

EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA
STANDING COMMITTEE
OF THE EFTA STATES

Ref. No.: 1088366
7 January 2009
Rev. 2

**THE WORK PROGRAMME OF THE ICELANDIC CHAIR
OF STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE EFTA STATES
FIRST HALF OF 2009**

I. Priorities

The Icelandic Chairmanship of the Standing Committee of the EFTA States will emphasise the following priorities:

- **The Financial Mechanisms post-April 2009**

Aim to finalise the negotiations on the Financial Mechanisms in a timely manner, allowing for a smooth transition on 30 April 2009.

- **Notification from 28 November 2008 of protective measures under Article 43 of the EEA Agreement**

Before 15 January 2009, deliver an opinion in accordance with Protocol 2 to the Agreement on a Standing Committee of the EFTA States on the application of measures notified by Iceland in accordance with Article 43 of the EEA Agreement.

- **European Food Safety Authority**

Finalise incorporation of the General Food Law package into the EEA Agreement and formalise the EEA EFTA participation in the European Food Safety Authority.

- **Energy and Climate Package**

Follow closely further developments and progress of the Energy and Climate Package agreed by EU leaders and adopted by the European Parliament in December 2008.

- **European Institute for Gender Equality**

Follow up on a letter from the EEA EFTA States to the Permanent Representations of the EU Member States on 4 December regarding the modalities of EEA EFTA participation in the European Institute of Gender Equality.

- **Access for EEA EFTA citizens to work in the European Commission Executive Agencies**

Clarify as soon as possible with DG Relex the access for EEA EFTA citizens to work in the European Commission Executive Agencies. Follow up on the request for a meeting with Director General of DG Research, Mr Silva Rodríguez.

- **Directive 2001/81/EC on national emission ceilings for certain atmospheric pollutants**

Encourage Subcommittee IV to find a solution to the issue of incorporation of Directive 2001/81/EC into the EEA Agreement as soon as possible.

II. Legal Acts

- **The Services Directive**

Finalise the incorporation of the Services Directive into the EEA Agreement. Monitor the preparation for implementation within the EU.

- **Consumer Affairs**

Follow closely the discussions on the new proposal for a Directive on Consumer Rights. Continue to ensure the inclusion of data from the EEA EFTA States in the upcoming editions of the Consumer Markets Scoreboard. Finalise the incorporation of the Consumer Credit Directive into the EEA Agreement.

- **The AVMS Directive**

Finalise the incorporation of the Directive on Audiovisual and Media Services into the EEA Agreement. Follow the preparation for implementation within the EU.

- **The 2nd Telecom package**

Follow closely the discussion within the European Union on the adoption of two amending Directives to the existing regulatory framework on electronic communication markets and services and a regulation on a Group of European Regulators in Telecoms (GERT). Prepare the incorporation of the package into the EEA Agreement by encouraging full participation of the EEA EFTA States in comitology committees and in the group of regulators.

- **The Postal Services Directive**

Finalise the incorporation of the Directive on the Postal Services into the EEA Agreement. Follow the preparation for implementation within the European Union.

- **The Marine Directive**

Analyse the EEA relevance of the Marine Directive and, if relevant, prepare for the incorporation of the Directive into the EEA Agreement. Ensure that the special circumstances of the EEA EFTA States are taken into consideration and reflected in the final decision.

- **Single European Sky Package II**

Follow closely the discussions on the new Single European Sky II Package.

- **The Emission Trading Scheme**

Analyse the EEA relevance of the proposed Directive on the revised Emission Trading Scheme and, if relevant, prepare for the incorporation of the Directive into the EEA Agreement. Assess the implications of the incorporation of aviation into the EU-ETS to ensure that the special circumstances of the EEA EFTA States are taken into consideration.

- **Novel Food and GM Food and Feed**

Finalise the EEA Joint Committee Decision on Novel Food and GM Food and Feed.

- **Food information to the consumer**

Follow closely the discussions on the proposal on food information to the consumers.

- **Energy**

Continue to follow closely EU proposals and possible new legislation, particularly the third liberalisation package the promotion of renewable energy and the Second Energy Strategic Energy Review.

- **The New Legal Framework for the marketing of products (NLF)**

Continue to prepare for incorporation of the New Legal Framework for the marketing of products into the EEA Agreement. Prepare for (i) the signing, as EFTA at four, of the general guidelines for the co-operation between the European Commission, EFTA and the European co-operation for accreditation (EA), (ii) the follow-up on the Frameworks partnership agreement with the EA, and (iii) financial contributions to EA, by bringing these issues to the EFTA Council. Contribute to the work undertaken by the Commission in the field of market surveillance.

- **EFTA Study and Workshop on Certification and Marking**

The EFTA TBT Committee will finalise a proposal for concrete actions to follow up on the outcome of the study and the workshop held in June 2008.

- **Medicinal products**

Finalise incorporation of the long-standing 2004 Pharmaceutical Package and monitor developments with regard to the new 2008 Pharmaceutical Package consisting of a Communication on the future of the Single Market in pharmaceuticals for human use, a Directive on pharmaceuticals – information to patients, and the strengthening and rationalising of EU pharmacovigilance.

- **Renewed Social Agenda**

Examine closely the initiative and measures proposed by the EU in the Renewed Social Agenda, in particular with regard to the proposed directives, such as Health Services, information and consultation of employees and anti-discrimination outside the labour market.

- **Health services**

Follow closely the proposal for a Directive on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare and assess its impact on the EEA EFTA States.

- **Labour law**

Follow closely the discussions on the proposal for amending the Directive on working time and prepare for the incorporation of the Directive on Temporary Agency Work into the EEA Agreement.

- **Gender Equality and Family Policy**

Follow closely the discussions on the proposal for a directive on anti-discrimination outside the labour market.

- **European Private Company**

Follow closely the discussions at EU level on the proposal for a European Private Company.

- **Social security schemes**

Continue to prepare for the incorporation of the Regulation 883/2004 coordinating social security schemes and its implementing Regulation into the EEA Agreement.

- **Financial Services**

Continue to follow closely the developments of the EU legal framework within Insurance, Banking and Securities. Of particular importance will be the finalisation of the Solvency II Insurance Framework Directive, amendments to the Capital Requirement Directive/Banking Directive, revision of the Deposit Guarantee

Scheme Directive and the UCITS Directive (Undertakings of Collective Investment in Transferable Securities) and a new Regulation on Credit Rating Agencies.

Follow closely all new initiatives within the area of Financial Services taken by the EU in order to counter the Financial Crisis including the White paper on Early Intervention expected in mid-2009.

- **Intellectual Property Rights**

Follow closely the implementation of the EU strategy on Industrial Property Rights and in particular the possible set-up of a Community Patent and a supra-national court system.

- **Customs**

Follow closely the bilateral negotiations between Norway and the European Commission with regard to the integration of Norway in the EU security standards and implement the result of these negotiations into Protocol 10 of the EEA Agreement.

Provide updates to the EEA EFTA Member States on the continued development of the regional convention on preferential rules of origin.

- **Agriculture**

Finalise the bilateral negotiations on processed agricultural products between Iceland and the European Commission and provide for the foreseen implementation of the results of these negotiations in Protocol 3 of the EEA Agreement (as a bilateral regime).

- **Competition Policy**

Finalise the Agreement amending Protocol 4 of the Surveillance and Court Agreement.

III. Issues of general nature

- **Lisbon Strategy and Single Market Review**

Monitor implementations of the second cycle of the Lisbon Strategy and emerging proposals for the Strategy post-2010. Finalise within Subcommittee V an analysis on the Single Market review as decided by the Standing Committee on 4 December 2008.

- **Participation in programmes 2007-2013**

Monitor participation in existing programmes and agencies.

Aim for participation in the following programmes:

- the Erasmus Mundus II 2009-2013;
- the Safer Internet 2009;
- the MEDIA Mundus, estimated in 2010.

Participate in the preparatory discussion for a new generation of IDABC Programme (Interoperable Delivery of European eGovernment Services to public Administrations, Businesses and Citizen).

Actively follow up with the Commission on the issue of access for EEA EFTA nationals to posts in the Commission's Executive Agencies.

Aim for the appropriate participation in the European Institute for Gender Equality.

Raise awareness within the EEA EFTA States about the opportunities available in the EU programmes.

- **Arctic Policy**

Follow the Comprehensive Communication from the European Commission on the Arctic, "The European Union and the Arctic Region", adopted on 20 November 2008.

- **European Neighbourhood Policy**

Continue to monitor developments within the ENP, the proposals for the Union of the Mediterranean and on the Eastern Partnerships, and the possible implications on the EEA Agreement.

Monitor developments in the EU-Russia relationship, with special focus on the negotiations of a new partnership treaty.

- **Treaty of Lisbon**

Continue to monitor further developments of the Treaty of Lisbon within the Member States of the European Union.

- **Institutions of the European Union**

Monitor closely the elections to the European Parliament which will be held in the member states of the European Union between 4 and 7 June 2009, and the subsequent selection of new Commissioners of the European Commission.

IV. Support to the EEA Agreement

Raise awareness of the importance of decision shaping in the early stages of the process. Focus on the role of each of the institutions of the EU in the decision making process, especially that of the European Parliament.

Continue to follow the developments of new instruments in the decision making process and which are codified in the Lisbon Treaty.

Analyze the effects of increased decentralization of EU decision-making for the EEA EFTA States, as their participation is challenged in High Level Groups, OMC, Forums and Executive Agencies, and what actions can be taken.

Encourage active participation in the meetings of the Internal Market Advisory Committee (IMAC), especially at the level of Directors General.

Continue to raise awareness of the EEA Agreement within the EEA, including within EU institutions, the member states of the EU and the EEA EFTA States.

Study the possible consequences of the financial crisis on the functioning of the EEA Agreement.

Explore ways to make EEA organisation work in a more efficient way in view of the current financial crises, for example by encouraging cross cutting approach, i.e. cooperating across subcommittees and working groups in areas such as research and energy.

Strengthen the network with the national experts from EEA EFTA States to the European Commission.

Building platform for informal contacts with the EU Presidencies, establish contacts with incoming Swedish Presidency.

Launch the implementation phase of the statistical reporting of decisions by the EEA Joint Committee creating an overview of developments of the EEA legal framework from the signature of the Agreement.

Continue the close cooperation between the EFTA Standing Committee and the Advisory bodies; the EFTA Consultative Committee and the EFTA Parliamentary Committee. Encourage enhanced cooperation between the EFTA Parliamentary Committee and the European Parliament with a view to better monitor and follow up on upcoming EEA-relevant legislation in the Parliament and have better access to the decision shaping process. Explore ways to strengthen EEA EFTA representation in the European Parliament and in the Committee of Regions.

Complete the work on the modalities for the Forum for local and regional authorities.