

Rijeka Declaration on the Future of Bioethics

Fritz Jahr used the term ‘bioethics’ (‘Bio-Ethik’) as early as 1927. His “bio-ethical imperative” (*Respect every living being as an end in itself, and treat it, if possible, as such!*) should guide personal, professional, cultural, social, and political life, as well as the development and application of science and technology. In order to promote the Bioethical Imperative and the future of integrative bioethics, the participants of the Rijeka symposium “Fritz Jahr and European roots of bioethics: Establishing an international scholars’ network (EuroBioNethics)”, wish to highlight the following:

1. Contemporary bioethics quite often has been narrowed down to issues of informed consent and liability in medical ethics, whereas the practical impact of general ethical principles has been minimal.
2. It is necessary that bioethics be substantially broadened and conceptually and methodologically transformed so that it may consider different cultural, scientific, philosophical, and ethical perspectives (*pluriperspective approach*), integrating those perspectives into orientational knowledge and practical action (*integrative approach*).
3. Such *Integrative Bioethics* will have to harmonize, respect, and learn from the rich plurality of individual and communal perspectives and cultures of the global community.
4. Recognising the inexhaustible source of relevant perspectives for *Integrative Bioethics* in the works of authors and teachings using the term and the concept of bioethics, but also of the other “precursors” of integrative bioethical and deontological ideas since antiquity, we strongly call upon the study of classical works and teachings.
5. Respect for life, the considerate treatment of all life forms, need to be supported by all citizens, public discourse and the media, and by educational programs at all levels.
6. If these ideas are successful, bioethics will become a truly open field of meeting and dialogue of various sciences and professions, visions and world-views, that have been gathered to articulate, to discuss, and to solve ethical issues related to life as a whole and each of its parts, life in all its forms, shapes, stages, and manifestations, as well as to life conditions in general.
7. If these ideas are successful, bioethics will become the basis for the development and implementation of law, nationally and internationally.
8. If these ideas are successful, the recognition and implementation of bioethics will become the “bridge to the future”, a “science of survival”, and wisdom as “knowledge of how to use knowledge” (as Van Rensselaer Potter defined it in the 1970s) of modern medicine and technology.

The EuroBioNethics International Scholars’ Network, promoting the above ideas, will organise further conferences and establish a website to improve global intercultural communication and cooperation. A Fritz Jahr Award for the Research and Promotion of European Roots of Bioethics will soon be announced. The Network invites scientists and ethicists for communication and cooperation in implementing these ideas of the *Rijeka Declaration*.

Signed in Rijeka/Opatija (Croatia), on March 12, 2011, by:

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