

AN EVENT IN THE FRAMEWORK OF

# GROWTH.<sub>ε</sub> 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 UK Sustainable Development Commission

**21 April 2009, 10am-5pm**

**Austrian Permanent Representation, Brussels**



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**Sustainable**  
Development Commission

## BACKGROUND

Just now – in the light of the current financial and economic crisis and intensive efforts for achieving economic growth – the question emerges which kind of growth we want for the future and which goals are targeted with it. In political circles, high growth rates are commonly still considered an essential prerequisite for our future development. However, the understanding that indefinite economic growth might not be possible on a finite planet is gaining 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 UK Sustainable Development Commission (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 for 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 advisory body on sustainable development, has been running a project on “*Redefining Prosperity*”, examining the relationships between three aims: economic growth, sustainability, and wellbeing. It challenges its readers to imagine the - potentially devastating - consequences of continued long-run worldwide growth, and discusses alternative ideas of what “prosperity” could mean. 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

**Doreen Fedrigo** (EEB)  
European Environmental Bureau  
**Oliver Zwirner** (EC)  
European Commission; DG Environment  
**Michaela Moser** (EAPN)  
European Anti-Poverty Network  
**Gerhard Huemer** (UEAPME) (tbc)  
European Association of Craft, Small and  
Medium-Sized Enterprises  
**Martin Sieker** (EESC)  
European Economic and Social Committee

**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 Huppel** (Universiteit Leiden)

**14:30** Questions and discussion

**15:00** Coffee

**15:20** Table discussion session

**16:00** Feedback

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

**17:00** End of meeting

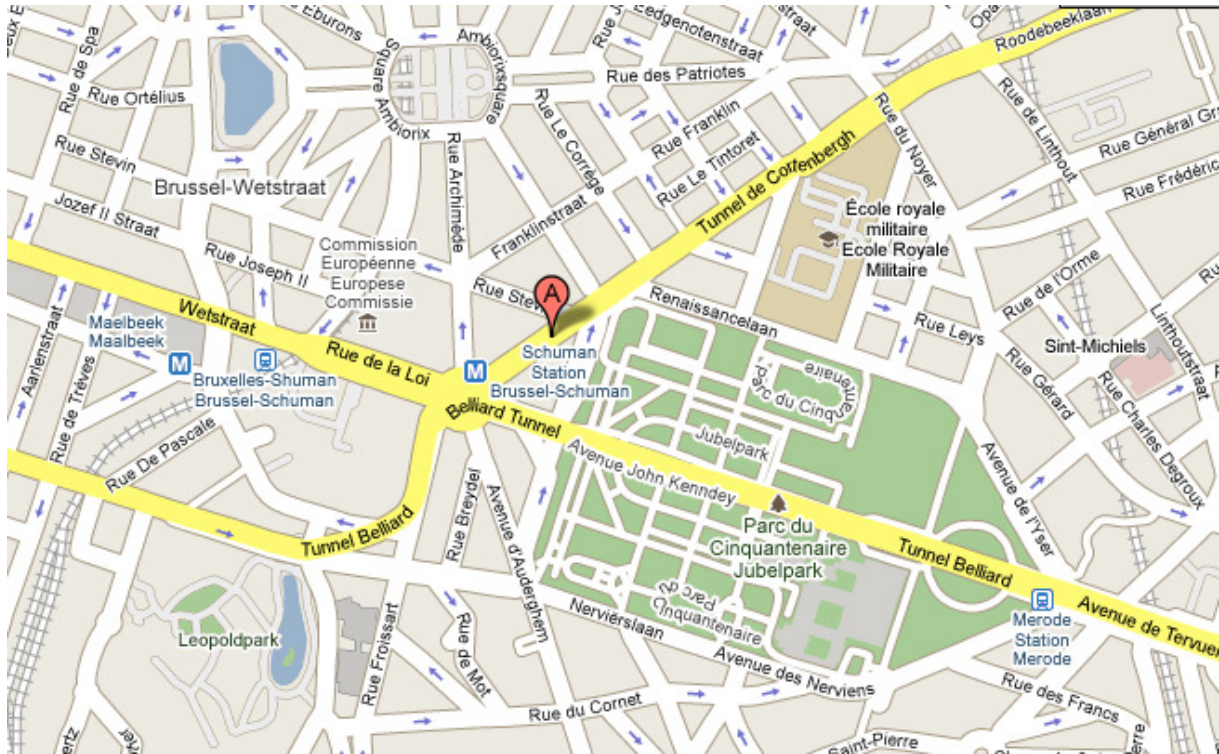
Moderation: **Rita Trattnigg**, Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry,  
Environment and Water Management

## LOCATION

Permanent Representation of Austria to the EU

Avenue de Cortenberg, 30

1040 Brussels



## ORGANISATION



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## WEBSITE

[www.wachstumsargumentarium.at](http://www.wachstumsargumentarium.at)

## REGISTRATION

For registration by 15 April and all enquiries, please contact:

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