



Einladung zum Vortrag

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Austrian Biosafety Policy – founded on ‘Ignorance’?

Dienstag, 18. November 2003, 19 Uhr

**Seminarraum des IFZ, Schlögelgasse 2/Ecke Kaiser-Josef-Platz,
Hochparterre**

Abstract

In a recent column in the UK newspaper the Guardian, William Farish, U.S. ambassador to UK, stated that “Europe's continued blocking of GM imports is illegal, unjustified and founded on ignorance”.

When analyzing decision-making under circumstances of contested scientific evidence, social scientists have adopted a different meaning of the word ‘ignorance’, distinguishing it epistemologically from other categories such as ‘risk’ and ‘uncertainty’. This public lecture examines the extent to which Austria’s decisions on transgenic Bt maize products have, in contrast to those of most other EU Member states, acknowledged this third category - ‘ignorance’ - by highlighting the inability of contemporary molecular biology and environmental science to predict long-term impacts on complex ecosystems.

Ely, Adrian, Mag.

Adrian Ely is a doctoral Student, at SPRU, Science and Technology Policy Research, at the University of Sussex, UK. His project “Regulatory Appraisals of Bt Maize: a Study of Science in Governance” analyses the different ways in which scientific evidence has been employed by expert institutions and policy-makers in the USA, UK, France and Austria. For October and November 2003 he is a visiting fellow at the Institute for Advanced Studies on Science, Technology and Society.

Main fields of Activity

His research interests revolve around the evaluation of environmental risks associated with genetically modified organisms, and the role that science does, can and should play in policy-making over their deliberate release. Drawing on perspectives from social constructivism and critical science, Ely focuses on differences in the selection and interpretation of scientific evidence in order to explain regulatory divergences across national and regional jurisdictions. His subject is of great relevance to questions of international regulatory harmonisation within the multilateral trading system and, currently, to the EU-US dispute at the World Trade Organisation.