



# Participation in EU Programmes

## EEA EFTA States' Rights and Obligations

The Agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA) provides for cooperation between the EU with its Member States on the one hand and three of the EFTA States – Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway (the EEA EFTA States) – on the other outside the four freedoms in a wide range of fields. The EEA EFTA States have thus participated in several EU programmes since the entry into force of the EEA Agreement in 1994 such as Horizon, Erasmus+ and Creative Europe. The EEA EFTA States contribute financially to the programmes by adding on to the agreed EU budget according to the rules specified in the EEA Agreement.

The legal framework for cooperation outside the four freedoms is contained in Part VI of the EEA Agreement (Articles 78 to 88) and in Protocol 32 to the Agreement. The EEA Agreement provides for a general obligation of the Contracting Parties to strengthen and broaden cooperation in several fields as well as to develop, strengthen and broaden cooperation in others. In many respects, the EEA Agreement calls for a closer partnership than the specific association agreements the EU has concluded with other non-EU Member States.

When the cooperation takes the form of participation by the EEA EFTA States in EU programmes, Article 81 of the EEA Agreement explicitly stipulates that **the EEA EFTA States shall have access to all parts of the programmes**. Furthermore, it specifies that at the project level, **institutions, undertakings, organizations and nationals of the EEA EFTA States shall have the same rights and obligations as partner institutions, undertakings, organisations and nationals of the EU Member States**. Thus, any legislative or administrative provisions leading to restrictions of the EEA EFTA States' participation in programme or project implementation would stand in contradiction with the principles set out in Article 81 of the EEA Agreement.

It is crucial for the good functioning of the EEA Agreement that all stakeholders respect its conditions as the basis for the participation of the EEA EFTA States in the EU programmes at all levels. The EEA EFTA States are confident in continued close and trustful cooperation with the EU based on partnership, shared values and mutual interest.



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