***The Greening of Europe***

***A Journey through 50 years Environmental Action***

**THIS IS NOT A LECTURE**

**THIS IS NOT A SPEECH**

**THIS IS NOT AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY**

**but….**

*(slide 2)*

*(slide 3)* …an informal talk, a walk with you through 50 years of my professional life, with an overview of the most significant milestones. It is a testimonial which I hope to be useful for all those believing that Humans are part of nature and should care for their Only One Earth.

You will pardon me if I skip some events, facts and people. This is not yet my memoires.

**MY AWAKENING TO ENVIRONMENTAL CONSCIOUSNESS**

In February 1962 I was on board of the cargo ship *Lusambo* as an apprentice, a Naval School cadet in the Belgian merchant marine.

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My first journey lasted four months, from Antwerp to North America, then to Africa, returning to the US and back to Europe.

I had grown up in post war years. The fifties were years of reconstruction, of unseen economic development, of growing welfare and wealth. The American Way of Life was the model. America was great.

Well, discovering the Manhattan skyline, the glitter of Broadway, the omnipresent cars, the numerous night and day cinemas on the 42nd street, the hamburgers… Wow! Fabulous! Indeed, a glimpse of paradise.

But on the waterfront in downtown Manhattan I discovered creepy houses in filthy streets, tramps, beggars and drug addicts. The hidden face of the glittering Big Apple, nowadays attracting millions of tourists.

I questioned the American miracle, model for the world.

When we had left the harbour, bound to Philadelphia, the first mate took his binoculars, watched the land at the horizon. He shouted the command: “Come on guys! No coast guards in views”. And the crew started throwing all the waste overboard: metal cans, used oil bins, old cables, plastic bags, food waste.

I was flabbergasted.

It was worse in the middle of the south Atlantic, far from the American and African coasts. I was on watch on deck. And there at one point I saw a very large surface of black oil, wooden debris and plastic waste. This was in such a contrast with the immaculate blue ocean. Good heavens, was this a token of a highly civilised, wealthy industrial civilisation?

My questioning became even greater when I discovered misery and poverty of the black workers behind the scene of the prosperous ports of Matadi, Luanda or Lobito.

Something was shaken in me. I awoke in a reality far away from my bourgeois education and the promises of a world in unseen progress as featured during the Brussels World Exhibition in 1958.

My world view was taking a different course. It was the beginning of critical look at society. A first step towards my environmental awareness. A start of a fifty years quest for action.

Another significant personal experience was the revelation of the greatness and overwhelming might of Nature:

* The immensity of the ocean, the deep blue, with no sign of life for days and night, with only the roaring of the ship’s engine.
* The impressive skies at night in the southern hemisphere with billions of flickering starlight. A glimpse of the Universe.
* The force of wind and seas in two days hurricane in the Bermuda’s, with no horizon except threatening, waves, rolling one after the other, higher than ten store buildings.

When not on watch or work I had plenty of leisure to read in my cabin. I discovered the stoic wisdom of Marcus Aurelius, the cosmic/religious views of Teilhard de Chardin, the call for responsible action from Antoine de Saint-Exupéry.

**GROWING CONSCIOUSNESS AND COMMITMENT**

After two years, much to my regret, I had to quit the merchant navy because my eyesight wasn’t good enough. I resumed studies in social sciences, married and had to make a living.

With no television at home and three boys to look after I read a lot, from *“The Affluent Society”*  and *“Economics, Peace & Laughter”* by J.K.Galbraith to *“Les Désillusions du progrès”* by Raymond Aron, not to mention Rachel Carson’s *“Silent Spring”*. I skip the numerous books of Herbert Marcuse, Ivan Illich, Alan Watts, Fritz Capra, to name a few… My wife Maggie and I – though working within the establishment - were close to the hippie movement, also in our way of life.

As an account executive in a leading P.R. firm I took a keen interest in communication and information. Reading *“The Hidden Persuaders”* and *“The Naked Society”* by the American Vance Packard, I realised that the insights of psychology and social sciences were used to influence our choices and our behaviour in such an inviting manner that few people can resist the temptations of material welfare and consuming.

Today, more than ever and on a global level, our lives are dominated by the obsession of producing and consuming ever more material goods. The invisible hand of “the market” is visible in marketing and advertising. All demonstrations against environmental degradation are overshadowed by the false images of happy consuming in all media.

*(Slides 5 & 6)*

Let me jump to some of the conclusions of my lecture:

* Homo Sapiens became master and owner of Nature. In the last centuries he imposed or exported his way of life all over the World.

The industrial society is not going to collapse: it is already collapsing.

* Our civilisation has lost the sense of true spiritual values.
* There is growing consciousness, but there is little effective change in human behaviour.
* Leadership is lacking the courage to enforce a radical change of course. Citizens behave mainly as addicted consumers. Changing habits and behaviour is difficult, indeed.
* We cannot foresee the unforeseeable, but we can try to shape the future.
* Science and technology are only means, not the objective.
* We should quit the growth obsession and our addiction to consumption.
* A new civilisation is only possible through a new “Enlightenment” based on values with a spiritual dimension.

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**A FIRST GLOBAL ANALYSIS AFTER 50 YEARS**

The environmental awakening in the Western world started in the fifties and sixties.

In the last fifty years I distinguish in Europe three major phases:

* the *socialisation* of the environmental movement;
* the *politization* of the environmental movement;
* the *internalisation* of the environmental concerns.

They often overlap each other and vary from country to country, from people to people.

*Socialisation* means civil society is becoming aware of the impact of pollution on the natural and urban environment and the depletion of natural resources. It is the beginning of structured organisations around a nucleus of volunteers, roughly between the mid-sixties and throughout the seventies. These organisations gradually evolved into professional bodies, getting media attention and lobbying public authorities with the aim to put environmental concerns on the political agendas.

*Politization* is a further step, starting around the mid-seventies. The first direct elections of the European Parliament in June 1979 saw the creation of green ecology parties in Germany, France and Belgium. In the next decade it was followed by the constitution of national and local green parties in almost all members states of the then European Community. Today, green or ecology parties are represented in several national parliaments and even in governments. Most of the traditional political parties from right to left have taken over the environmental concerns to different degrees on their programmes.

*Internalisation* of the environmental concerns means that these concerns are getting more and more integrated in policies, regulations, public and private affairs, including choices and behaviour of some citizens and consumers. Today, it is largely defined as “sustainable development”. It includes trends such as waste reduction, recycling, circular economy.

It means that the use of natural resources, of land, water and air should no longer be externalities in our economic systems. We should tell the truth about prices. And pay the true price. This is a matter of a more ethical behaviour in business, requiring a radical change in our economic thinking.

Let us now go back to history:

*(slide 8)*

**HISTORY**

**The environmental movement**

**Rising awareness in industry**

**New approaches in EU policy making**

**Science and Media**

*(slide 9)*

**The environmental movement**

**1970 European Year of Nature Conservation**

**Council of Europe, Strasbourg, calling for action**

At the opening ceremony in Strasbourg on 9 February 1970 His Royal Highness Prince Albert of Belgium – later King of the Belgians – delivered a remarkable speech. It is a lucid, visionary text. It should be published again and read by all.

I cannot start my overview of growing environmental awareness without sharing some quotes:

*(slide 10)*

*“We are gathered here to launch an opinion campaign which, we hope, will not only be transposed in acts by the Governments, but also and above all in individual behaviour. … we will talk in Europe about nature, that Man believed He could violate, with impunity. It is taking revenge today.”*

*“…How can we move from words to acts in a fragmented world, full of preconceived ideas and where, largely, profit making remains the engine of the economy?”*

*“Today, part of the youth rejects the economic models of the last 150 tears. Even if the youngsters are not always able to express their motives, at least they have the merit to perceive that Man, prisoner of his comfort and gadgets lost touch with the quality of life.”*

*“Now that the scale and seriousness are starting to be revealed, would we really dare leaving matters as they stand, leaving to tomorrow’s generation a completely artificial civilisation in a poisoned, hostile environment which would leave little room for human beings?*

*If so, we would then abdicate our human dignity.”*

This is a radical statement, a commitment, a call for responsible care. It is the merit of the later monarch Albert II to appeal to all the leaders of Europe, as more recently Pope Frances did to the world.

Behind this kind of outstanding public declarations there are always visionary advisors. Not spin doctors, not communication mavericks, who assist world leaders, in spreading fake news and lying to remain in power and protect vested interest.

One of these visionary advisors is our Honorary Member, Count Michel Didisheim, who in 1970, was counselling the Prince.

This brings me to the next milestone:

*(slide 11)*

**1970 Bond Beter Leefmilieu/Inter-environnement**

**A pioneering Belgian initiative**

We were six, in early summer 1970, in a popular Brussels restaurant, when we agreed that something had to be done to put environmental protection on the political agendas.

Failing to create a civic trust we decided to try setting up a federation of nature conservation and environmental groups. Individually, they were too small to influence politics. Together they could become a strong lobby.

You will not be surprised to learn that Michel Didisheim very soon profiled himself as the inspiring leader we needed. He and I soon became a close team, me acting as the secretary.

There were of course other initiatives in other parts of Europe to create a strong environmental front. The most successful ones were the German *Bundesverband Umweltschutz* and the Dutch *Stichting Natuur en Milieu*. However, the Belgian federation was probably the most original and progressive umbrella organisation:

* the approach was holistic. All aspects of the human environment were linked: nature conservation, urban and rural environment, pollution and waste control, resources and energy;
* the growth economy was questioned and the need for ethical fundaments was stressed.

I’m quoting from the “ethical fundaments of the Bond Beter Leefmilieu/Inter-environnement”:

*(slide 12)*

*“Quality of life is a dimension of civilisation. More than ever the finality of life is at stake. It is not a matter of simple adaptation to new material obstacles.”*

“*The battle for environmental protection is a major social demand within the broader frame of the quality of life.”*

Though the content was based on consensus among the 40 founding associations, the inspiration and wording are from Michel Didisheim, who was elected President.

*(slide 13)*

**1972 Stockholm: The U.N. Conference on Human Environment**

**The environment on the political agendas**

*(slide 14 & 15)*

The first world conference on the human environment is one of the most significant steps towards global environmental awareness. It kicked off many initiatives in various parts of the world, inspired political leaders, mobilised the media.

In Stockholm the gap between North and South was obvious when leaders like Indira Gandhi declared that the only real pollution is poverty. First the economy should grow, creating wealth and resources for protecting the environment, a luxury concern for the rich industrial Western world.

*(slide 16)*

**1973 Small is Beautiful**

**Economics as if people matters**

The German-British economist Fritz Schumacher served a long time as advisor to the British Coal Board. He argued capitalism brought higher [living standards](https://www.britannica.com/topic/standard-of-living) at the cost of deteriorating [culture](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/culture) and nature. His belief that natural resources should be conserved led him to conclude that bigness would lead to the depletion of the planet. Bigger is not better. Small is beautiful. Good economy for people is a matter of an appropriate scale of production.

**1974 the European Environmental Bureau/le Bureau Européen de l’environnement**

**Strengthening the power of the NGO’s**

Before the first Environmental Action Plan was adopted by the then European Community, environmental NGOs from Europe met in the United Kingdom, together with the European Commission, the [UNECE](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UNECE), the [UNEP](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UNEP) and the [IUCN](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IUCN). A federation of [non-governmental organizations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-governmental_organization) within the European Community, was created.

The EEB office was set up in Brussels in 1974 to provide a focal point for its members to monitor and respond to the EU’s emerging environmental policy.

It has a membership of 143 member organisations in more than 30 countries NGO’s, dealing with environmental issues and nature protection.

**1976 Ecoropa: Ecological Europa**

**Econo-maniac spectres a reality.**

**Living reality has become a spectre**

*(slide 17)*

In the mid-seventies I made the acquaintance of a remarkable German physicist: Manfred Siebker, a leading engineer of EURATOM. Knowing too much about the deadly threat of nuclear technology, witnessing the ignorance, arrogance and irresponsibility of the supporters, made him an invaluable source of scientific and technical information. We became friends and he introduced me to his European network.

This network led to the creation of Ecoropa, founded in Geneva in 1976, by a group of scientists, writers and activists identifying issues of their common concern

* Complex ecological interactions are not adequately addressed by addressing only one dimension of an environmental problem.
* Democracy and public information and participation are key at local and national levels. They need to be complemented, however, by international cooperation, wherever impacts cross national borders.
* North-South relations based on respect, fairness and justice are preconditions for long-term successes.

The first Ecoropa colloquium was held from 15 to 17 September 1977, hosted by the famous naturalist Jean-Marie Pelt at the Institut européen d’écologie in Metz, France.

It interesting to note the participation of Jacques Delors, who became president of the European Commission nine years later, in 1985.

Unfortunately, I was not able to be present myself, but my friend and colleague Pierre Laconte was. Today’s members of the Club of Rome participating in this very significant European meeting were Ernst von Weizsäcker, Orio Giarini and Wouter van Dieren.

Ecoropa is still active, mostly behind the public scene but very effective and efficient. It is chaired by Christine von Weizsäcker, who lectured for the CoR-EU here, as did Ernst.

**1977 Denis de Rougemont:**

**“L’Avenir est notre Affaire”**

*(slides 18 & 19)*

The Swiss writer and philosopher Denis de Rougemont is a forgotten founding father of the unification of Europe after World war II. A true federalist, he developed his concept of a federal union built on the regions, rather than on the national states. He soon realised the importance of environmental protection and contributed to critical thinking on the industrial society.

He was elected first president of Ecoropa and hosted the association at his Centre européen de la Culture in Geneva. His essay *“L’Avenir est notre Affaire”* is a must for all. It is a call to all: the future is the business of all citizens. It requires a change in our individual behaviour.

**1979 European Parliament: The Greens are there!**

**Ecological Manifesto for a Different Europe**

When the first direct elections of the European Parliament were announced, several environmentalists saw there an opportunity to create a public platform for disseminating their message. In a couple of countries green parties were taking shape.

At Ecoropa – a apolitical forum - we thought we should publish a manifesto, addressing it to the candidates running for these elections and to the media.

It was radical and prophetic. The text started dramatically:

*(slide 20)*

*“The ideological spectres of the last few centuries still haunt Europe. Worse, these* *econo-maniac spectres have become a reality and living reality has become a spectre. If we look at what has been achieved and what is to be expected if we continue along the present road, we see that our society has not become the safe, healthy and peaceful community we once expected. On the contrary, itis losing meaning, quality and satisfaction. In important aspects the achievements of progress turn out to be as destructive as its failures. More and more citizens of Europe share a conviction that the present road will lead deeper into unemployment and inflation, energy dilemmas, the exhaustion of depletable resources of the environment, the spread of radioactivity and genetic deterioration, the disappearance of free space, quiet and serenity, the extinction of plants and animal life, a global arms race and a fierce conflict between North and South. All these symptoms are signals of a crisis of civilization...”*

In March 1979 Ecoropa held a press conference I organised at the International Press Centre, Charlemagne, in Brussels. It was well attended by the Brussels based media.

The response to our appeal was disappointing. In Belgium only two candidates subscribed to it.

**The breakthrough of the Green parties**

*(slide 21)*

The Germans were the first to create an ecology party under the name of *Die Grünen*. Initiatives were taken in other EU member states, however without much or any success.

In Belgium – always a complex state – there were two electoral colleges: a Flemish community one and a French community one. The Belgians greens were forced to split, against their will to be united. It became Agalev and Ecolo.

I took political leave as National Secretary of the Bond Beter Leefmilieu/Inter-environment. Finding no support within the environmental movement I joined the social movement *Anders Gaan Leven* (Living otherwise)founded by the Belgian Jesuit and activist Luc Versteylen. He had a small but significant network all over Flanders. On the basis of the Ecoropa manifesto we wrote a ten-point election programme and recruited candidates for a list I was heading under the name *Agalev*. Despite we had no access to the national radio and television channels and no funds for a media campaign, we made a good score of nearly 3% of the votes. Not enough for a seat. But it was the breakthrough of the Flemish greens, becoming the largest of the small parties.

I lost my job without the financial compensation I should have received, as my employer, the national association was broke. I was jobless for more than a year, devoting my time to structuring *Agalev* as a party and to housekeeping of my family.

*(slide 22)*

Picture of the press conference held in March 1979 at the IPC, Brussels.

Sitting on the floor*: Roland Vogt*

1st row, from l. to r.: *Joseph Baus, Manfred Siebker, Solange Fernex, N. & N. couple of German farmers, Marco Panella*

2nd + 3rd row l. to r.: *Mark Dubrulle, N. (Grüne), Luc Versteylen, Petra Kelly, Herbert Gruhl, N. (Grüne), Jonathan Tyler (?), two Grünen*

*(slide 23)*

**European and Green Pioneers**

**Some dear and inspiring friends I’d like to remember**

Manfred Siebker (D) Petra Kelly (D/IRL) Edouard Kressmann (F) Denis & Nanik de Rougemont (CH) Wouter & Sigrid van Dieren (NL) Brice Lalonde (F) Solange Fernex (F) Teddy Goldsmith (GB) Diana Schumacher (GB) Cherry Mares (GB) Ernst & Christine von Weizsäcker (D) Santiago Vilanova i Tané (E) Marco Panella (I) Willem Hoogendijk (NL) Orio Giarini (I)Wolgang Sachs (D) Sigmund Kvaloy (N) Roland Vogt (D) Paul & Freda Blau (A) Alain Hervé (F) Pierre Laconte (B) Serge Moscovici (F) Armand Petitjean (F) Jacques Grinevald (CH) Bernard Charbonneau (F) Carl Amery (D)…

**Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, WWF *et alii***

**Greater visibility for international NGO’s**

*(slide 24)*

In the seventies and eighties many demonstrations and public protest on the streets or around factories, as well as large campaigns took place in Europe and in many other parts of the industrial countries.

Greenpeace was definitely one of the most audacious militant organisations with spectacular actions, hitting the media headlines. Though far from Europe, the clash between the French military and the *Rainbow* *Warrior* had an enormous impact on the public.

I will no longer dwell on my years of activism. The growing awareness as from the late sixties until today was not limited to the NGO’s. Public authorities, the private sector and the academic were also taken by the green wave.

In 1981 I resumed my professional career as a consultant. Let’s have a quick look at it.

**Rising awareness in industry**

**1976 IPRE / 1993 ESED**

**Practitioners establish an International Professional Association for Environmental Affairs**

becoming

**ESED: European Society for environment and Development**

*(slide 25)*

Major industrial corporations created the function of environmental coordinators to deal with the increasing public concern about pollution. Remember the wreckage of the Torrey Canyon, the mercury contamination in Minamata, the air pollution around Bayer factories…

Some of them set up the IARC - International Association of Environmental Coordinators – with a secretariat hosted by ICI headquarters near Brussels. It became IPRE in 1976, attracting also non-industrial practitioners. I joined as a member and became a Vice-President. Under the impulse of President Bill Cairns, a Scottish environmental consultant, IPRE became ESED, A Premier Learned Society for Environmental Practitioners.

I chaired from 1993 to 2004. With at least one large conference per year, seminars and meetings ESED contributed to create awareness and a sense of corporate responsibility among industrial companies.

Unfortunately, for some corporations it often meant only greenwashing. In some industry sectors there was also a tendency to deny facts and figures by creating so-called scientific committees, funded by private interests. This has been masterly described by science historian Naomi Oreskes in her book *“Merchants of Doubt”.*

**AERPF**

**Association Européenne pour la Réduction de la Pollution des Fibres**

I’m mentioning this association because it is an example how in the eighties a major environmental problem led to a voluntary private initiative to address it, contributing to alert authorities and public opinion. Action was not limited to denouncing a very critical health situation, but rather aimed at disseminating unbiased information and proposing adequate measures.

The asbestos crisis in Europe – long hidden or denied by the powerful industries behind it – became public further to a series of publications, denouncements by workers and revealing articles in the press. A group of independent experts including toxicologists, medical doctors, engineers, decontamination companies, insurance brokers joined efforts to set up a platform. Under my guidance a non-profit association was founded. I chaired it in the first couple of years. AERPF organised a couple of conferences and lobbied public authorities to have them act.

The main achievement, also under pressure of labour unions and EC civil servants, was probably getting the decision of the European Commission to decontaminate the Berlaymont building, its headquarters in Brussels.

**ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT CONSULTANCIES**

*(slide 26)*

In the Western world environmental consultancies mushroomed in the eighties and nineties, often from a core of public affairs professionals, law offices, engineering bureaus, research institutes. Within universities sustainable development centres were created.

In Europe I’d like to mention a few initiated by some of my green fellows: the IEEP in Bonn, Brussels, London and Paris; the Wuppertal Institute in Wuppertal; Ecobilan in Paris; IMSA in Amsterdam.

With Wouter van Dieren, Charles van der Straten Waillet and I founded EMSA, Environmental Management and Strategies Analysis. We dealt with a wide range of subjects:

* Life Cycle Analysis
* Waste management
* Ecotaxes
* Environmental conflict resolution
* Priority waste streams
* Plastic waste recycling
* River water quality
* Surveys and studies on societal issues

**New approaches in EU policy making**

You will not expect me to take you on a journey through the evolution of European environmental policy making. I’d like to stress though some significant steps of the EU Commission in allocating an important place to legislation and regulation in its policies, making Europe the world’s leading region in sustainable development.

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**EU Commission: from SEPC in 1973 to DG XI in 1984, and more since then…**

In 1973 the European Commission created the Environment and Consumer Protection Service under the French Michel Carpentier as Director. My English friend Stanley Johnson joined the staff in April 1973 as one of the first of the new wave of Brits. He was Head of the Prevention of Pollution and Nuisances Division, before being elected an MEP in 1979.

Since then the small cell has grown into a fully-fledged Environment DG and several other DG – such as Research & Innovation to name just one – share competences in the environmental matters.

**1975 European Year of the Architectural Heritage**

Campaigns were initiated and launched by the EU institutions. 1975 aimed at creating awareness on the need to protect Europe’s architectural heritage against destructive urban and rural planning based on short-term solutions to solve mobility and housing problems.

**1986 - 1987 European Year of the Environment**

Several significant campaigns and projects were launched by the national committees set up in each Member State. They contributed to make media, local authorities and public opinion at large aware of the pressing environmental issues and challenges to be met.

**The *Life* Programmes**

Starting with an inventory of national or local campaigns and modest co-funding, the Commission’s initiative *Life* developed very successful programmes in the Member States.

**Consensus building with all stakeholders**

In the nineties, DG Environment and facilitators (incl. me) introduced a new methodology with a view to preparing regulations on prior waste streams through consensus building processes with all stakeholders. Each process lasted between 2 and 3 years, pilotedby a Member State: France (with ADEME) for End-of-Life Vehicles,the U.K. (with the DOE)for Health Care Waste, Italy (with ENEA) for Electric and Electronic Waste.

In the subsequent years the conclusions of these consensus building processes were translated into national legislation in the Member States.

**Science and Media**

* In the past 50 years all scientific disciplines, all R&D programmes, and most teaching, have increasingly taken the environmental parameter into account.

Many a scientist built bridges with environmental and social NGO’s. It is impossible to present an overview.

Our honorary member, professor Jean-Pascal van Ypersele, climatologist and former Vice-Chair of the IPCC, is a case in point.

* An interesting initiative in Belgium was the creation of an independent non-profit association “GreenFacts, Scientific facts on Health and Environment”, upon initiative of Jacques de Selliers and Jacques de Gerlache, both CoR-EU Full members. It had a permanent professional staff. I chaired the Board until 2005 when it had to be liquidated because of a lack of funding to maintain fulltime employed staff. It still exits, having been remodelled on a smaller scale by Jacques de Gerlache, PhD in toxicology.
* In the past half century – in my observation - the press at large has paid more attention to the negative news than to the positive. Mainstream economic and political thinking dominates the headlines, stimulating productivism and consumerism, fuelled by advertising and marketing.

However, alternative, independent and reliable news services, in printed publications or online, are quite numerous and a sound counterweight. But they reach only a very small audience.

* Audio-visual media have often launched educational programmes on nature conservation and environmental protection, supporting also nation-wide campaigns.

**The Future? *Come on!***

*(slide 29)*

If you are asking me about the future and how you can act, I would refer to the latest Report to the Club of Rome launched under the title *“Come On!”* prepared for the Club’s 50th Anniversary in 2018. It deals with the crucial issues of Capitalism, Short-termism, Population and the Destruction of the Planet. Co-authors are Ernest von Weizsäcker and Anders Wijkman, in cooperation with 32 more Members of the Club of Rome.

Their conclusion is that de world needs a “new enlightenment” addressing balance between humans and nature, as well as a balance between markets and the state, and the short versus the long term. But it is also necessary to address the taboo topic of population increase.

The book is full of optimistic case studies and policy proposals that will lead the world back to real sustainability. It is an excellent analysis of the current “world problématique” and an inspiring guide for action.

Let me end with a quote from William Shakespeare:

*(slide 30)*

***“There is a tide in the affairs of Men,***

***which taken at flood,***

***leads on to fortune.”***

Today’s Climate Change crisis has created a tide in worldwide public opinion. If we take this flood, we may be able to change course, saving the Planet and Humankind.

**Mark DUBRULLE**

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