

Brussels, 5 September 2007

## European Parliament sends strong signal to European Commission to end the use of primates in scientific experiments

Members of the European Parliament have adopted today in Strasbourg Written Declaration n°40 calling on the Commission to establish a timetable for replacing the use of primates with alternatives. With more than the required 393 signatures, the Declaration received sufficient support before the deadline of 6<sup>th</sup> of September. It now becomes a formal Resolution of the Parliament and a clear request to include this measure in the revised EU Directive 86/609/EEC on animal experimentation, which is due to be published any moment now.

The use of animals in research is a matter of great concern, as illustrated by the Commission public consultation which revealed that 80% of respondents considered primate research to be unacceptable.

Primates are very intelligent animals who live in social groups and can experience stress, pain much like humans. Primates share 90% of their DNA with humans and are capable of suffering like humans. In addition to the suffering during the experiment comes the frustration and boredom due to barren and inadequate housing, the stress of capture of wild primates, transport, restraint and finally euthanasia.

More than 10.000 primates are used in experiments in the EU every year. Most of these experiments are required by law for safety testing, either for the production and quality control of products and devices or in toxicological studies.

Over the last four months, Eurogroup for Animals has put a lot of efforts into informing MEPs on the need to end primates testing: *“This result is really encouraging, said Sonja Van Tichelen, Director of Eurogroup for Animals, but it is now up to the Commission to take this up as a priority. We realise that primate use cannot be ended overnight, but we want to see the Commission make a commitment by putting in place a strategy and resources to achieve phase-out as a matter of urgency. There is no reason to further delay this discussion.”*

The publication of a new Directive regulating the use of animals in research is long overdue. The present Directive from 1986 is no longer in line with scientific developments, knowledge and with the European citizens' opposition to animal testing.

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### Note to Editors:

1. Eurogroup for Animals is the leading federation of European animal welfare organisations. Established in 1980, it represents its member organisations at the EU level, provides advice and expertise on animal welfare to European institutions and campaigns for animal welfare to be taken into account in all areas of European policy and legislation.
2. Written Declaration n°40 (on primates in scientific experiments) calls for:
  - a phase-out on the use of Great Apes and wild-caught non-human primates;
  - a timetable to replace primate use with alternatives.
3. Directive 86/609/EEC is the EU legislation dealing with the protection of animals used for experimental and other scientific purposes. The Directive seeks to improve the controls on the use of laboratory animals, sets minimum standards for housing and care. It also aims to reduce the number of animals used for experiments by requiring that an animal experiment should not be performed when an alternative method exists.