

Publication

Embryonen und embryo-ähnliche Organismen: Definitionsprobleme im Entwurf zum Embryonenforschungsgesetz

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At the end of May 2002, the draft of the Swiss "Federal Act on Research on Surplus Embryos and Embryonic Stem Cells" (EFG, Embryonic Research Act) reached the pre-legislative consultation stage. Under certain conditions, it would allow research on "surplus" embryos from in-vitro fertilization, and the derivation of embryonic stem cells from surplus embryos for research purposes. The EFG draft defines an embryo as "the developing organism from the point of nuclear fusion until the completion of organ development". New technological developments show that embryo-like entities can also be created without nuclear fusion having taken place. It remains unclear how to treat embryonic entities that don't fall under the draft's narrow definition of an embryo. Expanding this definition would be a welcome improvement.

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