

## EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

PROJECT	
<b>Participant:</b>	21 Research Center
<b>PIC number:</b>	893050386
<b>Project name and acronym:</b>	Green but Just? Engaging V4 citizens and communities to achieve a socially just green transition — JustGreen

EVENT DESCRIPTION			
<b>Event number:</b>	D12.1		
<b>Event name:</b>	Report from Hungarian Climate Assemblies		
<b>Type:</b>	Climate assemblies		
<b>In situ/online:</b>	In situ		
<b>Location:</b>	Hungary (Budapest, Debrecen)		
<b>Date(s):</b>	14.10.2025, 22.05.2025		
<b>Website(s) (if any):</b>	<a href="https://justgreeneu.eu/past-events/">https://justgreeneu.eu/past-events/</a>		
Participants			
Female:	27		
Male:	47		
Non-binary:	0		
From country 1 [Hungary]:	74		
From country 2:			
From country 3:			
...			
Total number of participants:	74	From total number of countries:	1
Description			
<i>Provide a short description of the event and its activities.</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ki szólhat bele ? Kerekasztal a budapesti közösségi közlekedésről</li> </ul> <p>On 14 October 2025, the 21 Research Center organised a Climate Assembly in Budapest as part of the JustGreen Transitions project, which explores the social dimensions of the green transition in the V4 region. The event focused on sustainable urban mobility and aimed to bring together experts,</p>			

policymakers, and citizens for an open and participatory dialogue on how transport systems can support a greener and fairer transition in everyday urban life.

The discussion began with short inputs from three invited experts. Tamás Gregus, Product and Commercial Lead at WIGO Mobility, offered insights from the private sector, highlighting the potential of carsharing and shared mobility services to reduce urban congestion and emissions. Dávid Vitézy, transport and urban mobility expert and member of the Budapest City Council, provided a policy-oriented view on the challenges of integrating public transport, pedestrian areas, and private car use in a large and complex city. Zsolt Baranyai, Director of Urban Development at HÉTFA Research Institute, contributed a research perspective on social equity and inclusion in mobility transitions, underlining that accessibility and fairness are as important as environmental goals.

Throughout the session, our moderator posed several guiding questions—such as what “green mobility” truly means in a city like Budapest, and how different transport modes and user groups can coexist more harmoniously—but the format encouraged constant interaction between the speakers and the audience. Citizens were not passive listeners: they raised questions, challenged the experts, and shared their own experiences of navigating the city.

Audience members asked, for example, whether current public transport investments are sufficient to persuade people to give up private cars; how affordable and accessible shared mobility options really are for lower-income groups; and whether creating more pedestrian zones risks excluding those who rely on vehicles for work or mobility reasons. Others questioned how local governments can balance climate goals with the daily realities of commuters, or how education and awareness campaigns might change long-term mobility habits.

These exchanges created a genuinely participatory atmosphere, with experts responding directly to citizens’ concerns and even revisiting their earlier points in light of public feedback. The conversation gradually moved from policy and technology towards shared values—such as fairness, responsibility, and trust in public decision-making.

The assembly lasted around ninety minutes and involved approximately forty participants. It generated valuable qualitative insights for the JustGreen project, illustrating how citizens in Central Europe perceive the opportunities and tensions of the green transition in their everyday mobility. The event also showed that public dialogue, when structured as an open exchange rather than a top-down consultation, can meaningfully contribute to more inclusive climate policymaking.

- Ki szólhat bele ? Kerekasztal az akkumulátorgyárakról és a lakosság részvételéről

On May 22, 2025, the 21 Research Center organized a Climate Assembly in Debrecen, hosted at the Alternative Communities Association. The event provided a platform for open, public dialogue about the growing presence of battery production facilities in Debrecen and the surrounding region. In recent years, the city has become a hub for battery manufacturing, yet the developments have sparked increasing concern among citizens regarding environmental risks, infrastructural strain, and the absence of meaningful public consultation in decision-making processes.

The roundtable brought together key stakeholders: Dr. István Fábián, professor of chemistry at the University of Debrecen; local councilor László Mándi; and activists Anikó Maczkó and Marianna Makádi from the Nyíregyháza-based Green Action Group. The discussion was moderated by Kata Kiss, qualitative analyst of the 21 Research Center and contributor to the Just Green project. The speakers offered diverse perspectives on the societal, environmental, and democratic implications of large-scale battery investments. Dr. Fábián, drawing on his expertise in environmental chemistry, warned that the public’s attention has been misdirected toward substances like NMP, while the long-term danger of heavy metal emissions is significantly underestimated. Mándi stressed the inadequacy of Debrecen’s infrastructure and emergency preparedness, noting the city’s lack of a dedicated environmental contingency fund despite repeated proposals. The civil society representatives emphasized the systematic lack of transparency in the permitting process and the marginalization of local voices.

To support public understanding and informed discussion, participants received printed **briefing materials** developed by the 21 Research Center. These short, accessible summaries presented key environmental and social impacts of battery factories, accompanied by easy-to-understand **infographics**. The goal was to provide attendees with reliable, digestible information to support further community-level engagement and dialogue beyond the event. The Assembly quickly evolved into an active and participatory forum. Residents in attendance raised pointed questions and shared experiences of exclusion and misinformation. Some expressed frustration over the lack of official communication, highlighting that news about upcoming developments sometimes appears first in foreign-language media, not in local channels. Others questioned why Debrecen was selected as a

primary site for these investments and whether political loyalty played a role in that decision. A number of participants challenged the effectiveness of existing environmental monitoring systems and asked whether violations of safety thresholds would be meaningfully enforced. One citizen asked if the municipal government had ever seriously considered holding a local referendum on the issue, while others expressed concern about the long-term sustainability of water usage and potential contamination of drinking water sources.

Perhaps most strikingly, several voices from the audience emphasized the role of persistent civic pressure, even if it may seem ineffective in the short term. Referencing ongoing legal action and civil mobilization, participants argued that while resistance may appear symbolic, it often creates bureaucratic friction that can influence higher-level decisions. As one attendee put it, “Even if it feels like tilting at windmills, constant requests, demands, and complaints eventually reach the desks of decision-makers—and that’s where pressure begins to matter.” This vibrant exchange reinforced the event’s character as a true public discussion—open, multi-perspective, and deeply rooted in local concerns. The Assembly was also covered by the independent news outlet *Debreciner*, which emphasized the urgency of local dialogue and the political tensions surrounding the topic. Full article: [debreciner.hu – Civilians must be persistent](https://debreciner.hu). The Climate Assembly contributed meaningfully to the objectives of the 21 Research Center’s *Just Green* initiative, aiming to promote democratic participation and environmental justice in local-level policy processes across Hungary and the broader region.