

Rome, 30 August 2009

No cause for celebration as animal testing on the rise

At the start of the year's most important conference on the development of alternatives to animal testing, animal welfare groups are expressing concern over the increasing number of animals used for experiments.

Despite the progress made since the 3Rs (Replacement, Reduction and Refinement of animal testing) (1) were introduced 50 years ago, the number of animals used annually for research in the European Union is more than 12.1 million, according to the latest EU statistics (2), and is still rising.

At the start of the *7th World Congress on Alternatives & Animal Use in the Life Sciences*, which takes place in Rome from 30 August to 3 September, Eurogroup for Animals is expressing its hope that the event, which will bring together worldwide representatives of NGOs, industry and science as well as authorities and decision-makers, will mark a new chapter for animals used in research.

The Congress's motto is 'Calling on Science', and aims to highlight scientific progress covering innovative technologies, areas of animal use including the development of pharmaceuticals and safety assessment of specific product types, and scientific developments relevant to the 3Rs.

"The increase in numbers shows that relying on science is not enough," says Sonja Van Tichelen, Director of Eurogroup for Animals. *"Fifty years on from the introduction of the 3Rs, we now stand at a crossroads where major policy decisions must be taken to speed up the progress towards non-animal research. A coherent strategy, combined with EU and worldwide collaboration is absolutely essential to reach our targets."*

It is Eurogroup's view that:

1. Far stricter scrutiny of the use of animals is required for all research, including **EU-funded projects**;
2. More investment into **alternatives to animal testing** is needed;
3. A review of **ALL legislative requirements involving animal use**, such as food safety, should be undertaken as well as an impact assessment for all new policies;
4. The EU should adopt an **overall coherent strategy** to work towards phasing out all animal use.

- ENDS -

For more information, contact:

James Drew, Press & Publications Officer: +32 (0)2 740 08 23 – mobile: +32 (0)487 645 486; j.drew@eurogroupforanimals.org.
Local reporters (Rome) may contact Kirsty Reid, policy officer research animals, for interviews and more information: +32 495 24 23 33.

Notes:

- Eurogroup for Animals represents animal welfare organisations of nearly all EU Member States. Since its launch in 1980, the organisation has succeeded in encouraging the EU to adopt higher legal standards for animal protection. Eurogroup represents public opinion through its membership organisations across the

Union, and has both the scientific and technical expertise to provide authoritative advice on biotechnology issues relating to animal welfare. For more information, visit www.eurogroupforanimals.org

- (1) The 3Rs principles were first described in *The Principles of Humane Experimental Technique* by William Russell and Rex Burch, which was published in 1959. The authors were commissioned to write the book by the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the publication of Darwin's *The Origin of Species*. The 3Rs concept is found in both UK and European legislation governing the use of animals in research, and reflects the consensus view that alternatives to animals should be used where possible and that suffering should be minimised where alternatives are not yet available.
- (2) Fifth Report on the Statistics on the Number of Animals used for Experimental and other Scientific Purposes in the Member States of the European Union, http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/lab_animals/reports_en.htm