

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
26 – 27 November 2012

Opinion on European cooperation programmes 2014 – 2020 and the participation of the local and regional level in EEA EFTA States

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The EEA EFTA Forum of Local and Regional Authorities:

- A. Having regard to the proposal for a Multiannual Financial Framework 2014 – 2020, presented by the European Commission on 30 June 2011, and the proposals for new EU programmes;
 - B. Noting the Opinion of the Committee of the Regions on the Multiannual Financial Framework post-2013 of October 2012;
 - C. Noting the reinforced subsidiarity principle set out in the Lisbon Treaty and its explicit reference to the local and regional dimension and self-government;
 - D. Noting the role of the Forum as a body in the EFTA structure;
 - E. Acknowledging the impact of EU regulation on local and regional authorities in the EEA EFTA States through the EEA Agreement;
 - F. Recognising that the EU programmes are a key financial instrument to stimulate sustainable growth, employment and competitiveness in Europe;
 - G. Recognising that authorities in the EU Member States increasingly use EU Structural Funds to reach targets set by the Internal Market legislation, whilst corresponding support is not available for local and regional authorities in EEA EFTA States;
1. Welcomes the budget proposal from the European Commission and the proposals for new EU programmes for 2014 – 2020;

2. Welcomes simplifications measures in the EU programmes, as administrative burden is a major hurdle preventing municipalities and regions from participating effectively in European cooperation programmes;
3. Welcomes the proposal for Horizon 2020 and recognises the role of research for growth stimulation and employment creation at the local and regional level;
4. Supports the increased spending on education and the new education programme, Erasmus for All, and reiterates the need to support national efforts to improve skills and reduce drop-outs among European youth, and calls for the full participation of the EEA EFTA States in Erasmus for All;
5. Stresses the need for efforts to combat youth unemployment, and calls for the full participation of the EEA EFTA States in the new Programme for Social Change and Innovation;
6. Calls on the EEA EFTA States to assess the new programme proposals and decide swiftly on participation, in consultation with local and regional authorities, to ensure timely participation of stakeholders in the EEA EFTA States;
7. Calls for continuing participation in the Interreg Programme, formalised, and with adequate funding, as it is an important tool for regional development in both Norway and Iceland;
8. Calls on the EEA EFTA States to provide increased support for municipalities and regions to access and make use of the funds available through European Programmes;
9. Calls on the EEA EFTA States to explore participation in new European programmes, e.g. Europe for Citizens and LIFE+, in consultation with local and regional authorities; and
10. Calls on the EEA EFTA States to explore measures to promote increased participation of local and regional actors in EEA / Norway Grants projects.