

GLOBALISATION AND NEW EPIDEMICS: ETHICS, SECURITY AND POLICY MAKING

Brussels, 22-23 May 2006



**ORGANISED BY:
DG RESEARCH
European Commission – Science and Society**

Berlaymont Building, rue de la Loi 200, 1049 Brussels

BACKGROUND



This workshop is convened by the European Commission, Directorate General for Research, Science and Society, as part of an EC-funded research project on the “Bioethical Implications of Globalisation Processes” – BIG. One of the most salient effects of globalisation on health is likely to be the possible increased risk of global epidemics. From a microbiological standpoint, globalisation may involve: i) the confluence of infectious diseases within a single, global pool of susceptible individuals, not separated by national boundaries; ii) increased anti-microbial drug resistance, due to prolific and irresponsible use of these drugs against existing pathogens; and iii) the recognition of new emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases. Over the past three decades, scientists have identified more than 30 “new” infectious diseases, including HIV/AIDS, SARS, Ebola, and the West Nile Virus. In addition, the risk of infectious diseases crossing species boundaries may be more frequent, as in the case of “mad cow disease” and the threat of “avian flu.” The potential threat of infectious diseases to the security of human life and global stability is very real. In a closely interconnected and interdependent world, new infectious diseases may adversely affect economic growth, trade, tourism, business and industry, and social stability as well as public health.

RATIONALE



The ethical, social, and policy implications of new epidemics are difficult to assess. The nature and diversity of emerging infectious diseases challenge current public health practices. Physicians have limited or no experience with diagnosis, treatment, and outcomes of emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases. Availability of medical treatment may be increasingly limited within changing health systems; and there is increasing uncertainty about efficacy of currently available treatments and about the pipeline for development of new therapeutics. Many diseases affecting resource-poor environments are simply not profitable for development by multi-national pharmaceutical companies. Public health measures to limit emerging infectious diseases include isolation and quarantine of infected or exposed people. However, the emergence of new epidemics tests the limits of ethics, politics, economics and law in applying such measures. Governments have to weigh the benefits and harms of exposing people, communities and whole countries to possible discrimination and economic insult through epidemic controls. A range of negative outcomes are possible including a population's refusal to accept preventive measures or treatment regimens such as isolation and quarantine. Inappropriate public health responses may cause social disruption and civil disobedience. Beyond the immediate human health toll of epidemic crises, there may be damage inflicted by stereotyping, stigmatization and staggering economic losses, as in the case of a previous Cholera outbreak in India. Another aspect of epidemics in the globalisation age is that it is hard to distinguish a natural disease outbreak from an intentionally caused biological threat. The combined danger arising from the bioterrorist threats to public order and the emergence of naturally-occurring new infections demand novel solutions and particular attention to bioethics.

PURPOSES



The workshop intends to approach the ethical and legal implications of epidemics. These include: solidarity; protection of personal autonomy versus public good; informed consent under emergency circumstances (including individual assent and group consent – this applies in particular to developing countries); stigmatization, resource allocation; prevention vs. treatment; and human rights. It mainly intends to discuss the values stated in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU and other human rights regulatory frameworks in the context of emergency situations, including issues related to quarantine and free circulation of people (with preventive health and security measures). In this context, special attention will be also devoted to data retention of people travelling between countries affected by epidemics. The link between national measures to protect public good and individual liberties will also be addressed. With the emergence of new lethal infections and the risk of bioterrorism, this policy may involve discussion on how to promote responsible actions. To date, there is a general lack of target regulations addressing ethics in emergency situations (including free circulation of people). There is therefore a need for a novel international initiative on the ethics of new epidemics. Such an initiative should promote research on policies for enhanced security, respect for human dignity and political transparency. By bringing together an international, multidisciplinary group of experts involved – at various levels and in various ways – in ethics of global health, this workshop aims to be such an initiative.

Maurizio Salvi (Secretary of the Conference)

Policy Advisor to the President, Head of the Secretariat of the European Group on Ethics in science and new technologies (EGE), Bureau of European Policy Advisers – BEPA, European Commission

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Monday, 22 May 2006

09.00 - 09.45 **Opening**

Chairman: **Jean-Michel Baer**, Director, European Commission, DG Research –
Science and Society

09.00 - 09.10 Welcome from Chairman

09.10 - 09.20 **Bioethical Implications of Globalisation: an Overview of the BIG Project**
Emilio Mordini, BIG Project Coordinator, Centre for Science, Society and Citizenship,
Rome, Italy

Epidemics and Globalisation: the Ethical Context

Chairman: **Pēteris Zilgalvis**, Head Unit Ethics and Science, Science and Society, European
Commission

9.20 - 9.30 Welcome from Chairman

9.30 - 9.45 **EDCTP 2006-2007 Joint programme**
Vanessa de Oliveira, the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials
Partnership" (EDCTP), The Hague, The Netherlands

9.45 - 9.50 Questions

9.50 - 10.05 **Epidemics, Privacy Rights and Public Concerns: The Hong Kong Experience**
Roderick B. Woo, Justice of Peace, Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data, Hong
Kong

10.05 - 10.20 Questions

10.20 - 11.00 Coffee break

11.00 - 11.15 **Ethical Issues for Countries in Responding to a Global Pandemic**
Alexander MorganCapron, Director of Ethics, Trade, Human Rights and Health Law
at the World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland

11.15 - 11.20 Questions

11.20 - 11.35 **Karl Ekdahl**, Strategic Advisor to the Director and Coordinator of the Director's
Cabinet, European Centre of Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) Stockholm,
Sweden

11.35 - 11.40 Questions

11.40 - 12.30 General Discussion

12.30 - 14.00 Lunch

14.00 – 17.40

Session II

**From SARS to Bird Flu:
Freedom, Safety and Global Strategies for Epidemic Control**

Chairman:	Tom Novotny , Institute for Global Health, UCSF, USA
14.00 - 14.10	Chairman's introduction
14.10 - 14.25	<i>Ethical and Policy Lessons from SARS and Avian Flu: a Chinese perspective</i> Xiao-Mei Zhai , Executive Director Centre of Bioethics, Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences, Beijing, China
14.25 - 14.30	Questions
14.30 - 14.45	<i>New Epidemic and Health: Ethical Issues</i> Brigitte Jansen , University of Madras, Chennai, India / Germany
14.45 - 14.50	Questions
14.50 - 15.05	<i>Turkey and the Avian Flu</i> Serhat Unal , Hacettepe University Medical School, Department of Internal Medicine, Infectious Diseases Unit, Ankara, Turkey
15.05 - 15.10	Questions
15.10 - 15.25	<i>New Epidemics: history and Policy Issues</i> Giovanni Berlinguer , IBC Unesco, EP
15.25 - 15.30	Questions
15.30 - 16.00	Coffee break
16.00 - 17.00	PANEL I NATIONAL REGULATORY SYSTEMS FOR RESEARCH ON NEW INFECTIOUS DISEASES
Moderator:	Reidar Lie , University of Bergen NW
	LATINO AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE <i>Ethics of preparedness in Latin America</i> Fernando Lolas , Regional Program on Bioethics Pan American Health Organization, Santiago, Chile
	AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE Abraham Aseffa , Armauer Hansen Research Institute, Addis Ababa
	THAI PERSPECTIVE <i>Regulatory System of Research on New Infectious Diseases</i> Soraj Hongladarom , Center for Ethics of Science and Technology, Chulalongkorn University
17.00-17.30	General Discussion
17.30-17.40	Closing remarks Panel I and general discussion Reidar Lie , University of Bergen NW

Tuesday, 23 May 2006

09.00 -12.30 Session III

Policy Issues

Chairman	Octavi Quintana Trias , Director, European Commission, DG Research – Health Research
09.00 - 09.10	Chairman's introduction
09.10 - 09.25	<i>Stigma and Epidemics</i> Robert Cliquet , Bio-anthropology, University of Gent
09.25 - 09.30	Questions
09.30 - 09.45	<i>Migrations, Epidemics and Human Rights</i> Danielle Grondin , Director, Migration Health Department, IOM
09.45 - 09.50	Questions
09.50 - 10.05	<i>Bioterrorism and the Censorship of Science</i> Michael J. Selgelid , Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics, Australian National University, Australia
10.05 - 10.10	Questions
10.10 - 10.25	<i>The WIPO perspective</i> Tony Taubman , World Intellectual Property Organization, Geneva, Switzerland
10.25 - 10.30	Questions
10.30 - 10.45	<i>The Civil Society perspective</i> Anne Hoel, European Public Health Alliance (EPHA), Brussels, Belgium
10.45 - 10.50	Questions
10.50 - 11.20	Coffee Break
11.20 - 12.00	PANEL II
Moderator:	GLOBAL HEALTH ISSUES AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR EPIDEMICS Richard Cash , Department of Population and International Health, Harvard School of Public Health, Boston, USA
	IPR: A CRITICAL APPROACH Maureen O'Sullivan , Faculty of Law, University of West of England, United Kingdom
	ENVIRONMENTAL PERSPECTIVE Fabrizio Fabbri , International Society of Doctors for the Environment, Arezzo, Italy
12.00 - 12.20	General Discussion
12.20 - 12.30	Closing remarks Panel II and general discussion. Richard Cash , Department of Population and International Health, Harvard School of Public Health, Boston, USA
12.30 - 13.30	Lunch

13.30 -16.00

Session IV

A Quest for Justice

Chairman: **Guido Van Steendam**, Director, International Forum for Biophilosophy, Belgium

13.30 -13.40 Chairman's introduction: *Human rights in emergency situations*

13.40 -13.55 *Ethical Implications of Avian Flu: a work in progress*
Marc Guerrier, ESPACE ETHIQUE, Paris, France

13.55 - 14.00 Questions

14.00 - 14.15 *Genomics as a Global Public Good*
Halla Thorsteinsdóttir, Joint Centre for Bioethics, University of Toronto, Canada

14.15 - 14.20 Questions

14.20 - 14.40 Coffee break

14.40 - 15.10

**PANEL III
STRENGTHENING HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE**

Moderator: **Tom Novotny**, Institute for Global Health, UCSF, USA

EPIDEMICS AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE. LESSONS FROM HISTORY
Baroukh M. Assael, Istituto Azienda Ospedaliera Borgo Trento, Verona, Italy

VACCINATION: EXPERIENCE ON AIDS IN AFRICA
Nicola Barsdorf, African AIDS Vaccine Program (AAVP), South Africa

15.10 - 15.40

General Discussion

15.40 - 16.00

Concluding remarks

Jean-Michel Baer, Director, European Commission, DG Research –
Science and Society

Maria da Graça Carvalho, Acting Director general BEPA, Senior Policy Advisor to
the President, Bureau of European Policy Advisers – BEPA, European Commission