



CARE

The FENS Committee on Animals in Research



The establishment of the **FENS Committee on Animals in Research (CARE)** reflects the overall policy of **FENS** in supporting the appropriate and responsible use of animals in neuroscience research. Knowledge generated by neuroscience research using experimental animals, as well as providing fundamental knowledge about brain function, has also led to important advances in the understanding and treatment of diseases and disorders that affect the nervous system. This knowledge continues to make a critical contribution to our understanding of the complexity of our own brains and of ourselves as human beings. Progress in understanding brain function and improvements in the treatment of disorders affecting the nervous system require research at all levels in the living nervous system: the brain is a complex organ and cannot be simply replicated in a test tube or in a computer model. Where no appropriate alternatives exist, it is necessary to use appropriate experimental animal models. **FENS** encourages all its member neuroscientists to contribute to scientific progress, including studies of the structure and function of the normal brain, through responsible and humane research on animals, and to carry out research which maximizes scientific gain without compromising animal welfare.

Of necessity, neuroscience research often has to employ complicated and sometimes invasive approaches, each of which is associated with different problems, risks and specific technical considerations. The decision to use an animal model, which species of animal to use and which procedures to employ are all taken with a view both to the scientific objectives and the implications for animal welfare and potential suffering. In this respect, the **FENS Committee on Animals in Research** stresses the overarching importance of the 3Rs (refinement, reduction and replacement), which provide a comprehensive set of guiding principles for many areas of animal research, and encourage both improvements in animal welfare and the use of complementary and alternative procedures, where appropriate. The **CARE** also supports the principle of harm benefit analysis for each prospective project involving animals in research, including purpose-bred non-human primates, and the adoption of standards of animal welfare to the highest level compatible with the scientific objectives of the project.

At present each Member Nation of the EU has its own national regulations that concern the use of animals in scientific research. An important function of the new Committee will be to monitor the new EU Directive on Protection of Animals used for Scientific Purposes (Directive 86/609 EEC) and make responsible and scientifically well-informed contributions to the process which will result in the final version of this Directive and its transposition to new laws governing animal research within the Member States. The **CARE** will work actively with members of **FENS**, their academic institutions, other scientific organizations that share its goals, the public and the media to provide informed support to the continued use of animals in neuroscience research, and to defend the cause of neuroscientists who carry out properly-regulated and licensed scientific research.

The **CARE** and the **FENS-IBRO Advisory panel on Ethics and Communicating Neuroscience** will promote and coordinate the critical discussion of the themes central to the use of animals in science at all courses of the **FENS-IBRO Programme of the European Neuroscience Schools**.