

Brussels, 20 December 2006

New European Commission survey shows that citizens want animals used in experiments to be better protected

Eurogroup for Animals is encouraged by the wide public support for increased protection of laboratory animals as revealed in a public consultation published on the internet today.

The survey will be guiding the European Commission in the preparation of a new law on animal experimentation to update the European Directive which dates from 1986.

The answers reveal great opposition to the use of animals for research purposes, a general call to give these animals more protection, and for more funds from industry and the EU to develop methods which do not use animals.

Over 80% of the people feel "more should be done" to improve the poor level of welfare of the animals and to inform the public on this issue.

In Eurogroup's view, next year's negotiations on the new EU animal experimentation law will need to take the strong feelings of the EU citizens into consideration. "*We all want animal experimentation to come to an end but this will not happen tomorrow. Meanwhile it is our priority to reduce numbers as much as possible and for that reason legislation must be tightened*" states Sonja Van Tichelen, director of Eurogroup.

Every year over 10 million animals are used in tests but this figure is incomplete as it does not include animals used in basic research and in education. Animal protection groups want the Directive and the statistics to extend to these research areas in order for all animals to receive the highest level of protection.

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The results of the survey are available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/lab_animals/questionnaire1.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/lab_animals/questionnaire2.htm