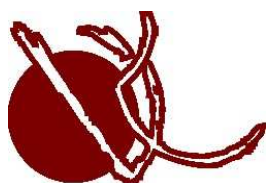


# EurSafe News

European Society for Agricultural and Food Ethics



**EurSafe News**  
**Volume 10, No. 3**  
**September 2008**

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## **Editorial**

Dear EurSafe members,

In democracies that operate free markets, as opposed to democracies that get replaced by free markets, there can be reason for consumers to have *political* rights. I mean, referring specifically to issues that fall under democratic decision-making, when state intervention to regulate the economy is unavailable to citizens in order that optimization happens in the market, then market optimization should be enabled to consumers.

Now whether these rights are sufficient to legitimize political action is likely to be decided on a case by case basis. It will depend on the logistics of the undertaking, the implied costs, the performance of alternative regulatory

approaches, and it will probably require the disclosure of presently undisclosed production information. But sometimes the alternatives might not be satisfactory, the costs might not be forbidding, and the reasons may be found to be overriding and justifying.

Such may be cases where commitment to efficiency, liberalism, international trade law, or another reason convinces democratic states to refrain from setting standards in the market about issues of significant concern to the public. In these cases, when results from alternative efforts to strike international agreements fail to suffice, and results from present market incentives fail to satisfy, it may be useful to remember that in democracies that operate free markets consumers may have political *rights*. These rights can require access to information that enables consumers to reveal preferences in the market about issues of concern; aiming that the agreed-thus-expected access to democratic decision-making about issues of concern is reasonably restored for members of the society if not as citizens, then as consumers.

With these words and with thanks to the excellent work done by the editorial team, please allow me to welcome you to the September issue of EurSafe News, dedicated to ethical and political consumption. One of the issues of significant public concern in our days is

that of ecological sustainability. European Commissioner for Consumer Affairs **Meglana Kuneva** opens the thematic section of this newsletter discussing the role of consumers in shaping a more sustainable and responsible economy. Following, Applied Philosophy Professor **Michiel Korthals** discusses the next stage of political consumerism, referring in particular to the fair representation of foodstyles in markets, government and research.

In this issue you will also find a welcome note from EurSafe Executive Committee, with an update and further information on the activities of the Nordic Network of Agriculture and Food Ethics. Finally, you can find our usual news about publications, courses & conferences, and funding.

The theme for the next issue of EurSafe News will be “Practice versus theory”. Please send all relevant contributions to Herwig Grimm, the editor of the December 2008 issue, before November 15.

Tassos Michalopoulos, *issue editor*

a.michalopoulos@tudelft.nl  
*applied philosophy; business economics;  
food biotechnology*

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## **Thematic Section ‘Ethics & Political Consumerism’**

### **The role of consumers in shaping a more sustainable and responsible economy**

Meglana Kuneva

The threat of climate change has been the driving force behind a series of initiatives the European Commission took in 2008. In January, the Commission adopted an ambitious energy and environment package. Its most recent initiative is the Action Plan on sustainable production and consumption, adopted in July 2008. These initiatives mark a turning point for the vast majority of the European Union's policies, as from now on, they all have to pass the sustainability test. Through those initiatives Europe shows itself ready to give global leadership.

Political consensus has crystallized to put this issue more than ever at the heart of the European Union's political programme. This is of key importance. Indeed, climate change frames all current public policy debates. Consumer policy is no exception. In practice, it means that we need to translate ambitious commitments into practical measures that have an impact on the daily lives of 500 million EU consumers. I believe that the European Consumer Strategy covering the period 2007 – 2013 provides an excellent framework to undertake action in this respect. The strategy is built on three pillars: empowering consumers, enhancing their welfare and protecting them from serious risks and threats. In a free society such as ours, confident, informed and empowered consumers are the motor of economic change as their choices drive innovation and efficiency.

Behavioral economists and marketing people have already discovered the huge potential of the growing group of consumers who are ready to change lifestyle and consumption patterns, thereby contributing to a low carbon future. Today's consumers, indeed, are unlikely to be willing to consume less, but they are ready to consume differently.

However, many consumers remain often "locked" into patterns of consumption that are at odds with a sustainable economy because of habits, disincentives, social norms or cultural traditions. They are looking for practical leadership from lifestyle setters such as public authorities or businesses to show the way so that, where they live, shop, work etc... offers them choice opportunities to make small but significant changes.

For policy makers, our job is therefore to enable choice and incentivize change. Although the great issue of our time has been called an "inconvenient truth" by Al Gore, it is our job to make the truth more convenient. Together, we need to incentivize change through increased access to affordable choice. Many such incentives are included in the strategic policy documents and legal instruments which the Commission adopted this year and plans to adopt.

As regards concrete action within consumer policy, I strongly believe in a

partnership approach between the European Commission and retailers. I'm convinced it can deliver quick and replicable action as retailers can directly influence the behavior of millions of consumers in their retail outlets. The Commission will work with retailers for them to take green commitments to be included in their marketing and sales strategies.

The Commission has vowed to be ambitious in tackling climate change,

and I have no intention to lower the expectations as regards the ability of consumer policy to contribute to these ambitious objectives. In the end, we can only change the world and make the truth convenient, by changing ourselves!

### *Contact*

Meglana Kuneva  
*EU Commissioner for Consumer Affairs*

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## **The next stage of political consumerism: fair representation of foodstyles in markets, government and research**

Michiel Korthals

Political consumerism has already some history. It started as a boycott and buycott movement with respect to certain market trends. In Western Europe, from the 1980s onwards, production and consumption of food has become increasingly politicized. In the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, one can say that, at least with respect to the ethical values and goals of the food system, there was a large, implicit consensus across various stakeholder communities, including consumers: food was not seen to be a political and ethically controversial issue or a public good. Nothing political could happen with food; the only ethical issue that was at stake was food shortages in various parts of the world mostly due to misdistribution of food. Food was essentially seen as 'fuel' that could be made available for consumption in larger or smaller quantities, and could be unsafe to eat, but consideration was generally given to other issues. This consensus was a mainly result of the

food security problems facing Europe in the first half of the 20th century. However, since the 1980s, food has become more and more an item on the political agenda. Food catastrophes like BSE, Dioxin, Foot and Mouth Disease and other food safety incidents cause social crises which extend beyond straightforward matters of food safety. They demonstrate the gap which has developed between the locations where consumers shop for, prepare and consume a meal, and the distant places where (parts or ingredients of) the final food stuffs are produced. This gap between production and consumption not only determines various kinds of ethically unacceptable production practices but also contributes to an increasing feeling of consumer alienation, and a lack of trust by consumers, in the motives of various actors in the food sector. Policy measures and marketing strategies have contributed to the new awakening of ethical concerns with respect to food production.

Due to new developments, should political consumerism reorient itself towards a next stage. The stage is the recognition that food and food production are a pluralistic public good that is in need of decision-making processes that are based on *fair representation of food and farming styles* in markets, industries, governments and research practices. The right to food is not only the right to fill bellies but more specific to live with food production processes that reflect substantially the various life and food styles.

Food is indeed a multi-interpretable public good (which in no way precludes that food can be produced and traded by market parties) which makes it clear that the organization of food in its broadest sense nowadays lacks representation of the various food styles. Political consumerism has to take a next step and to bring into the food networks fair representation of food styles. All the earlier mentioned problems are an immediate consequence of the misrepresentation of this multi-interpretable public good exerted by one dominant food style. Due to misrepresentation there are these difficult ideological struggles about food, the power play of one or a few dominant forces that want to colonize food styles with one peculiar foodstyle (that of food as fuel, or fast food) in sectors like research and governance, the constant marginalization of different foodstyles other than the fast food style, and the institutional channeling towards intensive, upscaling bio industries. The expression 'hunger is the best sauce' is

one of most disturbing lies that conceal that even hungry people have their food style preferences.

The organization of representations of food styles in these different practices is not easy. Two main problems are how these representations should be organized and how to make representations auditable. Usually, representations are done by organizing and mobilizing communicative political power, mostly around certain issues. The gap between producers and consumers is such a multi-layered and broad issue, that it can motivate many to take part in a searching and learning process how to embed the alienated food network again in their daily life. It is not necessary that representation goes along national or regional party lines. The issue of controllable, responsible and auditable representations is as important as their increasing influence in the current food networks. Transparency, reporting, clever webcamming and using other ITC mechanisms can make a difference. Regularly rotation, clear decision making processes, regularly back reporting and back calling are some other mechanisms.

### **Contact**

Michiel Korthals  
*Prof. Applied Philosophy, Wageningen  
& Political Science, European University  
Institute, Firenze*

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michiel.korthals@wur.nl

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## **EurSafe Executive Committee Update**

Welcome to the Autumn EurSafe newsletter. In this issue the Executive Committee would like to highlight the recent activities of the Nordic Network of Agriculture and Food Ethics.

The Nordic members of EurSafe have been involved with a PhD course was held in Vilnius, Lithuania, at the end of August involving 23 participants from across Europe. Presentations were given by Vonne Lund, Helena Röcklinsberg, Mickey Gjerris and Matthias Kaiser, to name but a few of the EurSafe Members involved. A second course is planned for 2009 (see next section). Members of this group are also involved in the Organic Farming Meeting in

Göteborg, Sweden in May 2009 (see *Courses & Conferences* section of this Newsletter)

For further information on the 'Nordethics' group please visit the website:

<http://www.vetmed.helsinki.fi/english/nordethics/about.html>

Finally, the Executive Committee hopes that everyone enjoyed the summer and we wish you a productive autumn.

Kate Millar, Vice-President, on behalf of the Executive Committee,  
September 2008

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## **Nordic Network of Agriculture and Food Ethics: Further**

The 'Nordethics' group had a great opening/planning meeting in October last year, and plans another meeting for November this year (see Courses section of this Newsletter). The group is currently working on an overview of e-learning material available for teaching ethics. The aim is to compile and refine what is available, and maybe add new material, in particular material based on the PhD-courses in the network. Matthias Kaiser is in charge of this task. The group works together with other Nordic groups active in this field. For additions to the list of e-learning materials please contact [matthias.kaiser@etikkom.no](mailto:matthias.kaiser@etikkom.no)

The Nordic Network on Agriculture and Food Ethics held its first Ph.D.-course in August. 23 participants from the Nordic countries, the Baltic states, Germany, Poland, Britain, Canada and Brazil spent a week in Vilnius, Lithuania, studying and discussing animal ethics. The next course will be held in August 2009.

The theme for the course will be "Climate change and food production: The ecological footprint".

Stay in tune for more info on the network homepage!

<http://www.vetmed.helsinki.fi/english/nordethics/about.html>

Vonne Lund

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## Publications

Problems of Trust. A question of trustworthiness.  
Meijboom Frank L.B.

Praxis in der Ethik. Zur Methodenreflexion in der anwendungsorientierten Moralphilosophie,  
Zichy, Michael/Grimm, Herwig. Berlin/New York.

Kontextsensitive Bioethik.  
Wissenschaftstheorie und Medizin als Praxis.  
Krones, Tanja. Frankfurt.

Nanotechnology & Society -Current and Emerging Ethical Issues.

Allhoff, Fritz; Lin, Patrick (Eds.). Springer: 2008, XXXIV, 300 p., Hardcover. ISBN: 978-1-4020-6208-7

What Can Nanotechnology Learn From Biotechnology?: Social and Ethical Lessons for Nanoscience from the Debate over Agrifood Biotechnology and GMOs,  
Kenneth David (Editor), Paul B. Thompson (Editor), 360 p. Academic Press; 1 edition (February 25, 2008), ISBN-10: 012373990X, ISBN-13: 978-0123739902

Pharming: Promises and Risks of Biopharmaceuticals Derived from Genetically Modified Plants and Animals. F. Wütscher, E. Reh binder, M. Engelhard, and K. Hagen (Hardcover - Nov 1 2008)

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## Book presentation

**October 30, 2008**  
Pharming: Promises and Risks of Biopharmaceuticals Derived from Genetically Modified Plants and Animals by

F. Wütscher, E. Reh binder, M. Engelhard, and K. Hagen (Hardcover - Nov 1 2008)  
Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften (BBAW): Berlin.  
<http://www.ea-aw.de>

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## Conferences & Symposia

### *Summer 2008*

**September 8-12, 2008**  
6th European Conference on Ecological REstoRation  
Gent, Belgium  
<http://www.ser2008.be>

**September 9-12, 2008**  
18th EUCARPIA General Congress:  
Modern Variety Breeding for Present and Future Needs  
Valencia, Spain  
<http://www.eucarpia.org/>

### **September 17-20, 2008**

XXII EURAGRI Conference: Agricultural Research for Sustainable Development  
Viborg-Denmark  
<http://www.agrsci.org/var/agrsci/storage/original/application/f401e4f3cd15638065dab83470f6b65b>

### *Autumn 2008*

**October 7-9, 2008**  
Tropentag 2008  
Hohenheim, Germany  
<http://www.tropentag.de/>

**October 11, 2008**

Symposium Verantwortung und Vertrauen.  
Voraussetzung für eine zukunftsfähige  
Gesellschaft (Responsibility and Trust)  
Mannheim, Germany  
[www.institut-iepg.de](http://www.institut-iepg.de)

**October 12-15, 2008**

ENDURE first International Conference  
'Diversifying Crop Protection'  
La Grande Motte (France)  
[http://www.endure-network.eu/international\\_conference\\_2008/](http://www.endure-network.eu/international_conference_2008/)

**October 13-14, 2008**

Internationale Forschungstagung an der  
Universität Zürich: Towards the Center of  
Pragmatism  
Zurich, Switzerland  
[lisa.brun@access.unizh.ch](mailto:lisa.brun@access.unizh.ch)

**October 15-16, 2008**

3rd BTL-Congress: Strategies for alternative  
propulsion techniques  
Berlin, Germany  
<http://www.fnr.de/btl-congress2008/>

**October 15–16, 2008**

International seminar: How are cattle doing?  
Tomorrow's strategies for better health and  
welfare in beef and dairy cattle  
Sigtuna, Sweden  
[www.cul.slu.se/cattle-seminar](http://www.cul.slu.se/cattle-seminar)

**October 21-24, 2008**

Foundation of the Formal Sciences VII:  
Bringing together Philosophy and Sociology  
of Science  
Brussels, Belgium  
[www.easychair.org/conferences?conf=fotfs7](http://www.easychair.org/conferences?conf=fotfs7)

**October 22, 2008**

Ecosystem Services Seminar  
Brussels, Belgium  
<http://ecosystem.biodiversity.be>

**October 23-24, 2008**

Global Justice and the Nation-State  
Universidade Nova de Lisboa  
[globaljustice@gmail.com](mailto:globaljustice@gmail.com)

**October 23-26, 2008**

6<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Ethics and  
Environmental Policies: Ethics and Climate  
Change: Scenarios for justice and  
sustainability  
Fondazione Lanza, Padova  
[www.webethics.net/padova](http://www.webethics.net/padova) 2008

**November 10-11, 2008**

Conference: Environmental Nanoparticles:  
Science, Technology and Ethics.  
University of Delaware, USA.  
<http://sepp.dbi.udel.edu/index.html>

**Winter 2008****December 16-19, 2008**

Die Bedeutung der Erde in den Kulturen  
Zum Dialog der Kosmologien vor den  
ökologischen Herausforderungen  
[www.mwi-aachen.org](http://www.mwi-aachen.org)

**Spring 2009****March 5-8, 2009**

18<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting; Association for  
Practical and Professional Ethics (APPE),  
Cincinnati, Ohio, USA  
<http://www.indiana.edu/~appe>

**April 16-17, 2009**

Conference: Animals: Past, Present and  
Future  
Michigan State University, East Lansing,  
Michigan, USA  
This conference will explore the past,  
present and future roles animals play in  
human histories. Possible topics for papers  
include animal histories, animal agency,  
anthropomorphism, zoomorphism, animal  
perception, gender and connecting (or  
separating) oppressions, and animals as  
technologies.  
<http://shotnews.net/?cat=8>

**May 17-20, 2009**

International Conference on Ethics  
Committees: The Division of Ethics of  
Science and Technology Sector for Social  
and Human Sciences; UNESCO



Zefat, Israel  
[www.isas.co.il/bioethics2009](http://www.isas.co.il/bioethics2009)

**May 18-20, 2009**

1st Nordic Organic Conference: Towards increased sustainability in the food chain.  
"The aim of the Nordic Organic Conference (NOC) is to create a Nordic forum with the focus on organic food and sustainable food production and consumption. Through mutual exchanges of knowledge between researchers and other stakeholders, development towards increased sustainability in the food supply chain can be promoted."  
Gothenburg, Sweden  
<http://nordicorganic.org/>

**Autumn 2009**

**September 14-18, 2009**

International ISHS-ProMusa Symposium: Global Perspectives on Asian Challenges  
Guang Dong, China  
[http://www.promusa.org/symposium\\_2009/home.html](http://www.promusa.org/symposium_2009/home.html)

**October 2009**

URBAN International Conference: Poverty in Medium and Small Cities of Developing Countries  
Lubumbashi, DRC (*To be confirmed*)  
<http://www.biw.kuleuven.be/personeel/documenten/Urban2009.doc>

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## Courses

**September 22-24, 2008**

Workshop: *Armchair in Flames?*  
*Experimental Philosophy and its Critics*  
Köln, Germany  
<http://www.armchairinflames.uni-koeln.de/>

**September 26, 2008**

Workshop: *Nanotechnology, Ethics, and Environmental Health*  
Georgetown University  
[http://kennedyinstitute.georgetown.edu/news\\_events/docs/NanoFlyer.pdf](http://kennedyinstitute.georgetown.edu/news_events/docs/NanoFlyer.pdf)

**November 12-15, 2008**

Workshop: Universities Münster, Nijmegen, Utrecht and Tübingen  
Moralische Urteilkraft.  
Thomas.pothast@uni-tuebingen.de

**November 13-14 2008**

Annual network workshop:  
The Nordic Network of Agriculture and Food Ethics invites everyone who is interested, to participate in the annual network workshop to be held in Copenhagen. There will be a possibility to present work in progress, meet with potential research partners and discuss the activities of the network. Please contact Mickey Gjerris for additional info: [mgj@life.ku.dk](mailto:mgj@life.ku.dk) .  
The network home page for further information:  
<http://www.vetmed.helsinki.fi/english/nordethics/index.html>

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## Funding

### Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, and Biotechnology Calls

Identifier: FP7-KBBE-2009-3

Deadline: 15 January 2009 at 17:00:00  
(Brussels local time)

[http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.FP7DetailsCallPage&call\\_id=143](http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.FP7DetailsCallPage&call_id=143)

### PEOPLE Calls

Identifier: FP7-PEOPLE-IRG-2008

Deadlines: 31 December 2008 at 17:00:00  
(Brussels local time)

08 October 2008 at 17:00:00 (Brussels local time) - 2nd cut-off date

03 April 2008 at 17:00:00 (Brussels local time) - 1st cut-off date

[http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.PeopleDetailsCallPage&call\\_id=96](http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.PeopleDetailsCallPage&call_id=96)

### PEOPLE Calls

Identifier: FP7-PEOPLE-ERG-2008

Deadlines: 31 December 2008 at 17:00:00  
(Brussels local time)

08 October 2008 at 17:00:00 (Brussels local time) - 2nd cut-off date

03 April 2008 at 17:00:00 (Brussels local time) - 1st cut-off date

[http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.PeopleDetailsCallPage&call\\_id=95](http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.PeopleDetailsCallPage&call_id=95)

### Socio-economic sciences and Humanities Calls

Identifier: FP7-SSH-2009-A

Deadline: 13 January 2009 at 17:00:00  
(Brussels local time)

[http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.CooperationDetailsCallPage&call\\_id=152](http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.CooperationDetailsCallPage&call_id=152)

### Science in Society Calls

Identifier: FP7-SCIENCE-IN-SOCIETY-2009-1

Deadline: 13 January 2009 at 17:00:00  
(Brussels local time)

[http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.CapacitiesDetailsCallPage&call\\_id=153](http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.CapacitiesDetailsCallPage&call_id=153)

### FP7-2009-BIOREFINERY\_CSA

Nanosciences, Nanotechnologies, Materials and new Production Technologies Energy; Environment (including Climate Change); Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, and Biotechnology

Identifier: FP7-2009-BIOREFINERY\_CSA  
Deadline: 02 December 2008 at 17:00:00  
(Brussels local time)

[http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.CooperationDetailsCallPage&call\\_id=166](http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.CooperationDetailsCallPage&call_id=166)

### FP7-2009-BIOREFINERY\_CP

Nanosciences, Nanotechnologies, Materials and new Production Technologies Energy; Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, and Biotechnology; Environment (including Climate Change)

Identifier: FP7-2009-BIOREFINERY\_CP  
Deadlines: 02 December 2008 at 17:00:00  
(Brussels local time)

05 May 2009 at 17:00:00 (Brussels local time) - 2nd deadline (for 2-stage procedure)  
[http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.CooperationDetailsCallPage&call\\_id=150](http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.CooperationDetailsCallPage&call_id=150)

### Environment (including Climate Change) Calls

Identifier: FP7-ENV-2009-1

Deadline: 08 January 2009 at 17:00:00  
(Brussels local time)

[http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.FP7DetailsCallPage&call\\_id=142](http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.FP7DetailsCallPage&call_id=142)

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### Executive secretariat

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[www.eursafe.org](http://www.eursafe.org)

### EurSafe News

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***Editors and themes for next issues***

Issue-editor December 2008: Herwig Grimm, "Practice versus theory"

Issue-editor March 2009: team Nottingham, "Veterinary ethics"

Issue-editor June 2009: Mattias Pasquali, "Ethical merits of agriculture types"

**Deadline for the next issue: November 15, 2008**

*You are kindly invited to send any relevant contributions, conference calls, publication reviews, etc. to the editors.*