

Brussels, 17 May 2024

33rd Meeting of the National Ethics Councils

16 & 17 May 2024

The 33rd National Ethics Councils Forum is pleased to release the following statement endorsed by the attending Committees & Councils.

"National ethics committees are part of democracy.

Interdisciplinary and pluralist in composition, they have historically sought to represent society as a whole, dealing with scientific progress and global uncertainty. More than ever, their contribution is needed in a world threatened by fragmentation. However, many countries around the world, including in the EU, have not yet set up National Ethics Committees or have not given them the guarantees they need to fulfil their mission properly and independently.

This is why the 33rd NEC Forum agreed on the following statement:

Each country should establish an independent National (Bio) Ethics Committee, provide it with a legal basis and sufficient resources."

Context:

The National Ethics Committees (NEC) Forum meets every six months to discuss current ethical challenges. NEC exchange views on pressing ethical issues. In the context of the Belgian Presidency of the Council of European Union (EU), NEC met on the 16th and 17th of May 2024.

National ethics committees in the EU safeguard fundamental democratic values while considering cultural particularities and applicable laws. National ethics committees in EU already collaborate, fostering harmonization while addressing specific national needs.