

Interview with Prof. Dr. Gusztáv Báger

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*“There’s joy in motion, when it’s not routine.
As long as I live, I rush toward the dream.”*
Gusztáv Báger: Működés (excerpt)¹

Gusztáv Báger, Professor Emeritus at Pázmány Péter Catholic University, has conducted wide-ranging work and research over the decades. He consistently transformed his practical achievements into contributions to academia, he applied new scientific findings in practice. As a department head at the National Planning Office and as an expert at the UN Economic Commission for Europe, he was responsible for the development of complex econometric macroeconomic models. Later, as a department head at the Ministry of Finance, he led the development of economic reform programs. As Director General of the Development and Methodological Institute of the State Audit Office, he played an active role in the development of Hungary’s anti-corruption framework and public sector integrity system, and in shaping public financial responsibility.

Your career has rested on a triad of institutions: academic research, the Ministry of Finance, and the Monetary Council of the Hungarian National Bank. What personal experiences or influences steered you toward public finance as a specialization? What were the names of the departments you worked at?

When I graduated from the Karl Marx University of Economics in 1961, I became an assistant lecturer at the Department of Political Economy, where I taught the history of economic theory and political economy for five years, while completing my doctoral thesis. This set me on my research path. In 1966, the Institute of Planned Economy was established – it became the research institute of the National Planning Office – and its director, Dr. Sándor Ganczer, who had been an associate professor at the Department of National Economic Planning, invited me to join. We had already worked together on the development and application of input-output and price models. I was tasked with heading the department for new planning methods. Since this role focused on macroeconomic modeling, it was essentially a research role and an excellent launchpad for my career.

¹ The translation was made by AI not for artistic purposes, but for the sake of conveying meaning. Not a literary translation, but in a literary translation style.

One major new research trend at the time was the application of mathematical models in economics, especially in planning. Prof. Dr. János Kornai was then the intellectual father of two-level planning, and under his management, we developed a comprehensive linear programming model that covered the entire national economy, with over 40 sectoral subdivisions. Each sector had its own linear programming model. I was responsible for this two-level planning project from the Planning Office side. The model also analyzed price effects for individual activities, and we implemented a shadow pricing program to assess the impacts of artificial pricing systems. My candidate dissertation was based on this shadow pricing system. So this was a highly important and innovative activity at the time – my first major research project.

So from a professional standpoint, you must feel satisfaction in how economics has increasingly moved in a highly mathematical direction since the 1980s. Predictive models have developed significantly, and many retrospective test models have also emerged.

That's not a bad direction – it's just that there aren't as many real innovations anymore, and perhaps there's too much hope pinned on mathematical modeling and its applications. Back then, the Planning Office officially had very high expectations. István Hetényi, then deputy president of the Planning Office and later Minister of Finance, oversaw the institute and was a strong supporter of this mathematical modeling. Retrospectively, we may have somewhat overestimated its significance. The reliability of data in aggregate models wasn't so great, even at the time.

Another line of research I pursued was systems theory. At the Institute of Planned Economy, I worked with Albert Hajnal, a systems researcher. In 1972, we co-authored a two-part study for *Közgazdasági Szemle* (Economic Review) on the complexity of planning.² It was a 120-page study that critiqued the Hungarian planning system using cybernetic and systems theory foundations. It received a lot of criticism because it was viewed as “bourgeois economics,” a label used back then to oppose Marxist economics. At the Karl Marx University [nowadays Corvinus University], students even went on strike against having to study it, chanting slogans like “We want Marxism, not bourgeois economics.” Still, thanks to this paper, I was able to attend several international conferences where it was well-received. It was a turning point – we had discovered something genuinely new.

I also applied my modeling experience in a third project: a Hungarian macro planning model for the Planning Office that again sought innovative approaches. I wanted to be an economist who wasn't just a theoretical researcher – which was the usual, somewhat philosophical and essayistic approach of the university departments – but someone whose research was close to practice. That's why it was a fantastic

2 Báger Gusztáv–Hajnal Albert (1972) A terv és a tervezés növekvő komplexitása (I. rész) *Közgazdasági Szemle*, április, 417. oldal
Báger Gusztáv–Hajnal Albert (1972) A terv és a tervezés növekvő komplexitása (II. rész) *Közgazdasági Szemle*, május, 521. oldal

opportunity for me to work at the Planning Office's research institute, and I was very thankful. It gave me very practical knowledge while I continued to lecture part-time at the economics university.

Between 1975 and 1981, you worked as an expert for the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. How did you manage to get into such a prestigious institution?

That's an interesting and twist-filled story. I presented our forecasting model, developed for the Planning Office, in English at an international conference in Moscow organized by the Academy of Sciences. During a coffee break, Jacques Royer approached me – he was then head of the Analysis and Forecasting Division at the UN's Geneva Secretariat. His first question was whether I'd be interested in conducting research with them and developing similar models. I said I would, but at the time it was very difficult to get a work permit to the West from the Hungarian authorities. After almost nine months of investigation and scrutiny by the Ministry of Internal Affairs – even though I worked at the Planning Office – they finally granted the permit. During my first year, I had to renew the permit monthly.

At the European Economic Commission, I reviewed, critiqued and applied their model. Later, I had to represent the Commission's economic position at UN meetings in New York, while facing pressure from both Western and Soviet sides to emphasize their respective viewpoints. In 1981, due to family reasons, I could no longer continue the international work, so I returned to Hungary and became deputy head of the Economic Department of the Planning Office. I was expected to incorporate my Western experience into the work. At that time, planning offices still existed in Western countries – such as in France and the Netherlands – and I tried to apply some of their methods in Hungary, though my Soviet-oriented colleagues were not very receptive.

I also participated in the UN's so-called "Development Decade" program. Every ten years, a broad global forecast was compiled. One such occasion was during the 1970s – as far as I know, that was the last of these programs before it was discontinued. The program's headquarters, of course, was in New York, at the UN's central offices. I was a member of the global coordination committee, regularly traveling from Geneva. I represented Hungary and the United States when delegates from other continents – Asia, Africa, South America – were also invited. I was essentially the only permanent participant in the work.

It was a very difficult situation, because according to the categorization, I had to represent the Soviet Union, the United States, and Western Europe simultaneously. I had to comment on the programs in such a way that all three blocs could accept it. But back then, the confrontation between East and West was still very strong. The Soviet Union was led by Brezhnev. At that time, I was called back to Hungary four times from Geneva because party officials had received complaints from Soviet comrades that I wasn't sufficiently representing the interests of the socialist bloc. So that's how I made it all the way to the regime change. I was continuously engaged in macroeconomic research and worked in exciting, significant roles.

During the regime change, you joined the Ministry of Finance. How did you experience the transition? What role did you play in the process at the ministry?

When the regime changed, the Planning Office was dissolved, and under legal succession, the Ministry of Finance took over the 50 staff members of my department without any change. Originally, the Japanese Nomura Bank had appointed me as their representative CEO in Hungary, but Mr. Ferenc Rabár, the minister of Finance, convinced me instead to stay in the Ministry of Finance. Our first tasks were to prepare both the Rabár and Kupa (budget) programs. Later – primarily for political reasons – the Department of Economic Policy was split into four parts, and I chose to lead the Department of International Finance. We’re talking about the 1990s here, when cooperation with the IMF and World Bank was particularly important due to loans. I was pleased to be dealing with Western relations again. Loan matters required close cooperation with the Hungarian National Bank (MNB). For a time, the MNB was legally responsible for international financial relations, but from 1997, my department assumed the legal and policy responsibility and decision-making authority.

As we’ve already discussed, you worked in international organizations, and later applied that experience in negotiating loan frameworks provided by international financial institutions – you even wrote a textbook titled “Hungary’s Integration into International Financial Institutions.”³

At the Ministry of Finance, I primarily focused on how international organizations – especially the IMF and the World Bank – relate to member states’ economic policies. Of course, there were also institutions like the EBRD and the European Investment Bank, but these were more technical in nature and played a smaller role in macroeconomic governance.

The IMF, on the other hand, was obsessed with monitoring the alignment between a country’s monetary and fiscal policy. They regularly assessed the relationship between the two. There was a period when our situation in this regard was especially poor – the Ministry of Finance and the MNB were simply not hand and glove with each other. I dealt with this issue extensively. At the time, we were under constant, strict observation by the IMF – and to a lesser extent, by the World Bank, but mainly the IMF. They have come for annual consultations and stayed in continuous contact – not at the top leadership level, but with their experts and directors. They have been constantly interested in Hungary’s budgetary policy, which they regularly analyzed and reviewed.

That’s how I came close to budgetary processes – both from the monetary policy perspective and in terms of how well these aligned with the expectations of the IMF and the World Bank.

3 Báger, G., 2011. Magyarország integrációja a nemzetközi pénzügyi intézményekbe. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó.

You also dealt with public finance. Several of your writings on the subject appeared in the Public Finance Quarterly. Do those stem from your time at the Ministry of Finance as well?

Those writings were more based on my experience at the State Audit Office (ÁSZ). When the first Orbán government took office, they retired everyone in the ministries who had reached retirement age – including me. Then Árpád Kovács, then president of the State Audit Office, invited me as an advisor. Two years later, he created a 25-member research institute, which I led as director general. From then on, we focused solely on the state budget from an audit perspective. This role came with a lot of media appearances, and during this period I also became a regular contributor to Public Finance Quarterly. I was involved in drafting the Budget Sustainability Act in 2008/2009. Among other things, we proposed that leaders be held financially responsible for violating budget discipline – for example, in the case of investments. Politicians, of course, laughed it off. It was a bold proposal, and it never made it into law.

Based on the papers you wrote during your time spent in ÁSZ with research the models you developed regarding integrity, it seems that you view fiscal planning not just as a matter of numbers, but also of ethics.

Yes, essentially. Fiscal planning is, on the one hand, a set of numbers, but behind the numbers lie specific economic and social processes, and the decisions made during these processes also have ethical weight. For an economist, this is basically a mathematical question, if you like. In the theoretical studies we did earlier, there was always some kind of ethical requirement present, especially in how we approached of public good and standards of living. So whenever I could, I tried to sneak this perspective prudently into my work – in addition to the dry, logical economic conclusions. Ethical questions can be raised even in fiscal matters. Whatever the topic, I've always considered this important.

You even wrote a book titled Corruption, underscoring the importance of ethics – still one of the hottest public issues today.⁴

At the State Audit Office, we published our first report in 2005 on how the Office should approach the issue of corruption. Our institute was tasked with finding an approach that went beyond simply reporting suspicious individuals or investigating irregularities. We found in the literature the Dutch integrity-based approach, which served as a possible direction for our anti-corruption work. This was research-based and carried a strong ethical dimension.

Thus, We began adapting the Dutch method to Hungarian conditions. We didn't adopt everything, but we took on the fundamental principles. By 2008/2009, we had prepared for its implementation. In 2010, the government showed interest in this anti-corruption method.

4 Báger, G., 2011. Magyarország integrációja a nemzetközi pénzügyi intézményekbe. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó.

On November 18, 2011, at the initiative of László Domokos, then President of the ÁSZ, a cooperation declaration was signed by Tibor Navracsics, Minister of Public Administration and László Domokos, President of the State Audit Office, András Baka, President of the Supreme Court, and Péter Polt, Prosecutor General, on coordinated, effective state action against corruption. The signatories of the declaration assumed personal moral responsibility for strengthening the resilience of the state organizations they lead against corruption, for *developing them with the most modern, integrity-based tools available*. According to the adopted declaration, the parties intend to move *towards prevention* as much as possible. Any state organization could join the declaration by signing it. The document also expressed their intention to establish bilateral or multilateral cooperation agreements specifically for the fight against corruption in order to make cooperation between organizations stipulated in the law or necessary more effective. The agreement was unprecedented both in Hungary and internationally. On this basis, the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice – with the participation of ÁSZ experts – prepared and submitted for public debate *the corruption prevention program, which was adopted by the government and published in Government Resolution 1104/2012. (IV. 6.) on government measures against corruption and the adoption of the Corruption Prevention Program of Public Administration, effective from 6 April 2012*. The aim of the program is to strengthen the resilience of state organizations against corruption, to create a public sector that recognizes the phenomenon of corruption, condemns it and prevents it, and to achieve social cooperation that promotes the consolidation of ethical values and a value-based approach in practice. In this way, it is possible that public administration and public services can set a model for the economic sphere, and thus, the government will promote the prevention of economic abuses in the business sector with targeted awareness programs, and indirectly they can also reduce economic corruption. The basic principles of the program have enabled it to achieve its most important goals. The efficiency and effectiveness of this program is indicated by the fact that integrity advisors are still participating in the work of public institutions today, and they are trained and further trained at the National University of Public Service, in which I have been participating since the beginning.

In public discourse – simplified – the debate usually falls between two basic arguments: one focuses on how many legal procedures are launched, the other refers to subjective corruption perception surveys. But the integrity model you promote actually surpasses this debate. At the start of your book, you cite the rankings, but then focus not on retrospective measurement, but on prevention.

Exactly. The focus is on prevention. The approach described by me focuses in the prevention. I detailed it thoroughly and comprehensively in the book, which has since been used in integrity training programs. Prevention, as a practical, active function, is the core of the Dutch method, and it was the State Audit Office's research institute – which I led at the time – that recommended the adaptation of it for Hungary. I note that this anti-corruption approach is being adopted by an increasing number of OECD and developing countries around the world.

You were a member of the Monetary Council of the Hungarian National Bank between 2015 and 2021. How would you evaluate that period?

The invitation and nomination came unexpectedly. In fact, it was a lucky, fantastic period for me. Getting to know the work of the Monetary Council also brought me joy because in my previous jobs I had only encountered monetary policy thinking comprehensively and not systematically, especially not at the decision-making level. It is understandable that I became involved in the work of the Council with great interest and dedication.

During this time, it was also an experience for me that the Council could continuously learn about the results of the well-organized work of about three hundred outstandingly prepared analysts and experts in the MNB and use them in its decisions. My previous jobs were generally characterized by a lack of scientifically analyzed data, in contrast to the abundance available in the MNB. Under such circumstances, favorable opportunities opened up for me to participate in the well-founded decision-making work of the Council.

I would also like to highlight that I was able to be a member of the Monetary Council as a truly independent decision-maker. I have not found any demand from the outside, even from a high level, to give “advice” regarding the vote.

Finally, I also consider it fortunate that the decision-making of the Monetary Council was characterized by a professionally lively debate and institutional creation, which kept the goals of Hungarian economic management, the public good and the public interest in mind.

After my work in the Monetary Council, in 2020 I accepted the invitation of the President of the MNB and was appointed as the President’s Chief Advisor. As a member of the Monetary Council, I was naturally in contact with the President, but the new role meant a more direct working relationship and also a great honor for me. I tried to meet this challenge for 5 years.

As one of my first priority tasks, I participated in the development of the research program of the Budapest Centre for Long-term Sustainability Institute as a member of the Advisory Board. The Institute was simultaneously transformed into a virtual and physical knowledge and training center, the primary objective of which was to reflect on one of the most important challenges of the future, long-term sustainability, and to position Hungary in the international intellectual life.

The Institute program consisted of six main research directions and 95 designated research tasks of long-term sustainability. Interviews with the members of the advisory board were made available to the public about the goals of the starting Institute. In the interview, I outlined a new Sustainability House for humanity, for which I believe three steps are necessary. One is to increase the number of supporting pillars of the Sustainable House. Currently, one is the economic pillar, the other is the environmental pillar, and the third is the social or societal pillar. It is necessary to have additional pillars. The new, fourth pillar would be the financial and financing pillar. It is important because experience has shown that it often causes disruption to economic life if the financial system does not function well. A good example of this is the global economic crisis of 2008-2009.

The other new, fifth pillar would be culture. This is important because we cannot achieve sustainable development without raising culture to a higher quality level, which is understood together with social and ethical value orientation. Currently, we can find only a few current examples of culture in the international literature.

Culture is not included in the goals of the UN Sustainable Development Agenda adopted for the period up to 2030 in a broad sense either. We must understand culture in such a way that we can embed it in our daily activities, so that instead of a mass person, a cultured, highly educated type of person develops.

How, with what approach methodology and tools could this attractive goal be achieved?

The approach and methodology of integrity could meet such a set of requirements. Applying this approach could be the second direction of progress. Integrity, as we have seen, has proven itself in the fight against corruption. We should extend this approach to the broader scope of sustainable development.

What are the characteristics of the approach and idea of integrity?

One is that the consistency and coherence of principles and values are achieved. The second: professional integrity and responsibility are also enforced in the activities of decision-makers. The third, organizational values and functions are identified. The fifth is that the integrity of policies and programs is also achieved in practice. What is important from our point of view: the following three requirements. Sustainable development is indispensable without a long-term, new economic theory. A real intellectual revolution is needed. György Matolcsy has emphasized this several times in the recent period, highlighting that two basic principles are needed in the context of the intellectual revolution: one is the development of sustainability, and the other is building on the principle of life.

The second requirement is to improve efficiency, which is also a priority task in the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is necessary that the emphasis be on improving economic efficiency rather than on the further decline of natural resources. We say that the environment has been overexploited by the economy, and one of the most important tasks is to restore the integrity of the environment.

The third important requirement is the broad consideration of cultural, ethical values, and norms, since without them it is impossible to solve the question of how we can satisfy the needs of today's society in a way that does not endanger the interests of future generations.

In addition to long-term sustainability, the so-called megatrends also play an important role in the change of the world. What is the relationship between them?

New development processes and megatrends are taking place in the world and the global economy. For example, digitalization and the twilight of coal-based energies. I looked at the UN Sustainable Development Goals valid until 2030 from the perspective of how they relate to megatrends. The result of this was that the compatibility of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and megatrends is low. I found only three cases where the goal and the megatrend are the same. The second

case is when the trends and goals meet to a small extent, partially: there were 11 such cases out of 17 cases. The situation is even worse in that financial megatrends and sustainable development goals do not meet. All this justifies the application of the financial pillar. I am pleased to note that by developing the methodology of the financial pillar, the MNB eliminated this deficiency in 2022, and its use is also available as a good practice for other countries.

Among the research we conducted at the Institute, I would also like to mention that in our book *Life-Centered Economics: Intermediate Theory*, written with Attila Grandpierre, a researcher at the Institute, we not only explored the comprehensive thinking necessary for sustainable economics, but also developed the intermediate theory necessary for sustainable economics.

In addition to your public finance work, you are also a prolific poet of contemporary Hungarian literature – your 26th volume of poetry is coming out this year. Hundreds of literary studies have been written about your poetry, with praise from poets like Dezső Tandori and János Lackfi, and literary historian like Béla Pomogáts, Zoltán Kenyeres, Lajos Sipos, Sándor Olasz. Your poems are very realist: they start from everyday topics and events and evolve into philosophical and moral insights. As you put it in your poem *Magic*, how do financial reports, budget statements, and economic theses come together with your realist, philosophical poetry? Is there an interaction between poetic and economic thinking?

I thank you for this beautiful and rich group of questions, but – for reasons of length – I can only briefly touch on the main changes in the poetry writing activity.

As a poet, I have observed and followed the Man in the House from the very beginning. For me, the Man in the House is one of the eternal dimensions. A cell in the body. A gene in the chromosome. In my first poetic period between 1995-2005, I observed this in such a way that I lived with the House through open windows and doors. My poems at that time were, in the words of Dezső Tandori, short grid poems, in the words of András Petőcz, root poems, which present existence and the world as a direct statement, but at the same time through formal characteristics in such a way that the reader is involved in the process of creation and interpretation.

In 2008-2009. However, before the international financial and economic crisis of 2011, one could hear increasingly large rumblings from the deep layers of the Earth, especially the global economy – at least to an economist's ear. In order to understand this change and our changing public conditions, it is not enough to just follow Man in His House from the outside, we must also go inside and engage in a dialogue about what this Homeland, this World, is like. With this change, macro-cosmic perspectives opened up in place of the previous micro-cosmic flashes. Thus, a new version of the narrative long poem emerged from the fusion of lyric and epic, and my poetry was enriched with sociological, economic, and political aspects and motifs.

In the last 10 years, a demand for order and harmony above consciousness has intensified in my poetry from the swirling of the subconscious. This is manifested in many ways in my last five volumes. I hope that this new turn of my poetry, by raising the

inner human quality, by strengthening the culture of love and cooperation, can serve to create another condition for community life and well-being that is missing today.

As an illustration, I would like to mention that I am deeply outraged by the great difference in income levels in the world. I was born in a small village in Órség, Csörötnek, and received a conservative upbringing. This also always comes up in my poems, what is economics and finance to me is also public good and public life in poetry. I do not forget the experience of economics even when I write poetry. As an example, I will cite my poem written for the 70th anniversary of the introduction of the forint, for the ceremony held at the MNB.

No need for Euro
nor dollar nor yen
Our currency now
is word-silken

(translated by Gábor G Gyukics)

The message of this is that dialogue, human contact, is more important than money. It also expresses that the forint is valuable, but the point is that there is also the silk of words, the human connection. The well-known literary historian, Zoltán Kenyeres, wrote about this poem in his summary study, highlighting that it is a well-formulated *ars poetica* and humor, which simultaneously represents the existence of the economist and the poet.⁵

And to make your life story even more exciting – you’re currently part of a space economics research group at the Ludovika University of Public Service. Can you tell us what that involves? We can practically consider space economics as a new discipline in the 21st century, just as integration economics was in the 1970s. Do you deal with the basics of this?

The task of continuously monitoring new research results and innovations at the central bank allowed me to join the research group that developed the Space Strategy of Hungary.⁶ It was a truly bold and challenging task. Within the framework of this multifaceted activity, I was a member of the research group that, in addition to developing the target system of the Space Strategy, dealt with the development of industrial and manufacturing capacity and project financing issues. (The head of the research group was Bianka Parragh (Horváth), and the members were Prof. Dr. Árpád Kovács, László Lovász, Chief Advisor to the Prime Minister, and Gergely Tóth.)

In addition to our proposals for the National Space Strategy and its Action Plan, we published a significant part of our experiences under the title Hungarian Development Opportunities for a Resilient and Innovative Space Industry in the 2021/1 issue of the Financial Review.

5 Kenyeres Zoltán: Írók, költők, fogalmak. Esszék és tanulmányok, Hunagrovox Kiadó, Budapest, 2024. 382. old.

6 Nemzeti Úrprogram, 2022. március

Our study provides a cross-sectional view of where Hungary stands in the space economy, and within this, in particular in the development of the space industry, and what state involvement and institutional conditions are needed in order to identify the socio-economic interests of our country and use the opportunities of technological development – provided by the industry – for the benefit of the state, the economy and society (ultimately, to increase the public good).

Although no attempt has yet been made to survey the Hungarian space sector in this direction, according to numerous surveys and studies, the development of the space sector has a positive impact on both the modernization of the economy and social well-being. The study aims to contribute to research related to the space economy by focusing on the examination of the characteristics of the domestic space economy and the issues of the economic and industrial implications of civilian applications, which also represents the scientific added value of the project.

Our research results so far have proven suitable for outlining the contours of the sector and, based on this, for demonstrating how important the role of stimulating state contributions and creating conditions is in the development of the space sector. All of this can be a starting point for further research work that provides a program. In addition to the systematic construction of an information base characterizing the activities of the space industry sector and increasing the accuracy of the “map”, these studies can help answer the questions of

- ▶ what conditions can be provided to increase the resilience and “crisis resistance” of the domestic space economy, which still exists today,
- ▶ what role can the space industry play – in the case of spontaneous or supported development – in general technological development and in strengthening the country’s competitiveness, and in what economic performances and innovations can these be measured and made probable in the medium and long term,
- ▶ how can they be interpreted and what interactions, opportunities and limitations prevail in the international cooperative relations of the space economy and the system of interests of economic sovereignty, and what balances should be achieved and maintained.

Answering these three questions can lead to the clarification of the research question of how the characteristics of the space economy may take shape in Hungary in the coming years and what additional performance it may bring.

How would you summarize the main experiences of a rich life journey?

1. In my activities, I have always consciously prioritized institutional creation and joint work over individual creative activity. In the crucial stages of my career, I worked not only as a researcher, but also as a practicing professional, where I tried to combine practical experience and scientific results in solving tasks. This path leads to the institutions of public administration becoming knowledge institutions.
2. This contribution directly resulted in openness to various professional trends, to the acceptance and initiation of changes. In relation to changes, I could

not accept the one-sided approaches that are so often encountered, when, for example, only the goal is outlined without an interdisciplinary situation analysis or without defining the directions necessary for implementation and taking into account the means. So let us not be angry at the always necessary reforms, but at ourselves, for not knowing or being able to apply the change management approach in practice. I wanted to prove this – as an example – even when I was the chairman of the National Planning Office reform committees at the end of the 1980s.

3. For a person who wants to change in the interests of modernization, it is important to try to achieve their goals in the right, appropriate place. In my experience, the institution in which a person sits is more important than what kind of chair. That is why I felt comfortable for (nearly three) decades in the chair of “only” a department head/director general, where it was still possible to resist unfounded and irregular problem solving.
4. It is important to recognize: there are also spheres of life to which economic rationality is deaf and blind, even though they are important for the entire life of a person and the community. I am convinced that the future of today's man-made society and economy would also be made more natural if human feelings, artistic directing forces, true culture, the view of integrity, and a better knowledge of reality were to play an increasingly greater role in it, and in a certain sense become decisive. ■