



Wild Chimpanzee Foundation*



Albert Schweitzer
Albert Schweitzer Stiftung
für unsere Mitwelt



Menschen für Tierrechte
Bundesverband der Tierversuchsgegner e.V.

Genetic engineering leads to even more animal experiments

Organisations urge German government to set higher ethical standards

2 July 2014. In an open letter, several organisations urge the German government to take action against the rise in the number of animal experiments with genetically engineered animals. The letter was drawn up collectively by the Albert Schweitzer Stiftung für unsere Mitwelt, Ärzte gegen Tierversuche e.V., Bund gegen Missbrauch der Tiere, Jane Goodall Institute Germany, Gen-ethisches Netzwerk, Gesellschaft für ökologische Forschung, Menschen für Tierrechte – Bundesverband der Tierversuchsgegner, No Patents on Life!, TASSO e.V., Testbiotech and the Wild Chimpanzee Foundation. Their demand for action is based on official statistics published by the German Ministry of Agriculture which reveal that the number of transgenic animals used in animal experiments reached nearly a million in 2012. This corresponds to an increase of 78% in only five years.

"New developments in biotechnology are leading to a higher number of animals used in experiments. This is in contradiction to binding legal objectives in Germany and the EU which aim to reduce the number of laboratory animals used for scientific purposes," says Christiane Baumgartl from Menschen für Tierrechte – Bundesverband der Tierversuchsgegner, an animal rights organisation. "The German government needs to act now. We need much stricter rules."

The organisations warn that new methods of synthetic genetic engineering allow animals to be engineered faster than ever before. Synthetic genetic engineering uses so-called gene-scissors (nucleases) and artificially synthesised DNA, enabling radical changes to the genome of animals and humans.

"The manipulation of animals has reached a new dimension. In many cases, the goal is not to find solutions to pressing medical problems. In fact, economic reasons are often much more important. The systematic amplification of the technical means to reconstruct and change the genome of all kinds of living beings adds a further incentive in this direction", says Christoph Then of Testbiotech. "Therefore we must set clear ethical standards to protect the genetic integrity and identity of animals."

The letter to Minister Schmidt presents a list of ten questions and calls for concrete measures in response. Amongst these are legal measures to protect the genetic integrity of animals and measures to curb the number of laboratory animals being used in experiments.

The letter also calls for a ban on the patenting of animals, since patents create an incentive to carry out animal testing for purely economic reasons. The European Patent Office has already granted more than 1500 patents on animals even including chimpanzees manipulated with synthetic genes.

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Letter to German government www.testbiotech.org/node/1070

Attachment to the letter: www.testbiotech.org/node/1069

Further informations:

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www.aerzte-gegen-tierversuche.de

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