

The role of NGOs and interest groups – Lobbying for sustainability on the EU level, and crisis facing chemical, car, oil and energy corporates

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Wiesbaden, 14 September 2007

Conference “Chiefsache Issues Management: Megatrends / Mega issues”

Organised by Issues Management Deutschland (IMAGE), the F.A.Z. Institute and ConVent Seminare
Wiesbaden/Germany

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1. Introduction

Civil society and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have a key role in holding European governments, public institutions and corporates accountable. They carry out research and lobby work, they raise public awareness and give people a forum to express their views, and they develop solutions.

EU institutions welcome the input of civil society. They have also accepted the legitimacy of civil society organizations because of their broad membership base and because they play a crucial role in shaping EU policies, and in keeping democracy alive.

But in the EU capital, Brussels, NGOs face a number of hurdles in their work – hurdles for civic society and barriers to democracy:

- The balance of power between business representatives and NGOs in Brussels is extremely tilted – in favor of corporates.
- When it comes to communicating content, NGOs are competing with firms that can afford to air TV commercials and plaster print and web-based media with adverts.
- Business lobbies have privileged access to information and often meet EU officials behind closed doors, as NGOs are too often excluded from discussions between business and officials on planned EU legislation.
- Business interests too often use “Corporate Social Responsibility” (CSR) as public relations tool.

2. EU lobby non-transparency

Civil society and NGOs need information and fair access to decision-makers to play their democratic role in Europe. For this to take place, the EU needs to significantly increase its transparency. The EU Commissioner for Administrative Affairs, Audit and Anti-Fraud, Siim Kallas, tackled that problem in May 2006 by publishing a green paper on a European Transparency Initiative (ETI). Its weaknesses are:

- Compliance mechanisms for existing codes are ineffective: the codes are essentially “voluntary”, there are no independent and external complaint panels and sanctions are weak.
- Rules regarding “revolving doors” – staff moving from the EU Commission directly into lobbying and vice versa – are inadequate. There is no “cooling-off” period upon leaving the Commission and rules on employment prior to working in the Commission are absent.
- The Commission’s standards for equal consultation of all stakeholders are non-binding.

NGOs demand the following, and, make no mistake, the EU Commission is moving slowly in this direction:

- Mandatory registration for all lobbyists, with a requirement for information to be made public about the issues, clients and lobby budgets involved. This is not at all unrealistic as such systems exist already in the US and Canada, and lobbyists objecting this system in Brussels are complying with it in Washington and Toronto.
- A code of ethics extending to all registered lobbyists. This must contain specific examples of prohibited behaviour. For example, lobbying companies could be banned from employing a former employee of the EU institutions who was handling the same dossier in the previous three years.
- An independent public body to investigate alleged breaches of lobbying transparency. The mandate of the European Ombudsman could be extended for that purpose.

Transparency and strict, obligatory rules for lobbyists are the basis for a democratic Europe. The current system puts NGOs at a disadvantage because information is disclosed selectively, and deals are made behind closed doors. This policy of secrecy weakens democracy and increases public distrust of the EU.

3. Business in Brussels

The balance of power between business representatives and NGOs in Brussels is extremely tilted – in favour of business. An estimated 15,000 lobbyists work in Brussels, of which around two thirds represent business interests. And the business lobby has enormous resources at its disposal. Take the European Chemical Industry Council (CEFIC), the lobby group of the European chemical industry. In 2006, 150 employees and a budget of 40 million Euros enabled it to significantly weaken the EU chemicals directive REACH. As a comparison, not more than 15 staff had worked in Brussels in 2006 on REACH at CEFIC's main opponents WWF, Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth Europe, European Environmental Bureau and HEAL – with a budget of about 2 million Euros.

When it comes to communicating content, the European NGOs are competing with firms that can afford to air TV commercials and plaster print and web-based media with misleading messages, in an attempt to distract from the problems they are causing (BP: "Beyond Petroleum?"; ExxonMobil: "Driving for efficiency"; Chevron: "Human energy"). The strong presence of sectors like oil and chemicals trying to polish up and green-wash their image with massive PR-measures is striking.

In one case of disinformation, CEFIC placed an advertisement in the October 19th, 2006 edition of the European Voice, distorting facts about the planned mandatory substitution of dangerous chemicals when alternatives are available. The ad included a picture of a sick African child with shocking arguments promoting the use of the highly toxic insecticide DDT – even though pesticides like DDT do not actually fall within the scope of REACH, and safer alternatives to DDT like mosquito nets are available.

Another tool used by corporates, especially by the biggest polluters, is "Corporate Social Responsibility". CSR is often communicated via sustainability reports that include activities corporates would implement anyhow to cut costs (like saving energy in oil drilling and industrial operations) or because they have to (paying for the relocation of a community living above a gas field). CSR is, unfortunately, in many cases a hollow public relations activity. Surprisingly enough, corporate managers and PR agencies believe that EU decision-makers buy it.

In a regular PR event, the business network for corporate social responsibility "CSR Europe" gives awards to companies which have implemented the best CSR solutions. In 2006, an environmental award was given to the French oil corporation TOTAL – a perfect example of hollow PR because TOTAL has been regularly exposed for its poor record on environment protection. It is one of the companies taken to court in Nigeria for gas flaring, and it is currently involved in an oil extraction project in Canada causing huge emissions of climate-damaging carbon dioxide (CO₂).

"CSR Europe" in June 2006 also gave the international accounting firm KPMG an award in "business partnership", despite the fact that KPMG faced a scandal in the US in 2005 for having set up tax shelters for some of its clients. Award ceremonies of this kind tarnish the image of corporates and only prove that too many managers still refuse to accept the meaning of credible CSR. They are too often using CSR to white-wash their image, while at the same time refusing to seriously address the real issues of environmental, social and human rights protection.

A coalition of Brussels-based NGOs struck back by giving ExxonMobil the "2006 EU Worst Lobby Award" for funding climate change skeptics and for its role in lobbying the US government to abstain from effective measures to combat climate change. On 4th December 2007, another corporate will get this year's shaming prize during a ceremony in Brussels.

4. NGOs in Brussels

I am observing a trend of professionalisation among some NGOs, especially in the fields of political communications. Many NGOs are investing more in communications and fundraising.

NGOs do not have to organize expensive dinners in luxury hotels in order to lure EU officials and journalists. They do not need to pay fortunes for TV commercials and print advertisements to reach the public. They need far fewer resources than their opponents to exert pressure and ignite public debates. They do it by consistently asking sharp and poignant questions, by developing scientific solutions and by mobilising millions of members and volunteers. They stage protests, create emotional pictures and expose scandals. They gain strength by working in coalition with other NGOs. They do not try to buy credibility. Their arguments are aired and printed for free because both media and the public rate their integrity highly.

NGOs are also supporting the organisational capacity building of their member groups. Activities include training seminars on management, media, communications, fundraising, software and volunteering; as well as meetings on effective organisational structures, leadership and managing change, membership development, strategic and operational planning.

The better they are in capacity building, in campaign work and in communications, the more visible they become. Strong visibility in the public sphere means more influence on EU decision-makers – and more pressure on corporates.

The degree of cooperation and coalition building across civil society organizations and NGOs active at the EU level is growing and occurs almost on a daily level. Civil society organising itself as political entrepreneurs and advocacy coalitions are effective in their engagement with EU institutions as organizations with a strong bottom-up, or grassroots membership. Here some of the main NGO networks active in the EU capital:

a. The European Consumers' Organisation (BEUC)

BEUC was a pioneer, one of the first lobbying organisations to set up base in Brussels to influence the decision-making process. It promotes "basic consumers rights", i.e. the rights to safety information, choice, representation, redress, satisfaction of basic needs and a clean environment. BEUC's membership includes about 40 national consumer organisations from 30 European countries, in Germany it is Verbraucherzentrale Bundesverband (VZBV) and Stiftung Warentest. BEUC's main task is to represent these members and defend the interests of all Europe's consumers. Through BEUC, these organisations are able to speak out with one voice. BEUC investigates all EU decisions and plans that affect consumers.

b. The EU Civil Society Contact Group

This group brings together eight large rights and value based NGO sectors: culture, environment, education, development, human rights, public health, social and women. The members of these sectoral platforms are European NGO networks. They bring together the voices of hundreds of thousands of associations across the EU, linking the national with the European level, representing a large range of organised interests.

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The Contact Group's objective is to encourage and promote a transparent and structured civil dialogue that is accessible, well facilitated and inclusive. It promotes access to information, access to justice in matters of concern to civil society, consultation, and integration of all levels of civil society in the European project. The Contact Group's *act4europe* campaign focuses on engaging national networks with the Future of Europe debate. It encourages more active participation of NGOs and their constituencies in the debate on the Constitutional Treaty, and in the development and realisation of the concept of participatory citizenship.

c. The Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN)

This network includes more than 80 human rights organisations like Amnesty and Human Rights Watch, institutions and individuals based in 30 countries in the Euro-Mediterranean region. The EMHRN promotes networking, cooperation and development of partnerships between human rights NGOs, activists and wider civil society in the Euro-Mediterranean region. The network acts as a regional forum for human rights NGOs and a pool of expertise on promotion and protection of human rights in the region.

d. The Green 10

The Green 10 organisations are: Birdlife International, CEE Bankwatch Network, Climate Action Network Europe, European Environment Bureau (EEB), Transport and Environment, Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL), Friends of the Earth Europe (FoEE), Greenpeace International, Friends of Nature, WWF European Policy Office. Together they coordinate joint responses and recommendations to EU decision makers.

They work with EU institutions to ensure that the environment is placed at the heart of policy-making, and they coordinate joint responses and recommendations to EU officials. They work with their member organisations in the Member States (in the case of FoEE, Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland, BUND) to facilitate input into the EU decision-making process. The Green 10 regularly send information to their members and supporters – this is vital to ensure these groups are fully informed of developments at EU level, so that they can contribute effectively to the EU decision-making process.

There is a marked difference in the choice of campaign strategies and tactics among the ten organisations. FoEE and Greenpeace, for example, carry out peaceful demonstrations during public campaigns while lobbying and developing policy work. FoEE is more grassroots than Greenpeace. The European Environmental Bureau focuses on policy work. WWF cooperates in some cases with corporates.

5. Future challenges for businesses on the EU and global levels

Some business and industry sectors will face in future more pressure from NGOs and decision-makers. These sectors are: chemicals, cars, oil and utilities.

a. The chemical industry

The EU's new chemicals legislation, REACH, entered into force on 1 June 2007. European environmental, women's, health and consumer groups are not happy with this legislation and have warned that REACH should be strengthened to provide proper health and environmental protection.

The good thing about REACH is that it marks the beginning of a new approach to chemicals regulation in Europe. Over the coming years, many persistent and bio-accumulative chemicals will be substituted if safer alternatives exist, and companies will have to provide health and safety information for large volume chemicals that they produce or import into Europe. But the chemical industry's lobby arm, the European Chemical Industry Council (CEFIC), has successfully managed to weaken REACH:

- Thousands of chemicals will escape any requirement to provide sufficient health and safety information. Many chemicals that can cause cancer, birth defects and reproductive illnesses will still be allowed in manufacturing and consumer goods.
- Companies are allowed not to provide any meaningful safety data to import and manufacture chemicals in volumes below 10 tonnes/year (these are 60% of chemicals covered by REACH).
- Many high-concern chemicals will still be allowed onto the market if producers claim that they can be "adequately controlled". The approach of "adequate control" and safe thresholds is premised on a risky gamble, given the unknown effects of chemicals in combination, on vulnerable hormone functions, and on the development of children from the earliest stages of life.
- The loopholes and provisions for self-regulation contained leave REACH very vulnerable to further manipulation by the chemical industry. There is no guarantee, for example, that information from third parties about safer alternatives to hazardous chemicals will be considered in every case.

The battle for a toxic-free world is therefore far from over. Medical associations, consumer groups, NGOs and innovative businesses across Europe will continue calling for a complete substitution requirement in REACH as the minimum necessary measure against hazardous chemicals. They will be watching and going public with information about any shortcoming by chemical producers. This industry will be scrutinised in the coming years because embedded in REACH are numerous reviews, beginning in 2007 and continuing for the next 12 years. These reviews will give the EU Commission and EU member states the opportunity to amend and tighten the legislation.

Civic society groups will use their rights to request information about the presence of a limited number of hazardous chemicals in products. In the past, companies could sell almost any chemical they liked without providing health and safety information; and hazardous chemicals were only restricted in response to scandal on a case-by-case basis.

NGOs will also focus on loopholes in REACH such as allowing many chemicals that can cause serious health problems, including cancer, birth defects and reproductive illnesses, to continue being used in manufacturing and consumer goods. The new EU Chemicals Agency in Helsinki will also be closely monitored by civic society groups.

PR activities by the chemical industry may help boost its image. As an example, BAYER co-organised in August 2007 with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) an International Youth Conference in Leverkusen/Germany, where environmental protection was one of the issues discussed. Be assured that if BAYER makes one mistake and undermines the REACH implementation, NGOs will raise the pressure and remind public opinion that the corporate has fought, through its lobbyists, against most agreements on environmental issues, be it the Kyoto Protocol for the protection of the climate, REACH, the phasing out of ozone layer-damaging CFCs or efforts to reduce the use of pesticides.

By the way, BAYER still produces a large number of highly dangerous substances like plasticisers, Bisphenol A and phosgene. BAYER is also the world market leader for pesticides, many of which account for pollution and poisonings all over the world.

b. Carmakers

At the EU summit in Brussels in March 2007, European leaders pledged to cut CO₂ emissions by 20 per cent of their 1990 level, and by up to 30 per cent in the event of an international agreement on a successor to the Kyoto protocol, which runs out in 2012. In this case, Germany said it would aim to cut its emissions by 40 per cent.

The EU Commission also proposed in February 2007 the world's toughest controls on CO₂ emissions from cars. By 2012 the average new car in the EU would have to emit no more than 120g of CO₂/km from 161g/km at present if the measures are approved by EU governments. The Commission argued the change is essential to hit the EU targets for reducing CO₂ emissions under the Kyoto protocol.

DaimlerChrysler BMW, Volkswagen and the European units of General Motors and Ford Motor, have broken ranks with other European companies by describing the EU proposal as "unrealistic" and "technically unrealisable". Reminds me of the German carmakers' similar warnings in the 1980s and 1990s when they tried to argue against the introduction of lead-free petrol and catalytic filters (that were already mass-produced in the US) and diesel sooth filters (that were already in French cars).

In August 2007, European carmakers were then confronted by a friend of business, EU Industry Commissioner Günter Verheugen, who said that carmakers failing to achieve the EU's tough new emission standards will not be allowed to offset their shortfall through financial payments.

Let us remember that carmakers have agreed in 1998 to "voluntary" standards that require emissions to be cut to 140g of CO₂/km by 2008. But the European Automobile Manufacturers Association (ACEA), which groups the EU's 13 leading car makers, would almost certainly fail to comply with this "voluntary" commitment to the target given to the EU Commission.

A survey released on 4th August 2007 proved that Europe's carmakers stalled again in 2006 in their attempts to reduce CO₂ emissions despite their professed commitment to going green. The survey released by Transport & Environment, one of the Green 10 organisations in Brussels, said European fleets' new vehicle emissions fell in 2006 by just 0.2 per cent, in comparison to the previous year. The figures covered the EU, excluding Romania, Bulgaria and Malta. In the first eight years of their "voluntary" commitment, carmakers concentrated on bigger, heavier and more gas-guzzling cars, and the results speak for themselves.

c. Oil corporates

In July 2007, the Dutch Advertising Authority instructed Shell to stop misleading the public, after Friends of the Earth filed a complaint against a greenwash advertisement claiming that Shell uses its waste CO₂ to grow flowers. Shell was ordered to withdraw the advertisement in the Netherlands, and British authorities opened a formal investigation in the case.

The advert, part of a global campaign by Shell, showed smokestacks emitting flowers. It states that Shell recycles its CO₂ emissions, which contribute to global warming, by piping them into greenhouses. It also states that its emissions of sulfur dioxide, another pollutant, are used to "to make concrete". This could be interpreted as applying to all of the

waste sulphur generated by Shell. In reality, a major part of Shell's sulphur waste is used for fuel for sea ships (bunker oil) and is finally released in the air. Sea ships are one of the biggest sources of sulphur dioxide pollution.

Instead of trying to green-wash its environmental behaviour, Shell should tackle real problems like stopping gas flaring in Nigeria and elsewhere once and for all. It should be noted that Shell has cut its flaring during exploration and production from eight million tonnes in 1997 to less than six million tonnes in 2006. But much more is still to be done.

Oil-producing countries and companies burned off gas worth \$40bn at US prices in 2006, equivalent to 5.5 per cent of the world's total production of natural gas, according to an analysis by the Defense Meteorological Satellite Program, a branch of the US Air Force. Gas is flared during oil extraction, when the producers allegedly can find no use for it. It represents a waste of energy, causes hardship for local communities in oil-producing areas, and contributes to greenhouse gas emissions. The study found that Russia had the highest level of flaring, in 2004 burning off more than twice as much gas as Nigeria, the second highest.

On another issue, Britain's leading scientists in 2006 challenged the US oil company ExxonMobil to stop funding groups that attempt to undermine the scientific consensus on climate change. In an unprecedented step, the Royal Society, Britain's premier scientific academy, demanded that the company withdraws support for dozens of groups that have "misrepresented the science of climate change by outright denial of the evidence". The scientists also strongly criticised the company's public statements on global warming, which they describe as "inaccurate and misleading".

The Royal Society cited its own survey which found that ExxonMobil last year distributed 2.9 million US Dollars to 39 groups that the society says misrepresent the science of climate change. These include the International Policy Network, a think tank with its HQ in London, and the George C Marshall Institute, which is based in Washington DC. In 2004, the institute jointly published a report with the UK group the Scientific Alliance which claimed that global temperature rises were not related to rising CO2 levels in the atmosphere. If the reader of this paper has any doubts about science saying that climate change is man-made and is actually happening, then please check reports from the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

No doubt, ExxonMobil is one of the least progressive oil companies because, unlike competitors such as BP and Shell, it has not invested heavily in alternative energy sources. I will stop short from elaborating about the role oil corporates play in exacerbating climate change. Corporates like Shell and BP have invested a lot in solar energy, but the crucial point is that most of their investments are still going into oil exploration. One cannot save the climate with this strategy. This is not "beyond petroleum".

d. Utilities

Energy giants are doing too little to save the climate. They rely too much on fossil fuels and nuclear, and much of their investments lead to more climate damaging CO2 emissions. They currently face harsh public criticism for these erroneous policies. Expect this opposition to grow.

Meanwhile, the EU Commission is planning to present new legislation on 19 September 2007 to promote further liberalisation of the EU's energy markets. It strongly favours ownership unbundling as the best way to ensure that new entrants, like green energy producers such as "Greenpace Energy", can get better access to transmission networks and to prevent energy giants exploiting their control over transmission and distribution assets. Under this proposed EU legislation, Germany's E.ON and France's Electricité de France (EdF) would have to sell off their transmission networks or create fully independent network operators.

UK, Sweden and the Netherlands are the major driving forces asking the EU commission to go ahead and propose full unbundling. They want to force energy firms to sell off their transmission and distribution networks as the only way to bring more competition to the EU's energy sector. But France and Germany are leading an unbundling opposition among nine other EU states.

6. Recommendations

Changing attitudes

The best strategy I advise companies to follow is to enter a serious dialogue with NGOs and introduce real changes with measurable impacts. No one is asking the immediate phase out of dangerous chemicals, oil, coal and gas. But people want to see that corporates are delivering real CSR and not hollow PR.

Lobby transparency

In the EU capital, companies should seriously consider accepting that secrecy is unacceptable in a democratic Europe. Lobbyists will face tougher regulations, and fighting them will not work. Fact is that the EU seems set for US-style controls on lobbying after the biggest public affairs companies in Brussels ruled out in August 2007 even “voluntary” regulation because they would have to divulge their clients and fees.

The European Public Affairs Consultancies' Association (EPACA), which represents 34 companies, has said its members would boycott an interests' register to be established by the EU Commission in 2008, describing it discriminatory and unworkable. EPACA, which includes multinationals such as Burson-Marsteller and Fleishman-Hillard along with smaller firms, has argued that disclosing client information would breach competition law.

The EU Commission has repeatedly warned that if “voluntary” controls did not work it would introduce a US-style mandatory system with penalties for non-disclosure. Time has come for all business lobbyists in Brussels to go beyond supporting with lip services the principle that *undue influence should not be exerted through improper lobbying*.

REACH

On this issue the recommendation is very simple: Replace dangerous chemicals with toxic-free ones as soon as possible or else public opinion, consumers and shareholders will strike after the next scandal involving any kind of poisoning or environmental contamination. Clean image adverts are a waste of money.

Carmakers

With CO₂ emissions from transport up by 32 per cent between 1990 and 2004 and oil prices rising, carmakers should realize that the time of gas-guzzling cars and SUVs is over soon. They should fully support EU plans to reduce CO₂ car emissions and start thinking about light and clean cars – and not bigger, heavier and faster ones.

The European Automobile Manufacturers Association (ACEA) is off course worried that big models, where most profit is made, would be penalized by EU legislation. It is therefore seeking a weight-based system, which would allocate higher allowances for heavier vehicles. But this will surely support a trend towards heavier cars, which emit more and kill more pedestrians and cyclists. The average weight of new cars made in Europe grew 17kg in 2006 to 1.38 tonnes, in comparison to 2005.

In the EU, you always get a chance to change things on a “voluntary” base. If you fail, the EU gets back to you with a regulation. Prepare yourselves for serious developments because the EU is moving into real CO₂ emissions reductions with a legally-binding target of 120g CO₂/km by 2012 and a series of long-term targets leading to very ambitious but needed 80g CO₂/km by 2020. Tough and legally binding fuel-efficiency standards for cars are one of the most important steps that can and should be taken to save our climate.

Energy and climate change

Adverts like EnBW's pro nuclear one (“Nuclear energy is a bridge. A vital bridge to renewable energy and climate protection”, German Times, June 2007) are not only wrong but also a waste of money.

And attempts by energy giants like RWE to sell so-called CO₂-free coal-fired power plants as a wise investment in climate protection will also falter. Currently in Germany, up to 26 coal-fired power plants are either being built now or are in the planning stages. If all of those plants end up being installed, it will be quite difficult for Germany to reach its climate protection goals for reducing CO₂ emissions. RWE says it wants to construct two new so-called “optimized coal-fired units” at its Neurath facility which are to go on the grid in mid-2010. And it wants to build “the world's first CO₂-free, coal-fired plant including CO₂ storage”. Vattenfall Europe has also announced similar plans.

The CO₂ storage technology is still a dream and, if ever realized, would mean pumping CO₂ underground – and hoping it would never leak out. In any case, underground CO₂ storage technology reminds me very much of the problems we currently face with nuclear waste. No one knows were to store it safely for thousands of years. And if you do manage to hide it underground in an allegedly safe mine, then there is no guarantee that it would not leak at some point. Actually, underground CO₂ and nuclear waste storage means dumping huge problems on future generations.

Utilities should seriously start considering becoming world champions in promoting energy efficiency and renewable sources of energy. This is the only sustainable solution.

Pressure from above

Regarding political support for corporates, I would not advise car and energy giants to believe that politicians will always back them. The EU commission and numerous heads of state have realized that climate change is a serious global threat. In doubt? Read the UK's Stern report about the costs of climate change and watch Al Gore's film "An inconvenient truth". Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace and WWF could not have argued better.

Face it: Protecting the climate is mainstream thinking because it is a matter of survival. Still in doubt? Remember how German Chancellor Angela Merkel in an energy summit in July 2007 defied business over climate goals. She then said her government would push for an energy strategy, brushing aside criticism from business about the potential damage Germany's ambitious climate goals could inflict on its economy. After her third and last "national energy summit" with business, consumer and research representatives, the chancellor said: "*If you take climate change seriously, you do not have any options; you must implement the reduction goals [for CO2]*".

The summit's participants had failed to agree on joint conclusions. Instead of drafting an energy strategy together with business, Merkel will now have to work without, perhaps even *against* business. The chancellor put global warming at the top of the agenda for Germany's presidency of the EU (first half of 2007).

Merkel repeatedly said that her government would stick to its goal of doubling energy productivity between 1990 and 2020, meaning that Germany's economy would have to generate the same output using half the amount of energy. It would also agree on legislative incentives to speed up the deployment of renewable energy and promote energy savings measures for business and households.

The rift between the government and Germany's energy producers has also deepened because of Merkel's refusal to reconsider a 2000 decision to phase out nuclear energy.

More and more business leaders are realizing the crisis we are in. Bjorn Stigson, the head of the Geneva-based World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), said in September 2007 that a revolution of society on a scale never witnessed in peacetime is needed if climate change is to be tackled successfully.

Speaking like a professional environmentalist, Stigson said developed nations need to cut CO2 emission levels by 60 to 80 per cent from current levels by 2050 if global emissions are to be kept below 550 parts per million. Global emissions at that level would keep average permanent global temperature increase below 3 degrees by 2050, a level beyond which most scientists say climate change would be significantly worse.

The WBCSD reached this conclusion after studying the Stern review on climate change and the International Energy Association's world energy outlook. It says in its mission statement that it seeks to "provide business leadership as a catalyst for change toward sustainable development, and to support the business license to operate, innovate and grow in a world increasingly shaped by sustainable development issues".

Beyond Gross National Product (GDP)

If businesses needs to debate about a world economy ticking beyond GDP. Today, we need to create environments to discuss ways out of the global trend towards the US and European *mega consumer way of life*. We know that life supporting systems on Earth would collapse if everyone wanted to enjoy the same level of consumption like in the EU or the US. At the same time, developing nations have the right to free their peoples from poverty and raise living standards.

The truth is there are just not enough natural resources on Earth if we all want *the mega consumer way of life*. That is why we need to revive debates on changing the way we live. Should economies be solely driven by blind growth? How about manufacturing only products that last almost for ever and can be 100% recycled? How about consuming less and contemplating more? What about a green GDP and a happiness scale?

In Bhutan, a country in the Himalayas with about 650,000 inhabitants, *Gross National Happiness* (GNH) is more important than GDP. GNH is the overarching concept, the central guide for planning and development in Bhutan. This concept has its roots in the cultural heritage of Bhutan and its spiritual tradition of Buddhism.

While conventional development models stress economic growth as the ultimate objective, the concept of GNH is based on the premise that true development of human society takes place when material and spiritual development occur side by side to complement each other. The four pillars of GNH are the promotion of equitable and sustainable socio-economic development, preservation and promotion of cultural values, conservation of the natural environment, and establishment of good governance.

Another way to a sustainable economy may be through a concept promoted by the Global Footprint Network. It seeks to advance the scientific rigor and practical application of the Ecological Footprint, a tool quantifying human demand on nature and nature's capacity to meet these demands. The tool is now in use by governments, communities and businesses to monitor current ecological resource balances and to plan for the future. The network seeks to make the Ecological Footprint as prominent a metric as GDP. By 2015, through its "Ten In Ten Campaign", it aims to have ten countries managing their ecological wealth in the same way they manage their finances.

It would be a bold and courageous step if corporates actively participate in reviving public debates about the way we produce and consume, and about sustainable economics – to make the global economy sustainable without sacrificing the benefits of industrialism.

8. Links

Businesses

- Business Europe, the lobbyarm of the European industry (German members are the Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie (BDI) and the Bundesvereinigung der Deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände (BDA), www.businesseurope.eu
- World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), www.wbcsd.ch

Lobby transparency and corporate watch

- On lobby transparency in the EU: www.alter-eu.org, www.lobbycontrol.de and http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/kallas/transparency_de.htm
- The European Public Affairs Consultancies' Association (EPACA), <http://www.epaca.org/>
- On Corporate Social Responsibility, final report of the Multi-stakeholders Forum, website EU Commission: http://forum.europa.eu.int/irc/empl/csr_eu_multi_stakeholder_forum/info/data/en/CSR%20Forum%20final%20report.pdf
- CSR Europe, www.csreurope.org
- The worst EU Lobby Award 2007, http://www.worstlobby.eu/2007/add_nominee_en
- Corporate Europe Observatory, <http://www.corporateeurope.org/>
- Lobby Control, <http://www.lobbycontrol.de/blog/>
- Spinwatch, monitoring PR and spin, <http://www.spinwatch.org.uk/>

Civic society groups

- The European Consumers' Organisation BEUC, www.beuc.eu
- The EU Civil Society Contact Group, www.act4europe.org
- The Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN), www.euromedrights.net
- The Green 10, <http://www.green10.org/>
- Transport & Environment, <http://www.transportenvironment.org/>

Chemical industry

- European Chemical Industry Council, www.cefic.be
- Bayer, sustainability and commitment, <http://www.bayer.com/en/Sustainability-and-Commitment.aspx>
- Coalition against BAYER Dangers (Germany), www.CBGnetwork.org

Oil corporates and utilities

- Shell environment and society, <http://www.shell.com/home/content/envirosoc-en>
- Total corporate social responsibility, <http://www.total.com/en/corporate-social-responsibility/>
- ExxonMobil corporate citizenship, <http://www.exxonmobil.com/Corporate/Citizenship/citizenship.asp>
- ExxonMobil critics, <http://www.exxonsecrets.org/> and <http://www.exxposeexxon.com/>
- RWE corporate citizenship, <http://www.rwe.com/generator.aspx/rwe-ag/corporate-citizenship/language=en/id=24030/citizenship-page.html>
- EnBW research and environment, http://www.enbw.com/content/en/commitment/research_environment/index.jsp
- Vattenfall environment, http://www.vattenfall.com/www/vf_com/vf_com/368181envir/index.jsp

Climate change and alternative energy

- United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), <http://www.ipcc.ch/>
- The UK's Stern review on the economics of climate change, http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/independent_reviews/stern_review_economics_climate_change/stern_review_report.cfm
- Greenpeace Energy, www.greenpeace-energy.de
- The Greenpeace energy revolution scenario: A sustainable pathway to a clean energy future for Europe. Greenpeace and the Institute of Technical Thermodynamics of the German Aerospace Center (DLR), have developed a blueprint for the EU energy supply showing how Europe can lead the way to a sustainable pathway, <http://www.greenpeace.org/international/press/reports/energy-revolution-a-sustainab>

Sustainable economics

- Gross National Happiness (GNH), www.grossinternationalhappiness.org
- Global Footprint Network, www.footprintnetwork.org
- Worldwatch Institute, <http://www.worldwatch.org/taxonomy/term/118>
- Wuppertal Institute, Wolfgang Sachs and Tilman Santarius (eds.): Fair Future - Resource Conflicts, Security & Global Justice, http://www.wupperinst.org/en/publications/entnd/index.html?&beitrag_id=581&bid=6
- The Beyond GDP International Conference, 19-20 November 2007, Brussels, <http://www.beyond-gdp.eu/>

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