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Italian Centro3Rs commitment: 1 year after the opening of the activities

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The Italian Centro3R was spearheaded by the Universities of Pisa and Genova back in March 2018, and today boasts some 300 members from Turin and of Milan Polytechnics, the Milan-Bicocca University and researchers from other universities, such as Pavia, Bologna and Padova who will shortly join this network.

The Centro3R represents a platform for the promotion of Russel and Burch's Principles of Reduction, Refinement and Replacement of animal use in scientific and teaching environments according to the European Union directive 2010/63/UE for the protection of animals used for scientific means [1]. Each of its 3R principles provides a responsible and conscious approach for biomedical research by firstly reducing the number of animals used in experiments, secondly, limiting any suffering by the animals, and thirdly to replace traditional animal-testing methods with alternative ones with equal or improved validity and translational value.

The Center is organized into Operating Units (OUs) (i.e. the Universities) and each OU works within its university to implement and organize degree courses on the 3Rs and foster the concept of humane research. The members possess a wide range of competence in disciplines such as pharmacology, engineering, law, biology, medicine and philosophy and these are shared on the website (www.centro3r.en) and in regular meetings, newsletters and active social media channels.

The 2nd Annual meeting "3Rs in Italian Universities", hosted by the Genoa OU, was generously supported by the Genoa University Rector on 20th-21st June of this year. There was an overwhelming response to the event: 3 weeks before the registration deadline, the event sold out with a record number of 110 participants. Besides the national interest in the 3Rs theme, the high level of response was also thanks to a packed programme including representatives from European and National institutions, as well as from Italian Ministers of Health, Education, University and Re-

search, and numerous scientists from the Centro3R UOs, and Research institutions and companies engaged in the field of innovative technologies and alternative methods. Two keynote speakers, Susanna Louhimies and Chantra Eskes, focused their speeches on Directive 2010/63/EU and on the 3Rs through research, education and communication implementation, respectively. The topics included: involvement of national/international institutions in 3R implementation; ethical and legal issues; *in silico* models; application of reduction and refinement in animal testing; disease models using human cells/tissues/organs; application of replacement in research and the commitment of Centro3R in University training. Moreover, to encourage the attendance of young scientists, two prizes were awarded for the best six abstracts and posters, and 30 young researchers presented their work. A roundtable on the role on Center 3R contributed to consolidating the scientific network on 3R teaching and research. The multi-disciplinary nature of the speeches was highly appreciated since it paved the way for synergic collaborations among the researchers. In conclusion, the conference attracted the interest of many researchers and the media who contributed to the dissemination of Centro3R's mission in promoting it as a point of reference for research and teaching resources in Italian academia and an invaluable platform for discussions.

Reference

- [1] Ahluwalia, A., Bassi, A. M. and Milazzo, P. (2018). *ALTEX* 35, 260-261. doi:10.14573/altex.1803201

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