



Media Release

For immediate release
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EU controversy over primate research continues with the publication of a new paper accusing the European Commission of producing a “deeply flawed and biased” report

A paper released today in the journal **Alternatives to Laboratory Animals (ATLA)** accuses the European Commission of producing a scientifically flawed report on the use of nonhuman primates in research. The report is based on a recent inquiry conducted by the Scientific Committee on Health and Scientific Risks (SCHER), into the validity of primate research and the alternative methods that could replace it. This inquiry was in part a response to a written declaration signed by no fewer than 433 MEPs in 2007 calling on the Commission to bring forward proposals to replace primate use.

The paper, titled ‘The SCHER Report on Non-Human Primate Research – Biased and Deeply Flawed’ exposes serious shortcomings in the SCHER inquiry and subsequent report which strongly backed primate use and played down the role and potential of alternatives. **Drs Jarrod Bailey and Katy Taylor**, scientists at the **BUAV**, analysed this report in detail. The ATLA paper demonstrates:

- Neither SCHER nor its working group had the necessary expertise in primate research or in alternative techniques. Most of the working group members were animal researchers (but not primate researchers), and just one member had (limited) expertise in alternatives to primate use.
- SCHER presumed the validity of primate research, while ignoring substantial peer-reviewed evidence submitted by the BUAV/European Coalition to End Animal Experiments (ECEAE) and numerous other organisations casting serious doubt on the efficacy of primate research. This covered such important areas as AIDS, stroke, malaria and Parkinson’s Disease. For example: not one of the 85 or more candidate AIDS vaccines tested successfully on primates has worked in patients; over 1,000 potential stroke treatments have been tested in animal models but none of the 150 that have progressed to human trials has proved successful.
- Similarly, SCHER dismissed or ignored significant evidence concerning the existing and potential application of alternatives to primate experimentation, including human clinical studies, *in vitro* (test-tube) techniques, neuroimaging and computer modeling.

The ATLA paper argues that the implications of such a flawed analysis are extremely serious, both for animal welfare and for human health and safety. In particular, because in revising the EU Directive on animal experiments, which is currently being considered by the European Parliament, the EU is basing its position to non-human primate research directly on the findings of the SCHER inquiry.

BUAV's Scientific Coordinator, Dr Katy Taylor, said: *"The conduct of the SCHER inquiry, and its published Opinion, should be of major and widespread concern and should not be given any political, scientific or legislative credibility."*

Scientific Consultant to the BUAV, Dr Jarrod Bailey, said: *"The SCHER investigation was conducted by scientists poorly and inappropriately qualified to do so, and the subsequent report in support of non-human primate research was based on flimsy evidence and ignorance of the evidence against."*

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For further information please contact the BUAV media office 020 7619 6978; after hours, 07850 510 955 or e-mail: erin.seymour@buav.org.

Notes

The European Coalition to End Animal Experiments (ECEAE) is pursuing a complaint to the European Ombudsman against the Commission for maladministration for failing to appoint suitable experts and the failure of working group members to analyse properly whether experiments on primates actually work.