

## Track 8 - Special Sessions

### 8.07 - Towards a shared understanding of science and risk communication in the context of the inevitability of chemicals and the hazard they may represent

Co-chairs: Annegaike Leopold, *Calidris environment bv, Netherlands* | Thomas-Benjamin Seiler, *RWTH Aachen University, Germany* | Charmaine Ajao, *ECHA, Finland*

*Wednesday 16 May | 10:50 a.m.–3:30 p.m. | Session Room Q*

Creating awareness through improvement of science and risk communication to and among stakeholders was the topic that was given highest priority by a group of environmental science stakeholders who attended the Horizon Scanning Project Stakeholder Event at the SETAC Europe Conference in Brussels on the 11th of May 2017. Hence this session is an immediate response to this recognized need.

Society cannot function in the absence of chemicals, at least not for the foreseeable future and not without radically changing our way of life. Therefore, it is essential that we find the right balance between the need for chemicals and the hazard that they might cause to human health and the environment. Essential to achieving this balance is the need for accurate communication about the real risk posed by chemicals in the environment, to be distinguished from emotions, beliefs, concerns or even fears. Attaining a shared understanding of findings from environmental research among scientists, policy makers and the public is a challenge, and is of critical importance if we want to clearly communicate risks and make informed decisions that will protect human health and the planet building on scientific facts rather than on opinions.

This special session will address some examples of topics that are of societal concern, about which there are differences in opinion between groups. The objective of this session is to demonstrate how through good science, constructive discussion and open communication, scientific and regulatory progress, respected by all stakeholders, can be made to promote environmental sustainability.

#### Programme

- 10:50 a.m. Introduction
- 10:55 a.m. How researchers can work in alliance with citizens to fight misinformation and improve public debates | Sofie Vanthournout, *Sense About Science EU, Belgium*
- 11:10 a.m. Discussion: the need to promote good science and evidence in public debates
- 11:15 a.m. How to communicate the risks posed by endocrine disrupting chemicals? (I) | Juliette Legler, *Utrecht University, Netherlands*
- 11:23 a.m. How to communicate the risks posed by endocrine disrupting chemicals? (II) | Markus Hecker, *University of Saskatchewan, Canada*
- 11:30 a.m. Discussion Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals
- 11:35 a.m. A regulator's perspective in involving stakeholders and the public in the regulation of a substance | Charmaine Ajao, *ECHA, Finland*
- 11:50 a.m. Questions/discussion
- 11:55 a.m. General Discussion with panel of Sofie Vanthournout, Juliette Legler and Markus Hecker

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- 12:20 a.m. Concluding remarks part I and a teaser for part II! | Annegaike Leopold
- 12:25 a.m. Lunch and poster viewing
- 1:55 a.m. Introduction
- 2:00 a.m. Nanotechnology: When shading effects through agglomeration of carbon nanotubes (CNT's) are confused with toxicity by media and the public - a case example revisited | Fabienne Schwab, *Adolphe Merkle Institute, Switzerland*
- 2:08 a.m. Nanotechnology: Communicating scientific findings through media – what could possibly go wrong? Lessons learned from Schwab's nanotubes | Gunilla Öberg, *The University of British Columbia, Canada*
- 2:15 a.m. Discussion Nanotechnology
- 2:20 a.m. Microplastics: The risks of plastics – perceived or real? | Michiel Kotterman, *IMARES - Wageningen University & Research, Netherlands*
- 2:30 a.m. Lost in translation: Do we communicate the risks of (micro)plastics in the right way? | Martin Wagner, *Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway*
- 2:40 a.m. Ocean Literacy – changing attitudes and behaviour of society in the face of the problems of the oceans | Angel Borja, *AZTI-Tecnalia, Spain*
- 2:50 a.m. Discussion Microplastics
- 3:00 a.m. General discussion with panel of all speakers about topics emerging from the session
- 3:25 a.m. Wrap-up and closing | Annegaike Leopold
- 3:30 a.m. End