



Implementing the Precautionary Principle: Approaches from the Nordic Countries, EU and USA

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From fisheries to persistent organic pollutants to climate change itself, no other environmental principle in environmental law has produced as much controversy as the precautionary principle.

Unlike a preventive approach in which action is taken provided that the threats to the environment are tangible, with a precautionary approach, authorities are prepared to tackle risks for which there is no definitive proof that the damage will materialize. The ramifications of this increasingly apparent approach are profound and cut across all areas of risk assessment and management, environmental law, policy and regulation in every major sector. However, to date little thought has been dedicated to the implementation of the precautionary principle in a wide array of environmental circumstances.

This authoritative handbook addresses the legal aspects of how the precautionary principle is implemented in different sectors, and examines its successes, failures, strengths and weaknesses. Sectors and subjects covered include chemicals, GMOs, marine pollution, fisheries and nature conservation, and the book draws on cases in the EU, in the USA, and Nordic countries, where the use of precaution has been gathering momentum. Ultimately, the book provides an indispensable appraisal of the question - increasingly important in the era of human-induced climate change - of whether the precautionary principle is relevant, indeed essential, to avert major environmental and health risks, and how and when it can be used successfully.

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