



Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri

NATIONAL BIOETHICS COMMITTEE

**ALTERNATIVE METHODOLOGIES, ETHICS COMMITTEES AND CONSCIENTIOUS
OBJECTION TO EXPERIMENTS ON ANIMALS**

(18th December 2009)

abstract

The principal contents of the opinion on Alternative Methodologies, Ethics Committees and Conscientious Objection to Experiments on Animals centre around three fundamental concepts: limiting experiments on animals to what is strictly necessary; envisaging the creation of ad hoc ethics committee; and publicising the Italian law that envisages conscientious objection in this field.

The text begins with agreement with the model of the 3 'Rs' (replacement, reduction and refinement of the methodologies used for experiments on animals) in line with the Draft Directive of the European Parliament and the Council of Europe on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes and with the principal international documents in the field, making clear that in this opinion the aim was not to take into consideration the possibility of research on human embryo stem cells which are seen by some as being 'alternative' to experiments on animals.

The NCB recommends the creation of ethics committees for experiments on animals and hopes for a greater coordination at an international level to achieve the development and validation of alternative methods. This opinion also calls for a full implementation of the Italian Law 12 October 1993, n. 413 'Regulations on Conscientious Objection to Experiments on Animals' which recognises (Art. 1) that citizens have the right to declare their conscientious objection to experiments on animals. It also calls for the establishment of the teaching of alternative methodologies at a university level.

In an appendix to the document the results are published of a survey carried out by the NCB of the scientific faculties of Italian universities to monitor the state of application of this law. The opinion has a Note.