

## Press release

### Anxious Times

**In his latest book, risk expert Ortwin Renn examines what drives people to populism**



*Published by Rowohlt*

*Potsdam, 29.11.2017* How powerful is fear and what effect does it have on our society? These questions are at the heart of a recently published book by the environmental and technical sociologist Ortwin Renn. In "Zeit der Verunsicherung" (Anxious Times), the Scientific Director at the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) probes the causes and effects, as well as the perception and handling of fears in our society.

Populist movements are on the rise across the globe. At the same time, a deep mistrust of politics, business and science can be observed: Is politics still capable of solving problems? How fair is the business world? And how independent are scientists? "The confidence of many people in the validity of long-standing norms and values has been thoroughly shaken. In the age of 'fake news' they are no longer sure what information they can trust," explains Ortwin Renn. "This book is intended to help those people orient themselves in uncertain times and regain confidence in their own powers of judgement."

Renn dissects the fears in our society from a scientific perspective and shows the spectrum of reactions to them: from rage and anxiety to feigned apathy. What do people feel threatened by? Where do their fears originate and how can they be dealt with? And what does it mean for society when fear becomes too powerful?



**Ortwin Renn: Zeit der Verunsicherung – Was treibt Menschen in den Populismus?  
(Anxious Times – What Drives People to Populism?)**

e-book, 240 pages

Published in November 2017 by Rowohlt

Price: €3.99 (D)

ISBN: 978-3-644-40165-5

**About the author**

Professor Dr Ortwin Renn is a Scientific Director at the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) in Potsdam. The environmental and technical sociologist teaches at the University of Stuttgart, where he remains affiliated to the Stuttgart Research Center for Interdisciplinary Risk and Innovation Studies (ZIRIUS). Renn was a member of the Ethics Commission for a Safe Energy Supply convened by Chancellor Angela Merkel and also served on the Science and Technology Advisory Council of the President of the European Commission. He is the recipient of numerous awards, including an honorary doctorate from the Swiss Institute of Technology (ETH) in Zurich, the Distinguished Research Award of the Society for Integrated Risk Management, and the Distinguished Achievement Award of the Society for Risk Analysis.

For a review copy, please contact

Nora Gottschalk

Press Office

**Rowohlt Verlag GmbH**

Hamburger Str. 17, 21465 Reinbek

Tel: +49 (0) 40 / 72 72 – 359

Tel: +49 (0) 40 / 72 72 – 395

[nora.gottschalk@rowohlt.de](mailto:nora.gottschalk@rowohlt.de)

[www.rowohlt.de](http://www.rowohlt.de)

To arrange an interview, please contact

Eva Söderman / Anja Krieger

Press & Communications

**Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies e.V.**

**(IASS)**

Berliner Straße 130, 14467 Potsdam

Tel. +49 (0)331 288 22-340/479

Fax +49 (0)331 288 22-310

E-mail [eva.soederman@iass-potsdam.de](mailto:eva.soederman@iass-potsdam.de) / [anja.krieger@iass-potsdam.de](mailto:anja.krieger@iass-potsdam.de)

[www.iass-potsdam.de](http://www.iass-potsdam.de)



The IASS conducts research with the goal of identifying, advancing, and guiding processes of social change towards sustainable development in Germany and abroad. Its research practice is transdisciplinary, transformative, and co-creative. The IASS cooperates with partners in academia, policymaking, civil society, and the business community to understand sustainability challenges and generate potential solutions. A strong network of national and international partners supports the work of the Institute. Among its central research topics are the energy transition, emerging technologies, climate change, air quality, systemic risks, governance and participation, and cultures of transformation. The institute is funded by the research ministries of the Federal Government of Germany and the State of Brandenburg.