

PRESS KIT

INTERDEPENDENCE 2016

Under The Patronage of His Majesty The King

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**13 - 14 - 15
M A Y 2016**



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INTERDEPENDENCE OF THE LIVING WORLD

Under The Patronage of His Majesty The King

The modern conference center Brussels44Center will be the scene for the International Symposium on the Interdependence of the Living World from Friday 13 until Sunday 15 of May 2016. Organised by the Jane Goodall Institute (JGI) and Planète-Vie, the "Symposium: Interdependence 2016" will place Brussels on the map as world capital for the reflection on interdependence and solidarity between all living things. This original and innovative Symposium will raise awareness among the public, in particular the youth, but will also address political stakeholders, from Belgium and Europe.

« *The symposium is an opportunity to initiate a large reflection about a new vision of the world, where we humans are placed within an interconnected network, and where it becomes clearer every day that its position is not at the top of the living world, but forms a link in the interdependent web* », explains Ingrid Bezikofer, Director of the Jane Goodall Institute Europe (JGI Europe).

A SYMPOSIUM IN 4 ACTS

During 3 days, from Friday 13 to Sunday 15 May, international experts will develop the topic following a determined sequence: "When Science Meets Philosophy" (Friday), "Interdependence as Drive of Evolution" (Saturday morning), "Leading to a Global Solidarity" (Saturday afternoon) and "Reinventing our Societies" (Sunday).

When looking at the mechanisms that underlie the evolutionary process, emerges an observation: all living things are interdependent. There cannot be a sustainable and respectful development as long as the rest of the living world is relegated to the status of object. The 21st century has to reintegrate the human into the process from which

he originates; and this can only happen if comes a change in the legal status of the living world.

A TURNING POINT OF AWARENESS AND BEHAVIOUR

According to Yvan Beck, President of Planète-Vie, « *the perspective of the interdependence of phenomena is a real upheaval of consciousness. This interdependence is visible at all levels of organisation, from the living matter, to the visible and invisible. It transforms the way we perceive ourselves and the others. It opens larger perspectives about who we are and our place in the universe. By restoring the links that bind us with the rest of life, the dual vision that we have about the world is attenuated as well as our selfishness. The interdependence replaces man within the evolutionary process that created him and invites to respect its foundations: cooperation and solidarity. It changes our behaviours fundamentally.* »

INCLUDING THE YOUTH

To include the youth and the general public in the dynamic of this reflection and its multiple aspects, a series of screenings in link with the topic will be organised at Cinéma Vendôme the week prior to the Symposium. This desire to raise awareness beyond the Symposium will be carried out through the production of a documentary about the interdependence of the living world.

**SYMPOSIUM:
INTERDEPENDENCE 2016**

From 13 to 15 May 2016

Brussels44Center

Boulevard du Jardin Botanique,
44

1000 Brussels

**TICKETS AVAILABLE ON
www.interdependence2016.be**

Origin & Philosophy of the Project

In 1911 the Belgian company Solvay united the greatest physicists in the world at a colloquy in the Metropole hotel in Brussels. Quantum physics, the special focus on this occasion, had opened the doors to new scientific paradigms during the 20th century: systems, chaos and fractal theory. Such approaches had revealed and shown the importance of the interdependence of the world.

Today this notion of interdependence applied to the understanding of the living world is a scientific fact.

Reflections on the changes that this implies for our relationship with the world questions our value systems more and more. But the challenge is not only ethical. The impact of our societies on the biosphere forces us to rethink the relationship between man and his living and non-living environment. This time the challenge is above all political. Our politicians should determine the decisions to be taken in terms of occupation and management of space and resources, as well as sharing the heritage of the planet with all its living species.

To meet these challenges, the most renowned international personalities in science, ethics and politics are united in Brussels around the theme of Life and its interdependencies from 13 to 15 May 2016. A wide public is addressed:

- The citizens who, by participating in the Symposium and by signing the Pact of Interdependence, can show their commitment to all living beings.

- The future generations, who will get access to the documentary about Interdependence through school screenings and an educational toolkit.
- The economic and political decision-makers who are invited to take part in the debate organised during the Symposium and who will receive the signed Pact.

The symposium will put forward logical arguments regarding the status of all creatures, particularly the rights of animals to be considered as non-human legal persons.

This symposium will invite scientists and other prominent people to present various aspects of this concept, and suggest possible ways forward to Belgian, European and other stakeholders. The symposium will end with a debate where the audience will get the chance to express their views and further feed the discussion.



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A Belgian Initiative

The Symposium about the Interdependence of the Living World is organised by two Belgian organisations: Planète-Vie and the Jane Goodall Institute.

PLANÈTE-VIE

Created in 1985 by senator Roland Gillet, the organisation is chaired by Dr Yvan Beck since 1995. Unifying movement for the protection and welfare of animals, its mission was expanded in 1996 to include the interactions between economy and the living world.

The objective of Planète-Vie is to recreate the link between animals, humans and the life in their natural and artificial environments as well as to raise awareness both individually and collectively.

How ?

- By editing books and producing documentaries
- By organising conferences with debates
- By participating in national and international commissions
- By integrating its values into the society (“Thursday Veggie”, Meat Free Monday”) and more specifically into schools (education tool kit “LoveMEATender”).

Currently, the activities of Planète-Vie are focused on the production of a documentary trilogy – for educational purpose – inspired by the book “L’animal, l’homme, la vie” (“The animal, man, life”) by Yvan Beck. The first film, “LoveMEATender” has received the Magritte award for best Belgian documentary in 2011. The second film about “Interdependence of the living world” will show parts of the Symposium. The trilogy is made possible thanks to the help of Manu Coeman.

JANE GOODALL INSTITUTE

The Jane Goodall Institute (JGI) is a global non-profit founded by British primatologist Jane Goodall in 1977 and focused on inspiring individual action to improve the understanding, welfare and conservation of great apes and to safeguard the planet we all share. Our mission is based in Dr. Jane Goodall’s belief that the well-being of our world relies on people taking an active interest in all living things.

Each of us has the power to make a difference, and it is the mission of JGI to inspire action. JGI supports community-centered conservation throughout Africa’s Congo Basin, engaging with individual stakeholders to garner long-term conservation impact; additionally, we support young people in more than 130 countries across the globe as they work make positive change in their own communities. Our cutting-edge use of technology ties our high-impact conservation work in Africa to our citizen-science projects led by youth groups across the globe. JGI’s multifaceted efforts- to protect great apes and their habitats, to improve human livelihoods, and to encourage the next generation to care for the world-creates an integrative approach to achieve Dr. Goodall’s vision of Earth as a place where people, animals, and the environment exist in sustainable harmony.

« *The Jane Goodall Institute Europe is very glad to be able to participate in this event to open our circles of altruism to all other living beings, thanks to research, education, knowledge and action.* » Ingrid Bezikofer, Director of JGI Europe.



Jane Goodall Institute Europe

The speakers...



Monica Gagliano is currently a Research Associate Professor and Research Fellow of the Australian Research Council based at the University of Western Australia. She has extended the concept of cognition to plants by demonstrating experimentally that plants can learn just like animals do, re-igniting the discourse on plant subjectivity and ethical standing.

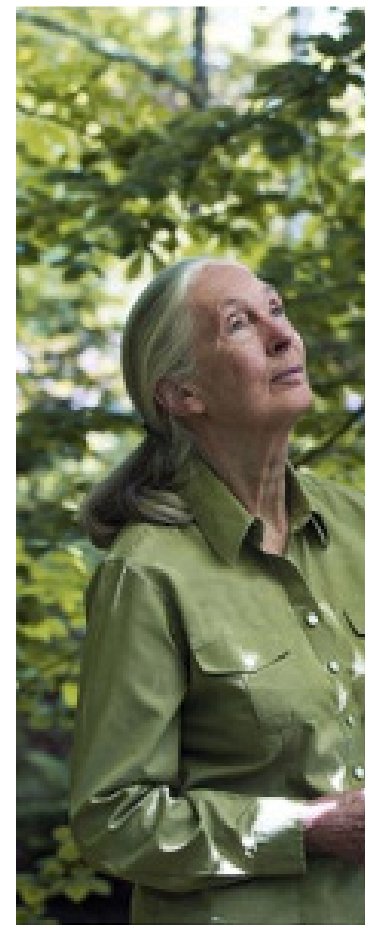


Michel Genet, former director of Greenpeace Belgium and Europe, he is the new director of Etopia, an ecological think tank, since 2015. Over the years, Michel's understanding of the environment has evolved, leading him to fully grasp the interdependencies of life. In fact, for Michel, Mother Nature is a sanctum of peace and inner wellbeing.



At 25 **Laurent Ballesta** completed his studies in discovering a new species of fish to the western Mediterranean, "Le Gobie d'Andromède". Diver and underwater photographer, he has received many awards and has founded the organisation «L'Oeil d'Andromède».

Jonathan Balcombe has a PhD in ethology from the University of Tennessee, where he studied communication in bats. He has published over 50 scientific papers and book chapters on animal behaviour and animal protection. He is now Director for Animal Sentience with the Humane Society Institute for Science and Policy, in Washington DC.



Claudine André is the founder and director of the 'Lola ya Bonobo' sanctuary in Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of Congo. With an experienced and determined team, she raises awareness of the need to protect the bonobo, its habitat and biodiversity in Congo. She regularly meets with the authorities in order to improve law enforcement. It is her principle to work always together with local communities to protect the bonobo.



Myriam Lefebvre is a multidisciplinary researcher, with a passion for beekeeping, nature photography and birdwatching. She examined the potential effects of climate change on malaria and animal populations. Myriam has been exploring consciousness in animals, which led to the discovery of undocumented bee behaviours and the "To Be a Bee" macrophotography exhibit. Presently, Myriam is finalizing a radio program on how beekeepers relate to their bees, is conducting research on honeybees' behaviour, is assisting children with learning disabilities and is writing a book.



...at a glance

Matthieu Ricard, PhD in cell biology, he is a Buddhist monk, author, translator and photographer. He has dedicated his life to the study and practice of Buddhism following the teachings of the greatest Tibetan spiritual masters of our time. He has been the French interpreter for the Dalai Lama since 1989. All proceeds from Matthieu Ricard's books, photographs, and events are donated to Karuna-Shechen, the humanitarian association he created.



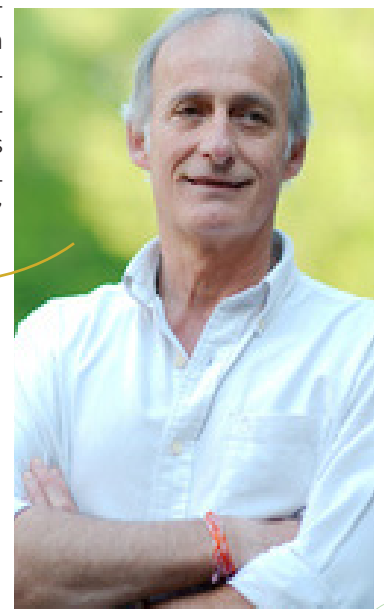
Jane Goodall : « *It's been an amazing journey, this life of mine. This planet has filled me with the wonder of all living things, great and small. We cannot ignore this earth that surrounds us, that feeds us, shelters us, replenishes our bodies and our souls and stretches our imaginations, where animals, plants, air, water, all care for us. We are all interconnected, people, animals, our environment. When nature suffers, we suffer, and when nature flourishes, we all flourish. I do believe in the possibility of a world where we can live in harmony with nature, but only if every one of us does our part to make that world a reality. So that when you look back over your journey, your life, you can truly say, "I did make a difference."* »

Olivier De Schutter is professor of law at the Université Catholique de Louvain, of Political sciences in Paris and member of the «Global Law School Faculty» at the New York University. He was appointed the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food by the Human Rights. Since 2015 he is Member of the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Yvan Beck is a veterinary surgeon and holds a degree in environmental sciences. Author, he is also chair of the association Planète-Vie. He has represented the organisation in various national and international committees looking at ethics in the relationships between humans, animals and the environment. His first book, "L'animal, l'homme, la vie" is inspiring the documentary trilogy of which the "Symposium: Interdependence 2016" constitutes the second film.

Toni Frohoff is a wildlife behavioral-biologist and psychologist studying dolphins and whales for over 30 years. Toni's pioneering research on human-cetacean interactions and related advocacy has contributed to legislation protecting wildlife in over a dozen countries. She co-founded the Teramar Institute of Research and Learning where students can study newly emerging fields of science such as Interspecies Psychology and Ecology and engage in learning Wild Wisdom.

Gauthier Chapelle, Agronomist, PhD in biology, he has worked for a decade on environmental issues. In 2006 he co-founded the non-profit organisation Biomimicry-Europa to promote the concept in Europe and in 2007 the consultancy Biomim-Greenloop around the same concept. He is also a lecturer and has been a scientific collaborator at the Belgian Royal Institute of Natural Sciences for 15 years and has authored or co-authored some 15 scientific articles.



The Symposium

WHEN SCIENCE MEETS PHILOSOPHY

The idea that phenomena are interdependent requires a genuine paradigm shift. This interdependence can be seen at all levels of organisation, from the material to the living world. Sometimes it is not visible, yet it changes the way we see ourselves and others. It throws wide open the question of who we are and what our place is in the universe. By recreating the links that make us part of a whole, it throws up a challenge to the dualistic view we have of ourselves and the world, a view that can provoke a selfishness, which all too often, leads us astray. It once again places humans at the centre of the evolutionary process that formed us, and urges us to respect its basic tenets of cooperation and solidarity. It demands of us a fundamental change in behaviour.

Jane Goodall and Matthieu Ricard will engage in a dialogue of science and philosophy based on their extraordinary life experiences.

DRIVE OF EVOLUTION

For millions of years, throughout the universe, all known matter came from the stars. All forms of life then became structured, organised and diversified in accordance with rules common to all. On Earth, intelligence, conscience, emotions and communication exist in forms that we cannot altogether apprehend. The differences between us are rather a matter of degrees of expression than of divergence or separation. Evolution in terms of interdependence and solidarity, not of competition....

This first part is intended to amaze us, but also to amuse, to fill us with wonder, but also to start us thinking. We will travel from the sea, the cradle of all life, to the plant kingdom in constant dialogue, then on to the cetaceans, shown by modern research to have a high level of conscience, intelligence and social life. Finally, we will reflect on the nature of emotions and happiness. Happiness, the aspiration of all sentient beings and not the exclusive privilege of human beings.

TOWARDS A GLOBAL SOLIDARITY

Since time immemorial there have been numerous examples illustrating the interdependence between humans and nature. Our so-called 'modern' societies have drifted away from this secular wisdom, encouraging a development model that prizes short-term individual profit to the detriment of long-term common growth.

However, it is possible to reintroduce the concept of interdependence into human activities, especially in relation to the environment. In fact it is already happening. Many initiatives are showing us the beneficial and lasting effects this can bring for all of us.

RETHINKING OUR SOCIETIES

If competition is only an occasional tool serving interdependence and solidarity – and not the reverse – how can we change the mechanisms that influence our current direction? Three round table meetings will explore the change in perspective that this alternative way of looking at the world would provoke; legally, economically and politically:

- Putting humankind back within the creative process from which it has become alienated, by assigning a legal identity to the whole of the living world
- Rethinking an economy in the service of ecology and the harmonious development of all species regardless of type
- Reinventing a political system governed by the principle of interdependence

At the end of the symposium the Interdependence Pact will be concluded, a text setting out a few crucial points relating to the issues discussed. This pact will bring together well-known personalities and ordinary people, in a joint commitment to act as ambassadors and to work towards its implementation at local, national or even international level.

The Programme of the Symposium

FRIDAY 13 MAY AT 8 pm

Opening lecture – Interdependence of the Living World (moderator : Olivier De Schutter - Belgium)
« When Science meets Philosophy » : *dialogue between Jane Goodall (UK) & Matthieu Ricard (France)*

SATURDAY 14 MAY

Morning session:

«Interdependence as Drive of Evolution»

(moderator : Yvan Beck - Belgium)

- 9:00** | « When the forest talks »
Monica Gagliano (Australia)
- 9:55** | Communication and collaboration with dolphins and whales
Toni Frohoff (USA)
- 11:10** | Buoyant beings: the significance of animal pleasure
Jonathan Balcombe (UK)
- 12:05** | Marine environment: interdependence and biodiversity
Laurent Ballesta (France)
- Afternoon session: «Interdependence and Solidarity»**
(moderator : Michel Genet - Belgium)
- 14:00** | Bonobos: Conservation and Solidarity
Claudine André (Belgium)
- 14:55** | The voice of the bees
Myriam Lefebvre (Belgium)
- 16:10** | Biomimetics
Gauthier Chapelle (Belgium)
- 17:05** | Interdependence and Animal Production:
LoveMEATender
Yvan Beck (Belgium)

SUNDAY 15 MAY

Interdependence and Choice of Society

(moderator : Olivier De Schutter)

- 9:00** | Interdependence and economic choice
Dirk Holemans (Belgium)
Isabelle Cassiers (Belgium)
- 9:55** | Interdependence and political choice
Carlo Di Antonio (Belgium)
& *Stefan Eck (European Parliament)*
- 11:10** | Interdependence and legal choice : towards a non-human legal personality
Jean-Pierre Marguénaud (France)
& *Andrea Gavinelli - to be confirmed - (European Commission) - ambassador of Bhutan*
- 12:05** | Public debate with Q&A



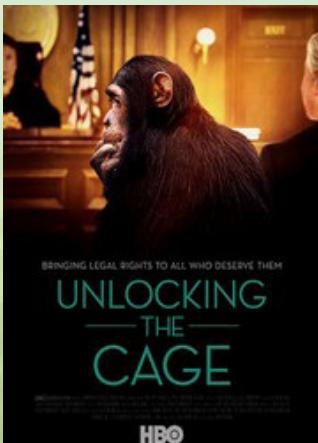
SCREENINGS Before the Symposium

In a world of constant evolution, in which humans possibly cannot live without taking into account the other life forms that share this planet, Planète-Vie and the Jane Goodall Institute are organising a series of screenings to introduce the concept of interdependence. The screenings will take place at the Cinéma Vendôme.



EN QUÊTE DE SENS - Running time: 87 minutes – French version
Screened: Monday 09/05 at 19h00

This road-movie type film follows a young disenchanted generation on its quest for wisdom and common sense. Combining the messages of a cell biologist, an urban gardener, a travelling shaman and a singer, president of an NGO, Marc and Nathanaël invite us to share their questions and vision of the world. This documentary was co-produced thanks to a crowdfunder campaign that mobilised 963 internet users. It is independently distributed by the organisation Kamea Meah.



UNLOCKING THE CAGE - Running time: 91 minutes – Original version
Screened: Tuesday 10/05 at 19h00

Unlocking the Cage follows animal rights lawyer Steven Wise in his unprecedented challenge to break down the legal wall that separates animals from humans. Steve and his legal team, the Nonhuman Rights Project (NhRP), are making history by filing the first lawsuits that seek to transform an animal from a thing with no rights to a person with legal protections.



BLACKFISH - Running time: 83 minutes – French version
Screened: Wednesday 11/05 at 19h00

Blackfish tells the story of Tilikum, a performing killer whale that killed several people while in captivity. Along the way, director-producer Gabriela Cowperthwaite compiles shocking footage and emotional interviews to explore the creature's extraordinary nature, the species' cruel treatment in captivity, the lives and losses of the trainers and the pressures brought to bear by the multi-billion dollar sea-park industry. This emotionally wrenching, tautly structured story challenges us to consider our relationship to nature and reveals how little we humans have learned from these highly intelligent and enormously sentient fellow mammals.

The screenings are made possible thanks to the support of Jean-Marie Delwart.

After the Symposium



In 2009 Planète-Vie embarked on a documentary trilogy exploring this subject in collaboration with director Manu Coeman.

- A first film, LoveMEATender, illustrated the animal pole in 2011 showing the impact of industrial meat production from different sides – on humans, animals and the environment.
- The second part, Interdependence, will have this symposium as its guiding thread, leading to an examination of the fundamental question of the legal status of animals.
- A third, more introspective segment on humankind is expected to be released in 2020.

If we really want to respect Nature and animals, we need to recognise their identities and rights. The documentary “Interdependence” will be a call to humans and in particular to the political leaders to acknowledge and create a new legal status for animals, independent from the one of humans and away from their current status as objects.

THE PACT

The Interdependence Pact is a citizens’ initiative which adheres to a new vision of Life on Earth and its interdependent nature.

2015 represented a watershed for the international community, having reinforced its internal bonds, it recognised the need for unprecedented international mobilisation to put a brake on the irreversible deterioration of the state of the world as we know it.

Since 2008, global crises – of food, of fuel of the economic and financial sectors – have clearly illustrated the shared vulnerability of the planet and the necessity for coordinated global responses. Moreover, these bear witness to the global interconnections and the mutual interest in organising collective action. Terms such as shared responsibility or global partnerships are being used more and more often in official documents and show the advent of a new paradigm.

The moment has come to forge a universal alliance based on mutual understanding of our shared humanity, which rests on the principle of interdependence in a world which is fast diminishing. It is in this spirit that the organisers have formulated the Pact of Interdependence. The public can support the Pact by signing it. It will also be submitted to Belgian and European decision-makers as outcome of the Symposium.

Contacts



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