

Betreff: The Dancing Economist 01/2017 Christian Felber Newsletter

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NOTE: Starting today we will be issuing this newsletter in English as well as in German. For that reason, we are sending this issue again. Future issues will be available in German and English. If you wish to receive both languages or switch to English, please write a short mail to marina@christian-felber.at.

The Dancing Economist | 01/Autumn 2017

Some of you know me through the **Economy for the Common Good (ECG)**, others through the **Project "Bank for the Common Good" (de)**. Some of you may have read one of my **books** or heard me give a **speech**. Perhaps some of you even know me through **dancing**.

For the first time, you will find the "entire Christian" in this one newsletter, where you can read about my entire spectrum of activities.

I hope you will all find something of interest!

- Christian Felber



Overview

- I. **Highlights:** prizes, 4000 attendees in Dresden, Common Good municipalities, talk show *SWR-Nachtcafé*, invitation to the United Nations
- II. **Project to establish a common good oriented bank:** submission for the operating

- license, participation of German GLS bank, new strategy
- III. **Academics & Education:** Vienna University, Chair for Economy of Common Good at the University of Valencia, IASS, MA degree "Applied ECG"
- IV. **Books:** Money, *Gemeinwohl-Ökonomie* paperback edition, upcoming books
- V. **Travels:** Colombia II, Holland, UK II, Argentina II
- VI. **Dance:** Science Ball, Old Town Hall in Munich, Dresden
- VII. **Recent media coverage**
- VIII. **Action!**

I. Highlights

Prizes in Germany and Spain



Three major prizes in one year! This is a great honor and a source of encouragement for my work. For the Economy for the Common Good movement, I received the **ZEIT WISSEN-Preis Mut zur Nachhaltigkeit 2017** in the category "knowledge". Honorary speaker **Harald Welzer** praised the fact that an international movement has arisen from my book, "**Change Everything: Creating an Economy for the Common**

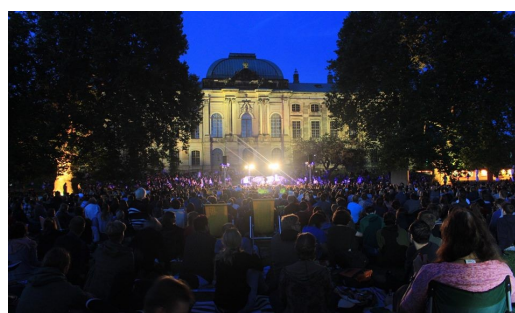
Good." I would put it a bit differently. The idea has been around for ages and on all parts of the planet. The book reminded us of something we already knew and encouraged us to make it happen. Apparently, at just the right moment!

Prize two will follow on November 12th. It will be in the German region Ostwestfalen-Lippe. In the 15th Century the small city of Steinheim was the home of the radical thinker and visionary Reineccius. Since 2008, the city has honored him by rewarding the **Reineccius Medal (de)**. Previous award-winners include Klaus Töpfer, Tanja Busse, Felix Finkbeiner and Josef Urhahne. This year I have the honor of receiving the medal as part of a city festival. I would never, not even in my wildest dreams, have imagined something like this happening.

One week later, I will be heading to Barcelona, Spain to receive the next prize. The city has produced numerous pioneers of the Economy for the Common Good including the first university and the first district of a major city that have completed a Common Good Balance Sheet. In 2015, the main public event at the Third International ECG Delegate's Assembly took place in the Aula Magna at the University of Barcelona and included representatives from the university's president, city hall and the state government. This year the **Barcelona Film Festival** will award me with the Human Rights Award. I am particularly proud of this award because this is exactly how I understand our movement. ECG strives to improve human rights and human dignity for each individual and to advance the common good for all.

4000 attendees at the Japanese Palace in Dresden, Germany

The people came and stayed until 11:30 pm. It was one of many political discussions on stage in the garden of the Japanese Palace in Dresden, but it turned into a highlight of the **Palais.Sommer** (Palace Summer, de), which featured various cultural events and a mass yoga session. For the organizer Jörg Polenz, an old dream came to fruition and he was able



to reactivate his political roots. The issues of universal basic income and Economy for the Common Good, combined with keynote speakers **Richard David**

Precht and myself, seemed to him to be a perfect arrangement. His plan turned out to be a big success and the atmosphere was filled with energy and excitement. One statement by Richard David Precht was particularly fitting for the moment. He noted that during the era of the German politician Willy Brandt, political parties looked towards civil society to understand the issues most dear to their voters. Today, they only listen to their communication and media advisors. This helps explain the huge public interest in economic alternatives and long-term solutions.



A similar experience at the **Wiener Stadtgespräch** (Vienna City Talk, de). Over 520 people crowded into Vienna's Chamber of Labor. The auditorium only seats 420 guests, so 100 had to watch the video presentation in the cafeteria next door. Director Christoph Klein opened the event and moderator Peter Huemer interviewed me about the Economy for the Common Good, Ethical World Trade and sovereign democracy.



First Common Good Municipality in Austria



There was also a celebratory atmosphere in Nenzig, Austria, where I had the privilege to present Common Good certifications to the **first two certified Common Good municipalities in Austria (de)**, Nenzig and Mäder. I gave my address to 300 guests including 15 German and Austrian mayors and the parliamentary president of the state of Vorarlberg. The idea of a **Common Good certification for municipalities** was developed over the past few years. Four small municipalities in South Tyrol, Italy were the first to be certified, but this did not

prove to be sustainable. Later came the first cities in Spain, where an independent certification process was created. Then the ECG Municipality Hub created a Common Good Balance Sheet for Municipalities based on the original balance sheet. The towns of **Mäder and Nenzing (de)** are the first to create their own Balance Sheet based on this new model. Two common good consultants from Vorarlberg, Austria closely followed the towns' work in creating the balance sheet. A team from South Tyrol and Switzerland conducted the final audit. The event celebrating the completion of their certification took place at the annual conference **"Zukunftsorte"** (Future Cities, de), a coalition of a dozen innovative Austrian cities. The atmosphere was international, non-partisan and festive. It will most certainly be a catalyst for additional cities in Bavaria and other parts of Germany, which are preparing to become Common Good cities.

My first talk show in Germany's SWR-Nachtkafé



After three attempts, the German television station SWR invited me to their talk show **Nachtkafé**. The subject was **sustainable consumption (de)** and I joined guests who have done some fascinating things. These included a dairy farmer who leaves calves with their mothers for three months after birth, a store free of any packaging, a couple that lives in a tiny house and only works for salary for two and a half hours a week and a merchant of organic

clothing. My sparring partner was the neo-liberal politician Frank Schäffler. Unfortunately, most of my statements on politics, the trade agreement CETA, the legislative branch and freedom in economics were edited out of the show. The recording was actually 15 minutes longer than the show itself. Feedback has been positive, however, **and the show can be viewed online for the next 12 months (de)**.

Invitation from the United Nations

This was realized right after naming this a strategic goal of the ECG. The UN invited me to their headquarters in New York. The Human Development Report Office of the **UNDP** organizes a monthly **seminar** with intellectual leaders from around the world. This event will occur one year after my **introduction** to the "land of opportunity". At present, it looks like I will have two presentations at the UN. One was an online conference about the ECG and the other will be a speech on Ethical World Trade in 2018 in New York City.



II. Project to establish a common good oriented bank

Application submitted to FMA for initial banking license



The next milestone has been reached in establishing our common good oriented bank (credit union). We submitted the initial (or "small") license for money transfers (savings account with online banking, ATM machine, debit card and credit card) on September 13, 2017 to the Austrian financial supervisory authority (FMA). The FMA is required to respond within three months. Please cross your fingers that we will receive the license without any further delays. If things go as planned, we can offer a "Common Good Bank Account" in the second quarter of 2018, making our bank open to new customers. This will also make the further collection of capital required for the final (or "large") license much easier. x

One million euros from the German GLS Bank

With 100,000 euros, the German **GLS bank in Bochum (de)** is already the largest single contributing member to our bank project. The bank's board has furthermore agreed to contribute 1,000,000 euros, or 20% of the necessary capital. Their contribution will be official as soon as we receive our license, establish the bank and begin selling shares. This cooperation with the GLS feels great. It is not only the most renowned ethical bank in Germany, it was also named Germany's most sustainable business in 2012 and was central in creating the **Global Alliance for Banking on Values**.

Change of Strategy: Full bank status as the final step!

Since starting our project, **our vision has remained strong and consistent (de)**. We have, though, had to adjust our strategy from time to time. As the collection of capital has proceeded more slowly than planned, we have decided to create a free, cooperative bank and will in the future develop a full payment transactions institute. We will, in other words, harvest corn for corn from the field of ethical financial services and the full bank will no longer be our first step, rather the last one.

We have already completed the first five (!) steps:

1. Developing the Common Good Audit for banks on the basis of the Common Good Balance Sheet from the ECG
2. Campaign on an external crowdfunding platform (respekt.net)
3. Crowd giving
4. Creating our own crowdfunding platform (gemeinwohlprojekte.at (de))
5. Crowd lending, including two successfully financed projects

We have learned that the term bank is relative. As you can see, even without a license we have completed these five steps. With the application for the initial license, we will start our major project – the full payment transactions institution.

III. Academics and Education

No more lectures at the Vienna University of Economics and Business



After ten years of teaching at the Vienna University of Economics and Business, my contract has ended I was a visiting lecturer at the university since 2008. At first I taught “Theory and Practice in the Critique of Globalization”. I later added the subject “**Economy for the Common Good and other Economic Alternatives (de)**”. Subject matter included financial markets, global trade, the commons, tax justice, sovereign democracy and the Economy for the Common Good. My lectures were praised by the students and I received very good student evaluations. The lectures fit well into the university's new motto, “Rethink Economy”. That phase of my life is now over.

After ten years of service for the university, I was not invited back. Their rationale was that guest lecturers who had previously been hired to increase the range of perspectives within the curriculum have now been replaced by permanent faculty members. Accreditation agencies, they argued, prefer to see more permanent teachers. Strangely enough, the budget for permanent teachers has actually been reduced. My inquiries at the Department for Social Economy and with the vice chancellor about a new contract were, unfortunately, fruitless.

Chair for ECG begins work at the University of Valencia

Despite the setback in Vienna, interest for the ECG is growing strong in other places in the field of education. The University of Valencia, Spain has set up a **Chair for Economy for the Common Good**, held by the economics professor **Joan Ramon Sanchis Palacios**. His specialty is social and solidarity economics. He had the idea to create the chair after he became familiar with the ideas of the ECG and found that the state government was supportive of the idea. After his recommendation was accepted, the university and state government agreed to set up a number of similar university chairs in subjects like solidarity and feminist economics. The chair will be dedicated to further research, teaching and advocacy of *Economía del bien común*. Their work will also support the ECG auditors in the state of Valencia and supervise dissertations on the ECG.

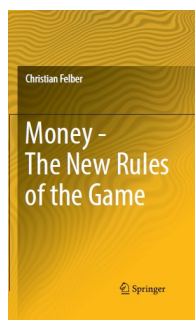
Fellowship at IASS in Berlin-Potsdam, Germany in 2018

My previous two lectures at the **Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS)** in Berlin-Potsdam were productive I was invited to be a Fellow at the institute beginning in 2018. We are currently working through the details of the subject matter. If all goes as planned, I will spend a few weeks in Berlin next year. Another one of my secret dreams will then come true.

MA in Applied ECG at the University of Applied Sciences, Burgenland

IV. Books

Englische Version "GELD": Money - The New Rules of the Game



One of an author's greatest successes is when a book is translated into English. Following "**Change Everything – Creating an Economy for the Common Good**", another book of mine will be published in English. The renowned German publisher Springer will publish "**Money – The New Rules of the Game**" on November 11. The original German edition of the book was awarded the **getAbstract International Book Award (de)** at the Frankfurt Book Fair in 2014 and was named economics book of the year. With that award, it was obvious that the book needed to be made available to English-speaking readers. Springer learned about my work at a conference at the World Ethos Institute in Tübingen, Germany, where the world-renowned author Jeffrey Sachs also spoke. I used the opportunity with the English edition to revise all chapters, extend the bibliography and improve on the overall content structure. I hope that my book on trade will soon also be translated into English and thus complete the triangle of publications on a common good-oriented economic order (ECG), a common good-oriented financial order (Money) and a common good-oriented trade order (Ethical World Trade).

Preview I: Revised paperback edition of "**Gemeinwohl-Ökonomie**"

The next stages: in March 2018, my book "**Gemeinwohl-Ökonomie**" (Economy for the Common Good) will be released in a new edition by the renowned German publisher *Piper*, eight years after the first paperback edition was published. This is very unusual as the "half-life" of most books these days is around three months and after six months most books can no longer be found on bookstore shelves. The book was never a true bestseller, but a "long seller" for sure. More than 80,000 copies have been sold in 12 different languages. For the new edition, I have completely revised the text and rewritten some chapters. The chapter "Money as a Public Good" has replaced "Democratic Bank" and the long-awaited draft of a questionnaire for the democratic economic convention replaces the 20-point summary in the appendix. The bibliography is now twice as long and the number of sources has also increased. After numerous rounds of editing, the text should be more consistent, up to date and precise. The new book should also help pave the way for the next expansion of the ECG movement.

Upcoming books

People often ask me if I have a new book in the pipeline or in my heart. In my heart, there is an infinite collection of possibilities. The question for me is which option I should prioritize and how much I can expect of my readers. There are two books that I would love to work on. The first is an alternative textbook for economics, which would use graphic elements. The second would be a book on sovereign democracy. This would be timely because the 100th anniversaries of the democratic constitutions of Germany and Austria will be in November 2019 and February 2020.

V. Travels

Colombia II



In Medellín, the social services organization **Congregación Mariana** secretly completed a Common Good Balance Sheet. They didn't inform us because they didn't know if they were allowed to use our certification framework. (All documents needed for a Common Good Balance Sheet are available through Creative Commons open source licenses.) At any rate, they decided to invite me so I could not refuse. I was very impressed by the symbol of their foundation: a beautiful flower with 13 petals representing the 13 social service organizations.

About 20 journalists attended the press conference. The second part of my visit consisted of two lectures in Bogotá at the Academia Colombiana de Ciencias Económicas and at the Universidad Javeriana.

Holland

Dutch is the 12th language into which my book "Economy for the Common Good" has been translated. The book's title is "**Ware winst**" which means "true profit". This fits perfectly. The **Dutch ECG movement**, which formed groups in seven different towns, did a great job of supporting the sustainability magazine that invited me to Holland. They put on four wonderful events, which included a talk show on TV with university professors and an expert from the Ministry of Economics. We reached people interested in sustainability, non-profits and social entrepreneurship. Another highlight was a representative from the World Wildlife Fund working on the Living Planet Report who invited me to submit an article on the ECG for their 2018 report.



United Kingdom II: Schumacher College



It's strange that I didn't find my way to **Schumacher College** much earlier. I greatly appreciate E.F. Schumacher and his teacher Leopold Kohr and quote them in my books and lectures. Finally, it happened and I was invited to teach a "Short Course on the Economy for the Common Good, Ethical World Trade, Money as a Public Good, Sovereign Democracy and 'The inner voice'". Half of the course participants were from Latin America and the other half were from Europe. We danced, played and hiked to the River Dart where we jumped off a swing into deep swimming holes. The subject matter of

the one-year master's program (20 students) says everything about the spirit of the school: "Economics for Transition" and "Holistic Science" for example. The college's nickname, "University of Holistic Science", is totally justified. I have found a new intellectual and spiritual home base and cannot wait to return. Maybe I will return as a Fellow...

Upcoming: Argentina II

I will be visiting Argentina for the second time this December. The University of Buenos Aires and **Cristina Calvo**, an expert on "bienes comunes" (commons), sponsored my first visit to this country. This time two foundations and a university have invited me. I will report on my journey in my next newsletter.

VI. Dance

Science Ball



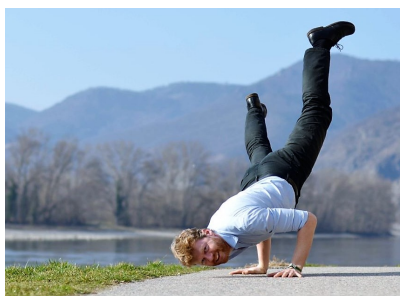
The economist and ballerina Gloria Benedikt heads the department of **Science and Arts** at the Laxenburger think tank International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA). She is another bridge builder. Together we created a progressive and holistic style. We are on our way to founding the first true university. Gloria and I created **a dance piece about "post truth"** as IIASA's contribution to the Austrian Science Ball. This ball takes place in the Vienna City Hall as a alternative to the traditional Vienna Ball at the Hofburg.

Munich, Germany

A long and cherished desire of mine finally came true in July. I got to perform my first danced lecture on the ECG. I was invited to perform freely on stage for ten minutes at the "**KulturProzession (de)**" event at the Old Town Hall in Munich. I took the opportunity and instead of holding a normal lecture, I performed a dancing lecture. My dance partner, Magoa, who taught me my first acrobatic figures, choreographed a dance with contemporary partnering, acrobatics and acro-yoga and including spoken parts about the ECG. The **12-minute piece** was a big success despite some challenging conditions. It was fulfilling for me and increased my appetite for more.



Dresden, Germany



One of my main projects in life is balancing physical activity, sensuality and feeling with verbal and intellectual work. Again and again I am surprised how good I feel after dancing and even more so after teaching or participating in a dance class. Connecting voice with movement seems to strengthen the flow of energy and vitality. By allowing life force and wisdom, which I physically experience, to flow through me and on to others by teaching connects me to the meaning of life. *I dance, therefore I am.* That is why I am taking more time to dance and to teach

dance. It is kind of a happiness and life insurance. In Dresden, the combination of political discussion (see Highlights) and yoga class worked out perfectly. The Palace Summer was such a

big success that around 200 people came to a yoga class in the park. After having taken part in it the day before I knew what was going to happen and I was prepared. Instead of demonstrating the yoga exercises from the stage, I divided the 200 participants into groups of eight. Then I showed the partnering and acro-yoga exercises in the middle of the meadow and had the groups practice themselves. It was a special and unique setting.

VII. Recent media coverage

- The German financial newspaper **Wirtschaftswoche (de)** reported about the ECG for the first time!
- In response to the protests at the G20 summit in Hamburg, the German magazine **Spiegel (de)** featured a **cover piece (de)** and a **video (de)** about the ECG as an economic alternative.
- The magazine “**trend (de)**” published an extensive **piece of a debate (de)** between Gabriel Felbermayer, the ifo scientist and pro TTIP author (author of a study for the BMWa and the Bertelsmann Foundation), and me (author of Ethical World Trade).
- The German newspaper **Süddeutsche Zeitung (de)** featured an extensive article on the state of the ECG movement.
- This is a sample of some of the media reports in the past months: **Freie Presse (de)** (Dresden), **Hamburger Abendblatt (de)** (Kreis Stormarn), **Radio Hochstift (de)** (Paderborn), **Celler Presse (de)** (Celle), **Kreisbote (de)** (Peißenberg), **Merkur (de)** (Weilheim) oder **Die Harke (de)** (Nienburg). Thanks to these and other articles in the press, which have mostly always been positive, the ECG movement is becoming better known.

VIII. Action!



Purchase shares of the Cooperative for the Common Good

Please purchase shares in the cooperative. This is a most important time to show the FMA that people are increasingly interested in the project and want to use its financial services. Pass on the word and encourage others to **purchase shares (de)**. The Bank for the Common Good is only possible through the collective effort of many.



Become an ECG member

The Economy for the Common Good is growing fast and it has been challenging to build the necessary infrastructure. So much is necessary to fulfill expectations and to provide high quality, dependable services to companies, municipalities, universities and to the public. To manage all this, we need a strong financial foundation. Please **enroll as a member** with one of the many ECG organizations. Thank you!



Democratic Trade Convention

If you feel like it is not enough to just say “Stop TTIP and CETA”, or if you want to be involved in determining the EU’s trade policy, then participate in the **Democratic Trade Convention (de)**. You can do it for yourself, within your family, an NGO or company and possibly one day even in your municipality.



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