

The Stockholm Seminars

- focusing on the dynamics and stewardship of social-ecological systems

Changing Environment in Central Europe in Course of Last Decades

Professor Bedrich Moldan

Founder and director of the Charles University Environment Center, and Senator
of the Parliament, Prague, Czech Republic

Friday May 7, 2010, 11.00–12.00
Linné Hall, the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences,
Lilla Frescativägen 4, Stockholm

Twenty years ago, the former Communist countries of Central Europe were probably the most polluted countries in Europe. The bleak environmental conditions were associated with adverse human-health effects and serious damages of living nature in particular forests. People rightly regarded this as a result of the long and generally disastrous totalitarian rule. The situation improved remarkably in a relatively short time due to several important factors. First, economic restructuring following the steep decline of GDP during the first years of transition has benefited the environment. Second, a broad public support enabled the governments to mobilize relatively large sums of money and helped installing modern environmental technology. Third, modern legislation was adopted following examples of the advanced European countries. Later on, as the important fourth factor, the preparation for the EU membership helped substantially. Now, most environmental indicators show Central Europe has reached values typical for the rest of Europe. However, some differences between the “new” and “old” EU countries still exist but the differences are decreasing.

Prof Moldan graduated from the Mathematical-Physical Faculty at the Charles University in Prague 1958 and has from the early 70's been involved in environment affairs in many directions. In 1989 prof Moldan became a member of Czech Parliament and Minister of the Environment of the Czechoslovakia. Currently he is professor at the Charles University as well as Senator of the Parliament of the Czech Republic. He has been the Chairman of Scientific Committee of the European Environment Agency in Copenhagen. From 2001 to 2004 prof Moldan was a coordinating lead author of Millennium Ecosystem Assessment.