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EDITORIAL: Launching the new *ecopa* website and newsletter

Costanza ROVIDA, *ecopa* President - info@ecopa.eu

This is the beginning of a new era for *ecopa*! I strongly believe that *ecopa* has an important role in the scientific environment, which is evolving from traditional toxicology, based on the animal models, towards a more advanced approach that is focused on biological pathways assessed on human based models.

The role of *ecopa* in this scenario is multifaceted. First of all, the strength of *ecopa* is based on the four pillars: Academia, Industry, Animal Welfare and Government. Each of them faces the transition to go beyond the use of animals in science from a different perspective. The authority still asks for animal tests that are requested in many regulations while animal welfare organizations strive for an immediate ban. Academia is in between with research groups that are moving fast in the area of NAMs (New Approach Methodologies) and other teams linked to traditional methods. Industry is in between, asking for

reliable and efficient methods for the assessments of chemicals or drugs. In this scenario, *ecopa* offers the opportunity of a platform where stakeholders from the four pillars can discuss and find a consensus following the principle of the 3Rs: Replacement, Reduction, and Refinement.

Another important aspect is that *ecopa* represents an umbrella joining the National Platforms, each of them based on the principle of the four pillars. Through *ecopa*, the National Platforms have a dialogue where they can learn from each other and share their experiences.

In the latest years, our activity faced unprecedented difficulties. That's why we decided to do something to booster our mission and improve our potential. The first step was the renewing of the website (<https://ecopa.eu>).

It is not only a matter of makeup, rather a substantial change in the principle. The website is now the forum to collect ideas and share initiatives.

In this context, we decided to complement it with an *ecopa* newsletter that will be quarterly and will contain the list of most relevant events and news. In rotation, each issue will have a page dedicated to special announcement from one of the National Platform.

I really hope that you are appreciating this initiative and you will enjoy staying with us along this exciting scientific era!

Welcome on board!

ecopa Board Members 2020-22

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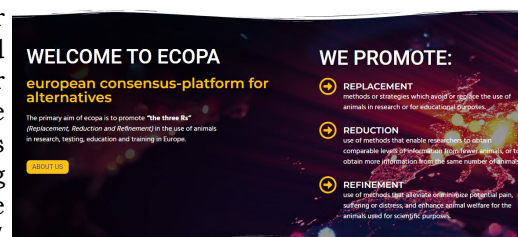
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ecopa strives for consensus between all four stakeholders

HIGHLIGHTS: the PEPPER initiative

PEPPER is a French Public-Private platform for the pre-validation of endocrine disrupter characterisation methods, that has been launched in 2019.

The PEPPER platform is looking for methods to be presented for selection to its Relevance Committee. PEPPER focuses on test methods participating to the characterisation of endocrine disrupters.

Methods allowing the identification of an endocrine mode of action (MoA), an endocrine-related adverse outcome (AO), or linking a MoA to an AO are in the scope of PEPPER. In silico methods or long term in vivo ones will not be considered for this exercise.

The criteria for a potential selection of a test method are:

- developed in Europe;
- be mature enough, which includes having an established protocol (ideally a Standard Operating Procedure), and available historical data;
- responding to an identified need (with regard to regulatory identification of EDs);
- its potential integration into a testing strategy/integrated approach to testing and assessment should have been considered¹;
- having a positive impact on 3Rs;
- likely to be accepted by international institutions (such as the OECD);
- being applicable easily in many labs (*i.e.* not requiring a very specific/expensive type of equipment)
- the method developer need to be willing to engage into a pre-validation exercise (including human resources to dedicate to the project)²
- no legal obstacle to a broad use of the method should exist

A template to describe the method is provided at the PEPPER website.

Alternatively, the method can be described using a template such as the OECD Guidance Document 2113, or the ToxTemp (described in Krebs et al 2019, ALTEX 36(4), 2019).

Exclusion criteria are:

- ♦ method covering pathways or endpoints which are already covered by standardised methods

such as OECD or US EPA Test Guidelines;

- ♦ methods which are already ongoing validation elsewhere.

Please send your method description (or your questions) to: elise.grignard@ed-pepper.eu or philippe.hubert@ed-pepper.eu



¹ However, a testing strategy or IATA does not need to be submitted

² PEPPER will provide financial support, but the developer need to be aware that a pre-validation requires time to test substances, answer questions from PEPPER/participating labs, draft/modify the SOP, gather historical data

³ <https://ntp.niehs.nih.gov/iccvam/suppdocs/feddocus/oced/oced-gd211-2014-508.pdf>

To know more about: [Call for submissions – L'association Pepper \(ed-pepper.eu\)](#)

MEETINGS and *ecopa* awards



ICT 2022

The XVIth International Congress of Toxicology (**ICT2022**) will take place in Maastricht, the Netherlands (NL), **from September 18th to September 21st, 2022** at the Maastricht Exposition and Conference Centre (MECC). This congress is jointly organized by the International Union of Toxicology (IUTOX) and the European Society of Toxicology (EUROTOX).

Congress' theme will be 'Uniting in Toxicology'. Foreseen plenary lectures include: Jos Kleinjans (Maastricht University, NL) "Of genes and the environment, two decades of toxicogenomics"; Helena Kandarova (Slovak Academy of Science, SK) "Reconstructed human 3D tissue models in toxicology: from initial idea to the regulatory acceptance".

To know more about: [ICT 2022 – XVIth International Congress of Toxicology](#)

An **ecopa award** will be granted to the best contribution of a young scientist presenting research on the 3Rs, and more specifically towards New Approach Methods (NAMs) without animal testing. **Further info:** [Awards & Bursaries – ICT 2022](#)



EUSAAT 2022

The 23rd **EUSAAT** (European Society for Alternatives to Animal Testing — The 3Rs Society) **Congress 2022** will take place **from September 26th to September 28th, 2022** at the University of Linz, Austria (AT).

Congress' topics will cover each R (Replacement, Refinement, Reduction). Foreseen keynote lectures include: Susanna Louhimies (European Commission) "Development of the 3Rs field in Europe"; Merel Ritskes-Hoitinga (University of Utrecht, NL) "Evidence-based transition to animal-free innovations: let's make it happen!"; Sasha Mendjan (IMBA, AUT) "Cardioids unravel human heart development and defects".

To know more about: [Congress 2022 - EUSAAT](#)

Two **ecopa awards** will be granted to the **best contributions of young scientists presenting research on the 3Rs, and more specifically towards New Approach Methods (NAMs) without animal testing.** **Further info:**



ESTIV 2022

The 21st International Congress of the European Society of Toxicology *In Vitro* (**ESTIV 2022**) will take place in Barcelona-Sitges, Spain (E), **from November 21st to November 25th, 2022** at the Meliá Sitges.

The ESTIV congress will have a pre-congress workshop on *bridging across methods in the biosciences (BeAMS): the opportunity of COVID-19* organised jointly with the JRC.

The scientific programme offers currently 15 scientific sessions, lunch sessions hosted by ILSI/ESTIV and JSAASE and a post-congress workshop organised by EPISKIN Academy.

The ASPIS annual cluster meeting will be a satellite activity open to the public and will present the latest research of the three H2020 consortia (ONTOX, PrecisionTOX and RISKHUNT3R) focusing on NAMs.

To know more about: [ESTIV Congress | European Society of Toxicology In Vitro](#)

An **ecopa award** will be granted to the best contribution (poster or oral presentation) related to the 3Rs' mission of *ecopa* and which is outstanding in the area of New Approach Methodologies (NAMs), either as original research topic or dissemination of the principles. **Further info:** [Awards | European Society of Toxicology In Vitro \(estiv.org\)](#)



Next *ecopa* EVENTS and meetings of interest

- ◆ *ecopa* General Assembly, Brussels, Belgium (B), December 8th, 2022 hosted by Eurogroup for Animals, [Eurogroup for Animals](#)
- ◆ 62nd Society of Toxicology (SOT) meeting, Nashville, Tennessee (USA), March 19th-23rd, 2023 [2023 SOT Annual Meeting \(toxicology.org\)](#)
- ◆ 12th World Congress on Alternatives and Animal Use in the Life Sciences (WC12), August 27th-31st, 2023, Niagara Falls, Canada, [WC12 Canada | August 27-31, 2023 | Niagara Falls](#)

ecopa MEMBERSHIPS

ecopa FULL MEMBERS

[Swiss 3R Competence Centre – *ecopa*](#) – Swiss 3Rs Competence Center

[Fincopa – *ecopa*](#) – Finnish National Consensus Platform for Alternatives

[Francopa](#) – French Platform for the Development of Alternative Methods in Testing ([description](#))

[IPAM](#) – Italian Platform on Alternative Methods ([Facebook page](#))

[Norecopa](#) – Norway's Consensus-Platform for Replacement, Reduction and Refinement of Animal Experiments

[REMA](#) – Spanish Network for the Development of Alternative Methods

[SET](#) – German Foundation for the Promotion of Alternate and Complementary Methods to Reduce Animal Testing

ecopa ASSOCIATED MEMBERS

[ROCAM](#) – Romanian Center for Alternative Test Methods

Trinity College Dublin

RepRefRed

ecopa PERSONAL MEMBERSHIP

Besides national platform, *ecopa* has also Institutions and Personal Members.

[Please contact us](#) if you wish to join *ecopa*.

CONTACT US



<https://www.ecopa.eu/>



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ecopa - european consensus-platform
for alternatives