



# ACADEMIA ENGELBERG

Engelberg, 15 October 2008

Academia Engelberg: Commencement of the 7th Dialogue on Science

## **Growth – Constraint or Opportunity?**

**Only what grows and becomes bigger and those who constantly create new spheres of influence are considered to be successful. Due to this pursuit, mankind, especially in the Western world, has enjoyed growing prosperity over the past two hundred years.**

Are there limits to this growth? Voices of warning, stating that all types of growth reach their limit, are becoming louder. Given the current financial crisis, doubts about economic growth are justifiable. But we also need to be focused on ecological, biological and ethical issues. Dr. Klaus Hug, foundation president, mentioned for example: "No country can become richer in the long run if it erodes its own resources or causes lasting ecological damage."

### **Industrial Revolution as a trigger**

After the solemn opening ceremony by Abbot Berchtold Müller in the Baroque Hall of the Monastery of Engelberg, the leading economic historian and professor Joël Mokyr from Northwestern University/USA showed how the Industrial Revolution in the eighteenth century mapped into sustainable economic growth in Europe and North America. "The economic performance per capita has dramatically increased over the past two hundred years. This occurred in a sustainable way and in a manner never seen before in history. The Industrial Revolution took place at the beginning of this development and technology was a key factor for these dynamics." Until Friday, leading scientists will critically discuss ecological, biological, ethical and economic aspects of growth. This exchange will be carried out in plenary discussions and workshops with roughly 130 personalities from economy, science, politics and society from 10 countries.

### **Bridge between science and society**

Fundamental scientific findings are likely to meet strong reservations and encounter mistrust among the general public. Academia Engelberg contributes its share to the creation of a new foundation of trust through interdisciplinary dialogue between the scientific community and the general public. Every autumn, personalities from science, industry, culture, politics and society meet in Engelberg, Switzerland.  
[www.academia-engelberg.ch](http://www.academia-engelberg.ch)

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