

EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA

**JOINT PARLIAMENTARY  
COMMITTEE**

**22<sup>ND</sup> MEETING**

**26 - 27 April 2004, Vaduz**

**RESOLUTIONS & RECOMMENDATION**

Adopted at the 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Joint Parliamentary Committee

in Vaduz, 27 April 2004

Resolution on the

***Draft annual report on the functioning of the EEA Agreement in 2003***

Co-rapporteurs: Mr Morten HØGLUND (Progressive Party, Norway) and  
Ms Diana WALLIS (ELDR, United Kingdom)

adopted unanimously

Resolution on

***Towards participatory democracy: the role of local and regional authorities in the EU  
and the EEA***

Co-rapporteurs: Ms Erika MANN (PES, Germany) and  
Ms Bryndis HLÖDVERSDÓTTIR (Social Democratic Alliance, Iceland)

adopted unanimously.

Recommendation on the

***EU ban of CO gas in the packaging of fresh meat***

Draftsman: Mr Morten HØGLUND (Progressive Party, Norway)

adopted unanimously with four abstentions

## RESOLUTION

### **On the draft annual report on the functioning of the EEA Agreement in 2003**

The Joint Parliamentary Committee of the European Economic Area:

- A. in accordance with its task laid out by the EEA Agreement (Article 95, paragraph 4),
- B. emphasising that the EEA EFTA States are not third countries in matters concerning the Internal Market, but full participants, on the basis of the institutional two-pillar system of the EEA.
- C. mindful of the importance of maintaining homogeneity within the EEA,
- D. noting that the information and consultation process provided for by the EEA Agreement is an essential tool for the EFTA States for the shaping of common rules,
- E. recalling its resolution on the functioning of the EEA in 1994 (adopted 29 May 1995), in 1995 (adopted 3 June 1996), in 1996 (adopted 14 April 1997) in 1997 (adopted 25 May 1998), in 1999 (adopted 16 March 2000), in 2000 (adopted 24 May 2001), in 2001 (adopted 20 June 2002) and in 2002 (adopted 20 May 2003),
  - 1. welcomes the draft Annual Report of the EEA Joint Committee for 2003 and agrees with the general assessment that the EEA is functioning well;
  - 2. recalls its resolution adopted at the 20<sup>th</sup> JPC where it encouraged the EEA Joint Committee to draft a more analytical report for 2003 taking major EU developments into account when assessing the functioning of the Agreement, and a more comprehensive Report enabling the functioning of the Agreement to be understood by a wider audience, which could enhance the democratic scrutiny of the functioning of the Agreement, and regrets that this has only slightly been taken into account;
  - 3. appreciates the statement delivered by the President-in-office of the EEA Joint Committee at the 21<sup>st</sup> EEA JPC, following the JPC resolutions adopted at the 20<sup>th</sup> meeting of the EEA JPC concerning the functioning of the EEA Agreement in 2002;
  - 4. welcomes the high, and increased, number of Joint Committee Decisions incorporated into the EEA Agreement during 2003;

5. reiterates its warning that incompleteness in the homogeneity of the Internal Market within the EEA by 1 May 2004 could have serious consequences for the functioning of the Market, but notes with satisfaction the minimal transposition deficit in the EEA EFTA States in 2003;
6. welcomes the significantly reduced backlog on the EFTA side as integration of new EU acts into the Agreement takes less time than before due to improved administrative procedures;
7. welcomes the Joint Committee decisions to integrate the Directive on Patenting of biotechnical inventions, the Biocidals Directive, the Money Laundering Directive and the Decision on cross-border payments in euro, which had been outstanding for some time;
8. reiterates its resolution adopted at the 20<sup>th</sup> EEA JPC where the JPC urged the contracting parties to find solutions with a view to integrating the supplementary protection certificates for medicinal products, notes that the issue was not discussed by the Joint Committee in 2003, and calls on the Joint Committee to explain in detail the nature of the problem;
9. calls on the Joint Committee to finalise its decision on the integration of the Regulation on the implementation of the .eu top level domain;
10. deplores the decrease in the number of EFTA comments on EC legislation which have been submitted to the EU side, and urges the EEA EFTA States to take actions with a view to enhanced participation in the EEA decision-shaping process at the earliest possible stage in the legislative process;
11. welcomes EEA EFTA comments submitted on general, horizontal policy issues to Heads of States and Governments and EU presidencies;
12. calls on the EEA EFTA States to report to the JPC how EFTA comments are distributed and followed up;
13. is concerned that the EEA EFTA States' ability to shape decisions and to make its voice heard in an enlarged EU could be reduced and calls on the EEA EFTA States to take appropriate steps as not to lose influence in the EU decision shaping process;
14. notes the increased role of agencies in the EU, underlines the need for EEA EFTA participation in EU agencies dealing with matters covered by the EEA Agreement, welcomes the participation of the EEA EFTA States in the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) and urges the contracting parties to make provisions for the EEA EFTA participation in the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and in the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA);

15. deplores the delays concerning EEA EFTA participation in EASA and EFSA due to issues of principle such as voting rights and budgetary contributions, and urges the contracting parties to agree on general principles once and for the foreseeable future to allow for a speedier EEA EFTA participation in EU agencies;
16. welcomes enlargement of the EU and the EEA on 1 May 2004, notes the outcome of the EEA enlargement negotiations and the considerable EEA EFTA contributions to social and economic cohesion in Europe through a new Financial Mechanism 2004-2009, but is aware of the concern of Iceland and Norway on the given export quotas for fish and maritime products to the new Member States as of 1 May 2004;
17. calls on EU and EFTA economic operators alike to participate in activities, projects or programmes under the new Financial Mechanism;
18. notes that Spain, Portugal and Greece continue to be beneficiaries under the new Financial Mechanism, and recalls its resolution adopted in March 1999 on the Functioning of the Agreement in 1998 where the JPC considered the Financial Mechanism (1995-1998) to be a temporary arrangement;
19. calls on the EEA EFTA States to pursue the Lisbon Strategy in line with the EU Member States, welcomes the inclusion of the EEA EFTA States in the Structural Indicators in 2003, calls on the EEA EFTA States to pursue monitoring and assessing the EU Neighbourhood Policy, and calls in particular on the EEA EFTA States to closely follow developments in the New Internal Market Strategy 2003-06;
20. recognises that the EU is in a period of transition and change and calls on the EEA Council and the EEA Joint Committee to be aware of and to address recent and future EU developments e.g. the new “Constitution for Europe” which could be agreed upon in June 2004, and the possible impact on the EEA Agreement, and to inform the EEA JPC;
21. welcomes the EEA EFTA Foreign Ministers’ address to the European Parliament on 17 March 2004 on their visions for future EU-EFTA cooperation within the framework of the EU’s new neighbourhood policy, and proposes that such debates could take place on a regular basis;
22. notes that after EEA enlargement, the EU’s new neighbourhood policy paves the way for a deeper political and economic relationship between the EU and the “Wider Europe” countries and calls on the EEA EFTA States to examine their relations with these countries in line with the EU.

## RESOLUTION

### **On “Towards participatory democracy: The role of local and regional authorities in the EU and the EEA”**

The Joint Parliamentary Committee of the European Economic Area:

- A. In accordance with its task laid out by the EEA Agreement (Article 95, paragraph 4)
- B. Having regard to the EEA Agreement and in particular Articles 95-96
- C. Having regard to the Maastricht Treaty (Articles 263-265 EC) of 1991, establishing the EU Committee of the Regions
- D. Having regard to the draft Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, prepared by the Convention on the Future of Europe
- E. Having regard to the European Commission’s work on European Governance
- F. Having regard to the Resolution on *New Governance of the EU and its implications for the European Economic Area*, adopted at the 17th meeting of the Joint Parliamentary Committee of the EEA in Brussels, 16 October 2001
- G. Noting the result of the Convention and acknowledging the efforts to increase participatory democracy within the EU
- H. Noting that local and regional governments in the EEA are responsible for the implementation and enforcement of a substantial part of EU and EEA legislation
- I. Welcoming the increased number of representations for local and regional authorities, both from the EFTA and EU States, in Brussels
- J. Regretting the lack of provisions in the EEA Agreement regarding cooperation between local and regional actors at EEA level
  - 1. Calls on the associations of local and regional authorities in the EEA States to take active part in EU policy shaping through European interest organisations for the local and regional levels;
  - 2. calls on the EFTA States to establish an EFTA Committee of the Regions, which would function as an advisory body representing local and regional representatives from the EFTA States;

3. calls for practical solutions in the EEA context to allow for informal cooperation between an EFTA Committee of the Regions and the EU's Committee of the Regions, and requests the EEA Council to report to the EEA JPC at its next meeting on the possible modalities for such cooperation;
4. urges the EEA EFTA States to take part in the town-twinning scheme under the new Community action programme to promote active European citizenship.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

#### **On the EU ban of CO gas in the packaging of fresh meat**

The Joint Parliamentary Committee of the European Economic Area:

- A. In accordance with its task laid out by the EEA Agreement (Article 95, paragraph 4)
  - B. Having regard to the EEA Agreement and in particular Article 102, paragraph 3
  - C. Having regard to the Opinion of the Scientific Committee for Food (SCF) of 13 December 2001 on the use of CO gas in the packaging of fresh meat
  - D. Having regard to the adopted European Parliament and Council Directive 2003/114/EC amending Directive 95/2/EC Directive on food additives other than colourers and sweeteners
  - E. Having regard to the future adoption of the Joint Committee Decision integrating Council Directive 2003/114/EC into the EEA Agreement
1. notes that CO gas has been used in packaging of fresh meat in Norway for 18 years without incidents or complaints;
  2. notes that a ban on CO gas on 1 July 2004 in the packaging of fresh meat in Norway would severely disrupt the sales of fresh meat in scarcely populated areas;
  3. notes that additional labelling requirements for the concerned products would be an appropriate way to deal with the risk that the presence of CO may mask visual evidence of spoilage should products be stored under inappropriate conditions;
  4. recommends that a transitional period for CO gas in the packaging of fresh meat in Norway should be reconsidered to allow market operators to adapt accordingly.
-