



Thematic days – Arras & Amiens – 20 & 21 June, 2017

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BIOECONOMY,
A SOLUTION OF TODAY TO THE PROBLEMS OF TOMORROW?

Population growth, combined with the rise of income, will continue to increase human's needs in energy, food, materials, chemicals, etc. Yet, the world economy remains heavily dependent on fossil fuels, price volatility and the non-renewable nature of these resources. Climate change and the deterioration of ecosystems are also pushing for an urgent reductions of CO² emissions.

To address these environmental and societal challenges, bioeconomy presents itself as a potential solution. Bioeconomy consist in placing solar energy at the center of all economic activities, preferring the use of biomass to the use of fossil fuels. This economy of photosynthesis is based on an optimal valorization of biomass, from production to transformation, and aims to be more respectful of the environment. A more efficient use of biomass, and the renewability of biomass, would enable the production of substitutes and equivalents to petroleum based products and materials, which could satisfy human needs, improve industrial processes and reduce the impact on the environment. The renewable nature of biomass would also mean that bioeconomy could be a sustainable solution to these challenges.

But bioeconomy is not without controversy. Exploiting biomass, for existing uses, in increasing volumes, as well as for new uses, could potentially jeopardize the sustainability of bioeconomy. Soil availability and fertility, availability of water resources, biodiversity needs and ecosystem services are all factors that could restrict the use of biomass. Climate change is also likely to pose a threat to the conditions necessary for biomass production (decreasing water resources, extreme climatic events etc.). Many ecosystems are already overexploited. How, in this context, can we imagine that bioeconomy could constitute a sustainable solution to the problems of tomorrow?

Transitioning to a sustainable and responsible bio-economy will require the establishment of a coherent strategy as well as rethinking the dynamics and foundations of our economy. How can economic sectors and territories seize this opportunity? What territorial dynamics should we implement in order to transform the constraints inherent to the use of the "living" in an advantage for the territories? How can we meet the demand for food and other products? How to prioritize the different uses of biomass? Which biomass to use and for which uses (crops, residues etc.)? How can food practices be adapted to reduce environmental footprint and need for resources? What innovations are needed to ensure the competitiveness of bio-sourced materials and how to stimulate innovation? What are the existing good practices that can be developed and multiplied to ensure that bio-economy will be a solution to the problems of tomorrow?

Find the answers during two thematic days organized by the World Forum for a Responsible Economy on June 20th & 21st in Arras and Amiens respectively.