

Bees on the Roof

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Since September 20th, there have been beehives on the terrace of the top floor of the National Palace of Culture (NDK). Just like at the Bundestag, the Paris Opera, the center of London, and Tokyo. Urban beekeeping has been developing with full force in recent years, as an attempt to raise more awareness about the endangered bee population. According to Greenpeace, it has declined by 50% in the last five years, and the phenomenon of "empty hives" is being observed in Europe and the USA. Research proves that one of the main reasons for this is pesticides. The proposed solution is purely organic farming, without the use of chemicals.

The idea to place beehives on the NDK terrace belongs to the I Have a Bee foundation. Trifon Mihaylov, Stefan Zlatev, and Petar Petrov created the organization to popularize the bee problem

and provoke people to keep beehives even in the city. "Bees cope with pollution without it affecting the product, but they cannot cope with pesticides. And precisely in the city, unlike villages and crop fields, there are no pesticides," says Trifon. This might also be the reason why the honey produced by bees kept in the very center of London is one of the most expensive in the city. They remind us that without bees to pollinate plants, the world will turn into a desert.

Since they founded their organization, they have raised many bee colonies all over Bulgaria. Petar has a hive on his balcony in the capital's "Manastirski Livadi" district. "The truth is, bees don't sting randomly or just like that – someone has to mess with their hive indiscriminately and without knowing when, for them to sting," claims Stefan. In fact, there have always been beehives in Sofia, it's just that most people don't notice them.

According to the founders of the I Have a Bee foundation, the NDK is an accessible location. After a prior appointment, anyone interested can see the hives and get the necessary information.

An important clarification is that the I Have a Bee hives are made by the bees themselves. "We don't use ready-made foundations from melted-down other hives as in conventional beekeeping, because pesticide and antibiotic residues settle in the wax from hives, and since we cannot know where other beekeepers kept their bees and whether there were pesticides, the best option is not to use such foundations." Petar, Stefan, and Trifon are volunteers and develop their project alongside their main occupations. "Our goal is one million hives. We want people to realize that it's easy to keep bees – whether in the city, at a villa, or in a village, it doesn't matter," says Trifon.

They offer hobbyist hives that can be placed on any balcony in the big city and turn beekeeping into a useful and pleasant hobby.

For more information: www.ihaveabee.com