

Motivation Letter

I have known the Club of Rome since the 1970ies and was impressed by the idea of the limits of our planet. I have tried in my career to understand the implications and to develop better resource management. In my final years as Director General I have understood more clearly that efficiency gains will not suffice and that the continued population growth will require more fundamental economic and societal change in order to return towards a sustainable development path. I developed the EU's Waste policy and extended it into a comprehensive circular economy approach. I have been climate negotiator up to the Copenhagen COP and gained a thorough understanding of the international challenges in addressing climate change. I have also represented the EU in the UN Convention on Biodiversity and fought for preserving the planet's ecosystems, its fauna and flora. I am acutely aware of global and regional water issues, both qualitatively as quantitatively, as well as the serious problems of ambient air pollution. Much of these problems relate directly to a lack of accounting for the external aspects of human economic activities. The polluter pays principle is widely recognized, but poorly implemented.

My experience in trade and environmental policies logically brought me to the Rio+20 Conference and the start of the negotiation for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The successful conclusion in 2015 still remains a very positive surprise and documents the potential for UN wide negotiations. The EU was a driving force for introducing the concept of universality, implying that these SDGs should also be guiding policy lines for the EU and other developed nations. Unfortunately, the SDGs have still not really been implemented as overarching commitments for policy design.

I remain more than ever convinced that the three aspects of sustainability, the economic, social and ecological aspects, need to be assessed together to formulate sustainable policies. Policy making itself requires proper inclusive governance based on the rule of law.

I think the EU Chapter of the Club of Rome offers an opportunity to share this analysis at EU level, due to the proximity to major European institutions, such as Commission, Council, Parliament, Committee of the Regions, Economic and Social Committee, European Trade Union Confederation and a large number of NGOs.