

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001084/26
to the Commission**

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(17 March 2026)

Subject: Expansion of non-human primate breeding capacity in France and compliance with Directive 2010/63/EU

The French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) plans to expand its primate research centre in Rousset, increasing capacity from 600 to 1 800 animals by 2029 with public funding of EUR 30 million. The project would involve importing around 300 cynomolgus macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*) for breeding. France already uses approximately 3 500 primates annually, the highest number in EU.

This expansion raises concerns regarding Directive 2010/63/EU ⁽¹⁾, which seeks to replace, reduce and refine the use of animals in science. The CNRS Ethics Committee has itself questioned the project's strategic relevance and called for a clear roadmap to reduce the use of non-human primates.

1. Does the Commission consider that the planned tripling of the primate population at the Rousset centre, combined with the importation of non-human primates, aligns with the objectives of Directive 2010/63/EU concerning the replacement, reduction and minimisation of animal use?
2. Does the Commission envisage requiring Member States to adopt time-bound roadmaps to phase out the use of non-human primates in scientific procedures?
3. Does the Commission consider that public national projects involving breeding or importation of non-human primates should be subject to an EU-level scientific or strategic assessment, in order to ensure they are consistent with the objectives of Directive 2010/63/EU?

Submitted: 17.3.2026

Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission
(6 July 2026)

The demand for non-human primates for use in science is expected to continue as they remain essential in certain research areas, such as neurosciences and immunology, and for safety testing where no viable alternatives currently exist.

Their use is regulated by the directive on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes ⁽¹⁾, which imposes stringent measures limiting their use for specific purposes.

Currently, a significant proportion of non-human primates used in the EU are sourced from outside the Union. The directive aims at ending the capture of non-human primates from the wild, including for breeding purposes. It also sets out some of the highest care and accommodation standards for non-human primates globally.

Increasing EU-based breeding capacity can contribute to these objectives by ensuring compliance with EU welfare standards and reducing the risks associated with long-distance transport.

The directive sets out a legal framework for progressing towards their full replacement as soon as scientifically satisfactory alternatives are available.

The use of non-human primates can only be authorised where a project evaluation satisfies the authorities of its compliance with the principle of the Three Rs (Replacement, Reduction and Refinement) and that the objectives cannot be met by using other species.

The Commission does not have the competence to require Member States to adopt time-bound roadmaps to phase out the use of non-human primates.

Similarly, the directive does not provide a legal basis for EU-level scientific or strategic assessments of national projects involving the breeding or importation of such animals.

¹ Directive 2010/63/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 September 2010 on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes (OJ L 276, 20.10.2010, p. 33, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2010/63/oj>).

⁽¹⁾ Directive 2010/63/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 September 2010 on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes, OJ L 276, 20.10.2010, p. 33.