world – exchanging, recycling and creating things we would normally buy. In addition, she concentrated on the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, noting that the plastic production is still growing and providing some ideas for alternatives to plastic, such as bringing our own bottles, using sustainable packaging and things from bamboo.

**Roman Bojko** on the other hand talked more about the visions of IKEA wishing to create a better everyday life for the people. IKEA is aware of sustainability and environmental issues of its work and recognises three main areas of living: healthy and sustainable (second life of furniture, recycling, vegetarian hotdogs), circular and climate positive (products from green materials and sustainable resources for instance wood or cotton) and fair and equal (strictly controlled products and conditions of employees).

Furthermore, the speakers had the opportunity to comment on each other's presentation, starting with

Josephine Mylan, who made a point about the big potential of IKEA, which could make a difference. She was followed by Jana Půlpánová talking about the danger of "greenwashing" in certain cases and Roman Bojko, who mentioned the rising number of people and the challenge of satisfying their demand.

After that, the questions from the audience were answered. The whole discussion was concluded by Josephine Mylan, stating that "we need to think sustainable consumerism is achievable, because we have no other choice".

*Prague Climate Talks is a new project aimed at establishing a platform for continued high-level discussion on the complex issue of climate change. Throughout a series of debates it will bring together experts and professionals from varying relevant fields as well as members of the general public.*

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