

EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA

FORUM OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES OF THE EEA EFTA STATES

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NINETEENTH MEETING OF THE FORUM OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES OF THE EEA EFTA STATES

Hurdal

27-28 June 2019

OPINION ON THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S REFLECTION PAPER ON A SUSTAINABLE EUROPE BY 2030

Rapporteur: Runar Bålsrud

The EEA EFTA Forum on Local and Regional Authorities:

A. Having regard to the European Commission's Reflection Paper Towards a Sustainable Europe by 2030;

B. Noting that an important purpose of the Reflection Paper is to inspire a roadmap towards a more united, stronger and more democratic union;

C. Noting that the European Council, in its informal meeting in Sibiu on 9 May 2019, renewed the union's commitment to work with issues of particular interest and concern to European citizens;

D. Acknowledging the need for consistent leadership and oversight when confronting transformative risks as argued by the European Political Strategy Centre in its report "Europe's Sustainability Puzzle";

E. Noting the ongoing work on an opinion on the European Commission's Reflection Paper Towards a Sustainable Europe by 2030 by the European Committee of the Regions;

F. Noting the global commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals;

G. Noting the reinforced subsidiarity principle set out in the Lisbon Treaty and its explicit reference to local and regional dimension and self-government;

H. Noting the role of the Forum as a body in the EFTA structure;

1. Acknowledge that implementing Agenda 2030 needs the commitment and leadership of a major actor such as the European Union;

2. Welcomes the EU's support for multi-level governance based on the principles of subsidiarity and autonomy when delivering on the Sustainable Development Goals;

3. Underlines that the European Commission offers comprehensive causality between policy areas in a three-dimensional (environment, society and economy) framework;
4. Emphasises that this approach is helpful for municipalities and regions when fulfilling their obligations to their citizens;
5. Understands that the Reflection Paper is limited to assessing the SDG's relevance and achievement of the policy implemented by the current Commission;
6. Recognises the lack of discussion of gaps in current policy; possible need for a shift in emphasis; and requirements for complementing action for more efficient SDG implementation;
7. Understands the importance of the Reflection Paper for future trade agreements;
8. Takes note of risks when leading and overseeing transformation of society;
9. Understands the crucial role of local and regional governments as regulators and providers of public good in making bold transformative choices and encourage the inhabitants to reflect on their choices;
10. Calls on the EEA EFTA States to encourage joint and shared EEA and EFTA action for the SDGs;
11. Calls on the EFTA States to facilitate and promote local and regional action for the SDGs with due local and regional inclusion when reporting achievements;
12. Understands the importance of SDG concerns in new EU policy and new programmes as well as in future trade relations;
13. Encourages the EFTA States to consult with local and regional governments on SDGs when assessing EEA relevance, integrating EU directives and implementing EEA policy;
14. Appreciates the opportunity to use the Reflection Paper when local and regional political leaders clarify how global considerations impact on local choices and how current preferences precondition the lifestyle of future generations;
15. Recognises the important role of youth in shaping future society built on the SDGs and encourages the use of youth consultative bodies at the local and regional level in the EEA States.
16. Asks the EFTA Secretariat to forward the opinion to the Standing Committee of the EFTA States.