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Climate, Environment and
Energy

Sustainable resource management, raw materials security, Factor-X resource productivity – tools for delivering sustainable growth in the European Union

December 6-7, 2006 in Bruges/Belgium, location NOVOTEL

The management of natural resources such as metals, industrial minerals, construction minerals, fossil fuels and renewable resources has been a challenge to sustainable development from the very beginning. It now can be seen as one of the most persisting problems worldwide. Economics and other branches of research have to explore appropriate tools able to deliver sustainable growth.

The conference has two starting points: firstly, the concern for high raw material prices on international markets and security of supply, secondly, the recently launched European thematic strategy on sustainable management of natural resources (COM(2005) 670 final) which aims at doubling resource productivity increases up to at least 3 % p.a. The conference will shed light on the status quo and on trends in both areas. By discussing tools and response options for both policy-makers and industry, it takes a forward-looking view. Those options will include business strategies, sectoral action plans, incentive systems, and international mechanisms. The conference also seeks to discuss modelling techniques such as input-output analysis and scenario development.

Target groups are researchers, in particular from economics, as well as high-level decision-makers from business, public policy and NGOs. Young researchers are especially encouraged to present a paper. The conference will take place in Bruges, Belgium, one of the most scenic places throughout Europe.

The conference is organized as a two days event. The first day is planned to setting the scene, with a top-level keynote lecture and policy-oriented lectures with speakers coming from the European Commission, from industry and NGO. The second day will be research oriented with paper-presentation sessions running parallel.

The conference will also be utilized to launch a proposal for an information hub on sustainable resource management. A panel with representatives from different European organisations will conclude on perspectives.

Papers should contribute to the following topics:

- A) Business strategies in an international, value-chain oriented perspective: how can strategies go beyond exploiting low-hanging fruits? How can they integrate SMEs, internationally operating corporations and business in developing countries?
- B) Resource-intensive industries, sectoral strategies: Can they cope with the challenges ahead? How do they influence downstream resource use? What is the challenge for extractive and resource-intensive industries in Europe?
- C) Resource use and sustainable consumption: how can consumers' decisions shape upstream extraction and production?

- D) Incentives and policy programmes: what incentives and cross-cutting programmes lead to the most positive impact on the economy as well as on social and environmental dimensions of sustainability?
- E) Scenario analysis, econometrics and forecasting: what tools are available to model future resource use? How can research assess technological and other potentials for resource productivity?
- F) Information systems: What information tools can efficiently support the quest for increasing resource productivity, sustainable resource management, and sustainable growth? How can they provide guidance for management and policy-making? How significant are transaction costs, especially for RTD, cooperation and partnerships? Can appropriate indicators cut across global monitoring, national statistics and reporting at business level?
- G) Economics of material flows: do mechanisms of ‘rebound effect’ overcompensate for productivity gains? To what extent can resource-saving strategies improve employment, social welfare and competitiveness in the long-run? What can institutional and evolutionary economics contribute to the understanding of material flows?
- H) Perspectives from selected European member states, in particular from new member states, emerging and transition economies: Do high prices provide incentives for leap-frogging strategies? How can they shape patterns of investments and industrialization? What is the impact of high demand for natural resources in some regions on European efforts for decoupling processes in the EU?
- I) Beyond Europe - Impacts in China, other emerging economies and developing countries: Does their demand undermine efforts undertaken by Europe and by some businesses? How do their efforts meet sustainable development demands? What are sustainability benchmarks for extracting and using resources coming from outside the EU?
- J) “Resource wars” and “new geography of trade”: what patterns of trade occur resulting from emerging economies? Does Europe need international mechanisms comparable to the Kyoto flexible instruments? Does Europe shift environmental burden to the developing countries?

Organized jointly by the ‘Toyota Chair for Industry and Sustainability’ at the College of Europe and by the Wuppertal Institute, and endorsed by the international research programme IHDP-IDGEC, further cooperation and endorsements are under way. Additional support is given from the Aachen Foundation Kathy Beys, a foundation committed to factor-X resource productivity.

The conference is co-organised with UNEP's Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (DTIE). The outcomes of the session 'Beyond Europe' will contribute to identifying issues and partners for the International Panel on the use of Natural Resources, which will be initiated jointly with the European Commission. The Panel has the objective to provide advice on the key environmental impacts of natural resource extraction and use in a life-cycle perspective and on approaches to reducing impacts, aimed at decoupling environmental impacts from economical growth.

A few top researchers have been invited to present a paper. Proceedings will be published, either as a special issue in a scientific journal or with a reputable publisher house. As of today (June 7), speakers include Bas de Leeuw, UNEP Paris; Thorvaldur Gylfason, University of Iceland;

Marton Herczeg or Robert Nemesceri, REC/HU; Bernd Meyer, GWS and University Osnabrück/GE; Gjalt Huppel, Leiden University/NL

The conference will be held in English. Proposals for papers should be sent by e-mail to kfuhrmann@coleurop.be. The body of the e-mail (no attachments please) should contain

- (1) The title of the proposed paper,
- (2) An abstract of less than 300 words (longer abstracts will be rejected. No graphs, references, tables etc. in the abstract, please),
- (3) The session you would like to present it in,
- (3) The complete address and professional affiliation of all (co)-author(s).

The deadline for paper proposals is July 7, 2006. An international review panel will review all submissions. Notification of the decision will be sent by e-mail no later than 25 August 2006. Full papers are expected by November 30, 2006. We are making all efforts to ensure funding to reimburse the travel costs of some conference presentators, with a preference for junior colleagues and colleagues from developing countries. Participants are asked to contribute a registration fee of 120 € (50 € for students with valid student ID) upon registration.

Further information about the Conference will be available at (<http://www.coleurop.be>).

Conference Chair: Prof. Dr. Raimund Bleischwitz, Toyota Chair for Industry and Sustainability, College of Europe and Wuppertal Institute, Research Group 'Material Flows and Resource Management' (Director: Dr. Stefan Brinzeu).

Conference Manager: Katrin Fuhrmann, College of Europe, Belgium,
email: kfuhrmann@coleurop.be.

Tentative Programme:

First day

14.00	Registration
14.30 – 17.00	Keynote Speeches Discussion
Coffee/Tea Break	
17.30 – 19.00	Afternoon Paper Sessions
Dinner at a Restaurant	

Second day

9.00 – 10.30, 11.00 – 12.30	Morning Sessions
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch
13.30 – 15.00	Sessions to be continued
15.00 – 15.30	Proposal for an International Information Platform
15.30 – 16.00	Coffee/Tea Break
16.00 – 17.30	Concluding Panel Discussion with Representatives e.g. from:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Parliament, and/or further European institutions • Industry and/or financial sector • NGO • Research

Endorsement by IHDP-IDGEC

