

SwedenBIO's response to the proposed revision of the **EMA policy on handling of competing interests of scientific committee members and experts, 0044**

SwedenBIO is the trade organization for the Swedish life science industry, and we would like to raise some serious concerns for the consequences on the innovative power of Europe from the suggested policy.

As the commission states in the communication about the upcoming life science strategy: "Life sciences and biotechnology are widely recognized to be, after information technology, the next wave of the knowledge-based economy, creating new opportunities for our societies and economies". For Europe to capitalize on this potential, it needs a supportive regulatory framework that advances the industry rather than holding it back

While policies to combat corruption are essential, overly restrictive measures may unintentionally hinder progress. The life sciences industry must have access to top experts to drive projects forward efficiently, especially in areas with limited expertise and high unmet medical needs. Preventing the EMA from getting access to the best competence for expert consultations based on perceived conflicts of interest is suboptimal for European patients. Disqualifying all experts with industry connections limits the pool to those with potentially less relevant experience and sometimes even opposing scientific agenda.

The future of life sciences will be relying on enhanced collaboration—not just with industry and healthcare professionals, but also with patient organizations, which offer valuable insights and share a vested interest in advancing treatment options. Excluding patient advocates from expert roles due to their involvement in development is counterproductive and does not serve society's best interests.

A new policy on competing interest should prioritize transparency but also reflect the authority's independence and discretion to select the most qualified experts. Experts should not have to choose between contributing to industry or regulatory bodies. Instead, the European Medicines Agency (EMA) must balance these competing interests, ensuring that the best expertise is accessible to both sides in a transparent and fair manner. Potential and actual conflicts of interests need to be assessed publicly and not exclude necessary competence without grounds.

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