

RESOLUTION

The implementation of EEA legislation

The Joint Parliamentary Committee of the European Economic Area:

- A. affirming that the EEA Agreement provides for full access of the EEA EFTA States and the EU Member States to the Internal Market,
- B. acknowledging the importance of implementation of EEA legislation in order to establish a dynamic and homogenous European Economic Area,
- C. noting that the Internal Market Strategy 2003-2006 is an essential element of the Lisbon Strategy,
- D. recalling the European Council Summit of March 2002 decision on a “zero tolerance” approach for directives whose transposition deadline is overdue by 2 or more years,
- E. acknowledging that EU Heads of State and Government have repeatedly called on Member States to improve their transposition records setting a 1.5% transposition deficit as an interim ceiling, which has been endorsed by the EFTA Surveillance Authority,
- F. recalling that the Internal Market Strategy 2003-2006 calls on Member States to reduce the number of infringements against them by at least 50% by 2006,
 - 1. recognizes the importance of establishing a dynamic and homogenous European Economic Area;
 - 2. regrets the fact that the EEA EU Member States missed the opportunity in the first six months of 2006 to go below the interim ceiling of 1.5% transposition deficit set by the Member States themselves and urges some of the old EU Member States that have increased their deficit to take urgent actions;
 - 3. welcomes the fact that the new EU Member States in general have kept their transposition deficits at a low level;
 - 4. calls for a concerted effort by all EEA Member States to implement and enforce rules effectively, correctly and on time;
 - 5. underlines the need for homogenous national implementation, and recommends that the EEA States establish training programmes for officials in their public administration to increase knowledge of procurement rules and procedures;

6. expresses its regret that despite calls on Member States to reduce the number of infringements against them by at least 50% by 2006, only five EU-15 Member States have reduced the number of infringement proceedings against them over the last three years, and urges concerted efforts on behalf of all EEA Member States to resolve this trend;
7. requests consideration of potential means of involving citizens of the 3 EEA EFTA States more directly in the monitoring and enforcement processes with regard to EEA legislation;
8. asks the Commission and the EFTA Surveillance Authority to review how they might cooperate more closely in order to ensure even enforcement across the whole of the EEA;
9. instructs its President to forward this resolution to the EEA institutions, to the European Parliament and the EEA/EFTA Parliaments and to the European Ombudsman.

Resolution

On Enlarging the European Economic Area: Experiences and perspectives

The European Economic Area Joint Parliamentary Committee:

- A. Recognizing that the European Union (EU) enlargement of 1 May 2004 posed both opportunities and challenges for the EU and the European Economic Area (EEA)
 - B. Having regard to the fact that the ten New European States joined the European Economic Area by signing the EEA Enlargement Agreement in November in Brussels, which entered fully into force in December 2005 when the ratification procedures were completed
 - C. Noting the Protocol 38 to the Agreement between Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and the members of the EU on the establishment of an EEA financial mechanism for the period 2004-2009 and the Agreement between the Kingdom of Norway and the European Community on a Norwegian financial mechanism for the period 2004-2009
 - D. Having regard to the EEA financial mechanism providing for a total contribution of EUR 600 million for the ten New Member States and Greece, Portugal and Spain for the period 2004-2009
 - E. Having regard to the Norwegian financial mechanism, providing for additional EUR 567 million for the ten New Member States for the period 2004-2009
 - F. Having regard to notifications from the EEA Countries in April 2006 on transitional arrangements concerning the free movement of workers
 - G. Noting the European Council Presidency conclusions in June 2006, the September 2006 European Commission's Monitoring report on the state of preparedness for EU membership as well as the September 2006 European Parliament debate as concerns Bulgaria and Romania
1. Welcomes the multiple benefits resulting from the enlargement of the EEA especially due to the intensification of trade and cultural exchange, with prospects of further cooperation in the fields of science, technology and research, contributing to competitiveness and innovation capacities of the EEA;

2. Underlines that the significant increase in the trade exchange, including both products and services, between the EEA EFTA and EU countries is the most feasible advantage of the EEA enlargement;
3. Acknowledges that fisheries and agriculture are given a special concern as areas of high importance especially for the northern EEA EFTA States;
4. Welcomes the financial support through EEA financial mechanism and the Norwegian financial mechanism which shall contribute to the social and economic cohesion of Europe, reduce economic disparities between EEA regions and which constitute a solidarity response to the particular situation of the ten New Member States;
5. Notes the reinforcement of common interests between the enlarged EU and the EEA countries, related to energy security and environmental security issues, which should result in common actions and mutual support;
6. Notes with interest the developments concerning the transitional arrangements applying to the free movement of workers from the new EU Member States; and encourages the EEA Countries to consider whether the continuation of such arrangements is needed;
7. Welcomes commitments by the Swiss Government to contribute substantially towards lessening the economic and social gap between the old and new Member States of the EU;
8. Calls on relevant authorities for a campaign directed to the EEA citizens, disseminating information about mutual positive benefits of the EEA enlargement, including publication of results of the cooperation;
9. Urges all EEA EFTA States, in light of the 2004 enlargement and future enlargement, to continue to increase their efforts in utilising all avenues for early decision-shaping with the aim to guarantee the homogeneity and good functioning of the Internal Market;
10. Calls for upgrading the diplomatic relations, if their governments recognize it necessary, between the EFTA countries and EU Member States, with a special regard to new Member States, in order to facilitate increased contacts not only between the citizens, but also with potential economic partners, as well as in other areas of mutual interests;
11. Looks forward to the forthcoming EU and EEA enlargements and the mutual benefits it will bring to all EEA Countries; and will follow closely developments with regard to transitional arrangements concerning Bulgaria and Romania;

12. Urges relevant authorities to come to a swift and balanced conclusion in the current enlargement negotiations with the aim of guaranteeing the parallel enlargement of EU and the EEA and to ensure the continued good functioning and homogeneity of the Internal Market.