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### **European Geneticists Call upon China to Change Its New Eugenics Law**

The European Society of Human Genetics and the European Alliance of Genetic Support Groups have joined forces to urge the People's Republic of China to drop compulsory childlessness on genetic grounds from their new Law on Maternal and Infant Health Care.

The following statement is being presented to the Chinese authorities through the Chinese Ambassador in London, and individual European governments are being encouraged to raise our objections at the 4th United Nations World Conference on Human Rights and Women, held in Beijing in September 1995.

We believe that the application of new genetic knowledge can relieve much suffering, but this must be on the basis of individual choice and a trust in the professionals to support the families' own decisions.

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*A Statement on the New Chinese Law on Maternal and Infant Health Care from The European Society of Human Genetics and The European Alliance of Genetic Support Groups*

We, the undersigned, urge the People's Republic of China to change the Law on Maternal and Infant Health Care, effective June 1, 1995, so as to avoid

*compulsory* childlessness on genetic grounds. As it stands, Article 10 of this law is an abuse of genetic information and a violation of human rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Article 16 provides that 'men and women of full age without limitation due to race, nationality or religion have the right to marry to found a family'. This is repeated in similar vein, but subject to national laws, in Article 12 of the European Convention.

We recognise the great progress made by the People's Republic of China in provision of high-quality health care to the Chinese people, and support their recognition of the need to address the burden that genetic disease brings to families and society, but we reject premarital selection, by physicians, as to who may or who may not have children, as required in Article 10 of this law:

Physicians shall, after performing the premarital physical check-up, explain and give medical advice to both the male and female who have been diagnosed with genetic diseases of a serious nature considered to be inappropriate for child-bearing from a medical point of view; the two may be married only if both sides agree to take long-term contraceptive measures or to undergo a ligation operation for sterility.

Article 34 of the same law states:

Personnel engaged in the health care services for mothers and infants shall strictly abide by professional ethics and keep the secrets of the individuals concerned.

Professional ethics cannot be maintained in the face of Article 10, with its violation of the Declaration of Human Rights, a declaration which the People's Republic of China, as a member of the United Nations, should uphold. Considering the direct conflict

between Articles 10 and 34, Article 34 should prevail on the basis of its fundamental nature to the health care profession. Therefore, the undersigned genetics associations, representing professionals and affected families in Europe, urge the National People's Congress to re-examine and modify Article 10.

*Marcus Pembrey*  
The European Society of Human Genetics  
*Alistair Kent*  
European Alliance of Genetic Support Groups

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**Symposium on Chromosome 12 Genes in Cancer**

November 18, 1995  
University of Leuven, Belgium

This symposium will follow the Third International Workshop on Human Chromosome 12 Mapping (organized by P. Marynen and R. Kucherlapati) on November 16-17, 1995 in Leuven. The symposium will focus on the identification and biology of chromosome 12 genes involved in the genesis and development of leukemias and solid tumors. For more information, contact:

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