



**HUMANE SOCIETY
INTERNATIONAL**
EUROPEAN UNION



Dr Hadwen Trust
Replacing Animals in Medical Research

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EU Parliament vote on animal experiments law brings both hope and disappointment for animals in laboratories

On May 5th the European Parliament took a vote on proposed amendments to the EU's 20-year old animal experiments law, Directive 86/609. When the European Commission first published its draft revision in November 2008, it launched hopes for the dawning of a genuinely progressive and future-thinking science agenda. Although not perfect, it combined compassionate and responsible curbs on what animals should endure in laboratories, with the foundation for greater transparency, fairer regulation and support for cutting-edge non-animal research.

It is deeply regrettable that so many MEPs failed to sustain the Commission's original vision and subsequent strengthening amendments. Sustained lobbying by the animal research industry has been intense, at times deeply disingenuous and certainly alarmist. The result has been that many MEPs rejected the very amendments that could make the revised legislation a law for Europe to be proud of and for the rest of the world to admire.

It is particularly disappointing that Parliament failed to demand greater protection for our closest genetic cousins, non-human primates, despite unequivocal consensus by global primate experts on their remarkable sentience. MEPs voted to continue to allow scientists the freedom to use primates in experiments with no direct application to improving human health, and reneged on their 2007 Written Declaration commitment to vote for a phase-out of primate use over time.

However there have been some positive gains at this stage which we hope to see strengthened further in the next round of negotiations. MEPs supported implementing a review of primate experiments every two years, a feasibility study regarding the phase-out of 'F1 primates' (off-spring of wild-caught parents), setting an upper limit on levels of pain animals can endure and increasing EU efforts on developing non-animal alternatives.

"In many ways animals in laboratories have been badly let down by the Parliament's vote." says Marie-Claire Macintosh for Make Animal Testing History "The animal research industry has used every trick available to dissuade them from better protecting animals used in experiments, and

although some stood firm on their principles, most have voted for a revised law that pays scant regard to animal suffering. It's clear that EU citizens support the future of humane science and MEPs have fallen short of those expectations. We sincerely hope that when the proposals come before the Council of Ministers, the original vision of science with compassion is brought back to life once more."

How MEPs voted on Directive 86/609:

- No to strict limits on re-use of animals in successive experiments
- No to restricting experiments on monkeys to avoid their use in experiments with no direct medical application
- No to a planned and time-tabled phase-out of monkey use over time or a phase out of F1 generation monkeys (offspring of wild-caught parents)
- No to mandatory central authorisation and ethical & scientific evaluation of all animal experiments before an animal-use license is granted (authorisation and ethical review at institution-level accepted for many experiments)
- No to retrospective ethical review for almost all experiments

- Yes to setting an upper limit of pain an animal can be subjected to
- Yes to creation of new EU & member state facilities to develop alternatives
- Yes to extending the scope of the law to include protection for some but not all invertebrate and foetal animals currently used in labs but not covered by the law.
- Yes to extending the scope of the law to include basic medical research on animals, meaning all EU animal experiments would be regulated by law.
- Yes to a ban on use of great apes (unless in exceptional and unforeseen circumstances)
- Yes to increased data sharing to avoid duplication of failed animal experiments.

MEP support for the creation of new EU and member state facilities to develop more alternatives to animal experiments is major victory for the Make Animal Testing History campaign. Current EU-level efforts to develop non-animal methods are narrowly focused on regulatory toxicity which only accounts for about 10% of EU experiments. Most animals in EU laboratories are used in basic medical research where far less effort has been focused despite enormous scientific potential. Increasing funding and co-ordination to bridge this gap in non-animal replacement research is immensely important.

The Make Animal Testing History campaign is a leading force in the effort to update Directive 86/609. Launched jointly by the Dr Hadwen Trust for Humane Research, Four Paws and Humane Society International, the campaign includes a call for EU citizens to join a Europe-wide virtual march to

Brussels with nearly 20,000 people marching in support at the time of going to press.

More than 12 million animals are used in EU labs each year. The proposals will be voted on by the Council of Ministers later in the year, before being sent back to the EU Parliament again in a process expected to stretch into 2010.

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For further information contact enquiry@makeanimaltestinghistory.org