

PRESS RELEASE
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STOP the European Citizens' Initiative on Vivisection

The League of European Research Universities (LERU) joins The Wellcome Trust in supporting European Directive 2010/63/EU and in calling upon the European Parliament and the Commission to reject the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) "Stop Vivisection" which was submitted yesterday.

The ECI "Stop Vivisection", which aims to prohibit the use of *all* animals in research, is based on flawed arguments, and if allowed to progress, could lead to the annulment of the 2010 EU Directive regulating the use of animals in research. This would be disastrous for Europe's research, as it would result in all such research being moved to other continents and putting Europe out of business in developing treatments for all kinds of diseases.

Therefore, LERU has decided to publicly state its opposition to the misguided and incorrect information that "Stop Vivisection" is spreading. LERU has also decided to endorse [The Wellcome Trust's Statement](#) in support of the EU Directive on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes.

By supporting Directive 2010/63/EU, LERU wishes to call attention to the fundamental importance of the use of animals in research and the vital role it plays in understanding and providing treatment for a range of debilitating and life threatening human diseases such as cancer, primary immunodeficiencies, neuro-degenerative diseases and heart failure.

Directive 2010/63/EU has firmly anchored the principles of the 3Rs (to Replace, Reduce and Refine the use of animals) in EU legislation and strives to achieve harmonization with the highest animal welfare standards. Under this Directive, animals may be used in research where the potential medical, veterinary and scientific benefits are compelling and no viable alternative method is available.

Furthermore, and in the interest of legal certainty, any amendment to Directive 2010/63/EU that might prove necessary should be the result of the review process stipulated in Article 58 of the Directive.

LERU calls upon the European Parliament and the Commission to maintain the effort undertaken through Directive 2010/63/EU towards the harmonization of the highest welfare standards, the application of the 3Rs and the advancement of research for the improvement of human and animal health. LERU's Secretary-General, Prof. Kurt Deketelaere, states : "Failure to do so will prove seriously detrimental to human and animal health, animal welfare and high-quality animal research".

Next to the Wellcome Trust statement, LERU's members fully support the [UK Concordat on Openness on Animal Research](#). The Concordat also illustrates the "Responsible Research & Innovation" (RRI) approach, as promoted and confirmed by the November 2014 [Rome Declaration on RRI](#). "Perhaps the EC should also do an "RRI"-check, before it registers a proposed European Citizens' Initiative", Prof. Kurt Deketelaere suggests.

More information

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About LERU

The League of European Research Universities (LERU) is an association of twenty-one leading research-intensive universities that share the values of high-quality teaching within an environment of internationally competitive research.

Founded in 2002, LERU advocates education through an awareness of the frontiers of human understanding; the creation of new knowledge through basic research, which is the ultimate source of innovation in society; and the promotion of research across a broad front in partnership with industry and society at large.

The purpose of the League is to advocate these values, to influence policy in Europe and to develop best practice through mutual exchange of experience. LERU regularly publishes a variety of papers and reports which make high-level policy statements, provide in-depth analyses and make concrete recommendations for policymakers, universities, researchers and other stakeholders.

The LERU universities are:

- University of Amsterdam
- Universitat de Barcelona
- University of Cambridge
- University of Edinburgh
- University of Freiburg
- Université de Genève
- Universität Heidelberg
- University of Helsinki
- Universiteit Leiden
- KU Leuven
- Imperial College London
- University College London
- Lund University
- University of Milan
- Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München
- University of Oxford
- Pierre & Marie Curie University
- Université Paris-Sud
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