

To *ecopa* General Assembly

19th November 2020

ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020

ecopa is an international not-for-profit association with its own statutes to rule main activities and functioning. *ecopa* represents, as a minimum, all the following pillars:

1. Government and regulatory authorities
2. Academia
3. Industry
4. Animal protection and welfare organisations

The primary aim of *ecopa* is to promote use of “the three Rs” (*Replacement, Reduction, Refinement*) in animal research in Europe.

In the end of 2020 following parties are under the umbrella of *ecopa*:

NCPs (National Contact Points), full membership

- **Fincopa** – Finnish National Consensus Platform for Alternatives
- **Francopa** - French Platform for the Development of Alternative Methods in Testing
- **IPAM** - Italian Platform on Alternative Methods
- **Norecopa** - Norway’s Consensus-Platform for Replacement, Reduction and Refinement of Animal Experiments
- **REMA** – Spanish Network for the Development of Alternative Methods
- **SET**: Stiftung zur Förderung der Erforschung von Ersatz- und Ergänzungsmethoden zur Einschränkung von Tierversuchen
- **3RCC** - Swiss 3R Competence Centre

Associate members (one of the four pillars is not represented)

- **RepRefRed Society** (Gesellschaft zur Förderung von alternativen Biomodellen) Austria
- **Trinity College**, Dublin, Ireland
- **ROCAM**, (Romanian Center for Alternative Test Methods) Romania

Personal members

- Philippe Vanparys
- Luisa Bastos
- Joseph-Paul Beaufays
- Lisbeth Knudsen

Latest General Assembly –November 2019 in Rome

Finalised minutes are available in Annex I

Board Meetings by teleconference

— 21/02/2019	— 28/05/2020
— 29/05/2019	— 27/10/2020
— 25/10/2019	— 13/11/2020

The finalised minutes of the board meetings are available upon request and readable during the general assembly.

In addition to the board meetings, during the year many discussions took place by emails

Members of the board in November 2020

	Deputy
Academia	
Tuula Heinonen (FI) (Vice-President)	Joseph-Paul Beaufays (BE)
Industry	
Valeria Castagna (IT)	Costanza Rovida (IT)
Animal Welfare	
Kristina Wagner (D)	Marianna Norring (FI)
Government	
Philippe Hubert (FR, President)	Stefano Lorenzetti (IT)
Secretary	
Costanza Rovida (IT)	Kristine Wagner (D)
Treasurer	
Philippe Vanparys (BE)	Luisa Bastos (BE)

The 2020 General Assembly elects the new board, as well as the new President, vice President and secretary. The treasurer and deputy treasurers will be appointed by the General Assembly, as they must be resident in Belgium. The board members must be associated to *ecopa*, through the National Platforms or as associate or personal members.

IPAM-ecopa Workshop, Rome 7-8 Nov 2019

The workshop was about: “Non-Animal Methodologies (NAMs): research, testing, assessment and applications”. Full report was published in ALTEX¹.

ecopa funding activities

EUROTOX 2019: *ecopa* best poster award, including 500 EUR and 1 year (2020) free ESTIV membership, to a PhD student or young scientist (≤ 35 years old): the winner was Tim Allen, University of Cambridge, presenting the poster: “Gaining insight into toxicity predicting machine learning algorithms”.

IPAM-ecopa Workshop: *ecopa* best poster award of 500 EUR to Beatrice Battistini as first author of the poster: “Preliminary assessment of nanoparticles in tattoo ink. In vitro and ex-vivo approaches”.

¹ ALTEX 37(2), 317-320. doi:10.14573/altex.2003041

WC11, 11th World Congress on Alternatives and Animal Use in the Life Sciences 2021”: 500 EUR *ecopa* best poster award to a PhD student or young scientist (\leq 35 years old). It should have been in August 2020 and it is now postponed to 22-26 August 2021.

***ecopa* website**

The *ecopa* website was completely updated, thanks to the contribution by A. Smith, from Norecopa.

CAAT walk and ALTEX

CAAT walk represents a valuable tool to disseminate *ecopa* events and news, including those coming from national platforms or associate members.

Publication in ALTEX is not free of charge, but represents an opportunity to publish workshop reports and any other scientific contributions, as is the example of the 2019 IPAM-*ecopa* Workshop.

Promotional Tools

Promotional tools are necessary to increase *ecopa*'s visibility. There was a flier distributed during many events occurring in the period 2019-2020, such as EUROTOX 2019, EU-ToxRisk meetings, ESTAF meetings, etc. There was also a poster presenting the *ecopa* activities.

This flier is no more available and the new printouts will be renovated with the contribution of the new board.

***Ecopa* as member of institutional organisations**

This is by far the most demanding activity, being *ecopa* stakeholder at:

- ESTAF, EURL-ECVAM stakeholder Forum
- ECHA, the European Chemicals Agency
- EFSA, the European Food Safety Authority

In addition to the possibility of participating in stakeholders and other meetings, this opportunity included:

- Comments on the revision of Regulation 528/2012 concerning the making available on the market and use of biocidal products
- Participation in the ESTAF ICATAM meeting (22/10/2019)
- Invitation to talk on endocrine disruptors at the EFSA NGO meeting (12/02/2019)
- Participation in the ECHA working group on nanomaterials
- 17-18/10/2019 EFSA Stakeholder forum
- Admitted as observer at the CARACAL (Competent Authorities for REACH and CLP) meetings

Participation in other events:

C. Rovida, as representative of *ecopa* was invited at the Biocides Symposium 2019 organised by Chemical Watch to talk about: “Application of New Approach Methodologies (NAMs) in the definition of endocrine disruptor properties of biocide substances”

Annex I

***ecopa* ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING 2019**

Time: 8th November 2019

Venue: Istituto Superiore di Sanità, Roma

Participants with right to vote:

- Stefano Lorenzetti, ISS, SLO
- Philippe Hubert INERIS, President, PHU
- Tuula Heinonen FINCOPA, vice President, THE
- Costanza Rovida CAAT Europe, Secretary CRO
- Philippe Vanparys GENTOXICON, Treasurer, PVA (from 16:30)
- Luisa Bastos – Eurogroup for Animals, vice Treasurer, LBA (until 16:30)
- Isabella De Angelis, ISS IPAM, IDE

Excused:

- Adrian Smith, Norecopa ASM
- Valeria Castagna, Merck
- Chantra Eskes, Swiss 3R
- Kristina Wagner, (animal protection and welfare organisations)

1. Approval of the agenda

The agenda was approved.

2. Election of the Chairperson and Secretary for the Assembly

Chairperson: SLO, Secretary: PHU

3. Election of two keepers of the minutes

Minutes keepers: CRO and IDE

4. The Board's annual report – communication by the President

The *ecopa*-IPAM symposium was very well organised and interesting. During the 2019, *ecopa* assigned two poster awards: during EURTOX 2019 and at the *ecopa*-IPAM symposium. These awards contributed in the positive visibility of *ecopa* and in the dissemination of non-animal experiments.

Another important issue is the presence of *ecopa* as stakeholder at ECHA and EFSA as well as EURL-ECVAM.

Regarding other actions decided during the previous General assembly, the admission of the Turkish platform is postponed. PVA should have received all the data for the registration of *ecopa* according to the Belgium law.

As an action for the future, it is important to improve the coordination with the National Platforms.

The next General Assembly will take place during the WC11 in Maastricht.

5. The accounts and Auditor's report

The presentation of the treasurer is in the attachment (Attachment #1). There is nothing irregular. The total exits for 2019 will be higher because in 2019 it does not consider the latest award and the reimbursement to the *ecopa* board members participating in the general assembly.

There is the proposal to nominate LBA as treasurer because she can be more present at meetings, and keep PVA as deputy. However, the treasurer has to know the Belgium legislation so it was decided to keep it as it is.

6. Report from National platforms

FRANCOPA was invited to participate in a new 3R Centre. It is mainly composed by veterinarians so it is not really focused on replacement. FRANCOPA is participating in a committee for the validation of new methods on endocrine disruptors. Not specifically in vitro, but in practice it will be mainly in vitro. The total founding is 4 million Euro per year, for a minimum of 4 years. It is not too much, considering the costs involved in the validation process; nevertheless it represents an important opportunity for FRANCOPA

NORECOPA was not present, but ASM shared a presentation. ASM from NORECOPA asks the National Platform to translate the ARRIVE guidelines.

IPAM organised a workshop with ECM credits ... (Isabella, please complete)

There is the IPAM-Farindustria prize. IPAM was present in a workshop organised by the 3Rs Centres and it was also present at a roundtable. IPAM is also stakeholder at the working table of the Italian Minister of Health.

Italy there is a 3Rs Centre that can collaborate with IPAM. The board of IPAM will discuss about it.

FINCOPA organised a workshop on refinement end of May. FINCOPA will be also present at the event "Strategies for Innovations in Life Sciences" organised on the 3rd December at the European Parliament. CRO will be at the same event and can represent *ecopa*. Members of FINCOPA are actively participating in various national committees.

7. *ecopa*'s Activity plan for the coming period (Strategy) – in and out of funding

In general, *ecopa* suffers for a lack of participation of the National Platforms. SLO proposes to have the Annual Symposium organised by all National Platforms together. LBA was asked to organise a satellite meeting at the EUSAAT. This is also another opportunity.

The proposal is to discuss the most effective action during the next general Assembly that will occur during the WC11

We should redefine the role of *ecopa* which is to join forces that are not supposed to talk to each other, like developers and users. This is more or less what happened during the *ecopa*-IPAM Symposium in Rome. The need is also to combine the position of those who are defending the environment asking for new in vivo tests and animal welfare organisations.

ecopa is supposed to be an umbrella organisation. We should understand why the National Platforms are losing interests. The 3Rs Centres are generally different and *ecopa* is not redundant in this sense.

8. Dissemination strategy

ASM will go on taking care of the website. For the moment, this is the only way. *ecopa* should have a good Facebook and LinkedIn pages, but there is no one who can take care.

In order to improve the visibility of *ecopa*, each website of the NPs should contain the links to the other national platforms.

The *ecopa* fliers are finished. We need to print additional fliers and we may consider changing the layout. We will discuss if we need to modify the layout.

9. Position Paper from Francopa

PHU will distribute the latest version (Done, attachment #2)

10. WC11 and next General Assembly

The poster award for WC11 is approved for the best projected presented by a young researcher on a theme related to non animal methods. The problem is that there will be really many submissions and the selection can be cumbersome. We need to share the task. Maybe we could also decide for a specific topic.

Next year other important congresses will take place: EUROTOX 2020 and ESTIV 2020. We should consider if *ecopa* can afford a poster award for each of them.

Another proposal is to submit a poster on behalf of *ecopa*. This topic will be discussed during the next board meeting.

11. AOB

The discussion was on the possible participation of *ecopa* in European Projects. *ecopa* may participate in the advisory board of a call or in general in the scientific committee. Regarding the possible participation as partner, the problem is that a representative should sign NDA. *ecopa* has to share the information within the board and this is unacceptable. Legally speaking, it is possible, but the administrative management can be too difficult for such a small organisation as is *ecopa*.

Action: PVA will ask Vera Rogiers how to do that, if it is manageable in practice.

There is a network of the European 3Rs Centres. Luisa is asking if she can participate on behalf of *ecopa*.

Action: LBA will take care

The mandate of the current board members should expire at the end of 2019. Due to the fact that very few members are participating in this General Assembly, it was decided to postpone the election of the new board during the next General Assembly.

12. End of meeting

The meeting started at 15:00 and it was closed at 17:00