

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

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LIECHTENSTEIN CHAIR WORK PROGRAMME
EFTA STANDING COMMITTEE

SECOND HALF OF 2017

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 is 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 Liechtenstein Chair during the second half of 2017 will be on:

- **Reducing the backlog, in particular in the field of financial services**

To this end, efforts must be continued both on the EFTA side and within the EU, and dialogue among all partners must be intensified. With nearly 250 acts currently awaiting incorporation, many of which have been outstanding for a long time, financial services represent roughly 40% of the overall backlog. Special focus must therefore rest on acts in that field, both to ensure a fully functioning Internal Market in financial services and to reduce the overall backlog.

- **Ensuring a smooth process regarding Brexit**

Continue regular consultations between the EU and the EEA EFTA States on EEA-relevant aspects of a UK withdrawal agreement under Article 50 and on the future relations between the EU and the UK. Deepen coordination and information exchange regarding Brexit on the EEA EFTA side, and conduct legal and technical preparatory work, including in the Ad-hoc Working Group on the UK’s withdrawal from the EEA Agreement.

- **Improving knowledge of the EEA Agreement**

Strengthen knowledge of the EEA Agreement and the EEA Financial Mechanism for the 2014-2021 period in the EU institutions and the EEA States, including through the organisation of events and spreading of knowledge of available EEA information tools and systems.

I. Cooperation, dialogue and decision shaping

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

Focus on key issues in the pre-pipeline and pipeline stage, and encourage EEA EFTA Comments and appropriate follow-up where relevant.

- **Cooperation and dialogue with the EU**

Seek to ensure EEA EFTA participation in EEA-relevant informal EU Councils, and to continue and further develop both 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 within the EFTA structure**

Continue efforts on improved cooperation and dialogue within and between the Working and Expert Groups and the Subcommittees, with the aim of further improving efficiency in the processing of acts.

- **Cooperation and dialogue with the advisory bodies**

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

II. **Legal acts and policies (not exhaustive)**

- **Climate change and environment**

Follow the legislative proposals implementing the 2030 framework for climate and energy policies and the Paris Agreement, notably on emissions trading, effort sharing and land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF). Implement the solution for the EEA EFTA States to auction their emission allowances on the Common Platform. Make progress in internal discussions on the Regulation on Fluorinated Greenhouse Gases and in discussions with the EU on the Regulation on Ship Recycling. Follow developments related to the Circular Economy, notably the legislative proposals on waste, as well as related upcoming initiatives.

- **Data protection**

Work towards the incorporation of the General Data Protection Regulation on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and the free movement of such data. Ensure future EEA EFTA State participation in the consistency mechanism between national authorities and in the European Data Protection Board.

- **Digital Single Market Strategy**

Monitor the Digital Single Market Strategy's initiatives and prepare for their incorporation, in particular those concerning copyright, regulatory framework for telecommunication and the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC), e-Privacy, online contract rules, cross-border parcel delivery, geo-blocking and consumer protection cooperation. Follow upcoming initiatives concerning online platforms, free flow of data, cybersecurity, digital skills and modernisation of industry and public services.

- **Electronic communication, audiovisual services and information society**

Incorporate the BEREC Regulation and related acts. Follow the European Commission's proposal for a revision of the regulatory framework for telecommunication, published in September 2016, in particular ensuring that the proposed amendment on the EEA EFTA States' participation in BEREC will be adopted. Follow the proposal replacing privacy rules for electronic communication. Monitor developments on the Commission Cybersecurity Package, which aims to make the internet more secure in the EEA. Monitor the revision of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive.

- **Employment and social policy**

Follow the re-establishment of the EURES network and the incorporation the new founding regulation into the EEA Agreement. Follow the planned establishment of the new Pillar of Social Rights.

- **Energy**

Focus on the legal acts that have been pending the incorporation of the Third Energy Package, including network codes. Continue discussions with the Commission on the incorporation of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive, and engage in discussions about the Energy Efficiency Directive. Follow the legislative proposals implementing the Energy Union.

- **Financial services**

Continue with the processing of the nearly 250 outstanding EU acts in financial services linked to the European Supervisory Authorities (ESAs). Monitor the revision of the ESAs Regulations. As to the more complex EU legislation, the Markets in Financial Instruments Directive (MiFID) II / MiFIR Package is to be particularly highlighted, as it is of the utmost importance that this be incorporated as quickly as possible into the EEA Agreement. EEA EFTA experts will work on the draft Joint Committee Decision (JCD) on MiFID II / MiFIR in the autumn.

- **Food and veterinary matters**

Continue to work towards the incorporation of the Regulation on Genetically Modified Food and Feed, as well as the preparation and incorporation of the new framework legislation regarding animal health, animal breeding and official controls along the food chain. Follow developments concerning Antimicrobiological Resistance (AMR), particularly the second AMR Action Plan being launched by the Commission.

- **Intellectual property rights**

Assess three Commission proposals in the field of copyright and follow their progress in the EU institutions. Work towards the incorporation of the Trade Mark Directive and the Trade Secrets Directive into the EEA Agreement.

- **Labour law and health and safety at work**

Seek to incorporate the Directive concerning the enforcement of the provisions applicable to the posting of workers, and follow the proposal reviewing the original Posting of Workers Directive. Participate in the new platform against undeclared work and monitor the Commission's planned proposal for changes to the Health and Safety Framework Directive and related acquis.

- **Market surveillance and product safety**

Follow the legislative proposal on market surveillance, expected to be adopted by the Commission in the second half of 2017, with a view to incorporating it into the EEA Agreement.

- **Medicinal products**

Follow developments with regard to the import/export of drug precursors between EEA EFTA States and EU Member States, and work towards the incorporation of Regulation (EU) Nos 1011/2015 and 1013/2015 on drug precursors. Ensure the incorporation and correct implementation of Regulation (EU) 2016/161 on safety features appearing on the packaging of medicinal products.

- **Postal services**

Work towards the incorporation of the Third Postal Directive.

- **Professional qualifications**

Ensure the incorporation of the Regulation on the European Professional Card and the alert mechanism, together with the update of Annex VII to the EEA Agreement, in order to ensure legal clarity for professionals from the EEA EFTA States seeking access to regulated professions in other EEA countries.

- **Research and innovation**

Monitor developments in the preparatory work for the Ninth Framework Programme on Research and Innovation, beyond Horizon 2020. Aim to facilitate collaboration between EEA EFTA stakeholders in their engagement with the preparatory stages of the future research programme.

- **Social security**

Monitor the Labour Mobility Package and the proposal on reforming the social security coordination rules regarding unemployment benefits, long-term care and family benefits.

- **State aid**

Work towards the incorporation of the revised procedural rules for state aid review, whilst ensuring the simultaneous entry into force of the Agreement amending Protocol 3 to the Surveillance and Court Agreement.

- **Statistics**

Seek to incorporate the amended Regulation on European Statistics. Follow the Commission's planned extension of the European Statistical Programme 2013-2017 to 2020, in order to synchronise it with the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020.

- **Technical barriers to trade**

Continue to monitor the legislative process and prepare for the incorporation of the new Regulation on Fertilisers, which extends the scope of application to organic fertilisers posing a significant challenge to Iceland, which foresees opt-outs or adaptations. Monitor the legislative process on the proposal for a new regulation on the type-approval and market surveillance of motor vehicles, which would enable onsite inspections as well as the imposition of fines on undertakings by the Commission. Consider approaching the United States regarding the EFTA-US Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) and negotiate the addition of a sector on Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) applicable to pharmaceuticals, in line with the recent EU-US agreement on this matter.

- **Tobacco**

Seek to finalise negotiations with the EU regarding the incorporation of the Tobacco Products Directive.

- **Transport**

Prepare and adopt a Standing Committee Decision designating a Performance Review Body for the EFTA States. Follow developments on the proposal replacing the Regulation on common rules in the field of civil aviation and establishing the European Aviation Safety Agency. Work towards the incorporation of the Ship Inspection and Survey Organisation Package. Follow discussions on the new Mobility Package. Process legislation related to the Fourth Railway Package.