

PRESS RELEASE

POSITIONING EUROPE IN GLOBAL SCIENCE

FUTURE EARTH EUROPEAN LAUNCH EVENT OF ITS 8-POINT PLAN FOR SOLUTIONS-ORIENTED GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY RESEARCH

On **Tuesday 3 February 2015** Members of European Parliament (MEPs), European and international institutions, research funders and leading researchers will sit around the table in the European Parliament (EP) on the occasion of a dialogue session seeking to gain insights from MEPs and EU policy makers and identify strategic priorities for European research leading to sustainable solutions, building on a global agenda recently published by Future Earth.

[Future Earth](#) is the global research platform providing the knowledge and support to accelerate transformations to a sustainable world. In December 2014 following a global consultation process with scientists and societal stakeholders, Future Earth published a **Strategic Research Agenda 2014** intended to create the step-change in global research needed to address serious environmental, social and economic threats and thereby accelerate sustainable development. It urges the private sector, governments and civil society to work with researchers to co-design and co-produce a more agile global innovation system.

The “Strategic Research Agenda” report focuses on three themes: firstly, on understanding how the planet itself is changing; secondly, on deploying integrated, interdisciplinary science to address urgent sustainable development needs; and thirdly, on transforming development to be more sustainable in the long term. **The eight global sustainability challenges driving this agenda focus on:**

1. Delivering water, energy, and food for all.
2. Decoupling carbon emissions from economic growth.
3. Safeguarding land, freshwater and marine natural assets.
4. Building healthy, resilient and productive cities.
5. Promoting sustainable rural futures.
6. Improving human health by incorporating global change concerns.
7. Encouraging sustainable consumption and production patterns.
8. Improving governance and early warning systems to respond to complex future threats.

The document is the result of a consultation process with global environmental change research communities and stakeholders from business, government and civil society, as well as an open online survey that received contributions from people in 74 countries worldwide.



“Science is crucial if we are to address today’s complex, interconnected issues – achieving water, energy and food security, in the context of climate change, while decarbonising energy sources and safeguarding Earth’s life-support systems,” says Frans Berkhout, Interim Director of Future Earth. *“If we are to meet society’s emerging needs, and adequately inform businesses, policymakers and practitioners with actionable knowledge, I believe that funding for solutions-oriented integrated research must increase rapidly and substantially. This must go hand in hand with a commitment from researchers and policy-makers to engage more closely to ensure the relevance of their work.”*

Confirmed speakers at this event hosted by **Paul Rubig MEP** and Chair of [STOA](#) (the EP Science and Technology Options Assessment unit) include: European Commission Director in DG Research and Development and Belmont Forum co-Chair, **Kurt Vandenberghe**; Future Earth Interim Director, **Prof. Frans Berkhout**; UNEP Brussels office Director, **Ulf Bjornholm**; **Prof. Corinne Le Queré**, Global Carbon Project and Director of Tyndall Centre (East Anglia University); **Prof. Frank Biermann** of the Institute of Environmental Studies at the University Amsterdam; and **Farooq Ullah**, Executive Director of the Stakeholders Forum for a Sustainable Future.

The event, convened by Future Earth, the European Commission and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), in collaboration with the EP Intergroup on *“Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development”*, is organised in view of a number of important new global agreements on climate, disaster risk reduction and the Sustainable Development Goals expected in 2015. Scientific research is critical to the success of these agreements, and science and innovation in Europe will play a crucial role.

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