



# testing TIMES

Monthly Update on Animal Experimentation Issues in the EU from the ECEAE

**ISSUE No. 2: March 2006**

*Welcome to the March edition of Testing Times.*

*Our bi-annual Coalition meeting will take place next week, bringing together members from all over Europe. Traditionally following the country that holds the EU Presidency, this meeting will be held in Vienna, Austria. With REACH, the proposed new Pesticides legislation, and a possible revision of the Laboratory Animal Welfare Directive, 86/609, on the agenda, we are busier than ever!*

*On another note, the 3R's Partnership, launched in November 2005 by the Commission and industry to place more emphasis on alternatives to animal testing in EU policy, are due to unveil their Action Programme by the end of March. We sincerely hope that this provides the necessary and long-overdue impetus for alternatives and the beginning of the end for animal experimentation.*

*I hope you enjoy this issue and please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns you may have regarding the Coalition or animal experimentation issues.*

*Warm regards,*

*Sandra Hannen,*  
European Policy Director, ECEAE

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## **Progress on the Development, Validation and Use of Alternative Methods**

Dr. Thomas Hartung, Head of the European Centre for the Validation of Alternative Methods (ECVAM) reported to the European Parliament Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals in February on progress on the Development, Validation and Use of Alternative Methods.

Among other things, he reported that it takes several years to develop and validate alternative methods, and that using this timeline it would not be possible to introduce alternative methods in time for 2009 which is when the cosmetics ban comes into effect and also when REACH takes off.

Therefore ECVAM have been looking at speeding up the development and validation of alternative methods. In this respect, they have introduced a modular approach which will cut the time of validation by about 50%. They have also created a new reference laboratory called 'Correlate', which will instantly assess proposed methods without the

normal bureaucratic procedures. Moreover, they have three integrated projects involving about 90 partners working on sponsoring and developing alternative methods.

Currently ECVAM has over 40 tests under validation, a significant rise compared to the 16 tests validated by ECVAM in its first 10 years. It is also promoting testing strategies that use a combination of means to assess the toxicity of a substance. It is estimated that the implementation of these intelligent testing strategies will reduce the use of animals by about 50%.

### **Rebuttal of the Commission's Dismissal of our Endocrine Disruptors Report**

On 17<sup>th</sup> February, Dr. Gill Langley, our scientific advisor, set out her rebuttal of the SCHER (Scientific Committee on Health and Environmental Risks) Opinion on the 2004 ECEAE/BUAV report, commissioned by Dr. Caroline Lucas MEP, entitled 'Endocrine disrupting chemicals: a non-animal testing approach'. Dr. Langley pointed out that SCHER made sloppy assumptions, simplistic interpretations and unjustified claims and criticisms. In her conclusion she states that, 'The SCHER Opinion reads more like an entrenched policy position than a scientific view from an expert committee.'

Read her full rebuttal [here](#).

### **Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) Adopted**

At the International Conference on Chemicals Management, held on the 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> February in Dubai, a new global initiative, SAICM, was agreed. It will cover everything from risk assessments of chemicals and harmonized labelling to tackling obsolete and stockpiled products. It also aims to help less developed countries train staff in handling chemicals. Although a voluntary agreement, it was

signed by over 100 environment and health ministers.

While we applaud the effort to protect both humans and the environment, there seemed to be virtually no attention paid to addressing the use, and suffering, of animals in painful and unscientific chemical safety testing. Indeed, in the draft documents, the issue of the use of animals in testing was mentioned only once in an annex of the Draft Global Plan for action. We hope that when the final documents become available, more attention will have been paid to the suffering and plight of animals in testing laboratories worldwide. As the press release notes, an estimated 1,500 new chemicals will be placed on the market each year.



*A guinea pig undergoing a painful skin test for a new chemical*

### **ECOPA Workshop**

In February, an ECOPA (European Consensus Platform for Alternatives) workshop entitled 'REALity CHECK: Proposals, Amendments and Conclusions - from the alternative point of view' brought together a range of stakeholders to discuss alternatives in the REACH legislation. At the meeting, the 'Animal Use Calculator' was unveiled by ECOPA. This would allow for a quick summary of how many animals will be needed for any particular testing strategy. While this is a good and useful tool, it will always be second best to the complete replacement of animals in testing.

## European Parliamentary Questions

### Parish - Primate experiments in Germany

17 February 06, written question

When will the Commission rule on complaint number 2004/5110 made by BUAV against Germany in relation to primate experiments at Covance Laboratories in Münster, Germany?

### Lucas - Use of animal testing for pharmaceutical products

06 February 06, written question

Subject: Use of animal testing for pharmaceutical products

The use of animals in experimentation is controversial for ethical and other reasons. It is most welcome that the Commission has taken many steps to reduce the number of animals used, and to foster development of new test methods that can entirely replace animal use.

Whilst much attention has been paid to the chemicals and cosmetics sectors, efforts to reduce and replace animal testing for pharmaceutical products have lagged behind, due in part to the case-by-case nature of drug evaluation. However, in the immediate term, it appears that greater communication, cooperation, and reciprocity of approval between the EU and third country regulators could help to reduce the number of animals used to test pharmaceuticals. Although work has been done to harmonise test methods and information requirements for drug licensing through groups such as the International Conference on Harmonisation, it appears that current practice regularly allows or even requires additional animal testing to take place for approval of the same product in different countries. Licensed drugs, especially those in human use, should not need to return to the animal testing stage.

Would the Commission outline efforts taken to ensure that additional animal testing is not required by EU regulators when products developed and

accepted in third countries are imported into EU, and also outline measures taken to ensure that EU approval of pharmaceutical products leads to acceptance of the products when exported to third countries, without the duplication of animal testing?

Furthermore, would the Commission give an estimate of the total number as well as the percentage of pharmaceutical products developed and approved for use outside the EU, but subsequently imported into the EU, for which additional animal tests have been required by EU regulators over the last two years?



*This macaque was saved from a fatal experiment and now lives a normal life in a special animal sanctuary*

## Who We Are

The European Coalition to End Animal Experiments (ECEAE) is Europe's leading alliance of animal protection organisations who have come together to campaign for an end to animal experimentation. Formed in 1990 to successfully campaign to ban cosmetics testing on animals, the ECEAE draws together organisations with a range of legislative, scientific, campaigning and political expertise.

For a list of who we are, please click [here](#). If you would like more information, please contact the relevant organisation in your country or [info@eceae.org](mailto:info@eceae.org)