

**CEC 12th Assembly  
Trondheim (Norway), 25 June – 2 July 2003  
Partners` Programme  
Hearings in the Core Programme  
Information about the Hearings**

**Hearing 7:**

- Title:** How are the Churches facing Bioethics in the 21st Century?
- Responsible Organization/s:** Society Religion and Technology Project (SRTP), Church of Scotland
- Date and Time of the Hearing:** Thursday 26 June 2003, 1700hrs-1830hrs
- Languages Used:** English
- Main Speakers / Presenters:** Dr Elaine Gadd, Special Advisor to the Council of Europe Committee on Bioethics, Strasbourg; Professor Egbert Schrotten, Chair of CEC Bioethics Working Group; Dr Donald Bruce, Director, Society, Religion and Technology Project, Church of Scotland; Rev. Anton Ilin, Russian Orthodox Church, Department for External Church Relations, Moscow
- Description:** Developments in biotechnology and medical sciences provide some of the most profound challenges to the churches of Europe today. How should our Christian understanding that Jesus Christ heals, in ways deeper than medicine, impact on developments which have provoked controversy in Europe such as human cloning, embryo stem cell research, genetic selection and gene databases? What are the limits to reproduction and to experimentation; how long should we go on replacing human cells and organs? Can we make replacement cells to treat degenerative diseases without using embryos? Should we allow the genetic selection of embryos to prevent serious diseases or to produce a designer baby? Should we create genetic databases? Who should own and control the information contained in our genes? The purpose of the hearing will be to share with delegates how the churches of Europe are addressing issues like these in our different traditions, and how the churches are also involved in the forefront of discussion with European policy-makers and regulators.

A member of the secretariat of the Committee on Bioethics of the Council of Europe will illustrate some current issues facing Europe in bioethics, especially in genetic information and genetic testing. The chair of the working group on Bioethics and Biotechnology of the CEC Church and Society Commission will offer some thoughts on how the churches in Europe are responding these issues. This will be followed by brief presentations - a case study on the topical issues of stem cell and cloning, a consideration of bioethics from an Orthodox perspective, and a consideration of issues of genetic testing and information. The second half of the hearing will give be a panel discussion between the speakers and the audience, which will give plenty of opportunity for delegates to question the experts and offer their own insights. Come and learn. Come and share your views with us. You don't need to be an expert!