

Editorial

The EJRR opens this new issue by hosting a special issue on the Risk Regulation Reflex. As illustrated by its editor, Jan van Tol, in his opening editorial, this term encompasses the innovative work undertaken by the Dutch Risk and Responsibility programme (DRRP), whose declared aim is to break the 'vicious circle of risk regulation'. I seize this chance to thank Jan for the impressive line up of distinguished contributors as well as Adam Burgess, EJRR Associate Editor and Reader in Social Risk Research at Kent University, for supporting this editorial project since its inception, almost a year ago.

In addition to the symposium, this issue contains two original articles that deal with some of the timeliest, yet thorny, risk regulatory challenges facing the risk world today: the difficult balance between consumer protection and scientific research in the field of GMOs on the one side and the regulation of food irradiation, a process which can be used to destroy bacteria that cause food poisoning, on the other. The first article consists in a contribution by Peter Hettich and Simone Walther, from St. Gallen University, who illustrate how the Swiss regulatory framework for the cultivation of GMOs in combination with the application of a strong precautionary principle risk to hamper freedom of research in the field of green gene technology. In the second article, Paolo Vergano and Ignacio Carreno, offer – by taking a comparative stance – an original analysis of the regulatory framework for food irradiation in the EU and predict the legal implications stemming from the approach suggested by EFSA's scientific updated opinion in 2011. Among the many findings, they illustrate how there are potential legal conflicts between the current regulatory framework on food irradiation in the EU and the international trade framework of the World Trade Organization.

As usual, our correspondents keep EJRR readers updated on the latest developments in different risk regulation sectors by covering various issues, such as inter alia access to regulatory information on agrochemicals, the limits of global food governance after the recent vote on MRLs for ractopamine, the comparative effectiveness of gambling regulation, the risk communication challenges associated with shale gas development as well as the latest developments in the regulation of nanotechnologies and pharmaceuticals.

Several annotations of important risk-related EU and WTO judgments, such as the recent panel report in *Tuna-Dolphin II*, together with the review of two recent risk regulation books, close the issue.

Finally, the EJRR has co-sponsored together with its sister journal, EFFL, the 4th Summer Academy in Global Food Law and Policy on the shores of the Como Lake at the end of July. This successful event witnessed the participation of a significant number of EJRR readers, contributors and followers. A detailed account of the themes discussed during the academy will be published in the next issue of the journal.

I wish you a happy and fruitful reading and an energetic back-to-work after the Summer break.

Alberto Alemanno