

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

Ref. 18-4630

EIGHTEENTH MEETING OF THE EEA EFTA FORUM

Brussels

6-7 December 2018

OPINION ON EU PROGRAMMES 2021 – 2027

Of high interest to the EEA EFTA States and participation at the local and regional level

Rapporteur: Kolbrún Jóna Pétursdóttir

The EEA EFTA Forum of Local and Regional Authorities:

A. Having regard to the proposal for a Multiannual Financial Framework 2021 – 2027, presented by the European Commission on 2 May 2018, and the proposals for new EU programmes;

B. Noting the Opinion of the Committee of the Regions on the Multiannual Financial Framework of October 2018;

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 support sustainable growth in European municipalities and regions by stimulating knowledge sharing and fostering European research and innovation;

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. Takes note of the budget proposal from the European Commission and the proposals for new EU programmes for 2021 – 2027;

2. Welcomes a more coherent, focused and transparent framework for the EU programmes, as the administrative burden is a major hurdle preventing municipalities and regions from participating effectively in the programmes;
3. Supports the proposal on climate mainstreaming across all EU programmes, with a target of 25% of EU expenditure contributing to climate objectives, recognising the need for increased investment at local and regional level in relation to the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals;
4. Supports increased focus on European youth and reiterates the need to reduce drop-outs and to combat unemployment among young people in Europe;
5. 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 the EEA EFTA States;
6. Calls on the EEA EFTA States to provide increased support for municipalities and regions to access and make use of the funds available through EU programmes;
7. Welcomes the proposal for Horizon Europe, the new research and innovation framework programme, and recognises the opportunities for more research and innovation for the development of future public services and employment creation at the local and regional level;
8. Calls for continuing participation in relevant parts of the Interreg Programme, as it is an important tool for regional development in both Norway and Iceland;
9. Highlights that the new LIFE and Rights & Values programmes offer some highly relevant cooperation opportunities for local and regional authorities in the EEA EFTA States with their EU counterparts;
10. Asks the EFTA Secretariat to forward the opinion to the Standing Committee of the EFTA States.