



# EUROPEAN FREE TRADE ASSOCIATION CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

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## ANNUAL REPORT 2010

### I INTRODUCTION

The EFTA Consultative Committee (EFTA CC) is a forum for social partner organisations in the four EFTA countries, serving as a platform for dialogue and consultations between EFTA's trade unions and employers' organisations, and between the EFTA social partners and the EFTA authorities. In 2010, the EFTA CC had three internal meetings and focused among others on the response to the economic and financial crisis in the area of financial supervision; latest developments with regard to SMEs; and the EU's growth strategy for the next decade (Europe 2020). Furthermore, the Committee worked on the initial draft Single Market Act and international trade developments. With regard to the latter, specific emphasis was put on EFTA's third country policy and the relationship between trade and labour and trade and environment. The Committee prepared background and discussion papers and invited speakers from ILO, WTO, academia, and the European Economic and Social Committee to share their experiences on these issues.

#### *Committee work*

In addition to the internal meetings, the Committee also met with the Standing Committee of the EFTA States in March, the EFTA Ministers in June and November, and the EFTA Parliamentary Committee in June and November. In the meeting with the EFTA parliamentarians and EFTA Ministers, the focus was on latest developments in EFTA's third country relations including an exchange of views on the possible inclusion of a chapter on sustainable development in future EFTA free trade agreements. Concerning the EEA, the Committee met for the second time with the EFTA Standing Committee at Ministerial level in Brussels in November. In June, it also invited the President of ESA to give a briefing on latest ESA activities. The Committee continues to strongly emphasise the importance of holding such joint meetings, which contribute to enhancing the dialogue with relevant EFTA authorities both at the political, parliamentary, and diplomatic level in the four EFTA countries.

The EFTA CC continued its cooperation also with relevant EFTA authorities, including a joint meeting with the EFTA Working Group on Health and Safety at Work and Labour Law in March. The key focus at this meeting was employee involvement in times of restructuring, transnational company agreements, and an exchange of views on other relevant issues such as posting of workers, temporary agency work, and the EU Agency on Health and Safety at Work (Bilbao Agency).

Throughout the year, the EFTA CC also dedicated time to enlargement and especially the situation in Croatia. Building on its experience as an active observer in the EU-Croatia Joint Consultative Committee, the EFTA CC in May organised a two-day meeting in Zagreb with its Croatian counterparts focusing on social dialogue, tripartite relations, and Croatia's accession negotiations with the EU.

### ***EEA Consultative Committee***

At its meeting in May, hosted by the EFTA CC in Vaduz, Liechtenstein, the EEA Consultative Committee (EEA CC) held an exchange of views with relevant speakers on financial reform in Liechtenstein, Iceland's EU application, and EU-Swiss relations. The Committee also engaged in a dialogue with representatives of the EEA Joint Committee on the latest EEA developments. In addition, the EEA CC discussed and adopted a resolution on "*Europe 2020 and the EEA*" and on "*Implications for the EEA of EU post-crisis financial reform*".

## **II OSMOSIS COOPERATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES IN 2010**

Cooperation between social partners in the EEA was further reinforced in 2010 through the Osmosis procedure, which allows representatives of the EFTA Consultative Committee to participate in the work of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and vice-versa. Cooperation in 2010 included, among others, EFTA participation in the EESC Joint Consultative Committee meetings with Croatia and Turkey; the EESC Lisbon Strategy Observatory (now with focus on Europe 2020); and the EESC Single Market Observatory.

The EFTA CC was represented in the following EESC and EEA meetings in 2010 under the so-called "Osmosis" procedure:

- **EU-Croatia Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) meeting, Brussels, 8 April 2010** (EFTA CC rapporteur: Mr Bjarni Már Gylfason)
- **EU-The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Civil Society Joint Consultative Committee (first) meeting, Brussels, 8 July 2010** (EFTA Secretariat represented the EFTA CC)
- **EU-Turkey Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) meeting, Edinburgh, 13-14 September 2010** (EFTA CC rapporteur: Mr Marco Taddei)
- **EESC Conference on Europe 2020, Brussels, 17 September 2010** (EFTA CC rapporteur: Ms Liz Helgesen)
- **Single Market Observatory meeting, Brussels, 16 December 2010** (EFTA CC rapporteurs: Ms Karin Enodd and Mr Robert Trausti Arnason)

### **III OVERVIEW OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS IN 2010**

What follows is a chronological overview of all Consultative Committee meetings in 2010:

#### **EFTA Consultative Committee meeting, Brussels, 10 March 2010**

Key focus points: SMEs, international trade with specific emphasis on trade and environment and trade and labour, Europe 2020, Lisbon Treaty, and the Internal Market.  
Speakers: European Commission, EFTA Secretariat, ILO, EESC.

#### **Joint meeting with EFTA Working Group on Health and Safety at Work and Labour Law, 11 March 2010**

Key focus points: EU framework for employee involvement, transnational company agreements, Posting of Workers Directive, Temporary Agency Work Directive, and the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (Bilbao Agency).  
Speakers: European Commission, Statoil, Bilbao Agency.

#### **Joint meeting with the EFTA Standing Committee, Brussels, 11 March 2010**

Key focus point: Latest developments in the EEA.

#### **EEA Consultative Committee meeting, Vaduz, 18-19 May 2010**

Key focus points: Latest developments in the EEA, Europe 2020, post-crisis reform in the area of EU/EEA financial supervision, financial reform in Liechtenstein, Iceland's EU application, and Swiss-EU relations.  
Speakers: European Commission, EFTA Standing Committee, Prime Minister's Office Liechtenstein, Swiss Integration Office.

The **Bureau of the EEA Consultative Committee** held its 35<sup>th</sup> meeting prior to the EEA CC meeting. Issues for the meeting of the EEA CC later the same day were discussed.

#### **EFTA CC delegation visit to Zagreb, Croatia, 19-21 May 2010**

Key focus points: Enlargement (latest developments with regard to Croatia's EU accession), and tripartite relations, social partnership, and social dialogue in Croatia.  
Met with: EFTA embassy representatives, Croatian Ministry for European Integration, Croatian social partners, and Croatian Office for Social Partnership.

#### **Joint meeting with the EFTA Parliamentary Committee, Reykjavik, 23 June 2010**

Key focus points: Developments in the Arctic; and EFTA's third country policy (briefing by and exchange of views with EFTA Working groups on Trade and Environment and Trade and Labour).  
Speakers: Icelandic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Stefansson Arctic Institute, University of Akureyri; and representative of the EFTA Working groups on Trade and Environment and Trade and Labour.

#### **EFTA Consultative Committee meeting, Reykjavik, 24 June 2010**

Key focus points: Recent developments in ESA's work, Europe 2020, trade policy with specific emphasis on trade and environment and trade and labour.  
Speakers: ESA, and European Commission.

**Joint meeting with EFTA Ministers, Reykjavik, 24 June 2010**

Key focus points: Latest developments in EFTA's third country relations and in the EEA.

**EFTA Consultative Committee meeting, Brussels and Geneva, 22-23 November 2010**

Key focus points: Europe 2020, Internal Market (draft Single Market Act), and challenges linked to international trade and global economic recovery.

Speakers: EFTA Secretariat, European Commission, WTO, Geneva Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies.

**Joint meeting with EEA EFTA Ministers, Brussels, 22 November 2010**

Key focus point: Latest developments in the EEA.

**Joint meeting with EFTA Ministerial Chair, Geneva, 23 November 2010**

Key focus point: Latest developments in EFTA's third country relations.

**EEA Consultative Committee Bureau meeting, Brussels, 1 December 2010**

Key focus point: Planning for the 2011 EEA CC meeting.

#### **IV OVERVIEW OF ADOPTED OPINIONS AND RESOLUTIONS**

The EFTA and EEA Consultative Committees agreed and adopted the following background/discussion papers, opinions, and resolutions in 2010:

- ***EEA CC Resolution on Europe 2020 and the EEA, 18 May 2010***  
Rapporteurs: Ms Liz Helgesen (EFTA CC, Norway/Trade Unions), and Ms Liina Carr (EESC, Estonia/Trade Unions)
- ***EEA CC Resolution on Implications for the EEA of EU post-crisis financial reform, 19 May 2010***  
Rapporteurs: Mr Aslak Molvær (EFTA CC, Norway/Employers) and Mr Lars Nyberg (EESC, Sweden/Trade Unions)
- ***Discussion Paper on Trade and Labour Standards, 24 June 2010***  
Rapporteurs: Ms Siri Relling (Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions), and Mr Knut Sørli (Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise)
- ***Background Paper on Trade and Environment, 24 June 2010***  
Rapporteurs: Ms Siri Relling (Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions), and Mr Knut Sørli (Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise)

**V MEMBERS OF THE EFTA CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE IN 2010**

**Iceland**

Mr Guðlaugur Stefánsson (replaced by Mr Róbert Trausti Arnason in April 2010)	Confederation of Icelandic Employers
Mr Haraldur Ingi Birgisson	Iceland Chamber of Commerce
Mr Halldór Grönvold	Icelandic Confederation of Labour
Mr Helga Jónsdóttir	Federation of State and Municipal Employees
Mr Bjarni Már Gylfason	Federation of Icelandic Industries

**Liechtenstein**

Mr Josef Beck	Liechtenstein Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Mr Sigi Langenbahn	Federation of Liechtenstein Employees

**Norway**

Mr Thomas Angell	Federation of Norwegian Commercial and Service Enterprises
Ms Liz Helgesen	Norwegian Confederation of Unions for Professionals
Mr Christopher Navelsaker	Norwegian Confederation of Vocational Unions
Mr André Nerheim	Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions
Ms Bente Stenberg-Nilsen	Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities
Mr Espen Søylen	Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise

**Switzerland**

Mr Jan Atteslander	economiesuisse
Ms Ruth Derrer Balladore	Swiss Union of Employers
Mr Jean-Pierre Monti	Swiss Workers' Federation

Mr Marco Taddei

Swiss Union of Small and Medium-sized  
Enterprises

Mr Pierre Weiss

Fédération des Entreprises Romandes  
Genève