



Recommendation 2176 (2020)¹

Ethics in science and technology: a new culture of public dialogue

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly, referring to its [Resolution 2333 \(2020\)](#) “Ethics in science and technology: a new culture of public dialogue”, underlines that democratic governance requires citizen involvement in decisions which have a crucial impact on society and individual lives. In this respect, the need for public debate and appropriate consultation is clearly stated as a principle in Article 28 of the Convention for the protection of Human Rights and Dignity of the Human Being with regard to the Application of Biology and Medicine: Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine (ETS No. 164, Oviedo Convention). The Assembly welcomes the adoption by the Council of Europe Bioethics Committee (DH-BIO) of the “[Guide to public debate on human rights and biomedicine](#)” and considers that its principles could be extended to applications of converging technologies beyond the biomedical field.

2. The Covid-19 pandemic has stressed, in a dramatic manner, a number of structural weaknesses in our societies. There is a need not only to recover from the crisis, but also to rebuild more resilient and sustainable European societies. The Council of Europe must uphold human rights and democratic values and ensure that the crisis does not become an excuse to threaten them. However, the Organisation must also assist member States to strengthen the culture of public dialogue and to develop the capacities of young people and the wider public to analyse different options for a sustainable functioning of European societies.

3. Accordingly, the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers, through its relevant committees and groups of experts:

3.1. widely promote the “Guide to public debate on human rights and biomedicine” in the member States and, in co-operation with the European Union, seek to assist national authorities, particularly in central and eastern Europe, to implement the principles it enshrines;

3.2. as part of education for democratic citizenship, encourage member States to include debate on scientific and technological developments and ethical considerations in the school curricula, in terms of regular practice to cultivate dialogue and to develop the ability to understand and analyse complex matters;

3.3. in co-operation with the European Union, consider initiating pilot projects on the use of specialised tools for online public debate which also have the potential to make cross-national and multilingual public debates feasible.

1. *Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 15 September 2020 (see [Doc. 15117](#), report of the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media, rapporteur: Mr Stefan Schennach).*

