

EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA
STANDING COMMITTEE
OF THE EFTA STATES

Ref. 14-133654
8 December 2014

ICELAND CHAIR WORK PROGRAMME
EFTA STANDING COMMITTEE
FIRST HALF OF 2015

The purpose of this programme is to give a general orientation to work at all levels on the EEA EFTA side, particularly under the EFTA Standing Committee structure and in the Secretariat which services it. This programme will be supplemented by the work programmes for the Subcommittees and for selected EEA EFTA working groups.

Items under "main focus" are issues that the Chair will pay special attention to. The listing of items in sections I and II is intended to highlight key issues under discussion.

The main focus of the Iceland Chair during the first half of 2015 will be to:

- **Legal acts awaiting incorporation.** Building on the progress achieved in 2014, continue the work to further reduce the number of legal acts awaiting incorporation in the EEA Agreement. In particular, ensure implementation of the new Standing Committee procedures for the incorporation of legal acts and follow-up on other measures proposed through the EEA Efficiency Project.
- **New European architecture of financial supervision.** Following the agreement of the EU and EEA EFTA Ministers of Finance on 14 October 2014 on the principles for the incorporation into the EEA Agreement of the EU Regulations establishing the European Financial Supervisory Authorities, continue the drafting of the relevant Joint Committee Decisions with the aim of their adoption by the EEA Joint Committee as soon as possible.
- **EEA Financial Mechanism.** Continue negotiations with the European Union regarding a new period, with the aim of reaching a conclusion during the Icelandic Chairmanship period.

I. Horizontal issues and EU developments to be followed closely

- **New European Commission**

Monitor closely the establishment of the new European Commission for the 2014-2019 period, in particular with regard to the development of Internal Market policies and the management of the EEA Agreement on the EU side. Assess the Commission Work Programme for 2015 and identify key issues of relevance to the EEA with the view of ensuring an early and appropriate action of the EEA EFTA States.

- **Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership**

Continue to follow the development of EU-US negotiations on a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) Agreement and assess the implications for the EEA Agreement and EEA EFTA States. Follow up and further develop the dialogue and exchange of information on TTIP with the EU side.

- **Information and knowledge of the EEA Agreement**

Strengthening the knowledge of the EEA Agreement in the EU institutions and Member States as well as in the EEA EFTA countries, including through the organisation of seminars and other events.

- **EEA EFTA decision shaping of EEA-relevant EU legislation and policies**

Be actively involved in all stages of EU decision making of EEA-relevant legislation and actions in a timely fashion and based on key EEA EFTA priorities and expertise. Encourage the submission of EEA EFTA comments and ensure appropriate follow-up.

- **Cooperation and dialogue with the EU**

Seek to ensure EEA EFTA participation in EEA-relevant informal EU Councils, and to continue and further develop the political dialogues with the EU on foreign and security policy, and the informal dialogues with the EFTA Working Party of the EU Council on EEA and EFTA related issues.

- **Cooperation and dialogue with the Advisory Bodies**

Continue the close cooperation and dialogue with the EEA and EFTA Consultative and Parliamentary Committees.

II. Legal acts and policies (not exhaustive)

Particular emphasis will be placed on the following areas at all levels:

- **Digital Single Market**

Follow closely the development of the Digital Single Market. In the area of telecommunications, monitor developments on the Commission proposal for a Single Market for Electronic Communications, including efforts to amend the BEREC Regulation to ensure full EEA EFTA participation without the right to vote. Monitor the upcoming reform of the current telecoms framework package and the developments of the Commission cyber-security package which aims at making the internet more secure in the EEA.

- **Energy, climate change and environment**

Follow closely the legislative proposals implementing the 2030 climate and energy package and actions to strengthen energy security:

- **Energy**

- Finalise negotiations with the EU side regarding the incorporation of the Third Package for the Internal Energy Market;

- ***Climate change and environment***

Ensure the incorporation of the Regulation on carbon dioxide emissions from new passenger cars and new light commercial vehicles and the Industrial Emissions Directive. Finalise the incorporation of the Fuel Quality Directive, and of the Directive on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law. Reach a common position on the EEA relevance of the Regulation on ship recycling. Agree on a way forward for the incorporation of the Regulation on fluorinated greenhouse gases, notably regarding the question of whether the EEA EFTA States want to be included in the Union system or establish their own corresponding system.

- **Data protection**

Continue to follow closely the negotiations on the regulation on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and the free movement of such data. Work towards future EEA EFTA State participation in the proposed committee and in the European Data Protection Board.

- **Transport**

Follow Council discussions on the proposals for the Single European Sky II plus package. Monitor the development of a proposal on remotely piloted aircraft systems in a safe and sustainable manner which was announced in the Commission Communication on a New Era for Aviation.

- **Research and Innovation**

Ensure the incorporation of the Community legal framework for a European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC) of 2009 and the amending Regulation from 2013 into the Agreement.

- **Modernised Professional Qualifications**

Ensure the incorporation of the modernised professional qualifications directive which is one of the twelve levers for growth set out in the Single Market Act I and aims at further facilitating professional mobility across the EU.

- **Internal Market Information System**

Ensure the incorporation of the Regulation on the Internal Market Information System linking national, regional and local authorities across borders.

- **Labour law**

Seek to incorporate the directive concerning the enforcement of the provisions applicable to the posting of workers. Aim to submit an EEA EFTA comment on the proposal for a directive to include seafarers within the scope of five labour law directives which is currently under discussion in EP and Council.

- **Employment**

Work towards the incorporation of the legislation on the reform of the legal base of EURES on which an EEA EFTA comment was submitted to the EU side.

- **Social Security**

Monitor possible new proposal on reforming the social security coordination rules regarding unemployment benefits and long-term care.

- **Deposit Guarantee Schemes**

Continue to work towards a solution on the incorporation of the Deposit Guarantee Schemes Directive.

- **Postal services**

Work towards the incorporation of the Third Postal Directive.

- **Medicinal products**

Ensure the incorporation of the Paediatrics Regulation.

- **State aid**

Work towards the incorporation of updated and revised state aid rules in relation to the State Aid Modernisation Initiative.

- **Public procurement**

Work towards the incorporation of the revised European Public Procurement Directives and the new Directive on Concession Contracts.

- **Chemicals**

Ensure the participation of the EEA EFTA States in the activities of the European Chemicals Agency concerning biocides.

- **Food and Veterinary Matters**

Ensure the incorporation of the Regulation on Novel Food. Work towards the incorporation of the legislation on organic production and on animal by-products and prepare for the incorporation of the Regulation on Genetically Modified Food and Feed. Continue to follow the finalisation of a new Regulation on Novel Food and the proposals on the cloning of animals for food production purposes. Follow the development of the so-called 5-pack, i.e. legislation for the food chain regarding animal health, plant health, reproductive material, and Official Controls along the Food Chain.

- **Public health**

Continue to follow closely the issues related to serious cross-border threats to health and the revision of the Tobacco Products Directive.