
Max Planck Society patent upheld

But great apes are no longer covered
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Today, the Testbiotech opposition against the Max Planck Society patent EP2328918 was rejected in most parts by the European Patent Office (EPO). The patent claims genetically engineered laboratory animals and even apes as “inventions”. They are genetically engineered to have symptoms of Parkinson’s disease. The claims on laboratory animals and their uses have only been marginally limited. The most significant change is a restriction of the claims: chimpanzees have been removed from the patent. But the patent still covers monkeys, such as baboons as well as rats and mice. Testbiotech will now file a complaint against this decision.

Testbiotech regards patents covering genetically engineered animals as an unacceptable violation of ethical boundaries since they create incentives for financial gain from animal suffering. The number of animal experiments with genetically engineered animals has been steadily increasing for the past ten years. In 2015, for the first time more than a million such animals were used in experiments in Germany. There are several reasons for this increase, including economic interests such as marketing laboratory animals as profitably as possible. The European Patent Office has already issued more than 1,000 patents on genetically engineered laboratory animals – these patents include claims that range from covering rodents to great apes.

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