

Bioethical Dimension in the Governance of Biotechnology

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Why it is important to look for new approaches to governance of modern biotechnology:

- Crisis of the democratic legitimacy (for example, in regulating food production and distribution) caused by the introduction of Genetically Modified (GM) Foods.
- High perception of risk and loss of consumers' trust towards industry, farmers, authorities and scientists.
- Power position and the role of large food companies in global food policy.
- Negligence of the socio-cultural meaning of food and of the pluralism of food producing systems.
- The clash between regulatory style in the Europe and USA.

The purpose of the project:

- to develop a contribution to the bioethics discourse that will help to build consensus between civil society, science, industry, farmers and other stakeholders, important for development of biotechnology.

Sub-goals:

- to identify and include all relevant stakeholders;
- to map the values and needs of the stakeholders;
- to promote the dialogue and to analyze what mechanisms can be used to facilitate the incorporation of the public views in policy making.

Theoretical basis and approaches:

- **Theory of Technological Citizenship;**
- **Ethical matrix developed by B. Mepham for the ethical deliberation and analysis in the agrifood sector.**
- **Risk theories.**

The project will deal in particularly with genetically modified plants that:

- **have changed metabolic cycles (case study together with the Center of Rural Research and the Institute of Biotechnology);**
- **are producing nutrients;**
- **are producing drugs or/and vaccines.**

Progress to date:

- **A network is under construction (planned lecturers Prof. Gary Comstock and Prof. Peter Sandoe for the period 2003-2004)**
- **A course of lectures “the Biotech Revolution and Decision-making: analyzing risks and values”
POL 1011 has been designed and is offered through ISS to discuss the issues of relevance to the project.**