

Editorial

This second issue of the EJRR opens with a symposium devoted to the ongoing debate about whether regulators should base their risk regulatory policies on intrinsic hazard or risk assessment. In other words, should regulators ban or phase out substances that have an in-built ability to cause harm, or should they examine whether there is a real probability that this substance will actually cause this harm?

For centuries authorities have allowed the production of potentially hazardous substances and tried to foresee all possible factors in order to reduce the probability of an accident instead of reducing its consequences. Ragnar Lofstedt, in his opening article, after providing a brief history of the risk versus hazard debate, illustrates how European regulators are gradually changing their attitude towards risks by embracing a risk regulatory approach which focuses on hazard rather than risk.

We have asked a number of risk experts, among them several academics, NGO representatives, policy-makers, two MEPs, to comment on Lofstedt's thought-provoking article. As a result, we have gathered a wealth of insightful comments that support, challenge and enrich the findings presented by Lofstedt.

Faithful to its commitment to addressing practical issues in risk regulation, the EJRR could not miss the opportunity to comment on the Japanese emergency situation triggered by an earthquake that was followed by a tsunami and a nuclear safety emergency. In "Fukushima Fixation", Adam Burgess offers a captivating essay on these recent events by illustrating how the media narrative have made Fukushima *the* story of the Japanese tragedy.

The other two articles hosted in this issue deal with the controversial precautionary principle and with the issue of the independence of scientific advice in regulatory agencies respectively.

As in the past, this volume of EJRR also contains a significant number of reports and case notes devoted to national, European and global regulatory approaches in areas such as biotechnology, food, intellectual property, pharmaceuticals and nanotechnology.

I wish you a happy reading and hope to see many of you at the forthcoming annual meeting of the Society for Risk Analysis Europe on June 6–8, 2011 in Stuttgart. The EJRR has planned and is sponsoring several panels devoted to the latest developments in risk regulation.

Alberto Alemanno