

PRESS RELEASE

Lecture organised by the Europäische Akademie GmbH and the Kreissparkasse Ahrweiler: Professor Dr. rer. nat. Dr. h.c. Hans von Storch: Climate Research and Climate Politics

Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler, 29 April 2010. – In cooperation with the Kreissparkasse Ahrweiler the Europäische Akademie GmbH organised the 17th lecture of the Kreissparkasse today dealing with current questions regarding climate research and climate politics. The speaker Professor Dr. rer. nat. Dr. h.c. Hans von Storch, who was co-author of the 3rd international climate assessment report of the IPCC, discussed problems regarding the role of principal actors in the climate sector and the issue of sustainability of climate science.

Von Storch stated that policy and science represented different social processes that are subject to social dynamics and implicit cultural controls but have different tasks and rules. Politics is value-driven and aims to balance interests and world views, while science ideally tries to analyse actual situations in a way free of values and interests. In order to be successful in the long run, the two social practices required a sustainable division of labour. If this is not done, both groups of actors would lose their potential to ensure an acceptable balance or to provide valid bases of knowledge.

As far as climate policy and research are concerned, the norm of sustainability has been compromised – parts of climate research tries to achieve a normatively motivated environmental policy by means of appropriate scenarios, whereas the present climate politics pretends that social preferences would no longer be relevant on the basis of scientifically reasoned necessities.

Therefore, the fact that the latest climate negotiations have failed and that the confidence in climate research had eroded is not surprising, said von Storch. It was of utmost importance to restore the original division of labour of the actors, in particular “honest broker” of science.

The moderator of the subsequent discussion was Professor Dr. Dr. h.c. Carl Friedrich Gethmann, Director of the Europäische Akademie GmbH.

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Speaker's Profile

Professor Dr. rer. nat. Dr. h.c. Hans von Storch

GKSS Research Centre, Institute for Coastal Research,

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- studied mathematics, physics and Danish at the University of Hamburg; received a diploma in 1976, the doctor's degree in 1979, the post doctoral lecture qualification in 1985; subsequently employed at the Max Planck-Institut for Meteorology;
- since 1996 director at the Institute for Coastal Research at the GKSS Research Centre and professor at the Institute of Meteorology of the University Hamburg;
- research interests: coastal climate and its impacts;
- became known for his book "Statistical analysis in climate research" and his cooperation with social scientists, for example with sociologist Nico Stehr (publication "Climate and Society. Climate as a Resource, Climate as a Risk");
- was awarded a doctor h.c. by the University of Gothenburg in 2008.

The Europäische Akademie zur Erforschung von Folgen wissenschaftlich-technischer Entwicklungen Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler gGmbH was founded in 1996 by the Bundesland Rhineland-Palatinate (Land Rheinland-Pfalz) and the German Aerospace Center (Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt e.V. – DLR). Director of the academy and manager of the company is Professor Dr. phil. Dr. phil.h.c. Carl Friedrich Gethmann, who is a full professor of applied philosophy at the Universität Duisburg-Essen. The Europäische Akademie deals with the scientific study of the consequences of scientific and technological advances for individuals and society, as well as for the natural environment. The main focus is on the examination of foreseeable mid and long-term processes that are especially influenced by the natural and engineering sciences and the medical disciplines. As an independent scientific institution, the Europäische Akademie pursues a dialogue with the world of politics and society at large. Further information: www.ea-aw.de/en.