



Commission acts to accelerate phasing out of animal testing in response to a European Citizens' Initiative

Brussels, 25 July 2023

Today, the Commission is responding to the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) '*Save Cruelty-free Cosmetics - Commit to a Europe without Animal Testing*'. The response provides a comprehensive overview of the EU's legislative and policy framework relevant to the use of animals for testing purposes. It also proposes additional actions to further reduce animal testing.

The Commission welcomes the initiative and acknowledges that animal welfare remains a strong concern for European citizens. It highlights the leading role of the EU in phasing out the use of animals in testing and improving animal welfare in general. This is especially reflected in the full ban of animal testing for cosmetics, which has been in place in the EU since 2013.

In addition, the Commission will launch a new roadmap with a set of legislative and non-legislative actions to further reduce animal testing, with the aim to ultimately move to an animal-free regulatory system under chemicals legislation (e.g. REACH, Biocidal Product Regulation, Plant Protection Products Regulation and human and veterinary medicines) and continue strongly supporting alternatives to animal testing.

In relation to the modernisation of science, the Commission will continue its strong support to research for the development of alternatives to animal testing and explore the possibility to coordinate the activities of Member States in this field.

The Commission outlines the following actions in response to specific objectives of the European citizens' initiative:

- **Protect and strengthen the cosmetics animal testing ban:** The Commission emphasises that the EU Cosmetics Regulation already prohibits the placing on the market of cosmetic products that have been tested on animals. However, this ban does not extend to safety tests required to assess risks from chemicals to workers and the environment under the EU Regulation on the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation, and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH). The interface between the two pieces of legislation is currently being assessed in two cases before the Court of Justice of the European Union. The Commission will consider the outcome of the court cases in view of any future potential legislative changes.
- **Transform EU chemicals legislation:** As part of its commitment to reducing and potentially eliminating animal testing in the context of chemicals legislation, the Commission will work together with all relevant parties on a roadmap towards chemical safety assessments that are free from animal testing. The roadmap will serve as a guiding framework for future actions and initiatives aimed at reducing and ultimately eliminating animal testing in the context of chemicals legislation within the European Union.
- **Modernise science in the EU:** While the Commission does not share the view that a legislative proposal is required to reach the goal of phasing out the use of animals in research, training and education, it will continue to strongly support the development of alternative approaches with appropriate funding. The Commission is also proposing to initiate a series of actions to accelerate the reduction of animal testing in research, education and training, including exploring the possibility to coordinate the activities of the Member States and national authorities in this field, exploratory workshops, and sustaining new training initiatives for early career scientists.

Background

Since April 2012, European citizens' initiatives (ECI) provide a tool for citizens to invite the Commission to propose legal action in areas where the Commission has the power to do so. For the Commission to consider an ECI, signatures from at least 1 million citizens from at least seven EU Member States are required. The ECI is one of the key innovative tools to promote participatory democracy on the EU level.

The Commission registered the European citizens' initiative 'Save Cruelty-Free Cosmetics – Commit to a Europe without Animal Testing' on 30 June 2021. Its organisers collected support between 31 August 2021 and 31 August 2022. On 25 January 2023, after verification of 1,217,916 statements of support by the Member State authorities, the organisers submitted the initiative to the Commission for examination and reply.

This citizens' initiative is the ninth one to reach the thresholds required by the Treaty and the ECI Regulation. It is also the fifth successful initiative concerning animal welfare or the environment.

For More Information

[Questions and Answers](#)

[Factsheet](#)

[Communication](#)

[European citizens' initiative "Save Cruelty-Free Cosmetics – Commit to a Europe without Animal"](#)

[EU actions for the protection of animals used for scientific purposes](#)

[EU Cosmetics Regulation](#)

[European Citizens' Initiatives](#)

IP/23/3993

Quotes:

Over the last 20 years, the Commission has provided an impressive investment of over €1 billion for the development, validation and uptake of alternatives to animal testing. This effort starts to pay off, as some of these non-animal tools and methods become available to the scientific community and are increasingly used for regulatory purposes. The Commission will continue its strong support to alternatives to animal testing with appropriate funding and explore the possibility to coordinate the activities of Member States in this field.

Margrethe Vestager, Executive Vice-President for a Europe Fit for the Digital Age - 25/07/2023

I welcome the fact that the EU citizens are actively using the citizens' initiative to shape the EU policy and influence what they care about. Animal welfare is also important for the Commission this is why we have a law ensuring strong protection of animals across all EU policies. I welcome the additional contribution this initiative is making to the EU policy-making process.

Věra Jourová, Vice-President for Values and Transparency - 25/07/2023

For 10 years already, the EU provides a most advanced framework of animal welfare protection. Since the ban of cosmetics tested on animals in 2013, science has evolved and the Commission is going to look into new ways to accelerate alternative testing methods across all its policies. A step-by-step approach will ensure the protection of human health, the environment and EU's competitiveness.

Thierry Breton, Commissioner for Internal Market - 25/07/2023

The EU is committed to animal welfare, to improving public health and protecting the environment. Animal testing should be phased out in Europe, and we are working towards this goal, by finding alternatives to it and by making sure they can be used for regulatory purposes.

Virginijus Sinkevičius, Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries - 25/07/2023

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