



European Medicines Agency
Press office

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PRESS RELEASE

European Medicines Agency's Management Board backs EMEA conflicts of interests policy

Meeting in London on 26 May 2005, the Management Board of the European Medicines Agency gave its support for the EMEA policy on handling conflicts of interest. After one year's experience with the March 2004 policy, the Board considered that it had been successful in identifying and limiting, or in a very small number of cases preventing, the participation of experts in EMEA activities where this might have presented a conflict of interest.

Committee members and European experts are not permitted to have financial or other interests that could affect their impartiality. Some experts, however, have previous experience that could in some instances present conflicts in their work. EMEA policy requires all Management Board member, committee members, experts and Agency staff to make public declarations of interests. The declarations of interests of Management Board and committee members are published on the EMEA website. The EMEA Executive Director, Thomas Lönngren, identified a number of issues where the policy may need to be further developed, including how to better manage real or potential conflicts of interests of committee members and experts arising from prior employment in the pharmaceutical industry, previous experience of an expert with competing products and improved guidance to the Agency's internal advisory group on declarations of interests on how to evaluate potential conflicts.

Other issues dealt with by the Management Board include:

- The European Parliament has given a full discharge to the EMEA Executive Director for the execution of the 2003 budget. This is the first year that the European Parliament has been responsible for granting discharge to the Directors of all European agencies under new EU financial rules.
- The Board welcomed the recent recommendations from the European Parliament on the four additional Management Board members to represent patients, doctors and veterinarians. It is anticipated that the Council of the European Union will be able to shortly confirm the appointments and the Management Board looks forward to welcoming the new members at its 28-29 September meeting.
- Coordination between the EMEA and the heads of national agencies is necessary for the operation of the European medicines system. The Management Board heard about the new organisation of national agencies as the Heads of Medicines Agencies (HMA) group, including a management structure to improve coordination of national agencies. A representative of the HMA group will provide regular updates to the Management Board at future meetings and the Management Board vice-chairman, Jytte Lyngvig, will make similar updates to the HMA group.

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NOTES:

1. The policy and procedure on handling of conflicts of interests was published in July 2004 on the EMEA website and can be found [\[here\]](#).
2. The report on the discharge to the Agency is published on the website of the European Parliament and can be found [\[here\]](#) (pages 52-60).

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