

Animal  
Research  
Tomorrow

**ANIMAL RESEARCH TOMORROW**  
**(Former BASEL DECLARATION SOCIETY)**

Annual Report 2020



## Editorial

### Dear Signatories of the Basel Declaration, Members and Supporters of Animal Research Tomorrow

The years 2020/21 are burnt into our collective memory as the years of the great Covid-19 pandemic that took the lives of too many including colleagues and family. I hope that you and your families managed to get through this health crisis fine and that you are either vaccinated or will be soon. The last 18 months has seen an amazing and unique effort to develop and introduce novel RNA-based vaccines at warp speed with the aim to vaccinate the entire world by 2022. As so often, the unsung heroes of this success are research scientists like Drs Kati Kariko and Drew Weissman, and research animals such as mice and primates. In fact, these two researchers spent a significant fraction of their career to develop efficient and safe RNA-based technologies in animal models, without the importance of their research being recognised initially. This is the best illustration for basic research and animal experimentation being first in line for developing biomedical technology and drugs not only today and tomorrow - but for many decades to come.

The year 2020 also marked the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Basel Declaration. Just prior to lockdown, our society manager Dr. Iana Buch organized several brainstorm sessions with a small team of board members with the task to redefine our core activities, sharpen our identity and develop novel and state-of-the-art communication. The success of this creative process was last but not least due to insightful input from Alexander Klauser and Mike Fung (Roche). The first prominent sign of the new things to come was the renaming the BDS into Animal Research Tomorrow (ART), which carries a clear and distinctive mission statement. In light of the current and future health crisis and challenges; this mission is more than appropriate. It is hard to imagine where we would stand in today's pandemic without the key contributions by basic and animal research.

Due to delays imposed by the pandemic, we are still in the midst of implementing the novel Animal Research Tomorrow (ART) concept and communication strategy. For the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Basel Declaration, we organised the first all virtual ART conference on "Animal Research 2020 and Beyond" with both senior and junior speakers, the latter representing the next generation of scientific leaders. Despite the rather short planning phase, this conference was attended by more than 250 participants from around the world. Currently, we are implementing our main goals, which include promotion of state-of-the-ART animal research in the framework of the 3Rs, increasing networking with young scientists and

boost reach-out activities. As a first step toward these aims, we have created two ART grant awards for young scientists with the inaugural awards scheduled for 2021. The first one is a 3Rs project grant promoting innovative Reduction and Refinement strategies, while the 2<sup>nd</sup> is awarded for creative and innovative Communication and/or Education approaches. These ART awards should boost the interest and involvement of students and early-stage carrier scientists in these central topics. The ART awards replace the BDS Award, which was given to Dr. Bogdan Sevastre from Romania in 2020. He is now establishing Laboratory Animal Education courses in Romania in agreement with his well-deserved BDS award!

I am very happy that we have managed to get Animal Research Tomorrow launched last year despite very difficult conditions. We will continue to announce additional exciting initiatives and events as the ART website continues to grow ([animalresearchtomorrow.org](http://animalresearchtomorrow.org)). In fact, Iana Buch and myself are very grateful to the "transition team" that made all this possible: Thank you Aimée, Giuliano, Nuno and Servan!

All activities require significant financial resources and Animal Research Tomorrow is grateful to its institutional sponsors for long-term generous support. Without this the reshaping ART, the organisation of conferences, workshops, growing our international network and other activities would not be possible. In addition, ART needs financial support from its members and signers. This is increasingly important as we move toward establishing regional/national ART chapters to strengthen our network. Your financial support is essential to the survival of the ART grass-root movement. Therefore, I kindly ask you to join ART and contribute your membership fee of \$/CHF 50, €50 or £40 per year. Alternatively, I would like you to consider convincing your organization/institution to join the growing network of institutions supporting ART.

Thank you so much for your kind support!

**Prof. Rolf Zeller**

President **Animal Research Tomorrow**



## 3R and Beyond: from Basel Declaration Society to Animal Research Tomorrow (BDS Rebranding Report)

In 2020 the Basel Declaration became 10-years old. We celebrated a decade of successful promotion of ethically responsible and transparent animal research and international networking among national organizations and interest groups, both in Europe and overseas. The anniversary was also a reason to reflect, redefine our goals and emerge with a new concept for the further development of our society.

The complete rebranding of BDS regarding concept, name, strategy, public profile, and design identity was successfully initiated at the end of 2019 and took shape in 2020. During the initiation phase a BDS rebranding core team consisting of the President Rolf Zeller, the Board Members Aimee Zuniga, Nuno Franco, Giuliano Grignaschi and Servan Grüninger, and the Managing Director Iana Buch formed, and successfully developed, in a series of brainstorming meetings, the basic concept and strategy of the BDS rebranding.



The BDS rebranding core team in action (February 2020, Basel, Switzerland). From left to right: Iana Buch, Nuno Franco, Rolf Zeller, Giuliano Grignaschi and Aimee Zuniga. Behind the camera: Servan Grüninger.

During the brainstorming sessions the BDS rebranding core team received invaluable help from Alexander Klausner and Mike Fung from the Corporate Brand & Communications Department of Roche. The discussions with them helped us bring our new concept forward by presenting it in clear messages and visuals. These ideas were developed further by the BDS team later during the year and partially presented at our Digital Conference “Animal Research 2020 and Beyond” on the 13<sup>th</sup> of November 2020. The promotion of the 3R principles and best practice in animal research has not lost its

importance especially in parts of the world where these are still to gain ground. We will further use our large network of biomedical researchers as a basis to bring to the scientific community and the general public a deeper understanding and appreciation of the ethical and philosophical (1), societal and medical (2) and scientific (3) aspects of animal research.



The BDS rebranding core team on the way to the next brainstorming session at Roche (February 2020, Basel, Switzerland). From left to right: Iana Buch, Aimee Zuniga, Rolf Zeller, Nuno Franco, Servan Grüninger, Giuliano Grignaschi. Behind the camera: Alexander Klausner (Roche).

The key messages of BDS were redefined to reflect better the strengths and distinctive advantages and show that BDS is:

- an international organization
- of (academic) scientists
- explaining the value of animal research for society based on only scientific evidence
- an independent reliable source of information and not simply a lobbying organization for animal experiments

The new website was released in basic form in autumn 2020 and is currently developed further in a stepwise manner. It will be personalized with statements, short movies and real-life stories from the board members and ambassadors, with links to social media feeds. As part of the rebranding, we have planned several new initiatives, which will be announced at our website during 2021. The new design identity of Animal Research Tomorrow is also finished and already used at our website and for this report.

## Digital Conference “Animal Research 2020 and Beyond”, 13<sup>th</sup> of November 2020 (Conference Report)

This year’s conference was originally planned as an anniversary celebration presenting Animal Research Tomorrow, the new face of the Basel Declaration Society, and was supposed to take place Basel, Switzerland. The COVID19 pandemic made such meetings impossible and instead of delaying the conference, the Organizing Committee decided to go digital. We managed to attract great speakers and their presentations together with the vivid discussions of the participants made the event a remarkable success.

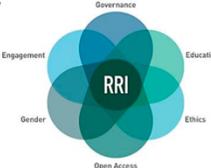
The conference was opened by a Rolf Zeller who reflected on the last 10 years of the society, on its achievements, but also on the need to develop further. Nuno Franco took over and presented the new priorities and initiatives of Animal Research Tomorrow, including the new Animal research Tomorrow Awards and Grants (for details of the Awards and grants please refer to the boxed text on page 5).

**What will the **Tomorrow** of Animal Research look like?**

**Responsible Research and Innovation**

- Move from just communicating to the public to engaging with and listening to the public.
- Society must not only be informed on scientific process, but also be heard on matters concerning scientific research, ethics, funding, etc.
- Any research, animal-based or otherwise, will only be socially acceptable if benefits are understood and is:

**Reliable, relevant, ethical, and transparent.**



Nuno Franco on the future of animal research (a slide from his presentation).

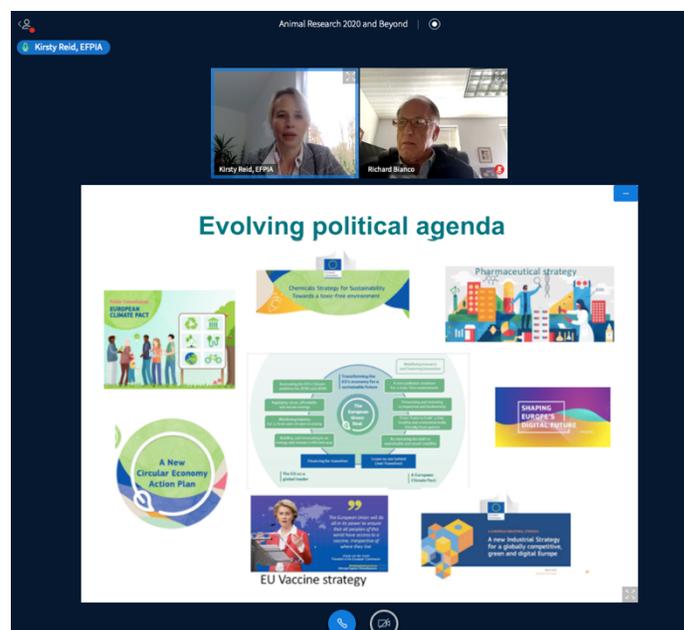
The conference proceeded with the program of three sessions:

- 1) Improving science and research practice of animal experimentation (with Susanna Louhimies, Ana Isabel Moura Santos and Annemarie Lang)
- 2) The ethics of animal research (with Anna Olsson, Simone Pollo and Matthias Eggel)
- 3) Animal research and its relation to society and medicine (with Kirsty Reid, Giulia Birolini and Hervé Raoul)

Among the highlights of the conference were the presentations of Susanna Louhimies (DG Environment, European Commission) and Kirsty Reid (EFPIA). Susanna Louhimies gave an extensive review of how to use the EU legislative framework to improve on animal research. She talked about issues of concern (ethics, reproducibility,

extrapolating of data to target species) and presented tools the EC provides for all types of stakeholders to improve their work and communication. Further, she talked about education and training, not only of the current target audience but also “education of the educators” to achieve long-term sustainability.

Kirsty Reid presented the pharmaceutical industry perspective on 3R and animal welfare. She talked about EFPIA priority areas, communication efforts, education, and training, and importance of collaboration with all relevant stakeholders for improvement of animal welfare.



Kirsty Reid on pharmaceutical industry perspective on 3R and animal welfare.

The other speakers talked about variety of important aspects concerning animal experimentation and welfare. Annemarie Lang gave various examples how to implement 3R principles in daily laboratory life. Anna Olsson talked extensively about critical translational aspects of animal experiments and their importance for experimental design. Simone Pollo talked about animal advocacy and science as democratic goods, balance of interests and importance of communication between groups with opposing opinions. Matthias Eggel highlighted the difficulties of Harm-Benefit Analysis; he argued that from research we can reasonably expect to produce valid and gut quality data, but not necessarily societal benefit. Hervé Raoul talked about challenges of working with pathogens in high containment level (Level 4) animal facilities, the very limited capacity of the existing facilities, limited scientific and technical expertise, the very specific

biosafety and biosecurity measures. Ana Isabel Moura Santos presented FELASA, the initiation of the organization 40 years ago, the subsequent growth, its structure, and activities. Giulia Birolini presented PhD Bioscienze Italia, an organization of young Italian scientists, and their efforts to communicate with animal activists and media on animal experimentation.

The conference finished with a panel discussion moderated by Aimee Zuniga. The discussion started with the increasing administrative burden on animal experimentation, which in many countries slows down (animal) research and is extremely frustrating for scientists. Later the panellists discussed the definition of ethical justification in science and defining costs and benefits. And finally, if it is possible to achieve full replacement, or are we animals always going to be needed for certain experiments. The general agreement was that it will be very hard to replace every single type of animal experiment, especially in basic science, and animal experiments are therefore going to stay for a while. But science is not isolated from society, so we need to accept that at least some parts of this society want to stop animal experimentation, work in this direction, and develop new and improved methods.



The panel discussion. From left to right: Aimee Zuniga, Annemarie Lang, Giulia Birolini, Simone Pollo and Susanna Louhimies.

The presentations of the speakers and a more extensive conference report are available for download at the Animal Research Tomorrow website.

## Conference Highlight: The new Animal Research Tomorrow Awards and Grants

This conference announced the upcoming ART-Awards and ART-Grants.

The Awards will acknowledge outstanding scientists with meaningful contributions in the field of the 3Rs, as well as outstanding scientists, educators, sociologists, philosophers, or journalists with meaningful contributions to improving communication and transparency on animal research.

The ART Grants are aimed at young scientists and will include a 3Rs Project Grant (with up to 5 000 €, with a special focus on Reduction and Refinement research, and a Communication Project Grant (of up to 2 500 €) for innovative approaches in communication and education on animal research.

Nominations for the ART 3Rs and Communication Awards will open in 2021 and will be voted by the ART Board. The awardees will be guest keynote-speakers in the next ART conference.

The call for project applications for the ART 3Rs and Communication Grants will be open in 2021, and the awardees (selected by an independent jury) are expected to start developing their projects in 2022.

## Report of Bogdan Sevastre, the 2020 awardee of the Basel Declaration Award for Education in Animal Research

My name is Bogdan Sevastre, Professor at Veterinary Faculty of University of Agricultural Science and Veterinary Medicine Cluj, Romania, and I would like to express my gratitude for the Animal Research Tomorrow, for granting me the 2020 Award for Education in Animal Research and for the opportunity to join the “LTK Module 1 Introductory course in laboratory animal science for persons conducting animal experiments; species: mice and rats” FELASA category B. accredited, University of Zurich, 13th to 22nd of January 2020.

I am taking this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to Dr. Philippe Bugnon and his enthusiastic team for all their support and collegial attitude! For me, this training program was more than a good opportunity to expand my knowledge, but it was a living lesson about how a proper training program should be. I would also kindly acknowledge the constant support of our national association ARSAL, personally to Dr. Cristin Coman for the constant support I received from the very first day I had become a member.

The main reason I decided to follow this training program is to contribute to the development of LAS education in my country as well as in my university. COVID pandemics, significantly affect Romania, as the rest of the Europe, thus my objectives were just partially achieved until now. At national level at on February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021, it has been emitted the order regulating the minimum requirements related to education in LAS, which is the final step of implementation of Directive 63/EU in Romania. In my quality as member in the “National committee for the protection of animals used for scientific purposes”, based on the experience gain on this course, I contributed to the recognition of the certificates emitted or recognized by a European association as FELASA as well as those recognized in EU states, EU economic spaces, Swiss Confederation and UK. This will provide the opportunity for other people to follow similar training programs abroad without the need of equivalation. Another significant success was the introduction in the legislative document of some compulsory modules, and minimum allocated time following the E&T Framework promoted by Commissions’ Expert Working Group, as well as the topic of the LTK Module 1. I am confident that this requirement will increase the quality of those courses.

At the University level, I am teaching an Introductory course in Laboratory Animal Science since 2008, for the

veterinary students of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year. The training was already improved by the new knowledge and skills, but as a next step in the coming academic year, I plan to build up in the Doctoral School of Veterinary Medicine a training program in LAS for PhD students, which, will be approved at national level. A first step was already done, on June 11<sup>th</sup> I will present a fist lecture for the PhD student about project authorization procedure.

Thank you very much Animal Research Tomorrow and University of Zurich not only for the chance to follow a very good training program, but for the chance to meet wonderful people, I hope I will stay in touch for the years to come!

June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
Cluj, Romana



Bogdan Sevastre (middle) receives his BDS Award Certificate. With Iana Buch and Philippe Bugnon (UZH).

## Current Board of Animal Research Tomorrow

### Chairman



**President**  
**Prof. Dr. Rolf Zeller**  
Department of Biomedicine  
University of Basel  
Basel, Switzerland

### Board Members



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



**Prof. (em) Dr. Ian McGrath**  
University of Glasgow,  
UK and University of  
Sydney, Australia



**Vice President Europe**  
**Dr. Giuliano Grignaschi**  
Animal Welfare Officer  
University of Milano  
Milano, Italy



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

### Managing Office



**Dr. Iana Buch**  
Managing Director  
Basel, Switzerland



**Prof. Dr. Johannes Wilbertz**  
Karolinska Institute  
Comparative Medicine  
Stockholm, Sweden



**Prof. Dr. Hansjörg Scherberger**  
German Primate Center,  
Goettingen, Germany



**Prof. Kevan AC Martin**  
Institute for  
Neuroinformatics  
University of Zurich/ETH  
Zürich, Zurich, Switzerland



**Prof. Dr. Stefan Treue**  
German Primate Center,  
Goettingen, Germany



**Dr. med. vet. Cornelia Exner**  
Animal Welfare Officer  
Philipps University of  
Marburg, Germany



**PD Dr. Aimée Zuniga**  
Department of  
Biomedicine, University  
of Basel, Basel,  
Switzerland



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



**Prof. Dr. Nuno Franco**  
Institute for Molecular  
and Cell Biology,  
University of Porto  
Porto, Portugal



**Servan Grüninger**  
PhD Student, President &  
Co-founder of Reatch,  
Zurich, Switzerland

# Facts & figures about Animal Research Tomorrow

## Members of ART

Individual Members: 270  
Institutional Members: 17

## Signers of the Basel Declaration

Individual Signers: 4766  
Institutional Signers: 60

## Ambassadors

183

## Twitter

In April 2013 we started a Twitter account under the username @BaselDec. Currently we count 949 followers.

## PayPal

Since the summer of 2013, PayPal has been installed on the Basel Declaration Website. This significantly simplifies the process of paying membership fees by our members from around the world. Since November 2015 there is the possibility to transfer fees and donations in EUR, USD or CHF.

## Become a member

We look for your support to show publicly that we are committed to the 3R principles (Replace, Reduce, Refine), i.e., plan and carry out animal testing in your area of expertise with the utmost care, and contribute to providing the public 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:

For individuals  
CHF \$ 50 | €45 | £40

[LINK](#)



For institutions / organizations  
CHF \$ 500 | €450 | £400

[LINK](#)



Or you can become a Signer and you just sign the Basel Declaration – free of charge

[LINK](#)

## Sponsors

interpharmaph



NOVARTIS

# Animal Research Tomorrow

## IMPRESSUM/CONTACT:

Animal Research Tomorrow  
4000 Basel  
Switzerland

+41 78 933 04 76  
[www.animalresearchtomorrow.org](http://www.animalresearchtomorrow.org)  
[contact@animalresearchtomorrow.org](mailto:contact@animalresearchtomorrow.org)

© Copyright 2021, Animal Research  
Tomorrow, Basel, Switzerland; all  
rights reserved

