POUR DEMAIN

Annual report 2023

About Us

A flourishing and safe future for our children

Pour Demain is a nonprofit think tank that develops proposals on neglected issues. We advocate fact-based policies, develop scientifically based recommendations and promote exchange between science, politics and civil society.

Focal points

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial intelligence: A safe and secure use of AI that promotes the common good.

Similar to electricity 100 years ago, AI applications are currently spreading rapidly in all areas of society. This technology offers many opportunities: in the health sector, for example, cancer can already be detected earlier thanks to image recognition algorithms. At the same time, the use of AI systems also carries the potential for damage through accidents or misuse.

Today, for example, it is not known how error-prone AI systems are in critical infrastructure such as power supply or what impact disinformation has on elections.

Biosecurity

Pandemic preparedness: Effective preparation for future pandemics and general protection against infectious diseases.

Pandemics have in recent history caused more human and economic losses than all other natural disasters combined. For example, COVID-19 caused 20 million additional deaths worldwide and cost $14 trillion.

The good news is that epidemics and pandemics can be prevented or mitigated.

Our society needs versatile and complementary tools to cope with epidemics and pandemics. Investments in pandemic preparedness are worthwhile because they reduce high social and economic losses. Not just during pandemics, but also during seasonal disease outbreaks.

Activities

From a pandemic early warning system to AI security in the Council of Europe. In 2023, the non-profit think tank Pour Demain was able to make concrete contributions to socially important issues. All activities aimed to enable a flourishing and safe future for our children and grandchildren.

Our work is based on intensive exchange with actors from science, civil society, politics and administration. We also organize both internal workshops for experts and public events.

We rely on the expertise of a network of over 300 specialists and a scientific advisory board of around 25 members. We always reflect our specialist knowledge in the context of the concerns of the population and civil society.
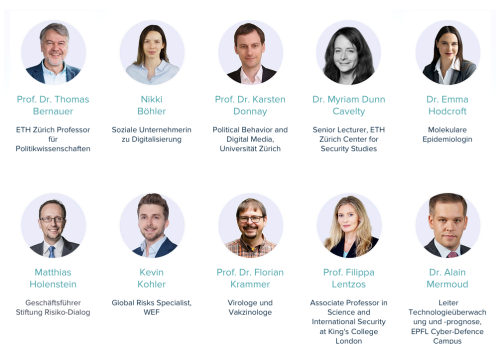
Organization

As every year, the association updated its science-based recommendations in a structured process involving its broad network. In addition, charitable fundraising was an important part of the organization-wide work.

The Pour Demain **team numbered six people, spread across around five full-time positions.** They are mediators between science, politics and civil society.

The association successfully secured **charitable funds** to continue the organization's work. The tax-deductible donations are made regardless of company interests or party political preferences. The association thus positions itself clearly independently and always acts for the benefit of its charitable vision. The Mercator Switzerland Foundation and the Hasler Foundation are among Pour Demain's funding partners.

Stiftung Mercator Schweiz

HASLERSTIFTUNG

Prof. Dr. Thomas Bernauer — ETH Zürich Professor für Politikwissenschaften	Nikki Böhler — Soziale Unternehmerin zu Digitalisierung
Prof. Dr. Karsten Donnay — Political Behavior and Digital Media, Universität Zürich	Dr. Myriam Dunn Cavelty — Senior Lecturer, ETH Zürich Center for Security Studies
Dr. Emma Hodcroft — Molekulare Epidemiologin	Matthias Holenstein — Geschäftsführer Stiftung Risiko-Dialog
Kevin Kohler — Global Risks Specialist, WEF	Prof. Dr. Florian Krammer — Virologe und Vakzinologe
Prof. Filippa Lentzos — Associate Professor in Science and International Security at King's College London	Dr. Alain Mermoud — Leiter Technologieüberwachung und -prognose, EPFL Cyber-Defence Campus

The annual update of **Pour Demain's recommendations took place at the beginning of 2023**. Pour Demain evaluates all recommendations using a structured process. The focus is on input from experts: from specialist articles to conversations and written surveys. Solid risk management as part of the development of European AI safety standards as well as advice on dealing with dangerous pathogens in high-security laboratories proved to be promising from over 50 recommendations examined.

Artificial Intelligence

2023 was the year in which the general public became aware of the opportunities and risks of artificial intelligence. Pour Demain has been working on the topic since 2021 and was able to provide important impulses on a national and international level.

Our AI activities included, among others:

- Participation in the negotiations in the Council of Europe on the AI Convention, one of the first international regulations on AI. Here we were able to make concrete suggestions for dealing with the most powerful AI systems such as ChatGPT.
- Public publications on dealing with AI (including on the EU AI law in a specialist publication) and participation in international meetings (including events at the World Economic Forum WEF and side events at the UK Safety Summit in Bletchley).
- Technical contributions in the negotiations on international AI standards (CEN-CENELEC). This process forms the basis for how AI systems are specifically evaluated and brought to market. Targeted contributions to AI risk management also took place within the OECD, where Pour Demain is part of a corresponding expert group.
- Expert survey on the opportunities and risks of artificial intelligence in the health and energy sectors. These sectors are particularly central as critical infrastructures; the use of AI can have particularly significant effects - both positive and negative. The study author also took part in a workshop on the topic in Brussels.
- Launch of an international AI Safety Prize to identify security vulnerabilities in systems like ChatGPT. This prize not only uncovers concrete risks, but also promotes awareness of this issue in society.

Biosecurity / Pandemic Preparedness

In 2023, the COVID-19 pandemic came to an end. Unfortunately, the next pandemic is only a matter of time. Despite declining public interest, targeted investments in pandemic preparedness remain key.

Our biosecurity/pandemic preparedness activities included, among others:

- Our cost-benefit study showed that a pandemic early warning system is worthwhile. To promote the monitoring of pathogens, for example in wastewater, we organized, among other things, an exchange between experts from Germany and Switzerland. The recommendations were also incorporated into political processes. The co-author presented the cost-benefit study at a specialist conference in Oxford. Media such as the Tages-Anzeiger reported on the recommendations.
- A white paper highlighted the opportunities in the area of international pandemic preparation, for example through joint research on new vaccines. Various media reported on the issue (e.g. Le Temps).
- Laboratory safety: Our recommendations highlight the need for action when dealing with potentially pandemic pathogens. Various media reported on the topic (e.g. Beobachter).

- Bioweapons: Recommendations for strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention in Geneva in close exchange with international experts.
- Indoor air quality: Pour Demain supported the first WHO conference in Europe on indoor air quality and began work on a study on the topic. Clean indoor air protects against infections and reduces human and economic costs.

Pour Demain also supported various initiatives in the area of global cooperation.

All activities promoting a positive and secure future can be followed via the Pour Demain blog. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at info@pourdemain.ngo.

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www.pourdemain.ngo
info@pourdemain.ngo