



Climate change was the hot topic of **Green Week 2005**, with the Green Spider Network hosting a lively discussion on the importance of communications in addressing climate change and influencing people's behaviour. The session, entitled **“Hot campaign or cool campaign?”** brought together expert speakers from a range of international organisations, who highlighted both the urgency and uncertainty of the issue.

**Speakers:**

- Ms Ylva Tiveus, DG Environment of the European Commission
- Mr Tim Geyer, Environmental Resources Management Limited (ERM)
- Mr Patrick Worms, Ogilvy PR Worldwide
- Ms Imogen Zethoven, International Switch Campaign WWF
- Mr Tom Kerr, US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)
- Ms Michele Pappalardo, ADEME
- Mr Lloyd Anderson, British Council Science

**Moderator:**

Brendan McWilliams, Weather Columnist, Irish Times

The session was chaired by Brendan McWilliams, weather columnist with The Irish Times, who did an excellent job and encouraged an active discussion from the floor. The session kicked off with a look at how best to communicate risk and future uncertainty - and indeed to what extent it is wise to communicate these uncertainties. The discussion went on to look at the most recent developments in mass media communications and their role in shaping the attitudes of the general public.

The role of the media - which is the preferred source of information for most Europeans - was also examined by Ylva Tiveus, from DG Environment of the European Commission, who highlighted the complexities of communicating climate change. Disagreements within the scientific community on the issue of climate change, compounded by the media's obligation to present both sides of the argument, can create confusion amongst citizens.

This point was picked up by Patrick Worms, Vice President of Ogilvy PR Worldwide, who proposed that most scientists broadly agree that climate change is occurring, but that disputes surrounding the exact details imply discord between experts, resulting in confusion amongst citizens and a consequent lack of behavioural change.

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>> This is principally a result of the confusion surrounding the issue. He suggested that consumers only act when ethical impulses dovetail with their other desires and that stoking fear about climate change is not enough on its own to change behaviour.

An industry perspective was provided by Tim Geyer of Environmental Resources Management Limited (ERM), who outlined the market implications of climate change, using a case study example of an international mining company. He described the method used to conduct a risk analysis of climate change issues, and also explained how these diverse and complex risks were communicated to the management team of the company.

The second half of the session focused on some cutting edge examples of communication campaigns on climate change, from both NGOs and government bodies worldwide. First up was Imogen Zethoven from WWF, who gave a fascinating presentation on the Global PowerSwitch! Campaign, currently operating in 12 countries. PowerSwitch! operates at both a

policy level, to get governments to dramatically cut carbon dioxide emissions from coal power stations and force a major switch to clean efficient power; and at the grassroots, to build national constituencies for action to clean up the power sector.

Despite its reputation for being in denial about climate change, the United States showed itself to be leading the way with voluntary corporate initiatives on climate change. Tom Kerr from the US EPA presented a review of the numerous activities currently under way, and highlighted two specific examples of voluntary initiatives, 'Climate Leader' and

'Energy STAR', which have both made significant achievements in the climate change arena. More information on these voluntary programmes can be found at: <http://www.epa.gov/climateleaders> and <http://www.energystar.gov>.

France has also been doing its bit, in particular with a successful television and radio campaign entitled Hurry up, it's getting hot! Michele Pappalardo, the Chief Executive Officer of the French energy agency ADEME (Agence de l'Environnement et de la Maitrise de l'Energie), attributed the success of this campaign to the use of simple messages and practical solutions over a long-term

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>> time frame. She also flagged the use of partnerships as an effective means of disseminating messages.

Finally, on the other side of the Channel, the United Kingdom has been contributing to the international climate change debate with ZeroCarbonCity, a two-year global campaign supported by the British Council. Lloyd Anderson, Director of the British Council, gave an interesting presentation on the campaign, which has explored the energy challenges facing cities across the world using six pivotal initiatives: 1) The Index: a climate index for the world's top one hundred cities; 2) The Global Debate: an on-line debate with a global focus; 3) The City Debates: face-to-face events in cities worldwide encouraging debate; 4) The Catalysts: approved speakers and presenters linked with the debates; 5) The Observation: developing networks of observers working through universities and NGOs; and 6) The Exhibition: touring exhibition, with accompanying publication/on-line resources. This exhibition was in Brussels during Green Week in front of the Berlaymont building.

For more information on ZeroCarbonCity please visit the British Council website:  
<http://www.britishcouncil.org/science-zeroarboncity.htm>.

To view and download presentations made during this and other sessions, please visit the European Commission's Green Week website at:  
[http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/greenweek/news\\_tuesday\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/greenweek/news_tuesday_en.htm)

The EECN is DG Environment's support structure for the European Environmental Communication Networks. Currently these include the Green Spiders Network and The Network of Urban Forums for Sustainable Development.

The website can be accessed here:  
[http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/networks/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/networks/index_en.htm)

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