

## Round-Table - Human dignity and Bioethics

*Chairman:*

**Miroslav MIKOLÁŠIK MEP**, *Member of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety in the EP*

*Panellists:*

**Ana Sofia CARVALHO**, *Universidade Católica Portuguesa*

**Gregor PUPPINCK**, *European Center for Law and Justice*

**Sophia KUBY**, *ADF International*

**Christoph THEN**, *Executive Director, Test Biotech*

- The revolutionary advancements in the field of genetic engineering require a public debate on their ethical and legal implications (status embryo, unregulated selling of gamete, surrogacy, etc.)
- The issue of allocating or not of a moral status to the human embryo is central to regulate research in the field of embryo engineering.
- Research on embryonic stem cells is controversial because when stem cells are obtained from living human embryos, the harvesting of such cells necessitates destruction of the embryos: it should be replaced by adult stem cell research.
- The long-held belief that non-embryonic stem cells are less able to differentiate into multiple cell types has been repeatedly challenged by experimental results that have suggested otherwise.
- There are lines that the research on genetic engineering must not cross in order to avoid contagion of unplanned long term effects.
- The question of the political approach of the end of life is particularly relevant considering the ageing of the population and the decline of family structures. It implies a humanistic and solidary approach in order to respect the fundamental values of our society.
- The practice of euthanasia, where it is recognized, is less frequent when palliative care are developed in order to accompany the end of life as part of a social and family support.
- Genetic engineering in human beings engenders crucial values and dignity issues as the topic of illegal harvesting of human organs. (Ex the Planned Parenthood Federation sale of baby organs). It is fundamental to raise awareness and political implication of the possible illegal activities against human dignity.