

AFSAAE NEWS

ESTIV 2026 Strengthens Europe-Asia Collaboration on NAMs

AFSAAE participation included regional reports, a silkworm NAM presentation, young-scientist awards, and the signing of the ESTIV-AFSAAE MoU.

Atsushi Miyashita | Teikyo University, Japan

The 23rd Congress of the European Society for Toxicology In Vitro (ESTIV 2026) was held in Maastricht, the Netherlands, from 29 June to 2 July 2026. Under the theme “Ensuring Safety, Advancing Science: Bridging to the Future with NAMs,” the congress featured active discussions on new approach methodologies (NAMs), regulatory acceptance, artificial intelligence, and international cooperation.



Representatives of ESTIV and AFSAAE mark the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding at ESTIV 2026 in Maastricht, the Netherlands. Image courtesy of Atsushi Miyashita.

A session organized by the Asian Federation of Societies for Alternatives to Animal Experiments (AFSAAE) reported on current activities across Asia. Yasuyuki Sakai introduced the work of AFSAAE and the Japanese Society for Alternatives to Animal Experiments (JSAAE). Atsushi Miyashita, a member of the JSAAE International Exchange Committee, introduced the Asian Federation Young Scientists Forum (AF-YSF). Vijay Pal Singh from India and Prasadi De Silva from Sri Lanka contributed prerecorded reports. Pang Yuan of Tsinghua University described activities in China, while Seokjoo Yoon of the Korea Institute of Toxicology introduced the Korean Society for Alternatives to Animal Experiments and the World Congress on Alternatives and Animal Use in the Life Sciences, scheduled to be held in Seoul in 2027. The session documented regional initiatives in research, training, and regulatory cooperation.

Early Stage Researcher Session 2 included a presentation by Atsushi Miyashita entitled “Silkworms as a Living NAM Bridging In Vitro Assays and Mammalian Testing.” The presentation introduced the silkworm infection model as a whole-organism system that can complement in vitro studies and mammalian testing. Because drug efficacy and toxicity can be evaluated at the individual level, this model may support both drug discovery and safety assessment.

During the congress, ESTIV and AFSAAE signed a Memorandum of Understanding. The agreement establishes a framework for continued cooperation between Europe and Asia in scientific exchange, capacity building, and the development and implementation of NAMs. It also supports the exchange of regional experience and the expansion of opportunities for young scientists.

At the closing ceremony, the JSAAE Best Oral Presentation Award was presented to Afaf Fizazi of the University of Mons, Belgium, and the JSAAE Best Poster Presentation Award was presented to Yejin Do of the Korea Institute of Toxicology and the University of Science and Technology, Republic of Korea. The awards recognized the achievements of early-career researchers at an international congress.

Presentations and discussions at ESTIV 2026 addressed the conditions required for the implementation of NAMs, including clear contexts of use, reproducibility, defined applicability domains, comparison with existing methods, and continuous dialogue with regulatory science. The ESTIV-AFSAAE MoU provides a formal basis for sharing evidence and expanding the participation of young researchers in international validation and standardization activities.