



THE BRUSSELS-EU CHAPTER

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Developments

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The Brussels EU-Chapter of the Club of Rome

Seasons Greetings

We present our best wishes for 2008 to all our readers and hope to be meeting with you again in the numerous exciting opportunities that 2008 will offer, in Brussels in the framework of the Brussels-EU Chapter CoR-EU Club of Rome activities and our Aurelio Peccei lectures, or in any other conferences, workshops or projects around the globe.

2008 will represent a year of major challenges at all political and economical levels, in national and international organizations, in local and global businesses, in domestic and international civil organizations. Never has it been so urgent to turn good wishes and speeches into concrete action. Never has it been so pressing for all actors of international governance to reconcile their divergent objectives, interests and agendas. But as the past year has profoundly revealed to all levels of society the dramatic effects of climate change, of uncontrolled and heterogeneous demographic and economic growth, 2008 can also become a year of change, a year of collaboration, a year of willingness. You can be assured that the CoR-EU Chapter will accompany these changes with its hopes, but also with its acts.

Recent Activities

Conference Beyond GDP

The European Commission, European Parliament, Club of Rome, OECD and WWF hosted a high-level conference on the 20th of November 2007 with the objectives of clarifying which indices are most appropriate to measure progress, and how these can best be integrated into the decision-making process and taken up by public debate.

GDP is the best-recognised measure of economic performance in the world, often used as a generic indicator of progress. However, the relationship between economic growth as measured by GDP and other dimensions of societal progress is not straightforward. Effectively measuring progress, wealth and well-being requires indices that are as clear and appealing as GDP but more inclusive than GDP—ones that incorporate social and environmental issues. This is especially important given global challenges such as climate change, global poverty, pressure on resources and their potential impact on societies.

A conference on the same topic – entitled "Taking nature into account" – already took place 12 years ago; if the diagnosis has not fundamentally changed since, the necessity and urgency of action has just increased.

Hans-Gert Pöttering, Honorary President of the Brussels-EU Chapter of the Club of Rome, gave a keynote speech and called for action in order to overcome the restrictions of GDP.

- *Web site of the Beyond GDP conference (presentations and videos can be downloaded from the site): <http://www.beyond-gdp.eu/>*

DESERTEC Concept for Energy, Water and Climate Security

On the 28th of November 2007, members of European Parliament Matthias Groote, Rebecca Harms, Vittorio Prodi and Anders Wijkman, and the Trans-Mediterranean Renewable Energy Cooperation (TREC) held a presentation of the white paper "*Clean Power from Deserts - The DESERTEC Concept for Energy, Water and Climate Security*".

His Royal Highness Prince Hassan bin Talal of Jordan, former President of The Club of Rome presented political options of a co-operation among Europe, the Middle East and North Africa (EU-MENA) for clean power from deserts and presented perspectives for the evolution of a community of energy, water and climate security.

Recent Activities & Aurelio Peccei Lectures

Recent Activities (cont.)

The White Paper was elaborated for the Club of Rome, and is based on studies by the German Aerospace Center (DLR) on the potential of deserts for clean energy supply for EU-MENA. It will introduce the option of clean energy co-operation between technology belt and sun-belt, in particular between Europe and MENA.

- *The action program proposed by the Club of Rome/TREC can be found at:*
http://www.desertec.org/downloads/articles/apollo_program.pdf
- *Trans-Mediterranean Renewable Energy Cooperation (TREC) home page:*
<http://www.trec-eumena.org/>

Measuring Wealth - Challenges and Ways Forward

On the 19th of November 2007, Anders Wijkman, MEP, member of the Brussels-EU Chapter and Vice-President of the Club of Rome, opened an event on technical and policy challenges related to measuring wealth. The event, held at the European Parliament, preceded the conference "*Beyond GDP*" (see above). Anders Wijkman outlined the history of GDP, which was developed in the 1930's. He emphasized that there are undeniable correlations between GDP and many indicators of welfare but that other aspects like the informal economy, volunteer work, leisure, human capital, pollution and resource depletion are not represented or underestimated in the presently used GDP.

Aurelio Peccei Lectures & Dialogues (Winter 2007-2008)

46th Aurelio Peccei Lecture (5th December 2007)

"The OECD Review of China's Innovation Policy" by Jean Guinet and Gang Zhang

Mr Jean Guinet, Head Country Review Unit and Mr Gang Zhang, Administrator and Principal Economist, Non Member Economies, both from the OECD Directorate of Science, Technology and Industry, presented the main findings of the OECD Review of China's Innovation Policy. China is one of the emerging powers illustrating that S&T is turning towards East. Mr Guinet presented the recently launched OECD strategy review regarding China scientific and technological capacity, but also in more general terms, the policy adopted by OECD for the country reviews already undertaken or in planning for countries such as India, Korea, Russia or Brazil.

47th Aurelio Peccei Lecture (10th January 2008)

"The Mission of the University for Peace of the United Nations" by Martin Lees

Recognizing the central role of education to create the human capabilities essential to peace and development, the General Assembly of the United Nations established the University for Peace in Costa Rica in 1980 to become a world wide centre of education for peace. Martin Lees, Martin Lees – Rector Emeritus of the University for Peace and Secretary General of the Club of Rome – explained how the University for Peace is developing, teaching and disseminating education programmes to partner universities and other institutions of learning across the world. This enables local and often under-resourced universities in developing countries to take advantage of international knowledge and best practices in teaching. Martin Lees outlined the hope to see from there the emergence of a new generation of men and women who will be able to take their future in their own hands to build sound governance, equitable societies and sustainable development.

Future Lectures

48th Aurelio Peccei Lecture (March 2008)

Upcoming lectures will be announced shortly on our website (<http://esc.clubofrome.org/cor-eu/news/index.html>) and through email invitation.

The Brussels EU-Chapter of the Club of Rome is organizing an average of 10 conferences per year in the framework of the Aurelio Peccei lectures. If you want to receive regularly the invitation for these lectures, which are taking place on a monthly basis (usually first week of the month at the Royal Flemish Academy of Belgium in Brussels), please send a request to our secretariat (cor.eu.secretary@gmail.com) who will add you to our distribution list.

Relevant Global News

Climate Change and Nobel Peace Prize 2007

Al Gore shared the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize with the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, headed by Rajendra K. Pachauri – Delhi, India) "*for their efforts to build up and disseminate greater knowledge about man-made climate change, and to lay the foundations for the measures that are needed to counteract such change*".

While the 2007 United Nations Climate Change Conference was taking place at the same time in Bali, Al Gore and Rajendra K. Pachauri accepted the Nobel Peace Prize for 2007 in Oslo on December 10th 2007. At this occasion, Al Gore delivered a speech, which can be found at:

http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2007/gore-lecture_en.html

"*It's time to make peace with the planet*" declared Al Gore in his speech. Al Gore has been both vocal and passionate over the past years to build-up awareness of climate change issues and to spread knowledge of the global warming threat. Gore emphasized on the human capacity to find solution to this global problem: "*we have the ability to solve this crisis and avoid the worst (...) of its consequences, if we act boldly, decisively and quickly*". Through his call for action, he stressed the importance for collective intervention – a "*world (...) alliance*" –, and he invited the countries "*that weigh heaviest in the scales where earth is in the balance*" (in particular China and his own country – the United States) to take decisive steps, in particular regarding their CO₂ emissions.

"*We have everything we need to get started. (...) We have a purpose. We are many. For this purpose we will rise, and we will act*". His wishes have certainly been heard in the Club of Rome; may they be turned into tangible transformations of behaviours by all global actors.

2007 United Nations Climate Change Conference

From December 3rd to 14th 2007 took place the 2007 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali, Indonesia. It brought together more than 10,000 participants, including representatives of over 180 countries together with observers from inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations and the media.

The core of the discussions and negotiations concerned the succession to the Kyoto Protocol, which led to the adoption of a roadmap. It "*consists of a number of forward-looking decisions (...) representing various tracks that are essential to reaching a secure climate future*". This however only represents a first step, "*launching a new negotiation process, designed to tackle climate change, with the aim of completing this by 2009*". This two-year process will therefore aim at finalizing a binding agreement at the forthcoming conference in Copenhagen, Denmark in 2009, with an intermediate milestone in Poznan, Poland in 2008.

In terms of specific results of the conference, it was decided to look at "*a long-term global goal for emission reductions*", especially for Western countries, which should commit themselves to "*measurable, reportable and verifiable*" actions (although this might not be accompanied by binding targets). Good advances were also made in the area of forests (policy approach to protect forests and reduce deforestation), enhanced co-operation to protect poorer countries against climate change impacts ("*support urgent implementation*") and technology transfer ("*remove obstacles to, and the provision of financial and other incentives for, scaling up*" the transfer of clean energy technologies from industrialised nations to the developing world).

Conference speeches, press summaries, closing statement and action plan can be found on the websites of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and of the conference:

http://unfccc.int/meetings/cop_13/items/4049.php

http://unfccc.int/files/meetings/cop_13/application/pdf/close_stat_cop13_president.pdf

<http://www.climate.web.id/welcome/>

Global Environment Outlook Report 2007 (GEO-4)

The UNEP Global Environment Outlook (GEO) project was initiated in response to a UNEP Governing Council decision of May 1995 which requested the production of a new comprehensive report on the global state of the environment. The 4th release of this report was published in October 2007 and assesses the current state of the global atmosphere, land, water and biodiversity; it describes the changes since 1987 and identifies priorities for action. It explores how current trends may unfold by 2050 in four scenarios and shows how our future will be largely determined by the decisions individuals and society make today.

Full report and executive summary can be found on the United Nations Environment Programme website:

<http://www.unep.org/geo/geo4/media/>

Information Corner

News from the Club of Rome

<http://www.clubofrome.org/news/index.php>

New from the Club of Rome National Associations

<http://www.clubofrome.at/news/index.html>

tt30 of the Club of Rome

<http://www.clubofrome.org/tt30/index.php>

Aurelio Peccei Foundation

<http://www.clubofrome.at/peccei/>

EU

News and events can be found at:

- <http://ec.europa.eu>
- http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/public/default_en.htm
- http://ec.europa.eu/energy/index_en.html
- <http://www.friendsofeurope.org>
- <http://www.bruegel.org/Public/WebSite.php?ID=2>
- <http://www.epc.eu/>
- <http://www.euractiv.com/en/HomePage>
- <http://www.agenceurope.com/EN/GobalFrameset.html>
- <http://www.robert-schuman.org/gb/index.htm>
- <http://www.greenfacts.org>

Books & Publication

• "L'Atlas Environnement – Analyses et Solutions" by the Monde-Diplomatique

Global warming, climate change, rise of oceans' level, desertification, deforestation, ecological catastrophes, pandemic crises... are thoroughly treated in this French-written atlas and very well illustrated with numerous and comprehensive maps and diagrams.

<http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/publications/atlas/>

• "World Energy Outlook 2007" by the OECD

The new release of the World Energy Outlook puts China and India under the spotlight, analyzed as "the world's fastest growing energy markets". The report examines 3 likely energy scenarios for these 2 countries: 1) surging energy consumption and CO₂ emissions; 2) policy-driven scenario addressing energy security and energy efficiency; 3) persistent high economic growth in China and India. Depending on the different scenarios, the report analyzes the impact on international energy prices, investment requirements, CO₂ emissions and energy trade.

<http://www.worldenergyoutlook.org/2007.asp>

• "State of the World 2008: Innovations for a Sustainable Economy" by the Worldwatch Institute

The Washington-DC based environmental research organization released its annual assessment of global environmental problems and the innovative ideas proposed and applied across the globe to address them. Following the urge of many US and global business players to pass legislation regulating greenhouse gas emissions, the authors call for major reforms of government policy to avoid economic collapse at global level. They recommend key economic transformation to create the right market conditions to protect biodiversity and "to steer the global economy onto a sustainable path".

<http://www.worldwatch.org/stateoftheworld>

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FEEDBACK

For feedback about this newsletter please contact the Club of Rome secretariat at cor.eu.secretary@gmail.com