

**Nanoethics and Regulation: The Situation
in Europe and the World**

If we extend the debate from the national level, as discussed in the last five chapters, to Europe and the rest of the world, nanoscience and nanotechnology have stimulated a previously unknown level of reflection on the international scale, adding ethical concepts to the previously dominant economic issues.

In this context, in 2008, the European Commission drafted a code of good conduct for responsible research in nanoscience and nanotechnology. However, this code depends solely on the good will of each member state to apply the seven principles specified in it, making them responsible for accepting or refusing to implement research into or synthesis of nanometric objects on the basis of expected benefits or potential risks.

There are a huge number of possible applications for nanotechnologies. To confirm this, one only has to consult the data base set up by the European Observatory on Nanotechnologies, where one can sift through hundreds of thousands of references in an almost infinite range of possibilities and in every area of industry.

It is well to ask whether this universal availability of scientific knowledge, combined with the current facility for disseminating it, will really be of benefit to developing countries, allowing them to devise a scientific policy in phase with their specific needs in health, education, and so on. This is the aim of the *Millenium Development Goal*. But will these countries have the means to achieve it?

The next four chapters provide a glimpse of a very important debate, regarding individual and collective awareness of responsibilities in research, innovation, industrialisation, and globalisation, not to mention the crucial need to “control risk without hindering progress” (*Le Monde*, 26 February 2010, p. 15).