



The European Agency for the Evaluation of Medicinal Products

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PRESS RELEASE

Nineteenth Meeting of the Management Board

The Management Board of the EMEA met on 30 September 1998 under the Chairmanship of Mr Strachan Heppell.

Concentrating on the budgetary issues facing the Agency, the Board agreed to a series of measures set out in a contingency plan presented by the Executive Director to meet the expected deficit. The Board noted that the EU budgetary authority had agreed in principle to the additional ECU 2 million contribution to the 1998 budget requested by the Board. Nevertheless the Board revised downwards the level of expected fee revenue and endorsed a second supplementary and amending budget for 1998 to take this into account.

The Board noted the considerable efforts made by EMEA staff to cope with the workload and to ensure good financial management under difficult and unpredictable conditions.

Representatives of Iceland and Norway are expected to begin participating in the scientific work of the EMEA from January 1999. The Board noted that an Exchange of Letters had been entered into between the EMEA, Iceland and Norway. In addition to minor modifications to its rules of procedure, the Board decided to invite representatives to its next meeting ahead of formal participation.

The provision of information to patients and health care professionals is a common priority for the EMEA and its partners in the national authorities. The EMEA already makes available European public assessment reports (EPAR) for all centrally authorised products and a similar initiative is being explored by heads of national authorities for products authorised by the mutual recognition procedure.

The Board agreed to a proposal from the Executive Director to improve the transparency of opinions of EMEA scientific committees, prior to granting marketing authorisation by the Commission, to be introduced in January 1999. Statistics will also be made available on the number and grounds for withdrawal of applications.

Consensus was reached within the Board on the development of a pilot project towards a Medical Information Network for Europe (MINE). The pilot project – to be discussed by the Board at a future meeting – would concern the electronic publication of the *summary of product characteristics* for products authorised after evaluation by the EMEA and also the mutual recognition procedure. The Board agreed to re-discuss any other aspects of the MINE project at its June 1999 brainstorming meeting after further consultation with interested parties.

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NOTES FOR EDITORS:

1. The next meeting of the Management Board will be held on 2 December 1998.
2. This press release, together with other information about the work of the EMEA, may be found on the Internet at the following location: <http://www.eudra.org/emea.html>. The new website has improved functions and linguistic coverage.

Contacts for further information:

Antoine Cuvillier or Martin Harvey, EMEA Directorate
Tel: +44.171.418.8428 / 8427
Fax: +44.171.418.8409