

PRIORITIES OF THE NORWEGIAN CHAIR SECOND HALF OF 2021

The purpose of this overview is to highlight the priorities of the EFTA Standing Committee during the second half of 2021. The programme is supplemented by work programmes prepared for the subcommittees and selected EEA EFTA working papers.

Incorporation of legal acts

Based on the shared responsibility between the parties of the EEA Agreement, continue the good dialogue and the systematic efforts to ensure the timely incorporation of EEA-relevant EU acts thus maintaining a level playing field within the EEA. Particular focus on critical acts, including acts within financial services (cover bonds, the banking package and revision of ESA regulations), transport (the railway packages, EASA), European Labour Authority regulation and the European Communication code and BEREC.

COVID-19

Maintain close cooperation and coordination with the EU on response to and recovery from COVID-19, ensuring the functioning of the Internal Market and the integrity of the EEA. Ensure swift incorporation of EEA-relevant legal acts within this area.

Decision shaping

Identify and provide input to relevant EU legislation and measures in the pre-pipeline and pipeline stages. Main focus for the second half of 2021 include:

- initiatives under the European Green Deal including, fit for 55 package (incl. revision of EU-ETS, effort sharing regulation, LULUCF - land use, land use change and forestry, carbon border adjustment mechanism, renewable energy directive), the mobility package, the circular economy action plan, the chemical strategy and the biodiversity strategy, the battery regulation.
- initiatives arising from Europe's Digital Decade including the Digital Service Act and Digital Markets Act, the NIS2 directive, the Data Governance Act, regulation on E-id, roaming, and the AI regulation.
- the proposal for a European health union.
- revision of banking resolution and deposit guarantees, anti-money laundering (AML) revision and possible establishment of new AML supervisory agency.
- labour and social issues, including collective bargaining/minimum wage, working standards, gender equality and non-discrimination.

Identify and engage with EU cooperation in overarching areas such as maritime issues, open strategic autonomy, competitiveness, and industrial policy.

Actively use EEA EFTA comments as an instrument for influencing the EU decision-making process, in addition to meetings with officials from EU institutions and other written statements.

EEA Outreach

Strengthen the knowledge of the EEA Agreement through full use of available tools and arenas, including EFTA House. In addition to the biannual seminars, aim at organising a seminar/workshop to increase knowledge about the EEA agreement and the rights and obligations of the EEA EFTA States, in the EU institutions.

Participation in EU programmes under the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027

Ensure swift incorporation of relevant EU programmes into the EEA Agreement. Ensure that EEA EFTA States participation is based on the rights and obligations specified in the EEA Agreement.

Other activities

Financial Mechanism

Follow the negotiations on a future financial contribution of the EEA EFTA States to the social and economic cohesion in the EEA. The negotiations should be conducted with a view to promoting a continuous and balanced strengthening of trade and economic relations, in line with Article 115 of the EEA Agreement. In conformity with established practice, the negotiations on the Financial Mechanism, will take place in parallel with negotiations on market access for fish and other marine products.