

Failures, successes and missed opportunities: What should we do now going forward?

Ragnar Lofstedt PhD

Professor of Risk Management

King's College London

Outline of my short talk

- Failures-when risk analysis theories and ideas were ignored and the consequences of that;
- Successes-when risk analysis theories and ideas were followed and what happened then;
- Missed opportunities—we could have had a major role but we didn't;
- What should we do now going forward?

Failures

- Sweden's radon communication programme-Sweden will not reach its 2020 targets for reducing radon levels in people's homes because consultants were ignorant of the vast risk communication literature on the topic;
- UK Food Standards Agency's February 2017 "Go for gold campaign" which had an aim to help consumers reduce their intake of acrylamide. Campaign failed as FSA and the consultants that they used were ignorant of past acrylamide communication disasters (Lofstedt 2003);

Successes

- The 2011 Review on Health and Safety (Lofstedt 2011). Review was evidence based and risk informed (261 references) and a majority of the 20 recommendations have now been implemented by the UK Government.
- Following the BSE scandal in the UK the Government set up the arms length body UK Food Standards Agency. In the first years it was led by Lord Krebs (chair) and Geoffrey Podger (chief executive) and they consistently adapted evidence based and risk informed policy making, winning back the trust of the UK public.

Missed opportunities

- The abolishing of the Chief Scientific Advisor in Europe. Prof Anne Glover's position was abolished following a NGO campaign to Commission President Juncker in 2014;
- The slow demise of Julie Girling MEP's Informal Working Group on Risk in the European Parliament. She did not get enough MEPs on board after the 2014 Parliamentary elections;
- The European glyphosate debate that has dominated the "risk airwaves" for more than a year now. Debate has been dominated by NGOs, certain Green politicians and a couple of regulators.

What should we do now going forward?

- We need a more active Society for Risk Analysis in the European policy circles;
 - SRA Nordic Chapter should arrange a meeting with representatives from the Nordic countries on how to communicate the risks of radon to homeowners;
 - SRA-E or SRA-Benelux should arrange a regulatory pesticide summit in Brussels;
 - SRA-UK chapter should host a meeting on risk communication in London;
- Need to persuade our colleagues to take a more active interest in the risk-policy area;
- We should persuade our students to take an active role in this area as well;
- SRA should be more active in the broader media space