



Report on the Conference

“Linking Environment, Development, Stability and Security, Friday 15th June 2007

In 2007, Friday 15th, the ELIAMEP and ELLINIKI ETAIRIA co-organized the Conference “ Linking Environment, Development, Stability and Security”. The Conference was divided in three thematic units by initiating with

- a. the identification of the links between the Environment and Security and the association of the environmental problems with the international relations.
- b. the Climate Change issues and its relevance with the energy policy and the global economics.
- c. the role of foreign policy in the confrontation of environmental issues by giving specific reference to the European experience and the Greek paradigms.

The welcoming introduction was conducted by the Secretary General for International Economic Development Cooperation of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Theodoros Skylakakis. Mr. Skylakakis, praised the EU environmental approach for serving as a paradigm and offering strong incentives for environmentally friendly future technologies. He argued in favor of a technological bridge that will enable the developing world to adopt climate change-neutral economic development. He also referred to the Human Security Network, which is presided by Greece this year. Although he admitted that there are gaps in the implementation of Greece’s environmental policy; however, there are strong incentives for Greece to become an active partner in the global security net.

First Roundtable Discussion

In the first roundtable discussion, the panel was consisted of the following invited speakers:

Geoffrey Dabelko, Director of the ‘ Environmental Change and Security Programme ’ , Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington

Wouter J. Veening, Director of the Institute for Environmental Security, The Hague

Ben Slay, Management Board Chair of the ‘ Environment and Security Initiative: Transforming Risks into Cooperation’ , Director of the Regional Centre, UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) , Bratislava

Costas Carras, President of the Hellenic Society for the Protection of the Environment and the Cultural Heritage, Athens

Moderator: Thanos Dokos, Director General of the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (E LIAMEP) , Athens

Initially, Professor Geoffrey Dabelko addressed the concept of environment and security through the three following categories a) Environment and Traditional Notions of Security with reference to the environmental abundance and scarcity b) Environment as its challenged the notions of Security c) Notion of the Security Institutions. The first category was primarily connected with the richness of the so-called developing countries in natural resources and the implied conflicts that motivate and fund the conflict in such countries. On the other hand, the scarcity of natural resources was alleged to equally motivate conflicts between countries as occurred in the borders of the Dominican Republic with Haiti. In this case, the absence of wood biomass and deforestation at 95% in the Haitian site was claimed to provoke migration and instabilisation to the Dominican Republic. Also, the issue of relative scarcity was mentioned through the example of water privatisation in Bolivia, which caused the life of one person in the recent protests. As Professor Dabelko claimed, the environmental scarcity will not cause conflict as such, but can significantly contribute to the deterioration of a political system in a country.

The second category mentioned by Professor Dabelko regarding the notion of Human Security and the environment, addressed the need to understand the environmental issues through the human security aspects and not separately as individuals contextual entities. The traditional notions of security should be steadily abandoned and instead, an indispensable connection with the environmental policy should emerge.

The third category was devoted to the understanding of security institutions through the recent impacts of humanity to the environment as well as through the use of security assets for scientific and environmental purposes. The example of Mr. Al Gore was referred when, as a senator, he was pushing the US navy to release iceberg thickness data from the arctic for the research on climate change effects.

In the end, Professor Dabelko mentioned that the environmental policy should be viewed as an opportunity to promote cooperation between the nations. He mentioned that the environment should be confronted as a confidence builder in the way UNEP assays to do in a global level.

In turn, Mr. Wouter Veening, Director of the Institute for Environmental Security, examined a further relationship between environment and security, and how this can affect regional balances. In particular, he divided his speech into five thematic units as below:

1. Environmental degradation as threat to security and stability.
2. The drivers behind environmental degradation.

3. International environmental governance: structure and operations.

4. The China Syndrome.

5. Concluding remarks.

Regarding the first thematic issue, Mr. Veening admitted that the climate change is the most salient aspect of the degradation of ecosystems as documented so comprehensively by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005). He congratulated UK government for putting climate change on the agenda of the UN Security council in opposition to the US and China where they still deliberately ignore it. He also mentioned the report on National Security and the Threat of Climate Change, by the Military Advisory Board of the report, published in April 2007 by the CNA Corporation. As noted, the Board indicated how climate change might induce food, land and water insecurity and thus susceptibility to fundamentalism with increased risk of terrorism, how migration may lead to conflicts in for the U.S. strategic areas, how sea level rise will threaten low-lying naval bases in the Pacific and Indian Oceans and how hurricanes may affect the bases on the U.S. Atlantic and Mexican Gulf coasts.

Alike Professor Dabelko, Mr. Veening mentioned that water shortage poses a direct human security risk, but not necessarily a conflict risk. He argued that water may also be an impulse for cooperation, although when the shortage is too severe the conflict potential is bound to increase.

In the second thematic issue regarding the drivers behind the environmental degradation, Mr. Veening noted that a change in the environment is always a function of the natural evolution, the number of people, their production and consumption patterns or life-styles, and the technology with which production and consumption are organized and conducted. A formula was designed with the aforementioned variables as below :

$$I = \phi (P \times A \times T) , \text{ where}$$

I = Impact on the environment,

ϕ = the coefficient for natural evolution

P = Population

A = Affluence (or the consumption pattern including the underlying production system)

T = Technology

The environmental degradation was claimed by Mr. Veening to be confronted through the international environmental governance which consisted of the fourth thematic issue. As he noted, the most crucial component of the international agreements is undoubtedly the Kyoto Protocol of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. It was alleged, that Kyoto Protocol should be taken seriously into account since the climate change effects have made its presence in the globe. Indicatively, the European Union, faced itself with growing droughts, floods, heat-waves and storms which is predicted

to get stronger in the next decades. Indicatively, The Institute for Environmental Security, based in Hague is monitoring whether a compliance and enforcement perspective can be brought into the international environmental legal and institutional structure.

The China syndrome was exhibited as the fourth thematic issue from Mr. Veening due to the unprecedented economic growth of the country and the need for huge imports of minerals, fuels, timber and water from the rest of the world. He emphasised that due to its fast economic growth, China has surpassed the U.S. as the prevalent emitter of greenhouse gases. He also addressed the debate raised mainly by China, India and Brazil about the right to pollute as emerging markets.

In conclusion, Mr. Veening foresaw that the environmental security will increasingly dominate international relations, thus the public awareness, the change in behavioural patterns and the technological innovation should be alarmingly accelerated towards the efficient management of natural resources.

The Director of the UN Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC), Dr. Ben Slay, mentioned that the environmental sustainability and development are two sides of the same coin and they cannot be pursued separately and successfully. Emphasis was given to the unclean water as a threat to childhood in the developing countries. Also, the urge for cooperation among organization and departments of various ministries in a governmental scheme was indicated for an integrated confrontation of the environmental problems. The role of ENVSEC as a cooperative arrangement was briefly noted.

The President of ELLINIKI ETAIRIA, and co-organizer partner of the Conference, Mr. Costas Carras, expressed its thanking to ELIAMEP for the successful organization and to the sponsors for the support of the event. The need for the awareness of the world community towards the danger of environmental impacts was stressed and the threaten that the technological, economic and political reforms might not become too rapid to be managed successfully for the overcoming of the future climate change effects. Mr. Carras also expressed its relative pessimism about the future of humanity towards climate change effects by mentioning the dilemma of the "impossible trinity" as below:

- a. All Chinese, Indians and other nations in their position should live as prosperously as North Americans and Western Europeans to today
- b. North Americans and Western Europeans should continue to live as now, emitting greenhouse gases as we do today
- c. Catastrophic climate change to our planet will be avoided.

Within this context, Mr. Carras noted that the very nature of the Western economic and information network makes the first result desirable. If therefore the third consequence is to be avoided, it is the second point which has something has to give.

For the confrontation of the environmental impacts and also the human survivability, the inclusion of environmental costs through a radical fiscal reform should initially occur. Secondly, the avoidance of military conflict should be pursued, to the degree possible, thereby permitting the great power blocs to focus their separate but combinable energies on the major issue facing humankind. Third, a very substantial transfer of resources and technical expertise from the richer to the poorer countries should be an imperative task by combining assistance in education and health issues.

In conclusion, Mr. Carras indicated that the environmental crisis alters the very concept of security, from one in which military power has been dominant, to one in which it comes low in a long list, on which economics, technology, the effectiveness of international cooperation, the influence of the old media, as of the new, e.g. the Internet, the values and lifestyles of particular communities, education and opinion formation among the peoples of the world, become far more critical elements in "securing security" than what we have traditionally termed "security" itself.

Follow Up Discussion of First Roundtable

In the following up discussion, the Director of Adelphi Research in Germany Mr. Carius emphasized the need to mutually respond in climate change effects through global world summits while Ms. Christopoulou Iole from WWF Greece, mentioned that environmental co-operation could act as a vehicle for peace. Mr. Carras recommended the reduction of energy consumption in relation to the population. He suggested the increasing of energy efficiency of buildings, and the reduction of individual transportation. The introduction of economic instruments and particularly green taxation was suggested as an efficient policy measure. Dr. Ben Slay agreed that the taxation of gasoline for instance could be a satisfactory motivation but if not used appropriately, as claimed to occur in US, then the revenues earned from this measure would not alleviate the environmental problems. Professor Dabelko referred to the issue of intervention towards environmentally related crises. He claimed that in the recent past, the President Gorbachev and the former UNEP Executive Director Mr. Klaus Toepfer attempted to develop rapid international reaction to environmental catastrophe. Both times the efforts went nowhere, mostly because certain governments vetoed it with perceived threat to sovereignty. In this context, it was alleged that there is still plenty of room for improvement on early warning and immediate response.

Second Roundtable Discussion

In the second roundtable discussion, the climate change effects and its relevance with the energy policy were discussed by the following speakers:

Dimitris Lalas, Physics Department, University of Athens

Dimitri Zenghelis, Senior Economist, UK Government Economic Adviser, The Stern Review Team, UK

Lučka Kajfež Bogataj, Vice-Chair of the Working Group II, International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Geneva

Michael Toman, Adjunct Professor of International Relations, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore

Kyriakos Mitsotakis, Member of Parliament, Athens

Moderator: Yannis Palaiokrassas, Former EU Commissioner, Vice-President of the Hellenic Society for the Protection of the Environment and the Cultural Heritage, Athens

Initially, an overview of the Stern Review on the economics of climate change was given by Dimitris Zenghelis. The possibility of the global temperature change in relevance to the pre-industrial levels and the potential impacts in key sectors was exhibited. Mr. Zenghelis was further focused on the economics of climatic stabilisation by mentioning that a level below 450ppm of CO₂E would require emissions to peak by 2010 utmost 6-10% per annum and to decline thereafter. In case the emissions would peak in 2020, a stabilisation in 550ppm of CO₂E could be achieved with an annual decline of 1 – 2.5% afterwards as the following figure displays

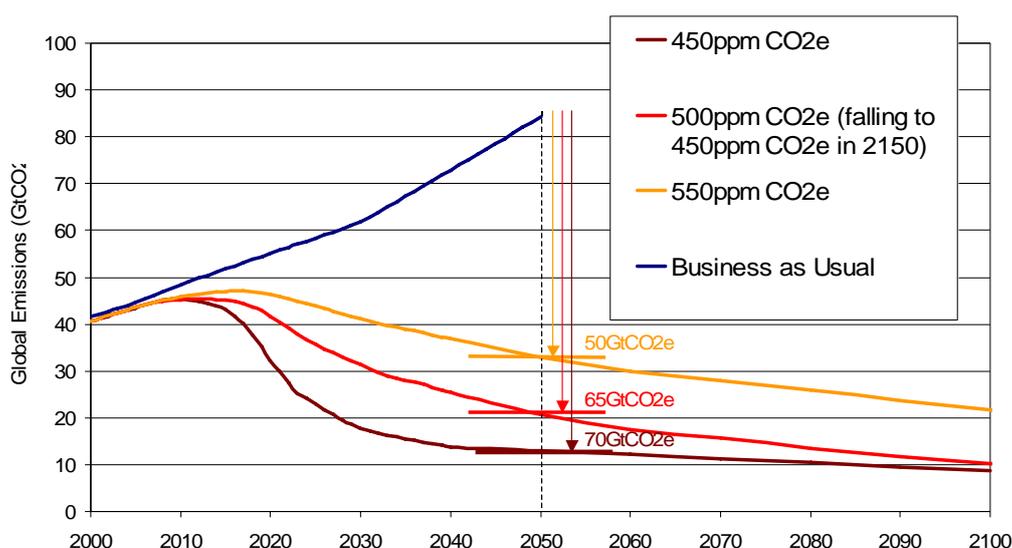


Figure 1.: Global Emission Scenarios

Going further in the cost of CO₂E stabilization emissions and mitigation of climate change effects, Mr. Zenghelis presented that the expected cost of cutting emissions consistent with 550ppm CO₂E would averagely demand 1% of GDP per year. These costs could be not evenly distributed although the competitiveness impacts can be reduced by acting together. Attention should be given to the emerged markets and the investment in low-carbon electricity sources.

According to Mr. Zenghelis, unless emissions are curbed, climate change will bring high costs for human development, economies and the environment. More specifically, the concentrations of 550ppm

CO₂Ee and above could provoke very high risks of serious economic impacts while the concentrations of 450ppm CO₂Ee and below are extremely difficult to be achieved now through the current and foreseeable technology. The costs of inaction, would averagely cost about 5% of the global GDP which is far beyond than the 1% GDP in case efficient measures will be now adopted. Also, attention to the adaptation measures was drawn, by however claiming that the adaptation measures cannot be a substitute for mitigation measures. The major economic contribution for adaptation measures should be directed from the developed to the developing countries.

In turn, the Vice-Chair of the Working Group II, International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Ms. Lučka Kajfež Bogataj, warned about the impact in a wide geographic longitude and latitude by mainly affecting, the Arctic, the Sub-Saharan Africa, the small islands and the Asian megadeltas. Further, she underlined the effects in the agricultural sector by focusing on the diverting impacts between the South and North Europe. Indicatively, Professor Bogataj referred to the potential positive effects arising in the agriculture of N.Europe within an increase of 2C° in the next two decades, like increased water availability and increased yields, while the opposite almost effects will occur in S.Europe. However, it was mentioned that in long run, the entire agricultural sector of Europe will affirmatively suffer from the climate change effects.

The moderator of the Panel and Vice-President of the Hellenic Society for the Protection of the Environment and the Cultural Heritage, Mr. Yannis Palaiokrassas, mentioned that the European Union has connected for the first time the sectors of energy and economics, by putting the CO₂ energy tax on its agenda. Mr. Palaiokrassas referred to the Stern Report as the document which brought new ground on the economics of climate change and put a specific and scary economic cost figure on the business as usual scenario, comparing to the light cost of undertaking a proactive scenario to contain global temperature increase. Also, the issues of the security in fuels supply, the equity in the distribution of burdens between developing and developed countries, the safety of existing populations and the feeding of future generations were spotted as formidable problems and challenges on an unprecedented scale.

The member of Greek Parliament Kyriakos Mitsotakis, pointed out that according to the Euro – barometer survey, 70% of the Greeks seem to acknowledge the climate change problem and they are very seriously concerned about it. However, although Greeks seem to understand that there is a looming challenge, they do not seem to understand that the result is going to be devastating. Mr. Mitsotakis expressed his disappointment about the fact that Greece is the only European country with no separate ministry for the environment and further that the environmental issues are handled together with the public works in the same ministry. He also noted that a lot more should be done to attract the business community for the confrontation of climate change effects. Also, the fast growing economic models which are putting tremendous pressures on the environment should be discouraged.

Mr Mitsotakis also mentioned that the application of renewable sources in Greece is still small due to three parameters: a)incentives b)bureaucracy c)regulations regarding land use. Regarding the usage of nuclear energy in Greece, he admitted that it has significant risks: recommissioning, storing waste, the nuclear proliferation and other problems which are of major concern. However, Greece is yet a country heavily relying on lignite and no matter how fast the renewables will spread, the country will be still dependent on lignite within the foreseeable future. Mr. Mitsotakis expressed the belief that the nuclear energy issue should be discussed without taboos and preconceptions. In an overview, he gave emphasis on the design of a sort of national plan for Greece which will analyse environmental and energy issues on a common basis.

The Adjunct Professor of International Relations from Johns Hopkins University, Michael Toman, indicated that the global oil markets and regional natural gas markets are characterized not just by high prices and tight demand-supply balances, but also by instability that can have economic and geopolitical consequences. Further, the need for a global coordinating action towards greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) was underlined as an imperative objective for the mitigation of climate change effects. The most attractive and promising option was claimed to be the improvement of energy efficiency.

The effectiveness of the economic instruments for the efficient use of energy sources was noted as a very debatable issue. According to Professor Thoman, there is a fundamental disagreement about how much to rely on price signals versus other approaches, either in enhancing energy efficiency or stimulating the further development and utilization of lower-carbon energy sources. On the one hand, many advocates call for higher regulatory standards for fuel efficiency of vehicles, building, and appliances. This approach is receiving increased attention in the United States, especially among environmental advocates. However, the advocates of economic instruments argue that these effects will achieve more cost-effectively through price signals.

Professor Thoman stated that the mitigation energy related impacts could come from three types of actions: increased flexibility in demand (rapid fuel switching); greater energy efficiency (to reduce the overall economic consequences of an energy price shock); and coordinated use of public and private inventories in a crisis to soften price spikes and dampen speculation. The absence of coordinated international action (since the markets are international), policies by any one country or small group of countries can have only limited impacts.

The investment in R&D activities was recommended for lowering the cost of renewable energy alternatives, including some cost/risk sharing for gaining knowledge from initial investment experience. In this context, the usage of nuclear power was mentioned as an alternative energy source which warrants some special consideration, since it can reduce GHGs and demand for fossil energy. However, the nuclear waste residuals, the risks of nuclear weapons proliferation as well as the plant safety issues should be contemplated.

Follow Up Discussion of Second Roundtable

The Associate Professor in University of Piraeus Dr. Tselentis, agreed with Mr. Mitsotakis about the reconsideration of nuclear energy as an alternative energy strategy for Greece and more wider for the globe. Dr. Tselentis indicated that there are now new technologies, which are based on fusion, but without all the drawbacks of the classic methods in the past. These technologies are based on accelerator driven nuclear, but they could not be used for terrorist actions, due to the deactivation of the radioactive material.

In turn, Dr. Slay referred to the “oil curse” by pointing at the region of West Africa where there are huge development gaps although the area is considered to have one of the richest oil reserves.

Mr. Carius, questioned Mr. Mitsotakis about the time required for changing the energy patterns and the individuals’ behaviour. As he stated “Negotiating the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol took 9-12 years and we learned that the thresholds we are looking at are at the moment 20:20, 20:40 and 20:20 is a very short term window of opportunity or pathway that we have.”

Mr. Mitsotakis replied that there is not any chance to enforce a global solution unless the US, China and India assume their leadership responsibilities. He also mentioned that the next US leadership will have to place global warming much higher than the current one. Getting back to nuclear energy issue, Professor Bogataj stated that nuclear is not very cheap option in comparison to the other alternative energy sources. However, little money is spent on nuclear fusion and more expenses should be given for research of safer nuclear energy. Professor Lalas additionally noted that the nuclear energy should be further developed in order to replace the current carbon driven economy. Professor Toman, agreed that more expenditures should be given for the development of alternative energy sources. He was uncertain whether a political agreement could be achieved on the carbon price in a world market level.

Third Roundtable Discussion

The last roundtable discussion was devoted to foreign policy and the environment with main emphasis to Europe and Greece, while the panel was consisted of the following invited speakers:

- H.E. Mr. Sverre Stub, Ambassador, Royal Embassy of Norway, Athens
- Alexander Carius, Director, Adelphi Research, Expert on Foreign Policy and International Environmental Cooperation Issues, Germany
- Alessandro Villa, External Relations Directorate-General, European Commission, Brussels
- Tina Birbili, Environmentalist, Athens

- Moderator: Georgios Papadimitriou, Professor, Department of Political Science and Public Administration, University of Athens

The discussion of the third Panel was commenced by Professor Georgios Papadimitriou who underlined the responsibility of the international community towards the confrontation of environmental burdensome issues. In turn, the Director of Adelphi Research, Alexander Carius noted that both Stern Report and IPCC do not provide completely new insights but created a consensus on climate change and potential economic/social/security implications. The climate change policy, the debates on energy (supply) security and the shift of global power relations, in particular India and China, are according to Mr. Carius, the three parallel major policy processes of our century. The need for developing new modes for dialogue was underlined. Indicatively, a reformation to global trade system should be conducted for the creation of opportunities to developing countries. The inclusion of G77 to environmental and security issues should be accomplished while the introduction of efficiency strategies in new high emitting economies (China, India etc.) should be encouraged.

The environmentalist, Dr. Tina Birbili, emphasized that classic security policy cannot cope with the new environmental related challenges which threaten the regional and international stability. The adaptation to climate change is emerging as a key element of preventive security policy. According to Dr. Birbili, the climate change measures should be incorporated into development assistance. Further, the global trade and investment should point on low-carbon incentives while the sustainable development issues and the management of shared resources should be examined as being part of the various peace treaties and cooperation agreements. Also the prospective foreign policy, should act via a multilateral system of governance and strong international institutions, for the promotion of collective actions.

The representative of External Relations Directorate-General in European Commission, Alessandro Villa, transferred the Commission's interest in the subject of linking Environment, development, stability and Security. As Mr. Villa mentioned, the EU as biggest provider of external aid and a civil super power when it comes to environmental affairs and stability and peace interventions around the world, has a clear comparative advantage to address such issues. Indicatively, the EC development and cooperation instruments alone amount to some €10 Billion/year through different geographic instruments (Phare, CARDS, Tacis, MEDA, ALA, EDF) or horizontal (EIDHR, RRM, Aeneas etc.)

Attention was given to the relevance of climate change with the current energy security global policy. To this orientation, the recent legislative proposal of EU to include aviation in the EU Emissions Trading Scheme has raised grave concern among partner countries and will continue to require DG RELEX coordination externally. As underlined by Mr. Villa, the EU has already established 130 EC delegations around the world that one day could become EU delegations and establish a unique network of external and diplomatic relations for the integration of environmental issues and objectives into Foreign and Security Policies. These delegations could also promote the strengthening and legitimating of the

European role and voice in the international arena, and help third parties to combat international environmental threats that can affect the global peace, security and prosperity.

Within this frame, Mr. Villa claimed that there cannot be sustainable development without peace and security. The environmental peacemaking and environmental diplomacy activities could become essential tools for EU conflict prevention and conflict solving support. They belong to the sphere of the so called “soft power” which distinguishes Europe from many other international actors.

Regarding the research perspectives of EU, the preparation of the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES) was presented, as a joint initiative of the EU and European Space Agency that will provide independent a permanent access to reliable and timely information on the status and evolution of the Earth's environment at all scales, within EU and globally. The cooperation with international organization was also addressed as occurred with the United Nations regarding the sanctions imposed for natural resources exploitation.

Follow Up Discussion of Third Roundtable

A comment to Mr. Villa's talk came from Mr. Veening who fully agreed that European development cooperation is on of the most powerful tools to Climate stability around the world in theory. However, Mr. Veening noted that the European development cooperation has to be more pro-active. He also mentioned that the European Development Cooperation needs to work more closely to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and to make sure that the receiving countries do have an adequate Climate Change Policy.

Another comment to Mr Villa's talk came from the Research Director of the National Observatory of Athens, Dr. Kambezidis Harry, who addressed the multi disciplinary perspectives of sustainable development, like economy, environment, health, tourism and others. He noted that unfortunately, the Commission has not yet adopted a European strategy towards sustainable development although the member states have developed national strategies.

Professor Bogataj was worrying that in the near future, the world will move to fast growing scenarios and the external cost will be bigger than the profit. In this light, she suggested that environmental education and outreach should be mandatory for the primary schools.

The response of Mr. Villa about the comments raised in the follow up discussion, was that the EU has attempted to empower the trade negotiation and partnership with developing regions and associations like the Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries. There is also a wider discussion with the African Union where the environment is mentioned, unfortunately still not sufficiently. However, the EU is strongly interested in bringing stability in Africa by resolving the conflict related with the scarcity of natural resources. Mr. Villa also highlighted the need to support UNEP although the strengthening of

such cooperation should be in line with the reformation of UN system. In this light, Mr. Villa expressed his scepticism to invest on UNEP when the whole UN framework needs to be reformed.

Regarding the education issue, Mr. Villa noted that there is an absolute need for rebalancing the lack of education and knowledge that exists at all levels. He also mentioned that it cannot be expected only from the politicians to tackle with the environmental problems since the majority of the population is still ignorant of these matters.

The representative of the Hellenic Ministry for the Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works, Dr. Mavroidis Ilias emphasized the importance of changing lifestyles and the significance of sustainable consumption and production. It was however alleged that not much was said on the role of education, training and public awareness regarding these issues. According to Dr. Mavroidis, this could be addressed to the general public but also targeted to specific sub-groups of the population. Regarding the energy security issues, it was claimed that Greece was actively involved in the SE European energy community, which is related to security and is now under consideration for the Mediterranean area within the framework of Euro - Mediterranean partnership, where also the DG Environment of the EU Commission is participating .

In turn, the president of Biopolitics International Organisation, Professor Vlavianou-Arvaniti Agni, mentioned that although a reference to clean technologies was conducted, there was not any comment on nanotechnology or the mechanisms of biological systems where high expectations should be waited.

In turn, the Director of Hellenic Ornithological Society, Mr. Xenophon Kappas, commented on the development and stability issues regarding the Greek case. He mentioned that the northern borderline of Greece and the rich biodiversity regions are almost identified with each other. In this context, Greece should develop very effective measures to promote stability near the borderline area through the capacity building, technical knowledge exchange as well as cooperation of people and development of these remote regions.

Finally, the Ambassador of Royal Embassy of Norway, Sverre Stub, expressed his disappointment for the lobbying exerted from the German car industry, towards the ambitious plan of EU Commission for the imposition of very strict CO₂ emission reductions. However, he noted that the German car industries will face more losses in the long run. He also declared his optimism about the development of Green Diplomacy and mentioned that the politicians are progressively becoming more engaged in environmentally related issues. However, he noted that it is high time for serious international approaches to be undertaken.