

## **"Common European Values for Assessment of Modern Technological Innovations in Medicine and Beyond", Prague, 15. and 16. July 2025**

Scientific and technological progress is accompanied by great opportunities for societies, but is equally often perceived as a threat to traditional values. A decisive factor for the sustainable handling of technological innovations in modern societies is resilience, understood on the one hand as the conservative ability to react to impending threats to their respective value systems and to adapt to crisis situations. On the other hand, resilient societies and value communities are also characterized by the progressive attitude of being able to support innovation and progress openly and constructively in a normative way. It is the analysis, discussion and awareness of their values that form the basis for the resilience of societies and enable a profitable and ethically justified approach to changes such as technological progress in a constructive and critical debate, instead of preventing innovation. The presentations at the conference contributed precisely to this analytical discussion by examining the question of shared European values from different perspectives and exploring common inter-, trans- and supranational positions in a European discourse on values. In particular, medicine as a possible area in which the normative ethical evaluation of technological progress becomes visible was considered as a significant area of value change.

After opening addresses from HEIKE GRAßMANN, State Secretary of the Saxon State Ministry for Science, Culture and Tourism, FRIEDERIKE MAY, Saxon State Ministry for Science, Culture and Tourism, HANS-JOACHIM KNÖLKER, President of the Saxon Academy of Science and Humanities in Leipzig and ONDŘEJ SANTOLÍK, Member of the Academy Council of the Czech Academy of Science, the co-organizers of the conference, FLORIAN STEGER and MARTIN NITSCHKE introduced into the topic by stressing especially the importance of a joint international and interdisciplinary effort, to discuss European values as an assessment to technological progress in medicine and beyond.

DENNIS HÄCKL started the series of talks by establishing the core values of the EU from an economic point of view as a resilient basis for urgently needed, shared European Health Technology Assessments (HTA), while at the same time calling for more efficient ethical evaluation structures for technical innovations that are adapted to AI learning cycles, especially regarding AI in medicine.

GEOFFREY DIERCKXENS and JOSE LUIS GUERRERO GUIÑONES supplemented this economic demand ethically with a phenomenological basis for a fundamentally value-sensitive design of AI and LLMs in medicine that can do justice to a holistic view of humanity.

NINA PARCHMANN then spoke about the regulations that the EU has already developed for AI in medicine. She pointed out that the primary values of the EU, similar to those envisaged by Häckl, form the basis for the specifically concretized and expanded AI-related guidelines.

With his plea for a virtue-based rather than value-based ethical framework for dealing with technological progress, IVAN GUTIERREZ supplemented the previous discourse with a moral infrastructure for operationalizing the EU's core values, which had always to be considered and guaranteed.

With an introduction to the life and thought of Fritz Jahr, who coined the term "bioethics" back in 1927, FLORIAN STEGER recalled the growing responsibility of humans for their environment as scientific knowledge increases. Jahr had extended Kant's anthropocentric categorical imperative to include all living beings that feel suffering, including animals and plants.

ANDRZEJ KANIOWSKI emphasized the rationally and voluntarily recognized rule of law as the basis for a value-based European society against the background of possible misuse of technical innovations, especially AI by authoritarian systems, based on Kant and Thomas Aquinas. Thus, he established a conservative ethical resilience of Europe as its differentia specifica.

In contrast, MARTIN NITSCHKE derived from the possibility of technology to create so-called third spaces the necessity of a dynamic understanding of value that progressively adapts to a changing world. Using the example of so-called Head Phone Experiences (HPE) as transitory experiences between inner resonance and outer perception, he substantiated the necessarily equally transitory character of resilient values.

OXANA KOSENKO added a historical perspective to Parchmann's presentation of the core values of the EU by presenting the Declaration of Helsinki as the starting point of the history of ethics committees in Europe. While the establishment of committees by the respective nations, prominently the U.K. and Sweden, but also Germany with the first committee in Ulm was presented, the desideratum of a harmonization of the nationally differing handling of research ethics, to which institutions such as the European Network of Research Ethics Committees (EUREC) are dedicated, was also highlighted.

By emphasizing Kosenko's presentation of national differences and expanding it to include an interdisciplinary difference, BEATA LAKI drew attention to the context-dependent different interpretations of the shared European vocabulary of values. To overcome these differences, she proposed a concrete workshop solution that combines the methods of Moral Case Deliberation (MCD) and Action Learning (AL).

MARCIN ORZECOWSKI highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of the current version of the Declaration of Helsinki from 2024 against the background of the history of the guideline as a fundamental operationalist European document. In doing so, he drew on Häckl, Gutierrez, Parchmann and Kosenko in particular, describing the Declaration as a living document that explicitly addresses the core values of the EU but is unable to keep pace with rapid technological developments due to its rather reactionary nature and sometimes comes into conflict with national law.

KATEŘINA MACHOVCOVÁ implicitly addressed the political implications of Orzechowski's topic in her presentation. She reported on the identification of an ethical gap in research into organizational resilience and leadership in times of crisis. The focus on the success factors of a change of perspective and a flexible mindset in leadership were to be justified also ethically.

Similar to Nitsche and Gutierrez, VINCENT MÖCKL also emphasized the dynamic aspect of values. With "Haltung", he presented a synthetic and therefore structurally European value that, in relation to resilience to technical innovation, refers to a circular interplay of purposeful, reality-based reflection and reflective, theory-conscious action.

In contrast, MARCUS BRAUN presented a much more relativistic perspective. He suggested that the ethically justified handling of technical innovation should begin with training experts to follow their intuition derived from internalized values, but at the same time subjecting them to control through social interaction. Accordingly, values cannot be regarded as absolutely valid but are subject to perpetual change depending on perspective.

By establishing art as a method of making visible the particular as an approach to the problem of a social pathology (Adorno), SABRINA MUCHOVÁ indirectly built a bridge to the synthetic character of Möckl's "Haltung". The aim of balancing out the unequal relationship between the general and the particular in society did not require an overall societal approach. The ethical problems are rather to be addressed through a normative and cognitive turn to the individual or the particular.

FLORIAN GRAFL's lecture concluded the conference with a concrete, negative historical example of the ethical handling of technical innovations in medicine, highlighting the treatment of syphilis at the beginning of the 20th century. In order to preserve conservative social, political

and religious values in relation to sexuality and prostitution and the gender-specific differences in their moral evaluation, the highly effective drug Salvasan was sometimes deliberately withheld.

Three main results can be derived from the summary of the contributions and discussions at the conference. Firstly, there seemed to be broad agreement among the contributors that the values that are an indispensable normative and critical accompaniment to progress must themselves evolve with the changes in the world. Technical innovations can represent epistemic paradigm shifts for ethical considerations, which they must at best consider in a forward-looking and not just reactionary way. However, this does not mean unrestricted value relativism, but rather a sensitivity to a reality with a strong potential for change. In order to guarantee the resilience of societies in relation to technical innovations, not only in medicine, values must themselves become resilient, in both a conservative and progressive sense.

Another key point of the conference was the different perspectives on established values or supranational EU guidelines, depending on the national and disciplinary context. The interdisciplinary and international field of participants, which was made possible by the cooperation between the Saxon Academy of Science and Humanities in Leipzig and the Czech Academy of Science, provided a fruitful framework for negotiating the dynamics of this difference. A focus on greater harmonization of the respective national regulations within the framework of the EU was explicitly stated as desirable or even necessary by all disciplines represented. The extent to which such harmonized guidelines and values can be justified as specifically European should also be taken into account, since shared values and guidelines not only facilitate practice but are also valuable building blocks of social resilience by fostering a sense of community.

Finally, the conference highlighted the desideratum of a suitable form or methodology for operationalizing common values. Instead of only being abstract variables in EU regulations, they should represent an active, practical benefit for a resilient, ethically justified assessment of societies to modern technical innovations in medicine and beyond.

This conference was organized within the framework of bilateral research project "Technological innovation and progress in medicine. The need for an ethical framework and the importance of European values".

Diese Maßnahme wird mitfinanziert mit Steuermitteln auf Grundlage des vom Sächsischen Landtag beschlossenen Haushaltes. – This measure is co-financed with tax revenue based on the budget approved by the Saxon State Parliament.



Supported by Czech Academy of Sciences research initiative Strategy AV21 "Resilient Society for 21st century".

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