



ESEE News

Newsletter of the European Society for Ecological Economics

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ESEE News is published by the European Society for Ecological Economics (ESEE). Its purpose is to inform ESEE members of developments both within the Society and in other areas of potential interest. It is published four times a year and is sent free to ESEE members. The views expressed are those of the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Society as a whole.

The European Society for Ecological Economics is a not-for-profit organisation devoted to the development of theory and practice in ecological economics in Europe. Membership is open to all interested individuals working in Europe or in other areas on request. For membership details please contact the Secretariat.

Looking to the future at the Frontiers meeting

As announced in the last newsletter we will hold our next General Meeting of the ESEE during the FRONTIERS 2 conference on Wednesday February 12, 2003, 17:00-18:30 at the Timanfaya Room, Hotel Maritim, Puerto de la Cruz / Los Realejos, Tenerife, Spain. Here is a flavour of some of the issues and news on the agenda; the full AGM agenda is posted on the ESEE website at: <http://www.euroecolecon.org>.

The terms for several board members will come to an end in May 2003. Some consider re-standing, others will retire after a busy three years. Elections for the vacant posts will be held in spring for the posts of President, Vice-President(s) and Administrative Board Members, and the call for nominations is advertised in this issue (see pages 2 and 12). This is a chance for you to consider getting more actively involved in ESEE matters, and if not yourself, you may know someone else who would be a suitable candidate and willing to stand for elections. Whichever way, we hope to hear from you!

Concerning the regional boundaries of ESEE, following some communications from prospective members, the Board has been in discussion with ISEE and RSEE as to re-defining and widening the boundaries for membership. As a result, we are considering researchers from Moldova, Ukraine, Belorussia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Russia to have the choice to join ESEE (along with or instead of RSEE) from 2004. From 2003, a reduced fee of \$10 applies to Eastern European countries (Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Yugoslavia).

Even as the ESEE 2003 conference arrives

on the doorstep, we are busy finding hosts and venues for 2005. We are currently checking out possibilities to hold the meeting in Italy; another option under consideration is Portugal. Sigrid Stagl will report back on those options, and we would like to hear your ideas and views on suitable locations and willing organisers. After the two, more focused and educational FRONTIERS 'mini-conferences' we will return to the larger-scale meeting format as last held in Vienna.

For those of you coming to the Tenerife conference, we look forward to seeing you at the ESEE General Meeting on Wednesday evening, when we hope for a TunISEE-level turn-out! Of course all members are welcome to contact the ESEE secretariat with suggestions and comments on these or any other items they wish to raise, ideally before February 10th to ensure inclusion.

Framework 6 rolls out

Over 8000 people are believed to have attended the launch conference for the 6th Framework Programme, held in Brussels from the 11th to 13th of November, 2002.

The main issue of discussion at the meeting was an important change of emphasis on the funding for Networks of Excellence.

A number of the most useful presentations made by Commission officials are now available from the conference web site at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/conferences/2002/resources_en.html. See also the CORDIS website (details p. 3).

COMMITTEES

ESEE Administration and Society Development and Planning Matters

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Greetings from the Editor

Ben Davies

Welcome to the latest issue of ESEE News - and a belated Happy New Year. In particular, a warm welcome to the many new readers drawn into the society by the Frontiers conference in Tenerife. Numbers of the society are continuing to increase, and that means the opening up of new channels of communication, new initiatives, new research interests, and new networks. I hope we can continue to build on the dynamism that comes from the rich diversity of interests and perspectives that spans the European continent, and find effective ways to generate improved understanding in both our research work and our channels of communication.

This issue is itself a good indicator of both

the dynamism and the pluralism that falls within the membership of the society. We have news spanning the continent from East to West, details of workshops and conferences organised by ESEE members, reports of activities from as far afield as the Philippines and East Asia, and developments in research ranging from trans-national networks to individual projects.

With the EU Framework 6 programme just launched, the value of an effective forum for the development of European communication is ever more apparent. While we do have great linguistic diversity, and that certainly offers a challenge at all levels which we continue to work on, it also offers tremendous potential for cross-fertilising ideas and a real wealth of comparative opportunities. With each member and country we gain a new perspective, and the potential to generate new contacts and find inspiration in new areas.

The Ibero-American Conference on Development and Environment, postponed due to the eruption of the Reventador volcano in Ecuador, has been re-scheduled in Quito to April 9-12, 2003. Visit <http://www.cidma2002.org> for further details.

Announcement of Elections to

European Society for Ecological Economics

Dear ESEE Member,

The terms of the following will come to an end in May 2003: Clive Spash (President), Arild Vatn (Vice-President), Helge Hagerup/Karen Refsgaard (Treasurer), Claudia Carter (Secretary), Ben Davies, Fritz Hinterberger, Jörg Köhn, Paul Safonov, Irmi Seidl and Caroline Sullivan. Mario Giampietro, Sigrid Stagl, Felix Rauschmayer and Jesus Ramos-Martin still have one year of their elected term to go.

The elections in 2003 will take place in two phases. First, this announcement is a call for nominations for members of the Administrative Board which is detailed below. There are 11 vacancies: 1 president, 1 or 2 vice-president(s), 1 student, 7 or 8 ordinary (depending on whether the vice-president post will be held by 1 or 2 persons). The closing date for nominations is Monday 31 March 2003. Second, a vote of fully paid and student members registered with the ESEE will be conducted by mail ballot to decide amongst the nominated individuals.

I hope you will find the procedures to be followed as stated on the back page self-explanatory. If you have any specific questions or concerns regarding voting, please contact me.

Yours,
Claudia Carter (ESEE Secretary)

News from the Community Research and Development Service

COMMISSION NEWS

New programme of research under Framework 6 launched with calls for tenders

The first calls for tenders under the EU Framework VI (FP 6) research programme have now been launched. A useful summary of the key themes and other programme elements can be found on-line in the 13th January edition of CORDIS, No.212. For details visit: <ftp://ftp.cordis.lu/pub/focus/docs/212en.pdf>.

Less water yields better crops according to EU project

Drought regions in southern Europe can now achieve healthy crop yields with less irrigation water thanks to irrigation scheduling programmes recently developed by a EU funded research project. Using high tech Trunk

Diameter Fluctuations (TDF) sensors, scientists were able to gauge the water retention status of fruit trees. This information was then fed into irrigation scheduling programs to determine the amount of water necessary to maintain the trees' health and crop yields. The results from the irrigation scheduling programs were surprising: reductions in water usage of 10 to 30 per cent were achieved without affecting the yield. In fact, it was noticed that the fruit quality had significantly improved. Not only did the project result in water conservation and healthy fruit crops, it also found that there was a reduction in nitrogen leaking into the soil.

For further details contact: Elias Fereres Castiel, University of Cordoba. E-mail: aglfecae@uco.es

Commission welcomes agreement on traceability and labelling of GMOs

Environment Commissioner Margot Wallström has welcomed the adoption by the Council of a common position for a regulation on traceability and labelling of genetically modified organisms (GMOs). The adoption of the common position means that the regulation is a step closer to becoming European law. Commissioner Wallström said: 'The people of Europe want to be fully informed about the use of GMOs in food, feed, and agricultural production. It is our responsibility as policy makers to show strong political leadership and do what is necessary to ensure a high level of environmental protection as well as safety and consumer choice.'

Special Report from the Philippines: EE Skillshare

'Seeking solutions: Mangrove Ecosystems, Shrimp Farming and Local Communities'
Puerto Princesa City, Palawan, Philippines
January 2 – 12, 2003
James Stevenson, University of Reading

The Philippines has lost the vast majority of its once extensive mangrove forest over the course of the twentieth century. One of the key drivers in this habitat loss was the conversion of mangroves to earthen ponds filled with brackish water, for the culture of fish and shrimp. Palawan, a long sliver of an island in the extreme west of the Philippines, is the exception.

Designated as both an international biodiversity hotspot and a mangrove reserve (the island has an embarrassment of UNESCO world heritage site riches), Palawan has largely resisted the lure of the 'Blue Revolution' in industrial aquaculture production that has spread throughout much of the rest of the Philippines and South-East Asia. That this conservation effort has been possible is through a combination of political will and the

mobilisation of communities by many of the energetic and competent NGO groups.

This workshop was a monumental logistical operation, with immense credit shared between members of the Asia Pacific Environmental Exchange (APEX), the Industrial Shrimp Action Network (ISA-Net) and the Gund Institute for Ecological Economics (GIEE). Numerous local NGOs were also crucial in providing resources and expertise.

With around 50 participants, split roughly half and half between Filipinos and non-Filipinos and with participants from Philippine and international NGOs, government officials and academics with interests across the spectrum, co-ordination was in no way guaranteed. However, a two-day crash course in ecological economics was held in Manila and material had been posted on the workshop website in advance.

And so to work...The workshop had been marketed as a skillshare, with local groups keen to learn some theoretical arguments to assist in their claims that aquaculture was being pursued in manner that was detrimental to local

communities for the benefit of speculators from Manila and abroad. Much information flowed in the other direction with all the international participants getting an understanding of the pressures and complexity of managing coastal resources in a country so utterly dependent on them.

The focus of the workshop was a set of small working groups. These groups worked tirelessly throughout the ten days on specific key issues in Palawan, ranging from mangrove valuation, sustainable aquaculture policy and the impact of WTO policy on trade in fisheries products to a number of case-studies on local community-based coastal resource management schemes. These groups all reported on their findings in a press conference at the end of our time in Palawan.

This was true action research – giving more power to the local NGO's elbow. It was frequently inspiring. To give just one example, one of the working groups, on returning from a field trip to see mangrove deforestation in a local village trooped back to our hotel with 140 illegally-cut mangrove trees that they had seized from a building site in the village. A court case is pending. All power to their elbow indeed.

To see the workshop website visit: www.uvm.edu/giee then click on the mangrove ecosystem picture or go through the links "Training" then "Ateliers".

PROFILE

A fire-side chat to a leading figure in Ecological Economics about life, the universe and everything

Inge Røpke lives with her two sons in the suburban area of Gladsaxe, close to Copenhagen. She was born in this area and has lived there most of her life, except for a few years when she studied closer to the centre of the city. After finishing her education as an economist, Inge stayed for a short period at the University of Copenhagen before taking up a position at the Technical University of Denmark. She has now been there for almost twenty years, in different positions, with different tasks and under changing organisational structures. At the moment she is an associate professor in the Department for Manufacturing Engineering and Management, in the Innovation and Sustainability section. Until recently she was also an Associate Editor of the journal Ecological Economics.

What was your impression of your local environment when you were a child?

In the suburban area where I lived there were still in the Fifties nearby fields, but the area was very quickly built-up, not leaving many 'natural' spots behind. However, during holidays we always went to the countryside and to the sea. I was also a scout for several years and developed a taste for outdoor life. Most important for developing my enjoyment of walking and biking in the countryside were my stays in Thy, the North-western part of Jutland - the closest you can come to 'wilderness' in Denmark. Although I have seen many wonderful landscapes abroad - and have a typical Danish photo collection of impressive mountains - this place still stands out as extraordinary.

Can you identify a point when you realised you wanted to work on environmental problems?

I remember reading Hans Palmstierna's book 'Plyndring, sult, forgiftning' (Plunder, hunger, poisoning) which made a deep impression on me - an eyeopener for many Scandinavians in the late 60s and early 70s. However, in spite of that book and in spite of the pleasure I had from outdoor life, I started out more red than green. When I studied in the seventies, solidarity with the workers and with people in the third world was higher on the agenda than environmental issues for most leftists. I was aware of environmental problems as one of the evils of capitalism and 'state capitalism' (USSR etc.), but I focused on studies of the crisis in the shipbuilding industry (locus of the working class avant-garde), imperialism, and what was going on in the so-called socialist countries. It was not until the end of the 1980s that I was drawn into environmental issues through students' demand for courses on the social aspects of the environment and through a colleague's invitation to take part in an evaluation of Denmark's first subsidy program

for clean technology. Since then I got caught by environmental issues.

Who were the most influential writers for you when you were a student?

Marx and Engels, I think - to a large extent through reading some of their modern interpreters, e.g. the Americans Baran, Sweezy and Magdoff and a Danish sociologist, Curt Sørensen. Economics was taught in such a narrow mainstream way (although broader than it is taught now...), and I had a broad interest in society and social change. Marxist theory, especially historical materialism, became a way into sociological and historical thinking (while for some students of sociology at the time, marxism became a way into economic thinking...). Many of the insights achieved by this reading beyond the curriculum (e.g. the debate on structure - actor interplay) could have been achieved in other and more modern ways, but I only realized that several years later.

Have your research interests changed since you first started working on environmental issues?

Yes. I started by looking at the promotion of clean technology, and in the following years I took up several of the dogmas in the environmental economic debate. I wrote critical papers on the ideas that trade is good for the environment, that growth can be sustainable, that the quality of life is improved by increasing consumption, that the change towards services will imply dematerialization, that technological change will solve our problems etc. The papers nearly always ended up in the same conclusion: we have to do something about the increasing consumption in the rich countries, if we want to deal with the combined environmental and distributional challenge. This led me to deal directly with the consumption issue, as we have to

understand the driving forces behind consumption growth to try to check them.

Which environmental problems concern you the most at the moment?

A difficult choice! One is climate change: are we going to have floods and storms, or is a new ice age approaching due to a turning around of the Gulf stream? Another one is chemicals. I have supervised some student projects on chemicals and that has made me acutely aware of the large scale, frightening experiment we are taking part in. Third is the detrimental impact of industrial agriculture e.g. in Denmark - it seems hypocritical to be concerned with biodiversity only abroad.

Are you generally optimistic or pessimistic about the future? Has your view changed over time?

I am afraid that I am getting more pessimistic with the years. I just read the chapter on Africa in the third volume of Castells' impressive book on the network society - an extremely depressing story. Cynicism seems to be in charge at the moment - from Bush to his followers in the Danish government. A journalist, Knud Vilby, recently published a book (in Danish) called 'The fight against the poor'. As him I see very little willingness to acknowledge that we have to change our lifestyles fundamentally to give room for others.

Which figures from the past do you most admire (not just in the environmental field), and why?

Usually, I don't think about that. When asked, I would look for women who made it in the men's world without losing their integrity - Simone de Beauvoir could be a good choice.

What advice would you give young researchers just starting out in ecological economics?

RESEARCH NOTES

Research Note

How 'efficient' is nuclear power?

Philip B. Smith

IVEM Centre for Energy and Environmental Studies, Univ. of Groningen

Email: P.B.SMITH@FWN.RUG.NL

A recent study by Phil Smith and colleagues has investigated the energy costs and CO₂ emissions of the different processes needed to make a nuclear-power plant run. The energy costs are compared with the energy production (in this case, electrical) and the CO₂ emissions are compared with the emissions of a gas-burning plant (the most favourable fossil fuel) producing the same amount of electrical energy. They restrict their calculations to actual operating plants.

On their findings, under the most favourable conditions the operation of a LWR (light water reactor) from birth to death creates about 30 per cent as much CO₂ as would come from a gas-burning plant. If the present high-grade uranium ores are exhausted and one is forced to use ores with less than 0.01 per cent uranium oxide, the CO₂ emission will actually be more than that produced by a gas-burning plant. At about the same ore grade, the energy costs (not monetary) will become more than the energy produced, i.e. it would be energetically favourable to just burn the fossil fuel to begin with.

The important question is then asked: how much uranium is available with a useable (as defined above) percentage uranium oxide? The answer is startling: there is enough uranium of this quality to provide the world's present electricity production for about three (sic!) years. The details of the study are available at:

<http://www.elstatconsultant.nl>

<http://www.oprit.rug.nl/deenen/>

Social Science Partnership for European Environmental Research (SPEER) – An Integrative Approach for Environmental Research in Europe

Bernd Hansjürgens and Felix Rauschmayer
UFZ, Centre for Environmental Research
Leipzig-Halle

The challenge of making global change sustainable in areas such as population growth, migration, industrialisation, international trade and land-use, calls for analysis of the interdependencies of different (sub)systems such as the water cycle, biodiversity, matter flows, and the socio-economic system including cultural, economic and living space aspects. An appropriate way to deal with such challenges is a trans- and interdisciplinary research approach. To develop and promote such a research approach on a European scale, the *Partnership for European Environmental Research (PEER)* network is bringing together (currently) seven of the largest European environmental research centres, each presenting a "Centre of Excellence" on the national scale: ALTERRA - Green World Research Centre (The Netherlands), CEH - Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (United Kingdom), CEMAGREF - Centre for Agricultural and Environmental Engineering Research (France), IES - Institute for Environment and Sustainability (European Commission, Ispra, Italy), NERI - National Environmental Research

Institute (Denmark), SYKE - Finnish Environment Institute (Finland) and UFZ - Centre for Environmental Research (Germany).

The mission of PEER (cp. <http://peer-initiative.org>) is to lead the development of a European Research Area in the environmental sciences, by integrating a broad range of environmental disciplines to provide science-based support for the development of a sustainable European environment. The main objectives are to develop and promote joint strategies in environmental research in support of both EU and national policies; to create synergies and critical mass so as to improve the competitiveness of European environmental research; to create opportunities for the exchange of scientific personnel and the training of young scientists; to prepare and facilitate proposals for the Framework Research Programmes of the European Union and to develop management capacities for large-scale and long-term European research projects and programmes dedicated to complex problems.

The networking between these centres are carried out through six thematic networks:

(1) Biodiversity and Nature Conservation (2) Aquatic Ecosystems and Sustainable Water Management (3) Contaminated Environments, Risk Assessment and Remediation Strategies (4) Global Change Impacts (5) Society, Natural Resources and Environmental Policy (6) Landscape Planning and Management.

The social sciences in the PEER network are organised in PEER pillar five 'Society, Natural Resources and Environmental Policy'.

continued from page 4

I would recommend reading my 'heroes' Herman Daly and Joan Martinez-Alier. Daly has the most wonderful style in his writing. Through clarity and illustrative metaphors and examples he gives you aha-experiences. Martinez-Alier provides very interesting perspectives, because he combines a never-failing instinct for distributional issues with a deep historical insight.

What kinds of music do you listen to?

The music that my younger son introduces - Red Hot Chili Pepper is his favourite at the

moment, I think. Actually, I prefer Sibelius and Carl Nielsen...

How do you relax at the weekend?

The weekend is the time for housework: shopping, washing, cleaning etc. - and often I have also some job-related work to do. I have a passion for reading novels, so fortunately I have found a way to combine housework and novels: I use the walkman to listen to taperecorded novels, borrowed at the library. Housework is close to becoming pleasant this way. The real spare time I spend mostly with

my children - chatting, watching tv and video, walking, and biking.

Do religious beliefs influence your life and work?

No, but I have been much influenced by theologian philosophers. The Danish theologian K.E. Løgstrup has had a strong impact on a group of theology students - now in their fifties and sixties - who have made very interesting contributions on environmental issues, ethics, view of nature, technological change etc. Sometimes it is really an advantage to be able to read Danish.

In Brief

Ethics experts discuss setting up a European ethics observatory

A European observatory for ethical issues in science is necessary because discussions and debates currently conducted at a national level are not having any impact at European level, according to Barbara Rhode, Head of Unit for Ethics and Science in the European Commission.

Coordinators of pan-European networks on ethics in science gathered in Brussels on 28 and 29 November at a Commission event to discuss the setting up of such an observatory, as foreseen in the Commission's Science and Society Action Plan. Concrete actions are expected to begin this year.

The observatory would facilitate access to information, gather intelligence and information and identify the ethical criteria necessary for the evaluation of proposals for projects under the Sixth Framework Programme (FP6).

The Commission has already made some progress in this area with the funding of EURETHNET, the European information network in ethics in medicine and biotechnology. The network covers Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the UK, and is designed as a virtual unit of different databases constructed using common structures, and a thesaurus allowing cross searching and comparative information research. EURETHNET makes information on ethics in biomedicine, biotechnology and related legal issues available to academics, researchers, decision-makers and consumers via an Internet portal. The network aims to harmonise documentary standards and documentation procedures while respecting ethical pluralism where content is concerned.

For further information on the Science and Society Action Plan, please visit:

<http://www.cordis.lu/rtd2002/science-society/home.html>

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/science-society>

For further information on EURETHNET, please contact:
E-mail: hfanger@gwdg.de

LOOK ROUND

Each issue we take a stroll round the continent to catch up on the latest environmental news.

Ukraine

Maria Nijnik, Academician of the Ukrainian Ecological Academy and Researcher at the Macaulay Institute, looks over the Ukraine.

The Ukraine comprises the most extensive nation in Europe in terms of territory and is a well populated country. Being a strategically significant state, today however, the Ukraine undergoes a difficult period in its history, with challenging perspectives, on one hand, and acute problems, on the other. With elimination of the existing economic relations, followed by structural changes in the early 1990s, the Ukraine's socio-economic life has been badly affected. The intensive 'industrialisation' of the economy in the past was promoted at the expense of household consumption. And it follows that to shrink and transform its huge military-industrial complex, the country had to expand production for the civil market and seek opportunities in public services. That was not an easy task. The country has experienced difficulties up till now, and many of them are related to the environment.

The Ukraine has inherited from its previous system the situation where 15 per cent of its territory lies in the zone of environmental disaster. Among the major points for concerns are the consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear accident. The area contaminated with radionuclides exceeds 41,000 km², excluding extremely polluted lands and the territories where the levels of nuclear precipitation are not a special issue (Ministry of Environment, 1994). The strategic goal of Ukrainian environmental policy is, therefore, 'greening of the economy'. Among the first priorities are environmental security and nuclear safety, and to reach these objectives much attention is being paid to environmental monitoring, environmental impact assessment and risk assessment, and the development of cleaner production technologies.

The southern part of the Ukraine lies in the

the Steppe zone, and considering a growing shortage of clean water, particularly in this area, the priority directions of environmental policy comprise the development of progressive technologies of water purification and restoration of rivers and lakes. Air pollution is also a problem of special concern with respect to mobile sources of air pollution, and also regarding large industrial agglomerations concentrated in the eastern and south-eastern parts of the country. Much attention is being paid to soil protection and optimisation of the agri-landscapes, the development of biotechnological methods of soil recovery, ecologically friendly fertilisers and methods of crop protection to raise productivity of agricultural production and enhance the ecological safety of food.

In order to preserve and improve the country's natural resources potential, to decrease the adverse influence of economic activity on the environment and to contribute positively to international efforts for the prevention of climate change, important steps have been undertaken towards wise use, regeneration and preservation of forests. Following the agreements under the Convention on Biological Diversity (1992), particular attention is being paid to nature conservation. The efforts are also focused on the development of tourism and recreation and on the protection of the valuable recreational areas of the country, especially those of the Crimea and the Carpathian Mountains.

The Ukraine's environmental policy is based on the Agenda 21 principles of the acknowledgement of integrity of the global ecosystem, surviving together and sustainable development. The country has signed a long list of international agreements in the sphere of environmental protection, including the Climate Change Convention. The Ukraine takes an active part in international projects, such as 'The preservation of biodiversity in Eastern Carpathians', 'Biodiversity protection in the delta of the Danube river', 'Environmental control and the protection of the Black Sea' and many others. Still, a lot remains to be done.

ND EUROPE

el news. This issue we visit countries on the edges of the Atlantic and the Baltic.

In Brief

Easier Access to Environmental Information

The European Parliament and the Council has reached a conciliation agreement on the draft directive on public access to environmental information.

The Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters ('Aarhus Convention') was signed by the EU and all Member States in June 1998. It gives citizens access to environmental information, to justice in environmental matters and participation in decision-making. It entered into force on 30 October 2001. The EU has to bring its own legislation in line with the Aarhus Convention. The draft directive on public access to information on environmental matters is one of three directives aimed at implementing this Convention.

The directive will strengthen the rights of citizens seeking information from national, regional or local authorities on environmental decisions. The conciliation agreement between the Parliament and the Council includes the following elements:

- * public officials will be obliged to actively assist citizens seeking environmental information;

- * where requests for documents are refused under the exemptions allowed in the directive, this should be clearly explained;

- * quality standards will be introduced to ensure that information supplied by the Member States is up-to-date, accurate and reliable;

- * the contamination of the food chain should be included in the definition of environmental information;

- * information should be provided for free but administrative charges for collecting the information may be levied. Higher charges can be made for information provided on a commercial basis.

For further information see:
<http://www.unece.org/env/pp/documents/cep43e.pdf>

**IF YOU HAVE NEWS, SEND IT
 TO: b.davies@macaulay.ac.uk**

Eire

Sheamus Flynn, researcher in Dublin, bags up some recent news from the Emerald Isle.

Although turkey is traditional at Christmas, it was fish that were most on everyone's minds in December. The government has threatened to go to the European Court of Justice to try to keep Spanish fishing boats out of Ireland's coastal waters. The fisheries minister warned it could become a 'war of the seas', as Ireland's failure to extend temporary restrictions on Spanish boats' access leaves the country fearing the 'fishing out' of its marine waters. Spain said the agreement enshrined its right to fish inside the 'Irish box' that forms a rectangle extending for up to 80 miles around the coast. Around 200 Spanish ships are expected to take advantage of open access to the 'box', while the existing agreement limits access to 40.

More bad news at the end of last year was the announcement that Britain might think of dumping radioactive pollution stockpiled at its Sellafield nuclear reprocessing plant into the Irish Sea after 2006, as tanks storing the waste may become unsafe. The tanks, built in the 1950s and 1960s at the plant in Cumbria in northwest England, do not meet modern standards and have already exceeded their expected lifetimes.

In fact, Irish concern about nuclear activities at Sellafield has become something of a national pastime. A celebrity-backed campaign against the Sellafield complex culminated with the delivery of thousands of protest postcards to the UK's Prince Charles and Prime Minister Tony Blair on the 16th anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster. The campaign was spearheaded by Ali Hewson, wife of U2 frontman Bono, supported by a string of well-known figures including pop group The Corrs, singers Ronan Keating and Samantha Mumba, and Manchester United soccer captain Roy Keane. Postcards were delivered to homes throughout Ireland, and put on sale in shops,

and a spokesman for Ireland's postal service said 700,000 cards were received. The postcard addressed to Tony Blair showed a close-up of a human eye with the message: 'Tony, look me in the eye and tell me I'm safe.' In the autumn the plant even sparked military action, though fortunately of a peaceful kind: Ireland's navy and air force turned out to monitor the passage through the Irish Sea of two ships carrying nuclear fuel to the plant.

Better news for environmentalists was received in autumn last year when it was reported a green tax on plastic shopping bags had hugely slashed the use of the carrier bags, and raised 3.5 million euros for Irish state coffers in just three months after it was introduced. The government said the use of plastic bags had fallen by more than 90 per cent since the levy was introduced in March to encourage the use of sturdy, reusable shopping carriers and remove the eyesore of wind-blown plastic bags. It had been estimated that the Irish Republic's 3.9 million people were using 1.2 billion plastic bags each year.

In the summer last year the main Irish green energy firm Airtricity began constructing the country's largest wind farm, capable of supplying power for 25,000 homes. The 35 million euro installation at Kingsmountain in the northeastern county of Sligo will employ 10 wind turbines of 2.5 MW each and is expected to be operational in early 2003. Earlier last year, the Irish government approved green energy projects worth 400 million euros which it said would double the amount of electricity generated from renewable energy sources. Around seven per cent of Ireland's electricity is currently produced from such sources.

But not all energy stories are so happy. The government also gave the go-ahead to develop Ireland's first significant gas field in 20 years, off a known field close to the coast of County Mayo in western Ireland. The project has generated fierce controversy, sparking objections from environmentalists and fishermen's associations in Mayo, where the (currently) unspoilt coastline is popular with tourists.

BOOKS

Please note that the details of books listed here are provided by the publisher

Greenhouse Economics: Value and Ethics

Clive L Spash

Routledge, London. 2002.

ISBN: 0 415 127181 (HB) 75.00 UKP.

320 pages.

This important book examines one of the most crucial issues in the modern world: climate change. With a refreshing interdisciplinary perspective that pulls together strands of natural science, economics and ethics, *Greenhouse Economics* poses some serious questions and offers intelligent answers.

Themes covered include:

- * How does science interact with business and government?
- * What role does the media play?
- * To what extent should individuals take responsibility for the society in which they and their descendants live?

By examining issues such as the Kyoto Protocol, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, recent economic analyses, and the ethical concerns of environmental

economics, this book manages to provide an up-to-date and informative analysis of this important problem facing society.

The book will be of strong interest to students and academics in the fields of ecological and environmental economics, while also being essential reading for all those for whom climate change is an important professional or personal concern. The interdisciplinary analysis will appeal to academics in a range of subjects including politics, geography, environmental ethics and ecology, as well as policy makers.

Contents:

1. Economics, science and politics: Introducing some of the issues
2. Scientific understanding of the enhanced greenhouse effect
3. Impacts of global climate change
4. Weak uncertainty: risk and imperfect information
5. Strong uncertainty: Ignorance and indeterminacy
6. Calculating the costs and benefits of GHG control
7. Loading the dice? Values, opinions and ethics
8. Dividing time and discounting the future
9. Economics, ethics and future generations
10. Science, economics and policy.

The Environmentalism Of The Poor: A Study of Ecological Conflicts and Valuation

Joan Martinez Alier

Edward Elgar, Cheltenham
2002

ISBN: 1 84064 909 7 (HB) 59.95 UKP

328 pages

The Environmentalism of the Poor has the explicit intention of helping to establish two emerging fields of study – political ecology and ecological economics – whilst also investigating the relations between them.

The book analyses several manifestations of the growing 'environmental justice movement', and also of 'popular environmentalism' and the 'environmentalism of the poor', which will be seen in the coming decades as driving forces in the process to achieve an ecologically sustainable society. The author studies, in detail, many ecological distribution conflicts in history and at present, in urban and rural settings, showing how poor people often favour

resource conservation. The environment is thus not so much a luxury of the rich as a necessity of the poor. It concludes with the fundamental questions: who has the right to impose a language of valuation and who has the power to simplify complexity?

Contents:

1. Currents of Environmentalism
2. Ecological Economics: 'Taking Nature into Account'
3. Indices of (Un) Sustainability, and Neo-Malthusianism
4. Political Ecology: The Study of Ecological Distribution Conflicts
5. Mangroves Versus Shrimps
6. The Environmentalism of the Poor: Gold, Oil, Forests, Rivers, Biopiracy
7. Indicators of Urban Unsustainability as Indicators of Social Conflict
8. Environmental Justice in the United States and South Africa
9. The State and Other Actors
10. The Ecological Debt
11. On the Relations between Political Ecology and Ecological Economics

Second Announcement - Call For Papers and Posters

Natural Forests In The Temperate Zone Of Europe - Values And Utilisation

October 13-17, 2003

Transcarpathia, Ukraine

International and interdisciplinary conference, organised by Swiss Federal Research Institute WSL, Birmensdorf (Switzerland) and Carpathian Biosphere Reserve, Rakhiv (Ukraine)

The objectives of this conference are to:

- review the status quo and the state of knowledge about natural (old growth) forests in the temperate zone of Europe,
- analyse the value and benefits of natural forests for ecology and society,
- assess the economic potential of natural forests and forest reserves,
- intensify the international and interdisciplinary co-operation in research on natural forests, and
- promote and support the long-term protection and conservation of old-growth forests.

The main topics will be 'Value of natural forests as reference systems', 'Value of natural forests as largely pristine habitats in an anthropogenically modified landscape', 'Socio-economical values of natural forests', and 'Protection and management of natural forests'.

Deadline for the submission of abstracts of papers and posters is **February 28, 2003.**

For more detailed information, please visit the conference website with online registration:

http://www.wsl.ch/forest/waldman/rakhiv_2003/

or contact Brigitte Commarmot: rakhiv_2003@wsl.ch (in English) or Dr. Fedir Hamor cbr@rakhiv.ukrtel.net (in Ukrainian or Russian).

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First announcement

**EU Advanced Summer
Course
in**

**Integrated Assessment
Methodology**

**PUZZLE SOLVING FOR
POLICY**

September 1-13, 2003

*Organised by the International Centre
for Integrative Studies (ICIS),
Maastricht University*

Course description

The central question that underlies the course is 'How to use IA tools and methods in practise?' The course contents will be structured around the following main themes:

Science-policy-society interfaces & governance issues
Integrative concepts & system thinking
IA modelling
Scenario analysis
Participatory methods
Uncertainty management

Applicant profile

The course IA methodology is designed for young researchers (PhDs and post docs) with a natural science, social sciences or humanities background, as well as young professionals in policy, business and NGO circles (age group under 35). Students from less favoured countries are encouraged to participate, and for them help with getting scholarships to cover travel and other costs will be provided.

More information

More information can be found at our website : <http://www.icis.unimaas.nl>

Application will close on **April 1, 2003.**

Contact information

International Centre for Integrative
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P.O. Box 616
6200 MD Maastricht, The
Netherlands
Tel: +31 43 388 26 62
Fax: +31 43 388 49 16

CONFERENCES

Call for papers

Congress with Innovation Fair
**Sustainable Management In Action:
Towards A Stakeholder Approach**

September 4-5, 2003
University of Geneva

Organised by

*Centre For Human Ecology and Environmental Sciences,
University Of Geneva
and the*

Association for Promotion of Sustainable Management, Lausanne

Preliminary profile of the congress:

SESSION A: Concepts, strategies and tools of sustainable management

Audits, life cycle analysis, co-operative benchmarking, charter for suppliers, sustainable personnel development, contracting, environmental balance, ecolabels, energy-efficiency, ecodesign, ecomapping, ethical management, risk management, financial instruments, biodiversity, ecotainment, sustainable reporting, human resources and education, renewable and clean energies and materials.

SESSION B: Development outlook

Research- and pilot projects, innovative concepts and promotional actions, incentives, public private partnerships, sustainopreneurs, Global Compact.

SESSION C: Forum of consumers, shareholders and students.

Debate on sustainable products and services.
With the participation of decision makers in politics and business.

SESSION D: Norms and certification

ISO 14'001, EMAS, SA 8000, IAS, etc: international situation and outlook, summary of laws and regulation.

SESSION E: Innovations in sustainable technologies in fields of:

Automotive, building, cement, chemicals, cleaning, electronics, food, glass & ceramics, health, iron & steel, machinery, mining, packaging, paperboard, plastics, printing, textiles, tourism, transports, and others.

Submission deadline: April 30, 2003 (abstracts only)

Final selection : June 15, 2003

Full paper not later than August 15, 2003

Proposals according to the preliminary profile of the congress should be sent to:
Beat.Burgenmeier@ses.unige.ch
Official congress languages are English, French and German.

We are trying to increase our coverage of conferences and workshops being organised and attended by ESEE members, so please email details to the editor.

VIEWPOINT

A new occasional section for discussion, ideas, reflections and comments.

This issue, Irmi Seidl, senior researcher at the Swiss Federal Research Institute WSL, shares some of her impressions after travelling for 4 months in South-East Asia (India, Burma, Laos, and Thailand) last summer.

When I asked the owner of an upper class Ayurveda Health Centre, located south of Bombay (Mumbai) why he hadn't installed active solar heaters instead of electric water heaters, he told me: 'I enjoy farm house tariffs for electricity, which is nearly nothing. So I am better off installing electric heaters'. Distorted prices, I soon realised, seem to be a major reason for resource squandering in India. Although the reasons for price distortion appear to be basically the same compared to northern countries, they come in slightly different colours. In India, one important reason for low electricity prices is the high income differential; in fact, the poor from both rural and urban areas are not even able to pay electricity bills that cover the basic production costs, to say nothing of external costs. Furthermore, those people in poverty are particularly vulnerable to 'vote buying' through electricity tariffs: repeatedly, electoral candidates have promised low electricity tariffs or even the cancellation of unpaid electricity bills if elected. Other arguments for low electricity tariffs are the increase of living standards, and low production costs for exporting sectors.

A striking environmental problem in India is plastic waste. One person I talked to remarked in desperation: 'I wonder whether this country can ever be cleaned up'. Plastic waste is certainly everywhere. To give a glimpse of the problem, one Indian newspaper reported that every day 1500 cows die because of up to a dozen kilos of plastic waste in their stomachs. As regards the handling of the waste, here and there it is burned causing air pollution. These problems and many more are difficult to tackle, as the powerful plastic industry averts any attempts by environmentalists and politicians to regulate plastic use.

Plastic can stand as one example of the technical lock-in phenomenon applying similarly to south-east Asian and to northern countries. As the plastic industry has become very powerful and literally all-pervading, it seems there is hardly any alternative which could be developed and serve the same functions. Another example of increasing lock-

in is private transport. Transport, especially of the middle class, is based more and more on car use, and the corresponding infrastructure is being built up, for example in highways development. An upper class Indian pointed out to me that 'today, nearly every college student has his own car.' For an example of a town locked in to private car use, take Bangkok. The traffic infrastructure for this town was planned by American city planners in the 1960s who were inspired by Los Angeles. Solutions to the permanent traffic jam and its accompanying air pollution seem to be out of reach. Yet another example of developing technical lock-in is in sanitary management. Western technologies are introduced and spread, which forecloses options to find and introduce technologies that prevent high water use and expensive sewer systems.

The role model chosen by the societies I visited is definitely the 'western' life style, which is largely equated with American life style. And this model seems mainly promoted by television which reaches even the remotest villages, as well as other forms of publicity. The corresponding life-style products which promise a modern life without any hardship are opening up new markets, and the publicity topics that seem to seduce consumers are the same in the north and the south: Whisky with beautiful women (often pale or western), and cigarette-smoking men driving jeeps. It certainly seems no exaggeration to say that millions, if not billions, are waiting to consume like westerners do, or seem to do. And to achieve this level, many are eager to work very hard.

In fact, the western role model not only concerns private consumption but also seems to extend to public spaces. I was dismayed to see in Laos that the architecture of main squares and river sites follows European examples, with even the same paving-stones. I even wondered if the development aid, which amounts to 16 per cent of the BNP of Laos, was somehow linked to copying European design of public spaces.

Laos and Burma (Myanmar), two countries in which westernization is still at its infancy, are increasingly courted by neighbouring countries for their rich resources (primarily woods, hydroelectricity, and natural gas), for their potential markets, and for their transit position. Westernization with exploitation of resources and major economic changes are

looming.

Burma is a sadly typical example of the environmentally disastrous consequences of corruption, dictatorship and civil war. The military regime enriches itself by exploiting the natural resources, as do various paramilitary groups, by, for example, selling logging rights across large areas. The human suffering involved is simply unmeasured and ignored. (Perhaps not surprising, as another income source of both is drug production and trade.)

Faced with major environmental problems and societal changes, I turned my attention also to ecological projects and movements. Two projects I visited stand out. First, the cultivation of green cotton in Madhya Pradesh, in the centre of India. In this Swiss-Indian private project, more than 1000 farmers have adopted ecological farming methods. The textiles produced from the green cotton are sold by a Swiss retail chain. I had the chance to assist in interviews with farmers. They stressed the benefits: (i) financially, as they need no more agro-chemicals, and many farmers are highly indebted from these purchases (ii) as regards their health, as the application of these chemicals has ceased, and (iii) the soil quality has markedly improved.

The second project which raised my spirits is in Thailand. Sulak Sivaraksa, Thai intellectual and winner of the Alternative Nobel Prize, has inspired and set up a large network of NGOs. The groups are involved in the movement against dams, illegal logging, and the construction of an oil pipeline in pristine forests. They experiment with alternative education methods and try to reach university students, they critically discuss consumerism, and link Buddhism and environmentalism. In the meantime, this active grassroot movement involves various strata of the society, has good contacts to the mass media and the clergy, and supports activists of neighbouring countries. It was a pleasure to meet some of the many young curious people involved who are highly aware of the social and environmental problems which their country and the world are facing.

If you would like to contribute a viewpoint, on resource issues, experiences or other ideas please get in contact with the editor. Comments of any length up to 1000 words are welcomed, and are intended to be informal. Writing need not be in English.

CALENDAR EVENTS

February

February 12-15, 2003

FRONTIERS 2. European Applications in Ecological Economics.

Tenerife, Spain

Organised by ESEE with University de la Laguna, Tenerife.

<http://www.euroecolecon.org>

March

March 14-15, 2003

Citizen's Parliament on Sustainable Consumption.

Brussels, Belgium.

Organised by IBGE-BIM, the CRIOC and ACRR; EC funded.

<http://www.igbebim.be>

March 23-27, 2003

Environmental Future of Aquatic Ecosystems.

Zurich, Switzerland.

5th International Conference on Environmental Future (5th ICEF).

<http://www.icef.eawag.ch/>

April

April 11-14, 2003

UK Agricultural Economics Society Annual Conference

Seale Hayne, Devon, UK.

<http://www.aes.ac.uk>

April 16-18, 2003

Framing Land Use Dynamics. Integrating knowledge on environmental and socio-economic systems.

Utrecht University, Netherlands.

<http://networks.geog.uu.nl/conference>

April 9-12, 2003 (NEW**)**

Ibero-american Conference on Development and Environment

Quito, Ecuador.

<http://www.cidma2002.org> or email

cidma@flacso.org.es

May

May 22-24, 2003

Second Biennial Conference of US Society for Ecological Economics.

Saratoga Springs, NY, USA.

<http://www.ussee.org>

June

June 12-14, 2003

Scales, Limits and Borders. Problems in Political Ecology

Turku/Abo, Finland.

6th Nordic Conference on Environmental Social Sciences (NESS).

<http://www.abo.fi/6thNESS>

July

August

August 18-22, 2003 (NEW**)**

XX Congress of the European Society for Rural Sociology.

Work, Leisure and Development in Rural Europe Today

Sligo, Ireland.

European Society for Rural Sociology.

Deadline for abstracts: April 1, 2003

<http://www.itsligo.ie/rural>

September

September 1-13, 2003 (NEW**)**

Puzzle Solving for Policy.

EU Advanced Summer Course in Integrated Assessment Methodology.

Maastricht, The Netherlands.

International Centre for Integrative Studies (ICIS), Maastricht University.

Deadline: April 1, 2003

<http://icis.unimaas.nl>

September 4-5, 2003 (NEW**)**

Sustainable Management in Action. Towards a Stakeholder Approach.

Geneva, Switzerland.

Centre for Human Ecology and Environmental Sciences, University of Geneva and

Association for the Promotion of Sustainable Management, Luusanne.

Deadline for abstracts: April 30, 2003.

Email: beat.burgenmeier@ses.unige.ch

October

October 13-17, 2003 (NEW**)**

Natural Forests in the Temperate Zone of Europe: Values and Utilisation

Transcarpathia, Ukraine

Swiz Federal Research Institute (WSL) and Carpathian Biosphere Reserve, Rakhiv, Ukraine

Deadline for abstracts: February 28, 2003.

http://www.wsl.ch/forest/waldman/rakhiv_2003/

Do you know of forthcoming conferences and workshops in related areas? Please forward details (preferably with a website) to the editor at: b.davies@macaulay.ac.uk

Take Note

ESEE BOARD: NOMINATIONS PROCEDURE

Nominations for the Administrative Council - President (1 position vacant)

Those standing for President will have to be fully paid members and require the agreed support of 5 fully paid current members of the ESEE who should be named in the submission. They must provide a one-page (12pt, single spaced, in English) statement of their qualifications and intended contribution to the Council and Society. Thus, documents required for each candidate are:

- named and agreed support from 5 fully paid ESEE members
- a statement of intent and background

These details will be supplied as part of the election process to ESEE members.

Nominations for the Administrative Council - Vice-President(s) (1-2 position(s) vacant)

Those standing for Vice-President will have to be fully paid members and require the agreed support of 5 fully paid current members of the ESEE who should be named in the submission. They must provide a one-page (12pt, single spaced, in English) statement of their qualifications and intended contribution to the Council and Society. Thus, documents required for each candidate are:

- named and agreed support from 5 fully paid ESEE members
- a statement of intent and background

These details will be supplied as part of the election process to ESEE members.

Nominations for the Administrative Council - Active Members / Active Student Members (5 to 6 positions vacant)

Those standing for the Administrative Council will have to be fully paid members and require the agreed support of 5 fully paid current members of the ESEE who should be named in the submission. They must provide an half page (12pt, single spaced, in English) statement of their qualifications and intended contribution to the Council and Society. Thus, documents required for each candidate are:

- named and agreed support from 5 fully paid ESEE members
- a short statement of intent and background

These details will be supplied as part of the election process to ESEE members.

Nominations for the Administrative Council - Student Member (1 position vacant)

Those standing for the post of Student Representative on the Administrative Council have to be enrolled at least half time in higher education and will require the agreed support of 5 fully paid current members of the ESEE who should be named in the submission. Candidates can either be paid up active student members or ESEE-registered student members who take advantage of the three-year free membership offer while in higher education. They must provide an half page (12pt, single spaced, in English) statement of their qualifications and intended contribution to the Council and Society. Thus, documents required for each candidate are:

- named and agreed support from 5 fully paid ESEE members
- a short statement of intent and background

These details will be supplied as part of the election process to ESEE members. Note that only student and active student members may vote for this candidate.

Where to Send Nominations

Nominations, including the complete set of documents requested above, should be received by the ESEE Secretariat on or before 31 March 2003, preferably by e-mail (address opposite). Please mark envelopes for the attention of Charlene Nash, ESEE Secretariat (Elections).

For further details refer to the ESEE website: <http://www.euroecolecon.org/>

Food for Thought: Past Greats

This is what you should do; love the Earth and sun and the animals, despise riches, give alms to everyone that asks, stand up for the stupid and crazy, devote your income and labour to others, hate tyrants, argue not concerning God, have patience and indulgence towards the people, take off your hat to nothing known or unknown or to any man or number of men...re-examine all you have been told at school or church or in any book, dismiss what insults your soul, and your very flesh shall be a great poem.

Walt Whitman (1819 - 1892)

The tree which moves some to tears of joy is in the eyes of others only a green thing that stands in the way. Some see nature all ridicule and deformity... and some scarce see nature at all. But to the eyes of the man of imagination, nature is imagination itself.

William Blake (1757-1827)

The wise skeptic does not teach doubt but how to look for the permanent in the mutable and fleeting.

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882)

The best thing one can do when it's raining is to let it rain

Henry Longfellow (1807 - 1882)

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