

European Medicines Agency (EMA): location of the seat

2017/0328(COD) - 25/10/2018 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 425 votes to 71 with 56 abstentions a legislative resolution on the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 726/2004 as regards the location of the seat of the European Medicines Agency (EMA).

The European Parliament's position adopted at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure amended the Commission proposal as follows:

Following the United Kingdom's notification on 29 March 2017 of its intention to withdraw from the Union, the other 27 Member States, meeting on 20 November 2017 in the margins of the Council, selected Amsterdam, the Netherlands, as the new seat of the European Medicines Agency (EMA).

Timeline: the amended text specifies that the competent authorities of the Netherlands shall take all necessary measures to ensure that the Agency is able to move to its temporary location no later than 1 January 2019 and that it is able to move to its permanent location no later than 16 November 2019.

The competent authorities of the Netherlands shall submit a written report to the European Parliament and the Council on the progress on the adaptations to the temporary premises and on the construction of the permanent building by three months after the entry into force of this amending Regulation, and every three months thereafter, until the Agency has moved to its permanent location.

Members regretted the decision of the Council which leads to a deepening of the geographical disproportionality with only 9 out of 37 EU decentralised agencies being located in new Member States contrary to the European Council Conclusions which both give priority to new Member States. They called on the budgetary authorities and the Commission to ensure that the costs relating to the change in the seat of EMA will be fully covered by the current host country.

Parliament's role: in a statement, Parliament condemned the procedure followed for the selection of the new location of the seat, which has de facto deprived the European Parliament of its prerogatives since it was not effectively involved in the process, but is now expected to simply confirm the selection made for the new location of the seat by means of the ordinary legislative procedure.

The European Parliament wishes to recall as well that in the Inter-institutional Agreement on Better Law-Making of 13 April 2016 the three institutions committed to sincere and transparent cooperation while recalling the equality of both co-legislators as enshrined in the Treaties.

In a statement to the legislative resolution, Parliament recognised the commitment of sincere and transparent cooperation, and in the light of the process followed for the relocation of the EMA and EBA, which was specific to the situation and did not constitute a precedent for location of agencies in the future.

The Council took note of the request by Parliament to revise, as soon as possible, the 2012 Joint Statement and Common Approach on decentralised Agencies. As a first step, it invited the Commission to provide, by April 2019, an in-depth analysis of the implementation of the Joint Statement and Common Approach as regards the location of decentralised Agencies.