

PRESS RELEASE
6 MAY 2015

Beware of your dreams, for they may come true...

The European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) "Stop Vivisection" was submitted to the European Commission in March 2015. Supported by an array of flawed arguments, this ECI has a clear objective: to get rid of the European Directive on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes (Directive 2010/63/EU) and to ban all research using animals.

If that were to happen, current research using animals for the understanding and treatment of human diseases such as cancer, heart failure or Alzheimer's would be banned. Not only human, but also veterinary medicine would be seriously hampered. Medicines and vaccines for pets and livestock are often developed from those for humans.

Even more harmful, annulling the Directive would effectively put Europe out of business in the fierce global competition for talent. Scientific and medical researchers would be forced to find new places where they can undertake their research.

Is that what we really want to happen? Rather than a dream, this might be a real nightmare for Europe and its citizens...

The European Citizens' Initiative, which was aimed at becoming one of the most advanced tools of participatory democracy, might now turn into a hindrance to society and some of its very basic values: health and research.

It is important to know that the European Directive on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes represents a very advanced framework with regard to animal welfare standards, firmly anchoring the principles of the 3Rs ("Reduction, Refinement and Replacement" of animals used for scientific purposes). It holds research with animals to the highest ethical standards. If changes to the Directive were deemed necessary, the review process should follow the legislative review process, as foreseen by the Directive itself.

On 11 May, the European Parliament is holding a public hearing on the ECI "Stop Vivisection". In view of this upcoming hearing, and the decision from the European Commission at the beginning of June, LERU strongly reiterates its opposition to the ECI Stop Vivisection. LERU's Secretary-General, Prof. Kurt Deketelaere, states "*The consequences for human and animal health and high-quality research, if this ECI were to go ahead, are simply devastating*".

LERU -together with more than 140 leading biomedical research organisations, learned societies, industry representatives, universities and patient groups in Europe- has signed up to [the Wellcome Trust's joint statement](#) supporting European Directive 2010/63/EU and calling on the European Parliament to oppose the Stop Vivisection ECI.

More information

FAQs on [research involving animals](#).

Link to LERU's first press release '[STOP the European Citizens' Initiative on Vivisection](#)'.

More information on the [European Citizens' Initiative](#).

Contact details

Please contact Prof. Kurt Deketelaere, Secretary-General LERU: +32 499 80 89 99 / kurt.deketelaere@leru.org

Press contact - Bart Valkenaers, Press and Communications Officer: +32 498 08 43 49 / bart.valkenaers@leru.org

About LERU

The League of European Research Universities (LERU) is an association of twenty-one leading research-intensive universities that share the values of high-quality teaching within an environment of internationally competitive research.

Founded in 2002, LERU advocates education through an awareness of the frontiers of human understanding; the creation of new knowledge through basic research, which is the ultimate source of innovation in society; and the promotion of research across a broad front in partnership with industry and society at large.

The purpose of the League is to advocate these values, to influence policy in Europe and to develop best practice through mutual exchange of experience. LERU regularly publishes a variety of papers and reports which make high-level policy statements, provide in-depth analyses and make concrete recommendations for policymakers, universities, researchers and other stakeholders.

The LERU universities are:

- University of Amsterdam
- Universitat de Barcelona
- University of Cambridge
- University of Edinburgh
- University of Freiburg
- Université de Genève
- Universität Heidelberg
- University of Helsinki
- Universiteit Leiden
- KU Leuven
- Imperial College London
- University College London
- Lund University
- University of Milan
- Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München
- University of Oxford
- Pierre & Marie Curie University
- Université Paris-Sud
- University of Strasbourg
- Utrecht University
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League of European Research Universities (LERU)
Minderbroedersstraat 8
3000 Leuven, Belgium

www.leru.org
@LERUnews
+ 32 16 32 99 71