

## Sustainability is an increasingly important factor in choosing where to work

While job choice is traditionally based on factors such as income, opportunities for career development and advancement, social utility and the working environment, potential employees are increasingly concerned about the sustainability of their employer. According to a survey conducted jointly by UniCredit Bank and SteiGen, sustainability is a significant factor in the job choice of 29% of Hungarians.

Although the [majority of Hungarians believe that it is the responsibility of the government to address sustainability issues](#), just over a third of Hungarians believe **that large companies also play an important role in promoting a sustainable approach**. Therefore, it is not surprising that **the sustainable operation of companies** influences their social perception, but it is less often mentioned that this is **often reflected in the choice of workplace**.

A joint survey by UniCredit and SteiGen on generational attitudes towards sustainability reveals that almost a third of Hungarians consider the sustainability efforts of their prospective employer to be an important factor when choosing a job, and an even higher 41% of Generation Z, now aged between 18 and 26, do so. As this age group is the most vulnerable in terms of finding a job, this data can also provide important lessons for employers.

### What exactly do they expect from companies?

While there are no well-defined criteria for corporate responsibility for sustainability in society, there are expectations from companies in many areas. The survey data clearly shows that for Hungarians, the most important requirement for sustainability is that a **company should not pollute the environment** – an interpretation shared by more than half (51%) of respondents. This is followed in popularity by a company's ability **to put sustainability policies before profit** (34%), but also by its ability to **use resources sparingly** (33%). The extent to which companies are generally able to meet these expectations is illustrated by the fact that although two thirds of respondents – including three quarters of Generation Z – think that companies can operate sustainably, roughly the same number (62%) believe that companies are really only interested in profit and that their sustainability initiatives are „sham solutions”. More tellingly, 83% of the youngest people believe that companies are not paying enough attention to sustainability.

### What matters most to young professionals?

Although the youngest, members of Generation Z fit into the main patterns, there are some aspects that are more important to them than the average. For example, the **desire to work in a workplace that uses renewable energy** in its office or shop is particularly high (29%). The use of **recycled or biodegradable packaging materials** is also higher than average (26%), so no wonder that the companies' disposable leaflets is so unpopular with them. **Companies supporting their employees to live more sustainably**, for example by providing bike storage for commuting to work in an environmentally friendly way, and supporting sustainability-related causes, organisations and programmes, are also really important to Z-gens.

Also important is the feedback that those just starting their careers receive from Generation Y who have already found their place in the world of work. This age group is characterised by the scepticism expressed by one research participant: „*we work a lot, but big companies are not interested in protecting the land, they sometimes do things to protect profits*”.

### What gives credibility to sustainability measures?

For companies, it is essential that this negative perception does not become a general one – that their sustainability measures are not just window dressing to the outside world, but real principles and practices. Companies can best do this by regularly assessing the sustainability needs and expectations of their colleagues, by encouraging positive individual initiatives and by setting an example for all employees through their management.

It is important, for example, that if a company bans PET bottles from its office, they are not brought up in management meetings, just as it can be motivating if a manager encourages cycling to work or collecting used mobile phones, and even introduces incentives for all employees to promote this. As one research participant put it, it is important that sustainability measures provide a „*sense of community, a sense of belonging to a community*”, so that practices that previously existed in isolation within the company can strengthen a sense of belonging and organisational identity.

Contact: [sajtoinformacio@unicreditgroup.hu](mailto:sajtoinformacio@unicreditgroup.hu)

SteiGen and UniCredit used a representative online survey of 1,000 people, as well as focus group discussions with different generations of residents and individuals, and in-depth interviews to explore the attitudes of four different generations towards sustainability.

The target group of the research was 4 different generations:

- Baby Boomers born between 1946-64, now aged 56-74,
- Generation X, born 1965-1979, now aged 41-55,
- Generation Y, born 1980-1994, now aged 26-40, and
- Generation Z, born 1995-2003, now aged 18-25.

#### **UniCredit**

UniCredit is a successful pan-European commercial bank with a fully integrated corporate and investment banking service and a unique network of clients in Western, Central and Eastern Europe. UniCredit offers both local and international expertise to its clients, providing them with unrivalled access to leading banks in its core markets of 13 countries through its European banking network: Italy, Germany, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Russia, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia. Through its international network of representative offices and branches, UniCredit serves customers in a further 16 countries worldwide.

#### **SteiGen**

The team at SteiGen Consultancy Ltd. has decades of market experience helping clients achieve their goals. With a long-standing and experiential approach, the company works with unique, state-of-the-art and generationally differentiated methodologies. SteiGen's goal is to ensure that their partners experience their time with them as an experience and get the most out of it.