

# PRESS RELEASE

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### On the occasion of its tenth anniversary, the German Ethics Council makes human dignity the subject of its annual meeting

**This year the German Ethics Council celebrates its tenth anniversary. To mark this occasion, the Council's members are invited this evening to an official reception hosted by Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier. Over the following two days, the Council will hold its annual meeting, dedicated this year to the topic of "Human Dignity in Our Hands – Challenges from New Technologies." The opening addresses will be delivered by President of the Bundestag, Wolfgang Schäuble, and the renowned Israeli historian Yuval Noah Harari.**

As Peter Dabrock, chair of the Ethics Council, outlines the aim of the anniversary conference, "The call to heed human dignity characterises not only the German polity, but also the European Union. In discussions with the public and with international guests, we aim to examine whether this call can be sustained and continues to offer orientation when new technologies fundamentally challenge the human self-image."

The general understanding of human dignity and what is specifically required for its safeguarding will be discussed at the beginning of the conference. Three areas of technology that touch upon and challenge our human self-image and dignity are explored in more detail: interventions in the brain with procedures such as deep brain stimulation, genetic interventions by means of genome editing, and developments in the field of artificial intelligence.

In the spirit of a critical reaffirmation following ten years of advisory and public relations activities, the Chair of the German Ethics Council, Peter Dabrock, will conclude by discussing with representatives of other national and international ethics councils the question of what contribution expert panels can make to the responsible use of new technologies.

The lectures and discussions are held in German or English and translated simultaneously. The website of the German Ethics Council ([www.ethikrat.org](http://www.ethikrat.org)), which has been completely updated in time for the anniversary, offers access to additional materials for the conference, but also the opportunity to stream the event live at <https://bit.ly/2tyOccS>. Moreover, anyone interested can participate in the online discussions at #Menschenwuerde.

On 11 April 2008, the German Ethics Council was formed on the basis of the Ethics Council Act (EthRG) of 16 July 2007, succeeding the National Ethics Council that had been established by the Federal Government in 2001.

The Ethics Council seeks to pursue the questions of ethics, society, science, medicine and law and the probable consequences for individual and society that result in connection with research and development, in particular in the field of the life sciences and their application to humanity. Its mandate includes informing the public and encouraging discussion in society, preparing opinions and recommendations for political and legislative action, and cooperating with national ethics

#### Members

Prof. Dr. theol. Peter Dabrock (Chair)  
 Prof. Dr. med. Katrin Amunts (Vice-Chair)  
 Prof. Dr. iur. Dr. h. c. Volker Lipp (Vice-Chair)  
 Prof. Dr. med. Claudia Wiesemann (Vice-Chair)  
 Constanze Angerer  
 Prof. Dr. iur. Steffen Augsberg  
 Prof. Dr. theol. Franz-Josef Bormann  
 Prof. Dr. med. Alena M. Buyx  
 Prof. em. Dr. iur. Dr. h. c. Dagmar Coester-Waltjen  
 Dr. med. Christiane Fischer  
 Prof. em. Dr. phil. habil. Dr. phil. h. c. lic. phil. Carl Friedrich Gethmann  
 Prof. Dr. rer. nat. Dr. phil. Sigrid Graumann  
 Bishop Prof. Dr. theol. Martin Hein  
 Prof. Dr. med. Wolfram Henn  
 Prof. Dr. iur. Wolfram Höfling  
 Prof. Dr. (TR) Dr. phil. et med. habil. Ilhan Ilkilic  
 Prof. Dr. rer. nat. Ursula Klingmüller  
 Stephan Kruijff  
 Prof. Dr. phil. Dr. h. c. Dipl.-Psych. Andreas Kruse  
 Prof. Dr. phil. Adelheid Kuhlmei  
 Prof. Dr. med. Leo Latasch  
 Prof. Dr. theol. Andreas Lob-Hüdepohl  
 Prof. em. Dr. iur. Reinhard Merkel  
 Prof. Dr. phil. Gabriele Meyer  
 Prof. Dr. med. Elisabeth Steinhagen-Thiessen  
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councils and comparable institutions belonging to other states and international organisations.

In the first ten years of its work, the German Ethics Council has produced 14 extensive opinions dealing with such topics as the anonymous relinquishment of infants, intersexuality, PGD, genetic diagnosis, biosecurity, patient welfare and big data. Since 2012, the German Ethics Council has also published so-called ad hoc recommendations in order to respond promptly to current topics. To date, the Council has published seven such recommendations on issues such as circumcision, suicide prevention and germline intervention in the human embryo.

Further information can be found at [www.ethikrat.org](http://www.ethikrat.org).