

The Welfare of Non-human Primates in Research in the EU

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Summary — This summarises a draft report of the Non-human Primate Working Group, prepared for the European Union's Scientific Committee on Animal Health and Welfare. It was formally adopted by the Scientific Committee at their meeting in December 2002, and the full text is available online at http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/fs/sc/scah/out83_en.pdf.

Key words: *ethological needs, housing, non-human primates, personnel training, physiological needs, welfare assessment.*

In 1986, the Council adopted *Directive 86/609/EEC* on the protection of animals used for experimental and other scientific purposes, which seeks to improve the controls on the use of laboratory animals, to set minimum standards for housing and care, and to address the training of personnel handling animals and supervising experiments. It also aims to reduce the number of animals used for experiments by encouraging the development and the validation of alternative methods to replace them. The Directive's Annex 2 contains guidelines on the housing and care of laboratory animals, and they rely on scientific knowledge of the physiological and ethological needs of the animals, as well as the influence of the environment on their well-

being. The European Commission requested an opinion from the Scientific Committee on Animal Health and Welfare (January 2002) and a report on the welfare of non-human primates used in research. The Committee had to take into account the most recent scientific information, to propose how the welfare of these animals could be improved, and to identify the most important issues within the European Union. Since the scientific basis of the Directive dates back at least 15 years, some provisions are out of date. At the same time, the Commission could fulfil its commitment to improve the controls and welfare of non-human primates, and to provide an opportunity to revisit some of the definitions and existing provisions.