

Letter of 16 March 2018 from the Minister for Medical Care and Sport to the President of the House of Representatives on the state of affairs regarding the new premises for the European Medicines Agency

I am writing to inform you of the state of affairs regarding the construction of the new head office of the European Medicines Agency in Amsterdam.

Premises

On 8 March, the Central Government Real Estate Agency awarded Dura Vermeer a contract to build the permanent head office of the European Medicines Agency (EMA) in Amsterdam. The contract was signed by the State Secretary for the Interior and Kingdom Relations, Raymond Knops. Signing the contract so soon after the announcement that Amsterdam would be the new seat of the EMA is a commendable result achieved through the hard work of all the parties involved.

Construction of the new premises in Amsterdam's Zuidas district is scheduled to begin in June this year, which is earlier than planned, and to be completed in mid-November 2019.

The EMA will move from London to Amsterdam no later than 30 March 2019. To bridge the period between the move and the completion of the new premises, the Netherlands will provide temporary accommodation in the Spark building near Amsterdam Sloterdijk train station as from 1 January 2019. While the Spark building was not one of the buildings included in the Netherlands' EMA bid book, it was selected in close consultation with the EMA. The EMA had requested an alternative building that would be able to accommodate all its workstations and facilities for its most important meetings at a single location. The Spark building meets these requirements.

Contribution from the Netherlands

Following the decision by the Council of the European Union on 20 November 2017, the Netherlands immediately began to implement the actions set out in the bid book. It will accordingly deliver a fully furnished building for the lease price stated in the bid book.

For the project to be cost-effective, the Netherlands will contribute €3 million on average per annum in the coming years. This contribution will be met from the budget of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport.

In Brussels, the Council has approved the budgetary agreements concerning the lease of the new building. The European Parliament is expected to take a decision on the agreements before the end of the month. The EMA will then be authorised to sign the lease agreement with the Central Government Real Estate Agency.

Dura Vermeer was awarded a contract to construct and maintain the premises for 20 years for the sum of €255 million. In addition, the Central Government Real Estate Agency has bought out the ground rent in perpetuity from the Municipality of Amsterdam.

Amendment of the regulation establishing the EMA

The European Parliament adopted its position on the amendment of the regulation establishing the EMA this week. The amendment provides for the EMA's relocation to Amsterdam. The European Parliament agreed to the EMA's relocation to Amsterdam but felt it had not been included in the decision-making process. It insists that it be involved in advance in future decisions on the location of decentralised agencies. The European Parliament included a provision in the amendments requiring the European Commission and the Netherlands to report to it on the project's progress every three months. I am very pleased the European Parliament has approved the EMA's relocation to Amsterdam and will gladly inform it periodically of the project's progress.

The Council had already approved the changes proposed by the European Commission without amendment. Now that both the Council and the European Parliament have adopted their positions, the institutions are expected to complete their triologue soon. As usual, the Council will be represented by the rotating presidency.

Benefits of the EMA locating in the Netherlands

The Netherlands was one of 19 candidate countries to compete for the EMA. This great interest was not surprising. The EMA is a knowledge organisation with a very good reputation worldwide. It is also expected to attract research institutions, businesses, service providers and civil society organisations in the life sciences and health sector. In support of the decision on the Netherlands' candidacy, at the end of 2016 the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport commissioned a short study into the economic benefits of the EMA's possible relocation to the Netherlands. The study has been appended to this letter. It found that in economic terms the EMA's arrival would create around 1,550 jobs among suppliers and service providers in addition to the 890 jobs at the EMA itself. The study conservatively estimates that the EMA will generate direct expenditure of about €128 million per annum. The attraction of new business and research could create several thousand additional jobs in the Netherlands in the medium term.