

“Responsible Nanotechnology Research and Innovation (RNRI)” workshop,
March 7, 2014, Donostia-San Sebastian

PURPOSE AND RELEVANCE

The European Commission claims that research and engineering activities under the next R&D Framework Programme, “Horizon 2020”, will be conducted according to a “Responsible Research and Innovation” (RRI) framework, meaning that *“societal actors work together during the whole research and innovation process in order to better align both the process and its outcomes, with the values, needs and expectations of European society”* (EC, 2012, “Responsible Research and Innovation – Europe’s ability to respond to societal challenges”, p. ii).

Nanotechnology is one of the key strategic areas in the European R&D system. However, together with its economic potential, nanotechnology also has the potential to create new environmental and health risks. Prompted by safety concerns, the EC claims to advocate a *“safe and responsible”* development of nanotechnology (EC, 2004, “Towards a European Strategy for Nanotechnology”, p. 3), and has adopted a *Code of Conduct for Responsible Nanosciences and Nanotechnologies Research* (EC 2008).

The integration of RRI issues and perspectives into nanotechnology R&D system expresses a growing institutional sensitivity toward societal demands for safety, environmental protection and ethical integrity. In fact, policy-makers and researchers have become increasingly aware that technological innovations, in order to succeed and be viable, must attend to those demands, as demonstrated by the European backlash against agri-food biotechnology, which can in part be interpreted as a social reaction against the promotion of a technology whose environmental and health risks might arguably have been under-analyzed and under-regulated.

However, policy claims on Responsible Nanotechnology Research and Innovation (RNRI) should not be taken for granted. Rather, they need to be analyzed in the context of the heterogeneous set of economic and political interests, technical capabilities, and socio-cultural factors that frame nanotechnology R&D. In that sense, this workshop aims to study the keys, dynamics and difficulties underlying the application of RNRI policies by tackling the following questions: How is RNRI being understood and applied? Which are the tensions between the different EU institutional bodies concerning the meanings and scope of RNRI? How do issues of social legitimacy and trust relate to RNRI policies and initiatives? Will European research policy be substantially transformed through RNRI?

The workshop brings together top researchers from academia and policy in RNRI issues, and aspires to serve as an instrumental platform to set an articulated research agenda and organize future larger events on the topic. Furthermore, the workshop wants to start building bridges between social scientists and the nanotechnology research community, in order to establish a collaboration and promote more reflexive, or environmentally and ethically more sensitive, RNRI practices. In fact, not by chance, the workshop will be held at the CIC NanoGUNE Consolider, a center promoted by the Department of Industry, Trade, and Tourism of the Basque Government, and created with the mission of addressing basic and applied world-class research in nanoscience and nanotechnology.

PROGRAM – March 7, 2014

Location:

Nanoscience Cooperative Research Center - CIC NanoGUNE, <http://www.nanogune.eu/en>
Tolosa Hiribidea 76, E-20018 Donostia - San Sebastian, +34 943 574 000, nano@nanogune.eu



Donostia – San Sebastian

9.15-9.30: “Welcome / Introductory Comments”

Ana Arrieta, Vice-Rector of the Gipuzkoa campus of the University of the Basque Country UPV/EHU

Andoni Ibarra, University of the Basque Country UPV/EHU

9.30-10.30: “Societal and Ethical Issues in Nanotechnology”

Carl Mitcham, Colorado School of Mines

10.30-11.30: “Nanotechnology and Public Participation: A Substantial New Agenda?”

Brian Wynne, Lancaster University

11.30-12.00: Coffee Break

12.00-13.00, **General Lecture:** “A vision of Responsible Nanotechnology Research and Innovation (RNRI) in the European Union”

Speaker: **René von Schomberg**, European Commission, Brussels

Chair: **Pedro M. Etxenike**, Donostia International Physics Center (DIPC)

13.00-14.30: Lunch

14.30-15.30: “The Meaning and Scope of RRI Concerning the Environmental, Health and Safety (EHS) Aspects of Nanotechnology”

Hannot Rodríguez, University of the Basque Country UPV/EHU

Andoni Ibarra, University of the Basque Country UPV/EHU

15.30-16.30: “Nanotechnology and Uncertainty: Beyond Risk and Responsibility”

Roger Strand, University of Bergen

16.30-16.45: Coffee Break

16.45-17.45: “Organizing Collective Responsibility Beyond Regulation: Deliberation, Precaution and Codes of Conduct”

René von Schomberg, European Commission, Brussels

17.45-18.30: “Working Discussion: Setting A Research Agenda for the Future”

WEBSITE

Miguel Sánchez-Mazas Chair UPV/EHU

<http://www.ehu.es/es/web/miguelsanchezmazaskatedra/upcoming-events>

ORGANIZATION

The workshop is organized by the *Miguel Sánchez-Mazas Chair UPV/EHU* and the *Post-Graduate Program in Philosophy, Science and Values (UPV/EHU and National Autonomous University of Mexico, UNAM)*, in partnership with *CIC NanoGUNE (Nanoscience Cooperative Research Center)*.