

## HONORARY SPEECH BY THE LINNEBORN PRIZE WINNER

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Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great honour to receive the European Linneborn Prize today in Amsterdam. I would like first to thank you Wolfgang for your eulogistic laudatio and friendly comments about our professional and personal relationships. You know that I share the same feelings about their exceptional quality. I must say that I have drawn a great benefit of what I learnt from you concerning the way of managing a research programme such as the DG 12 biomass project at the end of the seventies.

Beyond my own contribution to promote biomass, this prize rewards also all the colleagues who have been sharing the job for more than twenty years. Among them I would like to recall the major role of David Hall, previously honoured through the Linneborn Prize. He was involved since the very beginning of the European adventure in the biomass field. He was the main organiser of the first European conference in Brighton in 1980 and everybody in the audience knows the importance of his leaderships to promote biomass as a renewable energy source all over the world. Ton Beenackers, also honoured through the Linneborn Prize played an important role in the 8<sup>th</sup> conference in Vienna a few weeks before Austria entered the European Union. At this time the European commission changed its way of supporting this series of biomass conferences and the team who managed the event succeeded to avoid a fatal break. Ton was a major player of this team.

I am happy to find here at the tribune my old friends, Giuliano Grassi and Ralph Overend who were involved in this series of conferences since the first one.

I came back yesterday to the proceedings of the 1980 first conference. At that time, we anticipated a biomass contribution in the energy budget of the European Union by 2000 which is nearly the objectives of the white paper by 2010. The balance between the middle eighty oil release and the middle ninety climate change mitigation can explain this delay. And the story is far from its end. So I am convinced that focussing on biomass as it has been done this week is a very useful contribution to sustainability in the energy field.

Wolfgang Palz and myself visited Dr Linneborn at his home a long time ago. I remember the scene. We discussed about gasifier stories during the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These stories were strongly linked with the first and the second world wars. It was for me an important moment about peace and Europe. So, I am proud to receive a prize bearing the name of Dr Linneborn.

I wish to all of you and especially to our young colleagues to succeed in their projects to promote biomass. Once again thank you very much.