



Right Progress **Science** Perception
Want Fear Precautionary principle Protection
Industry **Risk** Business **Health** Understand
Known **Facts** Reason Trust Uncertainty Need
Doubt True Reality **Emotion** Wrong
Competitiveness Innovation **Concern**
Safety Myths **Hazard** Dispute **Complexity**
Prejudice Open-minded

Safety of Plastics: **Let's talk about it**

5 & 6 November 2013

Steigenberger Grandhotel, Brussels, Belgium

Summary Report

Summary Report



"Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to fear less, so that we might understand more."

- Marie Curie

Is the regulatory framework on risk in Europe harming or helping innovation? Is it possible to agree on criteria for use of scientific evidence in policy making? What do we mean by acceptable levels of risk? How can we address public mistrust in industry funded research?

These and other equally challenging questions were debated at a conference organised by PlasticsEurope in Brussels on 5-6 November. The conference "**Safety of Plastics: Let's Talk about it!**" brought together senior figures from the worlds of industry, science, civil society and politics to address concerns about the safety of plastics along with broader questions around the application of risk regulation in Europe.

The aim of the event was to provide a platform for different viewpoints and debate practical steps that can be taken to build consensus on these sensitive issues.

The celebrated quote of Marie Curie seemed more relevant than ever today, as a diverse range of speakers and panelists grappled with subjects such as:

- Science, politics and industry working together
- The divergent approaches to risk regulation between the EU and US
- The application of the precautionary principle
- Tools to address knowledge gaps on safety
- Driving innovation in risk averse societies
- Health and safety for competitiveness
- The art of communicating risk.

This document provides a summary of discussions over the two days and highlights some of the main themes that ran throughout the conference.

Conference Speakers & Moderators

PlasticsEurope

Karl-H. Foerster
Dr. Ruediger Baunemann
Hanane Taidi

Public Institutions

Carl Schlyter, MEP
Axel Singhofen, European Parliament
Amalia Sartori, MEP
António Fernando Correia de Campos, MEP
Julie Girling, MEP
Prof. Anne Glover, European Commission
Bjorn Hansen, European Commission

Scientific community/Academia

Alberto Alemanno, HEC Paris
Prof. Averil Macdonald, University of Reading
David Zaruk, Versalis College
Prof. Frederic Boudier, University of Maastricht
Dr. Jean-Luc Doumont, Principia
Prof. Richard Sharpe, University of Edinburgh
Dr. Roland Franz, Fraunhofer Institute for
Process Engineering and Packaging
Dr. Olwenn Martin, Brunel University
Prof. Ortwin Renn, University of Stuttgart
Peter Oldring, FACET

Government agencies

Dr. Mark Lohmann, Federal Institute for Risk
Assessment
Dr. Per Bergman, EFSA

Civil Society

Anne-Sofie Andersson, ChemSec
Gwynne Lyons, ChemTrust
Sir Jonathon Porritt, Forum for the Future
Dr. Sile Lane, Sense about Science
Ethel Forsberg, former head of Swedish
Chemicals Agency

Industry

Dr. Axel Brenner, Siemens AG
Florian Vernay, Unilever
Leonor Garcia, Coca-Cola
Vivienne van Eijkelenborg, Difrax
Patrick Thomas, Bayer MaterialScience AG
Dr. Jacques Ragot, Bayer MaterialScience
AG
Carlo Bartolucci, ExxonMobil Petroleum &
Chemical
Daniele Ferrari, Versalis
Roberto Gualdoni, Styrolution
Paul Leonard, BASF Group
Dirk Hudig, European Risk Forum

Media

Alok Jha, Science Correspondent, The Guardian
Laura Shields, The Media Coach
Robert Matthews, Science Journalist
Stephen Sackur, BBC journalist

Law Firms

Dr. Anna Gergely, Steptoe & Johnson
Dr. Mitch Cheeseman, Steptoe & Johnson

Gold sponsor



Bayer MaterialScience

Silver sponsor

ExxonMobil

Intellectual partner



ERF European Risk Forum

Media partner

EuropeanVoice
EV

Breaking out of the language of extremes

The aim of the conference was to address head-on concerns about plastics and to bring together a wide range of stakeholders to look at the issues at stake from different angles as a first step towards defining common grounds to work together on agreed objectives.

"Providing a platform for different viewpoints was exactly what we were trying to achieve with this conference."

Karl-H. Foerster, Executive Director,
PlasticsEurope

Sir Jonathon Porritt, founder of the Forum for the Future, threw down the gauntlet to all participants in his keynote speech on the opening day. He challenged them to *"ask yourselves over the next two days, is the language of the debate taking you out to extremes or bringing you into the common ground."*

"Arguments based on extremes are the default mechanism of those who advocate for so long behind prison bars that they have no idea how what they say - and how they say it - impacts on others."

- Sir Jonathon Porritt, Forum for the Future



Sir Jonathon Porritt

Sir Jonathon spoke of the need to unshackle a debate that had come to be defined by "advocacy by absolutism" and focus on the question of what world class governance and institutional arrangements for regulating the plastics industry should look like in 2020.

Sir Jonathon and fellow opening speaker Dirk Hudig of the European Risk Forum both highlighted in their speeches the importance of innovation in preserving the European social model. However, according to the former, *"we should not be interested in 'any old innovation' that only focuses on short term economic gain and does not make a contribution to the long term goals of humankind."*

The importance of constructive dialogue as the key to progress on major societal challenges was a theme that would run throughout the two day conference and would be elaborated on by a number of other prominent speakers.

"Now science itself is driving the debate. How bizarre that it is our love of science that is driving our differences. We need to get out of our prisms."

- Sir Jonathon Porritt, Forum for the Future

Science, politics and industry working together

The first panel session of the conference brought together the CEO of a major European company, a Green MEP, the head of a leading NGO and a globally renowned sustainability expert to discuss “*Science, politics and industry working together – what is the winning formula*”. The participants had to contend with searching questions from moderator Stephen Sackur, the presenter of the BBC’s *HardTalk* - all of which made for a fascinating debate.

Panelists:

Patrick Thomas, CEO, BayerMaterialScience, President of Plastics Europe

Anne-Sophie Andersson, Director, ChemSec

Carl Schlyter, MEP, Greens in the European Parliament

Sir Jonathon Porritt, Forum for the Future

Moderator:

Stephen Sackur, BBC journalist

“Industry would like to classify chemicals based on risk. I think it is better to concentrate on hazard.”

- Carl Schlyter, MEP

Discussions ranged from innovations needed to transition from a fossil fuel based economy, to the classification and registration of chemicals under REACH and the lack of scientific certainty around endocrine disruptors.

According to Patrick Thomas we are all driven by the same goal of safety – but that politicians have a responsibility to be clear when they are taking a decision based on the precautionary principle that over-rides scientific consensus. This led Anne-Sophie Andersson to argue that the precautionary principle can be good for business, and that instruments such as REACH and ChemSec’s SIN List were drivers of innovation.

“The market also decides on substances of concern. But are we always clear what the alternatives are?”

- Patrick Thomas



Carl Schlyter and Patrick Thomas continue the debate

A common theme running through the discussion was the lack of trust in scientific evidence, and in particular industry sponsored research. Carl Schlyter stressed the need for more independent research on divisive issues such as GMOs. Sir Jonathon Porritt agreed that “good independent research is key to building trust, but if politicians want this, they need to fund it”.

All panelists were enthusiastic about the idea of a code of conduct for scientific research as a means of building trust and consensus. Sir Jonathon Porritt called for “*society to be involved in industry related research within the bounds of commercial confidentiality*”, while Patrick Thomas stressed the importance of “*proper peer review and reproducible science*”.

“Industry has a role to play in building trust, by providing more robust data in registration dossiers for REACH.”

- Anne-Sophie Andersson

The theme of building trust in the role of scientific evidence in policy making was further developed in the two key note speeches that immediately followed the panel session.

Professor Ortwin Renn was unable to travel to the conference as he was recovering from a recent illness – “a clear example of risk management in practice” as he put it – but took the time to address participants by video on the idea of an ethical code of conduct in science.

Professor Renn, who is a member of the European Commission’s Science and Technology Council, highlighted the important role of risk assessment in helping policy makers take decisions on complex and emotive issues, while stressing that “no scientist can give you all the answers, and there will always be legitimate differences in interpretation.”

“Risk analysis is a very good tool, and it is important to distinguish between hazard and risk. “

- Prof. Ortwin Renn

“We need a process to build trust – it won’t just happen.”

- Prof. Ortwin Renn

He called for a “good ethical procedural approach to science” where all groups have access to scientific results and work together to deliberate the findings. When agreement is not possible that is when policy makers need to make trade-offs between the risk and benefits involved in a given decision.

The final speaker on the first morning of the conference was Dr. Per Bergmann, Director of Scientific Evaluation of Regulated Products at the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). Addressing the question whether science is the dominant driver of European policy, Dr. Bergmann said that he would like to think it plays a very important role, but that “realistically there are also other economic or ethical considerations at play.” In his view, “science only works when accompanied by clear communication, good practice, and good enforcement.”



Dr. Per Bergmann, EFSA

In addition to outlining the role of EFSA in providing risk assessments to policy makers, and the specific legislation governing the safety of plastics as a food contact material, Dr. Bergmann also touched on the issue of transparency in research. He spoke of the scrutiny EFSA faces in relation to conflict of interest claims, and the need for clear and transparent communication on risk assessment processes and decisions to both commercial applicants and the general public. Dr. Bergmann also called for greater access to industry research data and that while he understood the need for commercial confidentiality industry could sometimes “make a more prudent use of this argument.”

“Many of EFSA’s risk assessments touch on very sensitive issues, and the public importance of clear communication has never been greater.”

- Dr. Per Bergmann

EU vs. US Approaches to Risk Regulation

With the European Union and the United States embarking on groundbreaking negotiations for a comprehensive Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership the question of how to reconcile divergent approaches to risk regulation in the two jurisdictions has probably never been more topical.

But are rules and processes for assessing the safety of products and substances really drastically different on either side of the Atlantic? If not, what are the nuances of institutional process that mean the two administrations do not always arrive at the same decisions on sensitive issues?

These questions were tackled by Alberto Alemanno, Assistant Professor of Law at HEC Paris and by former FDA administrator, Dr. Mitch Cheeseman of the law firm Steptoe and Johnson.



Alberto Alemanno

Using the case study of food contact materials, Dr. Cheeseman compared the data requirements, the testing processes and the procedures for review and decision in the EU and US. He concluded that the processes are very similar. However, taking the example of Bisphenol A (BPA), Dr. Cheeseman showed how, despite reviewing the same data and arriving at nearly identical safety conclusions, the US decided not to take regulatory action and sponsored research into remaining uncertainties, while the EU chose to ban polycarbonate baby bottles based on a precautionary approach.

"In the EU, risk assessors and risk managers are not fully accountable to one another, but in an attempt to avoid undue influence, the EU has actually institutionalised it."

- Dr. Mitch Cheeseman

Both speakers agreed that the explanation behind such apparent anomalies lies in the differences in how risk assessment, risk management and risk communication interact with each other. In the EU there is a clear division of function between risk assessors and risk managers based on the experience of the food crisis in the late 1990's. In the US, risk assessors and risk managers are more accountable to one another.

Mr. Alemanno also highlighted the divergent approaches to the application of the precautionary principle. In the US, the precautionary principle is not a legal creation, but in practice it is often used during the risk assessment process. In the EU there is a clear recognition of the role of the precautionary principle at the risk management stage. According to Mr. Alemanno, *"the precautionary principle is here to stay in Europe, and is likely to be increasingly invoked"*. However, there is a *"general reluctance among the courts to do their job in interpreting its application"*.

"We need the courts to check the use of the precautionary principle and provide legal grounds for its application."

- Alberto Alemanno

The final word in this session was given to the floor. When asked to cast a digivote on the motion *"This House believes that the EU approach to risk regulation is better than the US approach"*, 52% of a predominantly European audience sided with the US (see page 14 for results of all digivotes during the conference).

How to deal with the unintended consequences of “precautionism”

Discussion on different transatlantic approaches to the use of the precaution principle perfectly set the scene for the next session, where a diverse group of speakers looked from different angles at the question of “*How to deal with the unintended consequences of ‘precautionism’?*”

Axel Singhofen, adviser to the Greens in the European Parliament, outlined a series of case studies where, he argued, industry had been guilty of “*denying the evidence and distorting the facts*” and employing delaying tactics to avoid legislative action. In his view “*the precautionary principle is inherently scientific as it depends on an analysis of the available evidence in relation to the challenge faced*”.



Axel Singhofen challenging the industry

“Instead of ‘decide, announce, defend’, industry’s approach should be ‘listen, learn, engage.’”

- Axel Singhofen

Prof. Frederic Boudier, of the University of Maastricht, painted a sobering picture of a future where regulators, industry and scientists remain mistrusted and a story hungry media will continue to demote science. He called for policy makers to incorporate “risk-risk” thinking into their decisions. In certain cases eliminating one established risk may leave people exposed to even greater hazards.

Speaking from his experience in the metal packaging sector, Martin Reynolds, Chairman of EMPAC, called for greater clarity on the use of scientific evidence in policy making. He also stressed the importance of clear risk communication around concepts such as “*scientific uncertainty*” which was increasingly taken to mean “*unreliable science*”.

“We need to know what factors other than science will be taken into account when decisions are made. These factors might be perfectly legitimate, but we need to state what they are specifically and not use vague terms.”

- Martin Reynolds

“We have to balance the consequences of taking action with the consequences of being wrong.”

- Gwynne Lyons

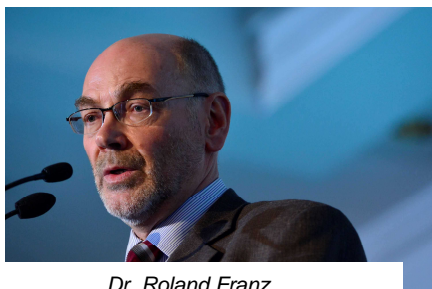
Gwynne Lyons, Director of the UK based charity ChemTrust, focused on the lack of scientific consensus on how to regulate endocrine disrupting chemicals, and outlined concerns about in utero development and low dose effects. She argued that substituting chemicals of concern makes good business sense for industry, as “*authorisations cost money, and new information can threaten your products*”.

The final speaker, Paul Leonard from BASF, provided a number of examples where policy action based on unfounded risk perceptions had led to counterproductive results. He explained that the Innovation Principle outlined in a recent letter by the CEO’s of leading European companies was all about striking the right balance between investment in innovation and precaution.

Tools to address knowledge gaps

The last group of speakers on the first day of the conference looked in more detail at current gaps in scientific knowledge in key areas. The discussions were moderated by Antonio Fernando Correia de Campos MEP, the Chairman of the STOA Panel in the European Parliament.

"I really appreciate the pluralism of participants at this conference – this is what policy makers need to help them make their decisions." - Antonio Fernando Correia de Campos, MEP



Dr. Roland Franz

Dr. Roland Franz of the Fraunhofer Institute for Process Engineering and Packaging presented the evolution of research into the safety of plastics over the past 35-40 years right up to recent findings indicating the lack of consumer exposure to nanoparticles /from plastics/ food contact materials. He concluded that while our capacity to test the safety of food contact plastics had developed considerably since the late 1970's, more can still be done to look at new models of testing.

Peter Oldring, the Chair of the FACET industry working group described a new tool to assess exposure to chemicals in food. The EU funded FACET programme has enabled highly exposed sub-groups to be identified with a view to arriving at a more reliable estimate of consumer exposure to migration from food packaging than has been possible to date.

The final two speakers addressed the status of research into endocrine disruption. Olwenn Martin was part of the team at Brunel University that developed a State of the Art Assessment on endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs) for the European Commission. According to Dr. Martin, there is wide consensus about the criteria to be applied to the detection of EDCs amongst the groups/institutions that have examined the question in detail.

Although there are internationally agreed and validated tests methods to detect endocrine disruptors, by and large, these are currently not necessarily required by European legislation.

"Current testing requirements on EDCs only capture the tip of the iceberg."

- Dr Olwenn Martin

Professor Richard Sharpe of the University of Edinburgh approached the issue from the angle of male reproductive disorders, as endocrine disruptors have been implicated in their origins. Using the example of bisphenol A, he showed that because a western diet is the main source of bisphenol A exposure, there was the possibility of mis-identifying what could be attributed to diet, and what to bisphenol A. Similar concerns applied to several other endocrine disruptors, such as certain phthalates and persistent organochlorine compounds. According to Prof. Sharpe, we should not presume 'cause and effect' in such situations, as some have done. Instead, we should keep open minds and actively explore the relationship between exposure to chemicals and western diet to ensure that we identify which is cause and which is innocent bystander.

"Sometimes we need to take decisions at an earlier stage. But we shouldn't then stop looking for answers. We need to look at the big picture on these issues. Sometimes people are so convinced something is right that they never stop to question it." - Prof. Richard Sharpe

European competitiveness – Is it possible to get something for nothing?



Amalia Sartori MEP

The emphasis on the second day of the conference shifted to competitiveness in Europe and the role of risk regulation in either stimulating or hindering innovation. The scene was set with keynote speeches by two leading figures in the European institutions.

Amalia Sartori MEP, the Chair of the Industry Committee European Parliament framed the difficult choices Europe is facing as it seeks to find the right balance between, short, medium and long term challenges. In her view, boosting European competitiveness must be the top priority if we are to succeed in other areas. She called for true European industrial policy which focusses on sectors where Europe is a leader – citing the plastics sector as an example in this respect.

"We don't want to lose sectors we can be proud of. "Plastics" is a sector where Europe is a lead. We should not forget this."

- Amalia Sartori, MEP

Professor Anne Glover, Chief Scientific Adviser to the President of the European Commission then addressed the theme of European leadership in scientific research. According to Prof. Glover, Europe is *"at the forefront of discovery and application in a number of crucial areas"*. The challenge lies in capturing that excellence, and effectively communicating and translating the scientific wealth of knowledge in Europe to policy makers, industry and citizens.

Prof. Glover highlighted the challenge of lack of trust in science and the impact this has on policy decision. In her view, the best way to combat unfounded risk perceptions was through scientific evidence that is *"sound and peer reviewed"*.

"Risk perception influences public opinion, and hence the behavior of politicians. We should never make important decisions based on gut reaction."

- Prof. Anne Glover

While there will always be scientific uncertainties, there is also a lot of consensus on key issues. The onus is on the scientific community to communicate this, so that policy makers can weigh up the risk and benefits and take effective decisions.

According to Prof. Glover, *"too much of the discussion in Europe is around risks and not enough around rewards. She argued that as a society we need to take risk if we want to enjoy the rewards, and if we fail to do this, the main losers will be European citizens. Citizens pay for the bulk of the research, and they should absolutely demand impact from what they spend. We let them down if we don't manage the process properly"*.

"I welcome the diversity of people at this conference. When we have debates we tend to surround ourselves with people who think like us. Talking to others with different opinions allows us to think differently and capture opportunities we need to move forward in Europe."

- Prof. Anne Glover



Prof. Anne Glover

Driving innovation in risk averse societies

Prof. Glover then joined a panel discussion to debate in more detail how to find the right balance between risk and innovation in Europe. As in other sessions, there was a general consensus that a big part of the solution lies in greater transparency around the use of scientific evidence and more effective risk communication by all stakeholders.

Panelists:

Prof. Anne Glover, Chief Scientific Adviser to the President of the European Commission,
Ethel Forsberg, Former Head of the Swedish Chemicals Agency
Bjorn Hansen, DG Environment, European Commission
Daniel Ferrari, CEO, Versalis

Moderator:

Laura Shields, The Media Coach

"Without innovation, in the medium-term we will lose market share to our competitors, people will lose jobs and the communities that rely on us will be worse off. In the long-term it is absolutely essential to meet the needs of a global population of 9 billion in 2050."

- Daniele Ferrari

Daniele Ferrari, spoke about the importance of predictability in regulatory processes for industry to take the risks involved in investing in innovation. Bjorn Hansen, the Head of the chemicals unit in DG Environment, agreed that REACH was not yet predictable and *"we need to get there urgently"*. However, he argued that, to make it work, industry needs to provide better information to regulators. If science is uncertain then policy makers will have to make decisions based on the information they have. According to Mr. Hansen the *"onus is on industry to fill that gap"*.

In Prof. Glover's view, having strict risk regulations in place should not necessarily act as a barrier to innovation and that, instead, a society with an appetite for innovation was the most important thing. For citizens to be able to judge the trade-off between risk and innovation they need to understand *"what is in it for them"*.



(l-to-r) Laura Shields, Anne Glover,
Daniele Ferrari

Prof. Glover also spoke of the responsibility of public scientists to act as translators for citizens and politicians and to ensure the *"best possible use of evidence in decision-making"*. What other considerations should be taken into account is up to politicians. However, while the definition of the precautionary principle is very effective as it is written and is intended to support innovation, it should not be used politically to prevent things from happening.

On the question of transparency, Ethel Forsberg called for more information on what goes into products. As a consumer she wants to know what risks she is taking when she buys something. In her view, a list of chemical ingredients is a more effective means of ensuring safety and building consumer confidence than the use of "free-of" claims.

"Innovation is the result of hard work, scientific discovery and the 'e-factor.' The e-factor means real collaboration and dialogue. That is why what PlasticsEurope is doing is so important in inviting people who don't necessarily agree with you on everything, rather than staying behind your barriers."

- Ethel Forsberg

Health and Safety for Competitiveness

How do fast moving consumer goods companies carry out risk assessments? How should industry address consumer concerns around product safety? Are safe products good for business? These and other questions were addressed by the only all-industry panel session in the conference, which was moderated by Alok Jha, Science correspondent at The Guardian newspaper.

Florian Vernay, European Public Affairs Manager at Unilever, spoke from the perspective of a downstream user of plastics. He explained that a company like Unilever needs to constantly invest in its brands to live up to consumer expectations in terms of safety, efficacy and taste. At the end of the day it is a combination of the level of trust in scientific evidence and the preferences of the consumer that guide the company's decisions on its products. Unilever needs its suppliers to put even more emphasis on responsible innovation than they have done in the past. Suppliers also need to get better at listening to societal concerns and engage more with groups who criticise their products.



Alok Jha takes questions from the floor

"It is very important to address safety concerns before consumer groups or the media get there. After a widespread campaign, it is very difficult to recover if industry has not listened to concerns early on."

- Florian Vernay

Axel Brenner, Siemens AG (on behalf of BDI Working Group Substance Policy), presented case studies on advances in energy storage and the life cycle of batteries. He also spoke of the need to balance the objectives of substance regulation and other political goals such as the transition to renewable energy and other climate mitigation goals.

Jacques Ragot of Bayer MaterialScience focused on the implications for society of the increasing use of "free-of" claims on consumer products. He argued that these labels create uncertainty for the general public and are based on misinformation. There is a need for increased societal dialogue to ensure a more balanced understanding of what is safe and what is not.

"Free-of' claims are educating consumers to think there are unsafe products on the market."

- Jacques Ragot

The final speaker, Leonor Garcia, Director of Scientific and Regulatory Affairs for Packaging at Coca-Cola, talked through the internal risk assessment processes for innovative products using plastics. She called for greater use of the mutual recognition principle to facilitate the work of the industry on guaranteeing safety as many companies in the food sector struggle with the fragmentation of legislation from one country to another.

"Risks tend to be looked at from a vertical point of view. We need to balance risks with benefits based on the overall goal of safety. Risk does not mean hazard, but unfortunately in many languages there is only one word for the two concepts. "

- Leonor Garcia

The Art of Communicating Risk



Julie Girling, MEP

Given the calls for more effective communication throughout the two days, it was fitting that the final session of the conference should discuss the *Art of Communicating Risk*. The question was addressed from the perspective of a politician, a regulator, a communications expert, a downstream user of plastics, and a journalist.

Julie Girling, MEP is the founder of a working group on risk in the European Parliament. She spoke of the dual role of policy makers as recipients of risk communication and risk communicators in their own right. The difficulty for policy makers is that they cannot just present risk information – they have to present risk management solutions. Only through greater cooperation between scientists and policy makers can we arrive at better decisions on risk. In Ms.

“Policy makers are often not very good risk communicators and find it easier to jump on a bandwagon than stay off it. It often requires more political courage to stand back on an issue.”

- Julie Girling, MEP

Girling’s view the role of public scientists is extremely important in this regard and more Member States should look to create positions analogous to the chief scientific advisers in the UK system.



(l-to-r) Hanane Taidi, Mark Lohmann

Dr. Mark Lohmann of the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment presented the work of his institution on understanding how risk perceptions vary among population groups. Risk communication is usually a one way non-target specific action – but subjective risk perception differs hugely from group to group. According to Dr. Lohmann, successful communication requires detailed socio-psychological aspects of target groups.

Vivienne van Eijkelenborg, the President of the World Bottle and Teat Organisation, addressed the challenges in communicating science to a particularly sensitive target group – mothers of young children. Understanding a mother’s instinct to protect her child is the key driver of the baby products industry. It is up to the industry, including all parts of the value chain, to translate scientific evidence into a language consumers understand and trust.

Scientist-turned-communications expert, Dr. Jean-Luc Doumont outlined the typical ways in which scientists fail to communicate their messages to non-expert audiences. While outlining various tips and tricks for more effective communication of scientific data, Dr. Doumont’s main message was that scientists need to be as passionate about their audience as they are about their work.

Robert Matthews is both an active scientist and a working journalist. He spoke about effective risk communication from the perspective of the media. Industry needs to understand the pressures on journalists to produce stories quickly that are relevant, understandable and entertaining for their readers. While NGOs are very effective at communicating

“Industry still believes facts trump everything when communicating with the media. The reality is that they are necessary, but not sufficient.”

- Robert Matthews

simple “human” stories, industry tends to focus too heavily on facts and fails to appreciate the need for speed in getting a message across in the media.

Closing Remarks

Proceedings were wrapped up with a closing statement by PlasticsEurope Executive Director Karl-H. Foerster. He remarked that the common theme running through the conference was the need to open up to collaboration with other organisations in order to find common ground and build trust and credibility.

These comments echoed the point made by PlasticsEurope Vice President and CEO of Styrolution Roberto Gualdoni during his closing remarks on the first day of the conference. Mr. Gualdoni spoke of the need to “*work together with other experts from the scientific community, NGOs, policy-makers, customers, and consumers to identify practical solutions to build public trust in the way we approach risk assessment in Europe.*”

According to Mr. Foerster the most important thing was not to lose the momentum generated by the conference. In this context, a PlasticsEurope conference being held later that month at national level in Austria would provide a first opportunity to build on learnings from discussions in Brussels.

“The discussions were very fruitful – but what are the next steps? We don’t want to lose what we have got out of the conference. We need to identify ways of continuing the dialogue.”

- Karl-H.Foerster

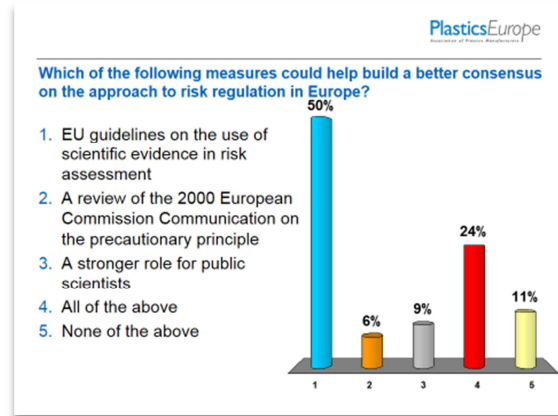
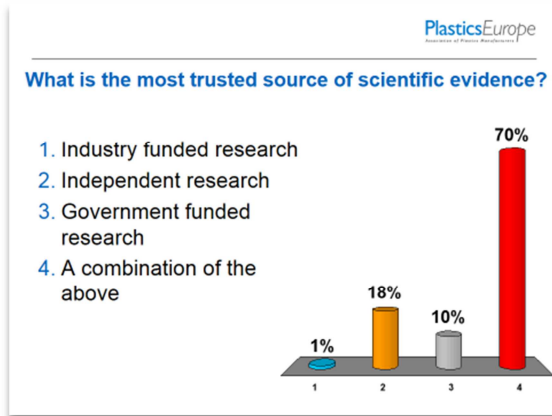
For more information on the conference and on PlasticsEurope initiatives in general, please contact Hanane Taidi, Director Communications: hanane.taidi@plasticseurope.org

PlasticsEurope is one of the leading European trade associations with centres in Brussels, Frankfurt, London, Madrid, Milan and Paris. We are networking with European and national plastics associations and have more than 100 member companies, producing over 90% of all polymers across the EU28 member states plus Norway, Switzerland and Turkey. The European plastics industry makes a significant contribution to the welfare in Europe by enabling innovation, creating quality of life to citizens and facilitating resource efficiency and climate protection. More than 1.45 million people are working in about 62,000 companies (mainly small and medium sized companies in the converting sector) to create a turnover in excess of 300 bn EUR per year. The plastics industry includes polymer producers - represented by PlasticsEurope, converters - represented by EuPC and machine manufacturers - represented by EUROMAP. For further info see the web links: www.plasticseurope.org, www.plasticsconverters.eu, <http://www.euromap.org>

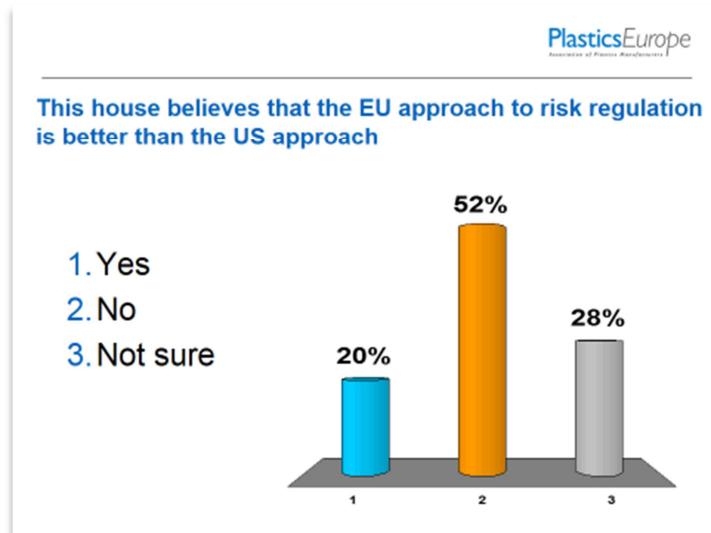
Annex: Results of audience digivotes

At the end of a number of sessions, the audience had the opportunity to cast its vote on a different questions relating to the discussions.

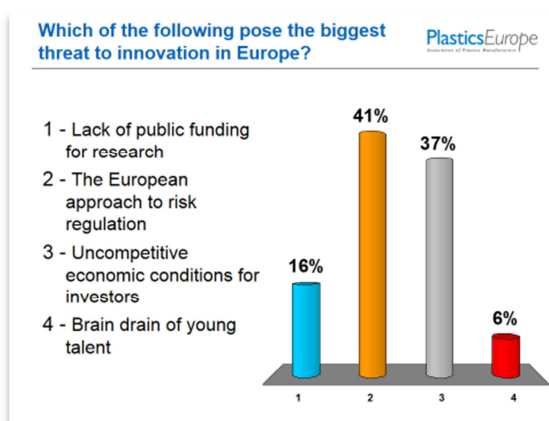
“Science, politics and industry working together – what is the winning formula?”



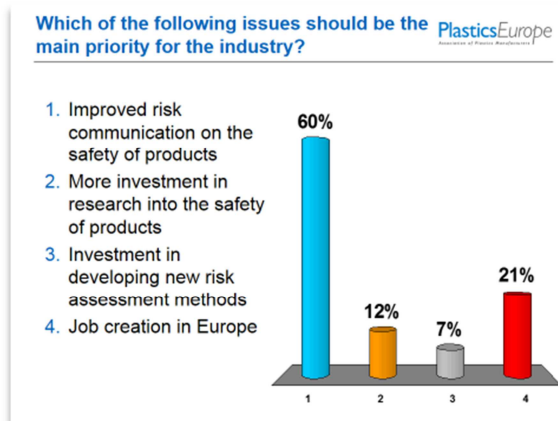
The Divergent approaches to risk regulation between the EU and the US



Driving Innovation in a risk averse society?



Health and Safety for Competitiveness



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