**The CHARM-EU Podcast Master’s Series – Episode 3 – The programme’s flexible phase & the Water theme**

**Krisztina Palotás**: Thank you for joining us today for another episode of the CHARM-EU Master’s Podcast series! My name is Krisztina Palotás, and I will be the host of today’s episode. With the Global Challenges for Sustainability master’s approaching, I would like to give our listeners a better insight into what the flexible phase of the course has to offer. That is why, with me here today is Ádám Tóth to introduce the Water theme of the flexible phase of the master’s programme. Thank you Ádám for joining me today!

**Ádám Tóth:** Welcome to the listeners and thank you for having me!

**Krisztina Palotás**: Ádám Tóth is an earth scientist and an assistant professor in hydrogeology at the Department of Geology at Eötvös Loránd University. He is studying the distribution and movement of groundwater to explore water and related geothermal resources. He has expertise in surface water - groundwater interaction, fluid dynamics and exploration geophysics.

**Krisztina Palotás**: As I mentioned this episode will introduce the ‘Water’ theme, but before we discuss its details, could you perhaps tell us a bit more about how the flexible phase is set up, and what will it offer to our students?

**Ádám Tóth:** The flexible phase is actually the second semester of our master’s. The students arrive at this stage after the completion of modules in phase one, so that the Social Innovation, Sustainability and Transdisciplinary research modules. Their transversal skills and competencies will be further developed shifting from beginner and novice to a rather intermediate level. But in the flexible phase, their skills are combined with thematic content and learning activities are aligned with a specific theme of our master’s. These are Food, Life&Health and Water. The students can choose which one of these focus themes they are interested in and then accomplish 30 ECTS during the flexible phase. Every one of themes has 3 modules of the given track. Within these 3 modules, students will work on sustainability challenges individually and in groups, as well, with stakeholders. Of course, the special emphasis will be on their chosen theme, but we are working on cross-thematic linkages and activities to provide more aspects and a more complex view of challenges.

**Krisztina Palotás** Thank you! And I really like the aspect of our master’s, that our students are going to be able to get an in-depth knowledge about their chosen topic, but also get familiar with the other topics as well. I think that’s very brilliant.

**Ádám Tóth:** Yes, so that’s the basic idea, to focus on a specific area, but still have the linkages between these really hot topics in sustainability.

**Krisztina Palotás:** Absolutely! And I think that’s the main way to get to know the overall topic of sustainability. So, could you give a very short insight into why it is crucial to talk about water when we discuss sustainability?

**Ádám Tóth:** The important role of water in sustainability is reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs, of the UN as water is explicitly formulated in 2 goals: SDG 6 Clean water and sanitation and SDG 14 Life below water. But if we take a closer look at these goals, we can see that water is directly linked to SDG 3 Good health and well-being, SDG 7 Affordable and clean energy, SDG 11 Sustainable cities and communities, SDG 12 Responsible consumption and production, SDG 13 Climate action and SDG 15 Life on land. However, I cannot see economic growth, innovation, peace and justice and reduction of poverty, famine and inequality without water. Water stands eventually either in the forefront or in the background of all these sustainable development goals. Simply speaking, water is a key element of sustainability.

**Krisztina Palotás:** That’s so interesting, because I’ve obviously been familiar with the fact that water is very important when it comes to sustainability, but I actually did not know that it was such an important part of so many different SDGs, so thank you very much for introducing that! And more specifically, what will the Water modules look like content wise?

**Ádám Tóth:** Our three modules are organised around umbrella challenge areas. The module of Extremes in the Water Cycle and Their Complex Consequences deals with the effects of climate and global change. For instance, the past and present extremes in the water cycle, all social, political, economic, cultural, environmental consequences of these water hazards. Here we can mention floods, droughts, sea-level rise, climate migration and their manifold impact.

The next module is titled Adaptation Measures and Strategies in Water Management and its main challenge area is water security. This part covers the natural, social, economic and legal issues in water management, water trading in terms of the virtual and physical presence of water. We will also discuss sustainable water management strategies from an engineering viewpoint to provide water supply resiliency.

Our last module is the Resilient cities: Water in Urban Environments tackling growing urban centres and their different geographical and social context considering technical, ecological, legal, social and historical aspects. Here, the key points are the water quality and monitoring, water treatments and wastewater management and also civic engagement.

Also important to mention that our Water modules will be delivered parallel and in this way, we can share the content, highlight interlinkages and organize joint learning activities such as a mobility week and a field camp together.

**Krisztina Palotás:** It definitely sounds like the Water theme was designed to give a ver in-depth information to our students, and to make sure that they not only get to learn about these different topics but get to know them interlinked as well with each other.Finally, how does this theme offer a unique approach to introducing the water element of sustainability? How does it set itself apart from other similar courses?

**Ádám Tóth:** The overall strength of this master’s is the transdisciplinarity. We bring together economics, chemistry, law, biology, history, hydrology and hydrogeology, international relations, social sciences, urban planning and many other disciplines to grasp the various aspects of sustainability challenges of water involving stakeholder, NGOs, companies and society. Regarding our traditional master’s, you need to graduate at least 10 times earning 10 separate degrees. We can discuss all relevant pieces of many disciplines focusing on the water in one place.

**Krisztina Palotás:** That sounds great! And I think for anyone who’s interested in the Water element of sustainability specifically – but also that goes for the Food, and Life and Health elements as well – it would be a brilliant opportunity to get to know this topic from all aspects within the Global Challenges for Sustainability master’s. Well, that’s all for today’s episode of the ‘CHARM-EU Podcast’ – Master’s series. Thank you for tuning in and thank you Ádám for joining me!

**Ádám Tóth:** Thank you for having me!

**Krisztina Palotás:** Check out our website for more information about CHARM-EU and make sure you subscribe to our YouTube and Podcast channels, so you don’t miss out on our new podcasts and other interesting content and follow us on our social media channels: such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter (links in the description) and join the CHARM-EU community! Thank you, and goodbye!