



# PRESS RELEASE

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## Swedish EU presidency receives Virtual Marchers' call to make animal testing history

STRASBOURG - The European Parliament's Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals will provide the backdrop for the hand-over of an impressive petition aimed at illustrating the public's desire to "make animal testing history". For over six months, tens of thousands of concerned Europeans have been cyber-marching alongside Brussels' famous landmarks and EU institutions, calling on the EU to increase its protection of research animals.

Today's Intergroup meeting, which brings together Members of the European Parliament and leading experts and opinion-makers, will discuss EU policy-makers' ongoing negotiations to revise EU legislation on animal experimentation. MEPs will be joined by the Swedish State Secretary for Agriculture, Mr. Rolf Eriksson, who will represent the Swedish presidency of the EU, and a delegation of the animal welfare organisations behind the first Virtual March campaign to end animal testing. The Swedish presidency aims to reach an agreement on the subject before the end of this year.

The Intergroup also welcomes the Parliament's rapporteur and shadow rapporteurs in the final phase of the process of the revision of Directive 86/609 on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes. MEPs and the Swedish presidency will be informed of the animal welfare repercussions to animal testing and how EU legislation can be improved so as to ensure EU rules remain the most progressive in the world.

The Swedish presidency and the Parliament's rapporteurs and shadow rapporteurs will then be presented with an urgent call from over 65,000 concerned citizens who are urging the EU to do all it can to improve the plight of animals used in experiments.

It is clear that EU citizens are now looking to EU policy-makers to work towards bringing an end to animal testing and, instead, focus on the use and promotion of alternatives replacing the techniques that are the cause of so much suffering.

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**NOTES:**

The Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals meets during the monthly Strasbourg plenary session of the European Parliament. This month's meeting will take place on Wednesday 21 October 2009 in Room Louise Weiss S 2.1 from 17:00. Visit [www.animalwelfareintergroup.eu](http://www.animalwelfareintergroup.eu) to view the full agenda of the meeting.

The Virtual March to Make Animal Testing History is an initiative of the Dr Hadwen Trust, Humane Society International and Four Paws. The Virtual March has managed to attract celebrity supporters, with famous rockers Brian May and Chrissie Hynde and comedians Joanna Lumley and Ricky Gervais all joining the cyber protest. For more information, click here: [www.makeanimaltestinghistory.org](http://www.makeanimaltestinghistory.org)

The EU's legislative process for the revision of Directive 86/609 regarding the protection of animals used for experimental and other scientific purposes is currently in the stage of discussion between the European Parliament, the Council of the EU and the European Commission.

The Intergroup meets once a month during the plenary session in Strasbourg. Its Secretariat is provided by Eurogroup for Animals. Intergroup meetings are open to the public and are widely attended by Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), European Commission officials, industry and NGOs.