

Education & Training Provision in Laboratory Animal Science in the EU

Results of a survey carried out by the EU Platform for Education & Training in Laboratory Animal Science, August 2013

Introduction

Organised by the European Commission, an Expert Working Group (EWG) on Education and Training (E&T) has developed (non-binding) guidelines regarding the minimum education and training standards for laboratory animal science personnel within different functions under Directive 2010/63/EU Art. 23(2). As a result, a modular training concept, based on learning outcomes, has been endorsed by National Contact Points (NCPs) from the Member States to establish training of agreed quality and to facilitate harmonisation of LAS E&T programs and thus free movement of personnel.

While Education and Training under the Directive is of the Member States competence, harmonisation and mutual recognition of training programs are important assets for pan-European scientific exchange and mobility of personnel. For this reason, a dedicated EU Platform was proposed to the NCPs to follow up on the work of the EWG. Representatives from Member States, course providers and accrediting bodies discussed the formation of a European Platform on Education and Training to provide assurance on the quality of education and training across the EU and agreed to progress its formation on a voluntary basis.

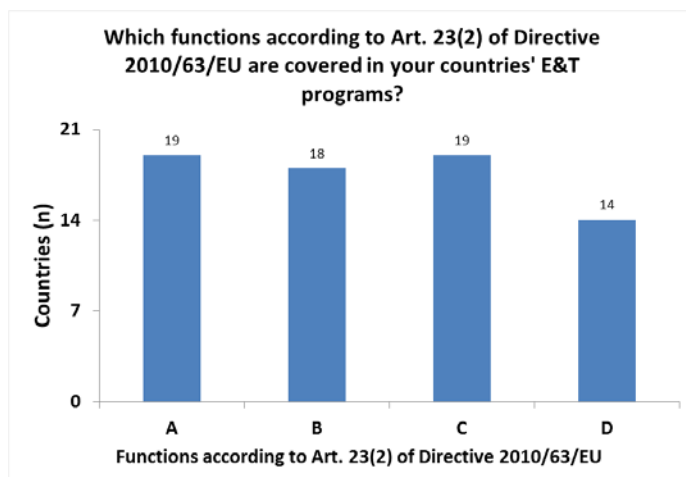
The proposed scope of the Platform is to help facilitate mutual recognition of LAS education and training within the MS as well as to provide confidence that mechanisms are in place to ensure its quality. It will guide course providers and accreditors to implement and promote E&T concepts of agreed quality. In this context, the platform will also disseminate information on available LAS courses as well as relevant information on new developments in E&T in LAS thus contributing to the concept of the 3Rs by making information centrally available.

Acknowledging the differences between Member States, it is crucial to determine a picture of the present situation on LAS E&T programs and accreditation or approval processes at the European Member State level. For the purpose of the Platform, it will be important to have contact details of approvers/accreditors as well as information on course organisers to ensure appropriate representation within the Platform and its Steering Committee. In order to conduct this situation analysis, a questionnaire was distributed to the Competent Authorities (CA) of Member States via their National Contact Points and to National Laboratory Animal Associations via FELASA.

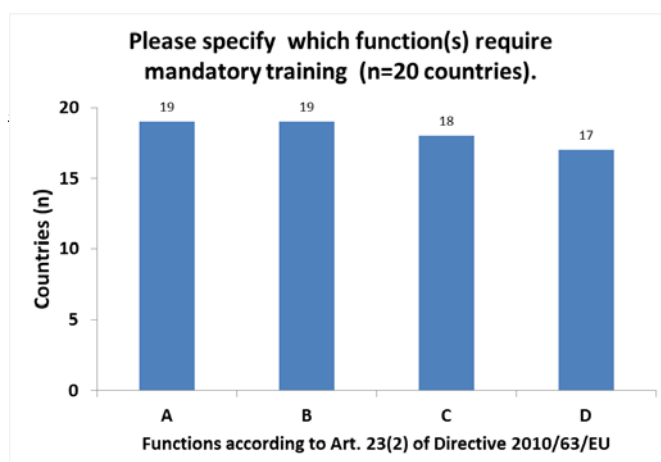
The results from this questionnaire are presented in this report. It should be noted that the data is illustrative of the situation mid 2013 during the period when Member States were continuing to implement the E & T requirements of the Directive.

Summary of Results

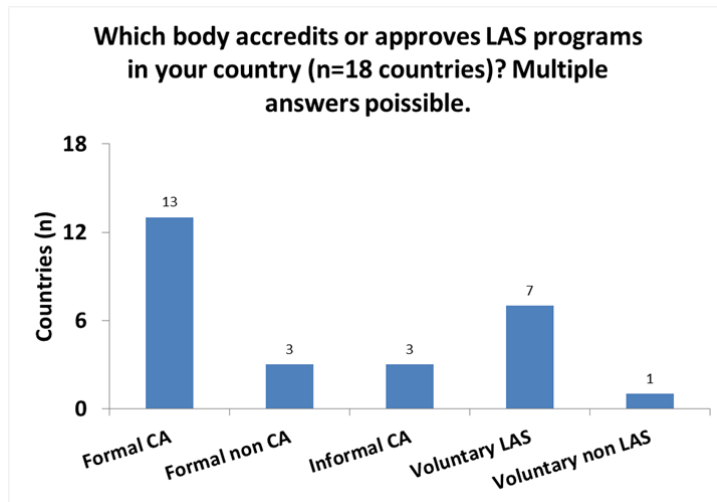
1. The response rate to the questionnaire was very high with returns from 23 Member States/Competent Authorities and 12 Laboratory Animal Science Associations. In total, analysis was possible for 25 countries. Except for two instances, where answers were provided by LAS Associations alone, the results represent answers from Member State representatives (NCP or CA).
2. Support for the EU Platform was unanimous. There were many suggestions for further activities beyond the initial scope (see Annex 2).
3. A total of 21 Member States have E & T courses in laboratory animal science in place and 2 are in preparation (Latvia and Slovak Republic). There are no laboratory animal facilities in Luxembourg or Cyprus. No data were available for Malta, Bulgaria or Poland.
4. Most E & T requirements are for Functions A (carrying out procedures), B (designing procedures and projects) and C (caring for animals). In many countries, Function D is not considered a separate Function.



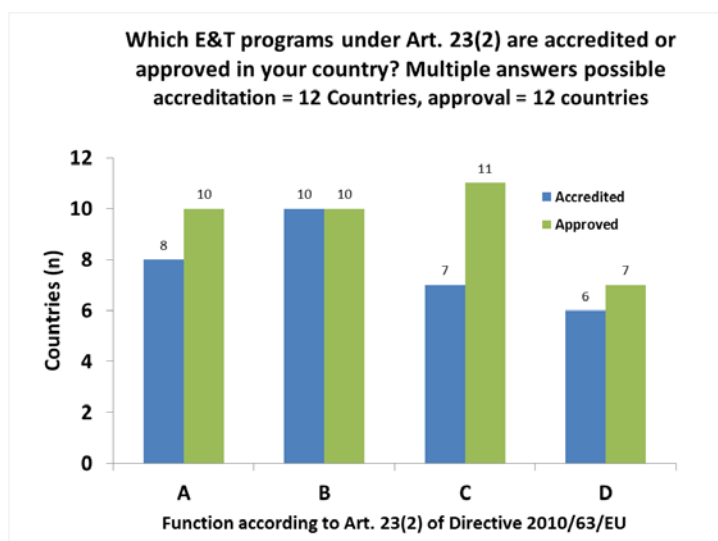
5. Most of these countries have a mandatory requirement for E & T. Exceptions were Greece, Romania and Italy.



6. 18 countries have some form of approval/accreditation process in place. Exceptions were Greece, Latvia, Romania, Austria and Hungary.



7. Accreditation or approval procedures were carried out in a variety of ways. (blue = accreditation, green = approval)



8. There is confusion over the definition of the terms approval and accreditation.

Analysis of the questionnaire

A detailed analysis of the information received in the questionnaires is presented in Annex 1 (questions 1 to 8) and Annex 2 (question 9).

Except for two instances, where answers were provided by LAS Associations alone, the results represent answers from Member State representatives (NCP or CA). The data show some inconsistencies between questions but reflect the responses provided.

Annex 1: Detailed analysis of questionnaire

Q1 Do you have E & T programs in Laboratory Animal Science in your country?

23 countries responded to already have LAS E&T in their country or to have E&T programs in preparation

- 20 have some LAS E&T in place
- 1 has E&T in place and in preparation (EST, not further specified which)
- 2 have E&T programs in preparation (LVA/SVK)

Answers came from

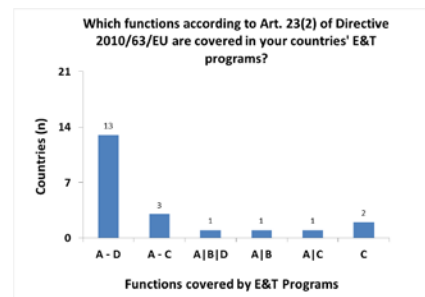
13 MS AUT|BEL|CZE|DEU|ESP|EST|FIN|HUN|IRE|ITA|LVA|NLD|SVN
 5 MS/CA DNK| GBR|HRV|PRT|SVK
 3 CA FRA|LTU|SWE
 2 LAS GRC|ROU

Total:

- 21 answers from people representing MS
- 2 answers from LAS organisation

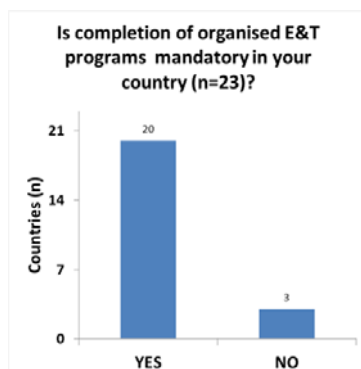
Q2 If YES, which functions according to Art. 23(2) of Directive 2010/63/EU are covered?

Function A - D		Function A - C		Function A, B & D		Function A & B		Function A & C		Function C	
13		3		1		1		1		2	
C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R
BEL	MS	HUN	MS	EST	MS	ITA	MS	GRC	LAS	AUT	MS
CZE	MS	NLD	MS							ROU	LAS
DEU	MS	SVN	MS								
DNK	MS/CA										
ESP	MS										
FIN	MS										
FRA	MS/CA										
GBR	MS/CA										
HRV	MS/CA										
IRE	MS										
LTU	CA										
PRT	MS/CAC										
SWE	A										



C = Country; R = Respondent

Q3 Is completion of organised E&T programs mandatory in your country?



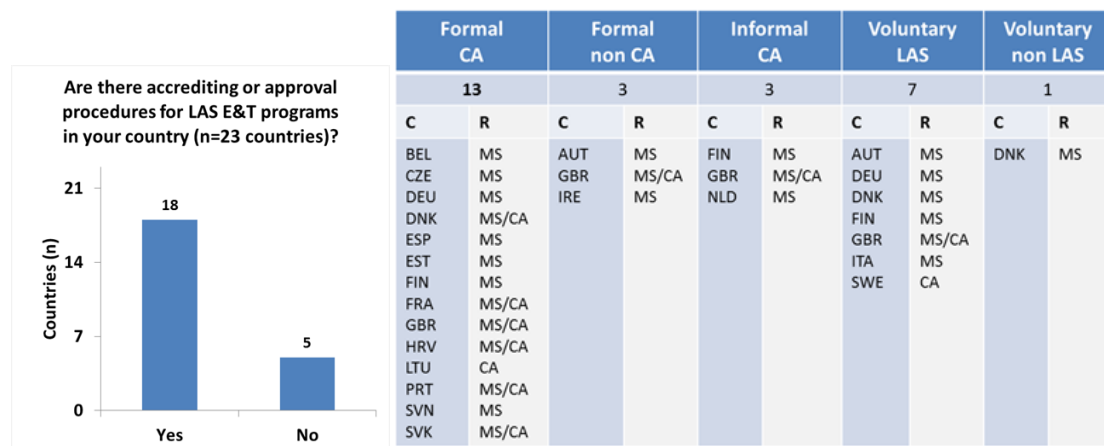
Q4 If YES please specify for which function(s) according to Art. 23

Function A - D		Function A - C		Function A, B & D		Function C	
15		2		2		1	
C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R
BEL	MS	NLD	MS	EST	MS	AUT	MS
CZE	MS	SVN	MS	GBR	MS/CA		
DEU	MS						
DNK	MS/CA						
ESP	MS						
FIN	MS						
FRA	MS/CA						
HRV	MS/CA						
HUN	MS						
IRE	MS						
LTU	CA						
LVA	MS						
PRT	MS/CA						
SVK	MS/CA						
SWE	CA						



Q5 Are there accrediting or approval procedures for LAS E&T programs in your country?

Q6 If YES, please specify by which "process" or body (multiple answers possible)



Formal CA		Formal non CA		Informal CA		Voluntary LAS		Voluntary non LAS	
13		3		3		7		1	
C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R
BEL	MS	AUT	MS	FIN	MS	AUT	MS	DNK	MS
CZE	MS	GBR	MS/CA	GBR	MS/CA	DEU	MS		
DEU	MS	IRE	MS	NLD	MS	DNK	MS		
DNK	MS/CA					FIN	MS		
ESP	MS					GBR	MS/CA		
EST	MS					ITA	MS		
FIN	MS					SWE	CA		
FRA	MS/CA								
GBR	MS/CA								
HRV	MS/CA								
LTU	CA								
PRT	MS/CA								
SVN	MS								
SVK	MS/CA								

Q7 Which E&T programs under Art. 23(2) are accredited or approved in your country?

blue: accreditation (n = 12 countries),
green = approval (n = 12 countries)

A - D		A & B		C & D		B		C		A - D		A - C		A & B		C	
5		3		1		2		1		7		2		1		2	
C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R
BEL	MS	GBR	MS/CA	DNK	MS	PRT	MS/CA	AUT	MS	CZE	MS	NLD	MS	DNK	MS	AUT	MS
CZE	MS	HUN	MS/CA			SWE	CA			ESP	MS	SVN	MS			GBR	MS
DEU	MS	ITA	LAS							FRA	MS/CA						CA
ESP	MS									FIN	MS						
SVK	MS/CA									HRV	MS/CA						
										LTU	CA						
										PRT	MS/CA						

Q8 Who provides (organised) LAS E&T in your country?

Multiple answers possible

Course provider	n	Country
Industry	8	DEU . DNK . ESP . FRA . GBR . GRC . HRV . SWE
Uni (curricular)	12	BEL . DEU . DNK . EST . FIN . FRA . GBR . HUN . LTU . NDL . ROU . SWE
Uni (extra curricular)	21	all, except ROU & SVK
LAS organisation	10	BEL . DNK . ESP . GBR . GRC . HUN . ITA . LVA . PRT . SWE
Commercial	6	DEU . ESP . GBR . GRC . PRT . SVK
Vocational	5	AUT . NLD . SVK . SWE
other	3	BEL . GBR . ITA

Annex 2: Additional Benefits of the Platform

Grouped answers to question 9

“Do you see other roles or have other expectations for the Platform, i.e. what benefits could the Platform have for you?”

Information resource

1. The Platform could have up-to-date book-keeping of education and courses in every member state.
2. Webpage with info about approved training organisers in each MS. This could be helpful if our scientist provides certificate issued by other training organised in other MS.
3. To disseminate LAS E&T initiatives, which could be good for course providers.
4. Platform could maintain and share LAS course calendars of member states.
5. Provide information on available courses and course providers.
6. In this context, the platform will also disseminate information on available LAS courses as well as relevant information on new developments in E&T in LAS thus contributing to the concept of the 3Rs by making information centrally available.
7. Providing contact information of LAS E&T providers for future reference.
8. To provide information to all possible candidates about the options/offers in terms of LAS E&T.
9. It would be a platform for sharing information, E&T programmes.
10. Sharing of information on courses.

Sharing information

1. Sharing of knowledge, and repository of data on course content, speakers, service providers etc.
2. Facilitate exchange of information on content of courses.
3. Sharing of tools for training and teaching materials.
4. The platform should collect and foster an exchange of relevant information related to LAS E&T.
5. There is also possibility to exchange the experience among the Member States.
6. Secondary objectives could be the exchange of information about training

methods: balance between e-learning and face to face, use of animals for teaching, etc.

7. We should also pay attention to the creation of systems 100% e-learning that may deviate from the spirit of the Directive where the purpose is to reach a level of skill and awareness with an adapted training.

Approval/Accreditation

1. Provide guidance on accreditation of local LAS E&T programs where necessary.
2. Provide information on how and by whom courses are accredited/approved.
3. Provide suggested criteria on accreditation/approval and minimum requirements on E&T.
4. The initial function of the Platform is of utter importance as all of us have to be confident with the quality of the courses that are provided all over the Member States.
5. Advise on criteria for LAS E&T accreditation.
6. It will guide course providers and accreditors to implement and promote E&T concepts of agreed quality.

Mutual recognition

1. Outcomes of the platform could also facilitate recognition by MS of non-EU countries' E&T programs.
2. The overarching benefit to the CA will be to facilitate movement of people between member states through mutual recognition of E&T of an acceptable quality and content.
3. Facilitate mutual recognition of LAS education and training within the MS
4. 'and mutual recognition'.

Harmonisation

1. The harmonization of the learning outcomes requirements is priority for this platform. It is also important to avoid having important differences, among European nations, in the mandatory length of the required programs.
2. To facilitate consistency of content and quality of training.
3. We support the work of the Platform and we consider it very useful the proposal to harmonise the training programmes across the EU. In our opinion the main benefit is that the programmes should be of the same level of quality
4. Agreed standards in LAS E&T and in conducting procedures.

5. General harmonization through transparency.

Additional education

1. Identify areas for specific training not available in standard category courses.
2. Promote availability for such training to help personnel to achieve specific competences.
3. To broaden the provision of formal courses in educational areas either not currently covered or covered by specialist courses.
4. but what I would put as my biggest expectation for the Platform is to help in the development (and recognition of quality) of LAS education and training programmes **directed for the other persons and functions that appear in the Directive 2010/63/EU**, such as the Designated veterinarian (article 25), Person responsible for overseeing the welfare and care of the animals in the establishment (article 24), Animal welfare Bodies (article 26), Inspectors (article 34), Project evaluators (article 38), etc.
5. Greater variety in LAS E&T Programmes e.g. courses for other species that are not available yet
6. Trainings for representatives of CA on organizing training programs and related questions.

Other items

1. Provide guidelines for CPD activities and how these meet requirements of CPD as mentioned in Directive (accreditation and/or approval).
2. Templates for course certificates.
3. To facilitate the revision of current modular course content to align more closely with Directive requirements.
4. A common platform will help us to carry out E & T pursuant to the requirements of Directive 2010/63/EU.
5. Recognised high quality education and training of those undertaking functions under our Act will increase national and international confidence in science from both quality and ethical viewpoints.
6. To enhance the quality and content of courses through input from a wider range of viewpoints and course providers.
7. This will enable in an easy way project evaluation, inspection and approval of the establishments of users, of suppliers and of breeders.
8. Through the Platform's recognition, all the trainees in our country, irrespective of their training provider (University, industry, etc.), will have training of a mutual quality and scientific depth/width.