

Time for Caution?

Abstract: This paper argues that in most applications of interest, Precautionary Principles in fact only recommend the intuitively precautionary course of action when we take an 'executive perspective', that is, consider bundles of similar choices or policies as one aggregate choice, even if they are enacted at different points in time. Those who defend precautionary policy-making by appealing to Precautionary Principles need to establish that we in fact have reason to enact the course of action that is best from this executive point of view. I raise doubts whether this can be done.