

## Science Europe Calls for Caution in Discussing Phasing Out of the Use of Animals in Research

### Support to LERU/EU-Life and AVIESAN/ZonMw Statements

Brussels, 20 July 2023

By 25 January 2023, a [European Citizens' Initiative](#) (ECI) had received the support from 1.2 million citizens from 22 countries, calling on the European Union to put forward a legislative proposal for a roadmap to phase out all animal testing in the EU before the end of the current legislative term (June 2024). On 25 May 2023, the European Parliament held a [hearing](#) to discuss the ECI; the European Commission needs to provide a response by 25 July 2023.

Science Europe [supports](#) the highest possible welfare and ethical standards for using animals in research, including implementing the [3Rs](#) - refinement, replacement, and reduction, as it is already embedded in the current legislation (Directive 2010/63/EU). In particular, Science Europe supports the main objective of that regulation: laboratory animals can only be used in experimental procedures if no alternative methods are available. Progress in finding alternatives to animal research is ongoing and must continue. However, numerous experiments in biomedicine currently lack validated alternative methods, hence ethical and scientifically rigorous animal research is still necessary to understand and improve human and animal health worldwide and develop better treatments.

Therefore, Science Europe joins the scientific community in calling for caution and nuance in approaching the issue of phasing out the use of animals in research. Specifically, it joins two recent statements, by [LERU and EU-Life](#) and by [AVIESAN and ZonMw](#).

We particularly agree with LERU and EU-Life that existing alternatives cannot fully capture the complexity needed to study pathologies and find treatments. It supports their call for dialogue and ramping up efforts to replace animal use in research. In addition, we echo the call from AVIESAN and ZonMw for more communication and accountability on the use of animals in research. Acting too quickly to prevent the use of animals in research would negatively affect human and animal health. In addition, animal testing would still occur in places with weaker protection for animal welfare, which would also endanger animal health and well-being.

Science Europe will monitor the implementation of the [Directive 2010/63/EC](#) which already foresees the complete replacement of animal use in areas where scientifically possible to do so, and offers its Member Organisations experience to facilitate dialogue in this area.



## **About Science Europe**

Science Europe is the association representing major public organisations that fund and perform excellent research in Europe. It brings together the expertise of 41 national organisations to jointly push the frontiers of how scientific research is produced and delivers benefits to society. They collectively invest over €22.4 billion each year on research in 30 European countries. Science Europe advocates science and the scientific community to help build the European Research Area (ERA) building upon the national research policies that its members develop and implement to create the best possible conditions for research.