

EuroBiO 2008

Paris International Congress Centre, 7-9 October 2008

At the request of its prestigious International Steering Committee, and in view of the French Presidency of the European Union, the organizing committee has addressed two goals for EuroBiO 2008:

- 1. to send the attendees home charged with ideas and*
- 2. to generate a snapshot of the collective mind of those present at EuroBiO regarding burning issues that will be of use to policy makers at national and European levels.*

To achieve this, EuroBiO 2008 is based on two highly innovative and interactive formats: the "House of Commons" debates and the BioDialogues, which will take place respectively on Tuesday 7th October and on Wednesday 8th. During the Grand Reporting Plenary on Thursday 9th Europe's decision makers will officially ask Conference what needs to change, for change to take place. In the weeks that follow EuroBiO, representatives of all those present will be consulted through a Green Paper which will lead to the presentation of a White Paper to the European Institutions. A follow-up meeting will be held with the European Institutions in the spring of 2009 to monitor progress.

House of Commons Debates

In order to prepare participants for the BioDialogues, EuroBiO will begin on Tuesday 7th October 2008 with three debates in the House of Commons (UK parliament) format. Motions will be of the kind that require a simple yes or no: for example "are biofuels exacerbating starvation around the world"? The motion will be projected on a screen. Two banks of benches will be arranged facing each other and participants will choose their camp according to their initial point of view regarding the motion: for or against. Four short speeches will have been prepared in advance: two for and two against. The "Prime Minister" makes the first of these speeches, in favour of the motion. There then follows an open debate during which anyone present may

comment, on condition that they can catch the Moderator's eye. At any point during these comments and speeches attendees may get up and walk over to the opposing benches, if they have been won over by the speaker. And of course they may get up and return to their former bench if the following speaker or comment can sway them! Whether or not the debate is carried depends on a tally of the number of participants who have changed benches.

BioDialogues

Participants will be seated around tables of eight with a "top table" on the dais comprising a moderator flanked by two keynote speakers, three discussants, a "young person" representing the up and coming generation together with a scientific journalist. During the first half hour, the two keynotes will speak, each for 15 minutes from the Top Table. The purpose of the speeches by the keynotes is to provide a framework for the ensuing debate. During the second half hour, the three discussants will each speak for 10 minutes. These will be opinionated speeches, providing spice to the fare set out by the keynotes. The third half hour comprises a break, with refreshments served at each table to encourage attendees to engage in a debate with members of their own table, based on all that they will have heard during the first hour. Each table will designate a "rapporteur" whose job it will be to make a note of the key points and issues raised and debated by their table's members. Between the third and fourth half-hours, the moderator will call upon the representative of the young generation, sitting on the top table, to express their thoughts on the debate up to this point. The fourth and final half hour will be given over to a debate between the tables and the top table. At the end of the session, the rapporteurs will go up to the top table and submit their bullet points to the journalist. During the first weeks following EuroBiO, the journalist will write a Green Paper that will be sent to the attendees' representatives (the rapporteurs) for comments which will be used to finalize the White Paper.