



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DES PHARMACIENS CATHOLIQUES  
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF CATHOLIC PHARMACISTS  
FEDERACION INTERNACIONAL DE FARMACEUTICOS CATHOLICOS  
INTERNATIONALE VEREINIGUNG KATHOLISCHER APOTHEKER



World Federation of the Catholic  
Medical Associations  
FIAMC  
Fédération Internationale des  
Associations de Médecins Catholiques



The International Catholic Committee of Nurses and Medico-Social Assistants  
Comité International Catholique des Infirmières et Assistantes Médico-Sociales

## OPEN LETTER FOR THE PRESIDENCE AND THE MEMBERS OF EUROPEAN COUNCIL

During the June 2010 session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the European Council (PACE), the *Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee* approved a *Report and Resolution* on the motion *Women's access to lawful medical care: the problem of unregulated use of conscientious objection* in order to limit the possibility of conscientious objection on the part of doctors and medical personnel.

This resolution will be presented at the next Plenary Session, which will be held from 4-8 October 2010 in Strasbourg.

Our associations (Doctors, Pharmacists, Nurses) consider this proposal a serious violation of professional deontology and the freedom of European citizens who, according to our representatives, should not have to take into account the moral aspects of their professional activity, but simply be the executors of political directives.

Science teaches that the existence of a new individual of the human species begins with conception with its own genetic individuality and life, different from that of all other human beings, which is entitled to an inalienable dignity until its natural death. The events of the 20th century have shown what can happen when nations claim the right to decide which individuals are to be granted full dignity and which instead do not have the right to exist: abortion, internment or physical elimination in lagers and gulags, and euthanasia programmes share as their common denominator the negation of the full human dignity of all individuals.

After the Second World War, the international organizations decided to exclude similar abuses recognizing the inherent dignity of every individual of the human species without exception. The *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* of the UN declares in its preamble: «[...] recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world».<sup>1</sup>

In the name of these principles we reaffirm that:

- 1) The conscientious objection of medical personnel is based on the respect of human life and the inherent dignity of every member of the human family.

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<sup>1</sup> UN, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, New York 16 December 1966.

2)The Commission of the European Parliament wishes to guarantee that women have full access to interventions like abortion or special reproduction technology; these are not strictly health problems (pregnancy is not a disease), abortion after conception is however a homicide as are those interventions on embryos produced in vitro.

3)If medical personnel is forced to act against the right to life, there is a danger of dehumanizing medicine, inasmuch as it negates the basic principle of the dignity and rights of man, and therefore of the patient.

4)It is also unacceptable that those medical personnel who refuses to come to a compromise when it is a matter of the right to life be discriminated in the place of work, and that their conscientious objection lead in fact to the impossibility of exercising their profession.

It is already difficult, if not impossible, today in several countries for a conscientious objector doctor to specialize in gynaecology. This is prejudicial not only to the right of the doctor, but also to that of all those women who refuse abortion and want gynaecologists who share their moral principles.

5)This request is a violation of the Declaration of Human Rights of 1948; of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the European Convention of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms; and the Resolution of the European Parliament of 1993.

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