

# EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA

## JOINT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE

Ref. 14-132359

Brussels, 17 December 2014

17 December 2014, Strasbourg, France

### **RESOLUTION**

Adopted pursuant to Rules 11 and 13 of the Rules of Procedure,

in Strasbourg on 17 December 2014

on

### **The Annual Report of the EEA Joint Committee on the Functioning of the EEA Agreement in 2013**

Co-rapporteurs:

Mr Svein Roald Hansen, Member of the Norwegian Parliament

Mr Paul Rübzig, Member of the European Parliament

The Joint Parliamentary Committee of the European Economic Area:

- Having regard to its resolutions on the functioning of the EEA in 1994 (adopted on 29 May 1995), in 1995 (adopted on 3 June 1996), in 1996 (adopted on 14 April 1997), in 1997 (adopted on 25 May 1998), in 1999 (adopted on 16 March 2000), in 2000 (adopted on 24 May 2001), in 2001 (adopted on 20 June 2002), in 2002 (adopted on 20 May 2003), in 2003 (adopted on 27 April 2004), in 2004 (adopted on 25 April 2005), in 2005 (adopted on 22 May 2006), in 2006 (adopted on 27 June 2007), in 2008 (adopted on 25 March 2009), in 2009 (adopted on 29 March 2010), in 2010 (adopted on 12 April 2011), in 2011 (adopted on 4 May 2012), and in 2012 (adopted on 30 May 2013);

- A. In accordance with its task to examine the Annual Report of the EEA Joint Committee laid out by the EEA Agreement (Article 95, paragraph 4);
- B. Emphasising that the EEA EFTA States are full participants in matters concerning the Internal Market;
- C. Mindful of the importance of maintaining homogeneity within the EEA:
  - 1. Takes note of the 2013 Annual Report of the EEA Joint Committee, and agrees with the EEA Joint Committee on the main issues of concern in 2013;
  - 2. Welcomes the inclusion in the Annual Report of both Single Market Scoreboards from 2013 from the EFTA Surveillance Authority;
  - 3. Reiterates the need for more analytical information on the main issues for discussion between the EU and EEA EFTA side before final decisions are taken in the EEA Joint Committee. This should be included in future Annual Reports in order for the EEA JPC to better fulfil its advisory role;
  - 4. Welcomes the implementation of EU legal acts as a permanent item in the Annual Report, and underlines the common interest of both the European Union and the EEA EFTA States in the timely incorporation of EEA-relevant legislative acts;
  - 5. Welcomes the EEA Efficiency Project initiated in 2013 by the EEA EFTA States which entered into force in October 2014, aimed at identifying and implementing the actions needed to reduce the number of acts awaiting incorporation into the EEA Agreement, and urges the EEA EFTA States to implement the measures proposed in the project as swiftly as possible in order to reduce this number substantially;
  - 6. Notes at the same time that the efficiency of the incorporation of EEA-relevant legal acts is the joint responsibility of the EU and the EEA EFTA States, while taking into account that the primary initiative of submission of Joint Committee Decisions is with the EEA EFTA States;
  - 7. Urges the EU and EEA EFTA States to find solutions for the legal acts that have been pending for a long time, in order to be able to incorporate them into the EEA Agreement. Notes that despite the joint efforts made to reduce the number of outstanding legal acts, at the end of 2013 their number had increased as compared to December 2012;
  - 8. Welcomes that the EU and the EEA EFTA States since 2013 have found a solution to the inclusion of the European Financial Supervisory Authorities in the EEA and now urges the relevant authorities to ensure that this is implemented as soon as possible;

9. Regrets the increased average transposition deficit of the EEA EFTA States in 2013, and underlines that the timely incorporation of EEA-relevant acquis is essential for the homogeneity of the Internal Market;
10. Notes that the EEA EFTA States request full participation without the right to vote in the management boards of existing and future EEA-relevant agencies. This is however not granted in the case of The Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC) where the Regulation only allows for observer status for the EEA EFTA States. The EEA JPC urges the Council and the European Parliament to ensure full participation also in BEREC without voting rights in the management board;
11. Welcomes the EEA EFTA Comments submitted in 2013 on topics of great importance to the EEA, regards these comments to be an important instrument for participating in decision shaping in the EEA, encourages the EEA EFTA States to continue to share their views and knowledge as much and as early as possible in the decision-shaping processes, and encourages the EU side to continue to take the views of the EEA EFTA States transmitted in these comments into account;
12. Welcomes the feedback received from the EU to these comments and encourages the EEA Joint Committee to continue this trend in order to facilitate a continuous dialogue between the EU side and the EEA EFTA side in the decision shaping of the EEA;
- 12a. Following the example of the Norwegian Parliament in establishing an office in the premises of the European Parliament, it encourages the other EEA member states and observers to follow this example;
13. Welcomes the reference made to EEA JPC resolutions in the Annual Report and the written reply to the requests made in the resolution adopted in May 2013; but reiterates its previous request that the EEA Joint Committee responds to specific requests in all resolutions of the JPC and submits these well in advance of the following JPC meeting;
14. Reiterates the appreciation of the EEA JPC for EEA Joint Committee representatives' attendance, statements and participation in discussions at EEA JPC meetings;
15. Welcomes the positive contribution made by the EEA Grants and Norway Grants at local level in bringing about specific reductions in disparities, and compliments all stakeholders on the high rate of timely completion of projects, as well as the results achieved. It welcomes the conclusion of the EEA Joint Committee review done in 2013 in accordance with the EEA Agreement that there still was a need to alleviate social and economic disparities, and encourages the parties to complete the negotiations for their renewal swiftly;
16. Welcomes the launch of EU negotiations with Norway on the liberalisation of trade in basic agricultural products under Article 19 of the EEA Agreement, and hopes for rapid progress of these negotiations. It encourages Iceland to make further progress in setting up the system for the protection of Geographical indications and the two sides

to resume the negotiations on the liberalisation of trade in processed and non-processed agricultural products, as well as on the protection of geographical indications;

17. Instructs its President to forward this Resolution to the EEA Joint Committee.