



Media release

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MEPs have turned their back on animal welfare and public opinion

A coalition of animal welfare groups across Europe are shocked that local Members of European Parliament (MEPs) turned their back on both animal welfare and public opinion at a crucial vote in Strasbourg on the revision of the animal experiments directive (Directive 86/609/EEC).

The European Commission's proposals to revise a 23 year old law were worsened in the European Parliament, on 5 May. MEPs voted amendments which significantly weakened the protection of animals used in laboratories, such as;

- voting against an amendment that called on the European Commission to devise a strategy to phase out the use of primates in research
- voting to allow researchers to carry out tests that cause animals suffering which is both severe and prolonged (surely an obscenity in a civilised society) and voted against an amendment that would have prevented researchers from carrying out a severe procedure on an animal if the pain was to be more than momentary
- voting to allow researchers to use non-human primates for just about any purpose, not simply life-threatening or debilitating diseases as the Commission proposed
- voting for an amendment that extends the time period whereby wild-caught primates can still be used for breeding from 7 to 10 years. It is universally recognized that capturing primates from the wild inflicts immense suffering and distress
- voting to allow researchers to in effect be allowed to determine for which experiments they need governmental permission, by deciding how to categorise the likely suffering (currently in the UK, researchers have to seek authorisation for all experiments carried out on animals)

There will be no strategy to bring forward the day when animal experiments no longer take place, as everyone claims they want.

79% of EU citizens voted in a recent opinion poll stating that MEPs should prohibit all experiments on animals which do not relate to serious or life-threatening human conditions. Following the Parliament's intervention, researchers will still be able to experiment on animals for all sorts of trivial purposes, such as household products testing, chemicals such as paints and glues, food additives, and other food stuffs.

Furthermore, similarly high percentages believe that the new legislation should not allow experiments causing pain or suffering to primates, dogs and cats.

Michelle Thew, chief executive of the European Coalition to End Animal Experiments (ECEAE), said: 'MEPs have shown themselves to be completely out of step with public opinion. A recent opinion survey by YouGov across 6 EU countries found overwhelming support to end the use of primates, cats and dogs in experiments causing suffering, and animal experiments to be allowed - if at all - *only* for serious human illnesses. The Parliament has produced a charter for the multibillion pound animal research industry to carry on business as usual, with scant regard either for animal welfare or public opinion. We will not give up on the struggle for justice for the 12 million animals used in laboratories every year, even if British representatives have. Voters can find out which of their parliamentary candidates are animal-friendly by visiting <http://www.buav.org/campaigns/12millionreasons>.'

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For further information contact the BUAV Media Office on 44(0) 20 7619 6978 or out of hours on + 44 (0)7850 510 955 or visit our Web site: www.eceae.org Notes

1. All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 7139 adults and took place in the UK France, Germany, Italy, Sweden and the Czech Republic. Fieldwork was undertaken between 24th February - 4th March 2009. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of the population sizes of the countries surveyed.

2. ECEAE Member Organisations: [ADDA \(Spain\)](#), [Animal \(Portugal\)](#), [Animal Friends Croatia \(Croatia\)](#), [Animal Rights Sweden \(Sweden\)](#), [Animalia \(Finland\)](#), [BUAV \(UK\)](#), [Deutscher Tierschutzbund \(Germany\)](#), [Dyrevernalliansen \(Norway\)](#), [EDEV \(Netherlands\)](#), [Forsøgsdyrenes Værn \(Denmark\)](#), [GAIA \(Belgium\)](#), [Irish Anti-Vivisection Society \(Ireland\)](#), [LAV \(Italy\)](#), [One Voice \(France\)](#), [People for Animal Rights \(Germany\)](#), [Svoboda zvírat \(Czech Republic\)](#), [SSPA \(Switzerland\)](#)