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# 34th Meeting of the National Ethics Councils

## NEC FORUM

**“Challenges to human vulnerability  
in the rapidly changing world”**

### MEETING PORTFOLIO

**26-27 June, 2025  
Warsaw, Poland**

## LOCAL ORGANIZERS



### Dr Joanna Różyńska

- **Chair of the Bioethics Committee of the Polish Academy of Sciences**
- Vice-Chair of the UNESCO International Bioethics Committee
- Member of the WHO Research Ethics Review Committee
- Center for Bioethics & Biolaw, University of Warsaw, Poland

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Dr. Różyńska is a trained bioethicist (M.Sc.), with an academic background in philosophy (Ph.D., M.A.), sociology (M.A.), and law (M.Jur.). She works as an ethics expert for numerous national and international institutions. She is the author, co-author, and/or editor of several books and numerous papers on reproductive ethics and law, research ethics and law, and clinical ethics. She has published in *Bioethics*, *Journal of Medical Ethics*, *The American Journal of Bioethics*, *Medicine Health Care and Philosophy*, *Journal of Bioethical Inquiry*, *HEC Forum*, among others. Her current research interests focus on the ethical and legal aspects of biomedical research, particularly the ethics of risk-benefit analysis, and payment for research participants. She has just started a new project on the right to bodily and mental integrity in the era of novel biomedicine and neurotechnological innovation. More info: <https://cbb.uw.edu.pl/en/team/joanna-rozynska/>

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### Prof. Paweł Łuków

- **Chair of the Committee for the Ethics in Science of the Polish Academy of Sciences**
- Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Warsaw
- Member of the European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies (EGE)

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To read more about Prof. Łuków's academic and research activities, go to page 6 of the portfolio.

## FINANCIAL SUPPORTERS

**The local organizers would like to thank  
the European Commission,  
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at the University of Warsaw,  
and  
the University of Warsaw Foundation  
for generously supporting this event financially.**



## WELCOME ADDRESSES

### **Bartłomiej Balcerzyk**

Deputy Head of the European Commission  
Representation in Poland  
and Acting Head of the EC Regional Office in Wrocław



As EU official with over 15 years of experience, I currently serve as Deputy Head of the European Commission Representation in Poland and Acting Head of the EC Regional Office in Wrocław. From 2023 to 2024, I was Acting Head of the EC Representation in Poland, overseeing a 32-member team, leading strategic communication, political reporting, and stakeholder engagement, while ensuring alignment with EU priorities.

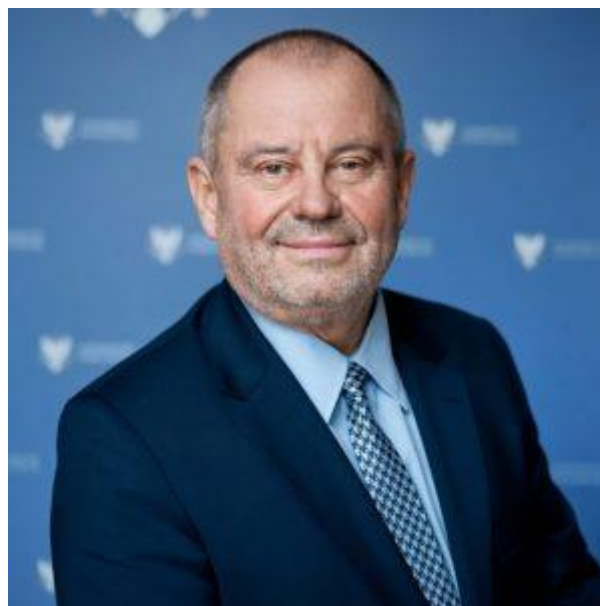
As Team Leader for Communication, I developed and implemented national campaigns, including Poland's 20th EU accession anniversary, coordinated EU information networks, and built effective partnerships with civil society, media, and government, including during key political transitions. I also oversaw the organisation high-level visits and Commissioners' missions, including to Ukraine.

Previously, I worked at the European Parliament Liaison Office in Poland, strengthening public understanding of the EP, and earlier held policy and legal roles in EC DG HOME (Asylum) and EC DG ENV (Chemicals Legislation), contributing to EU asylum policy, REACH enforcement, and stakeholder coordination.

Trained as a lawyer in Germany with an academic background from Humboldt University Berlin and the University of Liverpool, I bring strong legal, communication, and strategic skills to EU policymaking and public engagement.

# Prof. **Alojzy Z. Nowak**

Rector of the University of Warsaw



Prof. Alojzy Z. Nowak graduated from the SGH Warsaw School of Economics in 1984. He is affiliated to UW as of 1984.

In 1991, he earned his doctoral degree in Economic Sciences at the University of Warsaw. He received tenure in Economic Sciences in 1995 there. Between 1996 and 2002, he held the position of an associate professor. By the decision of Poland's President, he received professor degree in 2002.

Prof. Alojzy Z. Nowak has held a variety of leadership roles including Head of the Academic Subunit for International Economics and the Academic Unit for Economics at the Faculty of Management, Director of European Center. In years 1999-2006, Prof. Nowak was Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Management, and in 2006-2012 Dean of this unit. Next four years, he spent at UW working as Vice-Rector in charge of research and cooperation. In 2016, he was elected as Dean of the Faculty of Management. During his academic career, he was delivering lectures at universities in France, UK, USA, Russia, China and Korea.

He also studied at the University of Illinois at Urbana – Champaign (USA), the University of Exeter (UK), in Antwerp and the Free University of Berlin (Germany).

As of 2018, Prof. Alojzy Z. Nowak chairs the Academic Sports Association (*Akademicki Związek Sportowy, AZS*) – a mass students' sport organisation, one of the biggest sports associations in Poland.

## SPEAKERS AND MODERATORS

### SESSION 1

## New and old faces of vulnerability in scientific research

### Vivienne Parry

Head of engagement at Genomics England,  
science journalist and author



Vivienne Parry OBE is a British science writer, broadcaster and facilitator.

She was a board member of UKRI, Britain's principal research funder and is known for 'Inside the Ethics Committee', a long running BBC Radio 4 series.

She was on the governing body of the Nuffield Council on Bioethics



## Prof. **Paweł Łuków**

Chair of the Committee for the Ethics in Science,  
Polish Academy of Sciences,  
Member of the European Group on Ethics  
in Science and New Technologies (EGE),  
University of Warsaw, Poland



Paweł Łuków is professor of philosophy and ethics. He is the Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Warsaw, Poland, where he chairs the Department of Ethics, and the Center for Bioethics and Biolaw.

He is the head of the Supreme Bioethics Committee for Clinical Trials. He also chairs the Committee on Ethics in Science at Polish Academy of Science and is a Member of European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies (EGE). He works as an ethics expert for domestic and international institutions. He has published on I. Kant's ethics, bioethics, and philosophy of medicine. His current research focuses on human dignity and human rights in bioethical regulation and policymaking in a democratic society, the ethical and legal status of the human body, protection of human dignity and vulnerability in biomedical research.

His more recent publications include "The ethical significance of consent to postmortem organ retrieval" *Bioethics*, 37(5) 489-497, 2023; "Solidarity and the Ethics of Exposing Others to Risk in Medical Research". *Bioethics* 36 (8):821-828, 2022; "Pure Altruistic Gift and the Ethics of Transplant Medicine". *Journal of Bioethical Inquiry* 17 (1):95-107, 2020.

### *Abstract of the presentation*

#### **Vulnerability in research – a conceptual analysis**

The vulnerability of research participants was initially conceptualised categorically in terms of group membership and later supplemented by an analytic conceptualisation that focuses on individuals. This talk argues that both approaches should be understood within the broader context of participant protection. From this perspective, the choice of conceptual framework must respond to the dynamics of study design, review, and implementation, which involve different users of ethical standards at various stages in the lifetime of a research project—namely, researchers and members of ethics review bodies. Consequently, the concepts of individual vulnerability (analytic approach) and group-based vulnerability (categorical approach) can serve complementary protective roles.

## Dr Claude Kirchner

Chair of the French National Digital  
Ethics Consultative Council (CCNEN)



Claude Kirchner chairs the « CCNE du numérique » (French national digital ethics consultative council). He is director of research emeritus at Inria, the French national research institute for digital science and technology, of which he was the scientific director from 2010 to 2014. He is also a member of Viginum's Ethics and Scientific Committee and of the CNIL's Foresight Committee.

He was a member of CCNE, the French bioethics council from 2018 to 2023, a member of the ANSSI (Agence Nationale pour la Sécurité des Systèmes d'Information) scientific council until 2022 and the first chairman of COERLE, Inria's operational committee for legal and ethical risk assessment, and its scientific integrity referent until the end of 2018.

His scientific interests and contributions focus on the logical and semantic foundations for the design and implementation of reliable and secure digital systems, and their applications to cybersecurity.

### *Abstract of the presentation*

#### **Vulnerable individuals and communities in data-driven research**

Data now plays a fundamental role in the development of the Science. This Pythagorean approach was already highlighted by Jim Grey and Alex Szalay in 2007, and recent advances in machine learning techniques amplify this fact, if any were needed. This universal quest for data is being conducted in very different contexts: for physics, astronomy, medicine, biology, the social sciences, etc. In particular, data makes it possible to try out and test different versions of models. Today, this approach to scientific research relies on the availability of computers, quality data and human expertise in the design and interpretation of the models being run. Ethics, and in particular research ethics, must be examined in all fields and in all situations, and this has led to numerous results and publications. One important case concerns vulnerable individuals and communities.

These vulnerabilities may arise from many different and sometimes cumulative reasons. It may be difficult to obtain quality data because of specific vulnerabilities, whether physiological, mental, cultural, religious, educational, etc. The number or representativeness



of the data may be insufficient.

The data may come from internet platforms or online devices, in which case specific processing and careful specific conclusions may be drawn. The data may be biased, difficult to reproduce or explain, ...

Of course, in all cases, free and informed consent is mandatory and, as explained in a CCNE report (#136), consent must be dynamic and adapted to the potential vulnerability.

Scientists need to be aware that this data is particularly sensitive, especially when dealing with data from vulnerable individuals or communities. Consequently, their access control and security must be specially designed to be both suitable for control by vulnerable individuals and specially protected against theft and inappropriate exploitation by hackers who may operate far from the individuals themselves.

We will explain and examine these concerns from the combined point of views of cyberethics and bioethics.

# Lene Os Johannessen

Director of the National Committee  
for Research Ethics on Human Remains,  
the National Research Ethics Committees, Norway



Lene Os Johannessen is a Senior Advisor at the National Research Ethics Committees (NREC) in Norway and serves as Director of the National Committee for Research Ethics on Human Remains. She also leads NREC's project on the development of training resources in research integrity and research ethics. Johannessen holds a PhD in Classical Archaeology from the University of Oslo, awarded in 2015. She has previously held positions as a lecturer in archaeology and as a research advisor at the University of Oslo.

## *Abstract of the presentation*

### **Indigenous peoples and national minorities in research**

The National Research Ethics Committees (NREC) in Norway are committed to ensuring that all research adheres to recognized standards and norms of research integrity (RI) and research ethics (RE). In 2024 and 2025, the NREC has placed particular emphasis on the theme "Indigenous Peoples and National Minorities," raising the question of whether research involving these communities necessitates specific ethical guidelines to safeguard fairness, respect, and integrity.

Both globally and in Norway, the ethical dimensions of research involving Indigenous and minority populations have received increasing attention. Countries such as Canada, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand have addressed these concerns; some have developed specific guidelines. In Norway, the Sámi Parliament has established ethical guidelines for Sámi health research, and several NREC committees have incorporated these issues into their own guidelines. Notably, NREC's National Committee for Research Ethics on Human Remains has developed specific guidance and educational resources and has handled several cases involving the remains of Indigenous individuals and national minorities.

Ongoing ethical discussions – both in Norway and internationally – highlight several recurring concerns, including the importance of informed consent, representativeness, the prevention of discrimination and stereotypical representations, secure data management, the protection of self-determination, and the preservation of research independence.

# MD François Bompert

Co-leader of the VolREthics initiative  
Member of the INSERM Ethics Committee



François Bompert, MD is a member of the French National Institute for Health and Medical Research (INSERM)'s Ethics Committee and the Chair of the Access Committee of the Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi), a non-profit organisation based in Geneva.

He worked for over 25 years in anti-infective medicines and vaccines, with a focus on emerging and developing countries, mostly within the Sanofi pharmaceutical group. His main fields of interest are related to infectious diseases, access to care in resource-limited countries, as well as ethical issues in clinical research.

His specific interest in ethical issues related to healthy volunteers started with being a healthy volunteer himself in the 1980s, then an investigator and, later, a sponsor of many Phase I studies. He worked with the INSERM Ethics Committee to initiate the work that led to the VolREthics initiative's creation in 2022. The VolREthics initiative aims at protecting healthy volunteers in biomedical research from harm and from exploitation everywhere in the world.

He received his MD from the University of Angers (France) and trained in Clinical Pharmacology at University College London (UK) and Hôpital Cochin in Paris (France).

## *Abstract of the presentation*

### **Healthy volunteers: a blind spot in biomedical research ethics?**

Healthy volunteers (HVs) who participate in research play a significant role in the advancement of science and medicine. Yet, while most countries in the world have laws and regulations that protect research participants, these are de facto targeted at the protection of patients participating in research, and very few countries have specific provisions for the protection of HVs. Yet, HVs significantly differ from patients who participate to research on 3 main accounts. First, unlike patients, HVs cannot expect direct medical benefit from participating and, therefore, have a different benefit–risk balance. Second, HVs participate in studies with very stringent rules that might impinge on their wellbeing. Third, the prospect of financial compensation, usually the decisive factor in agreeing to participate, exposes HVs to the risk of being exploited when they are in situations of vulnerability. This presentation will summarize the key ethical issues that are specific to HVs in research and discuss why HVs are a “blind spot” in biomedical research ethics. It will conclude by presenting the first “Global Ethics Charter for the Protection of Healthy Volunteers in Clinical Trials” issued in 2024 by the international VolREthics initiative. This Global Charter is designed to help debates about ways for each country to ensure adherence to the best scientific and ethical standards for all research participants.

## SPEAKERS AND MODERATORS

### SESSION 2

## Challenges for democracy in the digital world

### Dr **Alexei Grinbaum**

Chair of the CEA Operational Digital Ethics Committee



The philosopher and physicist Alexei Grinbaum is a senior research scientist at CEA-Saclay with a background in quantum information theory. He writes on ethical questions of emerging technologies, including robotics and AI. Grinbaum is the chair of the CEA Operational Digital Ethics Committee and member of the French National Digital Ethics Committee (CNPEN). He coordinates the Horizon project AIOLIA and contributes to several other European projects in AI ethics. He is also an ethics expert of the European Commission. His books include "Mécanique des étreintes" (2014), "Les robots et le mal" (2019), and "Parole de machines" (2023).

# Dr Jan Piasecki

Jagiellonian University, Cracow, Poland



Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy and Bioethics, Jagiellonian University Medical College (2012–present). Member of the Research Ethics Committee and former advisory board member of the Conception IMI project.

## Key Research Projects & Leadership Roles

Activity Leader (2024–2025): Using Artificial Intelligence to Identify Psychological Factors in Belief in Conspiracy Theories. (EEA Grant, €111,300).

Project Leader (2020–2024): #Webimmunization. How can online social networks create collective resilience against misinformation? (EEA Grant, €1.3M).

Research Group Leader (2021–2023): Deception by design. Unravelling the ethical guidance and practice of deceiving research participants for methodological reasons. (CELSA Grant, €26,875).

Principal Investigator (2016–2019): Ethical principles for Learning Health Care Systems (NCN Grant, €52,037).

Researcher (2012–2016): The Principles of Biomedical Research Involving Human Subjects. Bioethical Issues (NCN Grant, € 154 333).

## Education:

PhD in Philosophy, Jagiellonian University (2010).

MSc in Bioethics, Erasmus Mundus (KU Leuven, Radboud, Padova, 2011).

MA in Philosophy, Jagiellonian University (2005).

## *Abstract of the presentation*

### **Pandemic, free speech, and social media: The ethics of countering online misinformation**

## Background

Free speech is a cornerstone of democracy, enabling public debate and civic participation. However, the rise of social media and the global COVID-19 pandemic have highlighted tensions between free speech and public health. The widespread of online misinformation

poses challenges to public health responses, prompting platforms to adopt policies to curb its spread. These interventions intersect with free speech rights, making public acceptance critical for their success. Understanding social media users' attitudes toward such policies is essential for crafting measures that balance free speech and public health.

### Methods

We conducted a survey of 2,727 active adult Twitter users in the United States to examine their attitudes toward social media policies affecting free speech during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Results

Right-wing views were moderately correlated with support for free-speech policies ( $R = 0.436$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ), while left-wing views showed weak negative correlations with support for media literacy ( $R = -0.283$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) and health education ( $R = -0.250$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ). Right-wing views were also moderately negatively correlated with support for misinformation countermeasures ( $R = -0.427$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ) and punitive measures against users spreading misinformation ( $R = -0.302$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ). When analyzed by political affiliation Republicans demonstrated stronger support for free-speech policies, while Democrats favored misinformation control measures, although overall correlations were weaker.

### Conclusions

Our findings underscore the significant influence of political views on attitudes toward social media policies addressing misinformation during the COVID-19 pandemic. Right-leaning individuals prioritize free speech, while left-leaning individuals support interventions such as media literacy, health education, and misinformation countermeasures. These differences highlight the challenge of balancing public health and free speech in polarized societies. Policymakers must consider these divergent perspectives to design effective, broadly acceptable interventions addressing misinformation.



# Prof. Jonas Kunst

BI Norwegian Business School



Jonas R. Kunst is a Professor of Communication at BI Norwegian Business School and Professor of Psychology at the University of Oslo. He was a Fullbright student at Harvard University and a postdoctoral fellow at Yale University.

His research focuses on misinformation, conspiracy theories, intergroup relations, acculturation, and violent extremism. With over 100 peer-reviewed publications, his work appears in prestigious journals including *Nature Human Behaviour*, *Nature Communication*, *PNAS*, and *Psychological Science*.

Professor Kunst has received numerous awards including the 2024 Janet Taylor Spence Award for Transformative Early Career Contributions and the 2019 Rising Star Designation from the Association of Psychological Science, and the 2021 Early Career Award from the International Academy of Intercultural Research. His work has been featured in various national and international media outlets such as *The Atlantic*, *New Scientist*, *Scientific American*, *Pacific Standard*, *Harvard Gazette* and *Vice*.

## *Abstract of the presentation*

**From reactive interventions to preventive epistemology: identifying systemic psychological vulnerabilities to misinformation and conspiracy theories.**

In this presentation, I argue that effectively combating misinformation and conspiracy theories requires a fundamental shift from reactive interventions to systemic prevention. Understanding the underlying societal conditions that allow misinformation to flourish is essential for developing proactive approaches.

I focus on two critical megatrends that create fertile ground for conspiracy beliefs: the increasing political polarization of Western societies and the growing loneliness epidemic. Based on two lines of research, I demonstrate how these trends undergird misinformation acceptance and conspiratorial thinking.

By understanding these underlying mechanisms, we can design interventions that address root causes rather than symptoms. Instead of merely intervening after misinformation spreads or warning people about it, we need comprehensive approaches that strengthen social cohesion, rebuild institutional trust, and address loneliness across different demographic groups. Only through such systemic approaches can we create future societies more resilient to misinformation and conspiracy theories.

# Prof. Barbara Prainsack

Chair of the European Group on Ethics in Science  
and New Technologies (EGE),  
University of Vienna



Barbara Prainsack is a professor at the Department of Political Science at the University Vienna, where she also directs the Centre for the Study of Contemporary Solidarity (CeSCoS). Her work explores the social, ethical, and regulatory dimensions of data-driven practices in biomedicine and forensics, as well as practices and institutions of solidarity in medicine and beyond. She holds honorary positions at the School of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Sydney and at the Centre for Health, Law, and Emerging Technologies (HeLEX) at the University of Oxford. Her latest books are: *The Pandemic Within: Policy Making for a Better World* (with H. Wagenaar, Policy Press, 2021), and *Personalized Medicine: Empowered Patients in the 21st Century?* (New York University Press, 2017). A new monograph on *States of Solidarity: How to save a world in peril* is under contract with Oxford University Press. Barbara is also involved in policy-related work, e.g. as Chair of the European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies which advises the European Commission.

## *Abstract of the presentation*

### **Defending democracy in the digital age (Based on the EGE Recommendation)**

Democratic societies face unprecedented challenges in the digital age, characterised by rapid technological transformations that simultaneously enhance and threaten democratic processes. Digital technologies facilitate broader participation, transparency, and civic engagement, but also enable disinformation, polarisation, surveillance, and the erosion of institutional legitimacy. Drawing upon two recent Opinions of the European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies (EGE), this talk addresses key questions arising from these tensions: How can democracies effectively respond to disinformation without undermining fundamental freedoms? What regulatory and institutional frameworks are necessary to ensure democratic resilience against digital manipulation and authoritarian tendencies? The talk argues for a robust defense of democracy that transcends reactive measures by proactively embedding democratic values into digital infrastructures, fostering inclusive participation, and establishing accountability mechanisms suited to digital realities. Ultimately, defending democracy in the digital era demands sustained democratic innovation, informed by an ethics of collective responsibility, pluralism, and justice.

## SPEAKERS AND MODERATORS

### SESSION 3

## Protecting mental health of children and young people in the digital world

### Prof. **Stefano Semplici**

Italian Committee for Bioethics



Stefano Semplici is a professor of Social Ethics and Bioethics and a member of the Faculty of the Ph. D in Philosophy at Tor Vergata University of Rome. He is a member of the Italian Committee for Bioethics and was the Chair of the International Bioethics Committee of UNESCO (where he was appointed in 2008) from 2011 to 2015 and of the Committee for Bioethics of the Italian Society of Pediatrics from 2014 to 2019. He is an Associate Editor of the journal «Medicine, Health Care and Philosophy» (since 2010) and was Editor and then Co-editor of the Journal «Archivio di Filosofia/Archives of Philosophy» from 2007 to 2016. He is also a corresponding member of the Pontifical Academy for Life, a member of the steering committee of the Institute for philosophical studies "Enrico Castelli", and of the Editorial Boards and the scientific committees of other institutions, journals, and series. In 2023 he published the book *Etica post-pandemica*.

## Dr Didem Özkul

London School of Economics and Political Science,  
Department of Media and Communications



Didem Özkul is interested in the social uses and societal implications of emerging digital technologies. Her research has explored mobile communication and use of location-based services, privacy and surveillance implications of geolocation technologies, use of networked sensors and sensor-mediated communication, and implications of machine learning algorithms and automation on social and physical mobilities. Her recent research focuses on AI and human agency, and the social uses and implications of human-machine communication.

She received her PhD from the Communication and Media Research Institute at the University of Westminster and received her MA and BSc from Bilkent University. Before joining LSE, she held academic and research positions at Bilkent University (Turkey), the Geomedia Research Centre at Karlstad University (Sweden), the Knowledge Lab at University College London (UK), and London College of Communication (UK).

She is an honorary associate professor at University College London and co-editor of Routledge Series in Mobile Communication.

She published her research in *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *New Media & Society*, *Mobile Media & Communication*, and *Convergence: International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*.

*Title of the presentation*

**Best interest of the child in the digital environment – human rights perspective**

## Dr **Isolina Riaño-Galán**

Vice chair of the Spanish Bioethics Committee



Vice-President of the Spanish Bioethics Committee. President of the Scientific Committee of the SIBI (International Society of Bioethics). Member of the Bioethics Advisory Committee of the Principality of Asturias and of the Bioethics Committee of the Spanish Association of Pediatrics. Doctor of Medicine.

Specialist in Pediatrics in Central University Hospital of Asturias. Researcher at the Ciber of Epidemiology and Public Health (CIBERESP) and the Research Institute of the Principality of Asturias (ISPA). Associate Professor, Health Sciences, University of Oviedo.

## Prof. André Dias Pereira

Vice president of the National Council of Ethics for the Life Sciences (CNECV), Portugal



Vice-President of the Council of Ethics for Life Sciences. Associate Professor, Faculty of Law, University of Coimbra. President of Direction of the Centre for Biomedical Law; President of the Institutional Review Board of AIBILI; Member of the Ethics Committee of the National Institute of Legal and Forensic Medicine; International Associate of the Brazilian Institute of Civil Liability Studies; Fellow of ECTIL (European Centre on Tort and Insurance Law - Vienna, Austria); Chair of the Education Committee of the World Association for Medical Law.

### *Abstract of the presentation*

#### **Screen addiction and mental health in children and adolescents: An emerging problem. The situation in Spain and Portugal**

Excessive screen use among children and adolescents has become a growing concern due to its negative impact on mental health and development. While digital technologies offer educational and social benefits, their overuse is associated with emotional and behavioral issues such as anxiety, depression, irritability, low self-esteem, and emotional dysregulation—especially among adolescents heavily engaged in social media. Additionally, screen exposure before bedtime disrupts sleep patterns, affecting rest quality, attention, memory, and academic performance. Socially, compulsive screen use can reduce real-life interactions, leading to isolation and weakened social skills.

Risk factors for screen addiction include lack of parental supervision, low self-esteem, and emotional distress. Conversely, protective measures such as setting screen time limits, promoting outdoor activities, and fostering family dialogue help reduce these risks. A preventative, educational approach that promotes healthy technology use is essential for children's well-being.

From an ethical standpoint, screen addiction raises critical concerns. Children are particularly vulnerable to the addictive designs of apps and games, which often use attention-capturing algorithms that undermine their best interests. Unrestricted screen use can hinder emotional,



social, and cognitive development, violating children's rights to health and balanced growth as established in international frameworks like the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Moreover, the collection of personal data without informed consent raises serious privacy issues.

There is a shared ethical responsibility among parents, educators, policymakers, and the tech industry to protect children from harmful digital environments. This includes promoting responsible screen use and ensuring regulation that respects digital rights. Additionally, the digital divide must be addressed, as some children face overexposure while others lack basic access. Ultimately, ensuring the full protection of children's rights in the digital world requires thoughtful decision-making that considers their holistic well-being. This complex task is essential and urgent.

## Dr Theodoros Trokanas

Hellenic National Commission for Bioethics  
& Technoethics, Greece,  
Scientific officer



Theodoros Trokanas was born in Thessaloniki, Greece. He graduated from the Department of Law of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (2000). In 2003 he obtained his Master's degree in "Human Rights and Protection of Humanity" with a specialisation in private law from the University of Dijon. In 2011 he was awarded a doctorate in Civil Law (Family Law) by the Faculty of Law of AUTH.

From 2011 to 2013 and from 2018 to 2020 he taught civil and commercial law courses at the Department of Accounting and Finance of University of Macedonia. From 2013 to 2017 he held the position of Lecturer and then Assistant Professor of Civil Law at the School of Law of European University Cyprus. Since 2011 he has been teaching as Visiting Professor in the Interdepartmental Postgraduate Programmes "Modern Medical Acts: Legal Regulation and Bioethical Dimension" and "Critical Thinking and Soft Skills in Biomedical Sciences" at AUTH. As an Adjunct Professor of the Hellenic Open University from 2017 to 2020, he taught the Module "Basic Principles of Law and Administration" in the Business and Organisations Administration Programme. As an Adjunct Professor of the Open University of Cyprus since 2021 he has been teaching the Module "Ethics and Reproductive Health" in the postgraduate programme "Bioethics-Medical Ethics", and since 2024 Modules "Contract Law" and "Family Law" in the undergraduate programme "Law. From 2022-2023 he taught "Inheritance Law" and "Land Law - Horizontal and Vertical Property" at the Faculty of Law of AUTH and since 2023 he has been teaching "Civil Law" and "Labour Law" at the Department of Accounting and Finance of the Athens University of Economics and Business. Since 2024 he has been teaching "Principles of Law" at the Hellenic Air Force Academy.

In 2017 he co-directed the International Anniversary Conference "1997-2017: 20 years after Oviedo Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine. What are the achieved gains and its potential?". Since 2020 he has been a National Trainer of the Council of Europe in the HELP project "Key human rights principles in Biomedicine", and since 2021 he has participated in the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Bioethics Academy (SNFBA) initiative of the Johns Hopkins Berman Institute of Bioethics (JHU) and Bioethics Chair at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH).

He is a member of the Laboratory for the Study of Medical Law and Bioethics at the Faculty of Law of AUTH, a Member of the Society for the Study of Medical Law and Bioethics and an external member of the Research Ethics Committee of the Ionian University. He is also a

member of the European Society for Reproduction and Ethics and the European network on Health, Law and Bioethics (HeaLaB EuroNet).

He authored the monographs "Human reproduction: private autonomy and its limits" (2011), "The Cyprus Law of Medically Assisted Reproduction" (2016) and "The error in motive under the Civil Code" (2022), as well as numerous articles on family law, inheritance law, medical law and personal data law. He has been invited as a speaker at many Greek and international medical law conferences.

Since 2002 he has been a practicing lawyer, a member of Thessaloniki Bar Association, and since 2018 a lecturer of GDPR/DPO seminars at the Lifelong Learning Centre of the AUTH. Since September 2023 he serves as a Scientific Officer at the Hellenic Republic National Commission for Bioethics and Technoethics.

He has an excellent command of English and French and good command of German and Spanish.

#### *Abstract of the presentation*

#### **Protecting children from the adverse impact of social media algorithms: A Statement of the Hellenic Republic National Commission for Bioethics and Technoethics**

This presentation highlights the Statement "On protecting children from the adverse impact of social media algorithms", elaborated by Hellenic Republic National Commission for Bioethics & Technoethics and issued in December 2024 after the conclusion of the NEC Forum Meeting held in Athens between 13-14 December 2024. The Statement emphasises the paramount importance of the best interests of a child in an increasingly AI-dominated world. In addition, the Statement introduces the right to be free from manipulation and misinformation as a safeguard against children's well-being and safety. Further, recognising that social media content can be addictive, misleading, malicious, or harmful, the Statement proposes mitigating these risks in alignment to the fundamental ethical principles, in particular the no-harm principle as well as the legal principle of proportionality. Finally, the Statement adopts concrete good practices and recommendations to foster children's wellbeing.

# Eva Flyvholm

Member of the Data Ethics Council, Denmark



Member of the Data Ethics Council, Consultant on foreign policy and security, former member of the Danish Parliament and spokesperson on IT, education, foreign policy etc.

## # Current Positions:

- Council Member, Writer, and Public Commentator (2022 - present)
  - Member of the Data Ethics Council
  - Consultant and lecturer on EU politics and security
  - Authoring a book on security policy and weapons production
  - Public debate on Tech, foreign policy etc.

## # Previous Positions:

- Member of the Danish Parliament 2015-2022
  - Spokesperson for foreign affairs and defense
  - Spokesperson for IT, education, and research
  - Member of various committees including foreign policy and law committee
- Political Advisor Red Green alliance
- Instructor Cevea and Krogerup
- Assistant Ministry of Education

## # Education:

- Master of Science in Public Administration and International Development (2002 - 2009)
- Diploma in Digital Communication (2003-ongoing)

Born 1981 Lives in Sorø in Denmark with her family

## *Abstract of the presentation*

### **Protecting children against violence in the digital environment**

For several years, the Danish Data Ethics Council has prioritized children's online experiences, recognizing the complex data ethics challenges at the intersection of child protection and digital rights. Digital platforms provide children access to knowledge, friendship and learning.

But the internet and online platforms were designed for adults, with business models built on attention capture, data collection, and behavioral targeting. This creates fundamental data ethics challenges, which the council has addressed this topic across separate projects:

2023: Policy Guidance for Parliament: The council provided comprehensive policy recommendations examining how policy makers can protect children while preserving their rights to information and participation.

2025: Concrete Guidance for Digital Identity Wallet Development: The council is actively advising authorities developing Denmark's new public digital identity wallet that will serve as a digital age verification system. The council focuses on ensuring a user-friendly solution that enables effective age control while protecting user privacy and preventing surveillance overreach.

Ongoing: Fostering public debate around age verification and 'Digital Sovereignty': We continue fostering informed public debate around age verification and "Digital Sovereignty." This fall, we plan to convene stakeholders for a conference exploring how age verification tools can create a better internet for everyone. Additionally, we are developing recommendations to ensure Danish digital sovereignty — establishing a responsible framework for children's data use and online experiences.

## SPEAKERS AND MODERATORS

### SESSION 4: WORKSHOP

#### Further outcomes of the NEC survey: organisation, functioning, and best practices

### Myrthe Lenselink

Coordinator of the Centre for Ethics and Health (CEG)  
senior advisor to the Council for Public Health & Society,  
the Netherlands



Myrthe Lenselink is Coordinator of the Dutch Centre for Ethics and Health (CEG) and Senior Advisor at the Dutch Council for Public Health and Society. In her role as coordinator, she leads the CEG staff team and acts as a liaison between staff, the CEG committee, and the presidium. A unique responsibility of the Centre is to proactively (and unsolicited) bring ethical issues to the political and societal agenda. This involves not only in-depth ethical analysis but also effective communication tailored to diverse audiences.

Myrthe is currently pursuing a PhD focused on the role and position of national ethics councils within democratic deliberation. She has been with the CEG since 2017 and has served as coordinator since 2021. Prior to this, she worked at a research and consultancy firm specializing in integrity, misconduct, and corporate investigations.

She holds a Master's degree in Philosophy and Applied Ethics from Utrecht University. Additionally, Myrthe is Chair of the Dutch Association for Bioethics (NVBe), a professional network dedicated to the ethics of humans, animals, and the planet.



## Dr **Lisa Tambornino**

Research project manager  
at the European Network of Research  
Ethics Committees (EUREC) Office



Lisa Tambornino is a senior research project manager and ethics trainer with many years of experience at the European Network of Research Ethics Committees (EUREC). With an academic background in philosophy, she specializes in research ethics and brings a strong theoretical foundation to the practical challenges of ethical research governance. Lisa leads the EUREC Office team, which is actively involved in numerous EU-funded projects focused on research ethics (RE) and research integrity (RI), contributing to both policy development and implementation.

Her work includes designing and delivering targeted training programmes for researchers, students, and members of research ethics committees (RECs), with the goal of fostering a culture of ethical awareness in European research. She is deeply committed to advancing ethical standards and promoting responsible research practices across disciplines.

# Carly Seedall

Research project manager  
at the European Network of Research  
Ethics Committees (EUREC) Office



Carly Seedall is a research project manager at the EUREC Office, where she has worked since 2022. She has contributed to multiple EU-funded coordination and support action projects, including PREPARED, RE4GREEN, and TechEthos, supporting initiatives at the intersection of ethics, policy, and emerging technologies. Alongside her work at EUREC, Carly serves as a part-time Scientific Policy Officer for the SAPEA project, representing Academia Europaea in the science-for-policy landscape.

Carly also coordinates EUREC's Working Group on legal and policy issues affecting research ethics committees, fostering dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders. Her work bridges project management, policy development, and the promotion of ethics in research governance.

## *Abstract of the presentation*

### **SAEGE and SIMPLIFY: Upcoming EU Projects Shaping the Future of Research Ethics and Integrity**

As science and technology rapidly evolve, the need for ethically grounded research and innovation in Europe becomes increasingly urgent. Two new EU-funded Horizon Europe projects—SAEGE and SIMPLIFY—led by EUREC, aim to strengthen the ethical infrastructure supporting both high-level policymaking and day-to-day research practice across the European Research Area.

SAEGE (Support for the EGE) is designed to reinforce the work of the European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies (EGE) by improving access to multidisciplinary, high-quality ethics analysis. The project will establish an early alert system for identifying emerging ethical challenges through techniques like horizon scanning, social media analysis, and web scraping. At its core is the creation of the EGE Et Alia Advisory Network (EGEAN), which will connect the EGE to leading ethics institutions across Europe. The NEC-Forum will play a special and strategic role in this network, ensuring national perspectives are meaningfully integrated into European-level ethical advice.

SIMPLIFY addresses the operational complexities and uneven implementation of research ethics (RE) and research integrity (RI) across European institutions. Despite comprehensive guidelines from EU and international bodies, institutions often face challenges in applying them effectively. SIMPLIFY will develop modular, context-sensitive RE&RI roadmaps, co-

designed with stakeholders, to help embed ethical standards in institutional practice. It also aims to expand collaboration within existing European networks.

Together, SAEGE and SIMPLIFY represent complementary efforts to strengthen Europe's capacity to anticipate, assess, and address ethical challenges—bridging the gap between ethics policy and practice, and reinforcing a shared commitment to responsible research and innovation.

## SPEAKERS AND MODERATORS

### SESSION 5

## New and old ethical challenges in the medical context

### Prof Janet Mifsud

Head of Department Clinical  
Pharmacology & Therapeutics,  
Faculty of Medicine & Surgery, University of Malta



Professor Janet Mifsud, is Head, Department of Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics, University of Malta. Her area of expertise is in the pharmacology of drugs used in chronic neurological disorders, pharmacotoxicology, education in pharmacology and also ethical issues in health care and has published extensively in her area of expertise. She is a Fulbright Scholar and is involved in several EU wide research projects. She was formerly Vice-President (Europe) International Bureau for Epilepsy. She also has a degree in Theology, has set on several national ethics committees. She is involved in several EU and internationally funded projects and has been invited several times by the European Commission to contribute as external expert evaluator on Ethics Panels for several FP and Horizon projects. She was elected Fellow of the British Pharmacological Society in 2017 and Ambassador for the International League Against Epilepsy in 2019.

On a national level, she was the first Commissioner, National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) and was for several years a member of the Public Service Commission, a member of the Centre for Freedom from Addiction, President's Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society; and a member of the Fund for Voluntary Organisations, Malta Community Chest Fund. She is presently Board Member, New Hope Services for Drug Rehabilitation, Caritas Malta.

# Dr Elodie Malbois

Swiss National Advisory Commission  
on Biomedical Ethics



Elodie Malbois is a philosopher and bioethicist based in Switzerland. She serves as a scientific collaborator for both the Swiss National Advisory Commission on Biomedical Ethics and the Institute for Ethics, History, and the Humanities at the University of Geneva. Her work spans a range of topics within biomedical ethics, including the ethical implications of emerging technologies and research ethics.

She holds a PhD in Philosophy from the University of Fribourg (Switzerland) and a Master's degree from the University of St Andrews (UK).

## *Abstract of the presentation*

### **Medical treatment for minors with gender dysphoria**

Medical decisions regarding minors with gender dysphoria are especially complex and heavily debated. Often, there is an urgent need to act because of the significant suffering of the young people concerned and the imminent physical transformations associated with puberty. At the same time, the fact that they are not yet mature and that their personality is still developing argues rather in favor of a cautious approach.

In a position paper, the Swiss National Advisory Commission on Biomedical Ethics (NCE) discusses how treatment decisions for gender dysphoria in minors should be taken from an ethical point of view. Given the extremely personal nature of this decision, the NCE considers that consent by substitution is inadmissible for gender-affirming medical measures and interventions that permanently alter a person's appearance or have irreversible consequences on their fertility. The right of minors who still lack capacity to consent to an open future must be respected as much as possible during treatment. On the other hand, for interventions with reversible effects, consent by substitution is admissible provided that they are medically indicated and desired by the person concerned.

The CNE also addresses the question of the social context in which these medical decisions are made. It is clear that the more a person has to conform to binary gender stereotypes for their gender identity to be socially accepted, the greater the pressure on those concerned to undergo treatments that modify their body.

## Prof. Luisa Borgia

Chair of the Bioethics Committee, San Marino



Luisa Borgia has degrees in Philosophy and Sociology and a PhD in History and Theory of Law from the University of Rome-Tor Vergata. She obtained her Postgraduate and Master's degrees in Bioethics from the Catholic University of Rome. She teaches Bioethics at the Polytechnic University of Marche, where she coordinates the Master in Bioethics for Clinical Trials and Ethics Committees.

She is Chair of the National Bioethics Committee of Republic of San Marino, member of the CDBIO-Council of Europe and its Bureau. She was President of the 14th Global Summit of National Ethics Committees, organized in collaboration with WHO and UNESCO in the Republic of San Marino. She is Member of the European Network of Research Ethics and Research Integrity (ENERI), of the European Commission. She was a member of the Italian National Committee for Bioethics and of several Italian Ethics Committees for clinical trials.

She is the author of numerous monographs and publications in national and international scientific journals.

### *Abstract of the presentation*

#### **The right to be forgotten for cancer survivors**

San Marino Bioethics Committee (CSB), in 2023, devoted a document to an issue that is still unexplored in the civil community and in the legal context: the exclusion of persons cured of cancer from participation in some social services. The stigma of "cancer patient" *de facto* constitutes a social discrimination, which persists throughout life even in those who have faced and overcome the disease. The severe discomfort experienced by these persons has led patients' associations to request that, after the remission of the disease, they are granted the so-called "right to be forgotten for cancer survivors", namely the possibility of accessing some specific services, including financial and insurance services, without having to provide information on their health history. Until now, this request has received little response in the legal sphere, even less in the bioethical sphere; however, in 2022 the European Parliament passed a Resolution in which it explicitly called on Member States to initiate a regulatory process to guarantee this right, following the example of what has happened in a (still small) number of countries. Therefore, a new course is being taken in Europe to ensure equity of



access to some services even for those citizens excluded on the basis of an unacceptable health stigma. Indeed, CSB document highlights the importance of developing a social culture of cancer survivors, from a point of view that is not only bioethical and bio-legal, but also clinical and psychological, offering original reflections on the rights of persons made vulnerable by a disease also extends to caregivers. The document was accepted by the Sammarinese government which issued the appropriate law (December 2024) with an emergency procedure and with the unanimity of the Parliament. San Marino therefore becomes the ninth European country to have such a law, inspired by the activity of CSB.

## Dr Calum MacKellar

Director of Research of the Scottish Council  
on Human Bioethics



After completing his Diplome d'Ingénieure in bio-organic chemistry with the European High Institute of Chemistry, now part of the University of Strasbourg, in France, Dr. MacKellar obtained his doctorate in Biochemistry with the University of Stuttgart in Germany. He then returned to Scotland to begin working, in 1991, with the University of Edinburgh and the UK Medical Research Council as a Postdoctoral Research Fellow, which was followed by a number of years in industry, in Glasgow, synthesising new kinds of DNA to be used as possible medicinal drugs against disorders such as AIDS.

Subsequently, in 1997, Dr. MacKellar began teaching biological chemistry and bioethics at Queen Margaret University, in Edinburgh, returning to Strasbourg in France, in 2001, to work as a senior civil servant with the Bioethics Division of the Council of Europe. In 2003, he came back to Scotland as the Director of Research of the Scottish Council on Human Bioethics (a registered Scottish charity) which encourages the engagement of Scottish society in biomedical ethics. Since 2010, he has also been a Visiting Lecturer and Visiting Professor in bioethics at St Mary's University in London.

*Abstract of the presentation*

### **Are Implanted Devices Part of the Body?**

Ever more mechanical and electronic parts are being grafted onto, or implanted into, patients in order to address certain dysfunctions. But these devices are creating new ethical challenges since they may, for example, significantly extend life-expectancy. Questions also arise whether patients should be able to switch off these artificial devices when they are tired of living.

In this regard, it is important to first define what the human body represents and the limits of this body since a number of legal human rights instruments indicate that the living human body (which has immeasurable value and worth) should be considered and protected in a completely different way to mere things or objects. Moreover, the boundary of the body delimits the private realm which is generally beyond public interference and largely outside the reach of governmental control. For example, Article 3 of the European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights indicates: "Everyone has the right to respect for his or her physical and

mental integrity.”

It is also sometimes difficult to determine whether different artificial devices which are grafted onto, or implanted into, patients are considered by them as (1) part of their human bodies or (2) just objects added to their bodies, which may be considered as forms of treatment.

The presentation will try to address some of these questions. It will also suggest that the way patients consider an artificial device grafted onto, or implanted into, their bodies may vary quite considerably in the light of a number of factors.

# MD Kati Myllymäki

Chair of Finnish National Advisory Board  
on Social Welfare and Health Care Ethics (ETENE)



## PRESENT ACTIVITIES

CHAIR: National Advisory Board on Social and Health Care Ethics ETENE  
CHAIR: Advisory board for Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare  
CHAIR: Board of Foundation Medical History Museum in Finland

## EDUCATION

MD Helsinki University 1984, Specialist in family medicine 2002  
University studies in administration, leadership, quality management

## PREVIOUS PROFESSIONAL CAREER

Clinical service in several hospitals and health centers  
Government/civil servant Ministry of Social and Health  
Chief Medical Officer in three social and health care districts  
CEO Finnish Medical Association  
Senior Medical Advisor SOSTE Finnish Federation for Social Affairs and Health

## PREVIOUS POSITION OF RESPONSIBILITY

Activities in several student and professional and scientific medical or scientific associations  
World Medical Association president 2002-03  
Member of working group for Declaration of Helsinki  
Evangelic Lutheran church – ecumenic co-operation and chair of committee for pastoral care in hospitals  
Chair of alumni association in University of Helsinki  
Several positions in governmental committees (End of life care, Arts in health care)

## HONORARY MEMBERSHIPS and MEDALS

Medical Students Association in Helsinki University  
Junior Doctors Association  
Finnish Medical Association  
Finnish Medical Society Duodecim  
Eesti Arstide Liit (Estonia)

*Abstract of the presentation*

**Call for international limits on the number of children per sperm or egg donor – joint statement of the Nordic national ethics councils (Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Norway)**

Nordic Medical/Health Care Ethics councils are calling for INTERNATIONAL LIMITS ON THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN PER SPERM OR EGG DONOR.

Nordic national ethics councils (Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden) recommend establishing an international limit on the number of children that can be conceived from a single egg or sperm donor.

The cross-border use of gametes needs to be addressed through agreement at the European level. The councils urge the Nordic countries to collaborate on a policy initiative to put this discussion on the agenda in the European Union and the Council of Europe.

In addition, the councils want to highlight the following considerations:

- Medical, psychosocial and ethical factors should be considered
- Transparency must be ensured
- The European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology could assist by creating guidelines for commercial operators
- Cryobanks should allow donors to set a maximum limit on the use of their gametes
- Strengthening efforts to recruit donors nationally
- Counseling should be available to donor-conceived individuals and their families

## SPEAKERS AND MODERATORS

### SESSION 6

**Protecting human rights while protecting environment in the context of bioeconomy and sustainable agriculture.  
Ethics of climate engineering**

#### Prof. **Piotr Skubała**

The University of Silesia in Katowice



Prof. Piotr Skubała is a professor of biological sciences at the Faculty of Natural Sciences, University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland. He is an ecologist and acarologist, specializing in the ecology and taxonomy of oribatid mites. He has authored 204 scientific articles, 61 book chapters or monographs, 40 scientific communications, and 195 popular science articles. Prof. Skubała is an environmental ethicist, ecological educator, nature conservation advocate, and climate activist.

He serves as an ethics expert for the European Commission (HORIZON 2020, HORIZON-MSCA-2022), member of the State Council for Nature Conservation, the Team Europe network (European Commission), and the Climate Council at UN Global Compact Network Poland. He chairs the Climate and Environmental Crisis Council at the University of Silesia and is a scientific advisor to the Climate Coalition and the Green REV Institute. He sits on the editorial boards of several journals, including Diversity, Acarologia, and AURA. Ochrona środowiska. He has delivered numerous lectures, workshops, and courses at his home university, at other universities in Poland and abroad, as well as for various institutions. He collaborates with local, national, and international media as an expert in ecology, environmental protection, the climate crisis, and as a science communicator.

# Prof. Dr iur. **Helmut Frister**

Chair of the German Ethics Council



- Since 2023 Senior Professor at the Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf
- Since 2020 Member of the German Ethics Council, since 2024 Chair
- 2007 Reinhard and Emmi Heinen Award, in particular for his research on the General Part of the Criminal Law
- Since 1999 Director of the Institute for Legal Issues in Medicine at the Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf
- 1994–2023 Professor for Criminal Law and Criminal Procedural Law at the Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf
- 1993 Professor for Criminal Law at the University of Dresden
- 1993 Habilitation in Criminal Law and Criminal Procedural Law at the University of Bonn
- 1987 Bonn University Award for the Best Law Doctoral Dissertation of the Year
- 1986–1993 Scientific Assistant and Senior Assistant at the Faculty of Law at the University of Bonn
- 1986 Doctorate at the University of Bonn
- 1983 Second State Examination
- 1980–1986 Research Assistant at the chair for Criminal and Criminal Procedural Law of Prof. Dr. Gerald Grünwald at the University of Bonn
- 1980 First State Examination
- 1975–1980 Law Studies at the University of Bonn

## Memberships

- Member of the Ethics Committee of the Medical Faculty at the Heinrich Heine University of Düsseldorf
- Member of the Ethics Committee of the University Hospital Düsseldorf
- Member of the working group Alternativentwurf
- Member of the Alexandra Lang Foundation for Patient Rights
- Member of the Ethics Committee of the North Rhine Medical Association
- Vice Chairman of the PID Commission NRW
- Leader of the working group General Part of the Standing Commission on Organ Transplantation at the German Medical Association
- Member of the Federal Advisory Board of the German Organ Procurement Organization



**Climate justice opinion**

Tackling climate change raises important questions of justice and responsibility. The analysis centres on three dimensions of climate justice: within society, internationally and intergenerationally. Burdens and responsibilities must be distributed fairly in these dimensions. In its Opinion, the German Ethics Council develops a concept of climate justice: Burdens and duties in the fight against climate change should be distributed in such a way that the minimum requirements for a good, successful life can be achieved for all human beings now and in the future. On this basis, the Ethics Council addresses key issues regarding responsibility in climate change and formulates recommendations.

The 13 recommendations in this Opinion take up these topics and call for a public debate on climate change that is focussed on climate justice and responsibility, as well as for a transparent and fair distribution of burdens. They highlight the responsibility of German politics to work towards a more rapid, effective and fair implementation of climate protection measures, both within our society and internationally. Politics must create better framework conditions that make it easier for individuals and private organisations such as companies to behave in climate-friendly ways, and that more strongly take into account the concerns of young and future generations. At the same time, the recommendations point to the individual moral duty of all people to co-operate, and to contribute to the containment of climate change within the scope of their possibilities. In a dissenting vote, three Council members discuss aspects where they disagree with the Opinion.

# Prof. **Maria do Céu Patrão Neves**

President of the National Consultative  
Ethics Committee (CCNE)  
Deputy Chair of the European Group  
on Ethics in Science and New Technologies (EGE)



Full Professor of Ethics of the University of the Azores (Portugal), President of the National Council of Ethics for the Life Sciences (Portugal), Vice-chair of the European Group of Ethics in Science and New Technologies (EGE, European Commission), Member Steering Committee for Human Rights in the fields of Biomedicine and Health (CDBIO, Council of Europe), of the World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology (COMEST, UNESCO), of the Lisbon Academy of Sciences. She was consultant on Ethics of Life for the President of the Portuguese Republic, Member of the Board of Directors of the International Association of Bioethics. Currently she teaches at different Universities and is a member of several Ethics Committees, also coordinating international projects, namely within Africa-EU partnership. Ethics expert and project evaluator for the European Commission, and Ethics Advisor and Chair of Ethics Advisory Boards (EAC) of several European Research Projects. Authored and/or coordinated 38 books, including the 13-volume collection dedicated to Applied Ethics (2016-2018), and the Dictionary of Global Bioethics, with Henk ten Have (2021), and hundreds of papers, delivered over 400 conferences. She is a regular columnist in regional and national journals. Member of the European Parliament (2009-2014).

## *Abstract of the presentation*

### **Responsible technological innovation applied to agriculture: an ethical imperative**

The National Ethics Council for Life Sciences (CNECV) has issued a Report on “The Application of New Technologies to Agriculture” (2023-2024), given

- the invaluable role of agriculture in producing high-quality and safe food, fulfilling its core mission in a world marked by strong population growth, where food security is a human right
- the negative impact of climate change on agriculture and the need for this activity to continuously adapt to new production conditions
- the contribution of agriculture to the provision of public goods, particularly in maintaining ecosystem balance, preserving biodiversity and protecting the environment, as well as sustaining rural communities and promoting territorial cohesion

- the ethical imperative of agricultural efficiency, both in increasing food production, adapting to climate change, and reducing environmental impacts

This Report highlights food and food security as a Human Right (UDHR, 1948; SDGs 2030) and warns about the growing world population, emphasizing the urgency of investing in agricultural technological innovation in light of a threefold need:

- to increase the production of nutritious and safe food for all, as a condition for an active and healthy life;
- to reduce the environmental impact of agricultural activity, easing the pressure on natural resources;
- to adapt agriculture to climate change, ensuring efficient and sustainable production systems.

Rejecting an uncritical and overly optimistic view of new technologies (technophilia), the National Ethics Council, in the current demographic and environmental context, considers investment in technological innovation applied to agriculture a responsibility shared by all stakeholders in agricultural innovation, subordinating it to a precautionary approach in the prior assessment of its efficiencies and impacts.

## Prof. Carlo Massimo Pozzi

University of Milan, Department of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences - Production, Landscape, Agroenergy



Carlo Pozzi is an Associate Professor at the Department of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (DISAA) at the University of Milan 'La Statale'. His academic portfolio encompasses teaching key subjects such as Plant Biotechnology Engineering, Plant Genetics, Genomics, and Grapevine Genetics across three distinct degree programs. His international teaching experience includes lecturing at the University of Copenhagen.

Professor Pozzi has coordinated significant projects, including Adaptnet (funded by EACEA) and CASTADIVA (funded by Regione Lombardia). While at the University of Milano, he supervised more than 20 Master's theses and one PhD candidate.

Beyond his core teaching and research, Professor Pozzi holds administrative and coordination roles. He serves as the Vice-President of the Management Committee for the Faculty of Agriculture, the Didactic Coordinator for the MSc program in Global Environment and Development (MERGED), and acts as the Delegate for Internationalization within DISAA.

Prior to his current academic position, his professional background included roles as a Program Manager and Head of Administrative Services at the Edmund Mach Foundation, as well as experience as a Staff Scientist at Philip Morris International.

He authored more than 30 scientific papers in international journals.

### *Abstract of the presentation*

#### **Sustainable agriculture – technologies of today and of the future**

The foundation of genetic improvement in any species lies in the availability of genetic variation, whether it arises naturally or is artificially induced. For much of human history, particularly the first approximately 10,000 years of agriculture, progress in breeding was slow. It relied primarily on observing natural phenotypes and selecting desirable traits that emerged from spontaneous genetic variation.

The Green Revolution of the 20th century marked the first large-scale application of scientific

methods to enhance the crop species central to our food supply. This initiative was immensely successful, playing a critical role in supporting global human population growth. Subsequently, our understanding deepened, enabling us to decode the complex genetic information encoded within the genome and unravel the mechanisms of gene expression.

Among the key enabling technologies, the capacity for DNA sequencing has developed at an unprecedented pace, now responsible for generating vast quantities of the data circulating globally. Concurrently, highly efficient and precise methods for creating new genetic variation have been refined. We have transitioned from inducing random mutations, often using methods like radiation, to possessing the ability to modify DNA at specific, targeted locations within the genome.

Scientific progress in molecular genetics has been exceptionally rapid, arguably outpacing advancements in many other scientific fields. However, this surge in technological capability has not always been accompanied by a commensurate ability to fully grasp and effectively regulate the underlying ethical considerations.

The crucial challenge humanity now confronts is to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the technological, ecological, and ethical implications of these powerful new genetic technologies. This understanding is vital before the mounting pressures of population growth potentially drive the widespread and perhaps uncontrollable adoption of these tools.

## **CLOSING REMARKS: the future of the NEC**

### **Announcement regarding the organisation of the 35th NEC Forum in Copenhagen, Denmark**

#### **Dr. Francisca Nordfalk**

Member of the National Center for Ethics, Denmark



Dr. Francisca Nordfalk holds a PhD in Medicine, Culture, and Society, with a background in Public Health. She is an experienced researcher within in the assessment of data infrastructures, the implications of technology, and the academic, political and public debates surrounding the values, rights, and duties related to the use and re-use of health data. Currently, she serves as a project manager for the Danish Data Ethics Council, where she focuses on the ethical considerations of data within the context of health and social values.

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#### **Closing remarks Edyta Sikorska**

The Research Ethics and Integrity Sector  
of DG Research & Innovation  
of the European Commission



Edyta Sikorska, a clinical psychologist by background, a specialist in Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT). For several years, she worked as psychologist-counsellor for NGOs and local government in Gdansk, Poland. Since 2009, she has been employed by the EU Institutions. She is presently serving in the Research Ethics and Integrity Sector of DG Research & Innovation at the European Commission. Her responsibilities encompass the management of operational matters related to the ethics appraisal process, provision of support to experts, and oversight of the ethics helpdesk. Furthermore, she is tasked with fostering cooperation with representatives of National Ethics Councils and coordinating the organization of the NEC Forum.