

WRITTEN QUESTION P-1169/04
by Eryl McNally (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: Support for biomedical research in the European Union

A technical expert working group has been set up by DG Environment recently to look at the issue of animal welfare in biomedical research. Despite approaches from NGOs, patient associations, industry and academia, the Commission does not seem to have taken the divergent views on this issue into consideration in the composition of the group. There seems to be little progress in the Health Impact Assessment that should be completed by DG Sanco and little awareness of the issue in DG Research.

Does the Commission agree that animal research remains an essential tool for some research that cannot yet be conducted by other methods? Does the Commission agree that the failure to have representation from a wider scope of interests may impair the balance of the report and therefore affect decision-making on matters that, at worst, may lead to delays in the development of new therapies or, at best, delay patient access to such therapies? Will the Commission look into how it can improve relations between directorates-general on matters such as this, where more than one DG has a legitimate interest in the policy?