EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
ENVIRONMENT

The Director-General

12 AVR. 2017

Brussels,
ENV.B2/KS/Ares(2017)

Dear petitioners,

You call upon the European Commission to set a timeframe for phasing out the use of non-human primates in biomedical research, production and testing of products and devices. Your reasoning is that results obtained from studies using non-human primates are not applicable to humans and that new technologies are available to be used instead.

The Commission has replied to similar petitions submitted to the European Parliament and the Commission (2015/1336 and 1833/2013) and the content of these replies is still applicable.

Directive 2010/63/EU regulates the care and use of animals for scientific purposes; the principles of the Three Rs, to replace, reduce and refine the use of animals used for such purposes are firmly embedded in the Directive. Its ultimate goal is the full replacement of procedures on live animals for scientific purposes.

The protection of non-human primates is one of the central elements of the Directive. It includes numerous measures specific to non-human primates such as banning the use of great apes in procedures, which generally prohibits the use of non-human primates except for specific purposes and always requires a scientific justification explaining why no other species could deliver the results sought. This limits not only the purposes for which non-human primates can be used but also their sourcing and provides stricter controls in terms of retrospective assessment and inspections.

Further, Article 58 of Directive 2010/63/EU calls for a review of the Directive's requirements to be undertaken by 10 November 2017. This review, which is now ongoing, takes into account advancements in the development of alternative methods not entailing the use of animals, and in particular non-human primates. Further to this review, the Commission may propose amendments to the Directive, if appropriate.

In the interest of the review, the Commission has asked the Scientific Committee on Health, Environmental and Emerging Risks (SCHEER) for an update of an earlier opinion delivered by its predecessor, SCHER in 2009. SCHEER has accepted this mandate and published their draft opinion in February 2017 on their web-site. The draft opinion is available for public consultation until 26 March. The final opinion is expected to be adopted by SCHEER in May 2017.

Commission européenne/Europese Commissie, 1049 Bruxelles/Brussel, BELGIQUE/BELGIË - Tel. +32 22991111
Office: BU-5 04/007 - Tel. direct line +32 229-61386

The SCHEER opinion together with other relevant information including from all key stakeholders will form the basis for the conclusions in the Review Report which is to be adopted by the Commission by 10 November 2017.

I hope this information is useful.

Yours sincerely,

Daniel Calleja