

E U R O P E A N E C O N O M I C A R E A
FORUM OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Ref: 1106786

THIRD MEETING OF THE EEA EFTA FORUM

Hamar
31 May and 1 June 2011

Opinion on Multilevel Governance in the EEA

Rapporteur: Bjarni Jónsson

The EEA EFTA Forum of Local and Regional Authorities:

- A. noting the reinforced subsidiarity principle set out in the Lisbon Treaty and its explicit reference to the local and regional dimension and self-government,
 - B. recalling the role of the Committee of the Regions (CoR) in the EU to defend and promote the subsidiarity principle with regards to levels of governance,
 - C. noting the role of the Forum as a body in the EFTA structure,
 - D. acknowledging the impact of EU regulations on local and regional authorities in the EEA EFTA States through the EEA-agreement,
 - E. emphasizing that local and regional authorities of the EEA EFTA countries face several challenges different to those of local authorities in the European Union.
-
- 1. refers to recent studies concluding that EEA legislation is implemented without sufficient input from local and regional government;
 - 2. supports the CoR initiative of drawing up a European Charter on Multilevel Governance, establishing principles and methods for developing a common and shared understanding of European governance based on partnership between levels of government;
 - 3. underlines that multilevel governance needs to be strengthened also within the EEA;
 - 4. welcomes the European Commission's initiative on smarter regulation to reduce administrative burdens and to simplify and improve legislation,

5. notes the references in the initiative to the local and regional dimension of smart regulation and the recognition of the role Europe's local and regional authorities have in EEA policy making and implementation of legislation;
6. believes that smarter regulation should be pursued in the spirit of multilevel governance;
7. supports the CoR opinion that the EU institutions should listen to local and regional government when designing legislation, assessing its impacts and devising ways to implement EU policies and objectives, noting the provision of the Lisbon Treaty stipulating that any EU draft legislative act should contain an assessment of its potential impact, taking also into account the local and regional levels;
8. asks the relevant EFTA bodies to inform and consult the Forum at an early stage concerning initiatives and proposals which may impact on local and regional government;
9. calls on the EFTA Committees and the joint EEA Committees to take the interest of local and regional authorities into account in their work;
10. points out that the Forum provides new channels for cooperation, communication and dialogue between the EU and the EEA EFTA bodies;
11. underlines that the Forum can strengthen the voice of the EEA EFTA States in relation to EEA legislation affecting local and regional government;
12. emphasises that the Forum should be recognised as an advisory body in the EFTA structure.