

Press release

EP Agriculture Committee vote on the EU Directive on the protection of laboratory animals

Brussels, 1 April 2009 - EFPIA, the voice of the pharmaceutical industry in Europe, acknowledges the adoption on 31 March 2009 by the European Parliament's Agriculture committee of a report on the welfare of laboratory animals.

"Society expects the pharmaceutical industry to research and develop innovative treatments and vaccines for many unmet conditions, such as cancers, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, and infectious diseases", commented Brian Ager, Director General of EFPIA. "We consider this as a step towards striking the balance between the protection of laboratory animals, biomedical research reality, and patients needs. We call on MEPs to keep in mind the need for this balance when casting their final votes in plenary in May"

Europe has the highest standards of animal welfare in the world. The pharmaceutical industry is also committed to the three 'R's of replacement, reduction and refinement of animal testing. However, animal studies remain a small but fundamental part of biomedical research. They are vital in developing fundamental biological knowledge and deliver modern vaccines, treatments and new cures for patients.

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About EFPIA

EFPIA represents the pharmaceutical industry operating in Europe. Through its direct membership of 31 national associations and 44 leading pharmaceutical companies, EFPIA is the voice on the EU scene of 2,200 companies committed to researching, developing and bringing to patients new medicines that will improve health and the quality of life around the world.

The pharmaceutical industry accounts for no less than 19,3% of global business R&D expenditure. It is the sector with the highest ratio of R&D investment to net sales (15,9%). However, between 1990 and 2007, R&D investment in United States grew 5.2 times whilst in Europe it only grew 3.3 times, and there is rapid growth in the research environment in emerging economies such as China and India.

Today around 645,000 people work in this sector and it is estimated that three to four times more employment is generated indirectly both upstream and downstream. A significant proportion of people employed are highly skilled and 107,000 work in research and development. The European research-based pharmaceutical industry generates a substantial trade surplus, which was estimated at about €49,000 million for 2007. It has contributed significantly to reducing the European Union's trade deficit in high-tech products – today almost a quarter of the EU's high-tech exports are pharmaceutical products.