

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

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SIXTH MEETING OF THE EEA EFTA FORUM

Brussels
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Opinion on labour migration within the EEA and impact on the local and regional level

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The EEA EFTA Forum of Local and Regional Authorities:

- A. Having regard to the EEA Agreement on Free Movement of Persons;
- B. Noting the reinforced subsidiarity principle set out in the Lisbon Treaty and its explicit reference to the local and regional dimension and self-government;
- C. Noting the role of the Forum as a body in the EFTA structure;
- D. Having regard to the increased migration of workers to Iceland and Norway from EU Member States following in particular the enlargement of the EU;
 - 1. Highlights the positive effects increased labour migration to Iceland and Norway has had for the economies, in particular after the EU enlargement in 2004;
 - 2. Recognises that the influx of cross-border workers to Iceland and Norway has in general not had a negative influence on employment levels or average salary levels;
 - 3. Underlines that the unemployment rate for migrant workers is generally higher than that of the general population and is concerned about how to tackle this and the long term impact this may have on social security, social benefits and other welfare costs borne by local authorities;
 - 4. Notes that labour migration has led to social dumping in certain sectors, and supports the measures taken by Icelandic and Norwegian Governments, in cooperation with the social partners, to prevent social dumping and circumvention of national rules and regulations on wages and working conditions;
 - 5. Stresses the importance of EU legislation being developed in a manner that allows the EEA EFTA States to maintain their labour market models;

6. Acknowledges that whereas unemployment is an issue of concern in the EU and Iceland, the situation differs in Norway that needs to attract foreign workers in certain sectors;
7. Highlights that Norway and Iceland have been able to maintain their social and welfare models with the increased mobility of persons within the European labour market;
8. Welcomes the proposal for modernisation of the Professional Qualifications Directive and the introduction of a European Professional Card, as simplification and clarification of the recognition of professional qualifications and language requirements is key to promoting the mobility of skilled workers, which is vital for the improvement of the European labour market; and
9. Encourages the introduction of a functioning alert mechanism that prevents professionals with malpractice to continue service in a different state.