

Recent Highlights from EURL ECVAM

Susanne Belz

European Commission, Joint Research Centre, Directorate F – Health, Consumers and Reference Materials, Chemical Safety and Alternative Methods Unit (F3) incorporating the EU Reference Laboratory for Alternatives to Animal Testing (EURL ECVAM)

Abstract:

The EU Reference Laboratory for Alternatives to Animal Testing (EURL ECVAM) is mandated with guiding research, coordinating validation and promoting international acceptance of alternative methods as well as disseminating information on the 3Rs and facilitating stakeholder dialogue. To this end, EURL ECVAM set up (and recently extended) its own networks and collaborates with other organisations and entities worldwide.

A substantial achievement of recent years was made by embracing mechanistic thinking for chemicals' hazard/safety assessment, enabled by the Adverse Outcome Pathway (AOP) concept, rather than focussing on purely observational science. AOP-based testing strategies are now applied at both, research and regulatory level, as evidenced by the outcomes of SEURAT-1 and the acceptance of non-animal methods as the default testing requirement for skin sensitisation under REACH.

In 2016 EURL ECVAM's Scientific Advisory Committee finalised its peer review of five validation studies and the OECD WNT approved the Test Guideline on the EURL ECVAM-validated human cell-line activation test (hCLAT). The provision of various databases on chemicals, models and methods, including the EURL ECVAM Database Service DB-ALM and the EURL ECVAM Search Guide, provided stakeholders worldwide with well-received tools to get comprehensive information about alternatives.

While many achievements towards the 3Rs have been made in the last 20 years more efforts need to be made. Examples of current activities of EURL ECVAM include an analysis of 3Rs Knowledge sources, safety assessment of mixtures, testing of vaccines, toxicokinetics and uncertainty assessment.

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