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## Protection of animals used for scientific purposes (repeal. Directive 86/609/EEC) scheduled for plenary vote 5<sup>th</sup> May 2009.

Earlier this week, patients and carers were in Brussels to speak to MEPs about the impact this Directive will have on them. They gave personal testimonies of what it is like to live with a serious disease or illness such as Alzheimer's or Parkinson's and how medical research using animals is bringing new hope and opportunities to improve their quality of life.

Without animal research, scientists across Europe would be unable to make further progress in understanding the causes of ill health and progress towards developing new treatments for conditions without a cure or treatment would be halted. Medicines for diabetes, asthma and leukaemia and medical procedures such as blood transfusions and transplant surgery may not have been developed without animal research.

A balanced Directive is crucial to improving patient lives wherever they live in Europe; this was clear from the presence of so many pan-European patient groups on Wednesday. Joining the **Genetic Interest Group (GIG)** and the **Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC)**, who together represent over 250 UK patient charities, to meet MEPs were the **European CanCer Organisation (ECCO)**, representing 24 European professional and patient organisations; the **European Cancer Patient Coalition (ECPC)**, representing more than 270 European cancer patient organisations; the **European Patient's Forum (EPF)**, representing 28 European patient umbrella groups; the **European Multiple Sclerosis Platform (EMSP)**, representing 33 European Multiple Sclerosis patient support groups; the **British Heart Foundation (BHF)**, the UK charity fighting heart and circulatory disease; the **Parkinson's Disease Society**, the UK charity dedicated to providing support, advice and information for people with Parkinson's disease, their carers, families and friends; the **Vereniging Samenwerkende Ouder- en Patiëntenorganisaties (VSOP)**, the Dutch genetic alliance representing more than 60 disease specific support groups; and the **Alzheimer's Research Trust**, the UK's leading research charity for dementia.

Our shared view is that the proposed revisions of Directive 86/609/EEC represent an important opportunity to raise the welfare standards for animals across the EU while fostering the best possible environment for well-regulated medical research. We thus urge you to ensure that these regulations do not hinder the progress or breadth of research in the EU and ask you to support the Agriculture committee's report when you vote next week and look forward to discussing these issues with you further in the future.

Yours sincerely,

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