Thematic reviews of animal use and implementation of replacements

SUPPORT – AGRI Committee amendment 59: Article 8, 2a (new), which states:

"Every two years, and for the first time two years after the entry into force of this Directive, the Commission shall, in consultation with Member States, conduct a review of the use of non-human primates in procedures and publish the results thereof. The review shall examine the impact of developments in technological, scientific and animal-welfare knowledge, and set targets for the implementation of validated replacement methods."

SUPPORT – AGRI Committee amendment 149: Article 53 a (new), which states:

"The Commission shall, in consultation with Member States and any relevant stakeholders, conduct a thematic review of the use of animals in procedures every two years commencing from two years after the entry into force of this Directive. The review shall examine the impact of developments in technological, scientific and animal welfare knowledge, and set targets for the implementation of validated replacement methods."

The replacement of the use of animals in research and testing is a complex issue. Requirements for replacement in regulatory tests for example, are different from those for academic, or fundamental research.

It is therefore proposed that, rather than address such wide-ranging and complex issues all together during review of the whole Directive, a framework be established to allow the Commission and stakeholders to review the use of specific species in specific areas of research and testing, on a case-by-case basis.

Thus a series of Regular Thematic Reviews is proposed to allow a more focussed approach, case by case, to the replacement of the use of animals in specific areas of research and testing.

This differs from the proposal for a 5-year review of the whole Directive, because these reviews are themed – they only focus on specific issues which are affected by developments in science, technology and animal welfare knowledge.

Consultations with stakeholders could:

- Identify and set objectives, targets and timetables to replace animals or amend regulations, appropriate to the need.
- Identification of areas where replacement could be most rapid.
- Different frameworks for regulatory testing, which is standardised, and academic research, which is varied in nature.

Detailed research and assessments can be made of:

- The use of specific species in specified fields of research and the opportunities for replacement
- Validation and implementation of alternative methods as they become available.
- Retrospective and systematic reviews to inform future cost/benefit analysis.
- Statistics, reporting
- Data sharing

- Species within the scope of the directive, to incorporate new knowledge
- Genetically modified animals
- Cost-benefit assessments and pain severity bands
- Methodology and best practice
- Other developments in scientific and animal welfare knowledge

Key objectives for each review would include:

- Research, consultation, assessment of current position
- Identifying scope for change
- Establish need for development or implementation of new methods; set timetables or targets as appropriate to the case.

How the process could work - selection of subjects for review:

- The Commission should manage and co-ordinate reviews, involving all stakeholders, including animal protection groups and non-animal funding bodies
- A call for proposed subjects for review should be sent out, allowing all stakeholders to contribute ideas and make a case for review.
- Stakeholders to suggest between 1 and 10 subjects for review.
- Commission and stakeholders conduct research, agree subjects and timetables for reviews
- Members of the European Parliament provided opportunity for input and comment

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