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## The precautionary principle and responsible risk management

**Reply to Recommendation<sup>1</sup>:** Recommendation 1787 (2007)  
Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers welcomes the attention given by the Parliamentary Assembly in its [Recommendation 1787 \(2007\)](#) on the precautionary principle and responsible risk management to a principle that is of crucial importance for the modern world.
2. The Committee of Ministers recalls here the undertakings given by the heads of state and government of member states in the Final Declaration of the 3rd Summit of the Council of Europe “to ensure security for our citizens in the full respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms” and to meet, in this context, “the challenges attendant on scientific and technical progress”.
3. The precautionary principle has multiple aspects: scientific, economic, media-related and legal, to which balanced consideration must be given if it is to be implemented in an appropriate manner. In this regard, the Committee of Ministers has noted with interest the measures proposed by the Assembly and has brought this recommendation to the attention of member state governments. It has also sent it to the Steering Committee for Education (CDED) and to the Steering Committee for Higher Education and Research (CDESR).
4. The Committee of Ministers endorses the Parliamentary Assembly’s approach as regards advocating a culture of precaution incorporating the precautionary principle into scientific research processes, with due regard for freedom of research and innovation. Promoting scientific education at all educational levels within an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary framework is likely to further that objective. The CDED has made a number of comments in this regard.
5. Referring to these comments, the Committee of Ministers encourages in particular the measures to promote a more balanced representation of girls and young women in science classes. Attention is drawn here to the guidelines laid down and the measures advocated in its Recommendation Rec(2007)13 on gender main-streaming in education.
6. With regard to the Assembly’s suggestion that a recommendation be prepared along the lines recommended in paragraph 9, the Committee of Ministers informs the Assembly that it acts on the basis of the programmes already introduced within the CDED to promote an interdisciplinary approach and encourage students to shoulder responsibility for social issues, with an eye to breaking down interdisciplinary barriers and opening up to others. It further draws the Assembly’s attention to its Recommendation Rec(2007)6 on the public responsibility for higher education and research, to which it has already referred in its reply to Parliamentary Assembly [Recommendation 1762 \(2006\)](#). The Committee of Ministers recalls that in this recommendation, it called on member states to exercise their responsibility “with a view to adapting it to the requirements of modern, complex societies through a range of political, legislative and practical measures to be taken, as appropriate, at national, regional or local level”.

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1. Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 16 January 2008, at the 1015th meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies.

