



Open Letter of Members of the European Parliament
on the occasion of the Universal Children's Day
(Anniversary of the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child)

Strasbourg, 20th of November 2013

We, undersigned Members of the European Parliament, hereby express our utmost concern over legislative and regulatory efforts in the United Kingdom, the only country worldwide to propose the approval of a medical technique known as "mitochondrial replacement".

This technique requires the combination of genetic material from more than two progenitor persons and would result in inheritable germ-line modifications for any resulting children. Such a biologically extreme procedure raises a host of serious safety, efficacy, ethical, legal and social issues. Moreover, we are gravely concerned about the unforeseeable consequences of this genetic manipulation to determine the traits of future children. Developed to help a small number of women affected by a rare genetic disease, this procedure would affect all of humanity by establishing a precedent for cloning and "designer babies".

As members of the Bioethics Intergroup in the European Parliament, we urge our colleagues in the United Kingdom to reconsider and withdraw their support of a procedure leading to human germ-line intervention. Allowing this procedure would deal a severe blow to human dignity and our common responsibility towards the well-being of children and our societies.

Today, as we celebrate Universal Children's Day, we stress our firm commitment to work towards ethically sound biotechnological progress. We strongly believe that the development of mitochondrial replacement techniques is not an indicator of progress, but a dangerous and unnecessary technology that would lead to the alteration of the human species and the destruction of our shared human heritage.

Miroslav Mikolášik MEP
Slovakia (European People's Party)

Peter Liese MEP
Germany (European People's Party)

Margrete Auken MEP
Denmark (Greens)

Konrad Szymański MEP
Poland (European Conservatives & Reformists)

Bastiaan Belder MEP
Netherlands (Europe of Freedom & Democracy Group)