

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000291/20
to the Commission**

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(21 January 2020)

Subject: Delay in publishing the report on statistical information on the use of animals for scientific purposes

The principle of replacement, reduction and refinement is at the heart of Directive 2010/63/EU and crucial for achieving the final goal of 'full replacement of procedures on live animals for scientific and educational purposes' mentioned in Recital 10 thereof.

In accordance with Article 54(2), Member States have been publishing annual reports with statistical information on the use of animals for scientific purposes since 2015.

In 2012, the Commission established a common format for submitting and referencing the Member States' statistical information, as laid down in Article 54(4).

The Commission was, however, supposed to publish a report with statistical information from Member States concerning the traceability and number of animals used, the conditions under which tests are conducted and the reasons for the tests by 10 November 2019 (cf. Article 57(2)).

The current lack of data at European Union level considerably delays attainment of the final objective of the total replacement of the use of animals for scientific or educational purposes.

1. Why has the Commission not yet published the statistical report?
2. When does the Commission intend to publish said report?
3. Does the Commission plan to launch a strategy for phasing out the use of animals for scientific or educational purposes?

Answer given by Mr Sinkevičius on behalf of the European Commission

(6 April 2020)

In June 2019, Directive 2010/63/EU on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes ⁽¹⁾ was amended by Regulation (EU) 2019/1010 ⁽²⁾. Article 6 of the regulation amended *inter alia* Article 54(2) of the directive to require Member States to submit statistical data to the Commission by electronic transfer in a non-summarised format in the future. This will allow the Commission to establish a central open access database of that statistical data.

At the same time, the regulation deleted Article 57(2) on the obligation of the Commission to submit a formal statistical report to the European Parliament and the Council. However, since improved transparency is one of the key objectives of the directive, the Commission considers it appropriate and necessary that the data submitted to date, and until such time the database is completed, will be made available.

Accordingly, on 5 February 2020, the Commission adopted the first statistical report on the use of animals for scientific purposes, covering the years 2015-2017 ⁽³⁾.

The Commission considers that the ultimate goal of full replacement of all use of animals for scientific purposes is most efficiently progressed through focused and targeted efforts. The directive provides for a strategy that is a legally binding step-wise approach as soon as scientifically satisfactory methods become available. The statistical reporting was revised in support of this same objective.

The new more comprehensive and detailed data, including on animal suffering, will facilitate the identification of animal use areas on which efforts by the Commission, Member States and other stakeholders for the development and validation of alternative approaches will have the widest impact in progressing towards the ultimate goal.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 276, 20.10.2010, p. 33-79.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 170, 25.6.2019, p. 115-127.

⁽³⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/lab_animals/reports_en.htm