Special Section on “Nanotechnologies and the Consumer”

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JCP Editors Lucia A. Reisch (Copenhagen Business School (CBS)) and Hans-W. Micklitz (European University Institute (EUI)) were organising a conference on “Nanotechnologies and the Consumer” which was held on the 5/6 December 2008 at the EUI in Florence. The conference brought together academics from a broad range of disciplines, namely: economics, history, natural science, law, and political science as well as policy makers and NGOs from all over Europe. The objective was to discuss the impact of nanotechnologies on consumer policy and law. The sessions were organized around the three topics: nano-ethics; the concept of risk in nanotechnologies; and policy and regulatory instruments. These topics were discussed within the fields of food, medical products, chemicals and pesticides, consumer products, and sustainable products.

The Special Section compiles two law papers presented at the Florence conference: The article by Roger Brownsword discusses whether we need a distinctive “nano-ethics” and what the ethical issues of nanotechnologies are. Geraint Howells analyses the impact of product liability law on nanotechnologies. Furthermore, Harald Throne-Holst and Pål Strandbakken contribute with a note on how Norwegian consumers react to nano-enabled products in the absence of a regulatory framework.

This Special Section is intended to launch further scholarly and political debate on “nanotechnologies and the consumer” and will hopefully inspire contributions to future issues of the Journal of Consumer Policy.

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