



International Corsage Winter Meeting 2008 in Nijmegen, NL

## Genomics in the Policy Room

December 3, 2008 – 9.00 am to 5.30 pm

In the “policy room” negotiations about how to deal with genomics affect the work of both life-scientists and social scientists accompanying genomics programmes: On the one hand, genomics is dealt with as an *object of policy-making*, most commonly in terms of (future) regulation & implementation, and in science policy. On the other hand, *policy-making* is also on the agenda of those active in genomics. Important policy questions are, among others, the division of resources, the valorisation and patenting of research findings and the societal aspects of genomics.

It is a common feature of late modern times is that the sciences are not only subject to regulation and steering from governments and administration, but that scientists are also political on their own behalf – be it as citizens, researchers, managers of their research institutions, as vendors of marketable outputs of their research, or as “activists” and “lobbyists” for visions, public-private joint ventures, “appropriate” legal frameworks and capital. In many Western countries, particularly in the Netherlands and UK, the current science-governance culture, with its “politics of public talk”, has developed a stronger sense for putting public dialogue, transparency and democratic engagement regarding life-sciences and bio-technologies on a wider and sounder basis than some decades ago. In some cases, scientists feel that this is an explicit societal task for them, and they search for refined ways of creating spaces and means for such engagement. Science governance, as outlined above, is deeply intertwined with the way in which sciences and technologies shape cultures and societies in modern times, and vice versa – how social and cultural conditions influence technological and scientific developments. Navigating through such complex cultures of knowledges and practices is difficult, considering that different rationalities are at work in these cultures, leading to the dissolution of boundaries.

We wish to shed light on this space of public science policy and start mapping it. We do so by asking the participants of the meeting to communicate and deliberate on both practical experiences and systematic reflections regarding this genomics policy room. We invite to **address** some of the following issues:

- What are the genomics policy **issues** at stake today, which are likely to emerge in the near future? What are the major thematic shifts compared to the past?
- How do social, ethical and economic **aspects** of genomics, as well as technology **assessment** relate to each other in practice and in policy-making? What is the role of **industry** in all this?
- By which means and in which ways do researchers and policy-makers **negotiate** their perspectives and interests?
- What are the **aims and objectives** of typical encounters between researchers and policy-makers? What are the **forums** or spaces in which they meet?
- To what extent is genomics policy **professionalized** and **controlled**?
- What are forbidden areas, contested terrain, or even non-issues, and how to deal with these?

The meeting is designed as a forum for young (pre/post-PhD level) scholars at the junctions of science, social sciences/humanities and policy-making. For this meeting, we invite young

- **social researchers** from the field of science and technology studies, from ELSA and TA programmes studying the field of genomics
- **life-scientists** who are interested, in general, in policy-making related to genomics, or those who already have experience in that area
- **policy-makers**, concerned with genomics and other life-sciences

to share their concerns, perspectives and experiences.

Our aim is to bring people together in such a way that both the global and the local natures of the genomics policy-making become concrete. Therefore, we organize this meeting in Nijmegen in the middle of the science faculty where life-scientists carry out their research and from where they encounter the world of policy; from where, at the same time, the CSG coordinates its nationwide activities as an intermediary between genomics and society.

Confirmed **opening plenary speaker**: *Cornelis A. van Bochove*, Professor of Science Policy Studies, University of Leiden, NL, former Director Science Policy at the Netherlands Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science (1999-2007) who will tell first hand knowledge about the installation of NGI how one can perceive of the further development of life-sciences policy in the Netherlands.

Confirmed **closing plenary speaker**: *Joris Veltman*, Assistant Professor at the Department of Human Genetics; Principal Investigator Genomic Disorders & Head Microarray Facility Nijmegen, Department of Human Genetics-855, Nijmegen Centre for Molecular Life Sciences, Radboud University Nijmegen Medical Centre. He will provide anecdotal insights into the relationship between his research (applying genomics technologies to the study of human disease, ever since these technologies became available) and policy-making, politics and societal issues.

**Call for abstracts:** Abstracts (no more than half a page) for this conference can be submitted until **November 7, 2008**.

An example of a contribution to this meeting could be a short (10-15 minute) presentation of one major question related to genomics and policy-making you encounter in your research.

Both personal experiences and those observed in your work environment are also welcome.

**Grants/fees:** International speakers can be supported with travel grants. The individual amount of the bursary will depend on the number of eligible speakers. The conference, including catering, is free of charge for all participants.

For more information and to submit a proposal, please contact both

Peter Stegmaier: [stegmaier@society-genomics.nl](mailto:stegmaier@society-genomics.nl), and

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The meeting is organized by Peter Stegmaier, CSG Nijmegen, & Erwin van Rijswoud, Department of Philosophy and Science Studies, Science Faculty, Radboud University Nijmegen in close cooperation with Eline Huisjes and Jurgen Haanstra from **GeNeYous** (the Genomics Network for Young Scientists; [www.geneyous.nl/home.php](http://www.geneyous.nl/home.php)) and also with the **Postgraduate Forum on Genetics and Society** (PFGS, based in Exeter/UK; [www.pfgs.org/pfgs](http://www.pfgs.org/pfgs)). Corsage is a thematic cluster of GeNeYous.

See also: [www.society-genomics.nl/?page=640](http://www.society-genomics.nl/?page=640) and [www.geneyous.nl/corsage/](http://www.geneyous.nl/corsage/).

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