Building a different approach to risk

The Dutch Risk and Responsibility Programme

UNECE Seminar 1 November 2010, Geneva
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How we deal with risks and incidents
Day of Risk Conference

- A more rational approach to risk is not enough
- Political and media rules
- Some other contributory factors:
  - Instinctive mistrust of ratio
  - Irrational perceptions
  - Government is considered default protector
  - If all accidents can be prevented, all risk actors will try to cover themselves
Some elements for the Cabinet vision

- Acknowledge that accidents can happen
- Acknowledge the way risk is perceived; provide positive values
- Acknowledge the limitations of government’s role
- Share advantages and disadvantages of risky actions
- Limit accident inquiries to facts (no recommendations on the assumption that every accident is avoidable)
- More rules could diminish safety
- Make a solid judgment of the public’s risk appetite
Proposed measures of our new Cabinet

- Fewer politicians at all levels (e.g. 1/3 fewer MPs)
- Fewer ministries
- Movement toward a single central government inspectorate
- No more gold plating of EU rules
- Major cutbacks of 18 billion euros (= 7% of National Budget)

In short: our government wants to take a step back.
Inspection Reform Programme

- Review of the Inspection Council
- Inspectorates quite advanced in risk assessment
- No consensus on integral risk assessments (new Cabinet will push it further)
- New impetus for information exchange between inspectorates and co-operation with local and regional authorities
- Intention to review their own role as risk actors
Final remarks about the Risk and Responsibility Programme

- A lot is going on:
  - Council for Public Administration
  - Province of North-Holland
  - Dutch Expert Group on Aviation Safety

Let’s keep working together internationally!