



Introduction to the Revision of Directive 86/609

Background

The legislation regulating animal experiments across the European Union has remained unchanged since 1986. There is an urgent need to bring it up to date.

Work to revise the text of the legislation began in 2002 and has now reached a critical stage. The RSPCA sees this as a vital opportunity to help animals. It is essential that important progress is made in **improving the ethical evaluation** of animal use and **implementation of the 3Rs**. This includes replacing animals with alternatives, reducing the numbers of animals involved and refining housing, husbandry and all procedures, to minimise suffering and improve welfare.

What the RSPCA wants...

The **scope** of the Directive should be extended to cover:

- all scientific procedures involving the use of animals (i.e. not just for the development and safety testing of products, but basic biological research as well)
- breeding or maintenance programmes of genetically manipulated and cloned animals
- the use of animals for the supply of cells and tissues
- experiments on wild animals 'in the field'
- octopus, squid, cuttlefish (cephalopods), crabs and lobsters (decapod crustaceans), and lampreys and hagfish (cyclostomes)

The use of great apes and wild-caught **primates** should not be permitted; the Directive should contain an obligation to develop and implement a strategy to replace primates with humane alternatives; any use of primates should require additional specific justification.

All member states should have a clearly defined and effective system of **licencing, control and inspection** covering experimental and breeding and supplying establishments.

A **harm/benefit assessment**, which takes into account the lifetime experience of the animals, must be an integral part of the licencing process. There should be a system of local, regional and/or national **ethics committees** as appropriate to the national legislation. This must incorporate animal welfare specialists and lay people in order to have a wider range of perspectives.

Current **standards of housing and care** should be completely and immediately replaced with those recently agreed for Appendix A of European Convention ETS123. The supporting text must be included as well as the space allowances.

The importance of implementing **reduction, refinement** and **replacement** should be stated explicitly in the legislative text, with greater emphasis on the importance of the development and use of alternatives to animals.

Greater **transparency and accountability** on animal use is essential and requires the production of informative statistics on an annual basis. This must include meaningful information regarding the nature and level of animal suffering.

Procedures causing animals substantial or **severe suffering** should not be permitted.