European scientists fear funding crisis for brain research

A petition by institutions, scientists and patient organisations, is highlighting the failure of the European Commission to include brain health in its list of priorities for the next programme of Horizon Europe.

There are concerns that without at least a European partnership on brain health in Horizon Europe, too little budget will be earmarked for brain research.

The petition has already been signed by major institutions including German Center for Neurodegenerative Disease (DZNE), Sainsbury Wellcome Centre (SWC), UK, and Strategic Research Area Neuroscience, Karolinska Institutet, Sweden.

Bart De Strooper, UK Dementia Research Institute Director and Group Leader at VIB-KU
Leuven, said: "We very much fear that Europe fails to see the emergency caused by neurological and neuropsychological diseases, for which there is essentially no effective treatment and very little investment."

**Research**

**Fewer animals used in GB research in 2018**

The [annual figures](#) for total scientific procedures using animals in Great Britain, have shown a decrease of 7% from 2017 to 3.52 million.

This is the lowest number of procedures carried out since 2007, although the figures for dogs and primates are up 16% and 8% respectively.

Additional data released, by [Understanding Animal Research](#) last week, shows that the top 10 organisations in Great Britain, using animals, account for nearly half of all animal research.

The [Medical Research Council](#), with labs across the UK, conducted 268,032 procedures on animals, followed by the Francis Crick Institute and the University of Oxford.

The Crick, based in central London (pictured), released its [annual stats](#) for 2018 before the official government figures, demonstrating its efforts towards openness and transparency on animal research.

Julian Downward, Associate Research Director of the Crick, said: “As the country’s largest..."
Research

New insights on brain neurons by Swiss scientists

Scientists in Switzerland have found how neurons process information, shedding more light on the functioning of the brain.

The results published in the journal Cell Reports, by researchers at the Ecole Polytechnique Federale de Lausanne (EPFL), Lausanne, examined cells from the virtual cortex of the mouse.

The work was made possible thanks to EPFL’s Blue Brain Project – an Initiative that aims to build digital reconstructions and simulations of the rodent brain.

Marc-Oliver Gewaltig of Blue Brain’s Simulation Neuroscience Division, said that these new findings “offer us more insight into the fundamental question of how the brain computes.”

Policy

Free public event in Zurich to discuss animal research

biomedical research institute, we have a particular responsibility to be open about our use of animals in research.”
A public event to discuss the current state of animal research in Switzerland will take place in September.

With the prospect of a federal referendum in 2021 calling for a total ban on animal research, the event will bring together scientists, and specialists in animal welfare and laboratory animal science as well as the interested public.

The event, *Tierversuche im Dialog* (in German only) is organised by EARA member, the Swiss Laboratory Animal Science Association [@SwissSgv](https://twitter.com/SwissSgv) and Life Sciences Switzerland.

The event, takes place at the University of Zurich on Friday, September 13, and is free, please register by August 1, 2019.

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