

**EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA**  
**STANDING COMMITTEE**  
**OF THE EFTA STATES**

Ref. No.: 1092147

30 June 2009

**NORWEGIAN CHAIR**  
**EFTA STANDING COMMITTEE – SECOND HALF 2009**

**WORK PROGRAMME**

The main focus of the Norwegian Chair during the second half of 2009 will be to:

- Ensure an efficient incorporation of new legislative acts in order to safeguard the good functioning and homogeneity of the EEA Agreement.
- Promote EEA EFTA participation in EEA-relevant EU bodies and fora.
- Monitor implications of the financial crisis on the internal market and safeguard the interests of the EEA EFTA States within this field.
- If Iceland applies for membership in the EU, initiate an assessment of any necessary adjustments to the EEA cooperation and establish an appropriate dialogue with the EU on the matter.
- Be actively involved in all stages of EU decision making of EEA-relevant legislation and actions, including making a priority list for possible EEA EFTA comments.
- Prepare the implementation of a new EEA Financial Mechanism.

This Programme will be supplemented by the Work Programmes for the Sub-committees and for selected EEA EFTA Working Groups.

## I. Key EEA EFTA Priorities

- **New EEA Financial Mechanism**  
Prepare the implementation of a new EEA Financial Mechanism by establishing Rules and Procedures and starting negotiations with beneficiary countries on programming frameworks (MoUs).
- **Climate and energy policies**  
Establish a dialogue with the Commission on the inclusion of relevant parts of the climate and energy package in the EEA Agreement. Identify necessary adaptations, including on the renewable energy directive and the revised emissions trade directive. Take part, to the extent possible, in comitology work in the EU as part of the implementation of the package.
- **New and revised legislation in connection with the financial crisis**  
Work actively to secure appropriate EEA EFTA representation in a new European System of Financial Supervision and a European Systemic Risk Council, which are expected to be announced in September 2009 and be finally established in late autumn 2009. Assess the necessity for adaptations.

Monitor new initiatives from the Commission on Financial Services and consider EEA EFTA input. Follow in particular the review of the Deposit Guarantee Scheme and the report from the Commission at the end of 2009. Stay in dialogue with the Commission and provide input where possible.

- **Food Law Package**  
Finalise incorporation of the Food Law package into the EEA Agreement, including EEA EFTA participation in the European Food Safety Authority, and ensure incorporation of acts which are on hold due to the delay in the entry into force of the Food Law package.
- **EU integrated maritime policy (IMP)**  
Continue to provide input to the EU process, including the status report to the European Council in the autumn of 2009 and on any discussions on the main focus and priorities of the maritime policy beyond 2009.
- **Consumer Affairs**  
Follow closely and consider input to the discussions, especially focusing on the following issues:
  - the new proposal for a Directive on Consumer Rights;
  - new EU initiatives in the field of consumer redress, including a possible proposal for a Directive on damages actions for infringements of the EU competition rules;
  - developments regarding the proposal for a Regulation on food information to the consumer;

- **Transport**  
The process with regard to the Directive on establishing rights of passengers in bus and coach transport.

## **II. Horizontal and flanking issues**

- **Services of general interest**  
Prepare EEA EFTA input to discussions on the Communication on Services of general interest, including social services of general interest. Assess the possible implications for national policies.
- **Social agenda package**  
Examine the different initiatives launched in the revised social agenda and the subsequent follow-up on the EU side with a view to assessing possible implications for national policies, with particular focus on the proposed directives and possible involvement in the EU process.
- **Lisbon Strategy post 2010**  
Closely follow preparation for the Lisbon Strategy post 2010 and possible implications for national policies and EEA EFTA involvement. Consider EEA EFTA input to the EU process.
- **Lisbon Treaty**  
Prepare for the possible entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty with focus on possible implications for the EEA cooperation.
- **Participation in programmes and activities 2007-2013**  
Monitor EEA EFTA participation in recent or new programmes/activities:
  - European Year for Creativity and Innovation in 2009;
  - Erasmus Mundus II – (2009-2013);
  - European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010;
  - European Programme for Critical Infrastructure Protection and the action programme “Prevention, Preparedness and Consequence Management of Terrorism and other Security Related Risks”;
  - (Proposal) Community programme to support specific activities in the field of financial services, financial reporting and auditing (2010-2013);
  - (Proposal) European Year for Volunteering 2011;
  - (Proposal) MEDIA Mundus (2011-2013);

- (Proposal) Interoperability solutions for European public administrations (ISA) (2010-2015);
  - (Planned) Joint programming initiatives under the European Research Area, in particular the pilot initiative on Alzheimer and neurodegenerative diseases.
- **Legal instrument for the European research infrastructure consortium (ERIC)**  
Assess the Regulation and its implications for the EEA EFTA States.
  - **The agencies and institutes**
    - In general, safeguard the interest of the EEA EFTA States with regard to participation in governing bodies of EEA-relevant EU agencies and institutes.
    - Prepare for participation in European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (Bilbao Agency).
    - Ensure EEA EFTA participation in the:
      - a. Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER) which is to be established
      - b. European Network for Transmission System Operators for electricity and gas (ENTSO)
      - c. Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC)
    - Secure appropriate EEA EFTA participation in the EU Authorities and Risk Council within the new structure for European Financial Supervision to be established in 2010.
  - **Participation in boards, committees and other bodies of the EU**  
Find ways to improve EEA EFTA participation in EU High Level Groups, as well as Open method of coordination (OMC) working groups.
  - **EU maritime transport strategy until 2018**  
Contribute actively in the process of identifying the key areas for action that will strengthen the competitiveness of the maritime sector while enhancing its environmental performance. Follow closely and participate in the discussions on how to create an attractive framework for quality shipping and other maritime industries that will contribute to the success of the Lisbon Growth and Jobs Strategy, and ensure the resilience of the European maritime transport sector in the face of economic slowdown.
  - **Criminal sanctions in internal market legislation**  
Continue discussion with the Commission on a possible adaptation text to the

revised Directive on ship source pollution and the Directive on Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law.

- **Medicinal Products**  
Follow development in the EU regarding the new Pharma Package proposal from 2008. Finalise EEA EFTA Comments.
- **Article 19 and Protocol 3 of the EEA Agreement**  
Pursue the constructive dialogue with respect to Article 19 and Protocol 3 EEA.

### III. Legal Acts

#### General objective

One main priority will be to look into ways to ensure a more efficient incorporation of legislative acts into the EEA Agreement and to avoid a backlog of adopted acts.

- **The Postal Services Directive**  
Conclude an assessment of the Directive in the EEA EFTA States, and have a dialogue with the Commission on the matter.
- **Data Storage Directive**  
Conclude an assessment of the Directive in the EEA EFTA States, and have a dialogue with the Commission on the matter.
- **Novel Food and GM Food and Feed**  
Carry out further discussions on the incorporation into the EEA Agreement of Novel Food and GM Food and Feed, and monitor the finalisation of a new Regulation on Novel Food.
- **Deposit guarantee scheme directive**  
Discuss possible adaptation text with the Commission to ensure a continuous high level of protection of deposits in the EEA.
- **Social Security**  
Prepare the incorporation of the 2004 Regulation on the coordination of social security systems in accordance with the agreed time frame in spring 2011.
- **Third energy market liberalisation package**  
Establish a dialogue with the Commission on the inclusion of relevant parts of this package into the EEA Agreement, including participation in the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER) and the cooperation in European Network of Transmission System Operators (ENTSO).
- **Marine Equipment Directive**  
Incorporate the directive into the EEA Agreement.

- **Medicinal Products**  
Ensure the entry into force of the 2004 Pharma Package, adopted on 29.5.2009.
- **Road Safety**  
Follow up on the new Road Safety Action Plan, which the Commission will present during the second half of 2009.
- **Plant protection products**  
Initiate an assessment of the new Regulation on plant protection products.
- **Organic production**  
Prepare the incorporation of the new Regulations on organic production and labeling of organic products.
- **Aviation**  
Ensure incorporation of a bilateral US-Norway Aviation Agreement similar to the US-EU Agreement (“Open Skies I”).
- **Land Transport**  
Propose necessary adaptations to and possibly incorporate the Eurovignette Directive 2006/38/EC.
- **Audiovisual Media Services Directive**  
Finalise discussions on the directive and ensure incorporation into the EEA Agreement.
- **Marine Strategy Directive**  
Initiate a dialogue with the Commission on appropriate ways of a possible link-up of Norway and Iceland to the Directive.
- **Cross-border health care directive**  
Follow closely, developments on the EU side and maintain a dialogue with the Commission and EU member states on the matter, with a view to assessing implications for national policies and providing input to the EU process.

#### **IV. Support to the EEA Agreement**

- Emphasise the importance of being actively involved and pro-active in all stages of the decision shaping.
- Strengthen the contacts with the national experts from EEA EFTA States and their input to the EEA EFTA process.
- Continue to enhance knowledge of the EEA Agreement within the EEA, in particular within EU institutions and the EU Member States.

- Review the decision on public access to EFTA documents with special emphasis on the EFTA Secretariat's practice regarding classification of documents.
- Establish an annual meeting between EEA EFTA ministers and the EFTA Parliamentary Committee and the Consultative Committee, in connection with the EEA Council.
- Finalise the establishment of a Forum for Regional and Local Authorities in the EEA EFTA States to ensure a platform for an active dialogue between the regional authorities of the EEA EFTA States and the EU.
- Reallocate relevant topics and themes from the Group on the Lisbon Strategy and other Horizontal Issues to the EFTA Standing Committee, EEA Joint Committee, the Working Group on Enterprise Policy and other relevant EFTA groups, with the aim of enhanced focus and discussions.