



ACADEMIA ENGELBERG

5th Dialogue on Science – 9 to 11 October, 2006  
in Engelberg, Switzerland

## Farewell

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Ladies and Gentlemen

Dear friends of the Engelberg Conference

As I told you yesterday evening on the top of the Titlis mountain, the role of the president of the Academia Engelberg Foundation is not a hugely thankful task. At the opening of the Conference, half the guests are not yet arrived, and at the end of the conference, half the people have already gone. But it is also part of the task to keep a sense of humour and composure. And this year perhaps more than ever, we can look back on a very successful Conference. We came here last Monday with a host of expectations. Not every wish has been met. But I am sure that everyone in this room will be going home with a lot of information and stimulation. By coincidence, the former candidate for the American presidency (or rather the elected president) Al Gore was in Zurich last Monday, presenting his new film about climate change. It is clear that he has become an untiring missionary for rethinking the future of our environment.

Arnold Schwarzenegger sold his large four-wheel drive off-roader after he saw the new Gore movie. And Al Gore answered a journalist's question in Zurich in a very optimistic mood, suggesting that within 15 minutes of the Bush administration leaving the White House, America will have a new carbon dioxide policy in place.

We discussed the issue here in Engelberg from the point of view of saving energy, using it more efficiently and distributing it in a fairer and more intelligent way. New technology can cut emissions, but industry is not sold on the idea. We asked questions. But as always, the answers can be neither wholly satisfactory nor can they offer us any guarantees. Is Russia playing Russian roulette with energy policy? Will coal be the fuel of the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Is the new wave really energy from the ocean? One thing that is sure is that the scramble for energy is fuelling a new era of power politics, as we see every day. I am convinced that energy will have been an important issue at President Putin's visit to Germany over the last two days. They will not only have talked about the 100 million euro investment of Russia's gas company Gazprom in the German Football Club Schalke 04. Mr. Putin himself is playing pipeline politics in Central and East Asia, as well as in Europe.

I was very happy to see that a considerable part of our discussion was dedicated to the possibilities of our personal contribution to the energy issue. When Sarah Holdsworth, student of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and our dear guest here, demanded at the beginning of the Conference that politics promote alternative energies more, this was a very reasonable and proper remark. But it also reflects something of the risk inherent in the whole discus-



sion. Instead of starting with our own perhaps small but overall effective contribution, we let politics do their deal and think that the great gurus will find a solution for the world. Energy is a field with many stakeholders: science, government, business, industry, consumers, media. We all are part of the game and cannot absolve ourselves from our individual obligations.

You know already that the subject of next year's conference will be **Water**. The programme committee will be chaired again by Dr. Bruno Porro, who made such a masterful job of it this year, for which I am deeply indebted to him. The date of the conference is 10 to 12 October 2007. The importance of the issue is evident – not only in Europe, but also in Asia; indeed, the whole world over. I hope that next year I can welcome many of our guests and participants who took part this year, and that we can pursue our work in the same traditional good spirit of Engelberg, which was crowned yesterday evening with the marvellous sunset panorama in the heart of Switzerland.

Let me conclude by expressing my thanks not only to the elements for smiling upon us with the weather, but also in particular

- to the lecturers, speakers and chairpersons, who added their invaluable contributions to the Conference,
- to the leaders of the workshops (I note with great satisfaction that the Conference has grown younger and that the positive influence of our young participants was most helpful and stimulating) and
- to everyone who helped organize the Conference; in this context, my thanks go above all to the honourable Vice-President and delegate of the foundation **Dr. Dominik Gal- liker** and his team. We very much appreciate their work, which merits a special round of applause.

Thanks finally to you all. You were not only distinguished participants, but dear friends.

I sincerely hope that you have been infected by the spirit of Engelberg, and that this will accompany you on your journey home and for a long time to come. At all events, take a look at the pictures on our website [www.academia-engelberg.ch](http://www.academia-engelberg.ch), and enjoy our proceedings which you will receive next month.

I wish you all a good homecoming and every success in your profession and your studies, and also much happiness in your private life.

With these wishes, I hereby close the 2006 Engelberg Conference.