

Press release

Revision of EU legislation on the protection of laboratory animals: European Parliament vote is a step in the right direction

Brussels, 5 May 2009 - EFPIA, the voice of the pharmaceutical industry in Europe, acknowledges the European Parliament's adoption of a report on the welfare of laboratory animals. The report places the emphasis on scientific justification and ethical review as the basis for decision-making on animal studies. Whilst the decision of the Parliament as adopted represents a compromise, it is a step in the right direction. It goes some way towards a balance between the protection of animals, the reality of biomedical research, and the needs of patients.

Brian Ager, Director General commented, "Industry cautiously welcomes this decision. However, there are several provisions that may potentially hinder the development of the new and innovative treatments that society wishes to see, addressing unmet conditions such as cancers, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, and infectious diseases." Mr Ager continued, "We would now urge Member States to consider positively those provisions which will enable this research to continue in Europe."

The review of the Animal Welfare Directive is designed to improve animal welfare and to harmonize standards across EU Member States. These comprise a mandatory and sound ethical review and authorization systems, as well as improved housing and care provisions and focus on development and implementation of alternative methods that will bring direct and tangible welfare benefits.

Animal studies remain a small but fundamental part of biomedical research. They are vital in developing fundamental biological knowledge and in delivering modern vaccines, treatments and new cures for patients.

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Useful links

www.efpia.eu
www.animalresearchforlife.eu

About EFPIA

EFPIA represents the pharmaceutical industry operating in Europe. Through its direct membership of 31 national associations and 43 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.