

Directive 2010/63/EU – focus on implementation and the Three Rs

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Directive 2010/63/EU took effect five years ago. A review was required to be carried out on its effectiveness in 2017. The review confirmed that the level of progress which has been made since the adoption of the Directive varies across the EU. This is largely due to widely differing starting points and speed of implementation of the respective national legislation.

Nevertheless, there are some aspects which are already developing and working well, such as the introduction of Animal Welfare Bodies (AWBs). This is considered a welcome addition, and these AWBs are already contributing positively to animal use and care practices within establishments. Other positive effects include raising standards in research practices, improving Three Rs awareness, promoting a culture of care, and growing recognition within the research community of the important link between animal welfare and good science.

However, there remain a number of challenges to achieve the Directive objectives. A particular area of focus should be a continued application of the Three Rs, from coherent and consistent project evaluation to the full life-cycle of a project. The legal obligation to apply the Three Rs and the use of alternative approaches does not end at project authorisation.

Finally, an update will be given on recent activities by the Commission to advance Directive objectives. These include several projects in the field of education and training to equip the future generations with the right tools and attitude from the start, and a Commission proposal to streamline environmental reporting