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Heritable genome editing in human beings

Reply to Recommendation[1]: Recommendation 2264 (2023)
Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers has carefully examined Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2264 (2024) "Heritable genome editing in human beings", which it has forwarded to the Steering Committee for Human Rights in the fields of Biomedicine and Health (CDBIO) for information and possible comments.

2. The Committee of Ministers welcomes the initiative of the Assembly with regard to human rights issues raised by the development in China in the field of human genome editing. It notes with satisfaction that the Assembly commended the clarifications adopted by the CDBIO in 2022 relating to Article 13 of the Oviedo Convention and its applicability to research.

3. In line with the Assembly's recommendation in paragraphs 6.1, and in view of the serious human rights implications of heritable genome editing in human beings, the Committee of Ministers urges member States which have not yet done so to ratify the Oviedo Convention as soon as possible.

4. With respect to paragraph 6.2, the Committee of Ministers reminds States Parties to the Oviedo Convention that they have an obligation under its Article 28 to see to it that the fundamental questions raised by the developments of biology and medicine are the subject of appropriate public discussion, and it encourages them to do so on heritable genome editing in human beings.

5. Finally, considering the many ethical, social and safety issues, the Committee of Ministers encourages all member States to take due account of the Assembly's recommendation in paragraph 6.3 calling for a clear prohibition in national legislation on establishing pregnancy using germ-line cells, their precursors or human embryos having undergone intentional genome editing of their nuclear DNA, as well as an opposition to permissive regulation at European and international levels.

1. Adopted at the 1508th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (25 September 2024).