



**RFO Change on Borders  
Thematic Forum 1:**

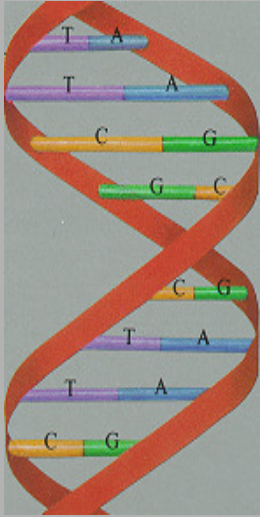
**Biotechnology and life science clusters in border  
regions**

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**“European Association of Global Bioethics”**

**A draft presentation**

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Linz, 21 March 2007



# EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF GLOBAL BIOETHICS

Founded in 1998

## Aims:

Implementing research and education on the ethical problems that have arisen by the on going developments in the Life Sciences and Technologies.

The EAGB is a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary forum open to everyone interested both in fundamental and applied reflection on bioethical problems.

The EAGB conceives Bioethics as **a secular ethics** based upon respect of freedom of conscience and the inalienable dignity and integrity of each and every person as well as respect of nature; a pluralistic and universalistic domain, one not restrained by moral conventionalisms, political biases, religious persuasions, social uses or cultural habits, but open to the values carried by the former; a critical and autonomous field distinct from juridical regulation, professional deontology and confessional morals.



## EAGB Objectives

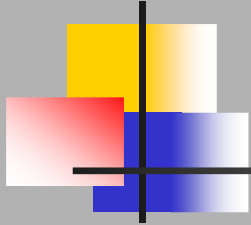
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- To promote research & teaching in Global Bioethics in the different countries of EU.
- To promote the exchange of information, workshops, scientific congresses & schools at the university level of the different European states.

The Society co-operates with the various offices for Education, Science and Culture within the following organizations: UNESCO, W.H.O., U.N.O., International Institute for the Study of Man, EU-programs and with all other relevant organizations which are concerned with the study of interrelationships between human beings and nature.

Disciplines involved so far:

Biology, Law, Anthropology, Philosophy



## EAGB BACKGROUND (1)



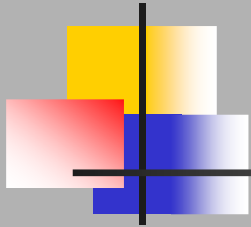
In 1996, under the SOCRATES-ERASMUS umbrella, a network of European Universities was established aiming to develop the European Module: **BIOETHICS BIOMEDICAL AND SOCIETAL ASPECTS**.

**Members of this network are:**

- **Vrije Universiteit Brussel (BE)**
- **Universite Libre de Bruxelles (BE)**
- **Universidad Pais Vasco (ES)**
- **Universidad la Coruna (ES)**
- **Universitat de Barcelona (ES)**
- **Attila Jozsef University Szeged (HU)**
- **Universita degli studi di Firenze (IT)**
- **Univesidad Lsboa Nova (PT)**
- **Democritus University of Thrace (Laboratory of Anthropology) (EL)**

**Outcome of the first period (1996-1999):**

- **elaborated curriculum for optional teaching (undergraduate level)**
- **pilot implementation in the partner universities 1997-1998**
- **educational CD with teaching material,**
- **establishment of the European Association of Global Bioethics (1998)**



## EAGB BACKGROUND (2)



In 1999 the network was funded for another 3 years and promoted a CDA (masters level) about **"SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES IN LIFE SCIENCES"**

**Outcome of the second period (1999-2001):**

- elaborated curriculum (post graduate level)
- A book of the same title
- An on-line Journal "STUDIA BIOETHICA"
- Acceptance of Bioethics as a topic within the European Master of Anthropology and Human Biology
- Students' exchanges within the network
- Preparation of a European Master on Global Bioethics



## EAGB TODAY

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Since 2001, the network is no longer funded by the EU.

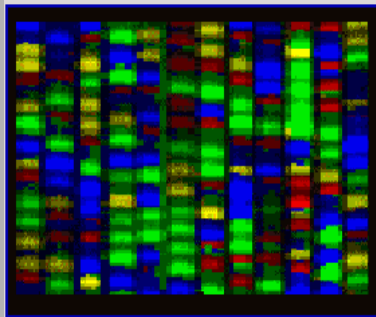
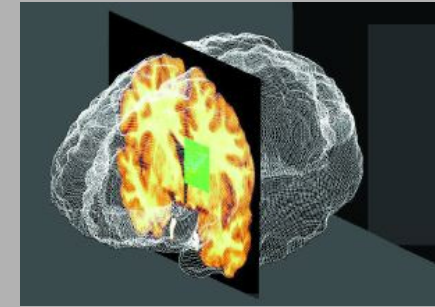
However, EAGB maintains its cohesion and proceeds with its activities, on its own members' funds:

Thus:

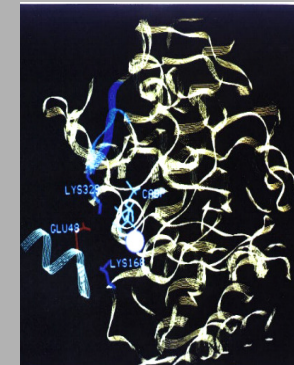
- It organises regular meetings twice a year in one of the participating countries (the next one to be held in Bilbao on 2-4 May 2007).
- It produces scientific papers and teaching material.
- It publishes books on Bioethical issues (the second one is under preparation).
- It participates in international meetings. (2003, Florence IUAES Conference).
- It tries to extend its educational relationships at a regional level.



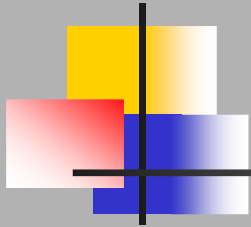
## EAGB: indicative topics



- **The Human Genome Project and beyond**
- **Gene patents**
- **Gene therapies**
- **Genetic databases**
- **Pharmacogenetics**
- **New reproductive technologies**
- **Stem cell research**
- **Xenotransplantation**
- **Environmental ethics**
- **Genetically Modified Organisms**
- **Cloning**
- **Public understanding of Life Sciences**



## Life Sciences, Bioethics and Regional Development Comments from a distant EU Region

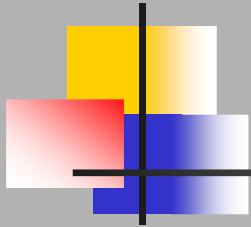


### **Key Traits of the Region of Eastern Macedonia & Thrace**

- **Agricultural character**
- **Unique natural environment (several RAMSAR protected areas)**
- **Variable linguistic landscape**
- **Multicultural traditions**
- **Numerous archaeological sites**
- **Strategic geographical position**
- **Developmental potential**

**...but no relation to high-tech biotechnological activities, innovative research in life sciences, advanced genetics or pharmaceutical industry...**





## However...

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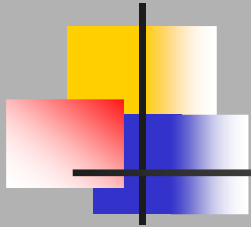
Through its involvement in the aforementioned educational activities, DUTH has succeeded to:

Host 4 Bioethics meetings of the Network, in which representatives from Bulgarian and Turkish universities were present, thus opening a relevant debate at a cross-border level.

Organise a 1 month seminar addressed to secondary education teachers, with updated information and teaching methodology on Bioethical issues.

Offer optional teaching of Bioethics to students of various disciplines.

Maintain its relevant European collaborations continuously active.



## Our experience suggests that...

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- In the era of globalisation no region is allowed to ignore the crucial developments in the field of the Life Sciences.
- Biotechnology units could be established at any time in any region, despite the contemporary absence of infrastructures (e.g. the case of Iceland)
- People should be aware of the economic growth opportunities as well as of the bioethical dilemmas arising from the innovations in the Life Sciences.

In cases of technologically underdeveloped regions, the education on Bioethics:

- brings to the broader public the necessary understanding of the Life Sciences,
- helps create regional collaborations in a “politically neutral” but very important field of knowledge,
- could become the basis of a cross-border educational institute aiming to familiarise local people with the amazing progress in the aforementioned fields, thus preparing them to face the social challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.