

PRESS RELEASE

Danish Committees on Scientific Dishonesty

23 January 2003

Statement from the Danish Committees on Scientific Dishonesty

On Tuesday 7 January 2003 the Danish Committees on Scientific Dishonesty (DCSD) published their ruling in the complaints concerning Mr Bjørn Lomborg, Director of the Danish Environmental Assessment Institute. The ruling triggered a series of reactions, which DCSD discussed at a meeting on 22 January 2003.

In this connection, DCSD would state the following:

DCSD has been following the debate to which the ruling on Bjørn Lomborg has given rise. The Committees consider it important that there should be ongoing, broad-based and differentiated discussion about the concept of science within the various scientific and academic fields.

At the meeting on 22 January, there was consensus that public discussion and the wide interest in scientific and legal aspects of the cases will benefit the ongoing work of qualifying the concepts of 'scientific dishonesty' and 'good scientific practice' as well as the administrative procedures involved in complaints.

Denmark was one of the first countries to introduce a system for dealing with allegations of scientific dishonesty. The ambition is to continuously develop a structure to safeguard the respect in which Danish research is held.

As regards the specific complaints concerning Mr Bjørn Lomborg in his capacity of director, the discussion gives cause to stress that the parties to the case have the option of referring the matter to the Danish Ministry of Science, should they consider that DCSD has committed errors of a legal nature during the hearing of the case, as has also been set out by Helge Sander, the Danish Minister for Science, Technology and Innovation.

Furthermore, it should be stressed *that the review and ruling concerning the complaints were made in agreement between DCSD's three committees*. DCSD therefore takes exception to the personal attacks that there have been on individual committee members. The names of DCSD's members/alternates can be seen on the Danish Research Agency's homepage.

In conjunction with the ruling on the complaints concerning Bjørn Lomborg, director, and the ensuing public discussion, the Director of the Danish Research Agency, Jens Morten Hansen, sent out a statement on 11 January 2003 on DCSD's mandate. In addition, a number of social scientists and humanist researchers, all of whom are members/alternates of DCSD, have stated their views on the written standards governing social-science research.

These two statements and the Danish Social Science Research Council's memorandum *Guidelines on research ethics in the social sciences* can be seen on the Danish Research Agency's homepage: www@forsk.dk

The Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation has asked the Danish Research Agency to evaluate whether there is any need to adjust the regulatory basis that governs the work being performed by DCSD. Carrying on from this, the Agency's director stated on 15 January 2003 that a working party with a broadly based composition will be formed and, amongst other things, will be requested to assess **whether there is any need**

- *to adjust the definition of the concept of 'scientific dishonesty'*
- *to specify what kinds of products can be included in DCSD's appraisals*
- *to request the government research councils to draw up joint or area-specific guidelines for good scientific practice in support of DCSD's rulings and researchers' conduct*
- *for the studies, reports and official deliberations on which DCSD's rulings are based, which have thus far been regarded as in-house working papers, to be published in future, including the form that any such publication should take*
- *to adjust the way DCSD's rulings are designed and disseminated.*

As a natural part of this work, DCSD expects to be asked to shed light on the theory and practice underlying the Committee's use of such concepts as: "scientific dishonesty" and "at variance with good scientific practice".

Thus, as a supplement to the articles on these topics published in DCSD's annual reports over the years, DCSD also plans to provide a full account of the deliberations involved in deciding whether a case brought before the Committee is dismissed or considered, and of the principles on which any further consideration of cases is based.

DCSD's wish to refrain from granting right of access to case files as long as the case has not been decided will also be elucidated. Finally, DCSD will analyse how best to convey DCSD's decisions—both to the parties involved and to the world at large.

The work is expected to take on sizable proportions. DCSD anticipates that it can contribute to the ongoing and dynamic development of the system used in Denmark to ensure good scientific practice and avoid scientific dishonesty.

To summarize, then, there will be a more detailed investigation into the general aspects of DCSD's work. Until such time as this review is available, DCSD's members will not be making any further comments. Enquiries from the press will be referred to the Danish Research Agency.

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