

Revision of EU Directive 86/609

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In November 2008 the European Commission presented a proposal for the revision of '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'.

This proposal for a 'Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes' includes a comprehensive revision of the existing Directive of November 1986. The objective of the proposal is to harmonize the measures in the Member States thereby ensuring a level playing field throughout the EU, to set more stringent and transparent measures in the area of animal experimentation, to improve the welfare of animals used in scientific procedures by rising the minimum standards for their protection in line with the latest scientific developments.

The proposal includes *inter alia* requirements for the killing of experimental animals, for the re-use of animals, for the authorisation of procedures, for establishments breeding, supplying or using animals, for the accommodation and care of animals as well as for the competence of persons. A severity classification of procedures is introduced. The proposal fully takes account of the so-called 3R principle of replacing, reducing and refining the use of animals in experiments. It also promotes that more research is carried out in the field of alternative methods.

The new Directive will be adopted by codecision procedure, both the Council and the European Parliament must approve the final text. In its first reading of the proposal in May 2009 the European Parliament proposed a series of amendments to the Commission proposal. Within the Council, the proposal was discussed in several meetings at working group level. Consultations are ongoing, probably also resulting in several suggestions for amendments. A first informal trialogue between Council, Commission and Parliament for exploring compromises took place in October. The goal is to rapidly adopt the dossier. The challenge is to bring the areas of animal welfare and freedom of research