

EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA JOINT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE

34TH MEETING OF THE EEA JOINT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE

Vaduz, Liechtenstein

RESOLUTIONS

Adopted pursuant to Rules 11 and 13 of the Rules of Procedure,
at the 34th meeting of the Joint Parliamentary Committee

in Vaduz, Liechtenstein on 29 March 2010

1. **Resolution:** *The Annual Report on the Functioning of the EEA Agreement in 2009* (Ref. 1097634)

Co-rapporteurs: Mr Harry Quaderer (Patriotic Union, Liechtenstein)
Ms Zuzana Brzobohatá (S&D, Czech Republic)

adopted unanimously.

2. **Resolution:** *The Common Fisheries Policy and the EEA* (Ref.1098012)

Co-rapporteurs: Mr Harald T. Nesvik (Progress Party, Norway)
Mr Pat the Cope Gallagher (ALDE, Ireland)

adopted unanimously.

3. **Resolution:** *EEA and regional cooperation: New channels for dialogue* (Ref. 1098042)

Co-rapporteurs: Mr Svein Roald Hansen (Labour Party, Norway)
Mr Indrek Tarand (Greens/EFA, Estonia)

adopted unanimously.

RESOLUTION

on

The Annual Report on the Functioning of the EEA Agreement in 2009

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,
- C. Mindful of the importance of maintaining homogeneity within the EEA,
- D. Noting that the information and consultation process provided for in the EEA Agreement is an essential tool for the EFTA States to participate in the shaping of common rules,
- E. Acknowledging the importance of implementation of EEA legislation in order to establish a dynamic and homogenous European Economic Area,
- F. Recalling its resolutions 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), in 2002 (adopted 20 May 2003), in 2003 (adopted 27 April 2004), in 2004 (adopted 25 April 2005), in 2005 (adopted 22 May 2006), in 2006 (adopted 27 June 2007) and in 2008 (adopted 25 March 2009),
- G. Recalling its resolution on Implementation of EEA legislation (adopted on 10 October 2006) and its resolution on Enlarging the EEA: Experiences and Perspectives (adopted on 10 October 2006),
 1. Emphasises that the EEA Agreement needs to be taken seriously by all stakeholders in the EEA and needs to be the focus of constant efforts so that outstanding differences are solved promptly and that the good functioning of the EEA is not put at risk;
 2. Takes note of the Annual Report of the EEA Joint Committee for 2009; and agrees with the general assessment that the EEA functioned well in the reporting period;
 3. Calls on the EEA Joint Committee to continue to pay specific attention to the extraordinary circumstances created by the financial crisis and to have a continuous focus on the challenges this may pose to the good functioning of the EEA Agreement;

4. Welcomes the finalization of the Financial Mechanisms 2009-14 negotiations in December 2009 and the increased contribution of the EEA EFTA States towards reduced economic and social disparities in Europe; and urges the EEA EFTA States to implement the Mechanism without further delay;
5. Welcomes the EEA Joint Committee decisions on the EEA EFTA States' participation in several new and important agencies and programmes, including the Galileo and EGNOS programmes, the Galileo Supervisory Authority, and the Modernisation of European Enterprise (MEETS);
6. Regrets the continued exclusion of the EEA EFTA States from the management board of the European Institute for Gender Equality, which has been a recurring issue for the EEA EFTA States and highlighted in previous EEA Joint Parliamentary Committee resolutions; and regrets that a draft Joint Committee decision had to be withdrawn from the long list following a letter from the Presidency of the EU Council informing the EEA EFTA States that participation would not be possible;
7. Regrets that the EEA EFTA States have experienced problems as regards participation in the European Research Council Executive Agency and the Research Executive Agency supporting the FP7 programme; expresses its concern over problems encountered with regard to opening posts for EEA EFTA nationals in executive agencies; calls for further clarifications from the European Commission; and calls for formalised EEA EFTA States participation in the agencies;
8. Notes the recent entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty; underlines the potential challenges this will bring to the EEA; urges Member States to follow developments closely; and recommends that the Committee focuses its efforts on the effects of the Lisbon Treaty on the EEA in its future work;
9. Highlights the democratic role invested by the EEA JPC; emphasises that its role should not be neglected; and recommends the EEA EFTA States to explore an increased role for national parliaments in the EEA EFTA States to mirror the new role of national Parliaments in the EU and of the European Parliament;
10. Reiterates its previous calls for the European Commission to provide the national parliaments of the EEA EFTA States with legislative proposals which are sent to the national parliaments of the EU Member States for consultation, in cases where these regard matters of the Internal Market; welcomes especially the EFTA Standing Committee's efforts to advance the EEA Joint Parliamentary Committee's request by raising it in the EEA Joint Committee; and urges the European Commission to review its position on the matter;
11. Welcomes the increase in EEA EFTA Comments in 2009 and encourages the EEA EFTA States to involve themselves in the decision-shaping from an early stage, which is regarded as the best time to have a genuine impact on the shape of legislative proposals;
12. Encourages the EEA EFTA States to follow closely developments as concern European Financial Supervision; and urges relevant EU institutions to secure the

EEA EFTA States' participation in the new Supervisory Authorities for Banking, Securities and Insurance Sectors and in the European Systemic Risk Board;

13. Encourages the EEA EFTA States to continue participation in EU programmes, committees, comitology committees and expert groups with the aim of influencing EU decision shaping at an early stage;
14. Welcomes the forthcoming implementation of the Food Law Package after approval in the Icelandic Parliament in December 2009; and regrets that its delays have caused a substantial increase in the backlog of new acquis connected to the Package, particularly in the field of veterinary legislation; and draws attention to the vulnerabilities of the EEA Agreement which this case reveals;
15. Reiterates its view that extended delays have implications beyond the implementation of a single act and can threaten the good functioning of the EEA Agreement;
16. Welcomes the sharp reduction in the average transposition deficit from the EU Member States and EEA EFTA States to a total of 0.7% which is well below the interim target set by Heads of State and Governments in 2007 and welcomes that 22 Member States have reached the target below 1.0%;
17. Notes the European Commission's briefing on EEA EFTA States participation in the Executive Agencies and regrets the absence of channels for participation in the Agencies;
18. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the EEA institutions, to the European Parliament and to the European Ombudsman.

RESOLUTION

on

The Common Fisheries Policy and the EEA

The European Economic Area Joint Parliamentary Committee:

- A. Having regard to the Commission Green paper entitled 'Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy',
- B. Having regard to the report of the European Parliament Committee on Fisheries (A7-0014/2010),
- C. Having regard for the EEA Joint Parliamentary Committee resolution from 27 June 2007 on 'EU Future Maritime Policy and the EEA',
 1. Welcomes the European Commission's initiative of submitting the Green paper, which is forming the basis for an extensive consultation procedure, involving also the EEA EFTA States, on the extensive constraints and challenges facing the current CFP, with a view to an urgent, overdue and far-reaching reform thereof and calls for stakeholders' views to be taken into account;
 2. Welcomes the main principles set out by the Commission with a view to an effective and successful reform of the CFP, in particular the need to give more responsibility to the sector, based on the establishment of conditions favourable to good fishing practice, and to adjust fisheries management models in order to create tools that will complement and improve the traditional single system of TACs and quotas currently in force;
 3. Agrees with the Commission's analysis of the five structural failings of the existing CFP, and agrees with its view that five aspects must be given central importance in the reform, namely: the deep-rooted problem of fleet overcapacity; imprecise policy objectives resulting in insufficient guidance for decisions and implementation; a decision-making system that encourages a short-term focus; a framework that does not give sufficient responsibility to the industry; and a lack of political will to ensure compliance, together with poor compliance by the industry;
 4. Stresses that the main objective of the CFP should be to guarantee the future of both fisheries resources and fishermen by ensuring the recovery of fish populations and restoring the economic viability of the sector;
 5. Underlines the importance of making the fisheries economically self-reliant;
 6. Emphasizes that an obvious prerequisite for an economically self-reliant fisheries sector is the phasing out of public subsidies at a set date;

7. Stresses that the best way to bring about an economically sustainable fisheries sector, to eliminate overfishing and economic overcapacity, and bring the level of fisheries to a sustainable level, is to apply appropriate management systems that are in accordance with the principle of maximum sustainable yield;
8. Stresses that while ecological, economic and social factors must remain as core objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy, the ecological factor should be given the highest priority as the other two depend on ecological health in the long term. Ecological sustainability is therefore a basic premise for the economic and social future of European fisheries;
9. Underlines that the introduction of regional management structures (provided they have real devolved responsibility) has the potential to create a simpler, cheaper and more effective CFP with localized management structures creating many positive effects, including increased responsibility on the part of stakeholders and the establishment of a CFP more sensitive to local concerns;
10. Emphasizes that a regional structure is not relevant for all fisheries as for example, some pelagic species are widely distributed across regions and joint stock management agreements exist with third countries;
11. Supports the concept of regionalization which clearly underscores that a Member State should take decisions on the management of local fish stocks within its exclusive economic zone and that such decisions should not be taken at the Community level, i.e. if the fishery can be better managed by the Member State or Member States directly involved than at the Community level, there is no reason to maintain the authority to manage at that level;
12. Stresses that order to achieve industry responsibility it is paramount that the stakeholders must depend on the success of the fisheries management and that long term interests must be regarded more important than the short term; and emphasizes that an important condition for this is that there must be incentives to reward compliant stakeholders;
13. Advocates that the fishing industry is allowed to play a more constructive and positive role in the reformed CFP whereas a greater role for stakeholders has always led to improved relationships between fishermen and managers, improved compliance and fisheries management systems; and urges for this approach to be further developed under the reformed CFP;
14. Stresses that compliance is a fundamental issue in any fisheries management and that a reform of the Common Fisheries Policy will be in vain unless the new rules are effectively implemented and complied with;
15. Underlines that a reformed CFP must standardize Member State compliance and enforcement regimes; and to ensure a level playing field for all parties in terms of control encourages the European Commission to introduce a system of administrative sanctions for minor offences;

16. Urges an introduction of a de-bureaucratized and separate regime for inshore fisheries and around small islands if they have little or no impact on stocks or are fishing for non quota species; warns that a one size fits all-policy is not appropriate; and emphasizes the importance of a regional approach to defining small scale fisheries. It is accepted where they target the same stocks particularly quota stocks as the larger fleets an integrated management approach is required;
17. Urges stakeholders to ensure that discarding, which not only has been authorized but mandatory, will no longer take place; and underlines that to address the problem of discards, the system should provide for some flexibility, for example by including transfers of catch quotas between years, between vessels and between species;
18. Emphasizes that any changes to the quota system would need to be carefully examined; and warn against abandoning the TACs and the quota system in favour of an effort based system, which can have very negative consequences;
19. Stresses that the way forward is to continuously work for improvement of the current system as opposed to developing large and complex effort systems; and draws attention to measures undertaken by Norwegian authorities to tackle the problems of discards in the field of technical regulations;
20. Stresses that historic rights have previously been protected by the principle of relative stability and that any new management regime should retain the benefits to coastal communities that have accrued from relative stability; and emphasises that any new management model should build on the existing arrangements based on relative stability; highlights that the management system for the fisheries sector must abandon a top-down approach but instead lay emphasis on the principle of regionalisation and subsidiarity which should not lead to regional discrimination or to disruption of the common implementation of fisheries policy on the redefinition nor increased flexibility of the principle of relative stability;
21. Urges the strengthening and adequate funding of EU Producer Organisations (POs) which will enhance stakeholder involvement and responsibility in day-to-day management and marketing;
22. Stresses that proper marketing, promotion and labelling of seafood is needed to strengthen the position of European seafood products in the market; and underlines the importance of the promotion of sustainable fisheries and other environmental considerations by the integration of various mechanisms in the EU external trade policy which may enhance the reputation and legitimacy of the fisheries policy;
23. Underlines that as the fisheries sector interacts closely with other sectors in the marine and maritime areas, close integration is necessary in order to adopt an ecosystem approach to marine and maritime management; highlights that access to fishing grounds and marine space is essential for the fisheries sector

and it is crucial to incorporate the views of the sector in the institutional framework for spatial planning; and stresses that climate change is a serious concern for marine ecosystems and that the CFP should be developed with sufficient precaution and flexibility to allow rapid adaptations to changes in the marine ecosystem;

24. Emphasizes that sustainable management of fisheries depends upon robust scientific research and that cooperation and coordination between states and scientific institutions can improve the overall output from the scientific community; underlines that involvement of stakeholders in research programs tends to reduce tension builds mutual trust and respect and that fishing vessels can be cost-efficient suppliers of data, and provide valuable supplements to scientific cruises and aggregated catch data; warns against the contribution of fishermen to the body of scientific advice to be ignored; urges an overhaul of the STECF (Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries) to include greater stakeholder representation;
25. Emphasizes that a fisheries policy based on subsidies is simply not sustainable, and the European Fisheries Fund should only be a temporary supplement to the CFP; agrees that while there can be some merit to the use of public funds to ease the transitional challenges which arise from structural adjustment programs and capacity reduction, there must be a clear linkage between the use of public funding and the policy objectives;
26. Supports measures to improve the competitiveness of the European aquaculture sector and measures to encourage research and technological development in the sector; encourages better planning of coastal areas and river basins to create additional space; and urges funding to be made available for the development of more intensive systems allowing water to be recycled; and supports measures by the European Commission to realize the potential that exists for offshore aquaculture in Europe;
27. Emphasizes the importance of aquaculture policy to fully integrate environmental considerations in order to fulfil environmental objectives and to meet the expectations of the market.

RESOLUTION

on

EEA and regional cooperation: New channels for dialogue

The Joint Parliamentary Committee of the European Economic Area:

- A 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,
- B Mindful of the lack of provisions in the EEA Agreement regarding cooperation between local and regional actors at EEA level,
1. Welcomes the increasing role of local and regional authorities in the European Union after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty;
 2. Expresses its concerns by the findings of a recent study by the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities which shows that EEA legislation is being implemented without sufficient input from the lower levels of government with region-specific knowledge, resulting in inefficiency and implementation of legislation that may be counterproductive at local level; and calls for greater participation and contribution from the local and regional authorities in the EEA EFTA States;
 3. Welcomes the launch of the European Commission 'Europe 2020 Strategy'; hopes that this new initiative will be given real content and useful actions to prepare the EU's economy for the next decade where economic, social and territorial cohesion; and highlights the role of European cohesion policy as a key delivery mechanism to achieve the priorities of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in Member States and regions where the territorial cooperation objective should be given a more important role and an increased budget;
 4. Notes that the participation of EFTA states in European efforts at regional development actually predates the establishment of the EEA;
 5. Welcomes that the EEA EFTA States have participated in the important *INTERREG programmes* to varying degrees with Iceland and Norway taking part in the Interreg IIIB and IVB Northern Periphery Programmes, while Liechtenstein participates in programmes concerning the Alpine space;
 6. Considers participation in INTERREG to be an important value added to the national regional policy in the EEA EFTA States;
 7. Notes that around 75% of EU legislation is implemented at local or regional level, making it seem indicated for local and regional representatives to have a say in the development of new EU laws;

8. Notes calls for involving the elected level of government closest to the citizens as one way of addressing concerns that the wider public has been left behind in the ensuing EU integration process;
9. Welcomes the EFTA Standing Committee's decision to establish a forum of elected representatives of local and regional authorities of the EFTA States with the objective of ensuring ensure a platform for an active dialogue between the regional authorities of the EEA EFTA States and the EU;
10. Stresses that the new forum on Local and Regional Authorities of the EEA EFTA States represents opportunities for cooperation, communication and dialogue between the EU and the EEA EFTA States on issues where local and regional authorities are often in charge of implementing EEA legislation, such as water, energy, waste, food and veterinary legislation and environmental supervision;
11. Underlines that cooperation between local and regional authorities provides opportunities for greater understanding between the parties and allows the EEA EFTA States to influence legislation affecting the lower levels of government at an early stage; and calls on the forum of local and regional authorities in the EFTA States to take active part in EU policy shaping through European interest organisations for the local and regional levels;
12. Highlights that increased cooperation between regional authorities in the EEA EFTA States and the EU can foster understanding and knowledge of the EU among local and regional politicians and create a channel between regions in Europe that experience similar challenges in implementation of EEA Legislation and build networks among regions with similar interests and challenges.