PRESS RELEASE
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45 Members of the European Parliament published an open letter addressed to British Secretary of State for Health Jeremy Hunt expressing their serious concern over today’s vote in British Parliament on controversial medical technique known as mitochondrial replacement which would introduce for the first time worldwide creation of three-parent embryos.

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, the consequences of this genetic manipulation to determine the traits of future children are unforeseeable. 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 representing almost all political groups 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", stressed Miroslav Mikolášik, chairman of the European People’s Party Working Group on Bioethics and Human Dignity.

Development of mitochondrial replacement techniques is not an indicator of ethically sound biotechnological 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. Moreover, approval of this technique would be in contradiction with European clinical trials directive explicitly stating that "no gene therapy trials may be carried out which result in modifications to the subject’s germ line genetic identity". Therefore, infringement procedure against UK could be brought in case this law passes, concludes the letter by MEPs.