

Energy. Future. Responsibility.

Final Conference 14th June 2007

Climate Change Challenges Urban Planning - Mr. Osmo Soininvaara, Licentiate of Social Sciences (Session 1, 09:40-10:10)

Osmo Soininvaara, Licentiate of Social Sciences

Mr. Osmo Soininvaara is Licentiate of Social Sciences by education, the science of statistics as the main topic.

He has worked for 16 years as the member of the Finnish Parliament, during 2000-2002 as Minister of Health and Social Services, during 2001-2005 as the chairman of the Green party as well as the member of the City Council of Helsinki since year 1985.

Mr. Soininvaara has written a large number of books about the society. In 1995, for instance, his book "Survival of Welfare Society" written in Finnish was awarded as the best book of economy, Pro Oeconomia.

In Spring, Soininvaara voluntarily retired from the Parliament and since then has worked as free-lance writer and lecturer.

Climate Change Challenges Urban Planning

There is sufficient knowledge available about the low-energy societies already. The problems to implement such societies are political and also related to equality and legalisation.

We know, for instance, that the residential areas and the working places should locate near to the main roads and rails in a band form. Those owning land outside such bands would feel as outsiders, as the value of their properties would fall down. We also know, that responsible behaviour should be supported and wasting practices be discouraged by means of economic incentives. In transition, some individuals would suffer for financial losses. In the society, the voice of the losers sounds always louder than that of the winners.

A good example here is the rush hour fees, that have improved traffic conditions everywhere they were applied. Regardless the good experience gathered already, the idea is very slowly implemented elsewhere.

Someday in the future, the society will wake up in a sort of panic. Then, the decision makers have to demonstrate that they are capable in taking painful decisions. The merit of a decision will be the high level of pain, regardless the decision is effective or not. That is

what happened during the oil crises in 1973 as well as in 2007, when Italy started to get prepared for a dry summer. A sound policy, however, requires measures that minimise the pain but is highly effective at the same time.

In some stage of the climate change, we will enter the period of panic solutions. While waiting for such panic, the experts should smoothly consider effective actions that will be ready for serving to the politicians when such actions finally become wanted.