

Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri



**BIOETHICS AND EDUCATION
IN SCHOOLS**

16th of July 2010

ABSTRACT

The document examines the relationship between `education in bioethics and `citizenship education` of the new generations: the first is an integral part of the second, in educating the future citizen to make conscious choices in the sphere of bioethics, biolaw and biopolitics. The ICB believes that in order to take part democratically in the public debate on choices that affect the lives of all human beings, such as the choices regarding important bioethical issues, information despite its primary role, is however not the only requirement, education is also necessary. This difficult and complex education cannot be left to chance or entrusted to the messages of the old and new media. The Committee recalls the guidelines adopted by international bodies in recent years, and also draws attention to some good practices tried out in the field of education in bioethics in several countries inside and outside Europe.

The Committee focuses on examining education in bioethics at a national level. While recognizing the importance of the many initiatives carried out by universities, research centres, associations, or promoted by principals and teachers the opinion highlights the episodic and unstructured nature of such initiatives. The ICB recommends, instead, that education in bioethics should be carried out in a continuative manner by teachers who have been appropriately trained in order to ensure that young people obtain the basic preparation to actively participate in the bioethical debate, promoting the development of independent moral judgement and critical awareness regarding the major issues of bioethics, in compliance with the fundamental ethical values in a pluralistic and democratic society. The Committee recommends that this education should be conducted through pedagogical approaches and teaching tools consistent with educational objectives, starting from the documents of the National Bioethics Committee and International Organizations.

The ICB, in the document, also refers to the resumption of cooperation between the MIUR and ICB attested by the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on July 15th 2010, which it is hoped will fully exploit the opportunities offered by the Law n.169 of 30th October 2008, with the inclusion of the teaching of Citizenship and Constitution.