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Brussels region finances VUB research into alternatives to animal experiments

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By **Alan Hope**



The Brussels regional government has approved a grant of €110,000 for research into alternatives to experimentation on

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The Free University of Brussels (VUB) has a long history of carrying out research into alternatives to animal experimentation, and is considered a reference point in the sector, Clerfayt's department said announcing the decision on Sunday.

“To support this, the Brussels Region previously financed the Re-Place project, which drew up an inventory of all alternative methods for animal testing” the department said. “Now inventory needs to be promoted and publicised, and the alternatives to animal testing must be publicised.” That part of the grant amounts to €50,000.

Along those lines, VUB researchers are currently investigating the possibility of using in-vitro models for toxicological research, which would not use living animals at all. Instead, the tests would be carried out on cultures of human cells. The ultimate aim of that

This research receives a grant of €60,000.

“Science has evolved and has provided alternatives that do not involve laboratory animals, are based on human cells and which produce more relevant results for humans,” Clerfayt said.

In many cases, tests on animals are not entirely suitable to determine the results on humans, but are nevertheless seen as the only acceptable alternative to tests on humans.

“So it is fundamental that these kinds of method can be developed. And even if in certain cases animal experiments remain a necessary evil, we must keep in mind the objective of drastically reducing their numbers,” he said.

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