



# ECEAE

## THE EUROPEAN COALITION TO END ANIMAL EXPERIMENTS

### **ECEAE statement on EARA Campaign to Maintain Dog Testing**

On 7 April 2025, the European Animal Research Association (EARA), a European umbrella organization representing proponents of animal testing, launched a **campaign aimed at justifying and perpetuating the use of dogs in biomedical research.**

This initiative stands in stark contrast to the global scientific and ethical movement advocating for a reduction in animal experimentation and the replacement of such practices with modern, Non-Animal Methods (NAMs). The majority of biomedical research and safety testing on animals is performed for human purposes. Therefore, NAMs offer improved human biological relevance. Particularly in the case of species like dogs and primates, there are broad efforts underway to end their use in scientific research as swiftly as possible.

**ECEAE, the European Coalition to End Animal Experiments, categorically rejects this campaign and the claims it makes.**

### **Where is the public mandate?**

Public resistance to dog experiments is particularly pronounced in European countries, as evidenced by **representative opinion polls**:

In 2009, the European Coalition to End Animal Experiments (**ECEAE**) commissioned a representative survey in Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, the Czech Republic, and Sweden:

- **77%** of respondents across these countries, and 79% in Germany specifically, were opposed or strongly opposed to allowing experiments that cause pain or suffering in dogs.

In 2011 a representative national survey conducted in **Switzerland** by the organization “Doctors for Animal Welfare in Medicine” yielded the following results:

- 70% of the Swiss population oppose dog experiments, even if conducted to advance veterinary treatments for dogs themselves.
- 65% oppose dog experiments for the purpose of developing treatments for human diseases.





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- 79% reject painful or distressing experiments on dogs aimed at assessing the toxicity of substances such as pesticides.

In 2022 a representative survey conducted in the **Netherlands** revealed that **77%** of the population support governmental action to end animal testing on dogs and cats.

### How dogs are cared for in research

Here is what you read in the EARA campaign:

‘Dogs are a well-understood animal, and it is relatively easy to provide them with good welfare and to be confident that they are happy and well-looked after.’

And here is what you see if you look a little closer:

- In In 2021, the Italian animal protection organization **LAV** urged competent authorities - the municipality of Verona and police - to investigate what was happening at the company called **Aptuit in Verona**, which conducts **animal experimentation on behalf of pharmaceutical firms**.

The public prosecutor of Verona authorized an official inspection of the facility by the Italian police. They found that **even the minimum legal requirements for animal housing were not met**, resulting in serious physical and psychological harm to the animals. Dogs were kept in **windowless enclosures with tiled floors**. A total of **51 animals were immediately seized**, including Beagles, macaques, and all the marmosets that were housed there. The laboratory had claimed to represent “**Excellence in Pharmaceutical Research**”.

- In 2019 an undercover investigation in the **German animal testing facility LPT** showed unbearable pictures of beagles lying in their blood and excrement after being used in tests for the Swiss bioscience company **Inthera**. The pictures were distributed through many media throughout Europe and were also [covered by prominent TV formats](#). Despite visible signs of severe suffering, even to laypersons, the dogs were left without medical care and not euthanized in consideration of their distress. Instead, they were **left to suffer and die slowly, unattended**. This is a clear violation of all established animal testing regulations and ethical guidelines.
- In 2015, a court in Brescia, Italy, **convicted** the key personnel of the Beagle breeding facility ‘**Green Hill**’ in Montichiari for **animal cruelty and unlawful killing of animals**. The general manager was sentenced to 1 year and 6 months in prison,





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the director to 1 year in prison (and ordered to pay a fine) and the attending veterinarian to 1 year and 6 months in prison. All three were issued a two-year professional ban. As a result, almost **3,000 Beagles were confiscated**. Green Hill was a subsidiary of the multinational company **Marshall**, which breeds Beagles for research purposes worldwide. The facility has since been **permanently closed**. Between 2008 and 2012, **6,023 dogs died** at the Green Hill site.

- If you look outside the EU, the situation is no better:

In 2022, the American animal protection organization [Humane Society of the United States \(HSUS\)](#) conducted an **undercover investigation** at one of the largest animal testing facilities in the United States, the **Animal Testing Facility Inotiv, Parent Company of Envigo, USA**.

The investigation uncovered **severe violations** of acceptable animal care standards, including lack of food and water, inhumane methods of euthanasia, inadequate medical treatment, negligent and careless handling of animals, and starving mother dogs, which resulted in the death of numerous puppies.

Following a **court order in Virginia**, **445 dogs and puppies** were rescued, and an additional **4,000 Beagles** were removed from the breeding facility and placed with new families.

The company **Inotiv** was fined a **record sum of 35 million US dollars**.

### **Several core claims made in the EARA campaign do not withstand critical scrutiny:**

- **Regulatory Oversight:** EARA states that EU legislation does not allow experimentation on any animal if there is an effective non-animal method available. This is highly misleading, as the majority of experimentation on dogs (and all animals) in the EU is not legally required but instead driven by long standing convention, supply and demand, where opportunities to explore innovative non-animal approaches could be investigated instead. However, where legal requirements *are* applicable, there is plenty of [evidence](#) that this legislation is not adequately enforced.





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- **Rehoming Programs:** These remain exceedingly rare. The majority of dogs are euthanized at the end of the experimental procedures.
- **Dog Testing for Veterinary Medicine:** While EARA claims that dog testing is necessary to advance treatments for dogs themselves, diagnostic and therapeutic interventions involving sick animals are scientifically and ethically permissible without resorting to invasive testing on healthy animals. If the aim is truly to investigate and treat diseases in dogs, ethical, well-designed veterinary clinical trials are the way forward and are still vastly underused, as is the routine collection, use and analysis of veterinary 'big data' from animal patients, to aid research and avoid further animal testing. Hoping that dog models of human diseases may also benefit dogs is an inelegant, unscientific and unethical way to investigate and treat diseases in dogs.
- **Scientific Progress Without Dog Testing:** The notion that medical research would stagnate without the use of dogs is outdated and inaccurate. Modern technologies such as organ-on-a-chip systems and AI, together with omics and systems biology approaches, are already proving more productive, efficient, and humane. EARA states that dogs possess similarities to humans, but this presents a very one-sided view. Dogs also have many *differences* from humans in their genetics, anatomy and physiology, from the clearly obvious, to the most detailed microbiological levels. Millions of dogs have indeed been used in experimental research and testing over many decades. But use is not proof of *utility*, or that using more modern, scientifically relevant methods wouldn't provide a better way forward, where research using dogs and other animals has stalled. **In 2022 in the EU-27 +Norway, 8,709 dogs were used in a total of 14,368 procedures.** It is important to note that the majority of this testing and research on dogs is for *human* rather than veterinary purposes.

Some specific points:

- EARA states that while new methods are being phased in, the use of dogs will continue to be instrumental because they will **be required as references to validate** non-animal methods. However, this statement only makes sense to those who continue to invest in animal research as a **highly flawed 'gold standard'**. In research contexts where human health is the ultimate goal, **humans are obviously the reference point** for new technologies which can continually evolve and advance, unlike experiments in dogs or other animals.





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- EARA states that dogs are often used in **toxicity tests**, as the non-rodent second mammal. But perhaps not for much longer: the **recently published FDA [Roadmap](#)** indicates that second-species chronic toxicity studies may be **replaced with an appropriately validated microphysiological system or in vitro assay**.
- EARA notes that dogs are often used for **repeat dose toxicity testing**, to determine the 'maximum tolerated dose'. But this is done for regulatory, not scientific, reasons. **Dogs cannot reliably identify human toxicities**: an [analysis](#) of animal and human data on over 2000 drugs found that the absence of toxicity in dogs provides virtually no evidence that adverse drug reactions (ADRs) will also be absent in humans. And while the presence of toxicity in dogs can indicate a risk of human ADRs, this evidence is highly inconsistent.
- EARA states that **Golden Retrievers** are used for research into **Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD)** because they naturally develop a mutation in the dystrophin gene, closely resembling what happens in human disease. However, this mutation is rarely seen in the breed naturally, so colonies of GRMD (Golden Retriever Muscular Dystrophy) dogs have been bred for use. They still have many differences in genetic variability and disease progression when compared to humans, which complicates translation of research [findings](#). DMD is even rarer in dogs than in humans (1 in 12,000 dogs reported, compared to 1 in 5000 male [infants](#)). Artificially inducing canine muscular dystrophy and killing dogs at a young age cannot accurately reflect the natural progression of DMD in humans, as reflected in the number of therapies for DMD which, despite showing promise in animal studies have gone on to fail in [clinical trials](#). Instead, research into DMD can easily and ethically be conducted in humans, avoiding any of the problems of translating from dogs. Genetic testing, using blood/ saliva samples and employing a variety of human relevant methods, such as *in vitro* human tissue and [organ-on-a-chip technologies](#) can be used to identify DMD gene mutations in humans. This, in combination with clinical research, is the way forward for developing treatments for humans.
- EARA states that dogs have been used as a model to investigate **heart rhythm disorders**. But human heart rhythm disorders are best studied in humans to avoid any problems of interspecies differences. A number of different approaches can be used, including genetic analysis to look for inherited disorders, screening and monitoring, using data from existing clinical datasets and biobanks, and combining genomics with proteomic/metabolomic data to identify biomarkers.





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- EARA states that dogs are used **to identify genetic risk factors for heart disease**. But there are so many ways that genetic risk factors for heart disease can be studied in humans. Genome-Wide Association Studies (GWAS) analyse genetic data from large populations to identify the common DNA variants linked to heart disease; polygenic risk scores combine millions of genetic variants into a single score to improve risk prediction; advanced computational [methods](#) pinpoint causal genes and mechanisms and uncover biological pathways; family-based studies can track the disease across generations; genetic testing enables early intervention for at risk family members; genetic data can be combined with phenotypic information to improve heart disease prediction, and so on.
- EARA states that dogs are suitable for **studying human age-related diseases** because they share their environment with humans. But why study dogs when there are so many ways of studying age-related diseases directly in humans? Clinical studies can investigate populations prone to accelerated aging or exceptional longevity, or those that age successfully. Open databases containing omics, clinical and epidemiological data can be analysed, and computational and non-animal experimental techniques can be combined to understand the [mechanisms of aging](#).
- **Dog Testing for Insulin Pump Development:** Closed-loop insulin delivery systems that monitor blood glucose and administer insulin were developed decades ago and were refined through direct human clinical testing.

**While EARA warns the public against being misled by animal welfare advocates, it is the campaign itself that disseminates misleading information.**

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*European Coalition to End Animal Experiments (ECEAE)*

