

Brexit : Relocating the European Medicines Agency (EMA) from London to Dublin



A Challenge for Europe

As a result of Brexit, a decision will have to be made on a new location for the European Medicines Agency (EMA). The Agency plays a vital role in the protection of the health of 500 million European citizens through the scientific evaluation and safety monitoring of human and veterinary medicines. The EMA is also key to maintaining the competitiveness of the European pharmaceutical industry, which is worth around €260 billion annually.

The Agency is facing a significant loss of expert staff and disruption to its operations unless a sustainable solution is found. It must be emphasised that we are not talking about the establishment of a new agency, but rather the relocation of an existing, well-functioning organisation which has gained a reputation for excellence within the global regulatory system over the last 20 years.

Ireland believes that an early decision on the future location of the EMA will allow for an orderly transfer of operations, maximise retention of expert staff and provide certainty to European citizens and the industries which it regulates.

Why Dublin?

The Irish Government decided in October 2016 to offer Dublin as the new home for the EMA. Ireland firmly believes that Dublin offers the best outcome for the Agency and the citizens of Europe. If Dublin is selected, the Irish Government will work with the EMA and the European Commission to ensure a seamless transition from London to Dublin.

Just some of the factors in Dublin's favour:

- Dublin will prove to be a popular location for current and future staff, thus contributing to the retention of expertise within the EMA. The Government believes that Dublin would offer a sustainable solution for the EMA which will minimise any disruption to its critical operations caused by the relocation.
- Dublin is an English-speaking environment – this is important in the context of this being the working language of the EMA and the pharmaceutical industry.
- Ireland's national medicines agency, the Health Products Regulatory Authority, already provides significant support to the EMA and this can be rapidly scaled up in the event of relocation.
- Dublin offers excellent air connectivity with EU capitals and internationally. The airport itself is only 20 minutes from the city centre.
- Dublin has the infrastructure in terms of office accommodation and hotel accommodation to meet EMA requirements, with significant development on both fronts in the pipeline over the next 2 – 3 year period.
- Dublin has excellent ICT connectivity as demonstrated by the range of internationally renowned tech companies headquartered in Dublin.
- The strong life sciences sector in Ireland, which is home to many of the leading bio-pharmaceutical companies, presents opportunities in terms of synergies between industry, research, and regulation.
- Dublin offers a politically stable, pro-EU environment with all the amenities a modern capital city has to offer.
- Dublin is an open, safe, friendly multicultural city. 20% of Dublin's population is international and over half a million Irish residents speak a foreign language fluently. Polish is the most common, followed by French, Lithuanian, German, Russian, Spanish and Romanian.
- Dublin offers choice in terms of education – a wide variety of State funded and fee paying schools are available. Dublin is well served with a wide variety of universities, colleges and institutes of technology.
- A growing economy with a strong employment record will provide excellent employment opportunities for spouses and partners of EMA staff.
- There is significant construction underway in Dublin which will continue to increase the supply of houses and apartments across the city.
- Dublin has five major university hospitals, as well as maternity and children's hospitals. There is also a range of private hospitals and clinics.
- There is an extensive public transport system, with a comprehensive bus network, trams, light rail and commuter trains serving the greater Dublin area.

The future location of the EMA is too important for this to be a purely 'political decision'. Europe must find a sustainable solution which is in the best interests of European citizens and the innovative bio-pharmaceutical industry. A decision to relocate to Dublin will best meet the needs of the EMA and its staff and ensure that the Agency can continue to deliver, without interruption, an excellent service to citizens and regulated industries into the future.

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