

Freedom of scientific research

URGENCY RESOLUTION 2

ELDR CONGRESS BRATISLAVA 23/24 September 2005

urgency resolution on Freedom of scientific research

Noting that:

- Science represents an opportunity to individuals, enhancing their economical and social conditions.
- Science is an occasion for creating new jobs and economic growth.
- Science constitutes a hope for people affected by genetic or chronic diseases.
- As a result of rapid advancement in scientific research, and in particular of the encouraging results of recent work with stem cells from human embryos, there exists today a genuine prospect that such research may result in cures for human diseases.
- In order to safeguard this research there must be adequate legislation, able both to safeguard respect for human dignity and prevent the imposition of moral or religious beliefs that might destroy the ability of scientists to advance the cause of human well-being.

Whereas:

- Article 15 (3) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights lays down that the ratifying States "undertake to respect the freedom indispensable for scientific research";
- Article 12 lays down "the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health";
- General Comment 14 to said Article lays down the obligation of ratifying States "to respect, protect and fulfill" such rights.
- 40 Nobel laureates released a statement in April 2002 that supported a ban on reproductive cloning but opposed restrictions on cloning research to make stem cells for therapeutic reasons.

Considering that:

- Science is in many EU countries linked to ideological and moral a priori conditions;

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- Stem cells and therapeutic cloning research is banned in some EU countries, thereby there are no investments, public or private, in these sectors;
- Some EU regions are not capable of guarantying the hope of health care and cures for individuals with chronic and genetic diseases;
- General research funds and investments are very low in some EU countries, under 2% of GDP, insufficient to represent a growth potential;

The ELDR Congress concludes that:

- The EU should support and respect the freedom of ethically acceptable scientific research.
- Science must represent an opportunity for any individual that aims to enhance and improve his or her own life, bringing a general benefit that all human beings could enjoy as result of his or her work.
- Cloning human cells for reproductive reasons must be banned, but all restrictions to human-cell cloning for therapeutic reasons should be removed.
- All proposals aimed at the prohibition of scientific research on stem cells from human embryos for therapeutic reasons, either regarding the use of supernumerary embryos (otherwise to be destroyed) or the technique of cell nuclear transplant for the production of stem cells, should be rejected.
- The ELDR will support its member parties in favoring the battle for freedom of scientific research in each EU member state. The ELDR will also cooperate with the various international organisations that pursue freedom for scientific research.

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