

Protection of animals used for experimental and other scientific purposes

2001/0277(COD) - 30/09/2010 - Follow-up document

The Commission presents its sixth report on the statistics on the number of animals used for experimental and other scientific purposes in the EU, in accordance with Directive 86/609/EEC.

It gives an overview of the number of animals used in Member States for experimental purposes for the year 2008, with the exception of one Member State which provided data from 2007. As the two newest Member States Bulgaria and Romania have submitted data for the first time (representing below 1.0% of the total number of animals used in the EU 27), it is in principle not possible to draw accurate quantitative conclusions on the evolution of the use of animals for experimental purposes in the EU by comparing data with those of the previous reports. However, some comparisons in trends have been attempted, and significant changes in use have been highlighted in the report.

Overview: the total number of animals used for experimental and other purposes in 2008 in the 27 Member States EU is just above 12 million. As in previous reports rodents together with rabbits represent more than 80% of the total number of animals used in the EU. Mice are by far the most commonly used species accounting for 59% of the total use, followed by rats with 17%. The second most used group of animals was, as in previous years, cold-blooded animals which represent almost 10%. The third largest group of animals used was birds with a little over 6% of the total use.

As stated in the previous two statistical reports no Great Apes were used in experiments in the EU in 2008.

Comparison with previous years: the inclusion of the data from Bulgaria and Romania did not lead to an increase in the total number of animals. On the contrary, there is a decrease of more than 116,500 animals.

However, noticeable changes have occurred for the use of some individual species compared to data from the 2005 report.

Significant increases occurred in 2008 for mice, rabbits, pigs and 'other birds' where percentage changes ranged from 5% to 28%. The increase in the number of mice used since 2005 is 691,842 animals which represents 9.71% of the total number of mice used in 2008.

The total number of pigs, goats, prosimians, and reptiles has increased by between 28 - 46%.

On the other hand the total number of rats, guinea-pigs, other rodents, dogs, cattle and other mammals as well as amphibians and fish used has decreased substantially since the last report.

When expressed in percentages these decreases range from more than 70% to around 10%.

The largest percentile change has been noted in the decrease of the use of other carnivores.

However, these species are not used in great numbers (from 8711 to 2853). There is also a large decrease of 75% in the total number of 'other mammals'.

The following animals which are normally used in fewer numbers show an increase in use: ferrets (16%), horses, donkeys and cross-breeds (11%), goats (44%) and reptiles (39%). It is also worth noting the large decrease in the use of new world monkeys of 73% as well as a decrease of 11% of old world monkeys. As in 2002 and 2005, no great apes were used for experimental or other scientific purposes in 2008.