



2024/269

8.2.2024

DECISION OF THE EEA JOINT COMMITTEE No 228/2021

of 28 July 2021

amending Protocol 31 to the EEA Agreement, on cooperation in specific fields outside the four freedoms [2024/269]

THE EEA JOINT COMMITTEE,

Having regard to the Agreement on the European Economic Area (“the EEA Agreement”), and in particular Articles 86 and 98 thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) It is appropriate to extend the cooperation of the Contracting Parties to the EEA Agreement to include Regulation (EU) 2021/697 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2021 establishing the European Defence Fund and repealing Regulation (EU) 2018/1092 ⁽¹⁾.
- (2) It is appropriate that the participation of EFTA States in the activities resulting from Regulation (EU) 2021/697 commence from 1 January 2021, irrespective of when this Decision is adopted, or whether the fulfilment of constitutional requirements for this Decision, if any, is notified after 10 July 2021.
- (3) Entities established in the EFTA States should be entitled to participate in activities which start before the entry into force of this Decision. The costs incurred for such activities, the implementation of which starts after 1 January 2021, may be considered eligible under the same conditions as those applicable to costs incurred by entities established in the EU Member States, provided that this Decision enters into force before the end of the action concerned.
- (4) The conditions for participation of EFTA States and their institutions, undertakings, organizations and nationals in programmes of the European Union are set out in the EEA Agreement and in particular in Article 81 thereof.
- (5) Protocol 31 to the EEA Agreement should therefore be amended accordingly, in order to allow for this extended cooperation to take place from 1 January 2021,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

The following is added in paragraph 5 of Article 1 of Protocol 31 to the EEA Agreement:

‘- **32021 R 0697**: Regulation (EU) 2021/697 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2021 establishing the European Defence Fund and repealing Regulation (EU) 2018/1092 (OJ L 170, 12.5.2021, p. 149).

The costs incurred for activities the implementation of which starts after 1 January 2021 may be considered eligible as from the starting date of the action fixed in the grant agreement or the grant decision concerned, under the conditions set out therein, provided that Decision of the EEA Joint Committee No 228/2021 of 28 July 2021 enters into force before the end of the action.

Iceland and Liechtenstein shall be exempted from the participation in, and the financial contribution to, this programme.’

Article 2

This Decision shall enter into force on the day following the last notification under Article 103(1) of the EEA Agreement *.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 170, 12.5.2021, p. 149.

* No constitutional requirements indicated.

It shall apply from 1 January 2021.

Article 3

This Decision shall be published in the EEA Section of, and in the EEA Supplement to, the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

Done at Brussels, 28 July 2021.

For the EEA Joint Committee
The President
Per SJAASTAD

Declaration by the EFTA States
to Decision No 228/2021 of 28 July 2021 amending Protocol 31 to the EEA Agreement to extend the
cooperation of the Contracting Parties to include the participation of the EFTA States in the
European Defence Fund

[for adoption with the Decision and for publication in the OJ]

This Decision extends the cooperation of the Contracting Parties to include the participation of the EFTA States in the European Defence Fund. The EFTA States consider that defence matters fall outside the scope of the EEA Agreement, and therefore that the adoption of this Decision does not extend the scope of the EEA Agreement to include defence matters beyond the participation of the EFTA States in the European Defence Fund. The EFTA States also stress that Iceland and Liechtenstein shall not participate in, and shall not financially contribute to, the European Defence Fund.
