

**EVENIMENT**

---

**Ecumenical and Interreligious Approaches to Bioethics:  
The Summer School from Vienna, 12-18 June 2017**

---



Just by the fact that they gravitate towards issues related to the beginning and the end of life, the unprecedented achievements in the field of biotechnological medicine, which we experience today both with amazement and worry, raise countless questions of

moral and ethical nature. The contemporary technologies of procreation, genetic engineering, contraception, organ donation or euthanasia – in order to recall just some of them – aren't, from a moral point of view, simple or neutral medical actions. On the contrary these

## EVENIMENT

often require the entire human involvement and they end up, not a few times, by confusing the human sensibilities at a personal or social level. This is the reason why, over the last decades, bioethics emerged as a new science whose task is to analyze and evaluate the ethical implications of the advancements which were made possible by the application of the technological improvements in the medical field. At a global level, physicians, sociologists, psychologists or philosophers are invited in order to pronounce or to give relevant answers to the painful, bioethical disputed issues and which concerns directly or indirectly the value of the human life.

For their part the three great Christian confessions (Roman-Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant Churches) didn't remain impassive to the bioethical discussions and they had put forward official documents in which they had expressed their faith and their point of view. Moreover, remaining at the same inter-confessional level, the bioethical dilemmas are discussed in national or international symposiums or other scientific researches, specialized courses, summer schools and other diverse cultural, educational or informing activities.

Recently, from 12<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> of June 2017, under the auspice of the University of Vienna and the Catholic Faculty of Theology within the first, took place the Summer School entitled *Ecumenical and interreligious approaches to Bioethics*, being coordinated by Ms. Sigrid Müller, dean and professor of Moral Theology at these prestigious Viennese faculty. The event, financially

supported by *Central European Exchange Program from University Studies (CEEPUS)*, gathered several professors of Moral Theology and Bioethics, as well as students from many countries from Central and Eastern Europe. In this way professors and, respectively, students from countries as Austria, Slovenia, Hungary, Poland, Republic of Serbia and Romania were present at this summer school.

On behalf of the Faculty of Orthodox Theology from Cluj-Napoca, Romania, it is Rev. Prof. Ștefan Iloaie, the holder of the discipline of Moral Orthodox Theology, who participated. At this event with inter-confessional character, Rev. Prof. Ștefan Iloaie delivered the next lectures: An Orthodox Approach to Bioethics; Bioethical questions: Do the Christian confessions argue differently; Bioethics in the Public Square. Perspectives from Romania and Slovenia (the last two lectures representing a round table discussion and a course moderated along with prof. Ștefan Tobler – Sibiu, Romania and prof. Roman Globokar – Ljubljana, Slovenia).

Regarding the courses that the Summer School's alumni attended in Vienna, some of them aimed at familiarizing the students with particularly inter-confessional and interreligious perspectives (e. g. the Islamic approach) on Bioethics. Others have brought into their attention current aspects regarding the reception of bioethical interrogations and issues at the political debate and making-decision level in countries as Romania and Slovenia. Finally, there were also courses that emphasized the manner in which the bioethi-

#### EVENIMENT

cal problems is reflected in contemporary fiction (e. g. the lecture *The Bioethics of Gilead – Religion, Gender and Politics in Margaret Atwood’s Fiction*, given by prof. Gustav Kovacs – Pećs, Hungary).

Beyond making students aware of the specific perspectives of each Christian confession concerning bioethics, the ultimate goal of this Summer School was to identify a trans-confessional consensus on various bioethical questions that raise acute consciousness issues and require immediate theological answers.

Last but not least, in order to combine the useful with pleasure, the students had the opportunity to visit the Viennese University, to attend a Mass at the famous Stephansdom and a procession organized during a Catholic holiday or to visit the Greek Orthodox Church in Vienna.

**Gabriel NOJE**