

Development of methods for the evaluation of risk communication programmes (EMERiK)

BfR Project Description, 1 July 2007

Appropriate, target group-oriented communication on risks has increasingly come to the attention of the public authorities and institutions involved in risk assessment and risk management. This evaluation project was to examine whether BfR risk communication is appropriate and target group-oriented. Furthermore, based on the recommendations from the report “Development of a Multi-Phase Risk Communication Procedure” (ERiK), it was to identify ways of constantly improving communication.

Project management agency

BfR

Department: Risk Communication

Unit: Risk research, perception, early detection, impact

Co-operation Partner

DIALOGIK – gemeinnützige Gesellschaft für Kommunikations- und Kooperationsforschung mbH (www.dialogik-expert.de)

Project Term

09/2005-07/2007

Funding agency

BfR

This project examined the impact of the online communication of the Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) on various target groups. In particular it examined whether the articles posted on its website were easily understood by visitors and whether there was a link between the comprehensibility of an article and the perception of the risk described in it. Various tools were used to examine these questions which were also tested for their effectiveness with a view to future evaluations of BfR communication. One of these tools was the online survey which was conducted between 10 March and 15 May 2006. During the first twelve days more than 200 online questionnaires were completed and returned. The survey was concluded on 15 May and 415 fully completed questionnaires were returned. 217 men and 198 women took part. The survey was intended for all visitors to the BfR website and the survey was announced via the BfR emailing list and the home page of the website. This was followed in the second phase by focus groups. The project will result in an orientation guideline that will provide systematic findings for optimising the content of future online risk communication.