

Perception and Assessment of Technology

Abstract

In Baden-Württemberg there exists no wholesale hostility towards technology. The public accepts technology rather benevolently, but grades its judgements according to different technologies and fields of application.

Corresponding to the societal key values, particularly environmental and medical technology are enthusiastically appreciated. Whereas nuclear technology and some fields of application of gene technology are assessed rather critically. Both are perceived as risk technology, assessed mainly negatively regarding their benefit and risk potentials, and are feared.

Technology is mainly appreciated when it is perceived as useful and connected with low risk potentials, when it is applied ecologically and socially harmlessly, and when it is ethically legitimate. Furthermore, the citizens demand to be asked before controversial technology is introduced. A broad majority states to be prepared to take part in mediation and voting procedures. Should these demands not be met, they threaten with a surprisingly high potential of protest to hinder the introduction of new technologies.

From the study you can deduce the recommendation to offer direct relevant possibilities of participation and to grant the affected citizens more rights of involvement in the structuring of their environment.

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