



# Changing character of transfrontier landscapes, case studies: Hungary-Austria, Hungary-Slovenia, Germany-France

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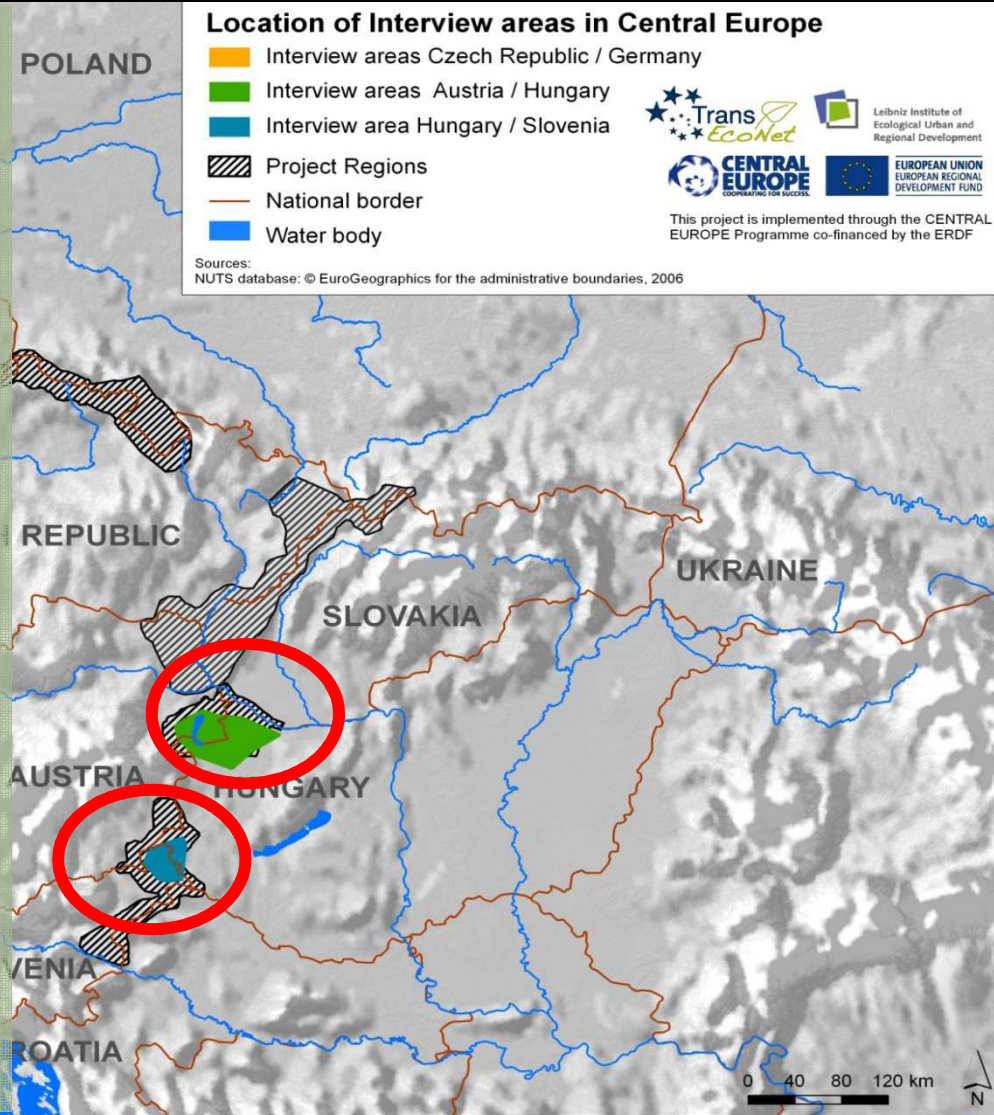
Faculty of Forestry

Chair of Landscape Studies and Rural Development

# Landscape's oral history - 20th c.

Perceived  
landscape character  
and its  
transformation  
in Central European  
transboundary areas

TransEcoNet  
Central-European  
Research project  
Interreg Central  
2008-2012

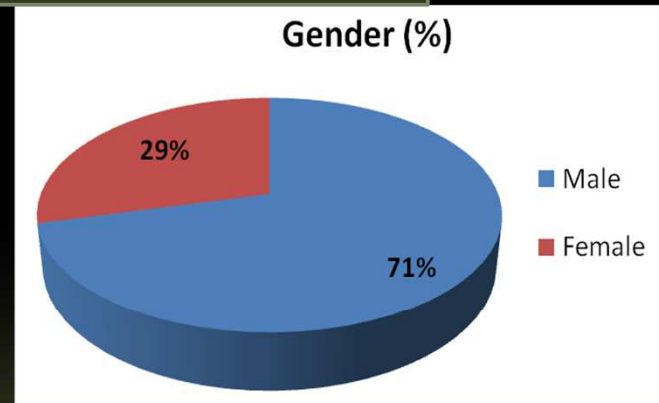
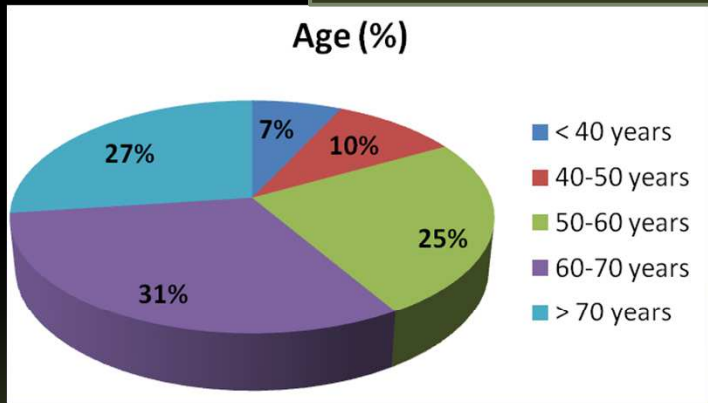


# Research questions

- „How local people and stakeholders, experts and non-experts do perceive the character and the changes of the landscape ?
- What is important, what are the values and the threats in the landscape for locals?
- How do people consider the differences between the neighbouring countries and the transformations with regard to the ecological network?
- How do they value the changes, what is positive or negative, what is ideal for them?

# Method: Interviews based survey by semi-structured questionnaire

**HU-AU-SLO**  
200 interviews in 2010-11  
with experts and non-experts



**GE - FR**  
30 experts interviews in 2013-15

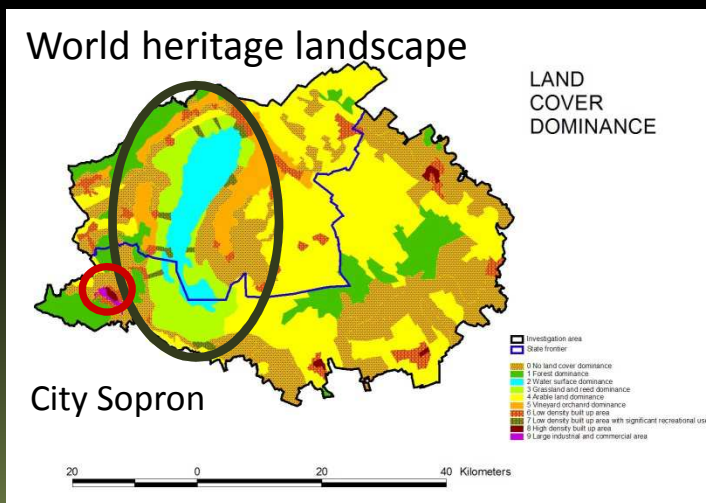
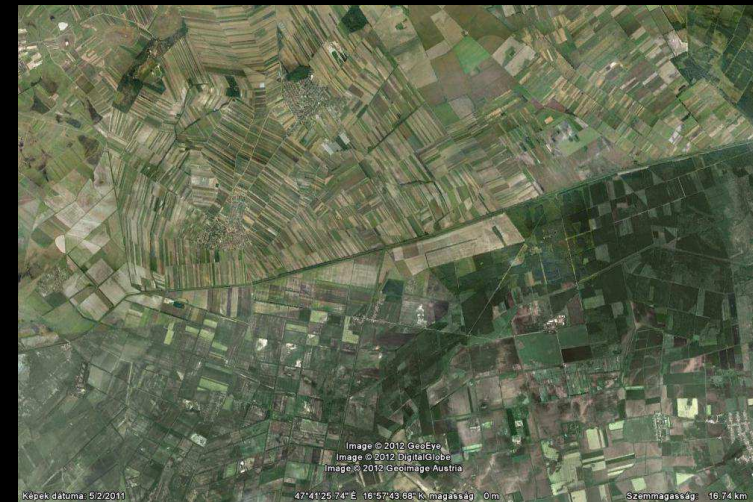
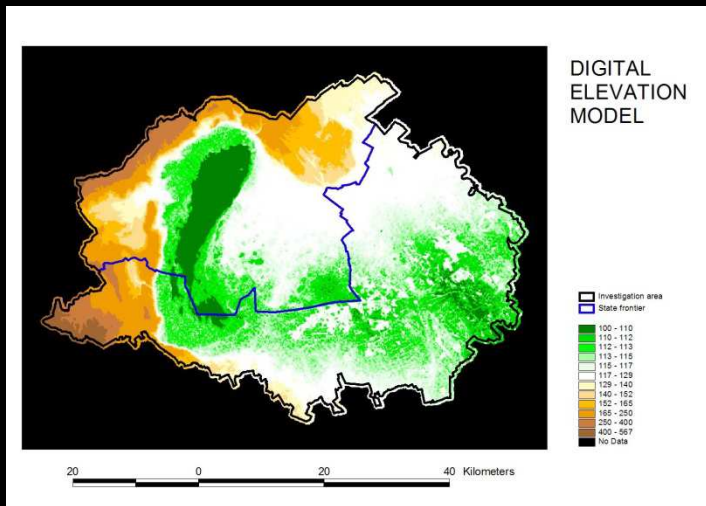


# Where are the boundaries of people's own landscapes?

- As far one's activities extend - overwriting geographical boundaries
  - my garden
  - my region etc.
  - "praktisch unser Lebens- und Wirkungsbereich"*
  - Diversity is considered as characteristics of a larger area and not as a difference between landscape types
- Within the eyeshot from the places of one's everyday life
  - „Alles was i, wenn i am Kogelberg oben steh, mit dem Augen (seh), des gehört alles zu mir dazu."*

# Hungary-Austria

## Lake Fertő world heritage cultural landscape and Sopron



### Austria:

Fine structured, well kept, intensively used agricultural and recreational landscape with protected semi-natural patches

### Hungary:

Large semi-natural protected areas and intensive use beyond it.

# Fertő/Neusiedlersee landscape in Austria and Hungary

**Even non-experts are aware of the major differences**



Hungary



Austria



# Fertő/Neusiedlersee landscape in Austria and Hungary



## Hungary



## Austria





# Hungarian – Slovenian borderland „Őrség”

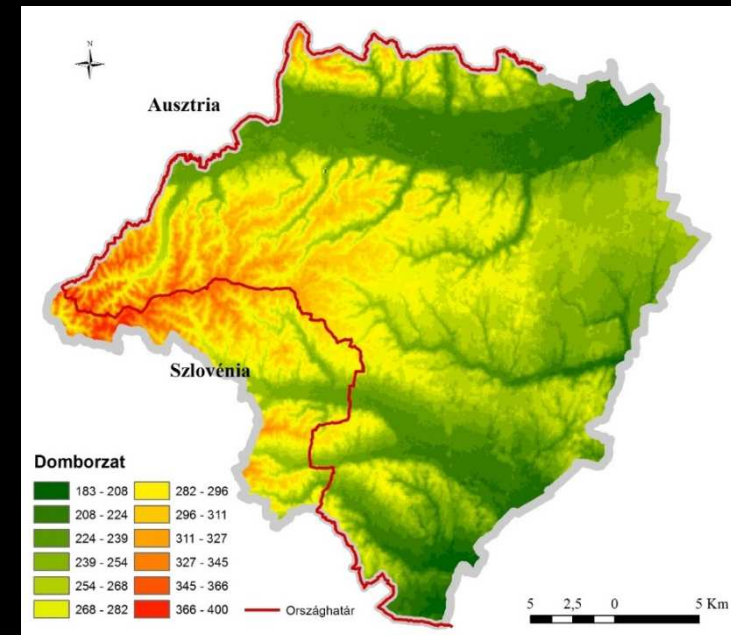
## Emotional attachment to „their” HOMELAND

*“...hilly, wonderful world slashed by meadows  
and fields”*

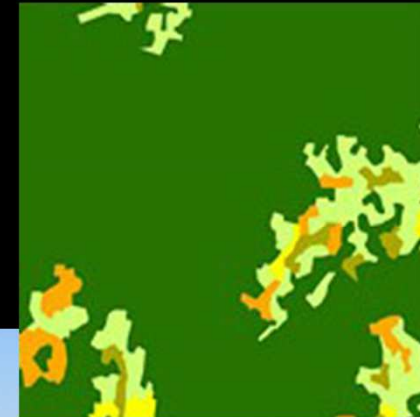
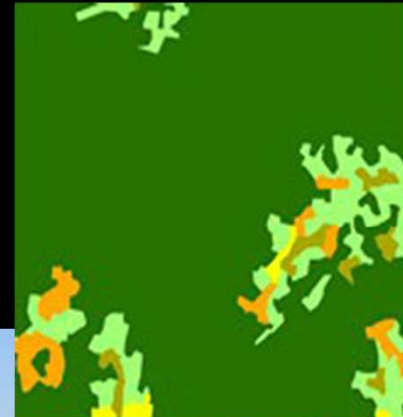
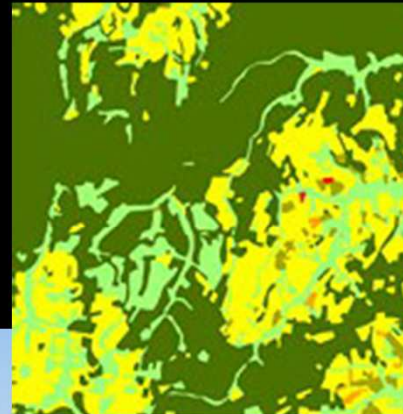
*“Őrség is totally different... houses are more  
distante, the structure is more spacious.*

*„...even the green is different –more intense”*

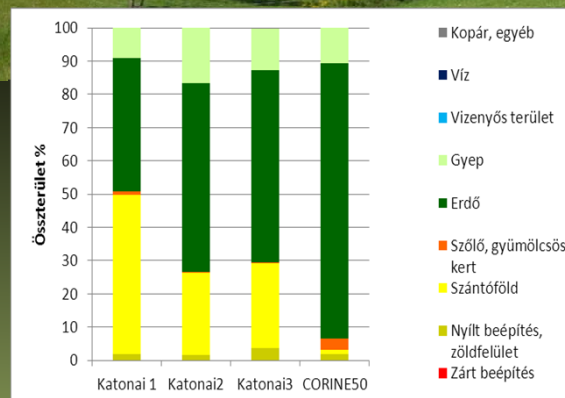
*“harmony with nature”*



# Land cover change on the Hungarian side



NP seeks at preserving grasslands and promote silviculture respecting nature



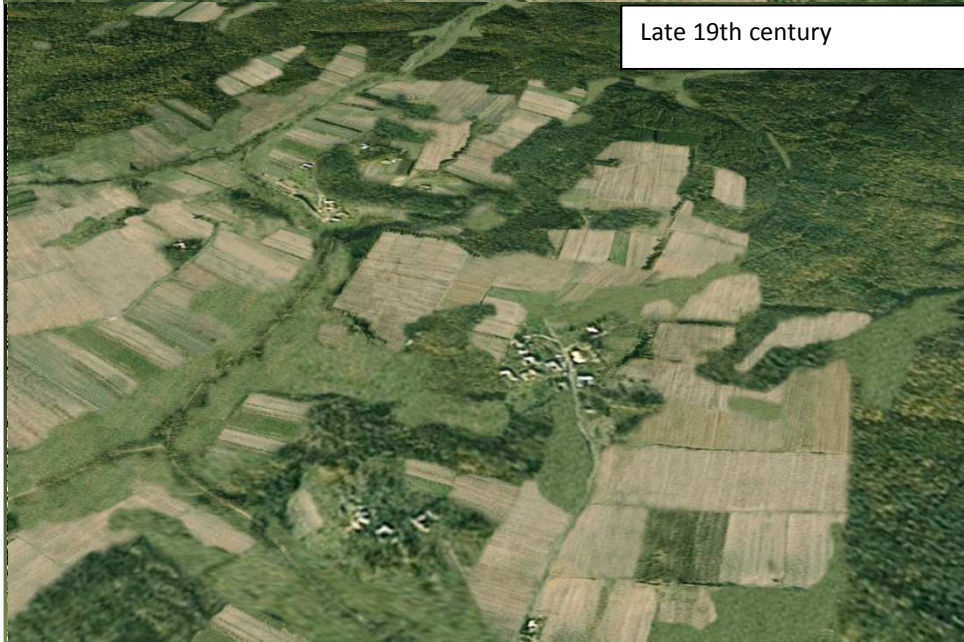
Late 18th century

Mid 19th century



Late 19th century

2000



# Ideal is the Slovenian side of „Őrség”

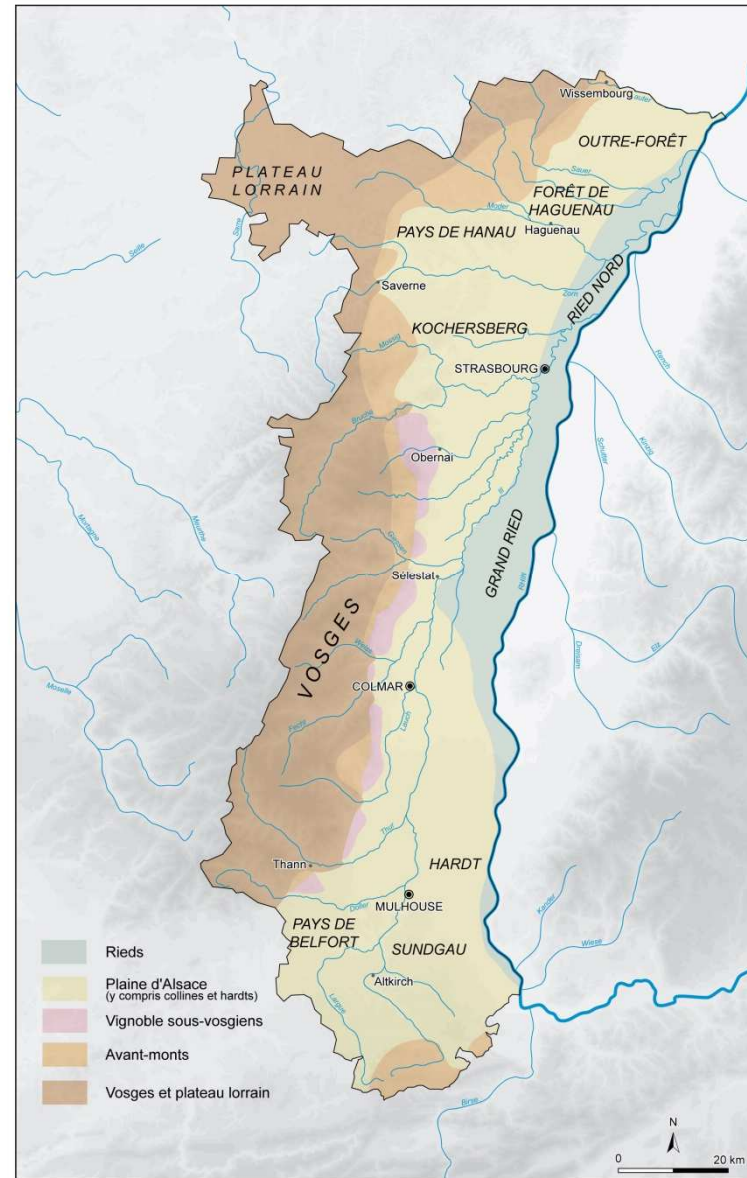
- according to the description of the Hungarians  
where the open landscape has been preserved

## Location of the project regions

Baden  
Württemberg –  
Elsas

DAAD funded  
research:  
at the Albert  
Ludwig University  
Freiburg  
2013-...

D'hier à aujourd'hui : régions naturelles et humaines d'Alsace



Auteur : J. M. Boehler, 1995  
Infographie : AHA, J.P. Droux  
Atlas historique d'Alsace, CRESAT, Université de Haute-Alsace

# How landscape is understood?

## Germany

- ‚Nature‘ – ‚Cultivated land‘ outside the settlements



## France

- Space of interactions





# How far the environmental awareness plays a role in the countries?

## Germany

Majority of the answerer talk on nature, natural biotops and on landscape scenery.

Landscape is a construction of the nature impacted by man

## France

Many talk on unity, on inseparable connection between man and nature.

Landscape is obviously formed by man, however nature is the „materia” the precondition of everything – still the human idea is in the center!

Both Germans and French are aware and acknowledge that environmental awareness is higher in Germany!

# Human impacts considered



**positive till the industrialisation and mainly negative recently**

with some exception: e.g.  
Southern Black Forest





Do the answers relate to the state of the landscape, the factual changes or the impacts, the underlying causes and the goals ?



DAAD

## Germany

Answers are predominantly factual.

What is there, what has been changed. The causes are mainly factual too.

The approach is clearly quantitative – natural scientific. It can be mostly measured with GIS or with numerical economic indicators what was mentioned.

## France

The main concern is:

What has been and is being done?

What are the driving forces?

From where do we start and where do we go?

Who are the actors?

How can we communicate, let things understand?

The approach is more qualitative – much more social scientific.

# What are the driving forces?



DAAD

## Economical

CAP subsidies have absolute priority: e.g. **biogas** – corn deserts

**Minimal wage and cheap east-european workers**

Location of the main European traffic corridors

**Touristic and recreational demand**

## Environmental

Florida effect in Germany

## Consequencies

- Serious endangerment of underground water
- Disappearance of small ecotones
- **Diversity vs. homogenisation**
- More and more barriers for wildlife by industrial, infrastructural development and continous agglomerations
- **Closing landscape – giving up of animal husbandary**
- **Significant grows of new residents and need of built up areas**

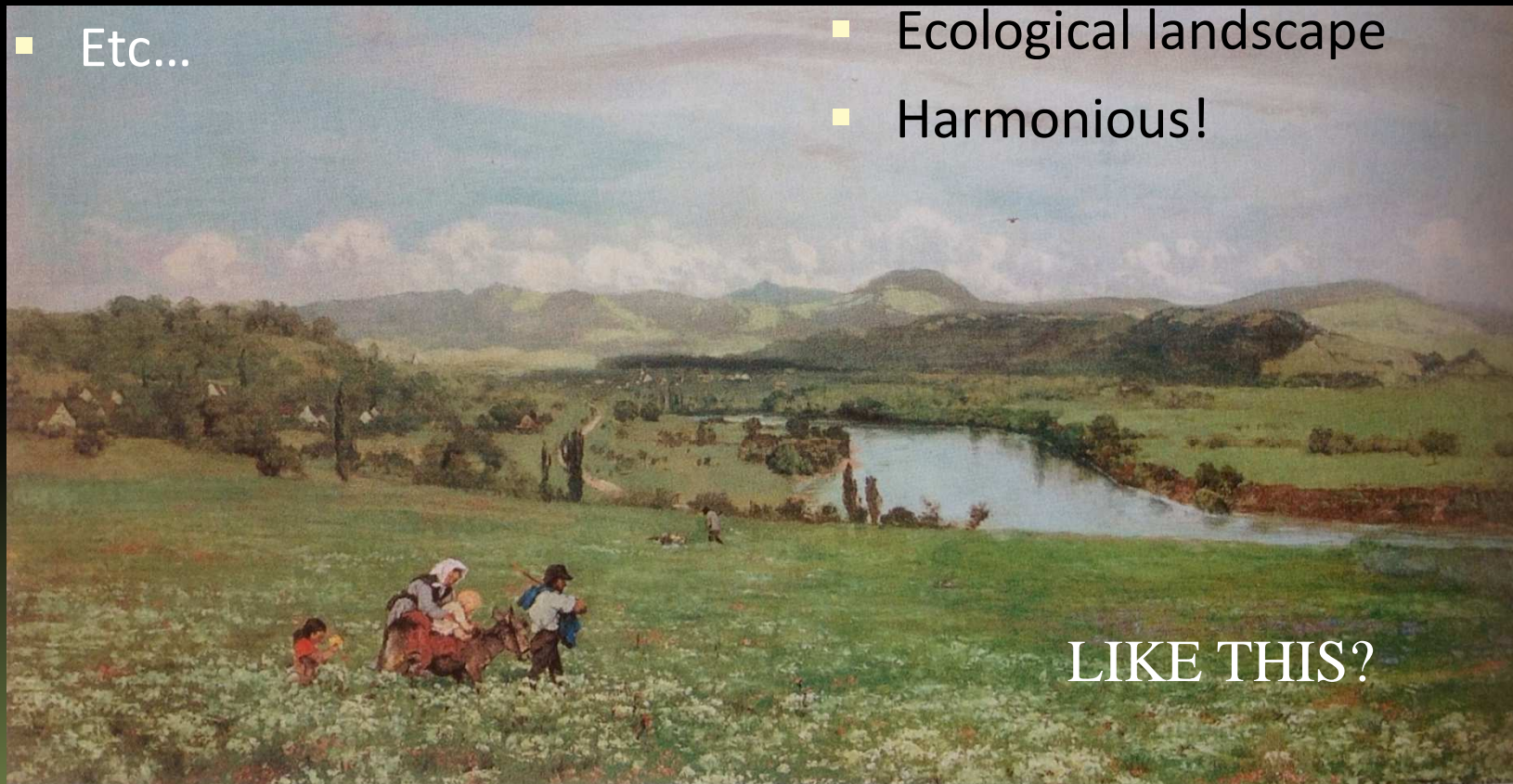
# The ideal landscape

## Factual answers

- Diverse
- Rich in water
- Etc...

## Conceptual answers

- Where the land use is adequate to the potentialities
- Ecological landscape
- Harmonious!



LIKE THIS?

# Favourite places



## Common in the 3 project region

- Interviewees **apreciate diversity** of the landscape:
  - *“This change between open land, forest and rocky areas I find amazing..”*
  - transition from Pannonian to Alpine (Hu/Au) *“a harmonious aggregate of hills, mountains and waters”*

but respondent also **perceive** the **threats**

- The abandonment – depopulation
- The increased traffic load by transit and tourism
- The speading urbanisation and dissapearance of traditional building style
- ...

## Transboundary co-operation

- The hidden, but still existing **sensibility caused by the historical traumas can't** be disregarded – language obstacles ...
- Therefore **communication** and **cooperation is limited**:
  - Official **committees** have regular meetings – effectiveness is questioned
  - EU facilitates transboundary **research** – the embeddedness and acceptance of the result still remains open
  - Couple of local initiatives – **GERPLAN** or regional projects founded by EU: e.g. **PANANET**
  - Economic **competition** exists - eventually detrimental e.g. differences in incomes (AU-HU) distort the labour market.

## Conclusions

Interviewees – both experts and non-experts are **aware of**

- major landscape **change** processes and the **threats**, that are mainly environmental conflicts, degradation
- landscape is the **result** of the natural processes and socio-economic activities - but the **estimation of the role of local initiatives is different!**
- **economy's** absolute decisive **role** – politics impacts through subsidies – „heritage: e.g traditional building style, open landscape are kept if they can bring money or contribute to the well being”
- **Ecological network**, green infrastructure are the new magic instruments – **opinion is far not just positive**
- **Ideal** is factually diversified, conceptually **harmonious**

## Outlook

Either we change the system toward **sustainability** (considering environmental, economic and social problems as parts of one integral system)

**Including cooperation and communication instead of competition**

or we run after the speedy changes and the **scissor opens** (between conservation of selected values, economic wealth of the privileged and growing environmental and social degradation at large scale) !



Our beloved Europe is at risk!





Thank you for your  
valuable attention!

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