



The European Partnership  
for Alternative Approaches to Animal Testing

**STATEMENT VP TAJANI  
EPAA ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
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Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the European Commission, and my colleagues present here today, I would like to welcome you to the 2010 Annual Conference of the European Partnership for Alternative Approaches to Animal Testing.

The EPAA was created in 2005, by my predecessor Gunther Verheugen, together with Janez Potocnik, and representatives of European industry from seven sectors. The EPAA was formed for an initial period of 5 years, but last year, the Commission and industry confirmed their commitment to continue this partnership.

Also on our behalf, the new Commission I would like to confirm our continued commitment to the EPA. My colleagues John Dalli and Janez Potočnik, will intervene in this Conference. Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner in charge of Research, Innovation and Science, including the ECVAM, could not be with us today, but she is fully associated to our policy on alternatives and committed to the EPAA.

The EPAA has become an important policy instrument for the promotion of the 3Rs, that is the replacement, reduction and refinement of testing involving animals.

Through the EPAA, both Commission services and industry join forces and resources, ideas and concrete initiatives in promoting alternative approaches in the context of regulatory testing. As EPAA, we have been able to increasingly involve academia, legal risk assessors and NGOs in a science-based approach towards the development of alternatives. Through the EPAA, we have been able to draw the attention of our global partners on the potential of public-private partnerships in promoting 3R strategies.

Since the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, animal welfare is firmly established as a generally applicable principle in the Treaty, to be implemented in a wide range of policies. In the EU regulatory context, we have introduced extensive provisions on the promotion of replacement, reduction and refinement strategies, in various sectors. In this context, I also refer to the recently adopted Directive 2010/63/EU on the protection of animals used for scientific

purposes. My assessment is that, each time in the EU new legislation will be proposed, a particular attention will be paid to the question of how we can improve legal provisions in relation to alternative approaches and the 3Rs. Similarly, alternative testing has become a standing issue in our international discussions, be this at the OECD level, or in our regulatory dialogues with our trading partners.

The Lisbon Treaty considers animals as "sentient beings" and therefore requires us to pay full regard to their welfare needs. Increasingly, however, we acknowledge that other reasons as well push us towards alternatives. We need to explore the potential of modern science to better understand the characteristics of chemicals and products.

I believe that there are strong scientific incentives to explore alternatives to traditional tests involving animals, some of which were developed more than 50 – 60 years, and for some tests even longer ago and to innovate testing. It is the responsibility of all – industry, academia, regulators – to harness the potential of all fields of science and technological development to contribute to the promotion of alternatives.

In the same way, I believe that there are strong economic incentives to use alternative approaches, provided we promote alternatives together with our main trading partners. Our preference, therefore, is to try to adopt alternatives at the international level, through bodies such as the OECD or the ICH (The International Conference on Harmonisation of Technical Requirements for Registration of Pharmaceuticals for Human Use), and the cooperation we have started through the ICATM (International Cooperation on Alternative Test Methods): the international dimension is an essential part of our strategy.

In implementing our policy on alternatives, we need to give full attention to each of the 3Rsv as they all have their own intrinsic place and value. Replacement is the ultimate goal, and our policy should be to achieve full replacement, even if this will take a long time. However, if Replacement is the ultimate goal, we should not divert our attention of the potential of Reduction and Refinement strategies, given their direct impact on the number of animals used and on animal welfare.

There are more instances where reduction and refinement initiatives on specific endpoints can have a larger impact than full replacement in areas, which today are still limited.

EPAA work on the extended one generation study for reproductive toxicity or its initiative on vaccines should therefore be highly welcomed. I know that, eventually, regulatory acceptance of tests is a task of authorities and legal risk assessors. However, for the extended one generation study, EPAA companies were able to push alternatives in an extremely short period of time to the level of regulatory acceptance.

I therefore welcome that the OECD has agreed in November to propose for final adoption in 2011 the extended one generation study, thanks to the efforts of all parties; including national authorities and Commission services.

In my opinion, the EPAA has therefore rightfully taken this year as lead theme the potential of Reduction and Refinement policies, as the 2Rs can bring huge benefits in terms of numbers of animals involved and in terms of animal welfare.

Having a background in journalism and politics, allow me to add the importance of a dynamic and clear communication policy in this respect. Substantiating the impact of these 2Rs in terms of science, economic incentives and animal welfare, to policy makers, regulatory risk assessors and company structures should remain an important task for the EPAA.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The EPAA adopted as theme for this year and for the Conference "Reduction and Refinement: Combining Excellence in Science and Animal Welfare". I fully support your theme, and as I explained in an interview published in your Newsletter, I see a clear link between Science and Animal Welfare: "we need to explore the full potential of the virtuous circle of innovation resulting in better animal welfare, and animal welfare resulting in better science."

I would like to thank all those who are involved in the EPAA - companies, European Trade Associations and Commission services, and I want to specifically include the members of the EPAA Mirror Group, colleagues of the European Agencies, academia and NGOs, who all participate in our work.

I wish you all a successful meeting.