

## Reducing and replacing animal experiments: Europe needs an action plan

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The EU considers itself a world-leader in innovation, safety and animal welfare, but its continued reliance on animal testing undermines this status and threatens to see Europe left behind compared to other regions. Approximately 23.5 million animals are bred and killed in EU laboratories every year,<sup>1</sup> and the staggeringly high number of uses of animals in experiments and other procedures (10.5 million in 2019) is dropping by only a couple of percent each year. At the current pace, animals will continue to suffer in EU laboratories for decades.

This slow rate of change is at odds with public and political will – citizens<sup>2</sup> and the European Parliament<sup>3</sup> overwhelmingly support development of an action plan to speed up the transition to animal-free research and regulatory testing in the EU. Aside from ethical objections and well-founded concerns for the welfare of animals in laboratories, many are now recognising that animal tests are slow, unreliable and costly, wasting resources and impeding scientific progress.

A move away from reliance on animal tests would ensure citizens have access to the best choice of safe and effective medicines and other products, but we cannot afford to wait decades for this to happen – the EU needs an action plan to phase out animal testing, and it needs it now. This is the motivation behind Cruelty Free Europe’s report “[Reducing and replacing animal experiments: Europe needs an action plan](#)”, which describes the problem in detail and sets out practical solutions.

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<sup>1</sup> European Commission. *REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL on the implementation of Directive 2010/63/EU on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes in the Member States of the European Union*. 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Savanta: ComRes. *Cruelty Free Europe – Animal Testing in the EU*. 2020. Available at: [comresglobal.com/polls/cruelty-free-europe-animal-testing-in-the-eu/](https://comresglobal.com/polls/cruelty-free-europe-animal-testing-in-the-eu/)

<sup>3</sup> European Parliament. *MEPs demand EU action plan to end the use of animals in research and testing*. 2021. Available at: [www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20210910IPR11926/meps-demand-eu-action-plan-to-end-the-use-of-animals-in-research-and-testing](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20210910IPR11926/meps-demand-eu-action-plan-to-end-the-use-of-animals-in-research-and-testing)