

EPAA press release

Mandate renewed for European Partnership for Alternative Approaches to Animal Testing

Brussels, 6 November 2009: The European Commission and major companies from seven sectors of European industry have agreed to continue collaborating in a partnership that aims at promoting alternative approaches to animal testing in regulation.

The European Partnership for Alternative Approaches to Animal Testing (EPAA) is now completing its initial five-year term. The EPAA partners see real prospects for alternative approaches, and want to build on the experience and achievements from this first period to progress their unique collaboration on 3Rs approaches.

European Commission Vice-President Günter Verheugen, Commissioner for Enterprise and Industry, opened the annual conference of the EPAA today by stating: *"It is important to renew our commitment to this joint initiative. I would urge industry and Commission services to translate such a renewed commitment in concrete measures and sufficient resources"*.

Within the EPAA, industry and the European Commission have worked on new mechanisms for data sharing, toxicology testing without animals, and streamlined procedures allowing alternative approaches to be used. And they have challenged traditional ways of meeting regulatory requirements that currently involve the use of animals. Some short-term results are already in the offing, but others will come only over the longer term, necessitating a strong commitment to continuous action by industry and authorities.

Both industry and the Commission have taken into consideration and put into practice the EPAA recommendations. Other organisations committed to the science-based promotion of alternative approaches are contributing increasingly to the work, and the EPAA has become a unique model of cooperation between authorities and industry across industrial sectors.

Odile de Silva of L'Oréal, the EPAA Steering Committee co-chair from the industry side, said *"Industry's commitment to the EPAA and its activities remains solid, and this is why we want to continue with this successful partnership. The EPAA has proved it can deliver in building trust and promoting new thinking among both companies and institutions, and in disseminating the 3Rs culture more broadly"*.

Georgette Lalis, the EPAA Steering Committee co-chair from the European Commission, said: *"The EPAA is based on voluntary participation, consensus and trust. It is based on cooperation between authorities and industry, between regulators and the regulated, each bringing in their own specific background, expertise and knowledge and constituencies, meeting as partners. Based on the output of this cooperation and interaction between industry and the Commission, there is on the side of the Commission services definitely an interest in continuing and reinforcing our work in the EPAA"*.

Notes for editors

The partners include DG Enterprise and Industry, DG Research, DG Environment, DG Joint Research Centre and DG Health and Consumer Protection from the European Commission, and some 40 companies from the chemical, pharmaceutical, cosmetics, soaps and detergents, crop protection, animal health and bio-industry sectors, including their European trade federations.

The focus of this year's conference (full programme in annex to this press release) is dissemination of 3Rs information, where scientists, regulators, and users discussed how to optimise research, as well as the acceptance and uptake of alternative approaches.

The European Partnership for Alternative Approaches to Animal Testing (EPAA) is a joint initiative from the European Commission, European trade associations from seven industry sectors and individual companies. It was launched in November 2005 to promote the development and implementation of new 3Rs methods (replace, reduce, refine) and modern alternative approaches in the field of regulatory testing.

The EPAA's annual report, released at today's meeting (and now available on www.epaa.eu.com), records the insights and achievements during 2009, and the progress on how alternative tests can be developed and brought into widespread use.

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