



Europe, protection of life and respect for human dignity

Last year, almost 2,000,000 EU citizens all over the 28 Member States signed the ONE OF US European Citizens Initiative, which became the biggest ever among all other initiatives. This initiative claims that **human life protection and dignity should be guaranteed.**

This questionnaire, supported by a very strong civil society mobilization, aims to identify what are the positions of the candidates, running for the European elections in May 2014, related to bioethics issues. **It asks both questions in the field of the European Union (EU) competences and questions that are often discussed within the European institutions.** Answers will be publicly announced in order to inform all citizens in the promotion of human life protection and dignity.

On which basis leans the survey?

In 2000, the EU adopted the Charter of fundamental rights and incorporated it in the Treaty of Lisbon (2009). This Charter has then the same legally binding as the Treaty of Lisbon.

Protection of human life and human dignity are recognized under the *Charter of fundamental rights of the EU* in its Article 1: "*Human dignity is inviolable. It must be respected and protected*". It follows on from this principle others rights, such as the right to live (Article 2), the right to the integrity of the person (Article 3) and the principle of NO-discrimination (Article 21) "*Any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, color, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prohibited.*" ■



■ INFORMATION:

First name Last name:

Electoral list:

Head of electoral list:

Place on the list:

Electoral district:

Country:

■ HOW TO COMPLETE THE SURVEY:

This form contains 12 questions divided in 5 groups.

Please fill in the questionnaire by answering ALL questions and return it to the email address mentioned in the accompanying email before May 16th.



❖ Dignity and human embryo research

Research on human embryos and human embryonic stem cells (hESCs - extracted from an embryo) implies the destruction of embryos. Because this research raises ethical questions, Member States of the EU apply diverse legislations: permissive system, permissive system with restrictions, restrictive system and the banning system. The EU contributes financially to programs on hESCs in some Member States, under the *Horizon 2020* program. ■

AS A REMINDER, research on stem cells can be used for **cell therapy** or **pharmaceutical industry research**.

1

Cell therapy research aims to treat patients by providing them stem cell transplants. Since 20 years human embryonic stem cells (hESCs) research has had no results in cell therapy. Moreover, cell therapy has already treated many patients with NO-embryonic stem cells, such as adult stem cells and umbilical cord blood stem cells. Regarding these facts:

QUESTION:

Do you agree that the EU should stop promoting and financing hESCs research on cell therapy, and then should only promote and finance non embryonic stem cells research on cell therapy?

REPLY :

YES

NO

I DON'T KNOW

2

Pharmaceutical industry research uses stem cells to model diseases and to screen molecules (toxicity tests...). Human induced pluripotent stem cells (iPS) have been discovered in 2006 by Professor Yamanaka (Nobel Prize for Medicine 2012). The scientific community recognizes that human embryonic stem cells and iPS have the same capacity to be used for pharmaceutical industry research. Regarding these facts:

QUESTION:

Do you agree that the EU should stop promoting and financing hESCs research for pharmaceutical industry, and then should only promote and finance non-embryonic stem cells research for pharmaceutical industry?

REPLY:

YES

NO

I DON'T KNOW



❖ Non-discrimination and abortion

Depending on the national legislations, abortion is either legal or illegal. When it's legal, legislations enforce more or less limited and supervised indications. These restrictions vary since there is no common position in Europe. ■

3

Abortion is regarded as derogation from the fundamental right to live recognized in the Charter of fundamental rights of the EU ("*Everyone has the right to life*" Article 2) and in the European Convention on Human Rights ("*Everyone's right to life shall be protected by law*" Article 2).

QUESTION:

Do you support any measure that will urge Member States to implement this fundamental right to live (from the conception) and that will prevent new legislation running counter to this right? For example, would you support banning of late term abortion, enforcement of limitative criteria to have an abortion, the guarantee of freedom of expression,... ?

REPLY:

YES

NO

I DON'T KNOW

4

Regarding the **financial contribution of the EU** on sexual and reproductive health:

QUESTION:

Do you commit yourself to prevent promotion and financing of abortion programs and to support programs that protect pregnant women from violence?

REPLY:

YES

NO

I DON'T KNOW

5

Early this year a Spanish representative has addressed a written question (No. 655) "**The issue of late term abortions**" to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. He wrote "*In a number of European countries allowing late term abortion, it happens that human fetuses are born alive, surviving to their abortion*" and asked "*what specific steps will the Committee of Ministers take in order to guarantee that fetuses who survive abortions are not deprived from the medical treatment they are entitled to - as human person born alive - according to the European Convention on Human Rights?*" The Committee of Ministers answered that it "*agreed to resume consideration of this question at one of their forthcoming meetings*" (Decisions on February 12th and 13th, 2014).

QUESTION:

Do you agree that the EU should outlaw late abortion because it means to kill a foetus beyond the viability threshold for a new born child?

REPLY:

YES

NO

I DON'T KNOW



❖ Non-discrimination and abortion

6

Progresses in **prenatal diagnostic** techniques allow the selection of human beings on genetic grounds. Some fetuses are aborted because they are **female fetuses**: the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, Nils Muižnieks, has asked for banning sex-selective abortions because they are discriminatory practices.

QUESTION:

Do you support measures that prevent all forms of prenatal selection focused on fetuses affected by Down syndrome because this is a discriminatory and eugenic practice?

REPLY:

YES

NO

I DON'T KNOW

7

Other fetuses are aborted because they are **desease-carrying fetuses**: in a range of Member States, the prenatal testing system leads **to eradication of targetted disabled people as the Down syndrom population**.

QUESTION:

Do you support measures that prevent all forms of prenatal selection focused on fetuses affected by Down syndrome because this is a discriminatory and eugenic practice?

REPLY:

YES

NO

I DON'T KNOW



...❖ Medically assisted procreation and Child's interest

Medically assisted procreation aims at helping infertile couples. Some of these methods are artificial (**artificial** insemination, in vitro fertilization and embryo transfer) or **surrogate** (surrogated motherhood) and raise ethical concerns. ■

8

If a **vitro fertilization** is conducted with donor, the child is deliberately deprived of a biologic mother or father.

QUESTION:

Do you commit yourself in favor of the child's higher interest by allowing the medically assisted procreation to couple formed by a man and a woman?

REPLY:

YES

NO

I DON'T KNOW

9

Surrogacy encourages considering the woman's body as an object, what is more, a commercialized object.

QUESTION:

Do you agree that surrogate motherhood must be clearly banned?

REPLY:

YES

NO

I DON'T KNOW



End of life's dignity

Most of the countries in Europe (and outside Europe) ban euthanasia and assisted suicide. The resolution 1859 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe named "*Protecting human rights and dignity by taking into account previously expressed wishes of patients*" (2012) says "*Euthanasia, in the sense of the intentional killing by act or omission of a dependent human being for his or her alleged benefit, must always be prohibited*". ■

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QUESTION:

Do you support any measure that will prevent expansion of euthanasia and assisted suicide in Europe?

REPLY:

YES

NO

I DON'T KNOW

11

In 2009 the Council of Europe has already called European countries to implement **palliative care** as "*an essential pillar of patient's rights*" confirming that euthanasia and assisted suicide are no human way to end one's life with dignity.

QUESTION:

Do you think the EU should instead promote and finance palliative cares?

REPLY:

YES

NO

I DON'T KNOW



Freedom of conscience

The freedom of conscience as well as the right to conscientious objection is recognized in accordance with the Charter of fundamental rights of the EU (Article 10). Moreover, in the Resolution 1763 (2010) named "*The right to conscientious objection in lawful medical care*", the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has stated, based on the European Convention on Human Rights (Article 9): "*The Parliamentary Assembly emphasizes the need to affirm the right of conscientious objection*". ■

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This right, which was first referring to abortion, has now a broader scope: prenatal selection, human embryo research, euthanasia and assisted suicide.

QUESTION:

Do you support any measure that would make a reality the freedom of conscience and the right to conscientious objection where the right to life is threatened in order to implement the fundamental values of the EU?

REPLY:

YES

NO

I DON'T KNOW

■ COMMENTS:



Thank you for taking time to complete this survey.

Please return it before May 16th, to the email address mentioned in the accompanying email.