



## European Coalition to End Animal Experiments

*The European Coalition to End Animal Experiments is Europe's leading alliance peacefully campaigning on behalf of laboratory animals. Formed in 1990 by animal organisations across Europe to successfully campaign to ban cosmetics testing on animals, the European Coalition draws together organisations with a range of legislative, scientific and political expertise.*

### **Briefing – January 2008**

#### Revision of Directive 86/609 on the protection of animals used for experimental and other scientific purposes

#### **Key points**

- *Directive 86/609, the key European law that governs how and when animals can be used in scientific procedures, is being reviewed after 22 years.*
- *Twelve million animals are currently used every year in EU laboratories. The Directive is failing to protect laboratory animals and is not bringing about a reduction in their use.*
- *The replacement Directive must lead directly to a sustained and targeted reduction in animal use, a drastic increase in engagement with non-animal methods, and the opening up of the use of animals in research to public scrutiny.*

#### **Summary of ECEAE key requirements**

- 1) The revised Directive must clearly have the primary purpose of protecting animals and reducing suffering.
- 2) Binding and mandatory targets must be set for reducing animal use and suffering
- 3) Tough, humane and transparent ethical review and authorisation process should be implemented
- 4) Certain types of research should be prohibited as a matter of policy
- 5) High minimum standards should be set which are applied consistently and at the MS level
- 6) Full transparency, accountability and stakeholder participation must be ensured

#### **Background**

In 1986 the European Council adopted Directive 86/609 on “the protection of animals used for experimental and other scientific purposes”. It sets minimum standards for how and whether animals may be used in experiments across the EU member states.

Twelve million animals are recorded as being used in experiments in European laboratories every year. The Directive is supposed to ensure “the protection of animals used for experimental and other scientific purposes” but it is simply not meeting that objective. As it stands Directive 86/609 does very little to challenge the reliance on animal testing and promote non-animal alternatives.

The revised Directive must take note of significant public concern about this issue. In 2006 over 42,000 European citizens responded to a Commission questionnaire about the Directive, the third highest response to any such questionnaire ever. The Commission notes that this “*gives a strong indication of the public interest in this area*”. Of the responses, 93% answered either “yes, certainly” or “yes, probably” to “*Do you believe that more needs to be done to improve the level of welfare / protection of animals used in experiments at EU level?*”, and 79% answered either “no, certainly not” or “no, probably not” to “*Do you think that there is enough public funding at European level into the development and validation of alternative methods to replace animal experiments?*”

## **ECEAE key requirements**

- 1. The Directive must clearly have the primary purpose of protecting animals and reducing suffering**
  - a. *Replacing* animal tests must be enshrined in the Directive:
    - i. the principles of the 3Rs paramount, with replacement prioritised
    - ii. member states and researchers obliged to search for non-animal methods
    - iii. a set amount of EU and member state budgets allocated for replacement
  - b. *Duplicate* animal testing must be prohibited, with mandatory data sharing
  - c. Extended *scope* of the Directive, to include
    - i. any animal that may be caused pain, distress, lasting harm or suffering
    - ii. basic research and education / training
    - iii. any research funded by the EU or member states that takes place elsewhere
    - iv. a mechanism to include species in the future based on scientific consensus
  - d. Directive must be *flexible* and *responsive to public concern*
  
- 2. Binding and mandatory targets to reduce animal use and suffering**

Met through strategic and coordinated policy initiatives
  
- 3. Tough, humane and transparent ethical review and authorisation process**
  - a. *Pre-authorisation*
    - i. A harmonised and rigorous *ethical review process*
    - ii. Harm / benefit test that takes *precautionary* approach, includes the whole *lifetime* experience of the animal, and *interrogates* the “benefit” of the work
    - iii. Project proposals made available for *public comment*, as in REACH
    - iv. Authorisation at the *member state level* subject to proper consideration of (ii)
    - v. Scope of project licences must *not be too wide ranging*
  - b. *Post-authorisation*
    - i. Actual “harms” and “benefits” of all projects *evaluated afterwards*
    - ii. A *transparent* process, except for the most confidential information
    - iii. Conditions of the harm / benefit test *revised* according to these evaluations
  
- 4. Certain types of research must be prohibited as a matter of policy**
  - a. *Immediate prohibitions* on some types of research as a matter of principle
    - i. Particular species (primates, cats, dogs) and origins (non-purpose-bred)
    - ii. Commercial gain (including household products and alcohol)
    - iii. Those procedures that cause the greatest suffering
    - iv. Genetic modification of animals
  - b. a mechanism by which the EU or member states has the power to *introduce other prohibitions* without re-visiting the Directive
  
- 5. High minimum standards set which are applied consistently and at the MS level**

with *specific encouragement* to go beyond minimum standards should MS wish (as currently exists)
  
- 6. Full transparency, accountability and stakeholder participation ensured**
  - a. *Transparency* – a principle of openness across the entire European regime
  - b. *Accountability* – scrutiny by the European Union and national parliaments, and detailed statistics available
  - c. *Stakeholder participation* – full ability to comment upon test proposals and at least 50% of membership of stakeholder groups comprised of those not representing the research industry.