

Advisory Expert Commission for the Teaching of Ethics

Background

The Ethics Education Program (EEP) that UNESCO has started in 2004-2005 biennium is an example of a major effort that combines the activities of both the Bioethics and the Science and Technology programs. The program is set up following the adoption by COMEST of the report on the teaching of ethics. It is not only implementing the recommendation made in this report, but is also itself a major instrument to implement the normative instruments in the area of bioethics adopted by the Member States.

EEP aims at initiating and reinforcing educational activities for the teaching of ethics to scientists in the Member States of UNESCO. The program will initially focus on university education. It will encourage international cooperation to develop innovative and new ethics teaching programs for regions. The program will also promote the development of a quality assessment and certification system. Schools of ethics (as networks of experts) will be established with pilot-programmes in teaching of ethics of science and technology, in order to promote education and to serve as a forum for the exchange of ideas between specialists, as well as to encourage studies, research projects and diffusion of information on the social, ethical and legal implications related to the advancement of science and technology. The program is not only focused on bioethics (although most existing programs will be in this area) but it has a wider scope, taking into account the need for ethics teachings within all sciences.

Need for advice

In order to develop, implement and assess the activities of UNESCO it will be necessary to involve qualified experts in ethics teaching to give advice and recommendations. For this purpose an advisory commission has been established to assist the Division of Ethics of Science and Technology. This commission will have Category VI meetings; it will therefore not have an official status as a body of UNESCO.

Terms of Reference

1. The Commission will advise the Division of Ethics of Science and Technology in regard to the development, implementation and evaluation of the Ethics Education Programme (EEP)
2. The Commission will assist in the identification of what should be a core curriculum in the area of ethics
3. The Commission will assist in developing standards and criteria for evaluating existing and newly developed teaching programs, in order to guarantee and monitor the quality of programs
4. The Commission will advise on setting up a mechanism for review and assessment of teaching ethics programs
5. The Commission will assist in developing a system of certification of programs that have been positively assessed.
6. The Commission will advise concerning the long-term perspective of the EEP.

Composition

Experts from COMEST:

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Experts from IBC:

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