



## WWWforEurope Newsletter 3/2016

### Final newsletter: future projects, contacts and new affiliation of the coordinator

#### WWWforEurope presentation in Brussels

As previously reported, the results of the WWWforEurope project were presented to European Parliament in Brussels on February 25th, 2016, as well as at the Final Conference attended by high-level members of the European Commission, academia, social partners, NGOs, and the press.

The Final Conference began with an introduction by **Noble Laureate Professor Kenneth Arrow** of Stanford University, who stressed that the European integration process has been characterised by the fact that this large area was created by neither military conquest nor expansion into lightly populated regions. European integration is unique, as it is based on the decisions of 28 democratic countries with individual cultures and diverse histories. From a historical perspective it is therefore a great success, even if the process has at times been murky and progressed in "leaps and bounds".

[Click here for full coverage of the conference](#)

The Final Conference reports are now available in the following documents:

Karl Aiginger, *New Dynamics for Europe: Reaping the Benefits of Socio-ecological Transition*. **Synthesis Report Part I**

Harald Badinger, David Bailey, Lisa De Propriis, Peter Huber, Jürgen Janger, Kurt Kratena, Hans Pitlik, Thomas Sauer, Renaud Thillaye and Jeroen van den Bergh, *New Dynamics for Europe: Reaping the Benefits of Socio-ecological Transition*. **Synthesis Report Part II**

Karl Aiginger, *New Dynamics for Europe: Reaping the Benefits of Socio-ecological Transition*. Synthesis Report Part I. **Executive Summary**

#### Presentation to international investors in New York

The WWWforEurope project was presented to US investors at the [4th Investor and Business Conference](#) in New York on April 13th, 2016. The conference addressed the opportunities and challenges of investment in Europe. The message to international investors was that, even if Europe is not the most dynamic region in the world, the European model can be interesting for industrialised countries as well as emerging economies, since problems arising from ageing and the necessity to upgrade and redirect innovation (e.g., to cope with environmental problems and increased income

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Demetrios G. Papademetriou  
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Jan Hatzius, chief economist of Goldman Sachs, Jana Randow of Bloomberg and Stephen Ceurvorst of Lord Capital LLC discussed investment opportunities in Europe with Hans Jörg Schelling, Austrian Minister of Finance. Migration flows and their benefits were analysed with respect to the differences between flows determined by problems in countries of origin and flows determined by the needs of destination regions. The discussion profited from the contributions of [Demetrios G. Papademetriou](#) (President of Migration Policy Institute Europe) and Jürgen Roth of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber.

The results of WWWforEurope were summarised by Karl Aiginger. He introduced a new European Strategy that provides innovative and sustainable solutions for upcoming economic, social and environmental problems. Such a future-oriented economic and social model could provide a chance for Europe, as well as an attractive international investment opportunity. In his presentation Karl Aiginger asserted that, although Europe faces many problems, it is not a "failed project", as some analysts maintain. On the contrary, the 21st century may yet become Europe's century, as the stronger prioritization of social and ecological goals is consistent with preferences under rising per capita income.

### Containing populism through a new European Strategy

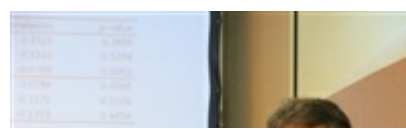
In follow-up papers, Karl Aiginger and Margit Schratzenstaller ([A New Strategy for Europe](#)) maintain that, although the strategy elaborated in WWWforEurope cannot solve all current problems, such as migration or Brexit, a pro-active strategy will be all-important to curbing political instability. [In a recent working paper](#) Karl Aiginger further extended his hypothesis that Europe has the best socio-economic model as well as the technological capacity to be a leader in a decarbonising world economy, as envisaged in Paris 2015 (COP 21).



Karl Aiginger © WIFO

### Broader definition of competitiveness based on WWWforEurope used in EU policy documents

WWWforEurope defined competitiveness as the "ability of a region to provide Beyond GDP goals" ([Competitiveness of EU vs. US](#) by Karl Aiginger, Susanne Bärenthaler-Sieber and Johanna Vogel). This has had a quick and far-reaching influence on actual decision-making. The EESC (European Economic and Social Committee) had been critical of the intention of the European Commission to install National Competitiveness Boards, since this might mean that each country should attempt to lower costs and welfare expenditures so as to achieve "cost competitiveness". The shift to a broader notion of competitiveness, based on which not only prices but also innovation and education matter, and the goal of a competitiveness-enforcing policy, in which growth is not achieved at the cost of neighbours, but rather in adherence to Beyond GDP goals, became the game changer for the EESC in approving the recommendation of the European Commission to set up Competitiveness Boards.



### WWWforEurope results in scientific publications

WWWforEurope results have been disseminated in a large and



Jeroen van den Bergh © WIFO

increasing number of academic papers.

The work of Jeroen van den Bergh, Professor in Barcelona and Amsterdam and leading project partner in WWWforEurope, extends beyond the simple pro- and anti-growth divide. In the [Global Environmental Change July 2016](#) journal, Van den Bergh reports that 4% of the participants in a public opinion survey favour growth at all costs, 59% favour green growth, 21% favour growth in general (i.e. a policy without reference to growth) and 15% favour de-growth (i.e. the necessity to reduce economic activities).

The extent to which the option of green growth is realistic has been further analysed by Ardjan Gazheli, Jeroen van den Bergh and Miklos Antal in the [Journal of Cleaner Production](#).

Migration issues were addressed in WWWforEurope from the beginning, but they have since gained in importance. The welfare entitlements of migrants have been all-important in recent political discussions, and the analysis of differences in the welfare dependence of immigrants and natives by Peter Huber and Doris Oberdabernig published in [Kyklos](#) (2016) therefore deserves special attention.



Marina Fischer-Kowalski © WIFO

Friedrich Heinemann and Theodor Grigoriadis (2016) discuss the [Origins of Reform Resistance and the Southern European Regime](#) in *Empirica* 2016.

[Job choice in academia](#) is analysed by Jürgen Janger, Klaus Nowotny in *Research Policy* 2016.

Marina Fischer-Kowalski and Helmut Haberl provide new insights into [Social Metabolism as a metric for biophysical growth and degrowth](#) in the *Handbook of Ecological Economics* 2015.

### **Dissemination in the media and at other conferences**

An article by Karl Aiginger in the [NZZ](#) listed the conditions developed by WWWforEurope which can remove reform barriers and facilitate socio-ecological change.

Thomas Leoni and Vanessa Koch published an article at [www.euractiv.com](http://www.euractiv.com) on the concept of symmetric flexibility, which asserts that combining the flexibility advantageous to firms, such as flexible labour input, with the flexibility advantageous to individuals, such as the ability to adjust working time based on work-life preferences, simultaneously increases the profits of firms and the well-being of individuals.

Karl Aiginger was invited to lecture on [a new industrial policy for a dynamic social and ecological Europe](#) at EAEPE, the European Association for Evolutionary Political Economy in Krakow.

### **Formal end of the project and thanks**

All of the content-related and administrative steps of the WWWforEurope project have been completed, including the Synthesis Report, Reporting and Final Payment. Project Officer Domenico Rossetti congratulated the Consortium on the successful conclusion of the project.

The topics addressed in WWWforEurope remain important and require further research. A possible guideline for future research is offered in the Working Paper "[Defining research gaps concerning the implementation of Socio-ecological transition](#)" by Teresa Weiss.

We can only thank all team members for their excellent work. We achieved a lot, widened our knowledge and won good friends. We wish to extend special thanks to Domenico Rossetti, our project officer in Brussels, who not only controlled and steered our work, but also encouraged us and helped whenever there was a problem.



Professor Christoph Badelt © WU  
Vienna

### **Change in the affiliation of WWWforEurope Coordinator Karl Aiginger from September 1st, 2016**

On September 1st, 2016 Karl Aiginger will retire as director of WIFO. He has called WWWforEurope "the project of his life", as the question of how to combine economic efficiency with social goals and ecological excellence has dominated his research over the decades. The importance of analytical work and evidence-based policy prescriptions to the future of Europe, a more inclusive society and the prevention of climate change has been dramatically demonstrated by Brexit, political polarisation and climate catastrophes around the world. Pro-active approaches such as that pursued by WWWforEurope and a vision of a society that improves the well-being of its citizens will not solve all problems but can offer solutions to mitigate the most pressing problems, such as migration flows and political polarisation. Such an approach shifts the perspective from problems to opportunities and the setting of new goals.

Karl Aiginger therefore founded the "Policy Crossover Center: Vienna-Europe", which provides a discussion forum for European problems in the spirit of WWWforEurope ([www.querdenkereuropa.at](http://www.querdenkereuropa.at)). It is intended as a communication platform rather than an institute that provides studies on demand. Ideas and policy measures can be commented and discussed in the platform using an interdisciplinary and interactive approach. The new center is intended as a source of information, networking opportunities and dissemination of ideas. It is open to collaboration and membership, calling for and testing proposed ideas. In the future, Karl Aiginger can also be contacted at [karl.aiginger@querdenkereuropa.at](mailto:karl.aiginger@querdenkereuropa.at) in addition to his current e-mail address.

Karl Aiginger continues to teach at the Vienna University of Economics and Business. His research and teaching will increasingly focus on European issues, specifically the aim to increase the well-being of citizens through innovation, social inclusion and environmental ambition. This includes the development of the concept of a green industrial policy.

Questions and suggestions concerning future projects by network partners should be directed to WIFO, specifically to the new director Christoph Badelt ([Christoph.Badelt@wifo.ac.at](mailto:Christoph.Badelt@wifo.ac.at)) and his deputy directors Margit Schratzenstaller ([Margit.Schratzenstaller@wifo.ac.at](mailto:Margit.Schratzenstaller@wifo.ac.at)) and Marcus Scheiblecker ([Marcus.Scheiblecker@wifo.ac.at](mailto:Marcus.Scheiblecker@wifo.ac.at)).

Welfare, Wealth and Work for Europe is to strengthen the analytical foundation of this strategy. WWWforEurope is a four year research project within the 7th Framework Programme funded by the European Commission, coordinated by the Austrian Institute of Economic Research (WIFO) and brings together researchers from 34 scientific institutions in 12 European countries. For more information see [www.foreurope.eu](http://www.foreurope.eu).

This project has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration under grant agreement no. 290647.

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