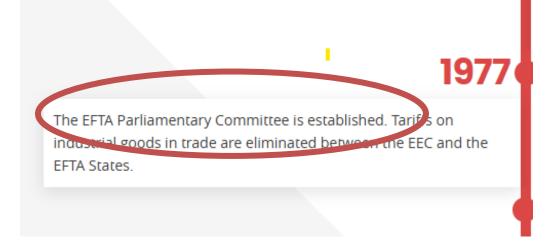


Agenda

- EFTA Advisory Bodies: Role and mandate
- Parliamentary scrutiny
- Scrutiny through social partners
- Scrutiny through local and regional authorities
- Recent topics of interest to the Advisory Bodies



Origins of the EFTA Advisory Bodies



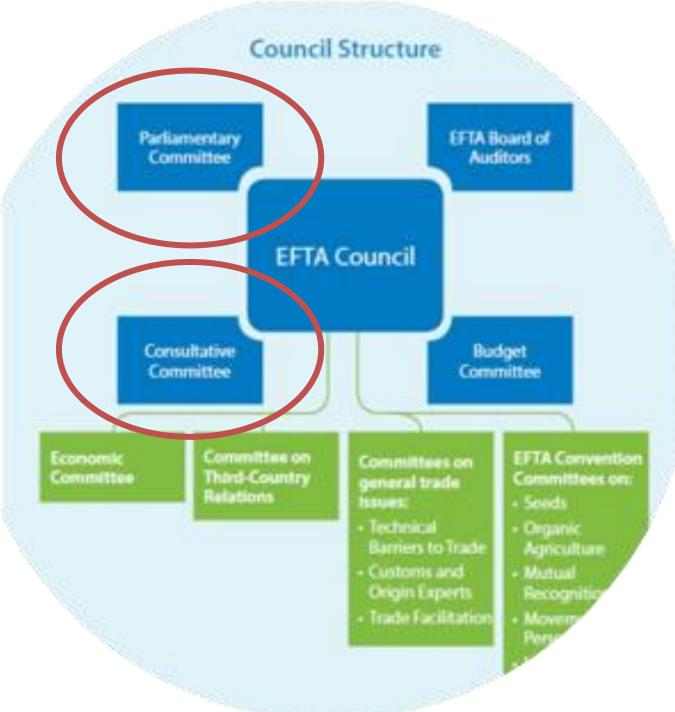
1961

1960

Finland becomes an associate member of EFTA. The EFTA Consultative Committee is established (representatives of trade unions and employers' organisations).

States.

The European Free Trade Association (EFTA) is founded by Austria, Denmark, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom to promote closer economic cooperation and free trade in Europe.





The EFTA Advisory Bodies

Who are they?

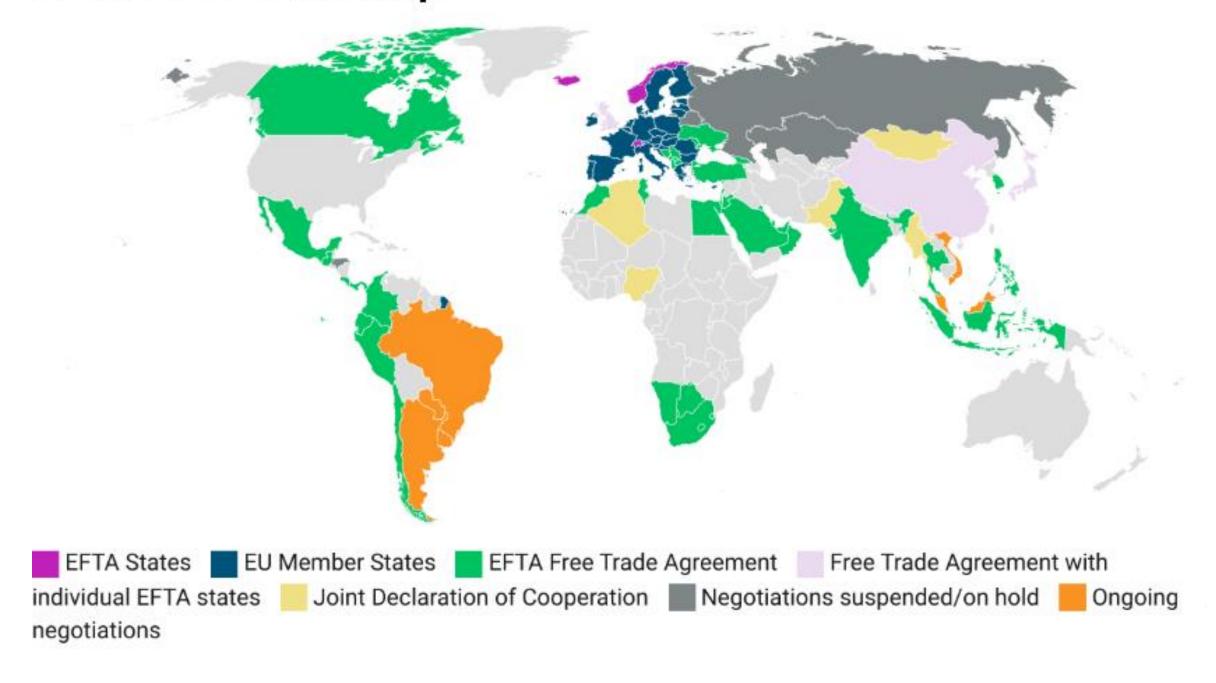
- **EFTA Parliamentary Committee**: forum for EFTA States' Parliamentarians
- EFTA Consultative Committee: forum for representatives of trade unions and business and employers' associations in the EFTA States

What is their role?

- Advice on matters falling within the scope of the Association
- Link/ channel for information between Parliamentarians/ social partners



EFTA Free Trade Map

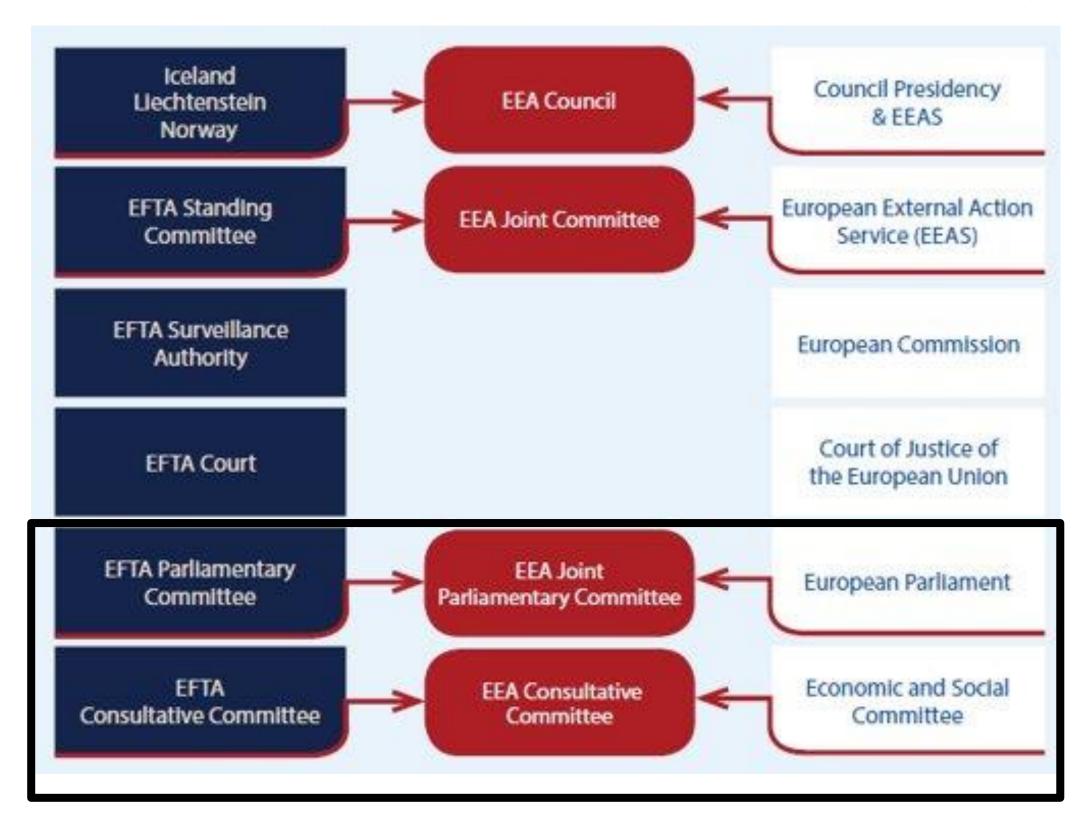


EFTA trade relations

Since the early 1990s, EFTA has established an extensive network of contractual free trade relations all over the world.



The EFTA Advisory Bodies and the EEA Agreement





Double-hatted role of the Advisory Bodies



Mandate is to provide advice and scrutiny on

- 1.Relations with the EU/EEA
- 2.Relations with thirdcountries



Birds eye perspective



- Not a governing body (but part of the EFTA family)
- Scrutiny and advise on EFTA matters
- Bringing EFTA matters
 closer to the citizens of the
 EFTA States

Democratic accountability and legitimacy



Parliamentary scrutiny

- EFTA Parliamentary Committee (PC): Forum for Parliamentarians from the EFTA States advising the MS on all issues of relevance to EFTA
- Six meetings per year often jointly with the CC incl.
 - June: Meeting with EFTA Ministers on trade matters
 - November: Meeting with EEA EFTA Ministers on EU/ EEA matters
- **EEA Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC):** EFTA Parliamentarians & EP delegation for relations with EFTA.
- Scrutinises the functioning of the EEA Agreement, monitors EU legislative developments and their impact on the EEA Agreement
- Two meetings a year:
 - EFTA State
 - Strasbourg (seat of EP)



EEA Council 2023. From left to right: (then) CC Chair Kristin Hansen, Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs Espen Barth Eide, (then) PC Chai Trine Lise Sundnes.



The EEA JPC at their meeting on 21-22 November 2024 in Oslo, Norway









Scrutiny through social partners

- **EFTA Consultative Committee (CC)**: forum for EFTA social partners
- Six meetings per year, incl.
 - Meetings with EFTA and EEA EFTA Ministers in June and November (jointly with PC)
 - EFTA CC meeting with EFTA Ambassadors in spring
 - Yearly trade seminar (with PC)
- **EEA CC:** EFTA CC members + EESC members.
- Scrutinise and monitor economic and social aspects of the EEA
- 1-2 meetings a year
 - EFTA State
 - EU member state
- Expresses its views in the form of reports/ resolutions → see e.g. report/ resolution on "30 years of EEA cooperation"



The EFTA CC and EFTA PC trade seminar , January 2025



EEA CC meeting in Reykjavik, 23 and 24 May 2024. with Þórdís Kolbrún Reykfjörð Gylfadóttir, former Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland



The EEA locally and regionally

- Roughly 2/3 of EU legislation is implemented at local and regional level
- **EEA EFTA Forum**: Informal body established by EEA EFTA States in 2009 to involve elected representatives from local and regional authorities in EEA matters
- Consists of elected local and regional politicians from Iceland and Norway, with Switzerland as observers
- Meets at least once a year
- Formulates its views in the form of **Opinions** addressed to the Standing Committee of the EFTA
 States
- Recent Opinions:
 - Urban Wastewater
 - Public Procurement



Delegates of the EEA EFTA Forum at their meeting on 28 and 29 November 2024



Recent topics of interest

Changing geopolitical context:

Transatlantic trade relations, future of multilateralism, changing security landscape

EU's quest for competitiveness:

Clean Industrial Deal, Competitiveness compass, Omnibus package

Broad-based approach

Internal market initiatives increasingly also contain elements such as trade policy, industrial policy and economic security

Join our workshop
"Brussels in transition" to
find out more!



