

MINUTES OF MEETING: IGLO Health WG

Date:	12 January 2024
Programme:	<i>What's next for Research after the European Citizens' Initiative "Save Cruelty-Free Cosmetics"</i>
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What's Next for Research After the European Citizens' Initiative "Save Cruelty-Free Cosmetics"

Introduction: Dr. Christian Desaintes from DG RTD leads the European Commission's response to the "Save Cruelty-Free Cosmetics" initiative. This meeting outlines the current landscape of animal testing in research and the steps being taken to promote alternatives.

Problematic Overview:

Animal Use in Research: The majority of animals used in the EU labs are for research purposes, not cosmetics etc.

2018 European Parliament Resolution: In 2018, the European Parliament passed a resolution advocating for a global ban on cosmetic testing on animals.

Current Actions: Efforts are being made to accelerate the development and implementation of alternative testing methods through various activities.

Funding for Alternatives: Over the past two decades, approximately €1 billion has been invested into research for alternatives to animal testing.

Focus on Toxicology: Most of the funding has been directed towards toxicology, particularly systemic toxicity studies.

Data Challenges:

- Some data collected from these projects have been deemed irrelevant, indicating a need for better alignment of research goals.
- Many projects using alternative methods are funded by the European Research Council (ERC).
- Some projects combine the use of animals and alternative methods to complement each other.

ECI Objectives:

1. **Protect and Strengthen the Ban on Animal Testing for Cosmetics:**
 - Ensure that the existing ban on animal testing in cosmetics is upheld and reinforced.



2. **Transform EU Chemical Legislation:**
 - Modernize regulations to support the use of non-animal testing methods.
3. **Enhance Coordination with Member States (MSs):**
 - Improve collaboration and coordination among EU member states.
4. **Continue EU Funding for Alternative Methods:**
 - Maintain and potentially increase funding for research into alternative testing methods.
5. **Exploratory Workshops:**
 - Organize workshops to explore new methods and share knowledge.
6. **Education and Training:**
 - Provide training for researchers and regulators on the use of non-animal testing methods.

New ERA Policy Action:

- The European Research Area (ERA) is focusing on non-animal approaches in biomedical research and pharmaceutical testing, particularly in areas where animal use is most prevalent.
- This policy action is co-drafted with Western EU states.

Challenges and Next Steps:

- **Slow Uptake of NAMs:**
 - The uptake of New Approach Methodologies (NAMs) has been slow.
 - Greater coordination among member states is needed, despite the €1 billion investment over 20 years.
- **ERA Objectives:**
 - The ERA aims to create a forum to address these issues, with four working groups (status of establishment unclear).
- **Next Steps for Action:**
 - By January 21, a priority list of actions will be developed.
 - The ERA action plan is set for a maximum of three years to establish the necessary infrastructure.

Key Issues:

- **Lack of Coordination:**
 - The biggest hurdle is the lack of member states discussing or identifying relevant actors.
 - The scientific community is supportive, but more structured efforts are required.
- **Infrastructure Needs:**
 - Successful implementation of NAMs depends on building the right infrastructure in Western labs.
 - A suggestion was made to use the EU4Health budget to support the establishment of this infrastructure.



In conclusion, while significant strides have been made towards reducing animal testing, ongoing efforts to improve coordination, funding, and infrastructure are crucial. The ERA policy action represents a strategic approach to fostering non-animal methodologies in research and testing, but requires robust support and collaboration among member states to be successful.



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