

Germany eyes European Medicines Agency after Brexit

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Germany said Wednesday it would apply for the European Medicines Agency (EMA) to move from London to Bonn after Brexit, pitting the western city against EU competitors from Helsinki to Barcelona.

France, Finland, Denmark, the Netherlands and Spain are all keen to host the EMA and its 900 employees once Britain has left the European Union in 2019.

"If it relocates to Germany, the EMA would have concentrated expertise and strong national partners it can rely on, all in close proximity," said Health Minister Hermann Groehe in an unusual English-language press release.

"Bonn's pre-eminent scientific and economic environment makes it a prime location for the European Medicines Agency."

Rhineland city Bonn was the capital of West Germany before lawmakers voted to move the government to Berlin after reunification in 1990.

It remains the seat of a number of international organisations, including a number of UN agencies, while some German ministries remain divided between the present and former capitals.

The European Commission must now judge among the applications, based on criteria ranging from the accessibility of the proposed location to job opportunities and school options for EMA workers' spouses and

children.

But it will be up to EU member states to make the final decision on the move, with Finland saying it could ignore the commission's advice at the November vote.

The EMA's main job is to evaluate drugs and supervise their use in humans and animals.

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