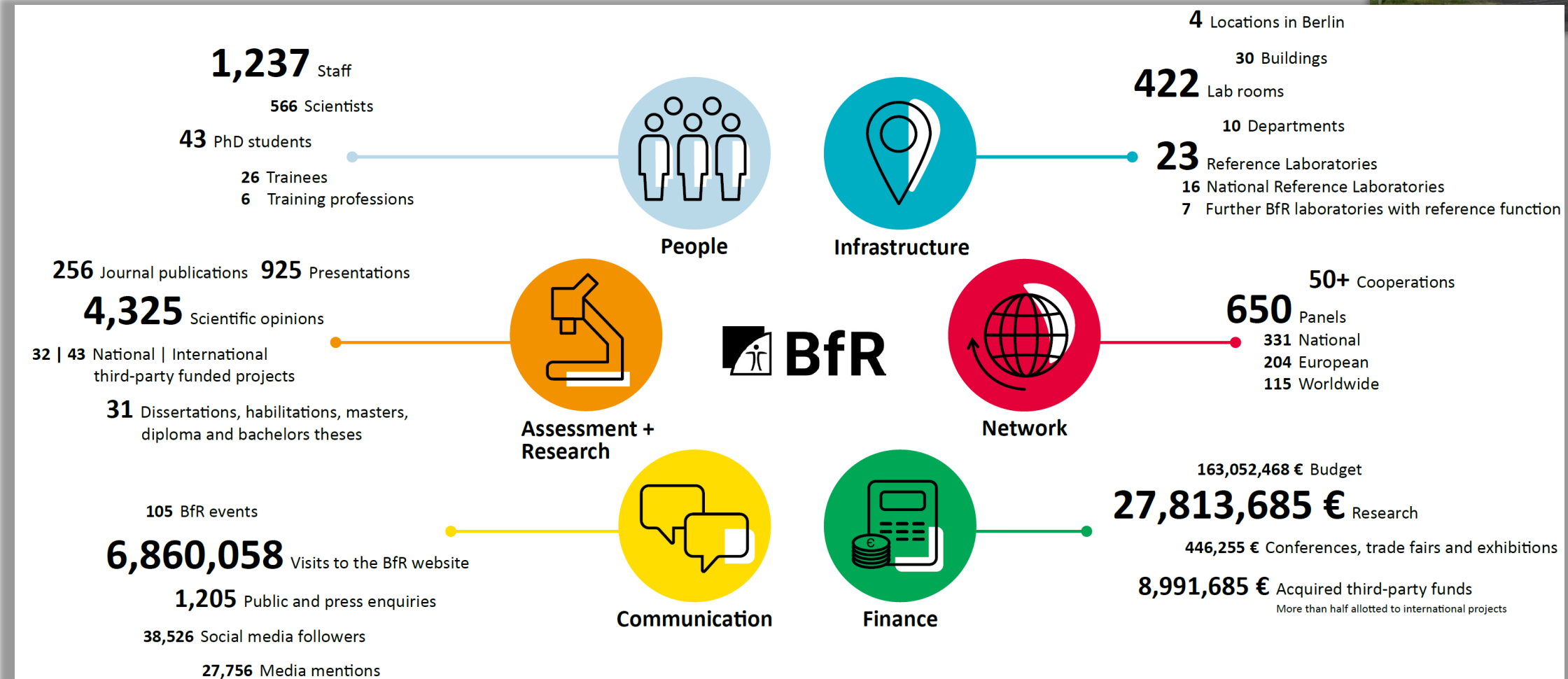


# **Risk Assessment, risk management and public expectation – when science meets politics**

May 21, 2026, Madrid

**Dr. Tewes TRALAU**

# BfR provides independent scientific advice to politics on chemical, food and product safety



# The German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR)

Founded in in the wake of the BSE crisis

Public-law institution in the portfolio of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Regional Identity (BMLEH)

## **Separation between**

- Risk assessment, risk communication
- Risk management

## **The BfR is independent in respect of its**

- scientific assessments
- research
- communication

## **Objective**

Qualified scientific assessment, free from legitimate influence from politics, business and society

## **Expected results**

- Clear responsibility regarding decisions and conflicts
- Control of dissonance between interdisciplinary expert systems
- Orientation information from a neutral party and structured procedures

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# Risk analysis components

## Assessment of hazards

- Identification
- Exposition of consumer
- Characterisation of disease

## Risk estimate

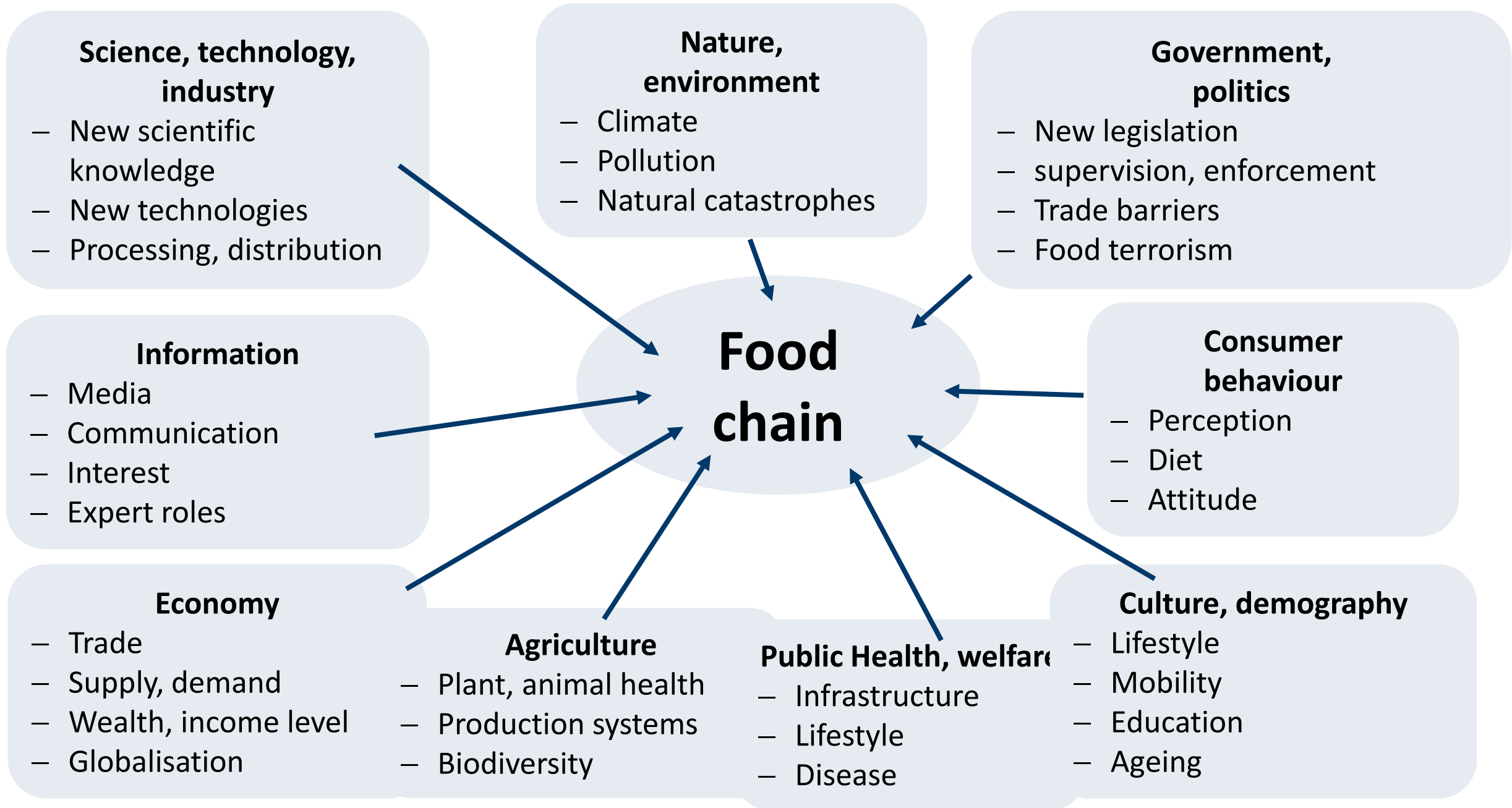
- Risk of disease or death, quantitative / qualitative

## Management

- Balance of options for actions
- Strategies, catalogue of measures, legal requirements included

## Communication, exchange of information

- Science
- Competent authorities
- Industry
- Politics
- Consumers, stakeholder



# Changes in the feed and food chain and the emergence of foodborne diseases

- ⇒ **Changes in consumer demand and expectation**
  - Increased travel and migration
  - Increased urbanisation
  - Consumer expect improved food quality and variety
  
- ⇒ **Changes in food production**
  - Multi-national nature of food production leads to migration of pathogens into new populations
  - Changes in processing practices may introduce new hazards
  
- ⇒ **Changes in the population**
  - Number of people at risk increase worldwide

# Elements of independent political consulting

- Politics requires scientific expertise.
- Especially the legislature has become an important consumer and addressee of expertise.
- Parliaments and governments are increasingly confronted with complex issues in drafting laws.

## Criteria of Good Scientific Practice

- Transparency
- Disclosure
- Impartiality
- Autonomy

# Risk management, politics

Real, emerging and perceived risks: Weighing of policy alternatives, taking into account EFSA's scientific assessment and other legitimate factors (social, cultural, ethical, political, environmental)

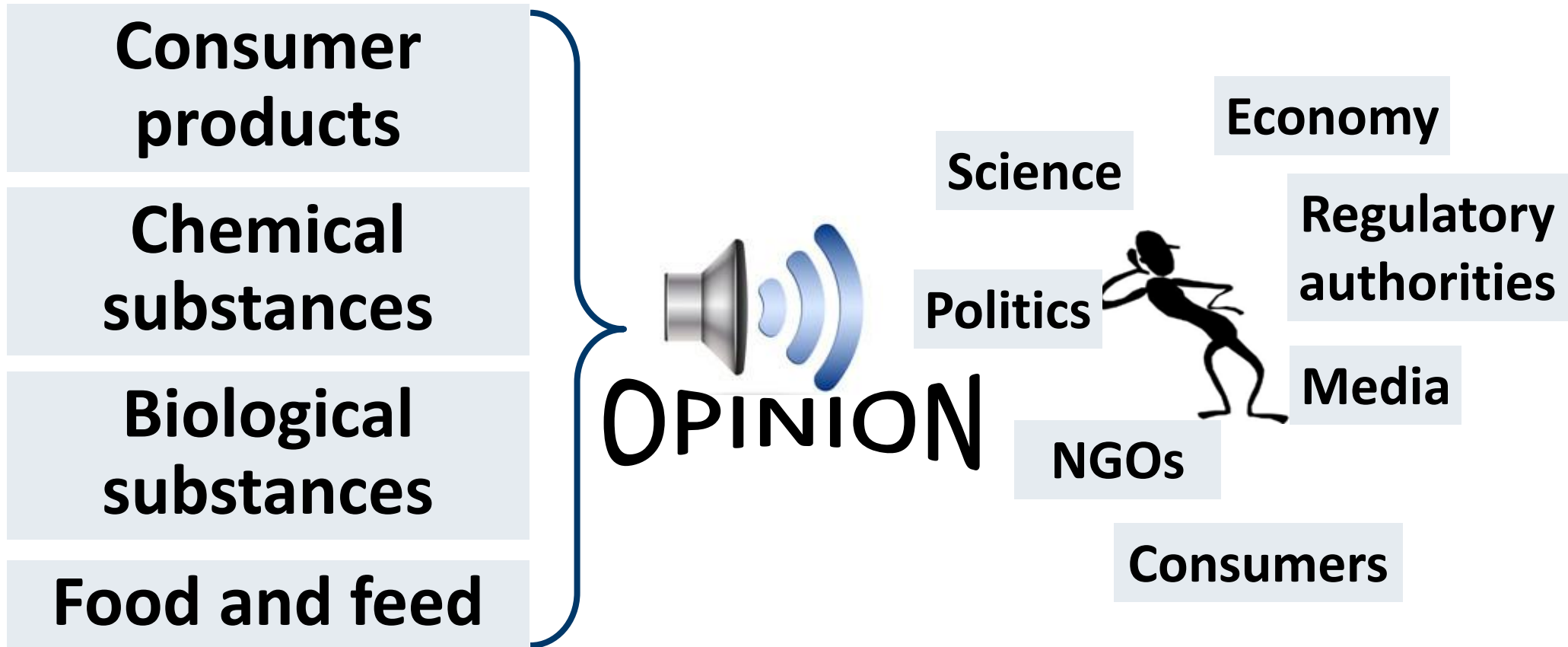
Actors: European Commission (DG SANTE) and Standing Committees composed of Member State representatives

## Risk management options

- No action needed
- Legislation for certain products
- Ban of a dangerous product
- Consumption recommendation
- Raising awareness



# Non-specific target group one-way communication



# Risk communication: target groups

Level	Target groups
<b>Politics and administration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Central state authorities</li><li>– Federal states authorities</li><li>– Local authorities</li></ul>
<b>Economy and civil society</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Industrial associations</li><li>– Consumers' associations</li><li>– Non-profit organisations</li><li>– Academic and scientific institutes</li></ul>
<b>Public</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Media</li><li>– Citizens</li></ul>

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