

Update on the EU directive and Council of Europe Convention

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The Council of Europe seat is in Strasbourg and it is **not** part of the EU system. Any European country may ratify Council of Europe conventions. The most well known convention, the one on human rights, is actually ratified by 47 European countries. Many of the conventions are also open to signature by countries outside of Europe. This is the case for all of the animal welfare conventions. So in some cases the conventions are in fact international treaties. In addition it is also possible for organisations to sign certain conventions whereby it is possible to reach an agreement between all of the parties involved.

The convention on the protection of animals used for experimentation has been ratified by 20 countries and in addition by the EU. As the convention sets minimum requirements, the EU must adhere to these minimum requirements. All ratifying countries are however permitted to adopt stricter rules to ensure the welfare of the animals used in procedures. It is therefore noticeable that a lot of the phrasing in the proposal for a new EU directive is similar to the convention but there are also some gains to animal welfare so far. Whether the directive will ensure a better welfare remains to be seen as the political discussions in EU are by now means over and the proposed text may be altered quite a lot.