

# Deadline for race to host EU agencies after Brexit

July 31 2017

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European Union countries faced a deadline Monday to submit their bids to host the post-Brexit locations of key banking and medical agencies currently based in London.

The list of official candidate cities for the European Banking Authority (EBA) and the European Medicines Agency (EMA) after 2019 will be published on Tuesday, EU officials said.

A final decision will be made in November on the winners of the competition to host the two agencies, which together employ more than a thousand people but have to move now that the UK is leaving the bloc.

The main EMA candidate cities that have publicly been put forward so far are Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Helsinki, the northern French city of Lille, Stockholm and Barcelona. It employs 900 people.

The German financial hub of Frankfurt is the frontrunner to host the EBA, while Luxembourg, Paris and Prague are also in the race for the agency, which has around 190 employees.

Vienna, Dublin and Warsaw have also put themselves forward as candidates for both agencies.

Leaders of the remaining 27 EU countries agreed at a summit in June on the timing of the process for choosing the new locations of the agencies.

With competition likely to be intense for the spoils of Britain's departure from the bloc, EU President Donald Tusk said the decision "confirms EU27 unity" and "reduces Brexit uncertainty."

The EMA has been based in London since 1995 while the EBA was set up in 2011.

The choice of new host cities will be made via a complicated points system that officials have compared to the Eurovision song contest.

The European Commission, the EU's executive arm, will then evaluate the bids in September, considering criteria such as accessibility for current employees, work opportunities for their spouses and schools for their children.

It will also look at whether a country already hosts other EU agencies to ensure they are not monopolised.

The EU 27 will then hold a political discussion on the offers in October before a secret vote in November.

Each country will have six voting points—three for its first preference, two points for the second and one for the third.

While they are allowed to vote for themselves they are also expected to take the commission's assessments into account.

If any one gets three points from 14 or more members then it automatically wins—otherwise there is a second round for the top three candidate cities but with each country only getting one vote each.

Should there still be no clear winner, there will be a third and final knock-out round between the two final candidates.

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