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Jill Evans ASE / MEP

Plaid Cymru – The Party of Wales in the European Parliament

for immediate release

Animal testing - MEP wants law changed

Duplicated experiments mean too many animals are suffering

Plaid MEP **Jill Evans** believes a twenty year old European law on animal testing is in urgent need of updating because it allows too many animals to suffer unnecessarily.

The MEP says many experiments are being duplicated, leading to animal suffering that could be avoided. The MEP wants the European Commission to establish a Europe-wide database, accessible to researchers, to help reduce the number of animals suffering in experiments.

Ms Evans was responsible for an influential report in the European Parliament in 2002 which detailed ways in which the European Directive on the protection of animals for experimental and other scientific purposes should be revised.

Six years on, the all-Wales MEP says the law is in urgent need of revision and she has written* to European Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas calling for the legislation to be reviewed without delay.

Jill Evans MEP said:

"Over twelve million animals are used in experiments across the EU every year, and the number is rising. We are not doing anywhere near enough to stop animals suffering unnecessarily, and an overhaul of existing laws is long overdue.

"The European Commission knows it's time for the law to be updated and has promised to do so. So why do are they continuing to delay any announcement?

"It's unbelievable that six years on from my earlier report so little progress has been made. That report highlighted the many areas where European legislation on animal testing is out of date. Duplication of experiments and scientific advances mean many tests on animals are simply unnecessary. That's why we must have a revision of this twenty year old law.

"I have written to European Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas urging him to act quickly to bring forward revised legislation. Too many animals are suffering without need and this must be stopped."

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Am ragor o wybodaeth cysylltwch â:
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*Jill Evans' letter to European Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas:

Commissioner Stavros Dimas
DG Environment
European Commission
200 Rue de La Loi
B1049 Brussels
Belgium

Dear Mr Dimas,

Proposed Revised Directive 86/60/EEC

I am writing to you to urge you to adopt as soon as possible for a revision of Directive 86/60/EEC.

I have worked on animal testing in the European Parliament for some time now. I am afraid that it has become apparent to me that there are several breaches of the afore-mentioned Directive which need to be rectified as soon as possible. I believe that there is a particularly urgent need to ensure that alternatives to the use of animals in experiments are not only developed, but used as standard. One of my main concerns is that so many experiments using animals are duplicated. I believe an EU-wide database should be established so that the results of any experiment are accessible to other researchers to stop more animals, in particular primates, suffering unnecessarily.

It is generally agreed that this Directive needs to be revised and modernised and myself and my colleagues have repeatedly called on the Commission to publish proposals to do so. This revision process started nearly six years ago, but the Commission keeps delaying adoption of its proposal. In September, the item was again removed from the official agenda despite public assurances. The Commission's own opinion polling demonstrates huge public concern on this issue.

A debate about the future of animal testing is long over-due. An important proposal such as this should not be further delayed. I look forward to your answer.

Yours sincerely

Jill Evans MEP
Plaid Cymru