

Establishment of the Innovative Medicines Initiative Joint Undertaking

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By adopting the report by Françoise **GROSSETÊTE** (EPP-ED, FR), the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy has amended, within the framework of the consultation procedure, the proposal for a regulation setting up the Innovative Medicines Initiative Joint Undertaking (IMI JU).

The main amendments that have been adopted are:

The creation of the Joint Undertaking: The MEPs call for the Joint Undertaking to be set up for an initial period ending on 31 December 2013, while noting that the work in progress should continue until 31 December 2017, if necessary. By analogy with the conclusions of the trilogue of 7 March 2007 on the Joint Undertaking for ITER, the IMI JU must also be considered a Community agency for the purpose of the application of point 47 of the Interinstitutional Agreement (IIA) of 17 May 2006;

Objectives: The Joint Undertaking must focus, above all, on the research to be carried out exclusively in the Member States and the countries associated with the Seventh Research Framework Programme. As for sources of finance, the MEPs have specified that the operating costs of the Joint Undertaking shall not exceed 4% of the total budget;

Financial Regulation: The financial rules applicable to the IMI Joint Undertaking should not depart from Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) No. 2343/2002 on the framework Financial Regulations for the Community bodies, unless their specific operating needs so require. The budgetary authority shall be informed of such derogations. The MEPs call for the European Parliament to be entitled to scrutinise the annual accounts of the Joint Undertaking and emphasise that Parliament should be given full and unconditional responsibility for the discharge of the implementation of the budget of the Joint Undertaking;

External auditor: The IMI Joint Undertaking shall appoint an external auditor in order to verify the fairness and accuracy of the annual accounts drawn up by the Joint Undertaking and to evaluate the contributions of the members and participants to the research projects. Against this background, the MEPs have introduced a new article stipulating that annual scientific and financial reports on the projects shall be submitted to the IMI Joint Undertaking by the participants. These reports shall give details of the research activities carried out and of the costs of such activities. Statements of expenditure shall be accompanied by an audit certificate. The external auditor shall examine the audit certificate and determine whether the in kind contributions match the contributions from public funds to the project;

Personnel: The MEPs call for a certain degree of flexibility in the recruitment of staff for the IMI Joint Undertaking. They call for the Commission to be free to second as many officials as it regards necessary to the Joint Undertaking and for the latter to be free to recruit staff on a contractual basis in accordance with the employment law in force in the state where it has its seat.

The parliamentary committee has also introduced the following amendments in the annexes:

- information on projects must be available on the Internet;

- the bodies of the IMI JU shall be the Board, the Executive Director and the Scientific Committee (it is inconsistent to create an Executive Office). The Executive Director shall present the annual activity report to the European Parliament;
- there should be no provision for proxy voting;
- three Members of the European Parliament shall attend meetings as observers and shall be invited by the Board. The European Parliament shall be consulted on any important changes to the JU's statutes;
- the Member States must be fully informed of the decisions concerning the research agenda of the IMI Joint Technology Initiative;
- the evaluation of proposals shall establish whether the funds requested are commensurate with the work involved in carrying out the project;
- project participants should establish any cases of co-ownership of intellectual property arising from projects;
- finally, a host agreement shall be concluded between the IMI Joint Undertaking and Belgium.

The MEPs also emphasised that the IMI Joint Undertaking should make provision for boosting SME participation, inter alia, by improving administrative procedures, taking their requirements more fully into account and deploying support measures.