

LAUDATIO FOR THE LINNEBORN PRIZE

Wolfgang Palz,
Conference Chairman, Brussels, Belgium

We honour today Philippe Chartier for his life's work and achievements, in particular for his role as a leader of European Biomass development. It is a happy coincidence that this ceremony is taking place here in Amsterdam to a Frenchman who loves his country and is proud to be French; indeed Holland, the land of flowers is also the country which shares with France one of the great genius of our times, Vincent van Gogh.

It is significant too, that this prize is given in front of the World's largest Biomass conference, one in a series that Philippe Chartier helped to set up in 1980 and to develop into the milestone events they have become since then.

Philippe Chartier has a Docteurs-Science degree and is a Directeur de recherche. He was highly decorated in his home country as a Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur in 1989, an Officier de la Legion d'Honneur in 1999 and a Commandeur de Merite Agricole in 2002. Two weeks ago he was given in Bucarest a honorary Doctor degree.

In his professional career he was a brilliant scientist, gave an example as a man of vision and strategy orchestrated large groups as an organiser and an administrator. He has a remarkable political instinct and a strong interest in international cooperation where I should underline his role in Brussels and in the IEA, numerous links with the USA and Japan and his commitment for Romania.

Philippe Chartier had always high responsibilities which were centred around Bioclimatology, Environment, Sustainable Energy and Biomass which all happen to be in the main focus of our world today.

His achievements are so numerous that they can not be mentioned all here. As scientist he started his career at INRA, the National Institute for Agricultural Research, where he worked on the photosynthesis of plant cultivations, the influence of CO₂, water, solar radiation on growth. Eventually he became a Director of the Bioclimatic Station in Versailles and the Head of the Bioclimatology Department.

From thereon, he developed his interest in Biomass and Bioenergy. Already in the 1970's he was well known as a prime promotor of Biomass in France and in the European Community of that time.

His vision and commitment were the driving force for the start-up and orientation of the first French and European programmes for development and implementation of Biomass technologies. He believed firmly in Biomass' future and pushed hard for action with the authorities and the general public. He was not only "Monsieur Biomass" in the Governmental Committees for Renewable Energies of these days but also the Head of the Project "Biomass" at the EC Commission's development programmes in Brussels which he helped to shape and orient.

At the end of the 1970's, Philippe Chartier developed a wider strategic interest in energy. He was involved, for

instance, in a Ground lurking study of a group of scientists, the "groupe de Bellevue" that was the first to investigate whether a large country like France could be 100% supplied with renewable energy. Later, in the mid 80's, he became the Resident of the powerful Committee of the EC Member Countries which overlooked the implementation of the "Non-Nuclear Energy R+D Programme" and its budget.

Particularly remarkable were also his skills as an organizer. I should underline here that his action was conducted with efficiency and applauded by the people involved because it belongs to his character to work more as the conductor of an orchestra than the commander of an army; he is consensual and convincing instead of imposing. For that he is eloquent and a great communicator. This is helped by a good close of Gallic humor which makes it pleasant and not annoying at all to discuss and work with him. ☺

These characteristics as a competent and open-minded personality helped him certainly when he started at the beginning of the 1980's to organize AFME, the new French energy agency. Its creation had been decided by the new Government in 1982 to give a counter weight to the nuclear euphoria of that time. AFME has perhaps become the master piece of his career. He organized a large number of working groups to make sure that a wide social consensus of all potential stake holders in energy was established on the content and the structure of this new agency which had to be created from scratch. Indeed, it was unique in Europe in these days that the agency was not set up as a branch of the many powerful nuclear research centers which were, and still are, in place throughout the Continent with tens of thousands of people employed. The creation of AFME was undeniably a great success and Philippe Chartier is the one who laid the basis for that unique achievement. He was also its Scientific Director for 2 decades!

The agency which became later the ADEME as we know it today with its +/- 700 people was enriched with national competence for programmes on pollution and waste; it has become an example to follow for other countries.

Some years ago, Philippe Chartier has decided to approach the industrial sector, certainly a logical step now when the renewable energies have become by and large nature and market development has become the prime challenge.

Philippe Chartier, on behalf of the European Biomass community which is strongly represented in this room we honour today your life-achievements, your commitment to biomass and your outstanding role for the advancement of sustainable development in France, Europe and the Globe.

But allow me, to conclude, also a personal note. You are a man of an enormous competence which is not trivial as biomass among others is certainly the most complex

sector among the renewable energies and this was of tremendous help when I had responsibility in the EU R+D programmes. Your good humours were a much needed encouragement when the job in Brussels became more difficult. And what appeals the most to me is your strong character. You don't let good friends down when they get into political trouble but you stand firmly at their side. I am personally proud of having you as my friend.

We wish you and your family and friends many more pleasant years to enjoy and hope that the Biomass Community can benefit from your active support for a long time to come.

With all our wishes....