



## Encouraging The Reflective Citizen

### Part 1. THE SHARING OF PREOCCUPATIONS AND EXPERIENCES

In this part of the Listening Post participants were invited to identify, contribute, and explore their experience in their various social roles, be those in work, unemployed, or retired; as members of religious, political, neighbourhood or voluntary or leisure organisations, or as members of families and communities. This part was largely concerned with what might be called, 'the stuff of people's everyday lives', that relating to the 'socio' or 'external' world of participants.

### Part 2. IDENTIFICATION OF MAJOR THEMES

In part 2 the participants were invited to identify in small groups, the major themes which emerged during part one. When brought together, some themes seemed to overlap in certain areas. The sum of the identified themes is described below as follows:

#### ***1. Increasingly mature activity of civil society***

People become increasingly aware of the role they have as citizens and the strength of their influence on the surrounding reality. They express their opinions on issues important to the quality of their lives more frequently and actively (GMO, antibiotics, vaccinations). People do not agree with solutions, which in their view, restrict the freedom of speech and access to information (protest against ACTA). For the first time since Solidarity movement, they took a mass action to express their views and stand up against government solutions. There is an increased environment awareness, long-term and system-thinking occurs (perception of interrelations and mutual influences) and the perspective broadens (from me to us). There is a greater sense of responsibility for the generations to come.

#### ***2. Internet courage***

Thanks to general availability of network we have access to unlimited amount of information. We also have a tool to spread information ourselves. However, the lack of direct confrontation with the recipients makes it impossible for us to evaluate the influence of our on-line activity on the off-line reality. On-line activity involves low level of responsibility and decision-making. We can declare opinions and express our interest on-line, which at the same time, does not have to be reflected by our actions and decisions in everyday life. Our disapproval concerning on-line matters is not addressed to an individual. We express it impersonally and direct it towards a form/society (eg. anti-facebook).

#### ***3. Exposure of individuality against the background of overwhelming masses***

More and more frequent activity of the 'different ones' in an increasingly numerous parts of social areas makes us seek our own place, authenticity in what we do, passion and chance to express ourselves. We want to self-realize, create something entirely for ourselves, be at one with ourselves and develop. At the same time, we would like the surrounding world to consume and pay attention to our self-expression. We expose our passions and share experiences. We present everyday life as something unusual.

#### ***4. Coming back to the roots, the praise of simplicity***

Once again people ascribe value to every-day reality and the activities it consists of. They self-

realize through small initiatives and are happy with 'small things'. 'Here and now' is sufficient for them. There is a recurring need for drawing happiness from motherhood and experiencing the peace connected to that period of life. People are more and more eager to find their own roots, traditions, bring back to life old customs, as if they wanted to rebuild the relation with universe, which has been violated. They seem to wish to maintain the continuity of humanity, justify the meaning of their actions by referring to what was in the past. They discover their own place/role/function in small communities, which they are part of. Communities for which they act and want to be proud of, and thanks to which, they create their own identity and sense of security.

### **5. Women expansion**

Women become activists. They are socially and professionally involved, speak about essential issues and make decisions. They perceive other women's strength, potential and resources. They create and address their message specifically to them. The market of services provided by women and dedicated to women is developing. Women begin to 'want more'. They invest in progress, consequently becoming an attractive group of clients, nevertheless, susceptible to manipulation and other marketing actions directed towards them.

## **Part 3. ANALYSIS AND HYPOTHESIS FORMATION**

In this part of the Listening Post the members were working with the information resulting from Parts One and Two, with a view to collectively identifying the underlying dynamics both conscious and unconscious that may be predominant at the time; and developing hypotheses as to why they might be occurring at that moment. Here the members were working more with what might be called their 'psycho' or 'internal' world, their collective ideas and ways of thinking that both determine how they perceive the external realities and shape their actions towards them.

### **Hypothesis 1**

*Private worlds: "My home is my castle"*

Being afraid of get the go-by, stay unnoticed, we expose our individuality, keep fighting for space for our own expression to be able to mark out, to distinguish ourselves against the background of the others. Feeling of loneliness and a need for acceptance push us to join various groups. We want to be noticed and accepted by our society. There is so much stimulation around that we need to distinguish ourselves from the mass by joining groups of people who are alike, who – for example – share the same interests.

We feel overloaded by the amount of available information, strength of expression of others and by a number of events in the contemporary world. That is why we seek for our own space and simplicity. We build our private worlds, which resonate well to our needs of security and self-realization.

### **Hypothesis 2**

*Overcoming fear and looking for feeling of "being in charge"*

Inefficacy in relation to our surroundings stimulates us to take a grip on things in order to regain the feeling of self-efficacy. I start to take responsibility for my own life, transgress my own limits, think of what really is important to me and voice my views in these areas. Since I feel worthless, inefficient in my activities, expelled from the world which I know, I look for a new way, my own way based on 'myself'. I get in touch with myself, discover myself, try to get in to what is really me. I go through topics – take responsibility for my own life, consciously take an effort to redefine my hitherto style of life, priorities which guide me, my own views on important issues. I learn resourcefulness. Being aware of how ephemeral, how unpredictable and uncontrollable our surrounding is, I mobilize my courage, take a grip on things. The above pattern is most typical for women.

### **Hypothesis 3**

#### *Missing of easiness*

Escaping from the baggage of responsibility I want to disappear, try to deluge, consigning to perdition in “now and here”. Trying to deal with an increasing complexity of the surrounding world, I look for the simplest solutions based on uncomplicated rules. To make sense of activities, I refer to what is known, what was established in the past, what is proven. I want to transfer these solutions to the contemporary world hoping that this will exempt me from the necessity of conceptualize things in a new way.

Out of fear of the complex and unpredictable world some people escape to virtual reality, which is more predictable: “I know what I’m afraid of, reality is foreseeable”, “it can become my source of self-efficacy and self-esteem“ more influence and possibility of relative control over my own and other people actions. Sometimes out of missing of easy we escape from ourselves and our responsibility related to making choices. We deluge in the outside world that is designed to give us an impression of being active and being in charge.

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