

E U R O P E A N E C O N O M I C A R E A
F O R U M O F L O C A L A N D R E G I O N A L A U T H O R I T I E S

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S E V E N T H M E E T I N G O F T H E E E A E F T A F O R U M

Bergen
20 – 21 June 2013

Opinion on the EEA and Norway Financial Mechanisms

Rapporteur: *Christian Haugen*

The EEA EFTA Forum of Local and Regional Authorities (the Forum):

- A. Having regard to Protocol 38A to the Agreement on the European Economic Area (the EEA Agreement) on the EEA Financial Mechanism;
 - B. Noting the Agreement between the European Union, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway on an EEA Financial Mechanism for the period 2009-2014;
 - C. Noting the Agreement between the European Union and Norway on a Norwegian Financial Mechanism for the period 2009-2014;
 - D. Having regard to the baseline study on bilateral relations and the EEA Grants and Norway Grants (the Grants) of February 2013;
 - E. Noting the reinforced subsidiarity principle set out in the Lisbon Treaty and its explicit reference to the local and regional dimension and self-government;
 - F. Having regard to the important role of local and regional authorities in reducing economic and social disparities in Europe;
 - G. Acknowledging the impact of EU law on local and regional authorities in the EEA EFTA States through the EEA Agreement;
 - H. Noting the role of the Forum as a body in the EFTA structure.
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- 1. Encourages the Governments of the EEA EFTA States to ensure that local and regional views are reflected in the Grants, through timely consultation on programme priorities for the upcoming financial period, i.e. through their associations in the EEA EFTA countries;

2. Asks that local and regional authorities in the beneficiary countries be specifically indicated as beneficiaries of the Grants;
3. Encourages the European Commission and the Governments of the EEA EFTA States to include special programmes addressing local and regional government issues in the next financial period for the Grants;
4. Proposes that mechanisms for encouraging partnerships between local and regional authorities in donor and beneficiary countries be further developed in the memoranda of understanding between the EEA EFTA States and the beneficiary countries;
5. Instructs its President to forward this Opinion to the EFTA Standing Committee at Ministerial level.