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THE HAPPY PLANET INDEX IN BELARUS

The Happy Planet Index is an index reflecting the welfare of the people and the environment in different countries, which was suggested by the New Economics Foundation (NEF) in July 2006. The main task of the index is to reflect the “real” wealth of nations. To compare living standards in different countries use GDP per capita or HDI, but these indices may not always reflect the real situation. In particular, the comparison of the value of GDP is considered irrelevant, since the ultimate goal of most people is not to be rich but to be happy and healthy.

HPI is based on general utilitarian principles that most people want to live a long and full life, as countries strive to do everything possible to achieve maximum well-being of its citizens, wisely using the available resources, without causing damage to the environment. For the calculation of the index three indicators are used: subjective satisfaction of people life, life expectancy and so-called “ecological footprint”.

For the first time the HPI was designed in 2006, it included 178 countries. The second time the calculation was carried out in 2009, it included 143 countries. In 2009, the most “happy” countries were: Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic and Jamaica. The most “unfortunate”: Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Botswana.

The purpose of our study was based on survey to know what percentage of the population of Belarus know about HPI, as well as how they relate to him.

The survey involved 45 respondents, 24 of them are under the age of 20 years, 10 people aged 20 to 30 and 11 people aged 50 years and older. The survey involved students, workers and people working in the service sector.

The survey showed that 100% of respondents have never heard of The Happy Planet Index but showed interest in this issue.

After some investigation we found that on the HPI is not mentioned in the newspapers or radio and TV programs. In this regard, people may not know about this rating.

Summing up, we can say that Belarusians are concerned about their quality of life and place of Belarus in the international rankings. To increase the interest of citizens should be broadcast on television and write in newspapers about the places occupied by the Republic in international rankings, as well as on measures to improve the quality of life in the country.

Also it could be prospective to use HPI at the regional and local levels in Belarus that could help to find better solutions for sustainable development of these territories and local communities.