

Would the Commission give an update on progress made towards establishing a 'European Centre-Laboratory for the protection and welfare of animals and the validation of alternative methods', as proposed in the 'planned actions in the field of animal protection and welfare' set out in the communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and Council on a Community action plan on the protection and welfare of animals 2006-10⁽¹⁾?

In particular, would the Commission give an indication of how the action plan's objective of continuing to support the replacement, reduction and refinement of animal experiments will be met through establishment of the Centre-Laboratory, and how this work can contribute to the replacement of all animal experiments, including animal experiments undertaken for purposes other than regulatory testing?

Will the Commission establish, through the Centre-Laboratory, a publicly accessible database of replacement methods (including, but not exclusively, listing regulatory test methods), along with a database of unpublished studies, reference to which may help to prevent duplication of unsuccessful research?

Parliamentary questions 24 May 2007 Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
The Community action plan on the protection and welfare of animals 2006-10 was [E-1200/2007](#) adopted by the Commission on the 23 January 2006⁽¹⁾. The action plan foresees the establishment of a European Centre-Laboratory for the protection and welfare of animals, which refers to two separate actions: a European centre-laboratory for the protection and welfare of animals currently under study, in particular concerning its role in relation to the establishment and the functioning of a European label for animal welfare, and a reference laboratory for the validation of alternative testing methods. The latter is covered already by a project within the Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) and more specifically the European Centre for the Validation of Alternative Methods (ECVAM).

The need to establish such a reference laboratory derives from changes in the environment of the validation of alternative in vitro methods, new scientific and technological developments, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Guidance Document 34, and policy conception, development, implementation and monitoring processes regarding alternative methods, such as for use in the implementation of REACH, wherever possible. Therefore, there is an increase in time pressure and a need for revised processes for method development, evaluation and validation.

The Commission is currently discussing the requirements, costs and commitments from Member States for setting up an improved system by involving more strongly Member States' laboratories for method validation purposes in the context of the revision of Council Directive 86/609/EEC⁽²⁾ on the protection of animals used in experiments in the near future. A concerted action will speed up the development and validation of methods by using internationally agreed validation guidelines, which then is likely to support regulatory acceptance. Through the existing JRC-ECVAM database (DBALM), information on replacement methods, including, but not exclusively, listing regulatory test methods, are available today. This database will be continuously updated.

JRC-ECVAM is also planning to set up a repository for reference substances that will ensure the harmonisation of method validation and enable the assessment of methods performance.

(1) COM(2006)13 final.

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(2) Council Directive 86/609/EEC of 24 November 1986 on the approximation of laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States regarding the protection of animals used for experimental and other scientific purposes, OJ L 358, 18.12.1986.

