



Legal aspects of the communication of risk predictions

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When dealing with risk communication and, in particular, when a State institution, such as the Civil Protection (CP), communicates a probable forthcoming natural event, the attention is generally focused on how to address correctly the message to the population. Phenomena as the cry wolf syndrome have been thoroughly analysed by social and psychological sciences and their effects on large groups are now clear. However the process of risk mitigation is not merely an institution-to-population communication action. Trials, intended against CP operators have shown how the vicious circle of mandatory prosecution of crimes can lead to an exponential increase of alerts issued by Civil Protections. The uncertainty that undergoes state of the art Numerical Weather Prediction models needs to be understood in all its implications and effects. It is thus of great importance to educate our populations on the intricate world of laws and codes that can heavily influence the political dynamics that are at the base of the codified guidelines followed by CP operators when issuing a meteorological alert. Educating our societies, in both its civil and jurisprudential aspect, on the risk that we are running of turning CP institutions into bureaucratic service centers represents the main objective of our research.