

# EuroBioAct: new paths of integrative bioethics

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## EuroBioAct: new paths of integrative bioethics

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*EuroBioAct is a project under the Department of Social Sciences and Medical Humanities, Faculty of Medicine – University of Rijeka and the »Fritz Jahr« Documentation and Research Centre for European Bioethics at University of Rijeka. Concerning the fact that this Centre is a part of Centre of Excellence for Integrative Bioethics on the one side and the main promotor of Europeisation of bioethics as its programmatic task, the role and the outcomes of the project in this wider context is analysed. After short presentation of the project main aims and systematic documentation of the visible/published products coming directly from the project plan, we discern different phases of its realisation highlighting the importance and the meaning of every step in overall plan. It is shown that the project plays an important role in the wider bioethical framework in general, and provides some significant methodological novelties in particular. The critical evaluation of the project's results is given and some further suggestions concerning its main goals are given.*

**Keywords:** EuroBioAct, »Fritz Jahr« Centre, Europeisation of Bioethics, Integrative Bioethics, Bioethical standards.

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## *EuroBioAct in broader bioethical context: Integrative Bioethics and Europeisation of Bioethics*

The vividness and potential of bioethical discussion in Croatia, especially in the last decade, is recognized and clearly noticed in scientific community many times.<sup>1</sup> The concept of Integrative Bioethics is also internationally recognized<sup>2</sup> and the establishment of Centre of Excellence for Integrative Bioethics<sup>3</sup> is the crowning acknowledgement of the concept as a fruitful and wellbased platform for fostering the original and creative bioethical discussion.<sup>4</sup> The foundation of »Fritz Jahr« Documentation and Research Centre for European Bioethics at University of Rijeka as one of the scientific units of the previously mentioned Centre<sup>5</sup> can be seen as one of the crucial steps in elaboration and further devel-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ivana ZAGORAC, Hrvoje JURIĆ, Bioetika u Hrvatskoj, *Filozofska istraživanja*, 28 (2008) 3, 601-611; Iva RINČIĆ, Amir MUZUR, Varieties of Bioethics in Croatia: a Historical Sketch and Critical Touch, *Synthesis Philosophica*, 26 (2011) 2, 403-428.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Amir MUZUR, Hans-Martin SASS (eds.), *Fritz Jahr and the Foundations of Global Bioethics: The Future of Integrative Bioethics*, Zürich – Münster, Lit Verlag, 2012; Mislav KUKOČ, Development of integrative bioethics in the Mediterranean area of SouthEast Europe, *Medicine, Health Care and Philosophy*, 15 (2012) 4, 453-460; Christian BYK, Hans-Martin SASS (eds.), *Fritz Jahr (1895-1953): From the Origin of Bioethics to Integrative Bioethics*, Paris, MA Éditions – ESKA, 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Centre of Excellence for Integrative Bioethics is declared in the 2014, with prof. dr. sc. Ante Čović as its director, by the decision of Croatian Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, and fully constituted in 2015. Its scientific units are: »Fritz Jahr« Documentation and Research Centre for European Bioethics (University of Rijeka), Department of Social Sciences and Medical Humanities (Faculty of Medicine, University of Rijeka), Centre for Integrative Bioethics (Faculty of Arts and Humanities, University of Split), Centre for Integrative Bioethics (Faculty of Arts and Humanities, University of Zagreb), Referral Centre for Bioethics in South-East Europe (Croatian Philosophical Society) and Centre for Integrative Bioethics (Faculty of Arts and Humanities, University of Osijek).

<sup>4</sup> There are two seminal works concerning articulation of the concept of integrative bioethics: Ante ČOVIĆ, Integrativna bioetika i pluriperspektivizam, in: Velimir VALJAN (ed.), *Integrativna bioetika i izazovi suvremene civilizacije. Zbornik radova prvog međunarodnog simpozija u Bosni i Hercegovini* (Sarajevo, 31. III. – 1. IV. 2006.), Sarajevo, Bioetičko društvo u BiH, 2007, 65-75, and Hrvoje JURIĆ, Uporišta za integrativnu bioetiku u djelu Van Rensselaera Pottera, in: Velimir VALJAN (ed.), *Integrativna bioetika i izazovi suvremene civilizacije. Zbornik radova prvog međunarodnog simpozija u Bosni i Hercegovini* (Sarajevo, 31. III. – 1. IV. 2006.), Sarajevo, Bioetičko društvo u BiH, 2007, 77-99. According to the last author, bioethics is, namely, »an open field of encounters and dialogue between different sciences and professions, and diverse approaches and worldviews, which gather to articulate, discuss and solve ethical questions concerning life, life as a whole and each of its parts, life in all its forms, shapes, degrees, stages and manifestations«. Ibid. 83, translation by Hrvoje Jurić.

<sup>5</sup> »Fritz Jahr« Documentation and Research Centre for European Bioethics is constituent unit of the University of Rijeka. It is founded in 2013 and its actual director is Professor Amir Muzur. Some of its major aims are preparation of institutional platform for research and development projects in the field of bioethics, performing research projects particularly those concerning European roots of bioethics and promotion of the European bioethics. Cf. Elvira MARINKOVIĆ ŠKOMRLJ, Neven PROTIĆ (eds.), *Sveučilište u Rijeci/University of Rijeka*, Rijeka, University of Rijeka, 2016, 57. Together with the Centre of Excellence for Integrative Bioethics of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Zagreb, it rewards

opment of Integrative Bioethics, because Europeanisation of bioethics is seen as one of its main programmatic tasks from the beginning of the articulation of the concept<sup>6</sup>.

Integrative bioethics is a concept born in Croatia during 2004. It was a reaction to discontent concerning narrow understanding of bioethics both in content and in methodology. As it is nicely summarized by few authors, integrative bioethics was intended to reach

»beyond usual terms: it is a field characterized by different perspectives (the perspective are necessarily different, but placed in relation), create a basic orientation (correlation of perspectives has a creating potential in providing orientation) toward numerous number of questions regarding life or condition of its preservation (it is oriented to all life-related questions, not only medical one)«.<sup>7</sup>

The concept of integrative bioethics directly led into the programatic task of europeisation of bioethics. According to Jurić,

»*Europeisation of bioethics* means the activation of the potential of the euro-continental ethical, respectively philosophical thought under the bioethical framework, so bioethics could satisfy its original intention which could not be realized exclusively by approach laying on content reduced (biomedical or medical ethics, clinical bioethics) or methodologically narrowed (practical or applied ethics) understanding of bioethics«.<sup>8</sup>

The discovery of the work of German pastor and theologian Fritz Jahr (1895–1953) and his concept of Bioethics (*Bioethik*)<sup>9</sup> did not just give the justi-

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eligible scholars with the »Annual Fritz Jahr International Award for Research and Promotion of European Bioethics« since 2016. The first awarded scholar was Professor Hans-Martin Sass (USA/Germany) and the winner in 2017 was Professor José Roberto Goldim (Brazil). The »Fritz Jahr« Centre is co-publisher of the *Jahr – European Journal of Bioethics* as well.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Ante ČOVIĆ, The Europeization of Bioethics, in: Amir MUZUR, Hans-Martin SASS (eds.), *Fritz Jahr and the Foundations of Global Bioethics: The Future of Integrative Bioethics*, Zürich – Münster, Lit Verlag, 2012, 193-196.

<sup>7</sup> Iva RINČIĆ, Stephen Olufemi SODEKE, Amir MUZUR, From Integrative bioethics to Integrative bioethics: European and American Perspectives, in: Christian BYK, Hans-Martin SASS (eds.), *Fritz Jahr (1895-1953): From the Origin of Bioethics to Integrative Bioethics*, Paris, MA Éditions – ESKA, 2017, 184.

<sup>8</sup> Hrvoje JURIĆ, Uporišta za integrativnu bioetiku u djelu Van Rensselaera Pottera, in: Velimir VALJAN (ed.), *Integrativna bioetika i izazovi suvremene civilizacije. Zbornik radova prvog međunarodnog simpozija u Bosni i Hercegovini* (Sarajevo, 31. III. – 1. IV. 2006.), Sarajevo, Bioetičko društvo u BiH, 2007, 97. For extensive discussion about Europeisation of bioethics and the nature of that task, especially in the framework of integrative bioethics, see Igor ETEROVIĆ, *Kant i bioetika*, Zagreb, Pergamena – Centar za integrativnu bioetiku Filozofskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, 2017, 77-88.

<sup>9</sup> Two Jahr's probably the most significant articles in this sense are: Fritz JAHR, Bioethics: Reviewing the ethical relations of humans towards animals and plants, in: Hans-Martin SASS (ed.), *Selected Essays in Bioethics 1927–1934: Fritz Jahr*, Bochum, Zentrum für Medizinische Ethik, 2010, 1-4; and Fritz JAHR, The Relationship of Animal Protection and Ethics, in: Hans-Martin SASS (ed.), *Selected Essays in Bioethics 1927-1934: Fritz Jahr*, Bochum, Zentrum für Medizinische Ethik, 2010, 5-8.

fication of Bioethics as an originally European concept<sup>10</sup>, but it triggered also a fruitful discussion concerning Europeisation of bioethics.<sup>11</sup> Such Europeisation is not thought in strictly geographical sense, but in deep philosophical sense. The task of Europeisation became a call for re-examination of the rich and huge intellectual heritage of European continent as a possible way of dealing with dissatisfaction concerning American principlism which was predominantly present in the most discussions concerning bioethical issues.<sup>12</sup> Fritz Jahr's thought gave a needed impulse for mentioned »European« response and the result was an impressive scientific production about his life and work, but – more importantly – about his potential role and significance in better understanding of nature and role of Bioethics, the need of its Europeisation and the call for search of new and more satisfying way of dealing with bioethical issues.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, the new founded Documentation and Research Centre took his name and put his thought in the fundamentals of Centre's bioethical project – European Bioethics in Action (EuroBioAct).

<sup>10</sup> Hans-Martin Sass made a great effort to spread a word about Fritz Jahr and his importance for contemporary bioethics. Cf. Hans-Martin SASS, Asian and European Roots of Bioethics: Fritz Jahr's 1927 Definition and Vision of Bioethics, *Asian Bioethics Review*, 1 (2009) 3, 187-193; Hans-Martin SASS, European Roots of Bioethics: Fritz Jahr's 1927 Definition and Vision of Bioethics, in: Ante ČOVIĆ, Nada GOSIĆ, Luka TOMAŠEVIĆ (eds.), *Od nove medicinske etike do integrativne bioetike/From New Medical Ethics to Integrative Bioethics*, Zagreb, Pergamena – Hrvatsko bioetičko društvo, 2009, 19-31; Hans-Martin SASS, Fritz Jahr's 1927 Concept of Bioethics, *Kennedy Institute for Ethics Journal*, 17 (2008) 4, 279-295; Hans-Martin SASS, Bioethics as a European Innovation. Fritz Jahr's 1927 Concept of Bioethics, u: Antje GIMMLER, Markus HOLZINGER, Lothar KNOPP (eds.), *Vernunft und Innovation: Über das alte Vorurteil für das Neue. Festschrift für Walther Ch. Zimmerli zum 65. Geburtstag*, Paderborn, Wilhelm Fink, 369-377.

<sup>11</sup> Further discussion about Jahr's place in the task of Europeisation of bioethics see in Igor ETEROVIĆ, *Kant i bioetika*, Zagreb, Pergamena – Centar za integrativnu bioetiku Filozofskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, 2017, 88-92.

<sup>12</sup> Review of the mentioned dissatisfaction with particular focus on the differences between American and European Bioethics concerning the basic principles is given in Iva RINČIĆ, Sličnosti i razlike europske i američke bioetike u odnosu na temeljna bioetička načela, *JAHR – Annual of the Department of Social Sciences and Medical Humanities*, 4 (2013) 2, 739-746.

<sup>13</sup> See more in: Iva RINČIĆ, Amir MUZUR, Fritz Jahr: the invention of bioethics and beyond, *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine*, 54 (2011) 4, 550-556; Amir MUZUR, Iva RINČIĆ, Fritz Jahr (1895-1953): a life story of the 'inventor' of bioethics and a tentative reconstruction of the chronology of the discovery of his work, *JAHR – Annual of the Department of Social Sciences and Medical Humanities*, 2 (2011) 2, 385-394; Amir MUZUR, Iva RINČIĆ, Fritz Jahr (1895-1953) – the Man Who Invented Bioethics. A Preliminary Biography and Bibliography, *Synthesis philosophica*, 26 (2011) 1, 133-139; Iva RINČIĆ, Amir MUZUR, *Fritz Jahr i radanje europske bioetike*, Zagreb, Pergamena, 2012; Marko KOS, Od Fritz Jahra do integrativne bioetike: prikaz razvoja jedne ideje, *Filozofska istraživanja*, 34 (2014) 1-2, 229-240.

### *1. EuroBioAct – aims of the project and the steps of their realisation*

Before we can evaluate the place and significance of the »Fritz Jahr« Centre and EuroBioAct project in promotion and encouragement of the task of Europeanisation of bioethics, short presentation of the main goals and aims of the project should be presented. The project European Bioethics in Action (EuroBioAct) has been carried out since September 2014 till September 2017 by the international group of researchers from several European institutions and it is headed by Professor Amir Muzur as principal investigator.<sup>14</sup> The project has been funded by Croatian Science Foundation.<sup>15</sup>

The primary aim of the EuroBioAct project was to demonstrate that the theoretical and methodological approach of new European bioethics (it means integrative pluriperspective 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: Municipality of Kršan, City of Bakar and City of Mali Lošinj. The three selected communities have either been recently experiencing ecological threats (on the territory of the Municipality of Kršan there is a thermo-electric power plant; Bakar had a cokery in the period 1978-1994), or represent a highly-valuable and vulnerable natural insular pocket (Mali Lošinj – health tourism, dolphin wildlife refuge, fragrant gardens programme).

The single goals of the EuroBioAct project would be: 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 three 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.

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

<sup>14</sup> Research group is consisted by following researchers: Full Professor Amir Muzur (principal investigator, University of Rijeka), Full Professor Ante Čović (University of Zagreb), Robert Doričić, PhD student (University of Rijeka), Igor Eterović PhD (University of Rijeka), Full Professor Nada Gosić (University of Rijeka), Associate Professor Željko Kaluderović (University of Novi Sad), Maja Miloš, PhD student, Assistant Professor Iva Rinčić (University of Rijeka), Full Professor Tomislav Rukavina (University of Rijeka), Professor Emeritus Hans-Martin Sass (Ruhr University), Assistant Professor Vanja Vasiljev Marchesi (University of Rijeka) and Full Professor Valerije Vrček (University of Zagreb).

<sup>15</sup> The EuroBioAct project proposal got the highest scores among proposals submitted in November 2013 to call Research projects in the field of humanities.



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 second phase i.e. the overview and analysis of geographic/ecological/economic/social situation in single local communities, monographs and publications related to the region, statistical reports and other databases, including field research and interviews with all relevant subjects (political leaders, experts, etc.) were used. Based on the theoretical background and the insights provided by the empirical collecting of data, in the third phase, preliminary list of bioethical standards was created. It is a set of principles and measures of the correct relation of men toward their own health, animals, plants, and the eco-system in total. In the fourth phase, three focused workshops were organised discussing the preliminary lists of bioethical standards with nonprofit organisations' (further: NPO) representatives in the local communities mentioned before (Kršan, Bakar and Mali Lošinj). A bioethical standards charter might improve the level of local community environmental consciousness, and provide direction lines for its sustainable development.<sup>16</sup>

Just given short overview of the project makes a good basis for reflection about importance of the project in the context of the Europeisation of bioethics. Those four steps can shortly be summarised in four basic results: 1) discussing and providing theoretical framework through scientific conferences and papers; 2) revealing empirical facts about specific local communities; 3) developing preliminary list of bioethical standards; 4) connecting with communities by focus groups workshops for final adjustment of bioethical standards for the specific needs of the local communities.

## 2. *Providing the theoretical framework: conferences and papers*

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 participants coming from France, Germany, Serbia, USA and Croatia. The program included presentation of realized *EuroBioAct* project activities and different topics were discussed during the meeting: Jahr's concept of bioethics and its application potential, the role of judges in the law making process in the field of bioethics, some of the practical aspects of European and American bioethics, the connection between organic architecture and bioethics, the Asian roots of bioethics, Croatian scholar Nikola Visković's public engagement in the field of bioethics and the relationship be-

<sup>16</sup> Overview of the project aims is mostly based on the research project proposal. Cf. Amir MU-ZUR, *European Bioethics in Action – EuroBioAct* (manuscript), Rijeka, 2014. HRZZ Research projects (IP-11-2013). More detailed presentation of activities under the first years of project see in Robert DORIČIĆ, Editorial, *JAHR – European Journal of Bioethics*, 6 (2015) 2, 171-175.

tween human and other living beings, especially plants. There were presented the lectures dealing with necessity to redefine agricultural ethics, the implementation of precautionary principle on the example of GMO safety, the ethical vegetarianism or veganism and its bioethical foundation and the lecture about hunting as bioethical issue. The last lecture at the conference dealt with theoretical and practical possibilities for standardization of (bio)ethics curriculum for postgraduate education of physicians. The ideas and conclusions from this conference were incorporated into theoretical platform of *Bioethical Standards*.<sup>17</sup> On the next conference day participants visited the town of Bakar, the capital of the one of the three local communities included in the EuroBioAct project. There they had an opportunity to meet its rich cultural and historical heritage.

First fruits of theoretical dissemination appeared in print at the end of the same year. A special thematic section *EuroBioAct*, published in *Jahr – European Journal of Bioethics* (vol. 6, no. 2, 2015) brought, besides the already mentioned informative »Editorial«, three original scientific papers (by Hans-Martin Sass, Tomislav Krznar and Željko Kaluđerović)<sup>18</sup> one short communication (by Florian Steger)<sup>19</sup> and two essays (by Amir Muzur and Iva Rinčić)<sup>20</sup> from the collaborators of the project and presenters at the previous June conference.

The following year a new scientific meeting is organized within the framework of the *EuroBioAct* project under the general title *European Bioethics in Action – EuroBioAct* subtitled *Workshops of Bioethical Standards*. It was held at Faculty of Medicine June 10 and 11, 2016. The first day of the conference started with the presentations of the project partners – the City of Bakar, the Municipality of Kršan and the City of Mali Lošinj. After Professor Muzur's introductory speech which presented the concept of bioethical standards, thematic workshops began. The first workshop focused on the relationship between Man and Animal. Hrvoje Jurić (Zagreb) pointed out the problem of animal exploitation for the human nutrition purposes. Tomislav Krznar (Zagreb) referred to the importance of hunting as an environmental protection mechanism. Damir Žubčić (Zagreb) spoke about the importance of early animal education and the psychological needs of

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Sven PAL, Robert DORIČIĆ, Amir MUZUR (eds.), *EuroBioAct International Conference Declaring war on declarations: various bioethical theories respond to modern practical challenges. Abstract book*, Rijeka, Faculty of Medicine – Faculty of Health Studies – »Fritz Jahr« Documentation Centre for European Bioethics, University of Rijeka, 2015.

<sup>18</sup> Hans-Martin SASS, Translating Asian Bioethics into developing global Biocultures Translational Challenges in Bioethics, *JAHR – European Journal of Bioethics*, 6 (2015) 2, 177-190; Tomislav KRZNAR, While we are standing away. Do we need to consider hunting as a bioethical issue?, *JAHR – European Journal of Bioethics*, 6 (2015) 2, 191-200; Željko KALUĐEROVIĆ, 'Upward Levelling' of Plants – Early Greek Perspective, *JAHR – European Journal of Bioethics*, 6 (2015) 2, 201-214.

<sup>19</sup> Florian STEGER, Fritz Jahr's (1895-1953) European concept of bioethics and its application potential, *JAHR – European Journal of Bioethics*, 6 (2015) 2, 215-222.

<sup>20</sup> Iva RINČIĆ, Amir MUZUR, In search of (lost) connection: organic architecture and bioethics. The case of Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959), *JAHR – European Journal of Bioethics*, 6 (2015) 2, 227-232.



the pets. Srećko Leiner (Zagreb) presented on the example of the Neretva River valley, which would be the necessary changes for an adequate relationship of the local community to natural ecosystems. What would be the bird adaptability to the effects of urbanization was presented by Denis Leiner (Karlovac).

The next workshop section was concerned with the relationship between Man and Plants. Željko Kaluđerović (Novi Sad) emphasized the importance of continuous raising of the public awareness related to the preservation of fitodiversity. Boštjan Surina and Željka Modrić Surina (Rijeka) presented the Liburnian karst, an area characterized by high biodiversity, with a high rate of the various endemic populations to which survival in the nature threaten changes in the land management, development and urbanization. Ivica Kelam (Osijek) emphasised the problems that can arise by uncontrolled deforestation, transformation of the forest into the agricultural land and using chemical means for higher crop yield. Valerije Vrčec (Zagreb) was dealing with the uncontrolled use of GM crops, likewise they are in the focus of the Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato si*.

The title of the third, last EuroBioAct workshop was Human health and the environment. The community as an important precondition for the health of the individuals were presented by Vanja Vasiljev Marchesi, Lovorka Bilajac and Tomislav Rukavina (Rijeka). Gordana Šimunković (Rijeka) pointed out the effects of the various factors in the work environment that can affect the productivity of an individual and cause adverse health and material outcomes. Robert Doričić (Rijeka) focused on the features of the public health in three communities and its importance in forming the bioethical standards. Nada Gosić (Rijeka) gave the definition of the bioethical education as well as its approach to the different personalities within the local communities. Igor Eterović (Rijeka) spoke about bioethical guidelines in the philosophy of mountaineering. Iva Rinčić (Rijeka) gave a review and recommendations for bioethical standardization in different aspects of the urban life. Tanja Ivošević (Rijeka) presented examples of activities in the field of environmental protection and the protection of the air quality in the Primorsko-goranska County. Sanja Ožić (Rijeka) presented waste management, with reference to the EU legal regulations and the achievement of the goals of sustainable development policy and the revision of the Waste Act in the Republic of Croatia. The next day the final discussion of the workshops was held. The conference program ended with study trip to the medieval towns of Plomin and Kršan, in the Municipality of Kršan.<sup>21</sup>

As the year before, publishing of the results followed the conference: again, a special thematic section, now titled *Bioethical Standards* is published in *Jahr – European Journal of Bioethics*, 7 (2016) 2. It brought several important

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Robert DORIČIĆ, Bernarda MRAK (eds.), *Europska bioetika na djelu – EuroBioAct: Radionice bioetičkih standarda. Abstract book*, Rijeka, Faculty of Medicine – University of Rijeka, 2016. Detailed overview of the conference see in: Bernarda MRAK, 18. riječki dani bioetike na Medicinskom fakultetu u Rijeci, *JAHR – European Journal of Bioethics*, 7 (2016) 1, 113-116.

contributions from the projects collaborators: one original scientific article (by Katica Knezović)<sup>22</sup>, one preliminary communication (by Valerije Vrček)<sup>23</sup>, one review scientific article (by Ivica Kelam)<sup>24</sup>, and two professional articles (by Amir Muzur, and group of authors)<sup>25</sup>.

### 3. Empirical explorations of specific communities: gathering facts

To make theoretical guidelines more applicable the knowledge about specific communities were necessary, thus the second step was oriented towards gathering as much as possible historical, geographical, cultural and other information about chosen communities. Actually, this step was not chronologically decisive, because such gathering was continually conducted during the whole project. The most important sources were the existed literature and archival sources (book, documents etc.), but no less important were the continual conversations with local authorities and institutions which provided extremely important contextual data for understanding the communities' attitudes and consequently their possible needs. It is extremely important to stress that this approach enabled the inclusion of so many times completely ignored perspective – a historical one. Continuing on the path, the research of the historical records concerning health preservation issues, prevention and treatment of diseases in the area of Bakar, Mali Lošinj and Kršan from Middle Age till the 19 Century was conducted and the results were presented.<sup>26</sup> The most extensive exploration has been carried out about the mortality characteristics on the area of City of Bakar and City of Mali Lošinj in 20 Century till nowadays.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Katica KNEZOVIĆ, Neudefinierung der Verantwortung im wissenschaftlich-technischen Zeitalter in Bezug auf nichtmenschliche Natur. Elemente einer Pflanzenethik, *JAHR – European Journal of Bioethics*, 7 (2016) 2, 225-246.

<sup>23</sup> Valerije VRČEK, Status of Transgenic Crops in the Encyclical 'Laudato si', *JAHR – European Journal of Bioethics*, 7 (2016) 2, 217-223.

<sup>24</sup> Ivica KELAM, Odgovorno upravljanje poljoprivrednim zemljištem, *JAHR – European Journal of Bioethics*, 7 (2016) 2, 203-215.

<sup>25</sup> Amir MUZUR, Standardi u bioetici: motivi, efekti, limiti, *JAHR – European Journal of Bioethics*, 7 (2016) 2, 197-202; Vanja VASILJEV MARCHESI, Darko ROVIŠ, Lovorka BILAJAC, Tomislav RUKAVINA, Europski gradovi budućnosti: uloga i značenje projekta Urban Health Centres, UHC, *JAHR – European Journal of Bioethics*, 7 (2016) 2, 247-256.

<sup>26</sup> The research results were presented on 24<sup>th</sup> Days of Frane Petrić Conference held on September 20-26, 2015 in Cres, Croatia. Cf. Robert DORIČIĆ, Amir MUZUR, Iva RINČIĆ, Povijesni izvori kao temelj razumijevanja suvremenog odnosa prema zdravlju – primjer triju sjeverno-jadranskih lokalnih zajednica/Historical Records as a Basis of Understanding the Modern Approach toward Health – Examples of Three North Adriatic Local Communities, in: Hrvoje JURIĆ, Ivica MARTINOVIĆ, Mira MATIJEVIĆ (eds.), 24<sup>th</sup> Days of Frane Petrić. Abstract book, Zagreb, Hrvatsko filozofsko društvo, 2015, 58-59.

<sup>27</sup> This is a part of Robert Doričić's doctoral thesis research proposal *The Effects of Industrial Pollution on Mortality Characteristics in the City of Bakar and the City of Mali Lošinj in the Period*

#### 4. Closing the theory and practice: bioethical standards

Although final list of some bioethical standards was the preferred final result of the project, some basic preliminary list had to be made as the only for further testing of their feasibility in the all three local communities. Thus, the head of the project called all collaborators to send several standards which can be crystalized from their research presented at conferences and workshops. The idea was to make a further departure from the more abstract theories to the more specific everyday realm of life. As it is explained in call, and later in Preamble of the list of bioethical standards,

»the primary aim of those standards« is »to provide to policymakers at the level of local government [...] the list of as much as more concrete guidelines which should lead towards advancement of the relation between human and primarily, but not exclusively living environment, and all with ambition to preserve health, to increase quality of life of the population, and to protect biodiversity and other natural resources while respecting local economic plans and choices ('sustainable development')«.<sup>28</sup>

Taking the general bioethical content, shortly summarised as the life in general, the whole realm of living environment was captured acknowledging that

»there are three somewhat interwoven groups of considered standards, because of practical reasons called 'public health parameters', 'relations towards animals' and 'relations towards plants'«.<sup>29</sup>

Through the lens of integrative bioethics this is crucial point, because standards were designed to integrate concern and responsibility towards life in all its forms. Furthermore, standards captured the basic idea that life could not be observed and thought without the whole environment necessary for the existence of all living beings and the quality of their life. Thus, the list included 22 standards concerning animals, 20 concerning plants and 52 concerning the environment in general.

Methodologically, some novelties are implemented for further development and one way of possible practical articulation of the basic pluriperspective methodology, important for gaining the orientational knowledge. First, the awareness about the necessary flexibility of standards is explicitly stated, as the reliance on the wisdom encapsulated in Fritz Jahr's Bioethical Imperative:

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from 1960 to 2012. which was successfully defended on July 6, 2017 at Faculty of Medicine – University of Rijeka.

<sup>28</sup> »Preamble« in: European Bioethics in Action – EuroBioAct Project, Bioetički standardi (manuscript), Rijeka, 2016, 1.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

»When we talk about standardization of the relationship towards animals and plants, however, we are aware that we suggest many novelties which should take into consideration local specificities and gradualism of application, and no sudden change of customs and consciousness (sometimes by relativization as the only guarantee of realization, somehow on the trace of the expression *nach Möglichkeit*, i.e. 'if possible' from Jahr's bioethical imperative). Thus, some standards might acquire absolute form, and the other necessary relativity«. <sup>30</sup>

Second, openness to the future re-examination and re-evaluation of the standards provide useful orientational nature of those standards. Such openness would be guaranteed by the method of constant »open coordination«:

»List of standards, of course, might be by method of constant 'open coordination' improved, revised and adjusted both 'bottom-up', i.e. from direct users, and 'top-down', i.e. from planners and developers«. <sup>31</sup>

The method of pluriperspective confrontation was included also through possibility of giving comments and suggestion by all collaborators to the mentioned preliminary list of bioethical standards. Furthermore, the final form of the preliminary list was sent for review to the external experts. This was the first step in articulation and adjustment of the bioethical standards list, but the most important revisions will be prepared in the next step.

### *5. Bringing the theory and practice together: questionnaires and focus groups in situ*

Although some empirical investigation and collection of data is gathered through second step, the final list of bioethical standards was primarily theoretically based. To test how strong theoretical tool such list could be one final step is planned and conducted – bringing all those standards as much as closer to users, i.e. population of the three communities in case. To attain some methodological standards, scientifically measurable, but in the same time content sensitive, the qualitative methodology of structured questionnaires and focus groups with relevant subjects is chosen. The online survey was conducted among community council members in the City of Bakar, City of Mali Lošinj and Municipality of Kršan during May, 2017 while one month later three focus groups were organised in Mali Lošinj, Kršan and Bakar with participation of the community based non-profit organisations representatives. The participants were members of associations dedicated to the needs of the specific age or social groups of the citizens, animal welfare and environmental associa-

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

tions, the associations dealing with preservation of the cultural and historical heritage and representatives of the sports associations.<sup>32</sup>

This was the effective way of bringing theoretical assumptions directly »on the field«, and by the exploration made *in situ* with the population who is the direct user of such standards. The final, and possibly the most important perspective (or better say perspectives, because there were different subgroups of the population captured by focus groups) is acquired in such way enclosing the circle of pluriperspective methodology.

## 6. Evaluation of the outcomes

The evaluation of the project can be the most easily done by critical examination of how and in what scope the eight major project hypotheses are tested.

First hypothesis was:

»the 'new European bioethics' theory is broader than the wide-spread 'classic' bioethics as practiced primarily in the Anglo-Saxon countries and it can better and more successfully address complex environmental issues«.<sup>33</sup>

This hypothesis is positively tested through so many conclusions in the theoretical dissemination of the project. The most presentations given and the papers published under the project came to the similar conclusion about the need of more extensive understanding of bioethics. Most of those papers openly advocated for the concept of integrative bioethics and defended the programmatic task of Europeisation of bioethics.<sup>34</sup>

The hypothesis that »the 'new European bioethics' theory can be transformed and transferred into practical matters of preservation of eco-systems«<sup>35</sup> is positively tested by twofold results. First, Europeisation of bioethics, understood as a finding bioethical inspiration and gaining motivation from European intellectual heritage (and Fritz Jahr as a paradigm of such heritage concerning bioethics), is considered as a wise choice from several reasons when we talk about some kind of practical implementation, especially in European

<sup>32</sup> The focus group results will be reported by Maja MILOŠ, Robert DORIČIĆ in conference paper *Local Community Attitudes towards implementation of the Bioethical Standards* at the 10<sup>th</sup> Medical Conference on Medical Practice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Emerging Trend in Sofia, Bulgaria, August 22-25, 2017.

<sup>33</sup> Amir MUZUR, *European Bioethics in Action – EuroBioAct (manuscript)*, Rijeka, 2014. HRZZ Research projects (IP-11-2013), Form A, 4.

<sup>34</sup> For the recent extensive elaboration of such need of wider comprehension of the content and methodology of bioethics, and the concept of integrative bioethics as the result of such need see Igor ETEROVIĆ, *Kant i bioetika*, Zagreb, Pergamena – Centar za integrativnu bioetiku Filozofskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, 2017, 57-76.

<sup>35</sup> Amir MUZUR, *European Bioethics in Action – EuroBioAct (manuscript)*, Rijeka, 2014. HRZZ Research projects (IP-11-2013), Form A, 4.

local communities. Those views are not just closer to the mind-set of populations from European continent, but it also engages necessary pluriperspective and community sensitive approach because of indispensable multiculturalism present in European philosophical, intellectual, moral – in one word: cultural – tradition. To take three local communities and to test that cultural heritage was exemplar how general principles through pluriperspective adjustments can be brought to operative and usable (bioethical) standards.

Third hypothesis goes:

»the integrative-bioethics pluriperspective approach, considering views from various scientific and non-scientific disciplines (medicine, biology, agriculture, urban planning, politics, citizen activism, etc.), can result in a platform of 'orientational knowledge' useful for conceiving preventive measures of environment protection and improvement of the quality of life of men, animals, and plants co-habiting within the same eco-system«.<sup>36</sup>

Through affirmative results for this hypothesis came possibly the most important result of the whole project. Namely, through activities under the project was clearly shown that pluriperspective methodology could be specifically articulated and the whole process attaining adequate orientational knowledge (in the form of applicable bioethical standards) efficiently gained. Thus, methodological novelties are the most important fruits of the project and a completely new path of exercising pluriperspective thinking effectively brought from theoretical ground to the real and specific moral agents, or better to say, to the population of moral agents – concrete local communities. Such approach kept the needed broadness of the reflected standards (and consequently universality in a sense of general guidelines), but also openness and awareness of possible revisions and adjustments in the future concerning the details about the list. The standards are also trying to implement as much as possible particular content concerning preferable actions and customs towards living beings and environment. In such way, the bridge between theoretical principles and everyday maxims of agent's action is provided.

Because of the collaboration of local population on different levels (from policymakers to NPOs) from the initial discussion on project proposal to final step which was completely conducted in the local community is definitely proved that »various participants of local-community life can co-operate on projects of public significance like the one proposed«.<sup>37</sup>

The other four hypotheses are still open:

»5. the conceived 'bioethical standards' will be accepted and obeyed by given local-community political leaders and citizens; 6. the conceived 'bioethical standards' help environment preservation and human, animal, and plant welfare, and they represent an acceptable modality of sustainable development at

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.



local level; 7. the conceived 'bioethical standards' may be exploited to attract visitors and for local tourism marketing in general; 8. the conferences and the 'bioethical standards' adequately promoted by public media, will result in better informing of local decision makers and population, improving its level of consciousness regarding environmental issues and sensitivity toward animals and plants.«<sup>38</sup>

Although there are strong reasons to believe that all of those hypotheses are reachable, it is not possible to give any strict answer to that question at the moment. We have to wait if local community leaders will take the formulation of »bioethical standards« as a guidance in decision-making. That would be not just the measure of their co-operation, but also the improvement in their consciousness with respect to environmental issues. The level and interest to the participation of representatives of NPOs in focus groups is already a strong indication of some success in the popularisation of bioethics and the proposed project, but it is too early to make some final conclusions, because concrete measures in local community and change the trends for improvement the quality of life and protection the environment is something what might happen in the future. The pragmatic usefulness of »bioethical standards« in tourism marketing might be measured by visitors' statistics once the promotion of the tourist destination with high awareness of implementation of the bioethical standards would be accepted as something preferable and the existence of those places which embrace the bioethical standards list came in wider public attention.

## Conclusion

We can conclude that although the major expected outcome of the EuroBio-Act project was »to prove the practical value of the 'new European bioethics' and make it closer to the real needs and conceptions of local communities«<sup>39</sup>, the project achieved much more.

Through conference presentations organised in Rijeka, study trips of collaborators and visits to several conferences abroad the not just new and original materials are brought, but – what is much more important – an impressive network of researchers with similar goals and interests is achieved. The deepening of understanding and articulation of »new European bioethics« or just the relevance of the task of Europeisation of bioethics is made.

Consequently, so much research results were published through scientific papers, book chapters etc. In the same time, that means a unique promotion of

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Amir MUZUR, European Bioethics in Action – EuroBioAct (*manuscript*), Rijeka, 2014. HRZZ Research projects (IP-11-2013), Form B, 4.

Rijeka as a leading research centre of the »Jahr studies« and consequently one of the most important centres in articulation of the »new European bioethics«, and generally promotion of Croatia and the original concept of integrative bioethics.<sup>40</sup>

There is also, one almost invisible, but very important infrastructural fact: the new Fritz Jahr Centre gained a real and adequate content with an increase of the book fund in Centre's specialised library. The EuroBioAct project provided a platform for new project proposal submitted for the international and national scientific grants. Furthermore, the EuroBioAct Project activities made the basis for two doctoral thesis research proposals and at the same time the project has enabled the employment of two young researchers.<sup>41</sup>

Finally, project definitely completed

»theoretical basis for the new European Bioethics (by rounding-up research on Fritz Jahr and other thinkers and conceiving a common platform with integrated ideas of modern environment science and ethics),«

and applied

»that theoretical basis in practice (by compiling a list of bioethical standards for settlements, containing concrete general and specific norms for preservation and improvement of local eco-systems – i.e. human health, animal and plant welfare, etc.«<sup>42</sup>

<sup>40</sup> The European Bioethics in Action – EuroBioAct Project has been chosen as one of the four projects – good examples of responsible research in the region. It has been incorporated in RRI Toolkit, the platform that aims to help to achieve better alignment of research and innovation with societal needs. For further information about the RRI Toolkit see: <https://www.rri-tools.eu/>. As an inspiring practice EuroBioAct Project was presented during the Responsible and Innovation Tools Training in Rijeka, Croatia in September 2016.

<sup>41</sup> The project team members Robert Doričić and Maja Miloš has been employed as research assistants at the Department of Social Sciences and Medical Humanities, Faculty of Medicine – University of Rijeka after the positive evaluation of the applications to the *Career development of young researchers – training of new PhDs* call opened by Croatian Science Foundation in 2015 respectively 2016.

<sup>42</sup> Amir MUZUR, European Bioethics in Action – EuroBioAct (*manuscript*), Rijeka, 2014.; HRZZ Research projects (IP-11-2013), Form A, 1. This work has been supported in part by Croatian Science Foundation under the project European Bioethics in Action (7853).

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*EuroBioAct: novi putevi integrativne bioetike*

## Sažetak

Projekt *EuroBioAct* provodi se pri Katedri za društvene i humanističke znanosti u medicini Medicinskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Rijeci i Dokumentacijsko-istraživačkog centra za europsku bioetiku »Fritz Jahr« Sveučilišta u Rijeci. S obzirom na činjenicu da je ovaj centar s jedne strane sastavnica Centra izvrsnosti za integrativnu bioetiku te da je njegova programska zadaća biti glavnim promotorom europeizacije bioetike, u širem se kontekstu analiziraju uloga i ishodi ovoga projekta. Nakon kraćeg predstavljanja glavnih ciljeva projekta i sustavne dokumentacije vidljivih/objavljenih rezultata koji neposredno proizlaze iz projektnog plana, prepoznamo različite faze njegove realizacije naglašavajući važnost i značenje svakog koraka u cjelokupnome planu. Pokazalo se da projekt općenito ima važnu ulogu u širem bioetičkom okviru, a posebice nudi neke značajne metodološke novosti. U radu se daje kritička evaluacija rezultata projekta. Ujedno se daju daljnji prijedlozi koji se odnose na njegove glavne ciljeve.

*Ključne riječi:* *EuroBioAct*, centar »Fritz Jahr«, europeizacija bioetike, integrativna bioetika, bioetički standardi.

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