

June 29, 2016

Dear Dr Schutte and Dr Louhimies,

Although we appreciate your last-minute efforts to increase the level of participation of Stop Vivisection representatives at the December 6/7 conference, we feel that the program you propose is conceptually flawed, and has very little in common with the aims of the ECI Stop Vivisection.

This is due in large part to the multitude of topics announced in the conference program, rather than the two core issues that are at the heart of the Stop Vivisection campaign, namely the validity of the animal model (*) and the necessity of making validated alternative models mandatory by law (**). It is also in part due to the time constraints that will be imposed on plenary speakers, as well as in the roundtable Q&A sessions, with so many panelists and so little time for anything resembling a serious debate.

While we thank you for your invitation, we would like to inform you that Stop Vivisection will not be participating in the december 6/7 conference and will inform relevant stakeholders, supporters, and the general public of the reasons for opting out of the conference. Namely that this meeting does not constitute a response to the core requests of the ECI Stop Vivisection.

Not qualifying as a valid response to Stop Vivisection, the december conference is a missed opportunity to question the validity of animal experiments and to inform people people about what is at stake, including the voice of scientists highlighting the damage this outdated method of research represents for human health and the environment.

Our decision not to participate is equally based on the following:

Firstly, we reiterate the need for an adequate response to the proposals that we officially submitted a year ago (please see appendix at the end of this letter), and for which 1.173.131 european citizens who signed our ECI expect some positive result.

Secondly, that we explore other ways to organize a truly scientific conference that focuses on the validity of the animal model in human research. We are therefore planning an alternative conference in collaboration with a group of Members of the European Parliament and it will be our pleasure to invite the European Commission to attend this conference in due course.

Finally we respectfully ask that you remove the following statement from the EC website (in all languages) as we feel that it is now completely irrelevant and we consider it seriously misleading to our 1,173, 131 supporters, as well as the general public, in light of the program that you propose for the December 6/7 conference.

04/05/2016 - As a follow-up to the Stop Vivisection initiative, the European Commission is organising a scientific conference in Brussels on 6-7 December 2016 to engage the scientific community and relevant stakeholders in a debate on how to exploit cutting edge advances in biomedical and other research in the development of scientifically valid non-animal approaches (alternatives to animal testing).
<http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/welcome?lg=en>

Sincerely, and on behalf of Stop Vivisection,
Dr Andre Menache
Professor Gianni Tamino

(*) this was also the idea of Vice President of the European Commission Jyrki Katainen last December when he wrote to Stop Vivisection representatives that Brussels Authorities were organising a scientific conference focused on the validity of animal models (letter dated December 18, 2015, <http://www.stopvivisection.eu/it/content/institutional-initiatives#overl>).

(**) In your last letters dated June 10, 2016 and June 21, 2016 (<http://www.stopvivisection.eu/it/content/institutional-initiatives#overl>) you seem not to know what is the exact definition of "legal obligation" *id est*, according to Black's Dictionary of Law "the term that describes the obligation or duty provided by law that is enforced by a court of law" .

Appendix:

Proposals officially presented by Stop Vivisection to the EP on May 11, 2015:

- 1 The statement "the use of live animals continues to be necessary to protect human health" shall be removed from all European legislation regarding medical and toxicological research.
- 2 A permanent scientific conference every 2 years.
- 3 All available alternative methods shall be mandatory by law.
4. Alternative methods as an EU priority.
5. Validation as soon as possible of specific alternative methods already existing.
6. Different way of validating alternative methods.
7. Transnational engagement on the necessity to phase out animal experiments and on the mandatory nature of alternative methods.
8. At least 50% of public funds to develop alternative methods.
9. Validation of alternative methods at the expense of the Union, not of the researchers.
10. Annual report for alternatives in applied research.