



Statement of European academic networks in support of European Directive 2010/63/EU on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes

This Directive, adopted in September 2010 and effective from 1 January 2013, provides one of the most stringent legislative frameworks in the world for the responsible use of animals in scientific research.

- This new Directive results from long negotiations with many stakeholders including animal welfare organisations, animal technologists, scientists and industry. Not only does it harmonise animal welfare standards throughout Europe but it also promotes high quality scientific research.
- It stipulates that animals can only be used in research where no alternative is available and the scientific, educational, medical and veterinary benefits are compelling. In addition, research should be ethically justifiable and should not duplicate results that are already known.
- At the core of this Directive is a commitment to implementing the principle of the 3Rs when using animals in research. The 3Rs are: (1) Replacement : using alternative methods, such as modelling or in vitro methods, that avoid the use of animals in areas whenever possible ; (2) Reduction : minimising the number of animals used in research without jeopardising scientific objectives ; (3) Refinement : minimising pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm and/or improving animal welfare. Implementing the 3Rs approach must remain a priority to enhance animal welfare and the quality of research in the EU.
- The Directive also stipulates that adequate staff training must be provided in order to ensure competence and animal welfare. A culture of care in all animal facilities is now enshrined in EU legislation.
- **This Directive thus sets higher standards of animal welfare for Member States across the EU - repealing it would remove these standards and therefore be detrimental to animal welfare.** Alternative scientific methods such as cell culture systems and computer models are progressing but they cannot fully replace animal research in informing our understanding of human and animal health and disease - particularly in complex multi-organ diseases such as cancer, diabetes and heart diseases. This also applies to developing safe and effective therapies for medical and veterinary use, especially in areas of high unmet medical need like rare diseases, new emerging viral

diseases like Ebola, but also for other diseases for which there are currently no cures, such as Parkinson's disease, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis and dementia.

- Hence, this Directive enhances both the competitiveness of the EU and its leadership in biomedical research, basic and applied, at this time.
- Ensuring that research is performed in a careful and humane manner will thus remain essential to the understanding and treatment of human disease; this is best achieved by implementing the carefully considered regulations in this Directive and by implementing the principles of the 3Rs approach throughout the EU.

We call upon the European Parliament and the European Commission to confirm its support of this Directive so that high quality research using animals, with high animal welfare standards, can continue. Such research is critical to advancing human and animal health in the EU and globally and to maintaining Europe's leading role in that endeavour. In particular we urge the European Parliament and the European Commission to oppose the European Citizen's Initiative which calls for a repeal of this excellent legislation and proposes an end to animal experimentation. It is our belief that the public interest is very well served by the Directive which ensures the most rigorous standards for research in animals for the benefit of human and animal health.

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