

Innovation where everyone wins: A call for a new dialogue in environmental toxicology, chemistry and risk assessment

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Since the early days in environmental sciences we have constantly increased our understanding of the impacts of human activities and technologies on the environment. We are experts in exploring risks and it is only logical that we focus our effort on avoiding the risk from those activities. We know that we don't have all the answers and have to apply precaution. But we shouldn't confuse precaution with avoidance. Avoiding innovation means avoiding progress, and without progress there will be no better outcome: not for humans and not for nature. As environmental scientist we are in a dilemma. The possible trade-offs are complex and require a different form of dialogue that pushes us all out of our comfort zone. A common reaction is to push decisions to the political level with detrimental effects on safeguarding and improving the quality and credibility of science in environmental toxicology and chemistry. We should rather shape a better and more inclusive science dialogue that focuses on the multiple facets of innovation benefits and risks based on reproducible science, unbiased data, analysis, interpretation and disclosure.