

More questions than answers: the 2003 Forum

Etienne Dancer

Mid-May, I had the choice: either stay at home and enjoy gardening, or have a week-end thinking about our World and its future.

Once again, I left my blooming garden for a while and did choose coming to Delft and Antwerp.

We did reach Delft just in time for the Friday afternoon Tour. I had already visited Nuclear Power Plants, but this was the first time for me to see the blue light of nuclear reaction, in a 100% safe environment. This light is amazing! The explanations obtained in small groups were very interesting.

As an Electrical Engineer, and having been involved in the Working Group, I had some ideas on what to expect from this Forum on Energy, but I do admit that the outcome was above my expectations.

As for the previous Forums, the speakers invited by Hitachi enabled us to get complementary information on the subject. I do like this opportunity to get information from technical speakers, but also from other actors who push us to look at the subjects from different points of view which also have great implications on the decisions to be taken.

I was a bit reluctant on the outcome of the discussions to be held in the parallel sessions, having in mind all the same stories we hear on the radio or on TV. I was therefore quite surprised to hear the conclusions we reached which were the opposite of what we usually hear, just by simple / logical thinking? Did we miss anything in our discussions or is what we usually hear more questionable than we might think?

I came to the Forum with questions, and did return with other questions: isn't this a normal scientific process? Indeed, I had more questions when coming back, which is a good proof that we did progress!!

The next Forum will be on Transportation. I have no doubt the Working Group will come up with exciting subjects.

I look forward coming to the next Forum. Once again, thank you Hitachi for giving us this opportunity to gather once a year and discuss about our future.

Coming back to my garden: shall I use a lawn mower with an electrical motor or a thermic motor? Which one is the safest for the environment? If I do not use any motor, I will have to exercise and drink much more, get something out of the fridge, take a shower... I told you I had more questions when coming back!

Meet you next year.

Etienne Dancer is Head of Business Unit of the ELYO Group.

This section of Connexion is open for contributions by forum members who want to share something with their colleague forum members. The content of the article is to be decided by yourself and can cover anything, which you feel, could be of interest for the readers. If you are interested in writing an article for Connexion please contact Hans Craen at hcraen@cm.px.head.hitachi.co.jp before 31 July 2003.

The Belgium-Japan Association Youth Committee

Amaury Catlin

Before I started working as a Management Engineer for Swift (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication), I spent one year in Japan at Sophia University (2000-2001), where I studied Japanese economics and management. Back to Belgium, I wrote my thesis about Foreign Direct Investments in Japan, and decided to share my experience within the new Belgium-Japan Association Youth Committee (BJA Youth Committee) as communication manager.

The objective of this Committee is to reinforce the relations between Japanese and European youngsters

living in Belgium. Founded in 1994, the BJA Youth Committee is composed of young people between 18-35 years old. Our objective is to create a network where people can exchange their interests, experience, language, culture, etc. We try to achieve this through our regular activities such as Shinnenkai, Carnival of Binche, Hanami, Martial Arts, guided visits, etc.

Since January, the Youth Committee focused in bringing a new dynamism in the association, creating a website (<http://www.bja-yc.be>), contacting universities and language schools, designing flyers, etc. We are happy to see our network increasing and discovering each other's culture. Feel free to contact me for further info (amaurycatlin@yahoo.fr).

Visit the new Forum homepage:
www.hitachiforum.com

European Connexion is published by Norikiyo Koide and edited by Hans Craen. The Hitachi Corporate Office, Europe welcomes and encourages your comments and ideas.

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e u r o p e a n CONNEXTION

THE NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS OF THE EU HITACHI SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY FORUM

ISSUE 14

JUNE 2003

Editorial note

The Forum is your Forum and if there was any need to demonstrate it your active and challenging participation in the working group meetings would be a key illustration. For 2004 we will have a working group made of 8 Forum members and we greatly look forward to the November meeting during which transportation and IT will be discussed.

Year after year, the Hitachi EU Science & Technology Forum is moving closer to its main objective which is to become a resource for public policy debates on specific issues. This point has been reinforced by several speakers and moderators who kindly joined us in Antwerp.

We need your help for making sure the summary of the proceedings is properly distributed. Let us know to whom we should send it either to colleagues and friends or to academia or persons involved into the EU public debate.

Antwerp was a meeting of friends who thoroughly enjoyed this opportunity. This is for Hitachi the best reward we can expect and we already hope the same friendly atmosphere, together with your individual commitments to participate in the Forum topics, will prevail in Stockholm.

Norikiyo Koide
General Manager
Hitachi Corporate Office,
Europe

Some impressions on the EU Hitachi Science & Technology Forum

Hiroaki Nakanishi

I have been very impressed by the Forum and want to share with you some of my thoughts.

For three days, there has been a constantly friendly environment. From the Friday reception until the Sunday closing lunch, your group was very much like a university alumni get-together where old members enjoy renewing old connections and making new ones. You also extended a warm welcome to speakers, moderators and Hitachi guests, so that all participants immediately felt part of the Forum.

Addressing the content components of the program, I want first to thank the speakers of the Saturday session. Their presentations representing the specialised views of energy agencies, the European Commission, NGO's, trade associations and companies provided the basic framework for the afternoon discussions led by the distinguished moderators. During the afternoon sessions, you blended your scientific background together with your personal assessment for discussing the different working groups' themes. In other words, to the knowledge part of the Forum was added the citizenship part, which is in fact the "raison d'être" of your Forum.

In Hitachi, we strongly believe that scientists have a special duty in the so-called "knowledge society". In this society, where the role of science and the benefits of technology may be differently perceived, well-trained scientists are probably best placed to demonstrate the genuine benefits of technology. As you may know, Hitachi's commitment to develop technologies that benefit society dates back from the very foundation of our company in 1910. This commitment is confirmed year after year, and is exemplified by our strong support to your Forum.

I personally lived in Europe for more than two years, and I was glad to have the opportunity to attend your Forum and meet so many talented Europeans from such a variety of countries. I hope that the discussions at this gathering, through the support of the summary of findings, will contribute to the EU policy-making process. This is an ambitious goal that I am confident you will achieve.

I wish to thank you all for joining the Forum each year, and for participating in the working groups whose activities are so important for the future of the Forum. I am also grateful for the enlightening discussions I had with many of you, which I truly enjoyed.

Hiroaki Nakanishi is Vice President & Executive Officer, General Manager, Global Business, Chief Executive for Europe, Hitachi, Ltd.



Some feedback on the 6th EU Hitachi Science & Technology Forum held in Antwerp, 16-18 May 2003

Energy and its implications for European Society

Dolf Gielen

One of the most interesting aspects of international meetings is the cultural dimension. Hitachi, a Japanese company, organising a regular meeting to contribute to European society – something only few European companies would think of. The meeting was very hospitable and well organised, in good old Japanese tradition.

Also the topic of the forum was well chosen. A secure, environmentally acceptable and affordable energy supply is essential for European society. Energy is an issue of increasing importance on the policy agenda. It is likely to remain there for quite some time, as easy solutions are not in sight. The panel of experienced speakers and chairmen provided an excellent overview of a complex theme, elaborating different perspectives and preferences. It may be worthwhile to expand the day programme into a full-scale conference with access for a wider audience, and keep the evenings for the reunion of Hitachi fellows.

Having been to a similar meeting in the US a weeks before, I was struck by the different approach in both regions. In Europe Kyoto targets are considered a serious energy policy challenge. Security of supply is an emerging issue because of increasing dependence on fossil fuel imports. The policies to meet these challenges are based on energy efficiency, renewables and hydrogen. This is in stark contrast with the US, where CO2 capture and sequestration, nuclear and hydrogen are emphasised, in combination with a policy that tries to secure supply of existing fuels. The US government has rejected the Kyoto protocol and is bargaining that new technology will solve the emissions problem. During the forum the Japanese energy future was discussed by Dr. Azuhata. It would be interesting to compare regional strategies in more detail, there might be an opportunity to learn from each other. Hitachi, as a global company, can play an important role to facilitate such international exchanges.

European decision making is complicated because national governments determine key policies. In the energy policy field it seems policy choices determine technology choice, not the other way around. And European policy choices are to a large extent determined by preferences of the general public. There might be a role for the forum audience as a reference group. May be use in future forums some kind of voting system for the audience to measure opinions?

The forum serves a number of important purposes. It informs the Hitachi fellows on specific topics, the Hitachi company may use the information in its decision making process, and it provides the speakers an opportunity to get some feedback on their ideas and concepts. Next years transportation topic is again an important one, with plenty of room for interesting discussions. I wish Hitachi and the participants a successful and pleasant meeting.

Dolf Gielen is Energy Analyst at the International Energy Agency (IEA). At the 2003 EU Hitachi Science & Technology Forum, he gave a presentation on hydrogen.

Government Policies to Promote Energy Efficiency

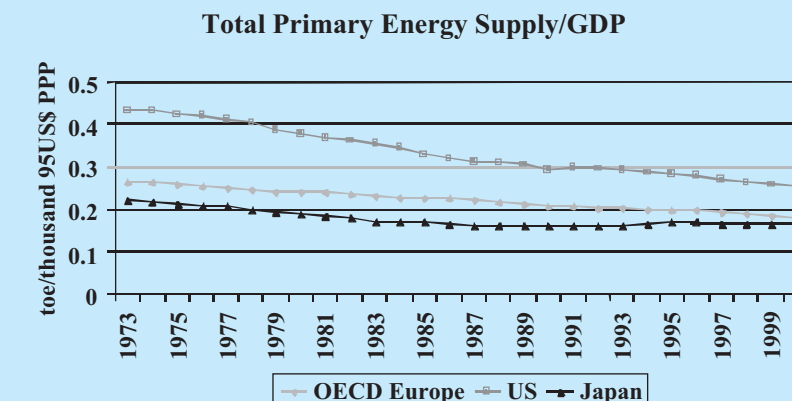
Jean-Christophe Füg

Energy efficiency is typically expressed in terms of energy input per economic value output (tons of oil equivalent per unit of GDP). The energy efficiency of the US (0.26 toe/1000 \$) is approximately 1.5 times lower than that of most West European countries and Japan (0.17-0.19 toe/1000 \$). The impact of country-specific characteristics such as climate, geography, urbanisation, industry structure can be assessed, provided accurate statistical data is available. Energy efficiency in industrialised countries improved drastically after the first oil shock until the mid-1980s; i.e. economic growth was decoupled from energy demand growth (see graph). Over the last decade, however, energy efficiency efforts have slackened and the decoupling between economic and energy demand growth has decreased to about 1% per annum. This is mainly because energy prices have been low - in real value, energy prices are now lower than before the oil shocks – and because

OECD service-based economies have become less energy-dependent.

Governments have a wide array of policy instruments to promote energy efficiency. They include fiscal instruments (taxes and tax incentives), regulation, voluntary agreements, information and awareness-raising, and RD&D. Policies must be targeted at specific groups of consumers. Thus, industry is continuously reducing its energy intensiveness to improve its competitiveness.

Voluntary agreements between governments and industry groups are the most common way to push for higher efficiency. Energy demand in the transport sector, however, is growing faster than the economy. Curbing fuel demand by taxes is politically thorny. Moreover, private car traffic tends to be relatively irresponsive to gasoline price hikes (unless they are massive and permanent), whereas freight haulers are much more sensitive. But fuel and energy taxes, which account for 6-8% of fiscal revenues in OECD countries, are rarely allocated directly to energy efficiency measures. Consumers and markets tend to honour initiatives by governments and manufacturers to promote energy-efficient and properly



labelled electric appliances, equipment and cars, but much remains to be done to harmonise standards among large trading blocs and to introduce procedures to ensure continuous improvements. Large potential efficiency gains remain in the building sector, where the main obstacles are the so-called landlord-tenant dilemma – i.e. the landlord, who leaves it to the tenant to foot the energy bill, has no real incentive to install efficient systems – and long turnover of building stocks. Financing energy efficiency projects, although proven to be effective, is facing numer-

ous hurdles, the main one being reluctance by both lender and debtor to take up debt on future energy savings.

Jean-Christophe Füg works at the department for International Energy Affairs of the Swiss Federal Office of Energy. At the 2003 EU Hitachi Science & Technology Forum, he gave comments on the EC Green Paper on Energy Supply from a government viewpoint. He also chaired a working session on the role of governments to promote energy conservation.

A brief overview of the 2003 Forum

Chris Farren

Briefly scanning over the last three months in my diary, I find that I have been to no less than seven different European countries (or eight, if you really want to count Wales). I guess that this makes me both very fortunate and semi-permanently jetlagged, but of all these trips the one that I feel to have gained most from personally was the weekend in Antwerp for the Hitachi European Forum on Science and Technology.

forum noun – a public meeting or lecture involving audience discussion.

The sixth Hitachi Forum on Science and Technology took place over the weekend of May 16-18th 2003, and while the above brief definition (taken from the dictionary currently sitting on my desk) provides a very basic summary of the weekend, it in no way cap-

tures the spirit of the meeting. As in previous years the Forum was well-attended by both European and Japanese members, and as those who have attended regularly will know, the atmosphere is very relaxed; more like a gathering of friends than a typical business or academic conference.

The broad topic of this years Forum – Energy in Europe – impacts directly or indirectly on everyone, and was introduced in a very practical manner by a visit to IRI, a nuclear research institute in the Netherlands. Seeing a working nuclear reactor at such close quarters was an amazing experience, and set the tone for much of the weekend's discussion.

With various European speakers from

both Government and Industrial backgrounds, detailing topics from alternate energy sources to CO2 emissions and global warming, the intellectual content of the Forum was high, with everyone having the opportunity to make their opinions heard in the parallel working session debates. Indeed, the level of enthusiasm displayed by both Forum members and speakers is creditable, with many good-natured debates and small-group deliberations continuing over into the coffee breaks.

As a 'reward' for such intense cerebral action, the reception on Saturday night is always well received, and this year's soiree was no exception. Traditional local cuisine, with the chance to sample some (or all) of the

hundreds of types of Belgian beer on offer made for a lively evening, and the chance to afterwards experience some genuine Antwerp 'nightlife' was enthusiastically taken by a group determined to burn off some more European energy!

Overall, the annual Hitachi Forum is an engaging and sociable event, always excellently organised and highly interesting no matter what the subject matter. Next year the topic of the Forum will be Transport, and Stockholm should provide an excellent venue. I look forwards to seeing you all again there!

Chris Farren is a Development Chemist working for Rhodia Chirex



• A working session at the 2003 EU Hitachi Science & Technology Forum.