

**PRIORITIES OF THE ICELANDIC CHAIR
STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE EFTA STATES
SECOND HALF OF 2022**

The purpose of this overview is to highlight the priorities of the Icelandic Chair of the EFTA Standing Committee during the second half of 2022. The priorities are supplemented by work programmes prepared for Subcommittees I-IV and selected EFTA Working Groups.

Incorporation of EEA relevant acts

Timely incorporation of EEA-relevant EU legislation into the EEA Agreement is crucial to ensure a level playing field throughout the EEA. Prioritize efforts to reduce the backlog and ensure that the EFTA side deliver a meaningful number of draft Joint Committee decisions on continuous basis to the EU side.

A particular focus will be made on the incorporation of acts in the fields of energy, financial services, transport, statistics and wine and spirits. Specific efforts will be placed on exhausting all possibilities to tackle the outstanding acts within the framework of the current EEA incorporation procedures.

Strive to reduce the number of Joint Committee decisions where entry into force is pending due to constitutional requirements, particularly for Joint Committee decisions where more than six months have passed since adoption.

Follow closely Ukraine-related acts and ensure swift incorporation into the EEA Agreement when EEA-relevant.

Decision-shaping

Continue to identify and provide input to the EU on EEA relevant initiatives and encourage EEA EFTA Comments when appropriate and possible.

Being half-way through the term of the current Commission, emphasis is placed on providing input on relevant proposals being discussed in the Council and the European Parliament falling under the *European Green Deal* including the whole fit for 55 package and including the ETS and aviation and the Refuel EU Aviation Initiative, *a Europe fit for the Digital Age* including the proposals on cybersecurity and artificial intelligence, *an Economy that works for People* including the Anti-Money Laundering Package (AML) and sustainable and digital finance matters and *Promoting a European Way of Life* including the proposal on minimum wages and the forthcoming revision of pharmaceutical legislation.

For all initiatives, it is particularly important to identify at an early stage possible two pillar issues related to major pieces of new EEA relevant legislation including on the proposal for an AML authority and the recently adopted Digital Markets Act.

EEA Outreach to ensuring the good functioning of the EEA Agreement

Continue to strengthen the knowledge of the EEA Agreement and the Financial Mechanisms and make full use of the available tools and the EFTA House to disseminate information on the EEA. The EEA Council will be hosted for the first time in the EFTA House in November of this year.

In addition to the biannual EEA seminars, a special event on energy and energy security will be organised. Renewables is the way forward and this could be a sustainable, green and cost-effective way to address the current energy situation. The aim is inter alia to showcase the potential of utilising geothermal energy for district heating as well as other solutions from the EEA EFTA States.

Continue outreach activities undertaken by the Secretariat within the framework of the EFTA Working Groups and invite EU counterparts to the EFTA House.

Participation in EU programmes

Continue to ensure that EEA EFTA States' participation in relevant EU programmes for the current programme period 2021-2027 is based on the rights and obligations set out in the EEA Agreement.

Synergies between the three EFTA House organisations

Continue work to enhance the synergies between the three EFTA House organisations.

Other activities – Financial Mechanism

Negotiations on our financial contributions to the social economic cohesion in the EEA were kicked off on 16 June. Ensure efficiency and continuity on the new fund and parallel processes on trade related issues with a view to promoting a continuous and balanced strengthening of trade and economic relations in line with article 115 of the Agreement.