

BASEL DECLARATION SOCIETY Report 2011–2012



EDITORIAL

«The time has come for more transparency»

Our ultimate goal is to replace the use of animals in research. However, we all acknowledge that animal experiments are still needed today in biomedical research and for developing better and innovative medications. Everyone also agrees that animals have an intrinsic value which must be respected. An ethical debate how this can best be achieved requires transparency, and achieving this transparency requires pro-active information of the public, of policy makers, and politicians about what we do to reduce, replace and refine animal experimentation according to the 3R principle. While we do everything we can to ensure that Refinement is not limited to scientific procedures, but also relevant in relation to care, housing and breeding of animals, we also work more firmly anchor the development, validation and use of alternative approaches in international regulations and guidelines. At the same time we work to further improve the international availability and quality of training in 3R techniques to ensure the most humane treatment of animals and to improve science.

Everything we do aims to bring the principles of the Basel Declaration to life:

- We respect and protect the animals entrusted to us and avoid unnecessary pain, suffering, or harm to them by adhering to

highest standards of experimental design and animal care.

- We consider carefully whether research involving animals addresses questions of importance that cannot be answered using alternative methods.
- We strive to minimize the number of animals used for research and use the most suitable species to achieve the intended gain of knowledge.
- We encourage collaboration to avoid repetition of animal experiments, and free and transparent communication to avoid unnecessary duplication of research.
- We invite representatives of animal welfare organizations to openly discuss all important issues with the research community.

We hope that many of you will join us in this initiative!



Prof. Dr. Rolf Zeller
President of the Basel Declaration Society

BOARD

Chairman



Prof. Dr. Rolf Zeller
Department of Biomedicine
University of Basle
Basle, Switzerland

Board Members



Prof. Dr. Richard W. Bianco
Director of Experimental Surgery
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, USA



Dr. med. vet. Cornelia Exner
Veterinary surgeon specialized in
behavioral science and animal welfare
Animal welfare officer for the Philipps
University of Marburg c/o FB Biologie,
Germany



Dr. Mark Matfield
European Biomedical
Research Association



Prof. Dr. Patrick Matthias
Friedrich Miescher Institute
for Biomedical Research
Basle, Switzerland



Prof. Dr. Gregor Rainer
Department of Medicine /
Physiology University of Fribourg
Fribourg, Switzerland



Prof. Dr. Hansjörg Scherberger
German Primate Center
Göttingen, Germany



Prof.(em) Dr. H.-P. Schreiber
Bioethik ETH Zurich,
Zurich, Switzerland



Prof. Dr. Stefan Treue
Director, German Primate Center,
Göttingen, Germany



Dr. Aimée Zuniga
University of Basle
Basle, Switzerland

Managing Office



Astrid Kugler
Managing Director
Basel Declaration Society

BASEL DECLARATION SOCIETY 2011–2012 ACTIVITIES AT A GLANCE

Founding of the Basel Declaration Society ➡

On October 5, 2011 the Basel Declaration Society was established at Basel University by 11 prominent members of the scientific community from three European countries. Prof. Dr. Rolf Zeller has been elected as first chairman.

Pathway to more transparency in Animal Research—Second conference of the Basel Declaration ➡

From October 16–18, 2011 about 90 researchers from 11 countries produced five additional position papers of the Basel Declaration.

Day of Research for Life

On February 6, 2012 researchers explained the long way of new medicines from «Bench to Bedside» at five simultaneous events in Basel, Bern, Fribourg, Lausanne and Zurich. About 400 visitors attended these «Research for Life» days («Tag der Forschung für Leben»).

Basel Declaration Award for Education in Animal Research ➡

The young Greek researcher Dr. Eirini Fragkiadaki from the Hellenic Pasteur Institute in Athens, Greece, won the first Basel Declaration Award for Education in Animal Research. She attended a five day intensive Introductory Course in Laboratory Animal Science at the Irchel University Zurich, Switzerland in August 2012 to gain technical knowledge and practical skills for the responsible and careful handling of laboratory animals before, during and after an animal experiment. She committed to apply this knowledge in her own day-to-day laboratory work, and to pass it on to fellow researchers in Greece.

Presentations of the Basel Declaration

September 27, 2011

Saint Joseph's Translational Research Institute at the Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta Georgia. «Pre-Clinical Assessment of New or Modified Heart Valves»

October 2011

Annual Meeting in Trondheim, Norway, of the Scandinavian Society for Laboratory Animal Science in a special session for communications on Animal research with the public to an audience including policy makers and politicians. The participants agreed to actively foster a strengthened networking on EU-level in cooperation with various organizations with an interest in responsible animal handling and care.

October 4, 2011

International Medical Device Expo, Chicago IL. Keynote address: «The Future: Therapy and Treatment of Heart Valve Disease»

February 13, 2012

Lecture, «The importance and ethics of basic neuroscience research with non-human primates» at the European Molecular Biology Laboratory in Heidelberg, Germany

March 7, 2012

Surgical Knowledge Seminar, Philadelphia PA. «Four Decades of Using Large Animals to Assess Human Safety of Heart Valves and other Class III Devices»

March 14, 2012

Presentation, «Regulating NHP Research in Europe: Where things stand» at the, 5th Primate Neurobiology Conference in Tuebingen, Germany

June 11, 2012

The Threat of Extremism to Medical Research: An International Summit, FASEB, Bethesda MD, «How to engage and inform the public on the value of research involving animals»

Aug 27, 2012

Lecture, «The importance and ethics of basic neuroscience research» in the summer school, «Visual Neuroscience—From Spikes to Awareness», in Rauschholzhausen, Germany

Aug 30, 2012

Lecture, «Ethical, legal and scientific aspects of basic neuroscience research on animals», in the summer school «Lausanne & Geneva FENS-IBRO Imaging Training Center 2012: Imaging Neural Function» in Lausanne, Switzerland

September 19, 2012

International Medical Device Expo, Chicago IL. «New Synergies in Technology and Processes Among Cross-Functional Industries»

Mice Times

Mice Times, a magazine showcasing true success stories in basic research in which animals play a central role, is published 2–3 times a year in English (Mice Times), German (Mausblick) and French (l'écho des souris). Since autumn 2011 the following editions were issued:

Nr. 4, November 2011

BSE – virtually disappeared thanks to intensive research

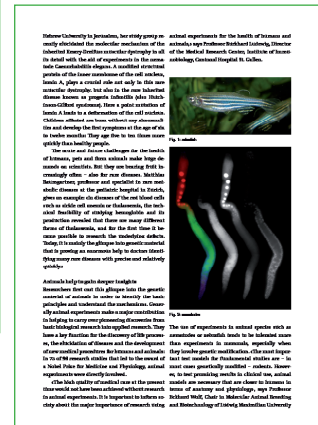
Nr. 5, February 2011

Rare diseases – widespread problem

Nr. 6, October 2012

The heart valve from the lab

To see all available editions please visit:
www.basel-declaration.org/publications



Communicating with Animal Protection Organizations

On 15 February 2012, Rolf Zeller, Hans-Peter Schreiber and Astrid Kugler welcomed Claudia Mertens and Kathrin Herzog from the Zurich Animal Protection Association to the Institute of Anatomy in Basel to discuss animal rights. Participants rated this meeting as straight forward, factual and satisfying. The representatives of the Zurich Animal Protection Association commit, that it will be not possible to replace every animal experiment right now and will be kept up for the time be.

The Basel Declaration also in Chinese

The Basel Declaration has been translated into seven languages so far, including Chinese. To see the Declaration in all available language versions, please visit:
www.basel-declaration.org

ESTABLISHING THE BASEL DECLARATION SOCIETY OCTOBER 5, 2011

The Basel Declaration Society is a not for profit scientific association established on October 5, 2011, at the Institute for Anatomy of Basel University. The Society aims at promoting the dissemination and advancement of the Basel Declaration, the ever more important international manifest in favor of research, care for animal welfare, and establishment of a transparent dialogue between scientists and stakeholders.

Purpose

The purpose of the «Basel Declaration Society» is to strengthen public awareness of the importance of animal models in experimental biomedical research, to foster communication between researchers and the public, and to enhance acceptance of the Basel Declaration. Like the Helsinki Declaration, which forever altered the ethical landscape of human clinical research, the aim of the «Basel Declaration Society» is to bring the scientific community together to further advance the implementation of ethical principles such as the 3R whenever animals are being used in research.

Significance

The significance of the Society is manifold. It has been created to establish a common forum of experts supporting the Basel Declaration, to enable them to speak with a single, prominent and respected voice when research is at stake, and to act as a credible interlocutor in public debates on research and animals.

To date more than 1400 researchers have signed the Basel Declaration. The creation of the Society will help coordinate their efforts towards the promotion of better science, to enroll additional support and to maintain and update the Declaration, to benefit better science and animal welfare.

As such, the Society embodies a strong message: it ensures that the commitment the signatories have undergone with the Declaration is real, and that it stays a lasting one.



Founding members

Dr. med. vet. Cornelia Exner
Veterinary surgeon specialized in behavioral science and animal welfare, Animal welfare officer for the Philipps University of Marburg, Germany

Prof. Dr. Susan Gasser
Director of the Friedrich Miescher Institute for Biomedical Research, Basle, Switzerland

Prof. Dr. Michael Hengartner
Dean Faculty of Science, Institute of Molecular Life Sciences, University of Zurich, Switzerland

Prof. Dr. Thomas Lutz
Institute of Veterinary Physiology, University of Zurich, Switzerland

Prof. Dr. Patrick Matthias
Friedrich Miescher Institute for Biomedical Research, Basle, Switzerland

Prof. Dr. Gregor Rainer
Visual Cognition Laboratory, University of Fribourg, Switzerland

Dr. Jan Rozman
Institute of Experimental genetics, Helmholtz Zentrum München, Germany

Prof. Dr. André P. Perruchoud
University Hospital Basle, Switzerland

Prof. Dr. Hans-Peter Schreiber
em. Ethik Professor ETH Zurich, Basle, Switzerland

Prof. Dr. Rolf Zeller
Department of Biomedicine, University of Basle, Switzerland

Dr. Aimée Zuniga
Department Biomedizin, University of Basle, Switzerland

Astrid Kugler
Managing Director of «Forschung für Leben», Zurich, Switzerland

Become a member of the Basel Declaration Society

We look for your support to publicly show that we are committed to the 3R principle (Replace, Reduce, Refine), i.e., plan and carry out animal testing in your area of expertise with utmost care, and contribute to providing society with open and transparent information about animal experiments.

We encourage scientists, veterinarians, animal caretakers and everyone with an interest in supporting the Basel Declaration principles for animal research to become a member of our society: the annual membership fee is 50.– CHF only.

Sign up today and fill in the membership form at
www.basel-declaration.org



PATHWAY TO MORE TRANSPARENCY IN ANIMAL RESEARCH

Conference of the Basel Declaration Society Berlin, October 17–18, 2011

«At the Berlin Conference we made another step towards further internationalizing our Basel Declaration Society, and to further enhance awareness of the Basel Declaration principles, particularly among politicians and policy makers,» says Prof. Rolf Zeller, chairman. «The conference was not only an excellent opportunity for researchers to explain their concerns regarding ever tighter international regulations in animal research to politicians and policy makers. We also had a constructive dialogue and direct interactions of supporters and opponents of animal research – this was truly inspiring and beneficial for a mutual understanding of both parties.»

During the Conference more than 100 participants from 10 countries actively collaborated in workshops to

- assess how the concept of 3R can best be implemented in the context of fundamental research;
- find ways for the effective implementation of training and continuous education in today's global and highly mobile science community, and give recommendations to EU legislators who need to implement such training;
- discuss publication and transparency issues, namely the publication of negative results to prevent duplication or repetition of animal experiments;
- improve communication at the level of individual institutions.

They issued several position papers which complement the existing positions of the Basel Declaration Society



Prof. Stefan Treue,
Co-Chairman of the congress and Director of the German Primate
Center, Göttingen, Germany



Susanna Louhimies
Policy officer Directorate-General Environment, ENV.D.3-Chemicals,
Biocides and Nanomaterials, The European Commission



Prof. Hans Wyss
Director of the Swiss Federal Office of Veterinarian Affairs



Elisabeth Jeggle
Member of the European Parliament

Position Paper: 3R in Research – how can the concept of 3R best be implemented in the context of fundamental research?

All stakeholders in experimental research must be aware of 3R principles and their current implementation, and the 3R education needs to improve at all levels, including authorities and decision takers, and peer reviewers.

3R related issues must be an integral part of scientific publications, with detail description of the methodology. Papers should include a «3R section» where 3R methods and new 3R developments that occurred during the current research project can be described. A comprehensive database related to 3R technology is necessary.

To enable more research in 3R methods, the financial and regulatory support in particular for Refinement has to improve. The establishment of key performance indicators for 3R principles is recommended. The Society members commit to review and to collaborate to issue guidelines of established and validated methods.



Team Work
3R in Research



Team Work
Assessment of pain

Position Paper: Assessment of pain, suffering and distress – Severity classification

The members of the Basel Declaration Society and the Basel Declaration signatories support the use of a severity classification system to better capture the impact of scientific procedures on the health and well-being of experimental animals, with the following cornerstones:

- Inclusion of a category covering «no pain, no distress». The categorization should be made on factually based criteria.
- Working towards the same regulatory standards (transparent, science- and evidence based and developed on a peer reviewed process) on a global level.
- All animals, whether genetically modified or not, are subject to the same general principles that govern the ethical treatment of animals, including the 3R.

In countries without mandatory severity classification systems the Society recommends the voluntary use of such systems.



Team Work
Publication and Transparency Issues

Position Paper: Publication and Transparency Issues

The Society fully supports more and improved transparency on animal research in the context of scientific publications.

To advance science, and to inform the general public, all types of results (positive, negative, and inconclusive) obtained in accordance with good scientific practice should be published in an easily understandable way without using scientific jargon, to help avoid unintended duplication or repetition of experiments.

Position Paper: Education and Training

The Society fully supports more and improved transparency on animal research in the context of scientific publications.

To advance science, and to inform the general public, all types of results (positive, negative, and inconclusive) obtained in accordance with good scientific practice should be published in an easily understandable way without using scientific jargon, to help avoid unintended duplication or repetition of experiments.

State of the art science and the welfare of the animals used for these purposes depend on the professional competence of all personnel involved. Training people in the proper handling of animals, in up-to-date and appropriate techniques, as well as in the biology of the animals involved, guarantees that pain and distress are minimized (i.e. Refinement is done). Educating people in topics such as ethics, experimental design and related database and literature searches assures that there is no alternative to the animal experiment and only the least necessary number of animals will be used to achieve scientific validity.

Establishing a harmonized and continuing education would allow setting up high quality standards and a valid accreditation and certification scheme throughout Europe. The continuing education system of Switzerland could be used as an example.

Networking between institutions should be encouraged regarding sharing of resources and information.



Team Work
Education and Training

Position Paper: Communicating with the public about animal research

The scientific community needs to promote communication with the public about the use of animals in research at the level of the individual scientist, the level of the research institute, and at the national level.

Individual scientists need to be encouraged and supported with appropriate training in communications, specific to the audience.

Research institutions should

- put a statement about their animal research on their website,
- teach their scientists in communication skills,
- invite school students, teachers, journalists or politicians to visit their laboratories and animal facilities and to talk to the researchers and animal care staff,
- enhance internal communications about animal research to their non-scientific staff, and
- publicly support their scientists' research.

At a national level, there is a need for organizations specialized in pro-active public communication about animal research. These organizations should provide professional communication consultancy, training and resources, and be a central point of contact for the media, decision makers and the public.

For maximum credibility, such organizations should be broadly funded by a group of national scientific associations and should employ professional communication staff.



Team Work
Communicating with the public about animal research

BASEL DECLARATION AWARD FOR EDUCATION IN ANIMAL RESEARCH

The Basel Declaration Society offered the reward of participating in a five day intensive training for animal experiments according to the latest legal standards in Switzerland and the EU, in the FELASA category B accredited Introductory Course in Laboratory Animal Science.

«This course covers all aspects of responsible and careful handling of laboratory animals, and teaches the necessary technical knowledge and practical skills. While course participants cannot gain comprehensive knowledge or develop routine of the techniques learned in practice in this five day intensive training, they are being made aware of all aspects of relevance to animal welfare before, during and after an animal experiment. For the jury it was particularly important to select an awardee that will not only apply this knowledge in day-to-day laboratory work, but also uses the knowledge and connections made at the course to establish similar trainings in their home institution and in their home country in general to train fellow researchers and animal experts,» explains Rolf Zeller, President of the Basel Declaration Society.

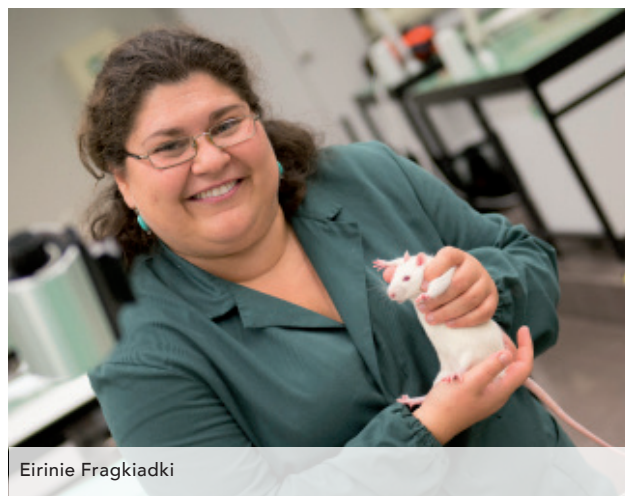
Winner of the first Basel Declaration Award for Education in Animal Research, elected by the Board of the Basel Declaration Society, was Dr. Eirini Fragkiadaki, a young lady from the Hellenic Pasteur Institute in Athens, Greece. As her prize she attended the Introductory Course in Laboratory Animal Science at the University of Zurich/Irchel from August 27 to August 31, 2012 which was led by Prof. Philippe Bugnon.

The training agenda included

- Basic knowledge of the characteristics, needs, husbandry and breeding of animals
- Assessment of health status and diseases in different rodents
- The principles of 3R (reduce, refine, replace)
- Handling and restraining of different laboratory animals used for experiments
- Recognition of normal behavior and observation and description of deviations
- Familiarization with techniques for studying laboratory animals (e.g. administration of substances and taking of samples)
- Administration and monitoring of anesthesia; pain management

Theory and practice were closely linked in the training, and the acquired knowledge and practical skills were assessed in a final examination. Participants received a formal confirmation of having successfully attended the course, which entitles them to conduct experiments with laboratory animals.

«Eirini Fragkiadaki committed to organize a similar training of people who conduct animal experiments in Greece in accordance with the national laws within the next two years. We are confident she will also work to repeat this course at regular intervals and works to establish it as part of the studies offered in the field of life sciences and/or biomedicine at her home university,» says Rolf Zeller. Eirini Fragkiadaki is a signatory to and member of the Basel Declaration Society and her home university, the Hellenic Pasteur Institute in Athens, Greece also supports the objectives of the Basel Declaration.



Eirini Fragkiadaki



The Basel Declaration

The aim of the Basel Declaration and its Society is to bring the scientific community together to further advance the implementation of ethical principles such as the 3R principles (Replace, Reduce, Refine) whenever animals are being used and to call for more trust, transparency and communication on the sensitive topic of animals in research.

The signatories of the Basel Declaration, researchers and institutions in the life sciences sector, are committed to the 3R principles, i.e., that animal testing in their area of expertise be planned and carried out with extreme care. In addition, they will contribute to providing society with open and transparent information about animal experiments.

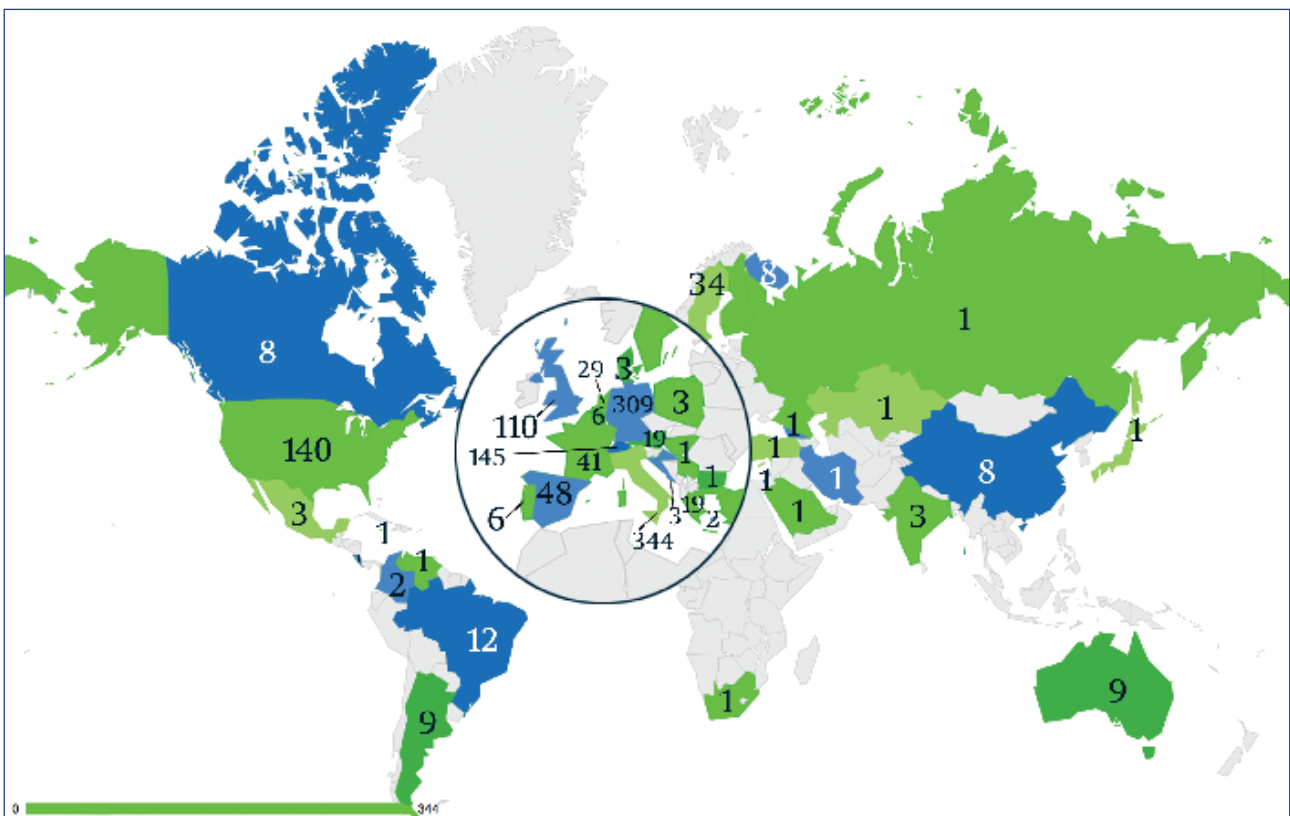
In return, the undersigned scientists expect society to recognize that animal experiments are essential for medical progress both now and in future.

Sign the Basel Declaration

Sign the Basel Declaration, to become part of the ever growing community of researchers which publicly show they are committed to the 3R principle (Replace, Reduce, Refine), i.e., that plan and carry out animal testing in your area of expertise with utmost care, and contribute to providing society with open and transparent information about animal experiments.

www.basel-declaration.org

Signatories of the the Basel Declaration by country (status 1. November 2012: Total 1421)



IMPRESSUM/CONTACT:

Basel Declaration Society, P.O. Box, CH-4055 Basel

+41 (0)44 365 30 84 – www.basel-declaration.org – contact@basel-declaration.org

© Copyright 2011, Basel Declaration, Zurich, Switzerland; all rights reserved

