



Is food too risky to eat?

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to the President of the European Commission*



Let's start with a fact:

Eating is risky.



- 1) You can die from swallowing a fishbone**
- 2) You can suffer an allergic or diabetic shock**
- 3) You may become infected with viruses or bacteria**
- 4) You can develop cancer**
- 5) You can die from eating too much or too little**
- 6)**



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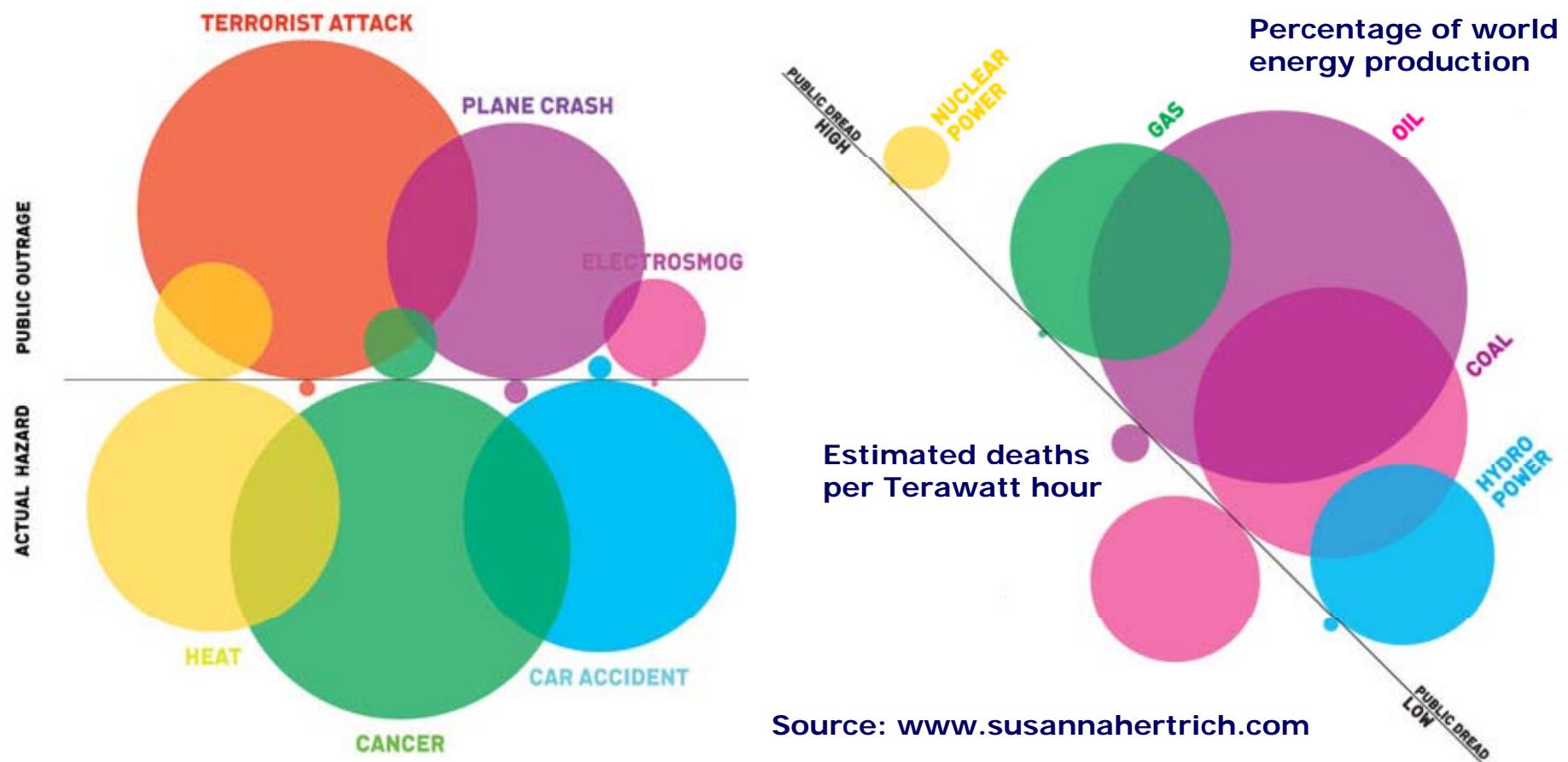




**Why don't we
stop eating then?**

**Because we think that
the benefits of eating
outweigh the risks**

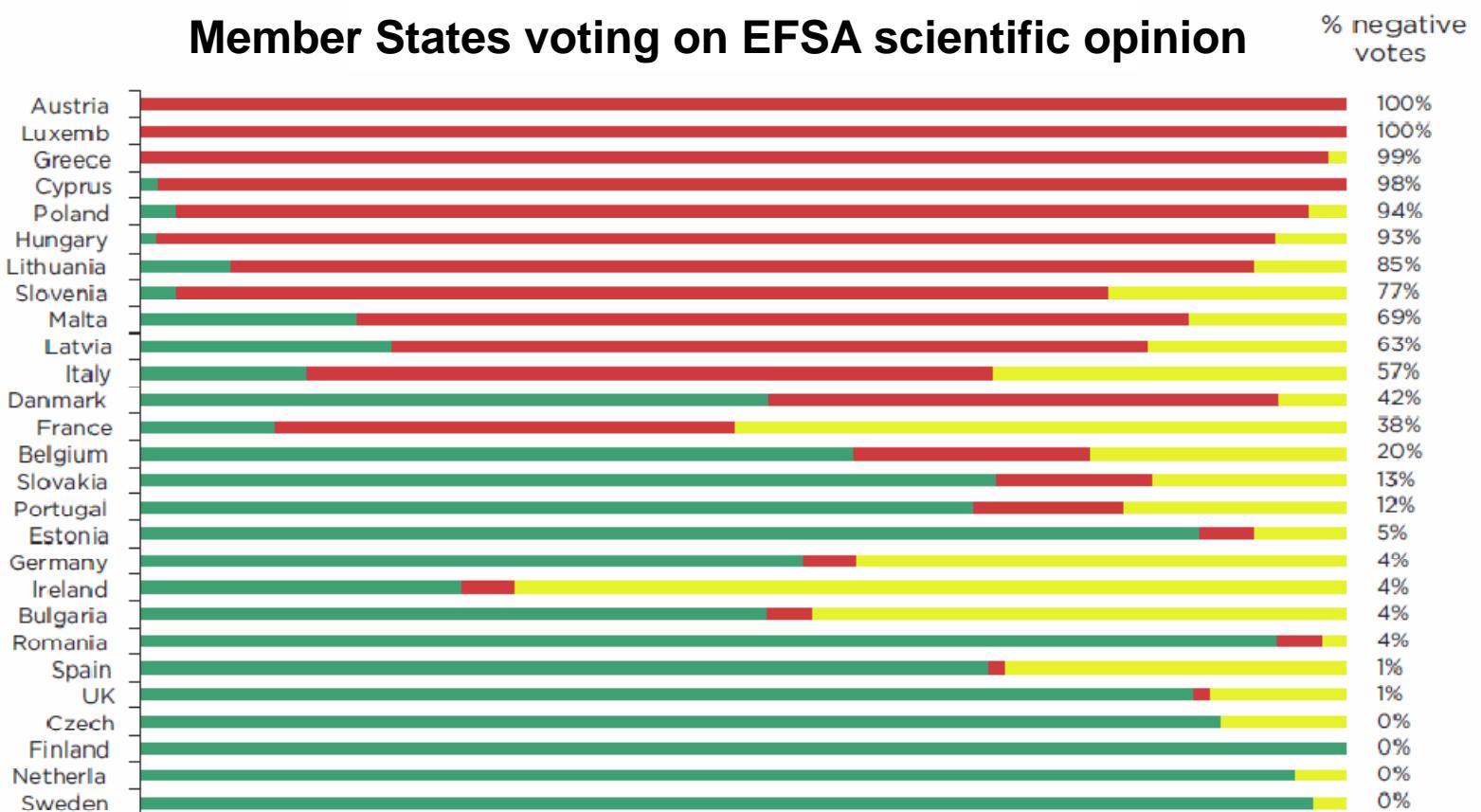
But: risk perception and evidence are two different things





GMO approval

Member States voting on EFSA scientific opinion



■ Yes ■ No ■ Abstain

Source: EuropaBio, Approvals of GMOs in the European Union, Oct. 2011



**How can science achieve
that evidence plays a
bigger role in societal
debate about risks?**



- 1) Speak up**
- 2) Stand up**
- 3) Gang up**



1) Speak up

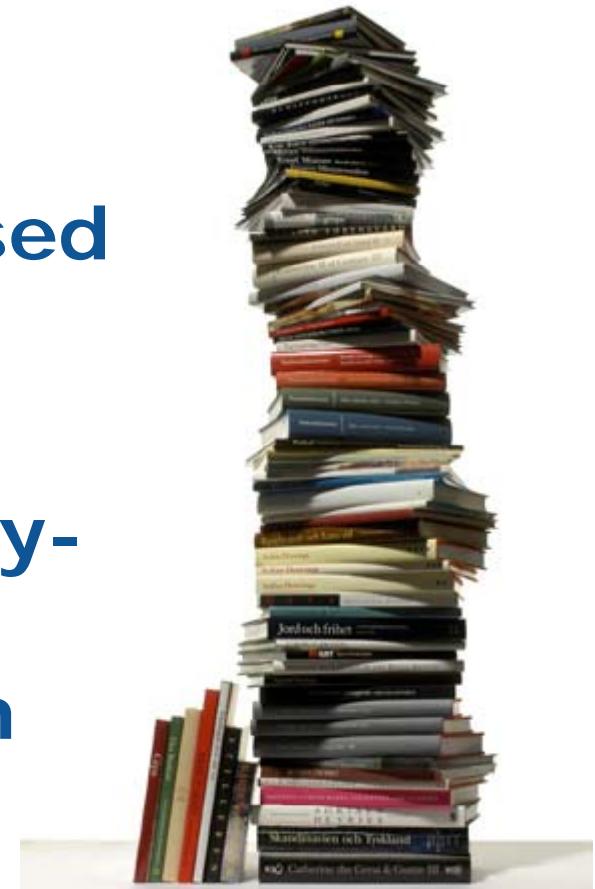
- We need to communicate much more proactively – otherwise others will fill the void
- We need to speak a language everybody understands
- We need to show empathy for public concerns and avoid being perceived as arrogant ("we know the truth")





2) Stand up

- **We need to raise our voice when science is being misused (including by scientists themselves!)**
- **We must demand from policy-makers to be transparent about their motivation when they ignore the evidence**





3) Gang up

**We all sit in the same boat –
let's pool our forces**

Chief Scientific
Adviser

Joint Research
Centre (JRC)

Scientific
Committees and
Advisory Boards

EU Agencies

European Science
Associations

EVIDENCE

European Research-
performing
organisations

National Research-
performing
Organisations,
Higher Education
Institutions,
Learned Societies



EFSA plays a key role in this context.

Its independence and scientific credibility are of crucial importance.

**Let's give EFSA
a strong voice of support!**



European Food Safety Authority

Happy Birthday!