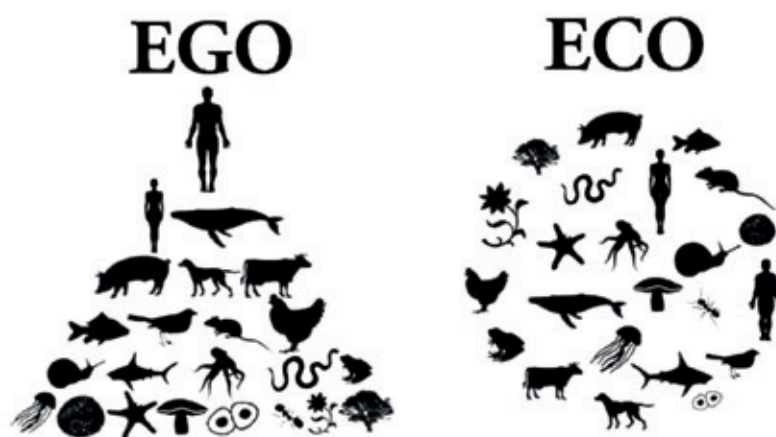


The Zoonosecene

Interreg
Italia-Österreich
European Regional Development Fund



The new geological epoch of intensive breeding, of wildlife trade, of antibiotic resistance and of pandemic diseases, following the Anthropocene



“Ego-Eco”: humankind is part of the ecosystem, not separate from it or above it

PH S. Lehmann, 2010 e 2019

It only took one of the many Coronaviruses to remind man of his evolutionary weaknesses and to highlight how we must quickly stop exploiting animals and the planet in order to prevent the extinction of our species.

Man considers himself the most intelligent living species, but forgets that intelligence is a secondary effect of evolution and does not necessarily constitute an evolutionary advantage.

The Anthropocene has been a geological epoch characterised by a significant increase of the impact of human activity on the ecosystem. It has been a short evolutionary period, because it is obvious to everybody that we have now entered a new period that we could call the Zoonosecene, characterised by the increasingly frequent appearance of pandemic in-

fectious diseases transmitted to man by animals (zoonoses).

More than 70% of the 1,700 infectious diseases that affect humans come from animals and the Ebola, Hiv, Sars, Mers, Swine and Avian flu, Zika, etc. pandemics, after starting from sporadic phenomena limited to rural areas, have become a global emergency.

The repeated and frequent onset of pandemics can also be attributed to the irresponsible behaviour of man.

In particular, the creation of enormous intensive domestic animal farms, the indiscriminate use of antibiotics on intensive breeding farms, the destruction of forests and the consumption of the meat of wild animals are all factors causing the insurgence of lethal human diseases.

From a medical viewpoint, it is

useless treating the symptoms of a patient without eliminating the causes of the illness at the same time, because it will never be truly healed.

In the same way, it is absolutely useless developing even more powerful new antibiotics or increasingly sophisticated vaccines unless we reduce the negative impact caused by our species on the other living beings, by closing the large intensive animal farms in favour of extensive ones, reducing the use of antibiotics and restoring the balance between our species and the ecosystem (from Ego to Eco). The Project Bio-crime Interreg Italia Austria (www.biocrime.org) creates awareness in people with respect to the biological risk and the project output is extremely simple: surviving in an “eco” world. ■