

**EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA**  
**JOINT PARLIAMENTARY**  
**COMMITTEE**

**32<sup>nd</sup> Meeting**

**25-26 March 2009, Strasbourg**

**RESOLUTION**

Adopted pursuant to Rules 11 and 13 of the Rules of Procedure,  
at the 32<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Joint Parliamentary Committee

in Strasbourg on 25 March 2009

***The Annual Report on the Functioning of the EEA Agreement in 2008 (1090139)***

Co-rapporteurs: Mr Svein Roald Hansen (Labour Party, Norway)  
Ms Bilyana Raeva (ALDE, Bulgaria)

adopted unanimously.

## RESOLUTION

on

### THE ANNUAL REPORT ON THE FUNCTIONING OF THE EEA AGREEMENT IN 2008

The Joint Parliamentary Committee of the European Economic Area:

- A. in accordance with its task laid out by the EEA Agreement (Article 95, paragraph 4),
  - B. emphasising that the EEA EFTA States are not third countries in matters concerning the Internal Market, but full participants,
  - C. mindful of the importance of maintaining homogeneity within the EEA, and acknowledging the importance of implementation of EEA legislation in order to establish a dynamic and homogenous European Economic Area,
  - D. noting that the information and consultation process provided for in the EEA Agreement is an essential tool for the EFTA States to participate in the shaping of common rules,
  - E. recalling its resolutions on the functioning of the EEA in 1994 (adopted 29 May 1995), in 1995 (adopted 3 June 1996), in 1996 (adopted 14 April 1997) in 1997 (adopted 25 May 1998), in 1999 (adopted 16 March 2000), in 2000 (adopted 24 May 2001), in 2001 (adopted 20 June 2002), in 2002 (adopted 20 May 2003), in 2003 (adopted 27 April 2004), in 2004 (adopted 25 April 2005), in 2005 (adopted 22 May 2006), in 2006 (adopted 27 June 2007); and in 2007 (adopted 29 April 2008),
  - F. recalling its resolution on Health Services in the EEA (adopted 29 April 2008); on Research and Education Programmes: the EEA and the EFTA States (adopted 4 November 2008); and on Future Perspectives for the European Economic Area (adopted 4 November 2008).
  - G. considering the fact that the EEA grants (for the 15 beneficiary states) and the Norway grants (for the 12 beneficiary states) will in the period 2004-2009 make close to €1, 3 billion available to the recipients.
1. emphasises that the EEA Agreement needs to be taken seriously by all stakeholders in the EEA and needs to be the focus of constant efforts so that outstanding differences are solved promptly and that the good functioning of the EEA is not put at risk;

2. takes note of the Annual Report of the EEA Joint Committee for 2008 and agrees with the general assessment that the EEA functioned well in the reporting period;
3. regrets to note the outstanding issues on agency and programme participation, and calls for these to be solved promptly as EEA EFTA participation in EU programmes constitutes an important and vital part of the EEA agreement;
4. welcomes the contributions from the EEA EFTA States towards the reduction of social and economic disparities in the enlarged Internal Market with the Financial Mechanisms 2004-2009; and underlines the importance of efficiency and transparency in the application and approval procedure, and would like to see a report laying out areas of improvement and plans for action following the report issued by PriceWaterhouseCoopers;
5. expresses its concerns on the potential effects of time delays to the negotiations on renewed financial mechanisms between the EEA EFTA States and the European Commission, requesting the actors involved to use all means necessary to avoid jeopardizing the good functioning of the EEA;
6. calls on the EEA Joint Committee to pay specific attention to the extraordinary circumstances created by the financial crisis and to have a continuous focus on the challenges this may pose to the good functioning of the EEA Agreement;
7. highlights the democratic role invested by the EEA JPC, calling for the fullest information possible to be made in order for it to perform its tasks and calls for the EEA Joint Committee Annual Report to include information on how the EEA JPC resolutions were incorporated in the work of the EEA Joint Committee or what progress that was made within the policy areas in question;
8. recommends a closer link between the EEA Joint Committee Chair reports and the annual report of the EEA Joint Committee, thereby fostering consistency and increased scrutiny to its work;
9. reiterates its recommendation that, in addition to the EEA Joint Committee Annual Report, the EEA Joint Committee drafts a more analytical report for the purposes of the EEA JPC, taking major EU developments and horizontal policy issues into account when assessing the functioning of the Agreement, enabling the report to be understood by a wider audience, and asks why such a report has not been produced despite repeated recommendations from the EEA JPC;
10. refers to the EEA Joint Parliamentary Committee resolution adopted on 4 November 2008, calling for the European Commission to provide the national parliaments of the EEA EFTA States with legislative proposals which are sent to the national parliaments of the EU Member States for consultation, in cases where these regard matters of the Internal Market. The EEA JPC calls for this request to be dealt with in the EEA Joint Committee, and its outcome reported to the EEA JPC;

11. welcomes the EEA JPC's institutional relationship with the EEA Joint Committee and the EEA Council and appreciates the oral responses provided by the President-in-Office of the EEA Joint Committee and by the representatives of the EEA Council;
12. reiterates its calls for having the written EEA Joint Committee statements on EEA JPC resolutions distributed before EEA JPC meetings which would facilitate a fruitful dialogue with EEA Council and EEA Joint Committee representatives;
13. encourages the EEA EFTA States to continue to participate in EU committees, comitology committees, programmes, expert and non-comitology committees with the aim of influencing EU decision-shaping to the widest extent possible;
14. seeks clarifications as to why the number of EEA EFTA Comments has declined over the last years, not least due to the fact that several important packages were discussed during 2008 to which the EEA EFTA States could make a contribution;
15. underlines that EEA EFTA Comments represent a very important line of communication between the EU and the EEA EFTA States as well as a decision shaping tool; and reiterates the importance of the EEA EFTA States submitting comments at an early stage when the EEA EFTA States have the greatest chance of shaping the outcome;
16. welcomes that the EU Member States' lowered average transposition deficit for 2008 at 1.0%, and welcomes especially the fact that 12 Member States have reached their best targets ever;
17. welcomes that the average and transposition deficit of the EEA EFTA States decreased to 1.3% from 1.7%, but regrets that it is above the 1.0% EU average; and urges the EEA EFTA States to increase their efforts considerably in order to reach the interim target of 1.0% in vigour as of 2009;
18. encourages the EFTA Surveillance Authority and the European Commission to cooperate closer in order to present more streamlined Internal Market Scoreboards;
19. welcomes the improved inclusion of EEA EFTA figures into the Consumer Markets Scoreboard, and encourages the work to fully include the EEA EFTA States to continue;
20. 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.