



# PRESS RELEASE

## 01/2022

Berlin, 21 February 2022

### Ethics Council invites to discuss the topic “Good to Know? On the Responsible Use of Non-Invasive Prenatal Testing (NIPT)”

In an online evening event of the series “Bioethics Forum” on 23 February, the German Ethics Council will discuss – together with experts and the audience – medical, ethical and sociological questions of dealing with non-invasive prenatal testing (NIPT).

Using a blood sample from the pregnant woman, NIPT can identify various genetic conditions in the embryo at an early stage of pregnancy, for example trisomies 13, 18 and 21. Since 2012, it has been available in Germany as an individual healthcare service, i.e. a medical service that is not covered by statutory health insurance. Following decisions by the Gemeinsamer Bundesausschuss (Federal Joint Committee), it is expected that from spring 2022, the costs for such testing will be reimbursed by statutory health insurance in justified individual cases.

While some welcome this development because they hope that the expansion of prenatal diagnostic possibilities will strengthen reproductive autonomy, others are concerned about it. They fear that non-invasive prenatal diagnostics could become routine practice and lead to increased burdens for expectant parents as well as to more abortions.

In this context, various guiding questions will be addressed in the course of the event: What are the arguments for and against the use of NIPT? What should be allowed to be diagnosed and what not? How should appropriate counselling services be designed? What could be the societal consequences if NIPT was routinely used? After three expert lectures on the use of NIPT, a panel discussion will focus on reports from practice and opportunities for improvement, also including questions from the audience.

More information about the programme can be found (in German) at <https://www.ethikrat.org/forum-bioethik/wissens-wert>. The event will be held in German and broadcast online at <https://www.ethikrat.org/live>. A registration is not required.

During the event, we invite participants to use the online question module to contribute to the debate or to join the discussion on Twitter using #NIPT.

There will be subtitling and sign-language interpreters for the hearing impaired.

#### Members

Prof. Dr. med. Alena Buyx (Chair)  
Prof. Dr. iur. Dr. h. c. Volker Lipp (Vice-Chair)  
Prof. Dr. phil. Dr. h. c. Julian Nida-Rümelin (Vice-Chair)  
Prof. Dr. rer. nat. Susanne Schreiber (Vice-Chair)

Prof. Dr. iur. Steffen Augsberg  
Regional bishop Dr. theol. Petra Bahr  
Prof. Dr. theol. Franz-Josef Bormann  
Prof. Dr. rer. nat. Hans-Ulrich Demuth  
Prof. Dr. iur. Helmut Frister  
Prof. Dr. theol. Elisabeth Gräß-Schmidt  
Prof. Dr. rer. nat. Dr. phil. Sigrid Graumann  
Prof. Dr. rer. nat. Armin Grunwald  
Prof. Dr. med. Wolfram Henn  
Prof. Dr. rer. nat. Ursula Klingmüller  
Stephan Kruip  
Prof. Dr. phil. Dr. h. c. Dipl.-Psych. Andreas Kruse  
Prof. Dr. theol. Andreas Lob-Hüdepohl  
Prof. Dr. phil. habil. Annette Riedel  
Prof. Dr. iur. Stephan Rixen  
Prof. Dr. iur. Dr. phil. Frauke Rostalski  
Prof. Dr. theol. Kerstin Schlögl-Flierl  
Dr. med. Josef Schuster  
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Jun.-Prof. Dr. phil. Muna Tatari

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