

Ministerie van Volksgezondheid,
Welzijn en Sport

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Betreft Access to Medicines Initiative

Dear,

In the past 7 years I have had the honor of being the Dutch Minister of Health. As you know the functioning and future of the EU pharmaceutical system was one of the main themes that I have addressed during our Presidency in 2016 and also afterwards . I did so because pharmaceuticals are an essential part of our health systems and because we have to prepare our system for the future in order to maintain resilient and affordable health systems.

The Netherlands, therefore, also submitted a bid to host the European Medicines Agency (EMA) in Amsterdam. As we think a high quality bid that ensures all the needs of the EMA. We hope that our bids convinces you to support the Amsterdam candidacy.

But I believe the hosting of the European Medicines Agency does not stand on itself. I would like to take this opportunity to raise a more fundamental issue. When it comes to access of medicines the EMA is part of a system in dire need of rethinking and modernization. The main challenge, which we already raised during the Dutch EU Presidency in 2016, remains that in spite of all the excellent work done by the EMA, and in spite of a highly regulated pharmaceutical system, an increasing number of EU citizens do not have access to essential medicines.

On November 20, the Council will decide on the new host city of EMA. The Netherlands proposes that we do not stop there and make it a political priority that medicinal products for human use after approval by EMA, are marketed by the manufacturer in all EU member states at the same time. In that way all EU member states can benefit in full from the work of EMA. In the accompanying paper you will find a brief problem definition that I hope you share. Let's start, with the support of the European Commission, to discussing potential causes and solutions. In the accompanying paper you will find our proposal which I hope will get your support.

Finally, within a few days I will leave the Dutch Health Ministry because of the change in government and turn over the responsibility to my successor who will bring this initiative further with full support of the Dutch Prime Minister Rutte who will remain in duty. I would like to thank you all for the cooperation and the important steps we have taken together in Europe.

DG Curative Care
Department of Pharmaceuti-
cals and Medical Technology

Yours sincerely,

Edith Schippers
Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport