



TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN,
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PRESS RELEASE –

European Risk Policy Experts call for a practical approach to risk in EU policy-making

Brussels - Belgium, 18 June 2013

The **European Risk Summit** (www.risksummit.eu), hosted this month at Trinity College Dublin (11-12 June 2013), has brought renewed focus to the issue of evidence and risk-based rulemaking, and has highlighted the critical role that science plays in policy formation at EU level.

Attended by 100 Irish and international experts comprising policy-makers, regulators, governing bodies, industry and academia from the chemicals, food, environmental, healthcare and pharmaceuticals sectors, the Summit heard calls for the establishment by the European Parliament of a formal group on risk that would advise politicians on potentially contentious legislative matters of perceived threat to human well-being and environmental sustainability.

Addressing the Summit, Professor Ragnar Löfstedt, Director of King's Centre for Risk Management, said that "a clearer and more inclusive approach to scientific evidence would facilitate a better regulatory decision-making process".

MEP Julie Girling, Chair of the Informal European Parliamentary Working Group on Risk, and keynote speaker at the Summit, criticised the disproportionate use of "emotive arguments and political pressure when making policy, with not enough rationality at the heart of the debate".

The Summit also discussed the need for a greater understanding of the culture of risk - something it was agreed would require a more rigorous debate at EU level to ensure fair and consistent rules and regulations across Member States. In addition, the need for science to be articulated in a more coherent, digestible and informed way to the media was identified as a key priority by a number of delegates, which would allow for the citizens of Europe, as well as politicians, to formulate appropriate views.

Director General of Science Foundation Ireland, Professor Mark Ferguson, stressed the necessity for the science community, when communicating risk, to "describe the weight of evidence for any view, use plain language and put probabilities into an everyday context. He added that it was important to "explain what is known and what is not known" and not to "cherry pick" data when engaging with the political system, media, general public and other stakeholders.

The European Risk Summit was chaired by Professor Ragnar Löfstedt, Director of King's Centre for Risk Management; Mr Pat O'Mahony, Chief Executive of the Irish Medicines Board; and Dr Kevin Bradley, President of the Nickel Institute.

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Speaker presentations and press coverage from the event will be posted on the **European Risk Summit website** (www.risksummit.eu) shortly.



European Risk Summit on Twitter: [@eurisk2013](https://twitter.com/eurisk2013)

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