

AN EVENT IN THE FRAMEWORK OF

GROWTH_ε
TRANSITION

Invitation to the workshop

Redefining Growth and Prosperity

**An initiative of the
Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water
Management and the Sustainable Development Commission UK**

21 April 2009, 10am-5pm

Austrian Permanent Representation, Brussels



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Sustainable
Development Commission

BACKGROUND

In the past, economic growth was instrumental in increasing our welfare. In political circles, high growth rates are commonly still considered an essential prerequisite for our future development. The economy is currently geared, above all, to economic growth. However, the understanding that indefinite economic growth might not be possible on a finite planet reaches more and more acceptance. In recent years, two other objectives have moved up the political and policy-making agenda: sustainable development and wellbeing/quality of life. The renewed EU Sustainable Development Strategy has set quality of life and wellbeing as primary objectives in the EU agenda: “It [the EU Strategy for Sustainable Development] aims at the continuous improvement of the quality of life and well-being on Earth for present and future generations.”

The Sustainable Europe Research Institute (SERI) and the Sustainable Development Commission UK (SDC) are dealing with this issue in two different projects.

SERI’s project *“What kind of growth is sustainable?”*, which was commissioned by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, focuses on the question: What conditions are necessary to allow for a different kind of growth in wellbeing – one that is geared toward compatibility between economic growth and sustainable development – and would be acceptable to inhabitants of the ‘rich’ parts of the world?” Starting from the sustainable development strategy of the EU, arguments of such an “alternative growth” were compiled, whereby an emphasis is placed upon concepts of human quality of life and well-being.

The SDC, which is the UK Government's independent adviser on sustainable development established in 2000, runs a project on “Redefining Prosperity” that aims to map out the relationships between the three aims – growth, sustainability, wellbeing – and ask what issues are raised. Do we have to choose between these aims? Can we combine them? What sorts of policies or approaches would we need to have? These questions go to the heart of what sustainable development is about. The project report, “Prosperity Without Growth?”, will be published shortly before the workshop. This event will be its Brussels launch.

Agenda

9:30 Registration, coffee

10:00 Welcome

Elisabeth Freytag (Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management)

10:15 Presentation of input papers from SERI and the SDC

Friedrich Hinterberger (SERI)

Tim Jackson (SDC)

11:00 Comments on the input papers

Pendo Maro (EEB)

Roshan Di Puppo (Social Platform)

Oliver Zwirner (DG Environment)

Gerhard Huemer (UEAPME)

Martin Sieker (EESC)

12:00 Questions and discussion

13:00

Lunch and coffee

14:00 Economic growth and economic crisis: Is de-growth here to stay?

Victor Anderson (SDC) and

Gjalt Huppes (Universiteit Leiden)

14:30 Questions and discussion

15:00 Coffee

15:20 World Café

16:00 Presentation of results

16:30 Concluding discussion introduced by Friedrich Hinterberger/Tim Jackson

17:00 End of meeting

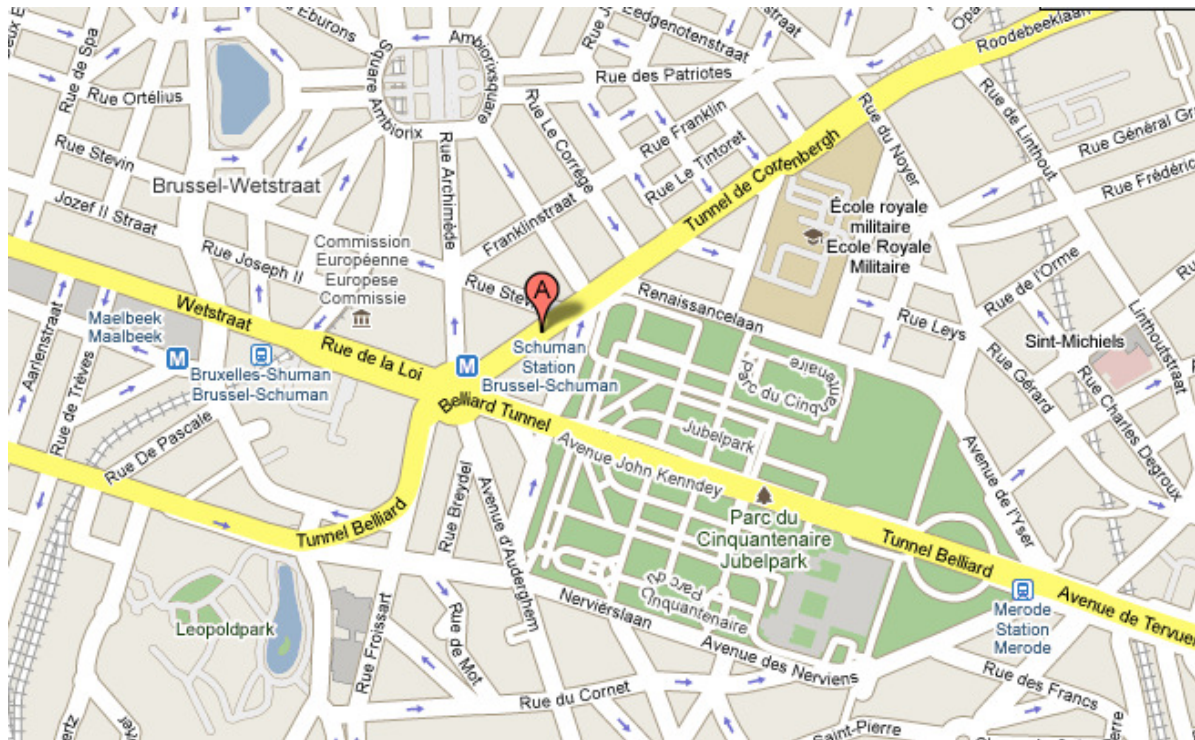
Moderation: **Rita Trattnigg**, Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management

LOCATION

Permanent Representation of Austria to the EU

Avenue de Cortenberg, 30

1040 Brussels



Organised by



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Registration

For registration by 10 April and all enquiries, please contact:

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