

"Problems that may be encountered in a scientific career"

Online webinar for students and aspiring scientists
By invitation only
Monday 16 December 2024, 15:00 - 17:00 CET



Registration link: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_RZK_OW-UTHeIBWR4DPrDPQ

ENSSER's goal is to advance public-good science and research for the protection of the environment, biological diversity and human health against adverse impacts of new technologies and their products. The challenges posed by such impacts are not just problems for governments and corporations, but for all citizens. People working in the relevant sciences, and technologists developing new products and processes, have the responsibility to investigate such problems.

When policymakers decide which products and processes to regulate, and also which to allow, restrict or forbid, they routinely call on expert scientific advisory panels. The decision-making processes of both the scientific advisory panels, and the politicians who receive their advice are heavily lobbied by corporate interests who choose to stress only the benefits of their technologies and products and suppress any attention to adverse impacts. Those industrial interests are well-organised, and they often have strong connections to officials, ministers and advisors, especially in regulatory bodies at both national and European levels. They also influence the directional trajectories of research and innovation, and frame the research agendas pursued by scientists. The strategies used to achieve this include distortion and manipulation of scientific information, polarisation, personal defamation, intimidation of various kinds and worse. Most of these strategies and their effects are unknown to the general public.

ENSSER members wish to share their understanding of, and experience with, those challenges and interests to help students and aspiring scientists navigate their careers and their citizenship.

Participants will, upon registration, receive five short papers, one from each speaker. Participants are advised to read them before the webinar, as the presentations will be brief summaries of the papers or current illustrations of the themes. That will make as much time available as possible for dialogue and discussions. Questions and comments can be sent to Diederick Sprangers (dsprangers@ensser.org) beforehand, but may also be asked during the webinar, both orally and in writing.

14:45 Participants to be let in

15:00 Introduction

Diederick Sprangers MSc, Scientific Coordinator of ENSSER

15:05 Scientific advice to policy-makers: why and how is it so problematic?

Prof. Erik Millstone, Emeritus Professor of Science Policy in the Science Policy Research Unit (SPRU), University of Sussex, UK

15:15 Believing in scientific technofixes - a method to avoid to deal with serious problems

Dr Michael Dittmar, retired from Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) and European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), Switzerland

15:25 Harassment and intimidation of scientists

Diederick Sprangers MSc, Scientific Coordinator of ENSSER

15:35 Polarisation and lack of debate

Sanjay Kumar MA, Communication Scientist and former student representative in charge of ecology and consumer protection at Bielefeld University

15:45 The power of science

Dr Ulrich Loening, Centre for Human Ecology, University of Edinburgh, Scotland

15:55 Dialogue and discussion

17:00 End