

**John Dalli**

Member of the European Commission, responsible for Health and Consumer Policy

## **Commissioner Dalli delivers speech on Animal Welfare**

*Check Against Delivery  
Seul le texte prononcé fait foi  
Es gilt das gesprochene Wort*

John DALLI, European Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy, attends the Annual Conference of the European Partnership for Alternatives to Animal Testing (EPAA)

**Brussels, 30 November 2010**

**EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIP FOR ALTERNATIVES TO ANIMAL TESTING  
(EPAA)**

**ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**TUESDAY 30 NOVEMBER 2010, 2010 AT 09:30HRS  
CHARLEMAGNE BUILDING - BRUSSELS**

**SPEECH**

Good Morning Ladies and Gentlemen,

Animal welfare is a very important European value. Animals have rights. They merit our respect and protection. Our ambition must be to avoid their suffering wherever this is possible.

To achieve this, we need to work in close partnership. Industry and the research community must take the lead in respecting animal welfare and developing innovation which does not impact the life and well-being of animals. Policy makers must accompany and foster these efforts through the right framework. And NGOs and consumers must help to push for progress.

Today's conference is an excellent opportunity to take stock where we stand as regards our overall policy on animal welfare as well as on the specific issue of animal tests for cosmetics.

In 2006, the Commission adopted the first EU action plan for animal welfare. For the first time, the EU presented a single and coherent strategy.

Since then, we have made good progress. And the Lisbon Treaty put even stronger emphasis on animal welfare as important element of European policies.

It is now time for a second EU strategy for animal welfare, which I plan to present next year.

In preparation, the Commission has launched an evaluation of current animal welfare EU policies. We need to assess what has been achieved, and what we need to do better.

Furthermore, in May, the European Parliament adopted a Resolution on the evaluation and assessment of the animal welfare action plan 2006-2010.

Enforcement of EU legislation remains a serious issue and efforts need to be maintained and enhanced to ensure a proper level playing field among operators. I have asked my services to be particularly vigilant in monitoring that Member States are properly enforcing EU rules on animal welfare.

Beyond legislation, we have to think of new approaches on how to develop and communicate EU standards to consumers, the sectors concerned and our international trading partners.

Sharing the views expressed recently by the European Parliament, I believe we need a general European animal welfare law, encompassing all animals. It should be the basis for creating a more flexible, open and participative framework where EU initiatives for animal welfare could be developed.

We should not only look at legislative ideas but also at initiatives on communication, education, research and international actions. In particular, we should better communicate the long term sustainability of high welfare standards. Similarly, we should support the dissemination and sharing of good animal welfare practices among producers.

Our new strategy should adopt a holistic approach – seeking innovative solutions to reconcile high animal welfare standards demanded by EU citizens with the sustainability and competitiveness needed by EU producers.

One important element of animal welfare I would like to address specifically today is the question in how far we accept animal tests for new cosmetics.

According to the famous 7<sup>th</sup> amendment to the Cosmetics Directive, *testing* on animals of cosmetics and cosmetic ingredients is prohibited in the Union since 2009. It also sets out a *marketing* ban, according to which products that have been tested on animals outside the EU cannot be placed on the European market. This marketing ban entered into force in 2009 also, apart from three toxicological endpoints for which the entry into force was postponed to 2013.

As a result, we have made huge progress in Europe. The clear legal framework obliged industry to move on. This has led to a massive drop in terms of animals tested for the development of cosmetics. In 2008, the last year before the European testing ban entered into force, we had just 1.510 animals used for cosmetic testing.

At the same time, it has sent an important signal to industry and researchers to develop alternatives to animal testing. In the past, cosmetics industry resisted the push towards alternatives tests. Nowadays, industry has changed. It has embraced this policy and now actively

contributes to the research. The European Partnership in which we are very successfully working together demonstrates this change of mindset.

We even succeeded to take our values to the international level. The European ban was the catalyst for international co-operation on the validation of alternatives to animal testing in the framework of the International Cooperation on Cosmetics Regulation.

So we can be proud of this legislation, which clearly reflects shared European ethical values.

But the file is not yet closed. There is an exception to the 2009 deadline. For certain tests, the marketing ban applies only as of 2013. This means that manufacturers can, in the meantime, still rely on animal test results – even though such tests can no longer be carried out in the EU.

When the European Parliament and the Council adopted the 7<sup>th</sup> amendment, they allowed for this longer implementation period because it was clear that no alternative tests would be available by 2009 for the three concerned toxicological endpoints.

Even more, the co-legislator tasked the Commission to report regularly on progress and compliance with the deadlines as well as possible technical difficulties in complying with the ban. We have done this yearly. In addition, the Commission is called upon to put forward a legislative proposal in 2011 if these studies conclude that for technical reasons one or more tests will not be developed and validated by 2013.

Before making this proposal we first have to establish all facts.

As a first step, we have thoroughly analysed the availability of alternatives. From all information available to us it is clear that we do not yet have alternatives for some of the tests in question, and that they will not be available by 2013 either.

Scientists in the Commission's Scientific Committees have indicated that they would not be able to conduct proper risk assessments on cosmetic ingredients without validated in vitro methods or without the necessary animal test data after the 2013 deadline.

Why? Because the products we are looking at now pose enormous scientific challenges. With regards the effects on reproduction for example, we need to understand the

entire reproductive cycle. This cannot be achieved by one in vitro replacement test. Instead, complex testing strategies are needed.

Much has been achieved and in many areas there are now ideas for further research. All of this is promising and shows that we are on the right track.

But we will have to decide what all this means for the 2013 deadline.

We are currently looking at the potential impacts – economic, social and on animal welfare – and will need to make the appropriate decision next year.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Animal Welfare is one of the political priorities which we have embraced.

To continuously improve animal welfare must be a political priority for all of us. And often it goes hand in hand with health or economic benefits. Just some days ago for example we decided to test the presence of marine biotoxins in bivalve molluscs not any more in mice, but through a modern chemical test. This will

improve the safety testing and at the same time move us forward in reducing the need for animal testing. This is the right way forward.

The European Partnership is a remarkable and successful model of how to work effectively across different sectors, and in co-operation between regulators, industry and other stakeholders.

I sincerely hope that the Partnership and the outcome of today's conference will help to consolidate a growing European network of institutions that are active in animal welfare, and in finding alternatives to animal testing.

Thank you for your attention and above all for your dedication and enthusiasm.

**End.**