

Political Animals 2006

Animal Defenders International • National Anti-Vivisection Society • Lord Dowding Fund for Humane Research

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Animal Welfare Bill: Evidence mounts for animal circus ban

Following an interesting debate in Standing Committee led by Shona Mclsaac MP, which heavily featured ADI evidence of circus suffering, Defra Minister Ben Bradshaw announced to the House of Commons on March 8th that certain non-domesticated species would be banned from animal circuses. A similar move was announced in the Scottish Parliament shortly afterwards.

In the House of Lords, an amendment drafted by ADI was tabled by Baroness Miller, the Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for the Environment, calling for the prohibition of animals from travelling circuses, but allowing for the licensing of certain acts. This received much support.

Such a licensing system would put the onus on circuses to provide evidence to support the use of certain species (including domestic animals) and prove that welfare would not be compromised.

The alternative is to attempt to address every species that might appear (at present these range from ostriches to apes). The scheme now has the backing of many groups, including the RSPCA.

In April a new ADI report, *The Science on Suffering*, was launched in the House of Lords at a reception hosted by Baroness Byford. The report provides evidence from scientific studies showing the suffering of animals (both exotic and domesticated) during transport and in captivity.

The report also includes observations at two British circuses in March and April 2006, which reveal: animals left in their transporters for 17.5 hours, when the journey had lasted 3.5 hours; some large cats remained in their transporter for 27 hours; horses remained in their transporters for 4-5 hours, for a 2 hour journey. The observations confirmed that due to the circumstances, animal welfare will always be compromised in a travelling environment.

Over 140 MPs have signed EDM 1626 (tabled by Mike Hancock MP) which calls for a complete ban on the use of animals in travelling circuses.

ADI has joined Defra's Circus Working Group and will be submitting further evidence on the suffering of animals in travelling circuses. We urge all MPs and members of political parties to ask Minister Ben

Bradshaw Defra to adopt the suggested policy of a prohibition of animals in travelling circuses with exemptions for certain species and acts, permitted under licence.

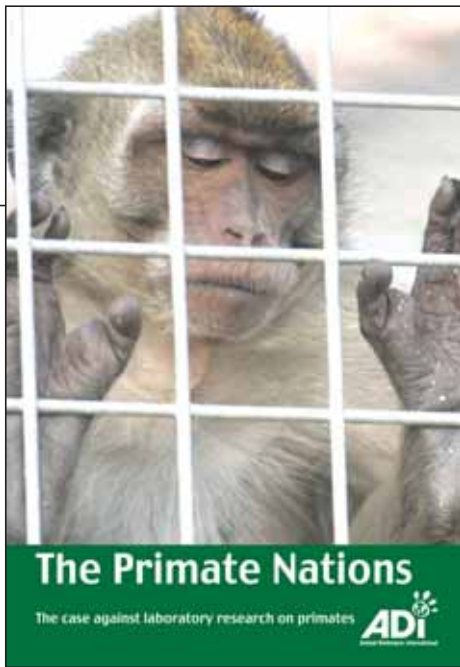
Political advertising ban challenged

In July, ADI went to the High Court to challenge the UK's blanket prohibition on political advertising on television. ADI argued that social advocacy as undertaken by groups like ourselves, Make Poverty History, and Amnesty International should not be banned from TV, especially since commercial bodies and government increasingly use the medium for outlining their good environmental policies. The case arose when an ADI advert critical of the use of apes in advertising was banned, despite a chimp being used to advertise a soft drink being screened at the same time. A decision is expected in the Autumn.

Keep animals out of REACH

In June 2006 the Council of Ministers published its Common Position on REACH (Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals). As expected, this reflects the compromise made in December 2005 by the Member States. This is currently being considered by the European Parliament's Environment Committee. ADI, NAVS and LDF continue to brief MEPs and others. Also in June, we welcomed the Action Plan from the "European Partnership to Promote Alternative Approaches to Animal Testing".





Historic push to end primate experiments

To mark International Primate Day (September 1st) ADI supporters tabled motions in the European Parliament, the US House of Representatives, the UK Parliament, the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly calling for an end to experiments on non-human primates.

This signals an international drive for governments to adopt a policy that an end non-human primate experiments is a legitimate goal.

The ADI campaign has the backing of Twiggy, Alexei Sayle, Jenny Seagrove, Carol Royle, and Uri Geller and over 150 animal protection groups around the world indicating how momentum is gathering on this especially sensitive area of animal research.

A new ADI report on non-human primate experiments, ***The Primate Nations***, highlights not only the similarities between humans and other primates, but the crucial differences that can dangerously misdirect biomedical research, as well as the non-animal techniques

that could be used instead. Earlier this year, people were horrified by the terrible side effects suffered by human volunteers, caused by the test drug TGN1412. The drug had been given to monkeys in doses 500 times stronger without such side effects.

The report was accompanied by video and photographs taken this summer inside Europe's largest lab monkey supply facility, which currently holds several hundred macaque monkeys from Mauritius but has a capacity for around 3,000 – Europe uses a total of approximately 7,500 macaques a year.

EC Directive 86/609: It's time for change

The EU is currently considering an overhaul of animal experimentation rules under EC Directive 86/609. The options being considered are as diverse as a ban on chimpanzee experiments or conversely, a special EU centre dedicated to chimpanzee research.

A Written Declaration has been sponsored in the European Parliament by UK MEPs David Martin, Vice-President of the European Parliament (Labour–Party of European Socialists); Robert Evans (Lab–PES); Sajjad Karim (Liberal Democrats–Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe); together with Portuguese MEP Paulo Casaca (PES), President of the Inter Group on Animal welfare and Swedish MEP Carl Schlyter (Green Party). The declaration, available for MEPs to sign from 23rd September, urges:

“... the Commission to propose an end to all non-human primate experiments in the revision process of Directive 86/609 EC on the use of animals in scientific procedures, specifically: to prohibit chimpanzee experiments and the use of wild-caught primates in the EU and phase out all non-human primate experiments in the EU over the next 6 years.”

This is a genuine opportunity to end the suffering of primates in laboratories. These animals are our closest relatives; almost all of the primate species share more than 90% of their genetic make up with us, with chimpanzees and humans differing by as little as 2% of DNA. The similarities in behaviour, emotions, and intellectual performance between ourselves and our fellow primates are striking. It is time for the European Union to take action to protect the primate nations.

There are also motions calling for an end to primate experiments before the Scottish parliament (tabled by Chris Ballance – Green Party); the UK Parliament (EDM 2633 tabled by Colin Challen MP (Lab), and already backed by fourteen MPs - Bob Russell, David Drew, Andrew Dismore, Derek Wyatt, Eric Illsley, Kelvin Hopkins, Greg Knight, Jeremy Corbyn, Ann Cryer, Andrew George, David Taylor, Rudi Vis, Betty Williams, Linda Riordan. Statement of Opinion has been tabled in the Welsh Assembly by Lorraine Barret AM (Lab – Cooperative)

The USA is the largest user of laboratory primates in the world. The UK is the largest user of laboratory monkeys in the EU with primate tests rising in 2005. Three countries, the UK, France and Germany are responsible for almost all of the 10,000 experiments on monkeys in the EU.

We urge all MEPs, MPs, MSPs, and AMs to sign the relevant motion and for all those attending conference to press their representatives to support an end to primate experimentation as a legitimate goal of government.

