

**RE: EU patients' view on the review of directive 86/609/EEC on the protection of animals used for experimental and other scientific purposes**

23<sup>rd</sup> November 2009

Dear AGRI Committee Member,

We write to you on behalf of all patients in the EU to alert you to our serious concerns over the impact that the review of Directive 86/609/EEC will have on our community.

### **Patients are the direct beneficiaries of biomedical research**

We depend on continuing excellence in this field for the development of cures and/or treatments to improve and/or extend the lives of 150 million patients in the EU. Animal research is a vital component of this work, and we are concerned that current proposals to restrict animal research threaten the pace and breadth of the research we depend on.

### **Animal research needs to remain in the EU**

Research involving animals is necessary for continuing progress in the development of cures and treatments for patients in the EU. Many diseases have complex mechanisms that cannot be modelled using one cell or one tissue. Only research using animals can help us to understand, and perhaps treat, these conditions. Until a replacement to animal research is found (a goal which we strongly support) we would like to see research involving animals stay in the EU where we can be sure that its regulation is high quality, proportionate and fair.

### **Decisions on non-human primate use need to be made by ethical review**

We are concerned that legislative limits and/or bans will allow no flexibility in the governance of research in the EU. Static limits will stop many valuable research pathways, and may leave us unable to take advantage of future progress in a rapidly developing field. Difficult decisions involving the use of animals in experiments should be made by expert ethics committees capable of balancing benefit of the procedure for humans with the necessity of animal usage.

**We are therefore against attempts to define “debilitating” or prepare a list of debilitating conditions for which non-human primates can be used in Article 8. We would advocate the use of expert ethical committees to make this judgement.**

With our first-hand knowledge of the diseases and conditions that might benefit from research involving animals we urge you to ensure that these regulations do not hinder the progress and scope of research in the EU.

Yours sincerely,

Alastair Kent	President	European Genetic Alliances' Network
Erick Savoye	Executive Director	European Men's Health Forum
Christophe Thalheim	Secretary General	European Multiple Sclerosis Platform
Anders Olauson	President	European Patients' Forum
EURORDIS		The European Organisation for Rare Diseases