



## Centre for Economic and Social Aspects of Genomics

### The Institutionalisation of Ethics in Science Policy: Practices and Impact (INES)

#### Description

INES investigates the issue of the incorporation of ethics in Science and Technology policy in terms of the methodologies used and their actual impact in decision making. Debates on technological developments touch fundamental ethical considerations and uncover wide mistrust in public authorities and scientific establishments. Policy makers have reacted by incorporating ethics into the decision making processes of S&T policy. Different nations have different ways of doing this, ranging from advisory expert committees to open debates with relevant stakeholders. The form and method in which ethics is incorporated in S&T varies greatly throughout Europe and its actual impact in decision making is still unclear. INES brings together a group of leading European experts in the area of S&T ethics and the relevant policy making community, to analyse comparatively the manner by which ethics is incorporated into the official decision making structures.

Informed by public perceptions research on "ethics" and paying particular attention to gender differences, the project explores case studies presenting particular challenges for the incorporation of ethics in decision making (medical genetics, forensic genetics and food technologies). The differences in the understanding of the ethical issues and the incorporation approaches chosen provide the basis for the creation of a "European map" which will be critically examined in terms of impact assessment and best practices. The specific aims of the project are to:

- explore variations in institutional approaches to ethics in policy making
- examine gender issues in relation to broader questions around the involvement of ethical considerations in science and technology policy
- identify 'best practices' of incorporating ethics in decision making
- establish ways of evaluating the impact of ethics on decision-making outcomes

The ultimate goal of INES is to create a pan-European platform where ethics experts, policy makers and relevant stakeholders can debate, exchange information, identify "best practices" and devise ways to improve the input and impact of ethics in the actual decision making process.

CESAGen is the co-ordinating institution for this project, which also involves research partners from twelve European institutions from nine countries comprising leading ethicists and parliamentary Science and Technology advisors. For more information about this project, contact [Ruth Chadwick](#).

[View INES documents](#) (password required).

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#### Research Team

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#### INES Conference

**26th - 27th October 2006**  
**Stanhope Hotel, Brussels**  
[Visit the INES conference website](#)