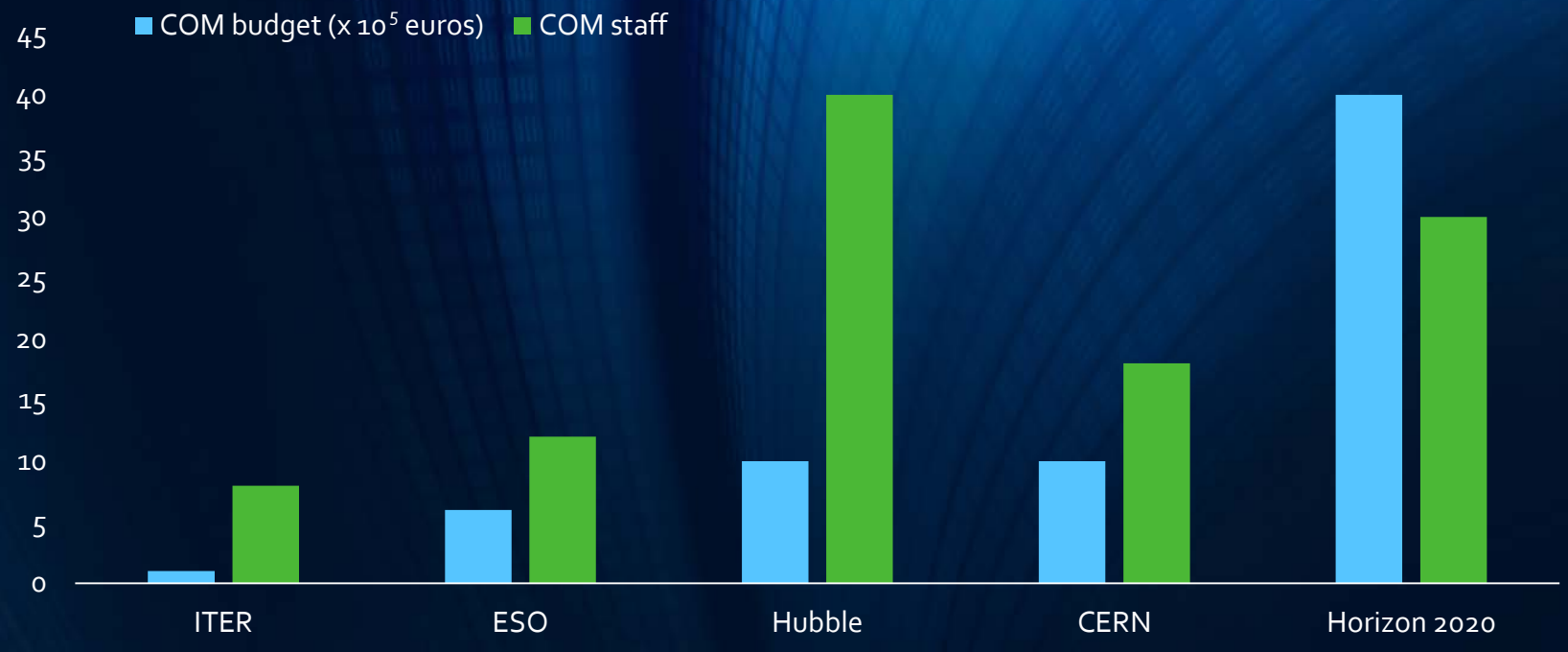
Is there a future for #scicomm?

Michel Claessens

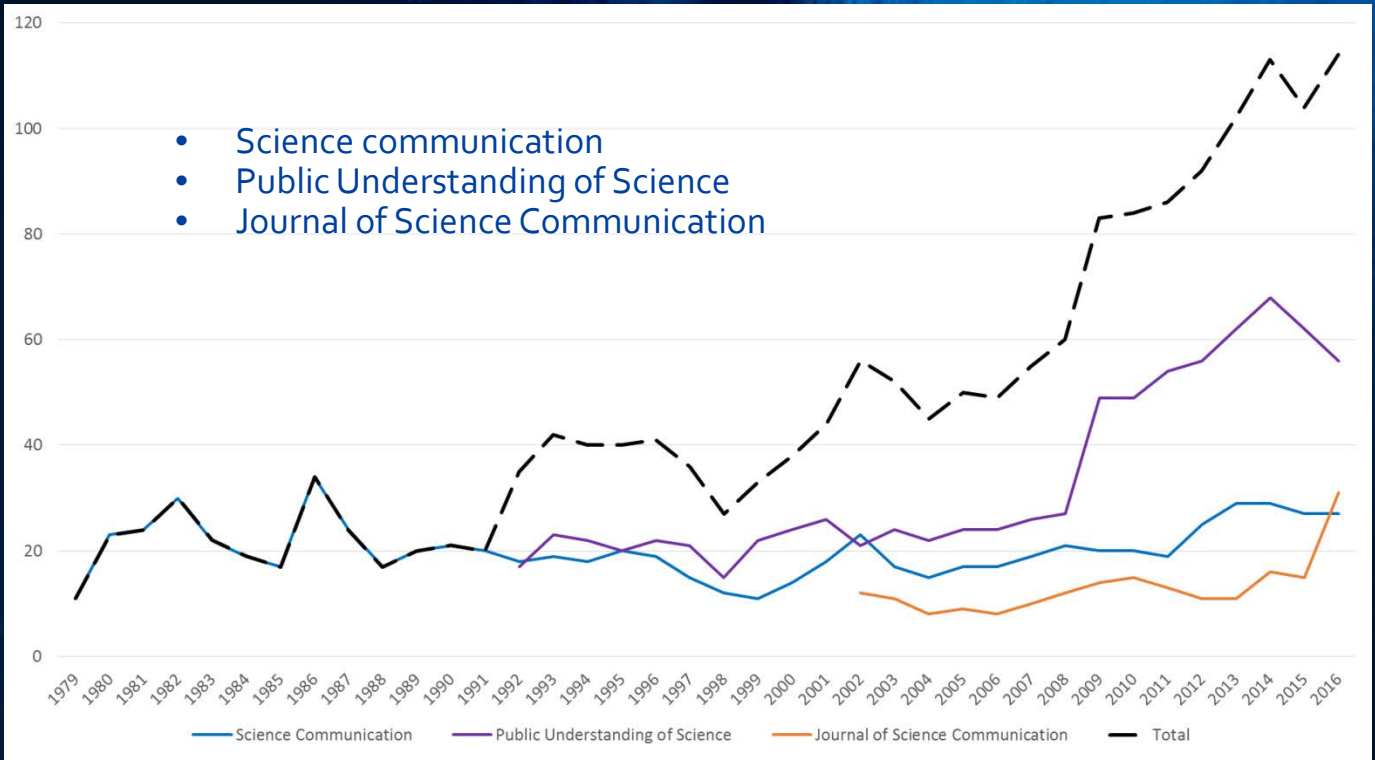
30 may 2017

Communication resources, S&T intl organisations



A dynamic academic field

articles per year and per journal



L. Guenther and M. Joubert, *Science communication as a field of research: identifying trends, challenges and gaps by analysing research papers*, Journal of Science Communication 16(02)(2017)

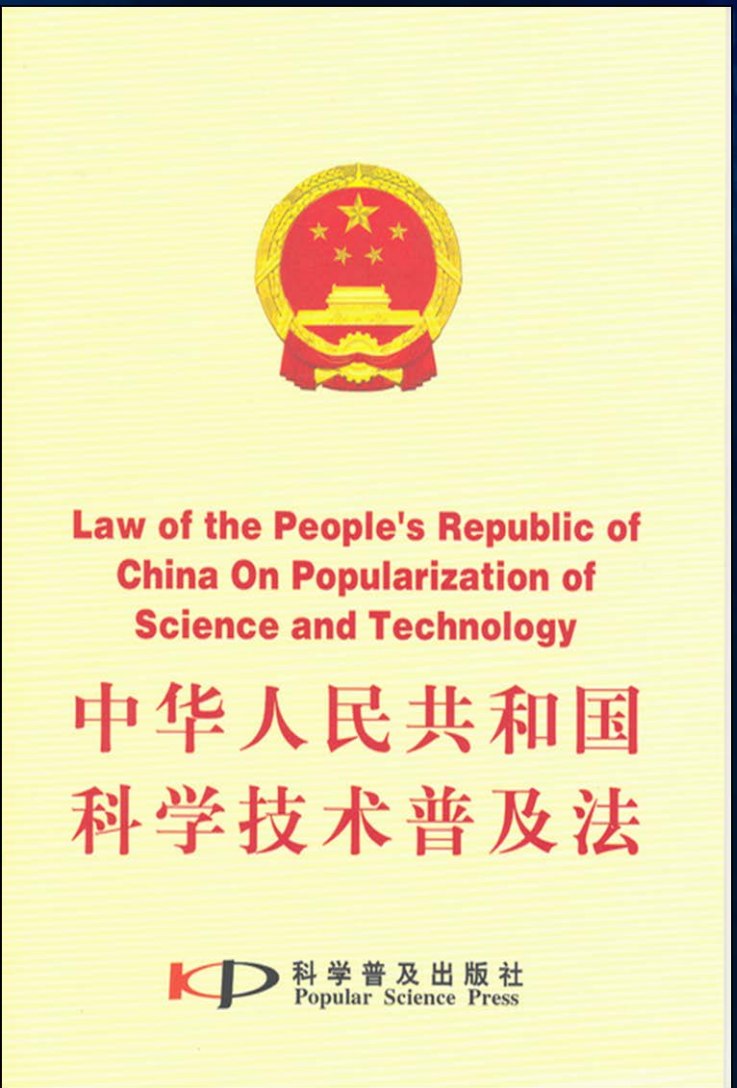
Communication in EU Framework Programmes

Grant agreement, Annex, General conditions

Information and communication

"The beneficiaries shall, throughout the duration of the project, take appropriate measures **to engage with the public and the media about the project aims and results** and to highlight the Community financial support."

National initiatives



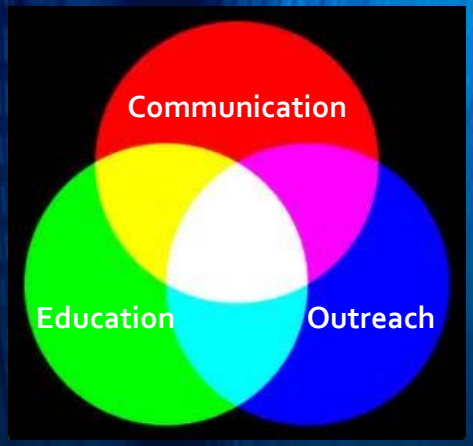
- China (Law on science popularization)
- Australia (National strategy)
- European Union (Framework programmes, Science in [with and for] society)
- France (CCSTI, Fête de la science, etc)
- Allemagne (Wissenschaft im Dialog)
- United Kingdom (PUS, Bodmer Report, etc)
- …

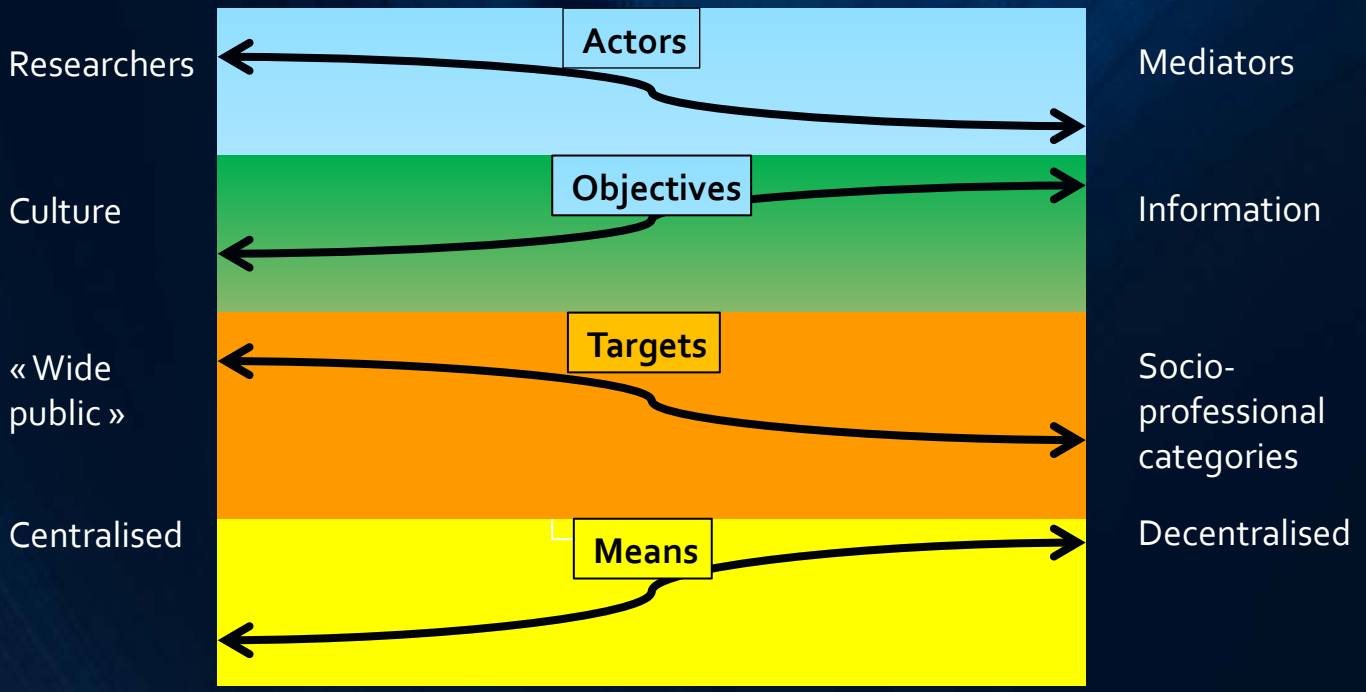
A brief history of science communication

1799	Foundation of Royal Institution – first British public laboratory – **public lectures** are an immediate feature of its work	**Popularisation**
19-21st	Books written by scientists (Flammarion, Sagan, Greene etc)	
1945	**BBC** starts science programmes on its radio Home Service	
1985	UK Royal Society publishes report "The Public Understanding of Science": scientists must "consider it their duty" communicate with the public about their work (**Bodmer Report**)	
1989	First **Eurobarometer** on science and technology (never published!)	**Engage with the public**
2002	EU launched « **Science in society** » programme (FP6)	
2002	Participants in EU-funded R&D projects have a **contractual** obligation to communicate their results to the public	
End 20st	**2-way communication** (opposition to GMOs etc). [But not only the public should be expected to listen and change their views…]	**Dialogue**
21st	Science is a **social activity** and should involve the public as well	**Social dimension**

Science communication or science confusion?

- What are we talking about?





Science communication or science confusion?

Scientists say:

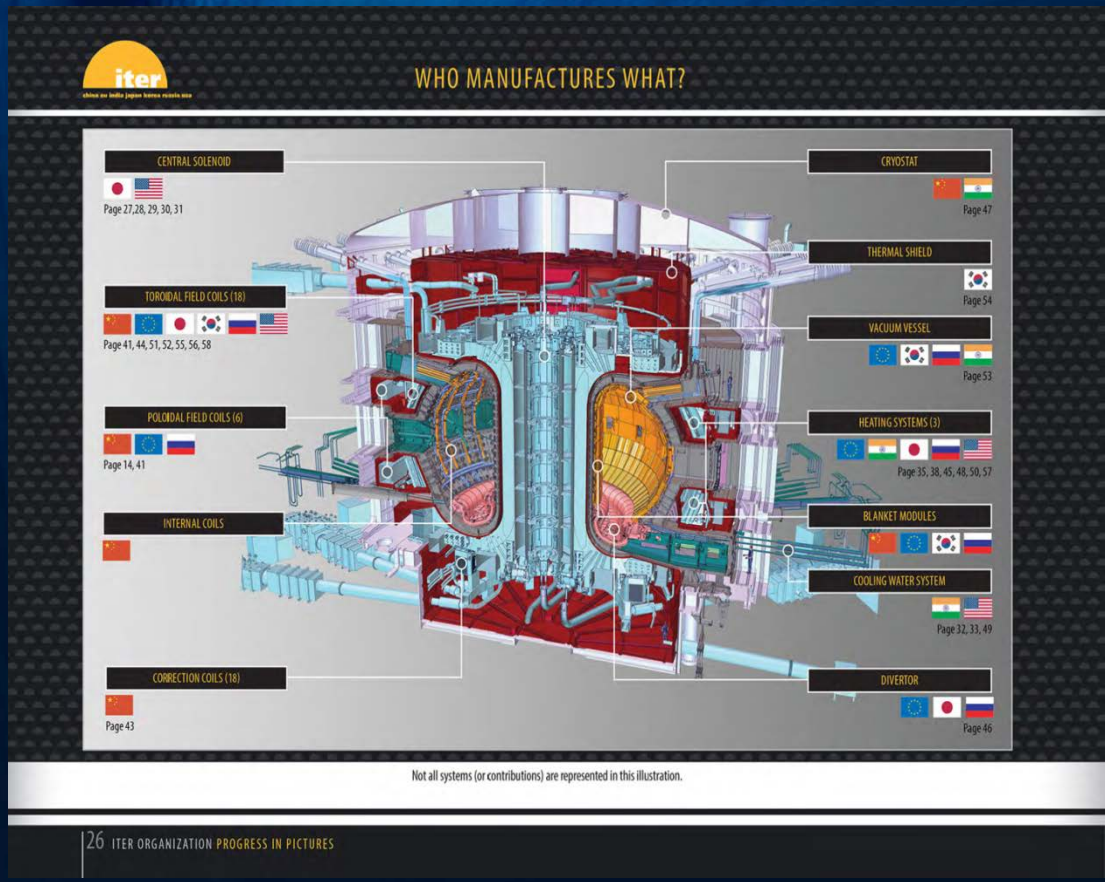
- 'We need to attract politicians to get funds but we don't like to do this.'
- 'I have been participating at the open days because it is obligatory for us.'
- 'This is a waste of time because it is not part of the promotion system.'
- 'If the public is informed, they will support science policies.'

ITER

- A huge multinational scientific collaboration
- To demonstrate the feasibility of fusion energy

International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor

- ITER, *the way*
- International experimental device aiming at demonstrating the scientific and technological feasibility of fusion as an energy source
- 7 Members: EU (+ Switzerland), China, India, Japan, Korea, Russia and USA
- Only few worldwide projects have such vast potential benefit for mankind



A project with evident economic (scientific?) benefits

- Contracts and grants for ~ EUR 3.6 billion awarded to European companies and research centers
- Creation of new knowledge and cutting-edge technology by European companies
- Spin-off products (e.g. in energy and aeronautics)
- Close to 4.000 direct jobs created on site and 1.700 indirect jobs

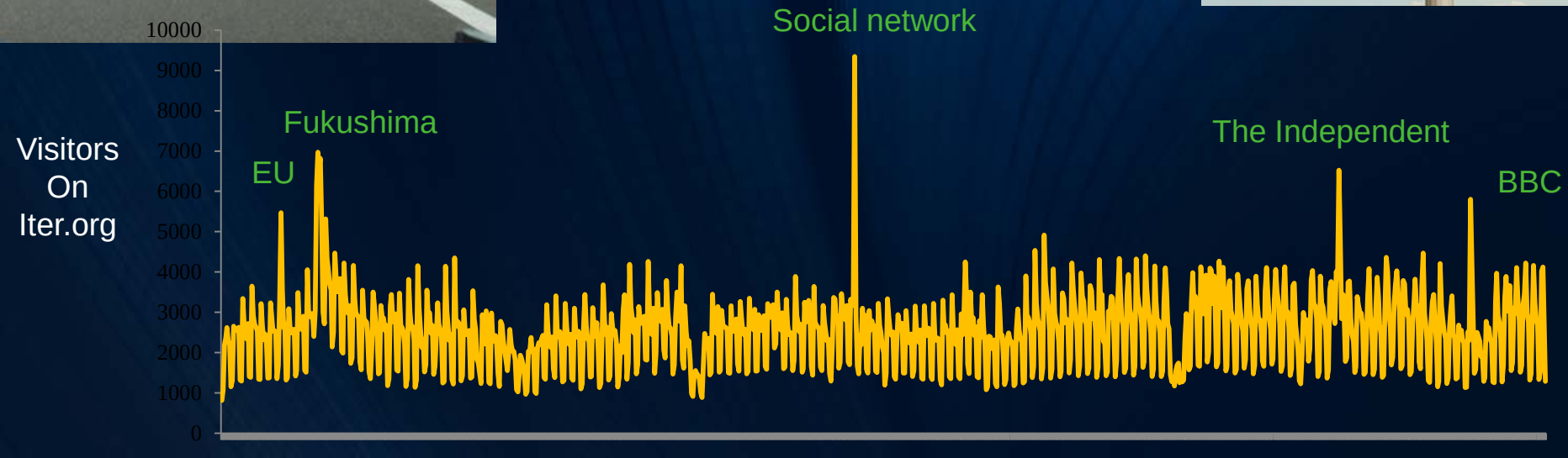
…but with many challenges

- First of a kind nature - biggest fusion device
- Technological and industrial challenges with 35 countries sharing manufacturing
- Difficult management with

  7 Domestic Agencies
- Complex international set up

  and governance
- Delays and budget increases

How far can you be transparent?



Visits and 'Open doors'

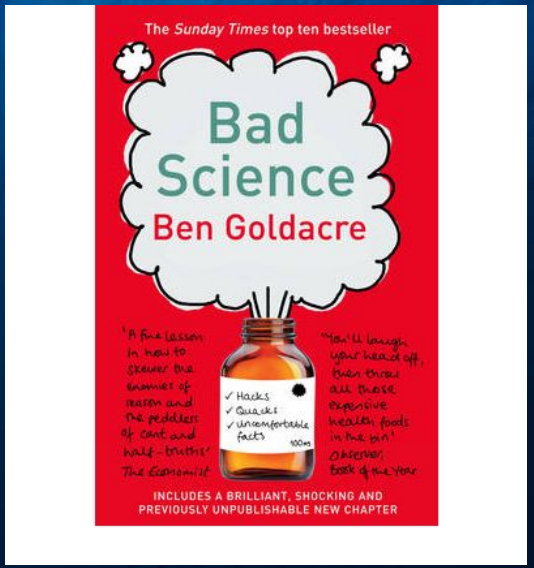
- 'I very much appreciated the didactics and the possibility to see the site'
- 'The visit was great. This will contribute to the project success'
- 'Events like these can really inspire a future generation of young scientists and enginee

How to turn science into 'mediascience'?

To hit the headlines:

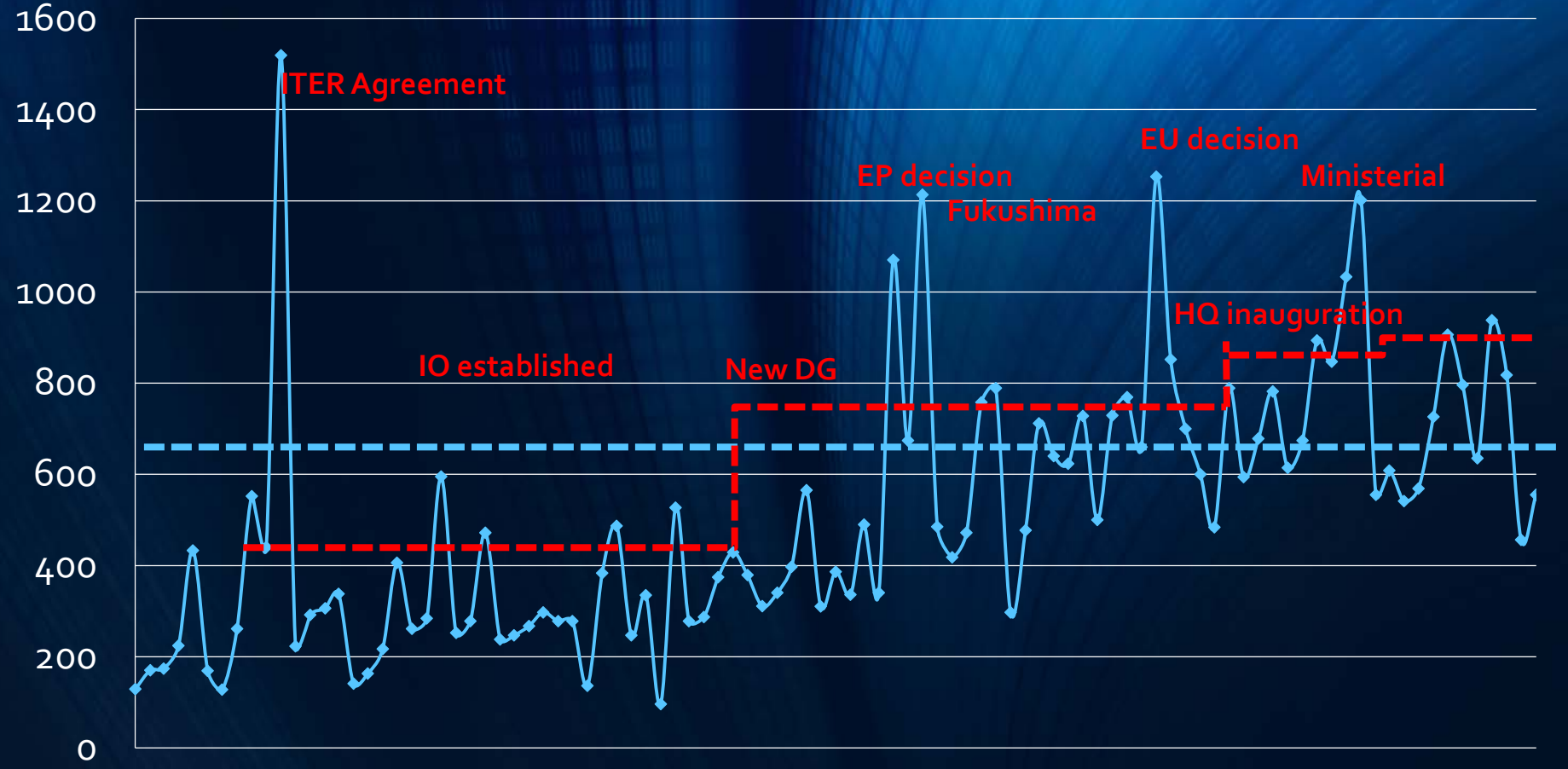
- Breakthrough
- Scary stories
- Wacky stories

- Scandal



ITER is a star shinning in absence

media reports / month quoting 'ITER' (2006-2016)

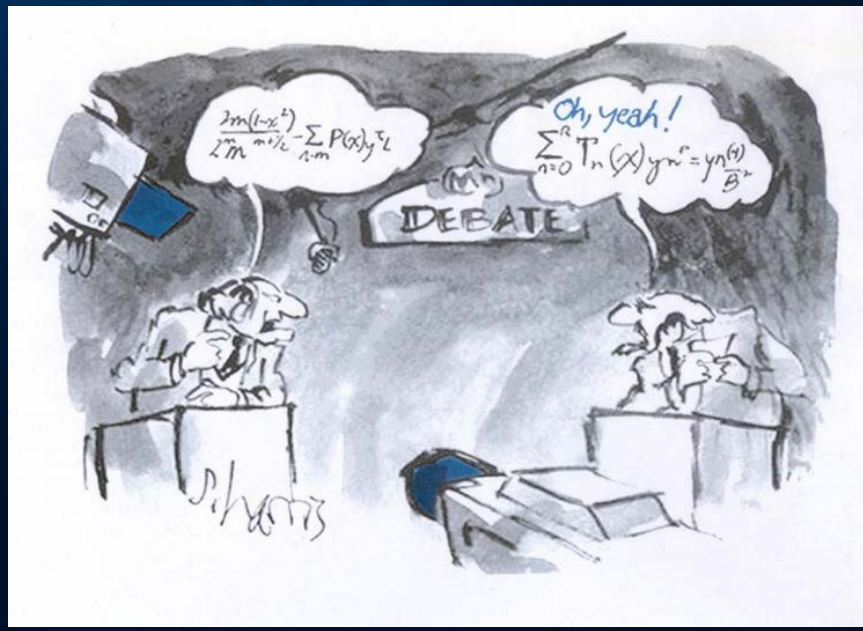


Source: Meltwater news reports

Science policy / politics

- Science communication departments close to top management
- Science is never far from politics
- Many research institutions are neither doing science communication nor developing 'public' relations in the proper sense
- Very few research organisations are supporting science communication without *arrières pensées*
- Recruiting

+ Science is a positive value
+ Let's focus on the science !



Thank you for your attention

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