The establishment of the UNESCO Chair in Bioethics and Human Rights

On May 28, 2009, the Director-General of the UNESCO signed the agreement for the establishment of the UNESCO Chair. When the Italian UNESCO commission received the agreement on July 6, 2009, the two rectors of the two universities which submitted the proposal for the founding of the UNESCO Chair, Pedro Barrajón of the *Ateneo Pontificio Regina Apostolorum* and Paolo Scarafoni of the *Università Europea di Roma*, signed the agreement on July 7, 2009. This signed contract was eventually submitted to the Italian commission.

Alberto Garcia currently directs the UNESCO Chair in Bioethics and Human Rights under the auspices of *Institute of Bioethics and Human Rights*. A Board of Director has been formally established. A Board of Advisors is in the process of being formed. The Chair has also instituted the positions of Fellows and Interns from faculty and students of Regina Apostolorum and Università Europea.

The official inauguration event of the UNESCO Chair took place on March 22, 2010. In this event, the following speakers participated: Paolo Scarafoni Pedro Barrajón, Alberto Garcia, Henk Ten Have, Director of the Division of Ethics of Science and Technology of UNESCO, Friedrich Bechina, representing the Congregation for Catholic Education, and Enrico Garacci, President of the *Instituto Superiore di Sanità* of Italy.

Activities of Institutional Relations


On January 13, 2010, Alberto Garcia met with Henk Ten Have, Sonia Bahri and Dafna Feinholz in the headquarter of UNESCO, Paris to inform them about the different activities and progress of the UNESCO Chair.

On January 13, 2010, Alberto Garcia met with Msgr. Francesco Follo, Representative, Permanent Observer of the Holy See in the headquarter of UNESCO, to inform him about the different activities and progress of the UNESCO Chair.

On January 15, 2010, Alberto Garcia met with Sjur Bergan and Carlos De Sola from the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, France to share with them the initiative of the UNESCO Chair. He also met Msgr. Aldo Giordano, Permanent Representative of the Holy See to the Council of Europe.
On January 22, 2010, Alberto Garcia was present at the granting of honorary doctorate degree by the Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia to Federico Major Zaragoza, former General Director of UNESCO.

On February 12, 2010, Alberto Garcia met with Fredrich Bechina, Official of the University Office, Congregation of Catholic Education to inform him of the progress and initiatives of the UNESCO Chair.


On February 26, 2010, Alberto Garcia and Joseph Tham met with David Heyd from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in Rome to share with him the progress of the UNESCO Chair.

On March 5, 2010, Alberto Garcia met with Msgr. Jean-Louis Brugues, Secretary, Congregation of Catholic Education to inform him of the progress and initiatives of the UNESCO Chair.

On April 30, 2010, Alberto Garcia and Gonzalo Miranda met with Michael Barilan from the Tel Aviv University, to share with him the progress of the UNESCO Chair.

On May 2-5, 2010, Alberto Garcia participated in an International Conference on Bioethics Education "Contents, Methods, Trends", organized by the UNESCO Chair in Bioethics of the University of Haifa which took place in Zefat, Israel. On May 6, 2010, Alberto Garcia participated in a meeting convoked by Henk Ten Have to discuss the formation of a network of UNESCO Chairs.

On August 26, 2010, Alberto Garcia, Director of the UNESCO Chair in Bioethics and Human Rights, was invited to give a presentation to a group working at the World Bank and IMF in Washington, DC. He spoke on "UNESCO Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights: A Step in the Right Direction?"

UNITWIN activities

During this year, UNITWIN partners actively cooperated with this initiative. In November, 2009, Alberto Garcia met with Oscar Martinez, Dean of the School of Bioethics of the Anahuac University who is coordinator of the UNITWIN program of the UNESCO Chair, to discuss and plan of the actions of the subsequent years. Alberto Garcia, Oscar Martinez and some of the faculty members of Anahuac University also participated in the 16th Session of the International Bioethics Committee (IBC) of the UNESCO representing the UNESCO Chair on November 23-25. On the following days from November 26-28, they also participated in an international congress “Joint Action for Capacity—Building in Bioethics” organized by the European Commission and UNESCO.

On May 26, 2010, Alberto Garcia gave the inaugural speech for the Center of Human Rights of the Universidad Anahuac del Sur of Mexico. This Center seeks to deepen the different aspects and basis of human rights by means of international academic exchanges. An initial fruit of this collaboration consists in a Diploma on Biolaw.

In February 2010, José Octavio Serra Van-Dunem, Dean of the Law School of Universidade Agostinho Neto of Luanda, Angola who is coordinator of the UNITWIN program of the UNESCO
Chair, visited Alberto Garcia in Rome. In this encounter, they discussed and planned the future actions of the following years. They also visited the Italian National Commission of UNESCO.

**Activities in the Different Areas of Interests**

In this year, the activities of the UNESCO Chair in Bioethics and Human Rights were made known through the creation of an internet page [www.unescobiochair.org](http://www.unescobiochair.org), brochures, YouTube videos, newsletters, and Facebook.

The following activities were organized, sponsored or participated by the UNESCO Chair in a significant way.

1. Bioethics, Multiculturalism and Religion

- From June 30-July 10, 2009 an international bioethics summer course entitled “Global Bioethics: Science, Religion and Human Rights in Dialogue” was held. Some of the speakers of the conference were Cinzia Caporale, Edmund Pellegrino, Carlo Casini, Adriano Bompiani, Laura Palazzani, Andreu Rocha, Riccardo Di Segni, Dariusch Atighetchi, Gonzalo Miranda, Rocco Buttiglione, Eugenia Rocella, Alberto Garcia, and Joseph Tham. More than 70 participants from 20 countries attended the course.

- A two day conference on Bioethics and Religion in Jerusalem was held on December 13 and 14 on “Culture of Life and Religion” and “Bioethics, Law and End of Life Issues.” Christian, Islamic and Jewish experts in bioethics participated in this discussion and simultaneous translations into Arabic, English, Hebrew and Italian were offered to the 60 participants. A concluding statement demonstrating the areas of convergence among the three religions was accepted by all the speakers. Some of the speakers include:
  - Alberto Garcia, Director, UNESCO Chair in Bioethics and Human Rights. Rome, Italy
  - Michael Barilan, Tel Aviv University, Israel.
  - Amnon Carmi, UNESCO Chair in Bioethics, University of Haifa, Israel.
  - Colleen M. Gallagher, The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, USA
  - Jonathan Halevy, Shaare Zedek Medical Center, Jerusalem.
  - Jamil A. Hamami, Al-Quds University of Jerusalem.
  - David Heyd, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.
  - Eamon Kelly, LC, Vice-Director, Pontifical Institute Notre Dame of Jerusalem Centre.
  - Gonzalo Miranda, LC, Regina Apostolorum University, Rome, Italy.
  - Laura Palazzani, LUMSA University, Rome, Italy.
  - Elio Sgreccia, President FIBIP. Emeritus President of Pontifical Academy for Life, Italy.
  - Paulina Taboada, Catholic University, Chile.
  - Mustafa Abu Sway, Al-Quds University of Jerusalem.

- On March 10, 2010, Fan Ruiping gave a presentation at the Regina Apostolorum University to a group of students on "Confucian Bioethics". Dr. Fan is a professor of bioethics from Hong Kong's City University.

- On March 11, 2010, the UNESCO Chair sponsored the meeting of Tristram Engelhardt of Rice University with students and staff of the School of Bioethics in Rome. This renowned bioethicist answered many of the questions directed to him regarding his understanding of faith and reason in bioethics, human rights, and global bioethics.
• The UNESCO Chair in Bioethics and Human Rights was one of the co-sponsors of the International Conference “Religions, Cultures, Human Rights: Complex Relations in Evolution” organized by Religion for Peace and under the High Patronage of the President of the Italian Republic. It was held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rome from May 12-13, 2010.

• The Canadian Catholic Bioethics Institute and the Order of Malta are hosting a free lecture on September 29, 2010 with Alberto García to speak on “Bioethics, Multiculturalism and Religion: Fostering the art of convergence and cooperation in global ethics.”

2. Neurobioethics

The Neurobioetica Study and Research Group (NSRG) was founded March 20th, 2009, in Rome, under the auspices of the Master in Science and Faith of the Pontifical Athenaeum Regina Apostolorum and the UNESCO Chair in Bioethics and Human Rights. A Board of Directors was created. The group has been meeting approximately every month. As of today, the group consists of 34 members coming from China, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, Canada, and USA. Their background ranges from Medicine (Anesthesiology, Neuroradiology, Psychiatry, Neurosurgery, Geriatrics), Bioethics, Medical Biotechnology, Pharmacy, History, Journalism, Law, Neuroscience, Neuropsychology, Philosophy, Physics, Psychology, Sociology and Theology.

• First meeting, March 20, 2009. A group of experts from various disciplines first gathered. Dr. Adriana Gini, Fellow of our UNESCO Chair and Coordinator of the NSRG, introduced the field of Neuroethics by explaining its two major division: Neuroscience of Ethics (Safire, 2002) and Ethics of Neuroscience (Roskies, 2002). In addition, she presented a power point by the title: “Neurobioetica and the Human Person”, and introduced the term Neurobioetica, the Italian translation of Neurobioethics (Giordano, 2005), for the first time. This event marks the foundation of the NSRG.

• Second meeting, May 8, 2009. The definitions of Neurobioetica, derived from different perspectives, were collected and discussed. There were proposals by the coordinator and group members regarding important topics and research activity to be accomplished during the year.

• Third Meeting, July 3, 2009. A mini-seminar by the title: “Brain storming on consciousness with five speakers” was held for the group members only. The five invited speakers (group members) belonged to the fields of philosophy (2), anesthesiology (1), neuroradiology (1) and psychiatry (1) and this was our first attempt at an interdisciplinary approach.

• Fourth meeting and Open Seminar. September 18, 2009. The Seminar: “Consciousness and Human Dignity” Dr. Gini presented a convergent definition of Neurobioetica and the Mission of the group. Paola Ciadamidaro, anesthesiologist, explained the difficulties in the definition and diagnosis of the so called “vegetative state” and the ethical implications of an inadequate clinical management; Andrea Soddu, physicist from the Coma Science Group in Liege, Belgium, illustrated the new and promising applications of functional Nuclear Magnetic Resonance to the severe disorders of consciousness (DOC); Jesús Villagrasa, philosopher, explained that the concept of dignity cannot and should not be separated from the concept of person and that the so called “quality of life” is not a measure of a patient’s dignity or of her right to life; and finally, Luisella Daziano proposed examples of media coverage of some emblematic and internationally known “cases” of patients with DOC, underscoring the ambiguity of the language used and the diffusion of data and information that are often misleading to the public and ethically unacceptable. The seminar was followed by a Q & A session with the public. Prof. James Giordano, neuroscientist and neuroethicist from the Potomac Institute for Policy Studies in Arlington, Virginia, USA and the Veritatis Splendor Institute, in Bologna, were able to participate live, through videoconferencing. Alberto García, Joseph Tham and a group of physicians and professors followed the session through videoconferencing from University of Texas-MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston.
Fifth meeting. November 6, 2009. A mini in house seminar was held. The four speakers were group members. Three psychiatrists spoke on “Decision-making and moral judgment, between cognition and emotion: a neuropsychological perspective”, “Chronic pain: a transnosographic and transdisciplinary approach”, and “Near death experiences”, by Carlo Blundo, Adalisa Palma and Maria Luisa Pulito respectively. Giovanni Chieregatti, a clinical pathologist and forensic medicine physician, presented: “From cognitive decline to brain death”: a Neurobioethical perspective. In October, Dr. Gini, coordinator of the group, spent three weeks as a visiting scholar with Prof. Giordano at the Potomac Institute for Policy studies in Arlington, Virginia. She presented a guest lecture on Cognitive Enhancement.

Sixth meeting. December 18, 2009. More members joined. Prof. Mustafa Abu Sway, Professor of Philosophy and Ethics, Al Quds University, Jerusalem and Prof. James Giordano, Director of the Center for Neurotechnologies of the Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, Arlington, VA, USA participated through videoconferencing. “Communication between mother and embryo/fetus and its implications in the post-abortion syndrome” was presented by Alberto Carrara. A brief report from the Milan neuroscientific meeting “Consciousness: balancing the neurosciences and the other humanistic science” was presented by Giuseppe Lombo of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross and member of the group.

Seventh meeting. January 22, 2010. Following a brief report on the “International Association of Catholic Bioethicists Meeting”, Colonia, July 12-16, 2009, with four of the group members among the participants. Alberto Garcia, from Madrid, Spain, highlighted the major events of the “International Conference on Bioethics and Religion” held in Jerusalem. Michele Farisco, philosopher of the group presented a paper on “Neurobiology of Wisdom”.

Eighth meeting. February 19, 2010. Proposals on five major topics were presented by group members and discussed. They included: scientific and philosophical studies on consciousness; nanotechnologies; neuro-anthropology; neuro-bio-esthetics; the relation between the brain and mystical experiences; the problem of addiction and their neural correlates; Genes, brain, behavior and legal responsibility, etc.

March 9, 2010. William Casebeer, Cognitive scientist and philosopher; USAF, Chief of Eurasian Intelligence Analysis, NATO Military Headquarters presented “Naturalizing ‘Souls’: Reduction, Consilience, and Ontological Claims”

Ninth meeting. April 23, 2010. A brief paper on “Brain stimulation (surface and deep)” was presented by our group member Ricardo Carrara. Group member Gabriele Sofia gave a presentation on: “Reflections on theater and neuroscience”. A report was made of the visit to Siena Biotech S.p.A. to celebrate the first year of the Neurobioetica Group. An announcement was made that Dr. Gini had been invited to the Neuroethics Society meeting in San Diego, November 11-12, to present the result of the interdisciplinary work of the group on the disorder of consciousness issues in an international panel. A paper written by eleven group members on the same issues had been accepted for publication on the Proceedings of the National Convention of the Association of the Legal and Forensic Physicians, Ancona, Italy, September 2009.

Tenth meeting. May 21, 2010. Roberto Gallinaro presented a paper on: “Biological determinism and freedom viewed from the concept of Incarnation”. Two group members, Dr. Adriana Gini and Prof. Vito Antonio Amodio, visiting scholars at the Potomac Institute for Policy Studies for three weeks in May, participated live, with James Giordano and Prof. Alejandro Canadas, Professor of Economics (our group member) at Mount St. Mary’s University in Maryland. Dr. Gini had presented a guest lecture at the Potomac on “Is morality innate” and Prof. Amodio one on: “Psychiatry: Neurobiotechnology’s last frontier”. A team of members updated their efforts at translating into Italian an interesting book “Pain, meaning and medicine” by Prof. Giordano.

Eleventh meeting. June 25, 2010. Alejandro Canadas, live from Maryland, presented the group with the new field of research in Neuroeconomics. The “Giornale di Bioetica” on line (Journal of Bioethics) now publishes articles written by some of the group members on neuroscientific topics.
3. Bioethics and Mass Media

- From June 28-July 9, 2010 an international bioethics summer course entitled “Bioethics and Communication: A Challenge for the third millennium” was held. Some of the speakers of the conference were: G. Miranda, C. Casini, A. Aguilar, M. Pensavalli, V. Comodo, C. Basili, D. Caramazza, R. Azzaro, G. Falleri, M. Bernardini, V. Pisano, P. Centofanti, A. Cavallotto, C. Pensieri, L. Daziano, A. Gaspari, G. MarizzaA. Meluzzi, T. Cozzi, A. Cavallotto, M. Losito, More than 50 participants attended the course.

- Biomedi@ is a Group for Research and Training on the relationship between bioethics and the media. This group offers the public a database of bioethics news gathered from some of most important international and Italian newspapers. To date, over 600 articles are in the database which will provide a useful service for scholars in bioethics and those interested to the media.

4. Bioethics and Human Ecology

On September 14, 2009, a conference was organized entitled “For a green revolution in Africa: Development is the New Name for Peace.” This conference anticipates the Synod of African Bishops gathering in Rome to study the recent agricultural innovations and the challenges that new technologies can play in Africa. The list of speakers includes:

- Gonzalo Miranda, Fellow, UNESCO Chair in Bioethics and Human Rights and Full Professor School of Bioethics, Regina Apostolorum
- Giampaolo Crepaldi, Secretary, Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace
- Jacques Diouf, General Director of FAO
- Monty P. Jones, Executive Secretariat Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), Ghana
- Daniel Mataruka, Executive Director African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF), Kenya
- Motlatsi Everest Musi, Farmer, South Africa
- François B. Traoré, President, Union Nationale des Producteurs de Coton du Burkina (UNPCB), Burkina Faso
- Gerolamo Fazzini, Editor, Mondo e Missione

- The UNESCO Italian National Commission in collaboration with our UNESCO Chair in Bioethics and Human Rights and Unicoop Tirreno organized a Round Table discussion on "Security Food in a Period of Crisis" on December 2, 2009. Some of the speakers include: Alberto Garcia, Paolo Scarafoni (Rector of UER), Pedro Barrajón (Rector of APRA), Fabrizio Calabresi (Commissione Nazionale italiana per l'UNESCO). Ambassatore Lucio Alberto Savoia (Commissione Nazionale italiana per l'UNESCO), Maurizio Malogliolo, Representative of FAO.

- On June 7, 2010, the UNESCO Chair participate at the seminar on “A World without Africa is not a World,” organized by Italian National Commission for UNESCO. Alberto Garcia was invited to speak at the event.