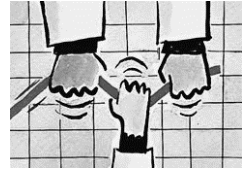


### Climate change

## A heated debate



- 1 **"W**HAT is truth?" That was Pontius Pilate's answer to Jesus's assertion that "Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice." It sounds suspiciously like the modern argument over climate change.
- 2 A majority of the world's climate scientists have convinced themselves, and also a lot of laymen, some of whom have political power, that the Earth's climate is changing. They feel that the change, from humanity's point of view, is for the worse; and that the cause is human activity, in the form of excessive emissions of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide. A minority, though, are sceptical. They think that recent, well-grounded data suggesting the Earth's average temperature is rising are explained by natural variations in solar radiation, and that this trend may be coming to an end. Some argue that longer-term evidence that modern temperatures are higher than they have been for hundreds or thousands of years is actually too flaky to be meaningful.
- 3 Such disagreements are commonplace in science. They are eventually settled by the collection of more data and the invention of more refined (or entirely new) theories. Arguments may persist for decades; academics may — and often do — sling insults at each other; but it does not matter a great deal because the stakes are normally rather low.
- 4 14, the stakes in the global-warming debate could scarcely be higher. Scientific evidence that climate change is under way, is man-made, and is likely to continue happening, forms the foundation for an edifice of policy which is intended to transform the world's carbon-intensive economy into one which no longer spews greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. A lot of money, and many reputations — both academic and political — are involved.
- 5 Sceptics claim that this burden of responsibility is crushing the spirit of scientific inquiry. Scientists, they maintain, are under pressure to bolster the majority view. The recent publication of embarrassing e-mails from the University of East Anglia, an important centre of climate science, revealing doubts about data and a determination not to air such concerns publicly, has strengthened these suspicions.
- 6 It is clear that politics and science make uncomfortable bedfellows. 16. The creation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to establish a consensus on the science was an excellent idea for policymakers, who needed a strong scientific foundation for their deliberations, but it sits uncomfortably with a discipline that advances by disproving accepted theories and overturning orthodoxies.
- 7 Some would argue that, in matters of great public import, scientific dissent should be silenced. It can, it is true, do harm. When AIDS first

reared its ugly head, no one knew what caused it. Gradually, the virus responsible was isolated, identified and then attacked successfully with drugs designed specifically to inhibit its reproduction. A few scientists, though, refused to accept the evidence, and some politicians used their arguments to justify inaction. Since one of those politicians was Thabo Mbeki, then president of South Africa, hundreds of thousands who might have been saved by an anti-AIDS policy grounded in scientific reality died as a result of his policies.

8 Yet the damage in that case was done by the politicians. A leader who is determined to pursue a wrong-headed course will always find some scientist to support him. A world in which that were not true would be one in which a dangerously narrow consensus had taken hold.

9 This newspaper believes that global warming is a serious threat, and that the world needs to take steps to try to avert it. That is the job of the politicians. But we do not believe that climate change is a certainty. There are no certainties in science. Prevailing theories must be constantly tested against evidence, and refined, and more evidence collected, and the theories tested again. That is the job of the scientists. When they stop questioning orthodoxy, mankind will have given up the search for truth.

adapted from *The Economist*, 2009

## Tekst 5 A heated debate

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- 1p 13 Which of the following concepts is introduced in paragraph 1?  
A deceit  
B sound judgement  
C subjectivity  
D timelessness
- 1p 14 Which of the following fits the gap in paragraph 4?  
A Consequently  
B However  
C Indeed  
D Paradoxically
- 1p 15 What do “these suspicions” (paragraph 5) amount to?  
A Climate science cannot prevent climate change.  
B Scientific evidence available for policy decisions is likely to be falsified.  
C Scientific research is being influenced by public opinions.  
D Scientists are incapable of proving the relevance of climate change.
- 1p 16 Which of the following fits the gap in paragraph 6?  
A Politicians fabricate facts. Science relies on logic.  
B Politicians implement policy. Scientists offer answers.  
C Politicians sell certainty. Science lives off doubt.  
D Politicians thrive on divisive tactics. Scientists need intellectual challenge.
- 1p 17 What is the main point made in paragraphs 7 and 8?  
A Agreement on the interpretation of research findings is a precondition for policy making.  
B Despite possible abuse, disagreement in scientific circles is desirable.  
C Politicians, not scientists, should be blamed when research findings are falsified.  
D Politicians sometimes bribe researchers to further their policy.
- The last sentence of this article has been left out.
- 1p 18 Which of the following was originally the last sentence?  
A That is why we should make a choice and stick to it.  
B Therefore, politicians should choose, not chatter.  
C The sceptics should not be silenced.

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### Bronvermelding

Een opsomming van de in dit examen gebruikte bronnen, zoals teksten en afbeeldingen, is te vinden in het bij dit examen behorende correctievoorschrift, dat na afloop van het examen wordt gepubliceerd.