

ANIMAL RESEARCH IN NEUROSCIENCE

Animal research is a sensitive topic and understandably so. At the same time, there is not always a clear understanding in wider society on its benefits and what it would entail if we stopped using animal models all together. This is why we see on a regular basis initiatives aim at stopping the use of animals in scientific research. The latest is the European Citizens' Initiative "Stop Vivisection" that was submitted to the European Commission (EC) on 3rd March 2015 and which called for "the EC to abrogate directive 2010/63/EU on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes and to present a new proposal that does away with animal experimentation".

Animal research regulations vary worldwide. In the European Union, Directive 2010/63/EU on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes replaced the EEC Directive from 1986. It strengthened legislation by improving the welfare of those animals that still needed to be used in research, as well as firmly anchoring the principle of the "3 Rs" standing for Replacing, Reducing and Refining the use of animals, in EU legislation. The Directive is world leading in terms of the protection offered to animals used in research.

While there are sometimes limitations in how animal research translates to humans, animal models often provide a unique window into the nervous system and have generated important directions for future human research. Exploring alternative research methods needs to be continued and prioritized, at the same time stopping animal research at this point would have a catastrophic effect on the development of the medical sciences, including the neurosciences.

EBC therefore remains very active in promoting responsible use of animal models and expresses its full support for the current EU legislation which provides a robust framework for animal research. At the same time, EBC welcomes further work that should be carried out by the EU and the scientific community in order to strengthen the objectives of the current legal framework and to develop valid non-animal approaches and advance towards the goal of phasing out animal testing.