



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Brussels, 11 May 2010  
9550/10 (Presse 105)

## **Council agrees on stricter rules for animal experimentation**

The Council today<sup>1</sup> agreed on a draft directive for the protection of animals used for scientific purposes, aimed at strengthening the protection of animals whilst allowing research to continue playing a key role in the fight against diseases ([8869/10 ADD 1](#) + [8869/10 ADD 2](#)).<sup>2</sup>

Under the new provisions member states will be required to ensure that

- experiments with animals are replaced, wherever possible, by an alternative method which is scientifically satisfactory;
- the number of animals used in projects is reduced to a minimum without compromising the quality of results;
- the degree of pain and suffering caused to animals is limited to the minimum.

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<sup>1</sup> The decision was taken, without debate, at a meeting of the General Affairs Council.  
<sup>2</sup> The German delegation abstained.

# **P R E S S**

The use of non-human primates for scientific purposes will be subject to tight restrictions. Experiments with great apes such as chimpanzees, gorillas and orangutans will be prohibited; a member state may however allow exceptionally the use of great apes if it has justifiable reasons for believing that it is essential for the survival of the species itself or because of an unexpected outbreak of a life-threatening or debilitating disease in human beings.

As a general rule, animals taken from the wild will not be allowed to be used in experiments, with some exceptions. Non-human primates may only be used if they are the offspring of animals which have been bred in captivity or if they are sourced from self-sustaining colonies.

Experiments using animals will require a prior evaluation and authorisation. Member states will also have to ensure that all breeders, suppliers and users are authorised and registered with the competent authority.

The new directive, which will replace directive 86/609 will cover vertebrate animals, including feeding larval forms and foetal forms of mammals as from the last third of their normal development, and cephalopods (for instance squids).

Approval of draft directive is a step towards the ultimate goal of achieving the full replacement of experiments on live animals as soon as it is scientifically possible to do so. According to experts, current scientific knowledge does not allow a complete phase-out of animal experimentation. Around 12 million animals are used each year in scientific experiments in the EU.

The Council's decision completes a partial agreement reached by the Agriculture and Fisheries Council on 14-16 December 2009 and reflects a provisional agreement reached in an informal triologue on 7 April 2010 with the European Parliament. The decision will be formally adopted at a forthcoming Council meeting, after finalisation of the text, and forwarded to the European Parliament for its second reading.

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