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Nanopublic Newsmail N° 2

- March 2010 -

The Nanopublic Newsmail deals with issues related to the development of nanotechnology. It provides useful links, resources, and announcements of important events in Switzerland. This Newsmail belongs to the Nanopublic platform, a joint project of the University of Lausanne and the EPFL.

<http://www.unil.ch/nanopublic>

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NEWS OF NANOTECHNOLOGY IN SWITZERLAND

No research on ethical, legal and social issues of nanotechnology in the NRP 64

Entitled "Opportunities and risk of nanomaterials", the National research program 64 issued its call in autumn and will decide on research projects in October 2010. With 12 millions francs for 5 years, the NRP 64 adds to the already important research funding in nanosciences and nanotechnology in Switzerland. It promotes research projects in medicine, ecotoxicology, consumer goods, food, energy, and materials. But the program offers nothing for ethical, legal and social issues, and governance of innovation and risk.

As members of the research platform Nanopublic, we regret that no slot of research has been dedicated to the exploration and anticipation of ethical, legal and social issues of nano. The Swiss parliament, where national research programs are decided, does not seem to follow the trend in the US and in Europe of addressing these issues upstream of research in technosciences. The report of the Federal council and the Action plan of the Confederation is although explicit: "the participation of the public, of the industry and of the sciences in the debate about opportunities and risk of nanotechnology must be fully part of technological development". One could also read the Thesis on nanotechnology by the Swiss Academies of Sciences, very clear about the public issues and what social research must contribute to. Therefore, these words are not followed by appropriate action. According to these recommendations, in parallel to ongoing research programs, another research should be dedicated to anticipation and exploration socioeconomic issues, to studies on the governance of innovation and risk, and to public communication.

In the US for instance, the National Nanotechnology Initiative planned the funding of research on societal issues from start. Apart of risk research, social research received 180 millions \$ from 2005 to 2009. Increasing both in risk and societal issues, the NNI budget in the latter domain has been brought to 40 millions \$ in 2009 within a total research budget of 1,5 billion. The United Kingdom is also active in this domain, promoting "public engagement" upstream in the development of technology.

Postulate on the necessity to legislate in the domain of nanotechnology

The postulate made last December by deputy Hansruedi Stadler on the necessity to legislate on nanotechnology has been addressed by the 9th of March at the Council of States. See this postulate (in German) and the answer of Federal councilor Didier Burkhalter (in French) here

http://www.parlament.ch/ab/frameset/f/s/4813/321266/f_s_4813_321266_321339.htm

Publication of the Swiss Nanotech Report 2010

Short articles and interviews of main research funding agencies, and of private and public institutions of innovation in Switzerland. The Swiss Nanotech Report advertises the excellent framing conditions for research and R&D in nanotechnology in Switzerland: top laboratories, concentration of skilled personnel and networks, high priority to research and flexible funding, availability of venture capital, policies and measures promoting innovation, spin-offs, 40 pages.

http://www.sbf.admin.ch/hm/dokumentation/publikationen/forschung/Swiss_Nanotech_Report_2010.pdf

PUBLIC DEBATE, ETHICAL, LEGAL, AND SOCIAL ISSUES

Public agency and debate on nanotechnologies : a European study

This 100 pages study published in January 2010 is based on four projects of the European Commission within its « Science in Society » program. Articles are considering the British project Deepening Ethical Engagement and Participation with Emerging Nanotechnologies (DEEPEN), the Code of Conduct of the European Union which encourages a responsible development of new technologies, the governance platform FramingNano, and the dialogue with trade unions and NGOs in public deliberative processes. To download the document

<http://www.eurosfaire.prd.fr/7pc/bibliotheque/consulter.php?id=1650>

<http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/index.cfm?fuseaction=public.topic&id=781&CFID=53136526&CFTOKEN=46751287&jsessionid=b20132221f89294dcf8432f221f825657f70TR>

Extreme politisation of public debate in France. Nano-analysis

On the negotiation table on environmental issues, the so called « Grenelle de l'environnement », it has been agreed to promote public debate upstream technoscientific research. The new and original institution of French political landscape, the Commission nationale du débat public, organized a series of debates in major cities. However, on 17 organized events, only 9 could happen, the others being jeopardized by one or a two of anti-nanotech small groups. Pièces et main d'oeuvre (PMO) is a group of people opposed to nanotechnology on a technophobic basis. PMO condemned un mascarade of public debate, since massive investments in research and R&D have already been decided and could not be influenced or modified at this stage, trajectories being already determined. These events show an extreme politization of the debate, even before it can start. It contrasts with the lack of concern in favor of some public debate in Switzerland, where authorities have the impression of well doing since they have addressed risk with their Action plan. But risk are not, by far, the only societal issues of nanotechnology. See the article of Bernadette Bensaude-Vincent in La Recherche, Mars 2010, pp.76-79.

REGULATION, ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND SAFETY

NanoImpactNet Conference took place in Lausanne, March 9-12, 2010

NanoImpactNet Conference took place in Lausanne, March 9-12, 2010. NanoImpactNet is a network on health and environmental impact of nanomaterials of the 7th European research programme. It is part of the EU Action Plan. It is led by the Institute for Work and Health in Lausanne (IST), and especially by Michael Riediker (a member of the Nanopublic platform), and is running until 2012. It brings together researchers, mainly in toxicology, of a number of relevant institutions and laboratories, stakeholders, regulators, etc. This coordinating program shows the impressive work done on handling, standardization, and behaviour of nanomaterials in the body and the environment. It shows the important remaining knowledge gaps. The Conference included training schools, stakeholders' sessions, conferences on relevant law, the European legislation (REACH) and the conditions for the regulation of nanomaterials. For more information on NanoImpactNet, go to the website

<http://www.nanoimpactnet.eu/>

« No Data, No Market ? » Report of the 5th NanoRegulation Conference

The implementation of the « no data, no market » principle of the European Directive REACH is a challenge for nanomaterials. The 2009 NanoRegulation Conference organised a dialogue between stakeholders about this challenge, including representatives of the European Commission, of the European Consumers' Organisation (BEUC), of the International Standardization Organization (ISO), of Bayer, of PlasticsEurope. Issues of regulation, of exchange of information on safety, and on labeling of nanomaterials have been addressed. With subtitle « Challenges to Nano-information and Nano-communication along the value chain », the report has been published in January 2010 by the Innovation Society, 46 pages.

<http://www.innovationsgesellschaft.ch/index.php?page=115>

FramingNano, Final report on the governance of nanotechnology in Europe

A year after the publication of a study on governance and regulation of nanotechnology in the world, the European project FramingNano (FP7) publishes its final report in February 2010. Handed in to the European Commission, it aims at elaborating a governance platform. The report analyses the gap between missing knowledge and the swift developments in nanotechnology. It reviews the various policies looking for a responsible development of new technology and makes recommendations to the Commission. Among those which may steer a debate, the authors recommend the creation of a Deliberative Panel which would function as

an Observatory, as an Advisory body, and as a Public engagement policy.
111 pages.

<http://www.innovationsgesellschaft.ch/index.php?page=115>

DATA BASE, GOOD PRACTICES, AND RESOURCES

ENPRA project (FP7) : first issue of a Newsletter of Engineered NanoParticle Risk Assessment

The 7th Research framework program Engineered NanoParticle Risk Assessment (ENPRA) is a 3,7 million € project aiming at the development of an integrated method to assess toxicology of engineered nanomaterials. March 3, ENPRA issued a Newsletter. To read No1 ENPRA Newsletter

<http://www.enpra.eu/>

The GoodNanoGuide, database

The GoodNanoGuide is a « collaboration platform designed to enhance the ability of experts to exchange on how best to handle nanomaterials in an occupational setting. It fills the need for up-to-date information about current good practices on workplaces, highlighting new practices as they develop. » The site also provides entries for non specialist, some management schemes for laboratories and organizations, and an occupational and health safety reference manual. The GoodNanoGuide is the result of a joint effort by the US International Council on Nanotechnology (ICON), the UK based Safenano, the Institute for Work and Health in Lausanne (IST), the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), , the University of Wisconsin's Center for Nanotechnology, InterNano, the Institute of Occupational Medicine (IOM), SAFENANO in the UK, IRSST, and, as the website says, « many, many others. » www.goodnanoguide.org/tiki-index.php

OECD Database on Research into the Safety of Manufactured Nanomaterials

The OECD has developed a global resource database which holds details of completed, current and planned research projects on safety of manufactured nanomaterials. It is also possible to contribute to the database.

http://www.oecd.org/department/0,3355,fr_2649_37015404_1_1_1_1_1,00.html

How to search the database, and how to contribute :

<http://www.nanowerk.com/news/newsid=9931.php>

READINGS, BOOKS, MOVIES, AND OTHER GOODIES

Dominique Vinck : Les Nanotechnologies. Paris, Le Cavalier Bleu, 2009

Your friends and your relatives do not understand what you are doing? They do not know what nanotechnology is about? Read and advise them to read this excellent short introductory book on nanotechnology and what is at stake.

Nanopublic - Nanotechnology and society interdisciplinary platform. Project of the University of Lausanne and the EPFL which conducts research on ethical, legal and social issues of nanotechnology. Nanopublic also aims at promoting public debate about emerging technologies.

<http://www.unil.ch/nanopublic>

March 31st, 2010

Editor:

Marc Audétat
Interface Sciences – Société
Université de Lausanne
marc.audetat@unil.ch
+41 21 692 20 86