

LIFE IN 2050

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After the extreme heatwaves, rainfalls and floods in the late 30's, which affected both the Western society and the Global South, there was a strong momentum for an international agreement, which was not only built on the sense of emergency, but **a strong sense of individual responsibility of the heads of the states for both national welfare and sustainability of living conditions on Earth for humans.** Another crucial momentum was, when a carbon footprint for various war conflicts was calculated. This led to a strong international agreement on conflict prevention signed by over 200 countries.

It would not be without this initiative of the world's elites that sent a strong signal that we all have to make changes in the way we live our everyday lives.

Thanks to this, **the transformational wave spread progressively to almost all areas of our lives,** just to name a few:

In general, there was a large shift towards **living closer to nature.** On one hand there are nature-based self-sufficient communities in the country-side, supplying other communities with organic food.

On the other hand, there are **sustainable cities,** which use high technology to maintain their energy and resource use low, but have also large green areas. Cities are very well designed, mainly divided into carbon neutral communities, where long-distance commuting is avoided by provision of services and jobs within the community. About 1/3 of commuting is avoided by simply working from home and a 4-day work week. Online conferences are very much in use. Long-haul business trips are no more necessary. Each individual as well as businesses comply with their respective carbon footprint threshold. *Car sharing, biking and walking reduced the need for parking spaces, which are now used as community gardens, and parks. The heat produced mainly from geothermal energy and biomethane is supplied through district heating network.*

Most of the **buildings** are passive or zero-emission buildings with mandatory solar PV & thermal collectors on each roof. This is also thanks to the fact, that the public buildings set high standards by building and renovating only to the level of zero-emission or plus buildings, while ensuring usage of sustainable materials and reuse of construction waste.

In **industry,** major robotization and efficient use of resources is taking place thanks to the prestigious governmental certificate Green Industry Pioneer. For robots and artificial intelligence, there are strict international protocols in place ensuring their peaceful use only. *Large energy and raw material savings were achieved by applying zero-waste principle.*

In **health care**, the responsibility for one's health has shifted towards the individual. This prevents overuse of medicine and health care services, and reduces public expenditures. Mental illnesses are prevented by stress reduction, requalification and in the already developed condition a long-term stay in nature is prescribed.

In **education**, pre-school and school children spend in total half a year in nature camps or day-care establishments, where they learn by senses and through experience, how to live in harmony with nature. The government support also home and community schooling.

The society supports **slower and simpler living**. Thanks to sharing things within the community, people own less and thus worry less. People are more conscious of their needs and priorities in life, and their talents. The society helps them realize their potential by supporting different community workshops, where each individual can use utensils for what they want to create and take courses and training. This way each member of the society works on their talents starting from an early age and develops a set of skills over time that help them earn living with their talents. As people are using their talents, there are less burnouts, less life crises. Thanks to this, there also is less frustration in the society, and less anxiety and conflicts among people.

Moreover, the **central governments** shifted substantial responsibilities and competences towards municipalities and regions. This brings the money to where it is most needed and most effectively spent. It required that municipalities created database of their buildings, vehicle fleets and other energy uses and developed long-term investment strategies. In implementing these, they are supported by regional sustainable energy centres.

All of these changes were possible due to sharing of different best practices among the world's heads of states, who decided to take personal responsibility for spreading these at a large-scale in their own countries.

Note: The talk for the purpose of the IIASA's competition "Life in 2050 with much less energy" is an excerpt of a longer essay.