

WRITTEN QUESTION E-4366/07
by Nicole Fontaine (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Progress report on Community research programmes on the development of alternative methods and strategies for the total replacement of animal testing with a view to the prohibitions contained in the seventh amendment to the 'cosmetics' directive

In conformity with the ethical principles laid out in the protocol annexed to the Amsterdam Treaty which aim to ensure greater protection of and respect for the welfare of animals as sentient beings, the seventh amendment of 2003 to the 'cosmetics' directive (directive 2003/15/EC¹ of 27 February 2003) provided for the total prohibition throughout the EU of cosmetic products that have been tested on animals.

This prohibition will come into full effect in 2009, except in three fields of toxicity which are to benefit from a postponement until 2013.

Although the cosmetics sector constitutes only a very small percentage of all animal testing carried out in Europe, for other purposes, particularly medical and research purposes the professionals involved, are actively researching alternative methods of testing.

With two years to go until the 2009 deadline, and in order to help their efforts, as Members of the European Parliament we must request the European Commission to assess the progress of the research being undertaken:

- What are the current programmes that aim to allow the replacement, within the time-limits, of animal testing with completely 'non-animal' methods or strategies?
- Aside from the alternative tests developed by the industry, relating in particular to phototoxicity, corrosion and skin irritation and validated by the ECVAM, of which some have already been approved by the Commission and the OECD, what methods have Community research programmes yielded which will allow the replacement of tests to evaluate health safety by 2009 and 2013?
- In particularly complex and crucial fields such as acute systemic toxicity, which require the detection of any toxic effects in the entire body following oral, respiratory or dermal exposure to a substance and which are now affected by the 2009 prohibition, what proposed alternatives does the Commission support with a view to ensuring consumers' health safety by this deadline?

¹ OJ L 66, 11.3.2003, p. 26.