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EMA celebrates 30 years of progress in science and medicines in the European Union

27 January 2025

Agency marks milestone highlighting its changing role in Europe

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EMA is celebrating 30 years of operations marking its evolving role at the centre of the European Union (EU) assessing and authorising safe, high-quality medicines for 450 million people and countless animals in Europe.

EMA began operating on 26 January 1995. In its 30 years of operations the healthcare environment has undergone radical scientific, technological, legislative, and social change. Through it all, EMA's mission has been consistent: to ensure that humans and animals in the EU have access to high-quality, safe and effective medicines when they need them.

This is a European story to be proud of and to celebrate. We know there are challenges ahead of us, but our future is incredibly bright. I believe that with open communication and collaboration, we can achieve anything we set our mind on. Together, we can fulfil our vision of a fast path from innovation to safe and effective medicines.

— Emer Cooke, EMA Executive Director

EMA was set up in 1995 to manage the centralised procedure for the authorisation of medicines and to harmonise the work of existing national medicine regulatory bodies. Originally based in London, the Agency moved to the Netherlands in 2019 following the UK's exit from the EU. At its inception, the Agency had two scientific committees with representatives from 15 Member States.

Today it has seven scientific committees, five of which include patients and healthcare professional members who play a vital role in the assessment of the risks and benefits of medicines along their lifecycle. More than 30 working

parties provide scientific expertise for the regulation of medicines by drawing on a pool of several thousand European scientific experts from 27 Member States, and Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein.

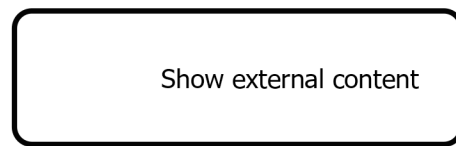
Over the years the Agency was given increasing responsibilities under EU legislation. Its role expanded dramatically due to the COVID-19 pandemic with a new extended mandate to tackle emerging challenges such as coordinating national responses to medicines shortages, supporting innovation, particularly in crisis situations, but also in preparation for other emerging health threats.

The original ambition was to centralise the evaluation of innovative medicines, so that, in the words of the French presidency at the time, 'all patients in the EU could benefit as quickly as possible from the very best treatments'. We applied the same principles to veterinary medicines and through the years we have steadfastly promoted the best of science to support public and animal health across the Member States. Thousands of scientists from across Europe have contributed to this 30-year milestone and it is their hard work and dedication that we celebrate and honour today.

— Emer Cooke, EMA Executive Director

A video with an overview of key milestones and achievements in the authorisation and safety monitoring of medicines for human and animal use in the EU is published today.

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