



SRA 2017
RISK ANALYSIS
The Profession · The Practitioners · The Research
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Plenary Session

Evidence and Knowledge-Based Decision-Making in a Risk Analysis Setting: Desired Reality or Misconception?



More post-truth than ever? A transatlantic perspective on evidence and policy

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SRA Annual Meeting

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Europe-US 2016-2017: two international events of a global scale



“Personally, never thought of academics as ‘experts’. No experience of the real world.” Glyn Davies, Conservative MP for Montgomeryshire

“I think that measuring with precision human activity on the climate is something very challenging to do and there’s tremendous disagreement about the degree of impact (...) So no, I would not agree that it’s a primary contributor to the global warming that we see.” Scott Pruitt , EPA Administrator



EPA Administrator Pruitt, you should know:

The science on climate change is settled. It’s real. It’s happening. Human activity is the primary cause.

Stop spreading alternative facts (otherwise known as lies).

Union of Concerned Scientists

ucsusa.org/PruittDenial

How is risk policy (potentially) evolving in the post-Brexit / Trump environment: more science-informed? Less science-informed? Or the same ?

Talk informed by 20+ elite interviews – IASS, Potsdam 2017.

What has clearly changed: US

Less science?

- Appointment of more corporate people and sceptics: Administrator Pruitt. Anti-vaccine individuals on FDA boards...
- Changing what gets on the agenda, “destroying the capacity to document things” (USDA).
- Information war: “We are in the middle of a Cyber war “(US Scientist)

More science?

- Turning the over-regulation battleship around (The Economist 14-Oct. 2017). E.O. 13771 Reducing Regulation and Controlling Regulatory Costs
- EPA’s board of Scientific Councilors not being renewed: had they become too political or self-serving?

What has clearly changed: Europe

UK

- 1- "Zeitgeist": Anti EU and climate sceptics
- 2- "Post-Brexit navel gazing"(UK regulator)
- 3- Grenfell Tower : "Knee-jerk" reaction. Creativity has left the UK?

Germany

1. Choosing consensus over science (German Scientist)
2. End of ties to top UK university "research hub"?

France

1. Politicization of scientific advice since Sarkozy . "The engineering of docility"
2. Misuse of Transparency: culmination with appointment of new head of INRA

EU

1. Scrapping of position of Chief Scientific Advisor to the EU Commission. What's next?
 2. Agencies' role: scientific opinion, guidance on uncertainty
- "Unless we are not changing we will have a lot more unbalanced decisions" (MEP)*

Moving forward: Risk Analysis can help to become more science-based

- **Risk analysis as method:** What about reviving the interest for benefit/cost/risk analysis ? What about decision science?
- **Risk analysis as change factor:** SRA, IRGC etc. can inject more science into the policy fabric. What about true European Academies of Science on the NSF model ? What about reviving and spreading the “Chief Scientists” model in Europe?
- **Globalization of the science voice:** are we international enough? SRA Asia & Africa. What about Anglo – German collaboration to make Europe more science-based?

Closing statements

1. Evidence and knowledge-based decision making is not yet a reality
2. Risk Analysis as an approach has the potential to instil more science into policy
3. We need to engage more in the international scientific debate to make it a reality