

Procedure file


Basic information

INI - Own-initiative procedure	1995/2122(INI)	Procedure rejected
Council of Europe Bioethics Convention		
Subject 4.20.02.04 Genetics and bioethics 6.40.13 Relations with/in the context of international organisations: UN, OSCE, OECD, Council of Europe, EBRD		

Key players

European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	JURI Legal Affairs, Citizens' Rights		21/11/1995
		ELDR PELTTARI Seppo Viljo	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	ENER Research, Technological Development and Energy		17/10/1995
		PSE TANNERT Christof	

Key events

26/10/1995	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
04/06/1996	Vote in committee		Summary
16/07/1996	Debate in Parliament		Summary
18/07/1996	Decision by Parliament	A4-0190/1996	
18/07/1996	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	1995/2122(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 54
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure rejected
Committee dossier	JURI/4/06736

Documentation gateway

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Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0190/1996 OJ C 211 22.07.1996, p. 0002	04/06/1996	EP	
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Council of Europe Bioethics Convention

The committee made clear its opposition to eugenics - attempts to create improved human beings by making changes to inherited characteristics - when it adopted an own-initiative report on the Council of Europe's draft Bioethics Convention. On 4 June the committee adopted the report (PE 215.245) by Mr Seppo PELTTARI (ELDR, Fin) on the Draft Convention for the protection of human rights and dignity of the human being with regard to the application of biology and medicine (Bioethics Convention). In its report, the committee accepted that there was a close connection between the admissibility of embryo research and the development of germ line treatment (which involves interference with sexual reproductive cells and with early embryonic development and subsequent inheritance of the changes made).

Council of Europe Bioethics Convention

The European Parliament rejected (by a very small majority of 197 votes to 192, with 30 abstentions) the report by Mr Seppo Viljo PELTTARI (ELDR, FIN) on the Council of Europe's draft Convention on Bioethics. The rapporteur, who had abstained during the vote in legal committee, left the general voting to the discretion of the House. It will be recalled that the draft Convention lays down minimum standards of protection which do not prevent the signatory countries from applying more stringent measures. In particular, it bans the sale of human organs and tissue and prohibits any alteration of the germ line. It also underlines the importance of not blocking research which might lead to advances in therapeutics. The adoption of the report, which was modified by some fifteen amendments, would have resulted in Parliament taking up a position which drastically reduced the possibilities of research and the recourse to certain therapeutic methods and screening processes. It would therefore have recommended banning the production of embryos, with the exception of a maximum number of 3 embryos in the case of in vitro fertilization, with such a ban complementing a ban on preservation. In circumstances similar to those anticipated by the draft Convention, research on persons who are incapable of giving their consent, particularly those suffering from neurodegenerative diseases, would have been prevented without any direct benefit for the patient. Tests designed to predict genetic diseases could only have been carried out in those cases where the life of the patient would have been at stake and where effective treatment was practicable.