

Statement supporting European Directive 2010/63/EU (“Directive”) on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes

The use of animals in research has facilitated major breakthroughs in medicine which have transformed human and animal health. We support research using animals where alternative methods are not available, where the potential benefits to health are compelling, and where acceptable ethical and welfare standards can be met.

The European Directive 2010/63/EU has enhanced animal welfare standards and introduced the concepts of refinement, replacement and reduction (‘3Rs’) across the EU, while ensuring Europe remains a world leader in biomedical research. Under this Directive, animals may be used in research where the potential medical, veterinary and scientific benefits are compelling and there is no viable alternative method.

For research using animals to be both ethical and scientifically rigorous and authorised according to the Directive, it must meet high welfare standards and embed the 3Rs. The 3Rs are:

- **Replacement** – methods which avoid or replace the use of animals;
- **Reduction** - methods which minimise the number of animals used per experiment;
- **Refinement** – methods which minimise any suffering and improve animal welfare.

Developments for alternative methods to the use of animals in research, such as the use of human cell models and computer modelling, continue to progress and scientists must continue to drive these forward. However, alternative methods are not able to fully replace the use of animals at this time. For many diseases, including complex conditions such as cancer, heart disease and diabetes, which affect multiple organs, we must understand how the whole organism interacts, which means that research using whole animals continues to be essential.

Research using animals has enabled major advances in the understanding of biology and has contributed to the development of nearly every type of treatment used in medical and veterinary practice today. Currently, research on animals continues to be necessary to understand human and animal health and disease, and to develop and improve treatments for patient benefit across the world.

191 signatories to the statement



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