



By Robert Windborne,
Chairman of ESPRO and The Windborne International Group



Driving the Move towards a Sustainable European Property Sector



Robert Windborne
Chairman of ESPRO

Robert Windborne was born and brought up in Cheshire, England. He represented his county Cheshire in athletics. He is a Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and holds a Master of Science from Loughborough.

Robert established Windborne International 1974 which is concerned with international property and industrial development. His company has initiated the development of property projects within Europe to a value of around € 3 billion and has been responsible for industrial development projects in over 25 countries including Europe, USA, Middle East and Latin America.

He was voted Businessman of the Year by the British-Swedish Chamber of Commerce for contribution to trade between UK and Sweden. Robert is Chairman of ESPRO: The European Forum for Sustainable Property Development.

Interests: Mountaineering, sports (particularly athletics and football), a good film and stimulating company.

Family: His Swedish wife Christina, daughter Anna, grandchildren Julia and Evelyn and Timmy the dog.

Current focus: To further develop the Company's activities in the field of sustainable property development including renewable energy systems.

Achieving a Sustainable Society – Mankind's Greatest Challenge

The achievement of a Sustainable Society is Mankind's greatest challenge. If we fail, then quite simply life on this Planet will, within an alarmingly short period of time, cease to be possible. Scientific evidence would indicate that the timescale leading to a critical and irreversible breakdown of our Planet's biosphere to be no more than a few decades.

Additionally, resources vital for our industrial society – such as fossil fuels – are rapidly dwindling and represent an incalculable threat to the way of life which we have grown so accustomed.

These are not the views of a Doomsday Prophet but the balanced views of an increasingly large body of eminent scientists.

The question is, what has this got to do with the Property Owner and, if he has a role, what is it? Perhaps, of more direct concern for businesses, what are the commercial implications for property companies?

To answer this, we need first to take a look at the global situation and, thereafter, consider a number of fundamental facts.

A Global Sustainable Society cannot be achieved without first achieving a sustainable property and construction sector. The Sector accounts for the consumption of almost half of all resources, energy and polluting emissions. These figure increase up to around 70% if we include the transport sector which is partially influenced by the degree to which we deploy communal (buses and trains) as opposed to individual (cars, motor bikes) transport modes.

Of course, the sustainability problem is further exacerbated by the rapid industrialisation of such highly populated countries as China, India and Brazil which has rapidly evolved into an Economist's Dream and an Environmentalist's nightmare.

Another troublesome feature is that many vital resources, particularly fossil fuels and

uranium, are in the hands of less than stable countries such as Russia and The Middle East. A large portion of Europe's gas and oil supplies will emanate from Russia in the near future. A large volume of Germany's gas already comes from Russia; a remarkable change of events from the situation of only a few years ago!

This dependability on insecure supplies is already a great cause for concern amongst European and other World powers. The highly sensitive nature of the fuel issue is highlighted by the increasing competition for these scarce resources amongst our fellow Europeans which has already led to the hitherto unthinkable situation where Fuel Transiting Agreements have been broken to ensure that domestic supplies are secured. In other words, a World shortage of these vital resources is leading to inflammatory political relationships. Obviously, a situation we would prefer to avoid.

The result of all this will, within the immediate years, not just vastly increase prices for fuel and other resources, but in addition, affect supply lines.

Developing a Sustainable Society – The Property Owner's Role

The Property Owner's proactive role in the drive towards a Sustainable Society is vital. Not just for Society and the Environment but also for the Property Owner's own survival.

As the Client in the property sector, the Property Owner and Developer is in a position to significantly influence the actions of most of the other participants. These include consultants, contractors, suppliers and logistical systems. Together with Planning Authorities, the Property Owner is in a unique position to influence the degree to which sustainability-enhancing measures are introduced and the rate at which these measures are deployed.

However, the passive Property Owner will unquestionably suffer if he fails to adapt to this new World Order. Increasingly onerous legislation (including the public classification of

buildings), related increasing tenant demand for sustainable properties (to harmonise with tenant organisations own Sustainability Charter) and the down - classification of sustainable-poor properties by investment and ethical funds (such as The Dow Jones Sustainability Index) will materially affect the profitability and value of property companies. The adoption by Property Owner's of a sound Sustainability Strategy is unequivocally justified merely on the basis of corporate economics let alone the nobler issue of saving the Planet. Large capital values are at stake!

ESPRO – The European Forum for Sustainable Property Development

ESPRO is an interactive, Forum where Europe's leading property Stakeholders, both public and private, meet and act upon issues related to the creation of a sustainable property sector in Europe. These Stakeholders include legislators, property investors, corporate investors, tenant organisations, planning authorities, consultants and contractors. ESPRO's motives are commercial, environmental and social.

ESPRO's Mission is based on the premise that Planet Earth cannot sustain life without the attainment of a Sustainable Society. Due to the dominant role which the property sector plays in the consumption of natural resources and the generation of waste and pollution, a Sustainable Society cannot be achieved without the creation of a Sustainable Property Sector.

ESPRO is the leading primary public – private sector Forum in Europe focussing on the sustainability issue and operates as a Driver of Change in the move towards the development of a sustainable European property sector.

ESPRO is focussing its efforts upon several areas of sustainable development ranging from the macro level (city planning, urban transport systems, regional energy systems) to the micro level (building design and construction, local energy systems). Activities include the establishment of sustainable policies and strategies, the arrangement of interactive events and the initiation and development of Pilot Projects.

The ESPRO Stockholm Conference was held on April 4 2006 and brought together over 100 Delegates representing the management of major European property Stakeholder organisations. Speakers were drawn from the management of leading European organisations including The European Commission,



"The Hammarby Sea City is a new city neighbourhood, located in central Stockholm, which comprises housing, workplaces, services and leisure facilities for 10,000 persons and has been designed and built after stringent sustainability principles. These include low energy consumption, the extensive use of sustainable materials, access to an abundant public transport systems, and an overall consciousness for environmental friendliness and healthy accommodation. NCC were awarded The Stockholm City Environmental Prize for its contribution to this Project".

British Land plc, The European and British Property Federations, The Dow Jones Sustainability Index, The City of Stockholm, The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, EPRA, FIEC, The Swedish Property Federation, The Swedish Board of Housing, Building and Planning, Skanska, and Electrolux.

The Hosts for the Conference were The Swedish Energy Agency, The Swedish Ministry of Sustainability, Skanska and The RICS. ◀

For more information go to:

→ www.espro.nu

→ www.windborne-group.com .

Windborne International

Windborne International is concerned with the international development of industry and property based projects.

Development is by its very nature about the future and of the factors moulding the future, convergence will certainly be a major contributor. Here we are talking not just about the convergence of technologies and disciplines but convergence throughout the whole spectrum of society and human endeavour.

We can already see clear trends towards the convergence of nations as a result of regional unions, of markets through industrial globalisation, of cultures through increased mobility and global media networks, of values due to a common concern for our planet, of perspectives due to an increasing appreciation of our insignificance within an infinite universe.

We are also witnessing an increasing convergence of social-economic and environmental interests and towards the promotion of a sustainable society. Yet this is just the beginning as the phenomena and consequences of convergence begin to creep into every facet of our lives.

Increasing convergence will generate an intensified rate of change in the way we live bringing with it both opportunities and threats for individuals, corporations and nations. The anticipation and management of change, and the creation of ensuing opportunities within the fields of international industrial and property development, has been a central theme in Windborne International's activities for over 30 years.

We embrace the opportunities afforded by change and are firmly committed towards increasing our knowledge and understanding of its implications. We are equally committed towards the achievement of those social, business and environmental benefits which are borne of this change and towards sharing these benefits with our Partners and Clients.