



Council of Europe
Conseil de l'Europe

Long –term dealing with the Corona Pandemic

Council of Europe activities

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<http://www.coe.int/bioethics>



Council of Europe Secretary General Toolkits

- April 2020: [Respecting democracy, rule of law and human rights in the framework of the COVID-19 sanitary crisis - A toolkit for member states](#)
“a toolkit for dealing with the present unprecedented and massive scale sanitary crisis in a way that respects the fundamental values of democracy, rule of law and human rights “
- September 2020: [A Council of Europe contribution to support member states in addressing healthcare issues in the context of the present public health crisis and beyond](#)
“ called for increased multilateral cooperation among the Organisation’s member states to draw lessons from the pandemic crisis and enhance preparedness for addressing health concerns on the basis of common principles and best practices”
→ *Multilateral and multidimensional cooperation project*



Committee on Bioethics (DH-BIO)

- Dedicated web page: selected resources
<https://www.coe.int/en/web/bioethics/covid-19>
- Statement on human rights considerations relevant to the COVID-19 pandemic (April 2020)
- Webinars (June 2020) <https://www.coe.int/en/web/bioethics/events>
 - Covid-19 testing - Key human rights and ethical concerns
 - Promoting health literacy in the context of a pandemic: relevance and challenges
- **Strategic Action Plan on Human Rights and Technologies in Biomedicine (2020-2025)** <https://www.coe.int/en/web/bioethics/strategic-action-plan>
 - Adopted in November 2019
 - Launched in June 2020

Strategic Action Plan on Human Rights and Technologies in Biomedicine (2020 – 2025)

- Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine: general framework for the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms with regards to the applications of biology and medicine.
- 20th anniversary conference (Strasbourg Oct 2017): to reflect upon the relevance of the principles laid down in the Convention and the possible challenges posed to those principles in light of the scientific and technological developments
- **Principles** enshrined in the Oviedo Convention **remain of crucial relevance**, however important new human rights challenges have emerged that need to be addressed.

Pillars

GOVERNANCE

To embed human rights in the development of technologies which have an application in the field of biomedicine.

To foster public dialogue to promote democratic governance and transparency in the field of biomedicine.

EQUITY

To promote equitable and timely access to appropriate innovative treatments and technologies in healthcare.

To combat health disparities created by social and demographic changes in Council of Europe member States.

INTEGRITY

To strengthen children's participation in the decision-making process on matters regarding their health.

To safeguard children's rights in relation to medical practices which have future or long-term implications for them.

To safeguard the rights of persons with mental health difficulties.

COOPERATION & COMMUNICATION

To develop long-term strategic co-operation with Council of Europe committees and other intergovernmental bodies working the field of bioethics.

To ensure the communication and dissemination of the outputs of the Committee on Bioethics to internal and external stakeholders to maximise their uptake and utility.

SAP Year Action Delivered

2020

2021

2022

2023

2024

2025

Translate and Disseminate the Guide on Public Debate in Council of Europe member States.

Disseminate the HELP course on bioethics in Council of Europe member States

Annual online newsletter reporting on the work of the Committee of Bioethics, bioethical developments in Council of Europe member States, and case law of the European Court of Human Rights

Framework for effective co-operation with CoE committees and other intergovernmental organisations working in the field of bioethics.

Seminar on relevant legislation and good practices with regard to early intervention on intersex children

Examine Article 13 of the Convention on Biomedicine in the light of developments in gene editing technologies

Assess the relevance and sufficiency of the existing human rights framework to address the issues raised by neurotechnologies.

Report on the application of AI in healthcare, with a focus on the doctor-patient relationship.

Recommendation on equitable and timely access to innovative treatments and healthcare technologies

Legal instrument to protect the human rights and dignity of persons with regard to involuntary measures in mental healthcare


Promote dialogue amongst a broad range of stakeholders on necessary elements to ensure patient and public interest guides the regulation of genomic medicine.

Guide on health literacy for older persons

Youth Forum for Bioethics

Compendium of Good Practices promoting voluntary measures in the field of mental healthcare

Guide on Good Practices on the participation of children in the decision-making process on matters regarding their health.

 Governance

 Equity

 Integrity

 Cooperation and communication



Covid-19 Pandemic: New priorities

- Relevance of the actions foreseen under the **Equity** pillar
- Change in **scope** and **timeline**
- **Governance**: Need to promote societal dialogue





EQUITY

To promote equitable and timely access to appropriate innovative treatments and technologies in healthcare.

To combat health disparities created by social and demographic changes in Council of Europe member States.

- *Initial focus:* Innovative treatment and interventions

Priorities:

- Equitable access to **vaccines**
 - Statement
- Equitable access to **treatment and equipment** in the context of scarce resources
 - Guidelines

- *Initial focus:* health literacy for older persons

Priority:

- Older persons and other **vulnerable groups**
 - Guidelines



GOVERNANCE

To embed human rights in the development of technologies which have an application in the field of biomedicine.

To foster public dialogue to promote democratic governance and transparency in the field of biomedicine.

- **Article 28** of the Oviedo Convention recognises the importance of trustworthy governance and the need for public engagement and democratic accountability
- Need to promote **societal dialogue** between the public, scientists and policy public health crisis.



Guide to Public Debate on Human Rights and Biomedicine

→ Webinar on Public Debate and Covid-19 Pandemic (February 2021)

NEW COOPERATION PROJECT



- **Multilateral and multidimensional**
 - Cross sectoral and multidisciplinary: between judicial, health and law enforcement authorities
- To address health care issues and devise effective tailor-made solutions
- To fully employ CoE relevant instruments and mechanisms with a view to:
 - **strengthening preparedness** to protect human rights in public health crisis
 - developing more **sustainable solutions** and **building trust** in crisis management
- Instrumental in enriching the Council of Europe standards setting activities in critical areas.



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