

Editorial

The *European Bioethics in Action (EuroBioAct)* project has been carried out since September 2014 by the international group of researchers from several European institutions.

The project has been funded by Croatian Science Foundation and it is been foreseen that funding will last until September 2017. It is worth mentioning that project proposal got the highest scores among proposals submitted in November 2013 to the Research projects call in the field of Humanities.

The primary aim of the *EuroBioAct* project is to demonstrate that the theoretical and methodological approach of *new European bioethics* (it means, integrative pluri-perspective dialogue) may result in a platform for solving practical problems of environment preservation and improvement by conceiving *bioethical standards* for human settlements in general, with particular regard to the three fragile eco-systems of Northern Adriatic. Those systems are Plomin located in the bay on the Eastern coast of Istrian peninsula, then City of Bakar and City of Mali Lošinj on the island of Lošinj. The three selected communities have either been recently experiencing ecological threats (Plomin – with thermo-electric power plant; Bakar – a coke plant was active until Croatian Government closed it in September 1994), or represent a highly-valuable and vulnerable natural insular pocket (Mali Lošinj – health tourism, dolphin wildlife refuge, the Fragrant Gardens programme, etc.).

More specific, the single goals of the EuroBioAct project would be as follows:

- 1) deepening/broadening of the theoretical foundation of *new European bioethics*;
- 2) strengthening the position of the Croatian group of scientists within international scientific community;
- 3) organisation of workshops discussing the interdependence of human health, animals, plants, and the eco-system in total;
- 4) formation of the *bioethical standards* for settlements;
- 5) popularisation of bioethics and its integration into local communities;
- 6) exploiting the *bioethical standards* charter by local communities in promoting general ecological consciousness and in tourism marketing.

Beside the integrative pluri-perspective methodology, applied at the conferences and especially in the process of the formulation of *bioethical standards*, would also be the

open co-ordination method (i.e., passing norms at a higher level with their application at local level in a corresponding way) and other positive European practices.

The outcomes of the *EuroBioAct* project are expected primarily to prove the practical value of the *new European bioethics* and to make it closer to the real needs and conceptions of local communities.

The project consists of four phases. In the first phase of the project realisation, the participants continued with the broadening and deepening of the theoretical basis of the *new European bioethics* primarily by completing the research of the life and work of Fritz Jahr and his most important models.

For the preparation of the second phase (overview and analysis of geographic/ecological/economic/social situation in single local communities), used will be monographs and publications related to the region, statistical reports and other databases, including field research and interviews with all relevant subjects (political leaders, experts, NGOs, etc.). In the third phase, three focused workshops will be organised dealing with the optimization of the human relations toward animals, plants and the environment.

Based on the theoretical background and the insights provided by the workshops, in the fourth phase, created will be the *bioethical standards*, that is, a set of principles and measures of the optimal relation of men toward their own health, animals, plants, and the eco-system in total. A *bioethical standards* charter is expected to improve the level of local community environmental consciousness and provide direction lines for its sustainable development (including a potential tourism-advertising ace card).

What has been done within the first year of the project?

- The *EuroBioAct* project had its first presentation abroad, in October 2014. RRI Tools, a project to foster Responsible Research and Innovation held its workshop on 29 October 2014 in the capital of Serbia, Belgrade where the *EuroBioAct* was presented. Moreover the *EuroBioAct* has been chosen as one of the four projects - *good examples of responsible research* in the region.
- The first step toward the local communities selected for this project was the project presentation to the local government representatives: to the Head of the Municipality of Kršan to which Plomin belongs (2 October 2014), to the mayor of the City of Mali Lošinj (10 November 2014) and to the mayor of the City of Bakar (24 November 2014). All of them showed interest towards the project and expressed their willingness to cooperate.

- As a result of positive evaluations of application to the *Career development of young researchers - training of new PhDs* call (Croatian Science Foundation), the Project team member Robert Doričić was employed at the Department of Social Sciences and Medical Humanities since January 2015. The call was released by Croatian Science Foundation, as well. The main aim of this call was to enable mentors who are principal investigators or team members of a scientific projects financed by the Croatian Science Foundation, UKF, various EU (FP7, Horizon 2020), to involve young researchers in their research project.
- In February 2015 the paper *Two kinds of globality: a comparison of Fritz Jahr and Van Rensselaer Potter's bioethics* written by Amir Muzur and Iva Rinčić was published in *Global Bioethics*, 26 (1), 23-27. This is the first published paper related to research done within *EuroBioAct* project.
- During March 2015 two researchers went on a study trip to Germany where they explored available archival and library materials about life and work of Ignaz Bregenzer.
- On April 23 and 24, 2015, the City of Mendoza, Argentina hosted *IV French Latin American Bioethics Forum*. Its main topic was focused on bioethics and environment. The idea of the *bioethical standards* was also discussed.
- In mid-May 2015 the *14th Lošinj Days of Bioethics* took place on the island of Lošinj, Croatia. Project team members gave their presentations. The aim of the conference paper titled *Bioethics: science or religion?* was to try to evaluate the attributions of bioethics, the second presentation dealt with Anaksimenes' understanding of life and the third one in what way personal and professional pathways of Jahr, Potter, Bregenzer, Šegota and de Witt influenced the development of bioethics and vice versa.
- Within the framework of the *EuroBioAct* project, the international conference *Declaring war on declarations: various theoretical respond to modern practical challenges* was held on June 12 and 13 2015 at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Rijeka. The conference gathered 14 participants coming from France, Germany, Serbia, USA and Croatia. It started with presentation of realized *EuroBioAct* project activities (Robert Doričić, Rijeka). Florian Steger (Halle) outlined Jahr's concept of bioethics and its application potential. Christian Byk (Paris) focused on the role of judges in the law making process in the field of bioethics. Amir Muzur (Rijeka) and Iva Rinčić (Rijeka) gave the presentation about some practical aspects of European and American bioethics, while the topic of their second presentation was connection between organic

architecture and bioethics. The topic of Hans Martin Sass (Bochum/Washington) presentation was the Asian roots of bioethics. Mislav Kukoč (Split) and Emil Kušan (Split) presented Nikola Visković' public engagement in the field of bioethics. In the scope of Željko Kaluđerović (Novi Sad) was the relationship between human and other living beings, especially plants. Katica Knezović (Zagreb) gave the lecture about necessity to redefine agricultural ethics. Valerije Vrček presented the implementation of precautionary principle on the example of GMO safety. The ethical vegetarianism or veganism and its bioethical foundation was the topic of Hrvoje Jurić' (Zagreb) lecture, while Tomislav Krznar (Zagreb) discussed hunting as bioethical issue. The last lecture at the conference delivered by Nada Gosić (Rijeka) dealt with theoretical and practical possibilities for standardization of (bio)ethics curriculum for postgraduate education of physicians. The ideas and conclusions from this conference are going to be incorporated into theoretical platform of *bioethical standards*.

- In the last week of August, Robert Doričić explored the Nikola Visković' collection of newspaper articles and other publications. The collection of this Croatian bioethics pioneer is kept at *Centre for Integrative Bioethics*, the unit of Faculty of Philosophy, University of Split.
- In August 2015 the project website was launched. It is accessible via <http://eurobioact.uniri.hr/en/>.
- The project researchers participated at the international conference the *24th Days of Frane Petrić* which took place in late September 2015 in the City of Cres, Croatia. The topic of the presentation was historical records as a basis of understanding the modern approach toward health – examples of three North Adriatic local communities.
- In mid-October 2015 Robert Doričić took the study trip to Copenhagen, Denmark. He visited *The Danish Centre for Bioethics and Risk Assessment* at University of Copenhagen.
- The project team has established collaboration with wide network of bioethicists from Europe and abroad. As its result the project proposal titled *Establishing Universal Bioethics, step 1: Bringing closer Europe and Latin America* also known under its acronym BELA was submitted for Horizon 2020 funding. The rejected project proposal would include activities where one of the main outcomes of *EuroBioAct* project, the *bioethical standards*, would be used.

- During the first year of the project, several titles of relevant publications in the field of bioethics were purchased: they are available at the *Fritz Jahr Documentation Center*, as well the digital archive with data collected from study trips.
- The allotted project fund was also used for new acquisitions of IT equipment (2 notebooks, LCD projector).

Robert Doričić

