PRESS RELEASE

Visit of IberoAmerican regulatory authorities to the Spanish Ministry of Health and Consumer Affairs (Madrid) and to the EMEA (London)

18-20 February 1997

The Spanish Ministry of Health and Consumer Affairs, in liaison with the European Agency for the Evaluation of Medicinal Products (EMEA), organised a first international encounter with the regulatory authorities of 17 IberoAmerican countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuala.

A two-day conference, in the presence of the Ministers of Health of Spain and Ecuador, was held in Madrid on 18 and 19 February 1997. The proceedings were conducted by Mrs Ana María Naveira, Director-General for Pharmaceutical products and Medical Devices. The meeting concentrated principally on pharmaceutical regulation in the European Community and in Spain in particular.

The operation of the EMEA and of the international harmonisation process between Europe, the USA and Japan (ICH) were presented by Patrick Deboyser of the European Commission, with Strachan Heppell and Fernand Sauer representing the EMEA. Participation in the next International Conference on Harmonisation to be held in Brussels during July 1997 (ICH4) was suggested.

The delegates were able to discuss the new European procedures and to present recent regional developments in Latin America (Mercosur, Pacto Andino, and in Central America). It is envisaged that more regular contacts will be established with these countries in future.

The conference was followed on 20 February by a visit of the IberoAmerican delegates to the seat of the EMEA in London, with the participation of Professor Jean-Michel Alexandre, Chairman of the Committee for Proprietary Medicinal Products (CPMP).

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