



**UNDER EMBARGO until 17 February 2010 at 16:30
NOT FOR FURTHER DISTRIBUTION**

Brussels, 17 February 2010

DRAFT PRESS RELEASE

**EU agencies engage in dialogue with EC President Barroso
on their contribution to shaping Europe**

The heads of European Union Agencies met today with European Commission President José Manuel Barroso to discuss ways to strengthen their partnership with the European Commission and to share their views on the EU's future approach to the governance of the Agencies.

The 28 EU agencies were established to help implement EU policies more efficiently and to respond to particular needs identified by the EU institutions. In recognition of the critical role of the Parliament and Council in shaping the renewed institutional framework, members of the European Parliament and representatives of the Spanish Presidency also participated in the meeting in Brussels.

“This was a very important opportunity for dialogue between the heads of the EU Agencies and the EU institutions. We work alongside the EU institutions, adding value by helping to implement policy and promote the sharing of information and expertise in areas as diverse as food safety, fundamental rights and gender equality, transport safety, training, medicines, the environment and public health – all areas that impact directly on the lives of Europe's 500 million people,” said Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle, Executive Director of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), the agency which currently chairs the troika coordinating the Heads of Agencies network.

In its Communication “European agencies – the way forward” of March 2008, the European Commission called upon the European Parliament and Council to give a new momentum to the development of a clear and coherent vision on the place of agencies in European governance. Today's discussions will feed into the inter-institutional dialogue on the future governance of the EU Agencies, which involves an evaluation of existing Agencies and reflections on changes which could be made to improve the system in the future.

The Agencies represent a significant presence within the EU with, in 2008, a combined staff of more than 4,460 people and a combined budget of around €1.24 billion, representing just 1.03% of the overall EU budget of that year.

Link to the EU Agencies brochure

For media enquiries, please contact:

Lucia de Luca, Press Officer

Tel: +39 0521 036 149

Email: Press@efsa.europa.eu