
EU: COMECE and Katholisches Büro in Berlin on “SoHO Regulation”, it creates “an unacceptable equivalence between embryos and fetuses and simple skin cells or blood plasma”

In a joint statement released today, the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union (COMECE) and the Katholisches Büro in Berlin express their “concern” over the future “Regulation on quality and safety standards for substances of human origin intended for human use”, also known as SoHO Regulation. The statement comes ahead of MEPs’ vote on the draft and tabled amendments prepared by the ENVI Committee concerning the future Regulation. The Secretariat of COMECE, in collaboration with the Katholisches Büro in Berlin, is concerned “about the potential consequences of the broad definition of ‘human substance’ outlined in the draft, which could include human embryos and fetuses”. According to the two bodies, as a matter of fact, the project sets the course for the future discussion regarding prenatal human life in European transplantation and pharmaceutical law, raising “numerous ethical and constitutional conflict issues in the EU Member States”. “As Catholic Church – COMECE and Katholisches Büro recall – we are convinced, with many others and for many reasons, that human life from the beginning, including unborn life, ‘possesses its own dignity, right and independent right of protection...’”. “The danger – Fr. Manuel Barrios Prieto, Secretary General of COMECE, explains in a statement – lies in the possibility that such a definition may degrade the dignity and value of human life, creating an unacceptable equivalence between embryos and fetuses and simple skin cells or blood plasma”. The two bodies raise questions particularly about Article 58 of the draft because, “if approved, this article would permit and mandate preliminary genetic testing on embryos and fetuses, potentially paving the way for life selection and raising concerns about compatibility with the right of self-determination for both donors and recipients”. COMECE and Katholisches Büro in Berlin therefore demand that the right of individual EU Member States to “regulate this highly ethical field” be upheld together with the right of “each Member State to refuse the authorisation of a SoHO preparation [and also] its recognition”.

Redazione