



EARA News Digest 2022 - Week 27

Welcome to your Monday morning update, [from EARA](#), on the latest news in biomedical science, policy and openness on animal research.

Media



‘Perfect storm’ as Air France ends transport of monkeys for research

The announcement by Air France, that the airline intends to end [its transportation](#) of monkeys is expected to add to the crisis already threatening their future use in European biomedical research.

[In a statement](#), EARA has described the airline’s decision as part of a ‘perfect storm’ for the sector.

This includes the [ban on the export](#) of research monkeys by China, and a forthcoming restriction by the European Commission on the biomedical use of first generation-bred primates - expected by the end of this year. It also follows a proposal by the [Dutch government](#) to reduce the use of monkeys in research by 40%.

EARA executive director, Kirk Leech, said: "Air France played a vital and life-saving role in the supply chain of non-human primates for global research that are essential for drug, vaccine, and therapeutic developments for human health.

"In the accelerated effort to [develop Covid-19 vaccines](#), monkeys played a critical role in ensuring the safety and efficacy of *all* the successful vaccines that are now in widespread use.

"On behalf of the research sector, and the millions of citizens who have benefited from research facilitated by Air France's transport of monkeys, we thank the airline for its past support."

Policy

Transparency agreement in Switzerland makes nine

The biomedical community in Switzerland has signed a Swiss Transparency Agreement on Animal Research, making it the ninth worldwide and the eighth in Europe.



Created by the STAAR Commission of [Swissuniversities](#), the agreement has 24

signatories from both public and private research, including EARA members SAVIR, SGV and the University of Zurich.

Every signatory organisation agrees to a [defined set of commitments](#), which include, being 'clear about how and why we use or support the use of animals in research'; communicating with the public; and reporting annually on the progress they have made towards openness.

Professor Elizabeth Stark, vice president research, at the University of Zurich, said: "Research with animals is essential for the progress in biology, human and veterinary medicine - and it will continue to be so in the foreseeable future.

"It is therefore our duty to inform the public openly, transparently and continuously about how and why animals are used in research. This is precisely the goal of STAAR."

The other eight transparency agreements are in Belgium, France, Germany, Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, Spain and the UK.

Policy



EU Parliament event discusses animal research phase-out

Scientists gave a strong defence of the vital need to use animals in research, at a European Parliament workshop this week, which discussed the implications of the EP vote to [phase-out](#) it out.

[The meeting of STOA](#) (European Parliament Science & Technology Options Assessment) started with a strong message from Marie Leptin, President of the European Research Council, who said rather than looking at the threat to Europe's position in science and development, 'what we have to balance animal suffering against, for me it has to be human suffering'.

EARA Board member [Ana Isabel Moura Santos](#), of Nova Medical School, Lisbon, Portugal, said animal models remain essential to study disease. 'If full replacement is to be achieved, it will not be through popular petitions, regulations, deadlines or legal decisions, but through scientific developments.'

Ana Isabel said that 3Rs research funding should therefore be directed not only towards replacement, but equally towards dissemination on recent refinement methods.

Bart Haagmans, of the Erasmus Medical Center, Rotterdam, Netherlands, reminded the audience that the development of Covid-19 mRNA vaccines, (Pfizer-BionNTech and Moderna), were 'fuelled by animal research'. He also pointed out that the drug hydroxychloroquine - advocated by President Trump to treat Covid - had worked when tested in cells and *in vitro*, 'but didn't work in humans - this was also confirmed when tested in animals'.

But Peter Loskill, of the Institute for Biomedical Engineering, Eberhard Karls University, Tübingen, Germany, said: "We can't end animal research today, but we have to change habits to bring down animal model numbers. We need to advance alternatives, introduce benchmarking and disseminate information."

This echoes a similar remark by Maurice Whelan, of the European Union Reference Laboratory for Alternatives to Animal Testing (EURL-ECVAM). Speaking at the [Helsinki Chemicals Forum](#) earlier this month, he said that focusing only on replacement 'limits what we can achieve and backs us into a corner'.

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