

E U R O P E A N E C O N O M I C A R E A
S T A N D I N G C O M M I T T E E
O F T H E E F T A S T A T E S

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NORWAY CHAIR WORK PROGRAMME
EFTA STANDING COMMITTEE
FIRST HALF OF 2014

The purpose of this programme is to give a general orientation to work at all levels on the EEA EFTA side, particularly under the EFTA Standing Committee structure and in the Secretariat which services it. This programme will be supplemented by the work programmes for the Subcommittees and for selected EEA EFTA working groups.

Items under "main focus" are issues that the Chair will pay special attention to. The listing of items in sections I and II is intended to highlight key issues under discussion.

The main focus of the Norway Chair during the first half of 2014 will be to:

- **Outstanding legal acts.** Intensify the work towards a more efficient incorporation of pending and new legislative acts into the EEA Agreement in order to ensure homogeneity of the EEA and reduce the number of outstanding legal acts.
- **New EU programmes.** Ensure the incorporation of the new EU programmes into the EEA Agreement for the period 2014-2020 and the EEA EFTA States' eligibility under the first calls for proposals.
- **EEA and Norway Grants.** Dialogue and negotiations with the European Union regarding a new period.
- **Croatia.** Contribute to the preliminary entry into force and the inclusion of Croatia in the EEA Agreement.

I. Horizontal issues and EU developments to be followed closely

- **Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership**
Monitor the development of EU-US negotiations on a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership Agreement and assess the implications for the EEA Agreement and EEA EFTA States.

- **Single Market Act II and other EEA relevant initiatives**

Continue to follow closely the implementation of the Single Market Act II. Monitor the further development of EU initiatives related to the Single Market.

- **Economic and Monetary Union and EU economic policy coordination**

Consider the impact on the EEA of the EU initiatives regarding Economic and Monetary Union and economic policy coordination, in particular the new proposals for a Banking Union and its impact on the Single Market in Financial Services, as well as the possible inclusion of the Single Market in the European Semester.

- **Regulatory Fitness and Performance (REFIT)**

Follow closely the Commission's on-going efforts to streamline legislation and reduce the regulatory burden related to the Single Market under the REFIT programme.

- **EEA EFTA Comments**

Encourage the submission of EEA EFTA comments and ensure appropriate follow-up vis-à-vis the EU.

II. Legal acts and policies (not exhaustive)

Particular emphasis will be placed on the following areas at all levels:

- **New European architecture of financial supervision**

Continue the dialogue with the EU with the aim of reaching an agreement on EEA EFTA participation in the three new European Supervisory Authorities and the European Systemic Risk Board. While such a solution is pending, EU acts linked to the ESAs should be assessed and processed to the extent possible.

- **Medicinal products**

Finalise discussions with the EU and prepare for the incorporation of the Paediatrics Regulation into the EEA Agreement.

- **Postal services**

Ensure the swift incorporation of the Third Postal Directive into the EEA Agreement.

- **Telecom Package**

A priority will be to follow up with the relevant EU institutions on the proposal for a Single Market for electronic communication, including efforts to amend the BEREC Regulation as far as the EEA EFTA participation in BEREC is concerned.

- **Deposit Guarantee Scheme**

Continue to work towards a mutually acceptable solution to the Deposit Guarantee Scheme, thereby safeguarding the interests of consumers.

- **Energy**

Follow closely the process on establishing a "2030 Framework for Climate and Energy" and the completion of the internal energy market in 2014. Seek to finalise negotiations with the European Commission regarding the incorporation into the EEA Agreement of the Third Package for the Internal Energy Market.

- **Internal Market Information System**

Ensure the incorporation into the EEA Agreement of the Regulation on the Internal Market Information System, the IT-based information network that links up national, regional and local authorities across borders.

- **Data protection**

Monitor closely the proposal for a regulation on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and the free movement of such data. Ensure future EEA EFTA State participation in the proposed committee and in the European Data Protection Board.

- **Labour law**

Follow closely the proposal for a directive concerning the enforcement of the provisions applicable to the posting of workers and the proposal for a directive to include seafarers within the scope of five labour law directives.

- **Employment**

Follow closely the proposal to formalise the Heads of Public Employment Services (HoPES) network and a pending proposal to reform the legal base of EURES.

- **Transport**

Finalise the incorporation into the EEA Agreement of the Road Package that aims at modernising provisions governing road transport operators and access to the road transport markets. Follow closely the six proposals forming the Fourth Railway package that seek to encourage more innovation in EU railways by opening EU domestic passenger markets to competition, as well as substantial accompanying technical and structural reforms.

- **State aid**

Ensure the swift incorporation into the EEA Agreement of updated and revised state aid rules in relation to the State Aid Modernisation Initiative.

- **Public procurement**

Ensure the swift incorporation into the EEA Agreement of the revised European Public Procurement Directives and the new Directive on Concession Contracts. Follow closely the decision-making process concerning the proposal for a directive on e-invoicing in public procurement.

- **Climate change and environment**

Follow closely the process on establishing a 2030 Framework for Climate and Energy. Ensure the timely incorporation into the EEA Agreement of the Regulation on carbon dioxide emissions from new passenger cars and new light commercial vehicles, the Fuel Quality Directive and the Regulation on the export for recovery of certain waste to certain non-OECD countries. Finalise preparations for the incorporation of the Directive on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law. Follow closely the decision making process regarding the proposal for a directive for the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure.

- **Chemicals**

Ensure the incorporation of the new Regulation on Plant Protection Products and its implementing acts. Ensure the participation of the EEA EFTA States in the activities of the European Chemicals Agency concerning biocides.

- **Technical barriers to trade**

Ensure the timely incorporation of the Standardisation Regulation and the Alignment Package into the EEA Agreement and monitor the ongoing revision of other new approach directives with regard to the New Legislative Framework for Goods.

- **Food and Veterinary Matters**

Ensure the incorporation of the Regulation on Novel Food and prepare for the incorporation of the Regulation on Genetically Modified Food and Feed. Monitor the finalisation of a new Regulation on Novel Food and the proposals on the cloning of animals for food production purposes.

Monitor the presentation of the “package” of legislation for the food chain regarding animal health, plant health, reproductive material, and the revision of the Regulation on Official Controls along the Food Chain.

Facilitate food information for consumers through the incorporation of the Regulation to this end.

- **Public health**

Ensure the incorporation of the Directive on Patients’ Rights in Cross-Border Healthcare into the EEA Agreement and follow the implementation process on the EU side. Monitor the issues related to serious cross-border threats to health and the revision of the Tobacco Products Directive.