



Brussels, 11 April 2017

Dear Mr Barnier, dear Commissioner Andriukaitis,

Re: EMA relocation

The imminent relocation of the European Medicines Agency (EMA) is of great concern for patients and consumers across the EU. We are writing to you as BEUC (The European Consumer Organisation), EPF (European Patients' Forum) and EURORDIS-Rare Diseases Europe to offer the perspective of patients and consumers in Europe, based on our high level of engagement in the scientific and public information activities of the Agency and in the Management Board.

The EMA is a regulatory agency of world renown, meeting the highest international standards. EU citizens and patients are proud of its track record in ensuring the safety and efficacy of medicines and its ongoing commitment to involve patients and consumers meaningfully in its activities.

The role of the EMA is vital to the safeguarding of public health. In addition, it contributes significantly to the attractiveness of the EU for investment, clinical research, and innovation which not only benefits patients, but also wider society, through more employment and growth.

For these reasons, the decision on the future location of EMA is extremely critical, as it will impact on safeguarding the highest possible standards and rigour. Crucially, it should be taken as soon as possible to ensure minimal disruption and no delays – inter alia in the activities on pharmacovigilance and assessment of new medicines – that would impact negatively on the lives of EU citizens and patients.

We invite you to draw to the attention of the Council the need to be extremely vigilant in deciding on the optimal location. This should focus on practical and environment factors which will govern EMA's capacity to retain as many current expert staff members as possible, and attract and involve the best possible medical, scientific and civil society experts in future.

Pre-requisites for the future location, from our perspective, are the following:

- An international airport hub with direct, reasonably priced daily flights. Direct flights are important as indirect flights often entail an additional day of travel and the cost of at least one more night's accommodation. Flight cost is also an important factor, impacting on the Agency's budget, but also for patient and consumer representatives who are required to cover their own costs on occasions.
- Ground transportation should be excellent, safe, accessible and inexpensive. Consideration should be given to the travel time from the airport to the Agency location.
- The availability of accessible hotel accommodation of different price ranges close to the Agency.



These considerations are important for all members of the scientific committees and working parties. Time constraints and travel requirements are high. A poor decision on the relocation will have an impact on attendance of meetings, and be detrimental to the overall quality of the work.

The choice of city will also have a high impact on the retention of current staff as well as on the capacity of the Agency to continue to attract the best possible people to deliver excellence in a highly complex, international environment. The quality, variety and price of housing; opportunities to find easily jobs for partners; international schooling and childcare options; access to quality healthcare; and a city that is safe, multicultural and open-minded are also very important aspects to consider when making the decision.

On behalf of our organisations, we would like to thank you for ensuring that this perspective is heard in the current discussion on criteria for selecting the new location.

Yours sincerely

Monique Goyens
BEUC Director General

Marco Greco
EPF President
Member of the EMA Pharmacovigilance Risk Assessment Committee

Yann Le Cam
EURORDIS Chief Executive Officer
Member of the EMA Management Board

Cc:

Mr Didier Seeuws , Head of the GSC Special Task Force on the UK Brexit
Ms Biljana Borzan, Member of the European Parliament