

Produced by the European Biomedical Research Association

December 2010



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🔗 Basel Declaration on animal research

A new declaration about animal research and the responsibility of animal researchers has been launched in Switzerland

At a joint Swiss-German conference about animal research held this week, a new declaration was launched and has been opened for signature. The Basel Declaration opens by re-stating the importance of animal research, both today and tomorrow, but focuses its main points on the responsibilities for animal welfare, openness and need for public communication shared by animal researchers.

Organised by the research organisations Forschung für Leben (Switzerland) and the Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft (Germany), the two day conference "Research at a Crossroads" aimed to encourage researchers to explain how the three R's of replacement, reduction and refinement are applied in animal research and to ensure that this was communicated to the public.

At the close of the meeting in Basel, the declaration was signed by all the chairs and co-chairs of the conference sessions, to indicate its adoption by the conference. However, it was immediately placed upon a web site with an open invitation to scientists, doctors, veterinarians and other professionals around the world to sign it to show their support for the principles it contains.

The full text of the declaration and the invitation to sign can be found at: <http://www.basel-declaration.org/>

🔗 The new Directive now enters the transposition phase

EU Member States are required to transpose the new directive on animal research into national law by 10 November 2012

Following the formal adoption of Directive 2010/63/EU on 20 October 2010, all EU Member States now have two years to implement national legislation (or equivalent regulations or administrative provisions) to transpose the provisions of the directive into national law.

Given the complexity of the directive, some countries are likely to require most if not all of the two years to achieve this. Some of the new Member States have legal mechanisms and the political will to adopt new directives in a single move, simply using the EU text as the wording

for their new law. Paradoxically, it is probably those older Member States who implemented the previous directive (86/609/EU) with the greatest attention to detail and then amended it over the intervening 24 years, who will have the most work to do. They will need to ensure an effective transition from one complex system to a similar, but subtly different system of regulation.

One of the driving forces behind the new directive was the variation in the way that the previous directive was implemented across the EU. With the implementation of the new directive there will be greater pressure on Member States to harmonise their resulting national legislation. However, such harmonisation will only result from initiatives by the Member States themselves as there is no pan-EU mechanism to facilitate it.

ECBR goes into hibernation

Now that the new directive has been adopted, the European Coalition for Biomedical Research is to go into hibernation

The European Coalition for Biomedical Research was formed in 2006 for the specific purpose of representing the European academic community in the revision of the EU Directive on animal research. The agreement between all the associations who formed the Coalition stated that, unless there was a need to continue its existence, the Coalition should dissolve after the Directive was adopted. Recently, representatives of the associations within the Coalition meet in Brussels to consider its future.

The meeting noted that the text of the new directive stipulated that, seven years after it was adopted, there would be a) a review of the proposal to limit primate research to second generation captive-bred animals – something which could severely limit or even prevent primate research in Europe and, b) a review of the entire Directive, with a view to amending it. It was agreed that, in approximately five years time, the European academic community would need to be represented in these reviews.

Accordingly, it was agreed to consult the full membership of the Coalition with the proposal that it should go into a state of hibernation that would permit it to be revived if and when the members considered there was a need for such a grouping to represent them.