Editorial

The EJRR starts the year by hosting a timely symposium devoted to regulatory reform in the United States and in the European Union. We asked the US Office for Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) as well as the European Commission Secretariat-General to provide us with two essays illustrating the latest developments in regulatory reform on both sides of the Atlantic. Two emerging scholars in this field comment on the essays in order to foster the debate on regulatory reform.

Although the latest developments in the field maintain significant continuity with past experiences, some new elements have being introduced in the US and the EU regulatory reform systems that deserve some attention.

In "Humanizing Cost-Benefit Analysis", OIRA Administrator Cass Sunstein outlines some of the underlying principles of the Obama administration's regulatory strategy. This strategy has been unveiled on the 18th of January 2011 with the publication of the long-awaited new executive order on regulatory review. As illustrated by Michael Livermore in his comment to Sunstein's piece, the new order represents "another small, positive step toward a balance effective regulatory review structure". By incorporating the recent findings of regulation and behavioural science research, the new order aims to lay down the foundations for a US "21st-Century Regulatory System". On the European side, Helen McColm from the Commission Secretariat-General illustrates the switch from Better to Smart Regulation operated by the publication of the recent communication Smart Regulation in the European Union. Commenting on the Commission's piece, Lorenzo Allio welcomes the semantic change behind the latest EU regulatory reform as a "further step towards de-franchising regulatory reform from its purely de-regulatory origins".

In addition to the symposium, this issue contains three original articles that deal with some of the most actual risk regulatory challenges facing the risk world today. The first article addresses the ongoing struggle in regulating an endocrine disruptor such as BPA. At the time the EJRR went to press, the use of BPA in baby bottles has been banned in the EU by Directive 2011/8 of the 28th of January 2011. The second article is devoted to "Regulating Catastrophic Risks by Standards" and the third to risk regulation institutional design, "Supranational Governance and Networked Accountability Structures: Member State Oversight of EU Agencies".

As usual, our correspondents keep EJRR updated on the latest developments in different risk regulation sectors by covering various issues, such as *inter alia* green patents after Cancun, the definition of nanotechnologies after the publication by the EU of a communication on the issue, the location decisions by research-based pharmaceutical companies, and finally the risk communication strategies of the 2010 airport closure that marked the Christmas holidays in the EU and the US.

Several annotations of important European and WTO decisions complete the issue.

I wish you a happy and fruitful reading!

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