

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

**Risk Management in
Regulatory Frameworks:
Towards a Better
Management of Risks**



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Note

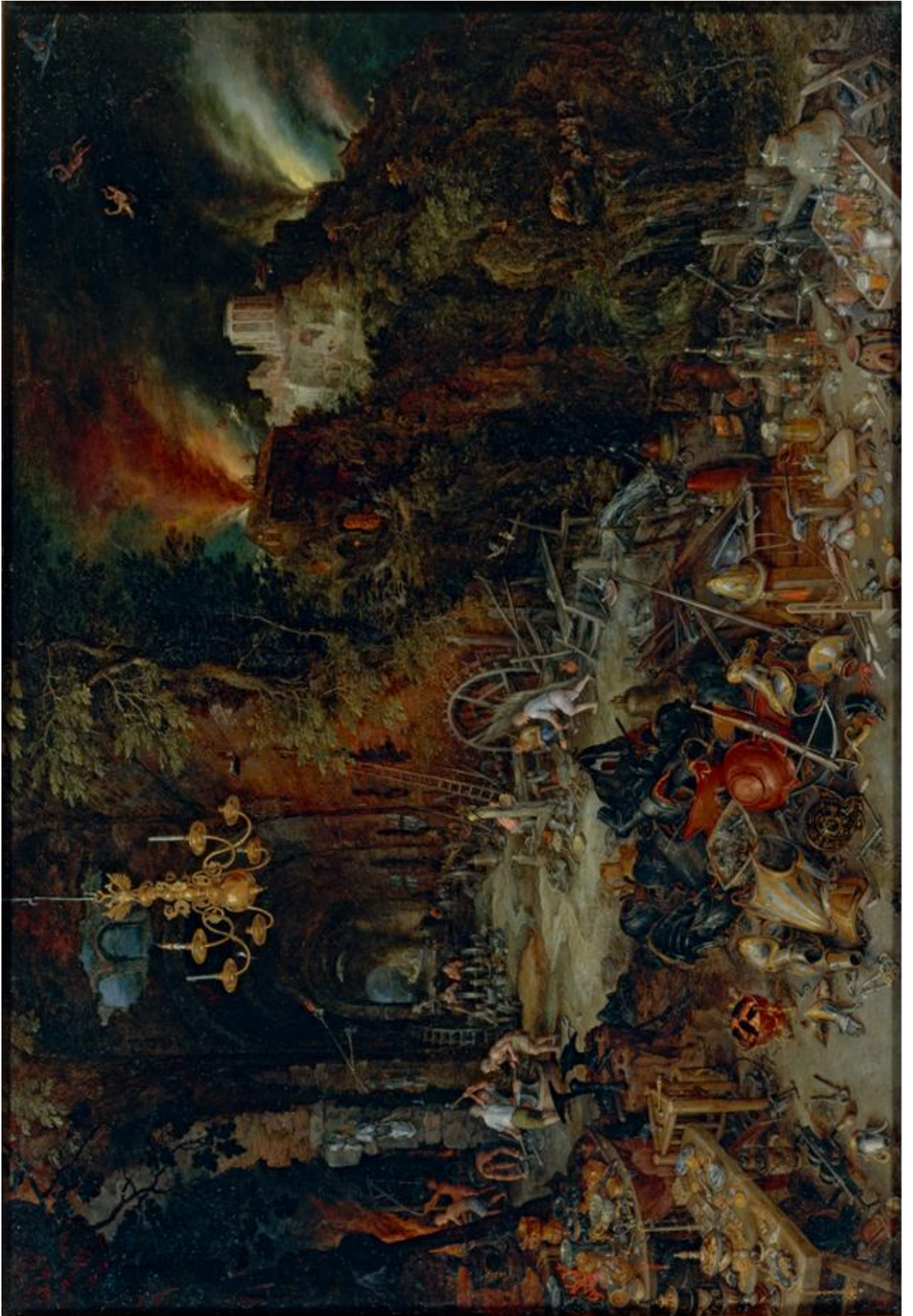
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The views presented in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the members of the Group of Experts on Risk Management in Regulatory Systems, or of the UNECE and its member States.

Finally, the authors wish to thank the Pinacoteca Ambrosiana of Milan for granting permission to use the copyrighted image that appears on the cover page and opposite this page. The image reproduces the famous painting by Jan Bruegel, "The allegory of fire". It was chosen to illustrate the dual nature of risks: fire can destroy, fire can create. The right hand side of the painting is dominated by a wild conflagration that reduces a building to ashes, the left hand side portrays fire as the energy that men have used for millennia to create objects of everyday use. Any risk, well managed, is an opportunity.



Preface

Among the most unsettling, and paradoxical, consequences of globalization has been its effect on risks: while it has great potential to reduce the impact and likelihood of a number of risks – local and global, natural and manmade – it has also helped magnify and spread others. The increasingly complex and intertwined nature of global supply chains spanning continents and oceans has brought many benefits but also directly or indirectly contributed to a wide range of events resulting in loss of life, environmental degradation and economic hardship.

Fortunately, another outgrowth of globalization has been astounding scientific and technological progress that has produced great welfare gains for society. Such advances entail their own risks, of course, but they have also enabled humanity to better shield itself from hazards. Harnessing this potential, however, cannot be done by controlling or regulating the behaviour of an individual company, country or region. International standards, regulatory response and coordinated action at the international, regional, national and local levels are the best and perhaps the only means of treating risks that have potentially worldwide consequences. The task is urgent, given that a number of risks are acquiring global proportions.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe is proud to contribute through this publication to global efforts to mitigate these risks and their potentially devastating consequences – efforts in which regulation is often paramount. While much has been written about the nexus between risk management and regulation, we believe this publication is the first to address the potential role of regulatory risk management in creating an effective synergy between the two fields, by transforming risk management concepts into regulatory actions. It argues that risk management should be a central process underlying all regulatory activity; that it should involve all stakeholders and a higher level of policymaking; and that sound regulatory systems should be driven by sound risk management processes. As such, the publication is intended to assist policymakers, regulators, businesses and other decision makers in making more informed choices about mastering the risks that confront our families, our communities and our planet.

Sven Alkalaj

Executive Secretary

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

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