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Newsletter on Economic Degrowth for Ecological Sustainability and Social Equity

1. Recent developments
2. Upcoming events

1. Recent developments

A Conference in the European Parliament

A conference on Socially Sustainable Economic Degrowth took place in the European Parliament on

on April 16 2009. Speakers included Joan Martinez Alier (Autonomous University of Barcelona), Francois Schneider (Research and Degrowth), Francine Mestrum (University of Ghent),

Stefan Giljum (Sustainable Europe Research Institute) and Raoul Weiler (University of Leuven)

Event was put together by Leida Rijnhout and Thomas Schauer and proceedings are available at: http://www.clubofrome.at/2009/degrowth/files/booklet_degrowth.pdf

A Special issue in the Journal of Cleaner Production

The Journal of Cleaner Production is dedicating one of its next issues on the topic of sustainable degrowth. Some of the articles are already available on the website of the journal.

The Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress

The last year saw several developments concerning GDP as a measurement unit, economic growth and well-being. One of these initiatives is the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress, chaired by Joseph E. Stiglitz and Amartya Sen, initiated by the French government in 2008. The commission focuses on the "adequacy of the current measures of economic performance, including GDP and their relevance as measures for societal well-being, or economic, environmental, and social sustainability. "

<http://www.stiglitz-sen-fitoussi.fr/en/membres.htm>

While challenging the mainstream measurements of economic performance and their environmental and social relevance, the Commission does not delve into issues such as the need to reduce overall production and consumption, which is being the major drive of environmental and social crises.

Relevant articles and reports that came of up in the last year, which we would like to draw your attention to:

G.D.P. R.I.P. / New York Times

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/10/opinion/10zencey.html?_r=2&emc=eta1

Sustainable Consumption Policies Effectiveness Evaluation - a report, issued by the TNO Built Environment and Geosciences,

p. 114 « This obsession with economic growth is just as fatal as it is redundant. Limitations set by nature, both as a source and a sink, are unavoidable and will dominate our economy and our lives in the long term. Our consumption patterns will have to adapt to these facts of life, and with increasing resource scarcity (be it economic, physical or political scarcity) and the strive for social justice inherent to sustainable consumption, even its very definition is about to change: in future, sustainable consumption may no longer mean to stop squandering natural resources despite a situation of abundance, but to lead a dignified life in a situation of overall resource scarcity (a situation familiar to the world's poor). »

Available at: http://www.score-network.org/files//35271_SCOPE2-Final_Report_-_071008.pdf

GDP and beyond - Measuring progress in a changing world

Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament

Paper talks about new indicators of economic growth, without challenging the very idea scaling down production and consumption.

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2009:0433:FIN:EN:PDF>

Political guidelines for the next Commission

A press release by José Manuel Barroso from September 03 2009

p. 17 "Those growth rates - and the economic model behind them - were simply not sustainable. Recovery will require a different approach from the past."

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/president/pdf/press_20090903_EN.pdf

A statement of Former President of America Bill Clinton, made in Denver, Colorado, January 2008

"We just have to slow down our economy and cut back our greenhouse gas emissions 'cause we have to save the planet for our grandchildren."

2. Upcoming events

Recovery towards what? Finance, justice, sustainability

Friday, November 6

9:00 - 19:30

Congress Centre, London

www.brettonwoodsproject.org/confnov6

An exciting and timely one-day conference on 6 November in London exploring the policy issues related to global finance and its role in both developed and developing countries. It brings together experts, researchers, practitioners and civil society to discuss how to reshape finance so that it contributes to a just and sustainable economy. To stimulate a genuine debate, it has not only plenary sessions but also two breakout sessions to facilitate small group discussions.

www.brettonwoodsproject.org/registerconfnov6

The event is co-sponsored by ActionAid, The Bretton Woods Project, Friends of the Earth, new economics foundation, Research on Money and Finance, and the Trade Union Congress. This event is being organised with the financial assistance of the Ford Foundation and the European Union. The event is the sole responsibility of the organisers and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the funders.

OECD World Forum, 27-30 October 2009 in Busan, Korea

The third OECD World Forum on Statistics, Knowledge and Policy will take place in Busan, Korea on 27-30 October 2009. The World Forum-organised by the OECD and the government of Korea-is entitled "Charting Progress, Building Visions, Improving Life" and will bring together 1,500 high-level participants from 130 countries. The conference will focus on three core questions: 1) What does progress mean for our societies?; 2) What are the new paradigms to measure progress?; and 3) How can there be better policies within these new paradigms to foster the progress of our societies?. To find out more about the conference and to register, please visit the conference webpage.

Conference on Economic Degrowth for Ecological Sustainability and Social Equity - Barcelona 2010

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS (OF PAPERS AND POSTERS) OPEN UNTIL NOVEMBER 30!

More information available at:

www.degrowth.net/-Barcelona2010

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