**International symposium on innovative toxicological approaches with the participation of the OECD, ECHA and EFSA**

[**The Department of Food Safety and Nutrition**](https://bit.ly/mprvsr-obpv) **of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic (MARD SR) and** [**the Slovak Toxicological Society SETOX**](https://www.setox.eu/) **are organising a scientific symposium that will be held in May, to discuss the implementation of innovative and internationally recognized approaches to the toxicity assessment of substances that do not require animal testing. The event will bring together respected internationally renowned experts. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) will also provide experts to give lectures at the event.**

The symposium entitled „**[Dissemination and implementation of the OECD](https://www.setox.eu/oecd-efsa-supported-symposium)** [***in vitro* and *in silico* methods applicable to the safety and risk assessment of the chemicals, food and feed**](https://www.setox.eu/oecd-efsa-supported-symposium)” **will take place online on 24-25 May 2021**. The driving force behind the symposium is a need to disseminate current information on alternative methods and innovative approaches that reduce or completely replace the use of animals in toxicological studies. The clear **goal of the event is to increase the expert levels of science and research in the field of practical implementation of alternative methods listed in the official guidelines approved by the OECD**.

*„****Many of the tests****, that have been performed* ***on laboratory animals*** *for many years, can* ***today*** *be replaced with* ***innovative methods that do not use animals****.* ***These methods*** *are based, for example, on the* ***use of cell and tissue cultures*** *(so-called in vitro systems),* ***organoids on microfluidic chips,*** *even*  ***on advanced computer simulations and databases****. In most cases, these approaches are combined. They are also known as the alternative methods, although this term is becoming less common. Innovative strategies for the toxicity assessment of substances not only contribute to the* ***replacement of laboratory animals****, but ultimately also to* ***better protection of humans****,”* **explains Dr.rer.nat. Ing. Helena Kanďárová**, **ERT**, vice-president of the Slovak Toxicological Society SETOX and the professional guarantor of the symposium. She further adds:„*Institutions at the global, European and national levels are working hard to successfully put innovative toxicological methods into practice. As a result, animal testing is replaced or restricted in many current expertiments.* ***Progress in this area is advancing*** *at a rapid pace, and* ***therefore the scientific community****, as well as* ***authorities*** *responsible for the development and implementation of* ***regulatory standards****,* ***must be constantly informed about current events****.* ***This symposium will provide such information****."*

**The event will bring together top scientists from the** [**OECD**](http://www.oecd.org/chemicalsafety/)**, the European Chemicals Agency (**[**ECHA**](https://echa.europa.eu/sk/)**) and the European Food Safety Authority (**[**EFSA**](https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en)**) and the interested participants**. Experts from research and scientific institutions from Slovakia and neighboring countries will take part in the **discussions** on the use of alternative methods in Central and Eastern Europe.

„*We realize that theory is very important. And we consider it* ***especially beneficial, if theoretical knowledge is lined to work practice****. Therefore, we decided to dedicate* ***the second day of the symposium to practical demonstrations****. Participants will see how to work with OECD and EFSA software and databases. These can also be used for food and feed toxicity testing. Demonstration of work with* ***validated in vitro methods*** *and* ***practical demonstrations of in silico modeling will facilitate the correct interpretation of results****. We cordially invite all experts who work in this field or are interested in the topic, to attend this symposium*,” **closes MUDr. Katarína Kromerová**, currently designated **Director** **of the Department of Food Safety and Nutrition** of the MARD SR.

The international symposium **could be organised thanks to the financial contribution** within the co-financing of **joint projects of the Slovak Republic and the OECD, approved by the** [**Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic**](https://www.mzv.sk/)**, as well as by EFSA**, supporting the use of innovative approaches in food and feed toxicology.

**For more information**, an online **registration** form and instructions for submitting poster abstracts, **visit** [**the symposium website**](https://www.setox.eu/oecd-efsa-supported-symposium).

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**Department of Food Safety and Nutrition of the MPRV SR and the Slovak Toxicological Society SETOX**

[Department of Food Safety and Nutrition](https://bit.ly/mprvsr-obpv) of the MARD SR ensures the performance of the Slovak Focal Point for the Scientific and Technical Matters of the EFSA, and another 8 contact points with European and international scope. It also fulfills legislation-based responsibilities in the fields of official controls and placing the GMO food and feed on the market, and also organises national and international events focused on food safety in the agri-food chain.

[Slovak Toxicological Society SETOX](https://www.setox.eu/)  is a civic association of toxicologists, affiliated with the Slovak Academy of Sciences. SETOX organises national and international events in the field of toxicology, leads the [Slovak National Platform](https://www.snp3rs.com/) (SNP 3Rs) for the promotion of alternative methods and principles of 3R, and participates in the development of education of Slovak toxicologists, as well as in increasing their qualifications.