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30 April 2009

The ethics of science

Motion for a resolution

tabled by Ms Maria Manuela de MELO and other members of the Assembly

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

Recent advancements in science highlight the concern that unbridled scientific progress is not always universally acceptable from an ethical point of view.

We have acquired the potential to alter the very basis of human life and its modes of transmission through genetics and reproductive technologies such as in vitro fertilisation, designing progeny through genetic manipulation, cloning or using ova of aborted fetuses.

Other areas of research which may raise ethical issues are for instance xenotransplantation, human/animal hybrid embryos, stem cell research or euthanasia.

The Council of Europe Bioethics convention and its protocols deal with many of these issues. National ethics committees play an important role at national level.

Other areas of science not directly linked to the living human body may also have ethical implications. This is the case, for instance, of GMOs, the re-creation by cloning of extinct animal species and other technologies that may have an impact on the environment but also archaeology when it involves human remains.

The need to establish benchmarks and to promote ethical principles and standards to guide scientific progress is becoming increasingly acute. Religion no longer provides the frame within which ethical choices can be made.

The Parliamentary Assembly is the most appropriate body within the European institutional architecture to debate the foundations for tomorrow's society, including in this domain.

Therefore it should investigate the ethical criteria on which legislation or other regulations about the ethics of science should be based.

Signed (see overleaf)



*Signed*¹:

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1. EDG: European Democrat Group
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
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