

EU says too soon for animal testing ban

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The EU pledged Wednesday to phase out animal testing in Europe but said it would be "premature" to ban it outright as demanded by a petition with 1.1 million names.

The European Commission, the executive arm of the 28-nation European Union, received the petition in March from Stop Vivisection, a European citizens' initiative.

"Thanks to major technological advances, Europe is reducing the use of

animal testing," European Commission Vice-President Jyrki Katainen said in a statement.

"However, a complete ban on [animal research](#) in the EU would be premature and it would risk chasing out biomedical research from Europe," added the vice president for jobs, growth, investment and competitiveness.

EU Environment Commissioner Karmenu Vella said Brussels was responding to the citizens' initiative by "taking a number of actions to enable faster progress in the uptake and use of alternative approaches" to animal testing.

Vella stressed: "The ultimate aim of EU legislation is to phase out all [animal testing](#)".

The commission statement said some animal studies are "still needed to advance research and to safeguard human, animal and environmental health" despite technological breakthroughs.

The campaigners oppose a 2010 EU law which allows animal tests but says they should be replaced by other methods where possible and that suffering should be kept to a minimum.

Instead, the group wants an outright ban on animal experimentation.

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