

# Introduction

When in May 2010 the first issue of the journal *Jahr* was published, the intention and mission of the Editorial Board was to have an annual publication with a broad horizon of different bioethical questions. Only 17 months later, the 4th number of this journal is finalized and, we hope, ready to enrich your libraries and provoke interest for the new and promising chapter in bioethics.

In the last few years bioethics in Europe has been forced to undergo radical transformation. Burdened by its own tradition, history, and experiences, Europe has for a long period been cautious towards Potter's (1970/71) and other Americans' vision of bioethics. With several exceptions, bioethics in Europe slowly started to be a question of scientific, educational, political and social interest only about 20 years ago.

The year 1997 was the year of an important bioethical milestone in Europe. The first one is the Oviedo Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine of the Council of Europe, finalized and prepared for signature and ratifications, while the other one is less known. On the occasion of 6th annual meeting of the German Society for the History and Theory of Biology (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Theorie der Biologie*) (Tübingen, Germany), Rolf Löther gave lecture entitled *Evolution of the Biosphere and Ethics (Evolution der Biosphäre und Ethik)*, mentioning for the first time the forgotten Fritz Jahr's notion of bioethics (Bio-Ethik). Interesting fact is that Jahr's article introducing *bioethics* was published precisely 70 year earlier (1927), while the broader public found out about it 10 years later (in 2007), mostly due to the papers by Hans-Martin Sass.

Department of Social Sciences and Medical Humanities of the University of Rijeka - Faculty of Medicine in 2010 conceived a project on Fritz Jahr's work and the foundations of bioethics in Europe. The project 06.05/17 *Fritz Jahr and European Roots of Bioethics: the Establishing an International Scholar's Network - EUROBIONETHICS*, received funds from Croatian Science Foundation (01 February - 31 July 2011), but also from two international partners, Kennedy Institute of Ethics (Georgetown University, Washington, D.C. USA) and Center for Medical Ethics (Ruhr University, Bochum, Germany). In addition to the gratitude for financial and logistic support to the above mentioned institutions, our homage acknowledge-

ment also goes to our friend and partner, Hans-Martin Sass, who has provided the most valuable support from the beginning of the project. "*Domestic*" forces of the collaborators have been represented by the Referral Centre for Bioethics in South-East Europe in Zagreb (under supervision of Ante Čović).

Scholars network can hardly be accomplished without scholars. Networking of our collaborators from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Columbia, Croatia, France, Germany, Greece, and the USA was at the same time inspiring and pleasant experience. Having them devoted to the ideas of the project became a firm ground for several activities: 1st international conference *Fritz Jahr and European Roots of Bioethics* (Rijeka/Opatija, 11-12, March, 2011), Rijeka Declaration on the Future of Bioethics, Fritz Jahr Documentation Center and the 4th number of journal *Jahr*. After we finish with this part, we continue with the publishing activities (Lit Verlag, Münster), as well as with preparation for establishing Fritz Jahr Award for Promotion and Research of European Bioethics. All other information regarding the project can be found on our web site [www.eurobioethics.com](http://www.eurobioethics.com).

The 4th number of *Jahr* journal brings out 15 papers presented at the Rijeka conference, Rijeka Declaration on Future of Bioethics in seven languages (English, German, Croatian, Greek, Portuguese, Spanish, French), and "traditional" sections: Partner Institution (Kennedy Institute of Ethics in Washington, D.C., and Center for Medical Ethics in Bochum), Bioethics calendar (with two contributions), a review of book on Ibero-American perspective in bioethics and Instructions for Authors.

The process of establishing bioethics in Europe is far from being completed. However, by emphasizing the importance of Fritz Jahr and other European thinkers we wanted to help broadening the horizons of bioethics and not to narrow them down to a continent.

**Iva Rinčić**