

Biomedicine and Human Rights: The Oviedo Convention and its Additional Protocols

Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, 2009, pp. 190.

Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine (ETS No.164, or, by its full name, Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Dignity of the Human Being with regard to the Application of Biology and Medicine) was brought in Oviedo, Spain, on April 4, 1997, by the Council of Europe and offered for signature and ratification to the member states and other international subjects. Thirteen years after, the Convention represents one of the most important documents in the realm of bioethics, being at the same time a part of the legal acquest of the European Union.

Although the Convention has originally had obligatory character and has encompassed all the important bioethical issues, it has been considered an instrument providing a framework (containing general principles and preventing rough infringing of human rights and dignity) and only minimal common standards.¹

In order to address particular bioethical issues, but also because the dynamics of bioethics science and practice has imposed a dynamic updating of the Convention, a series of additional protocols have been compiled and signed during the last decade. Those changes and adjustments are presented in a new edition by Council of Europe Publishing from December 2009.

Beside the text of the basic Oviedo Convention, printed are the Explanatory report on the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine (drawn up at the request of the Steering Committee on Bioethics in 1996, to clarify the object and purpose of the Convention), Additional Protocol to the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine, on the Prohibition of Cloning Human Beings (ETS No. 168; 1998),

¹ Cf. Iva Rinčić Lerga, »Deset godina Konvencije o ljudskim pravima u biomedicini Vijeća Europe (1997.-2007.): postignuća i perspektive« [Ten years of the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine by the Council of Europe (1997-2007): achievements and perspectives], in: *Integrativna bioetika i interkulturalnost: zbornik radova 2. međunarodnog bioetičkog simpozija u Bosni i Hercegovini* [Integrative bioethics and interculturality: proceedings of the 2nd international symposium on bioethics in Bosnia and Hercegovina], edited by V. Valjan (Sarajevo: Bioetičko društvo BiH, 2009), pp. 297-310.

Explanatory report on the Additional Protocol to the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine, on the Prohibition of Cloning Human Beings (1998), Additional Protocol to the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine, concerning Transplantation of Organs and Tissues of Human Origin (ETS No. 186; 2002), Explanatory report on the Additional Protocol to the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine, concerning Transplantation of Organs and Tissues of Human Origin (2001), Additional Protocol to the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine, concerning Biomedical Research (CETS No. 195; 2005), Explanatory report on the Additional Protocol to the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine, concerning Biomedical Research (2004), Additional Protocol to the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine, concerning Genetic Testing for Health Purposes (CETS No. 203, 2008), and Explanatory report on the Additional Protocol to the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine, concerning Genetic Testing for Health Purposes (2008).

The new edition of the Council of Europe Publishing represents a dextrously designed product offering a crucial updating for all those studying bioethical standards in Europe. This user-friendly book, moreover, provides an excellent insight into the fascinating recent history of institutional deliberation and of international and intercultural harmonizing of the cardinal issues of human life.

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