

MEETING OF THE HEADS OF REGULATORY AUTHORITIES

- 24 JULY 1998 - LONDON

1. The Heads of Regulatory Authorities met today in London at the EMEA - the first meeting of the group under the Austrian Presidency.
2. The group welcomed Fernand Sauer, the Executive Director of the EMEA, as a permanent member and looked forward to strengthening further the links between the EMEA and the member states. It was agreed that this marked a new chapter in the work of the group in its aim of building on the success of the community system.
3. The meeting developed its ongoing theme of improving communication between all the interested parties in the community system, including how to use better the means of communication systems available and importantly, the practical 'people' issues in improving the exchange of information. It was agreed that the efficiency of communication, in the light of enlargement of the Union, would be of crucial importance. The Heads of Agencies received a report from the Chairperson of the Mutual Recognition Facilitation Group on the operation of the system and approved an amendment to the 'best practice guide' for the procedure, which shortened the time limit (from 60 to 55 days) for the communication by member states of any potential serious risks to public health. This important change will help to ensure that the procedure works efficiently and effectively.

The group considered enlargement and how the future of Heads of Agencies business would be managed to ensure that new members of the Union would be included timeously. The group agreed to meet again on 5 October 1998 in Vienna.

Notes: The Austrian Presidency of the European Union begun on 1 July 1998.