



# Unveiling the Magic Behind the EEA Agreement



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# EFTA

## Responsible for the management of

- The EFTA Convention
- EFTA's worldwide network of free trade agreements
- The EEA Agreement

## EFTA Statistical Office (ESO)

- *Supporting EFTA Member States participation in the European Statistical System (ESS)*
  - *Facilitate incorporation of relevant statistical acts into the EEA Agreement*
  - *Monitor inclusion of statistics on EFTA States in ESS publications*
  - *Provides technical assistance with partner organisations outside EEA*

# The EFTA Secretariat in Brussels

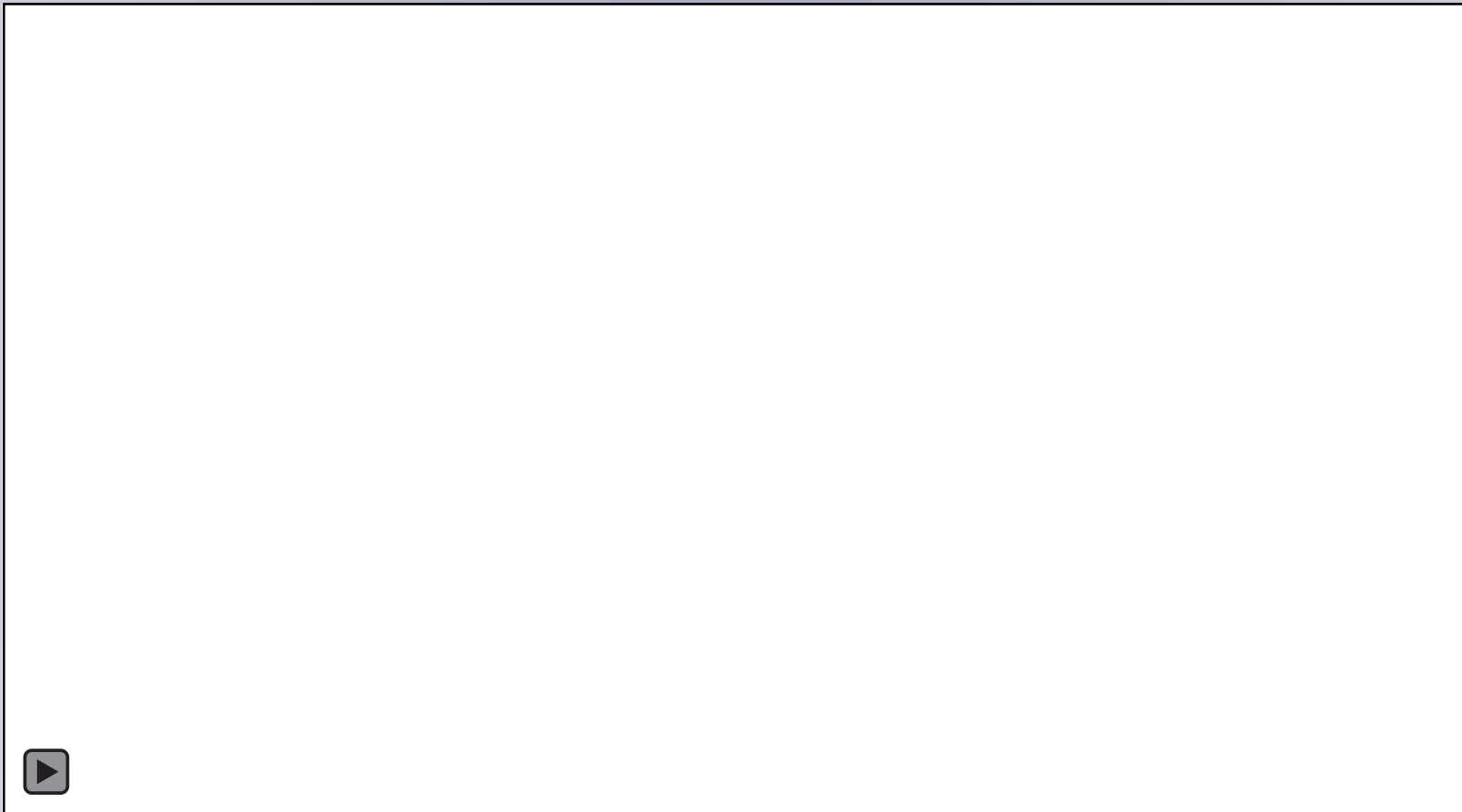
- Secretariat for the EEA EFTA States in their EEA work - “the EEA process”
- Coordinates collaboration of the EEA EFTA States and the European Commission
- Secretariat for the EEA advisory bodies
  - *EFTA Parliamentary Committee*
  - *EFTA Consultative Committee*





# The EEA Agreement

Why, What, How, and what not...



# Objectives and principles of the EEA Agreement

*“... establishing a dynamic and homogenous European Economic Area, based on common rules and equal conditions of competition and providing for the adequate means of enforcement at the judicial level, ...”*



# The Challenge

## Reconciling two different models of cooperation

### The EU model

- ***Supranational cooperation***  
- Transfer of competence and sovereignty
- Institutions with ***defined roles*** in the ***decision-making processes***  
Commission – European Parliament – Council
- Important concern  
***Preserving the decision-making autonomy*** of the EU

### The EFTA model

- ***Intergovernmental*** cooperation -  
No transfer of competence, no “common policies”
- Decisions taken by *consensus* between the governments of the EEA EFTA states
- Important concern  
***Preserving sovereignty***



# EEA institutional model

## The Two Pillar structure





# The EEA Agreement

## Substantive scope

### Four Freedoms

- Free movement of goods
- Free movement of services
- Free movement of capital
- Free movement of persons

### Horizontal Policies

- Environment
- Social policy
- Consumer protection
- Statistics
- Company law

### Common Rules

- State aid
- Competition
- Public procurement

### Cooperation

- EU programmes

### Cohesion

- EEA and Norway Grants



# Policy areas not covered by the EEA Cooperation

- The Economic and Monetary Union
- EU trade policy provisions
- EU aid policy
- EU customs union
- Common agricultural policy
- Common fisheries policy
- EU justice and home affairs policy
- EU common foreign and security policy



# The EEA process

## The framework for participation and engagement



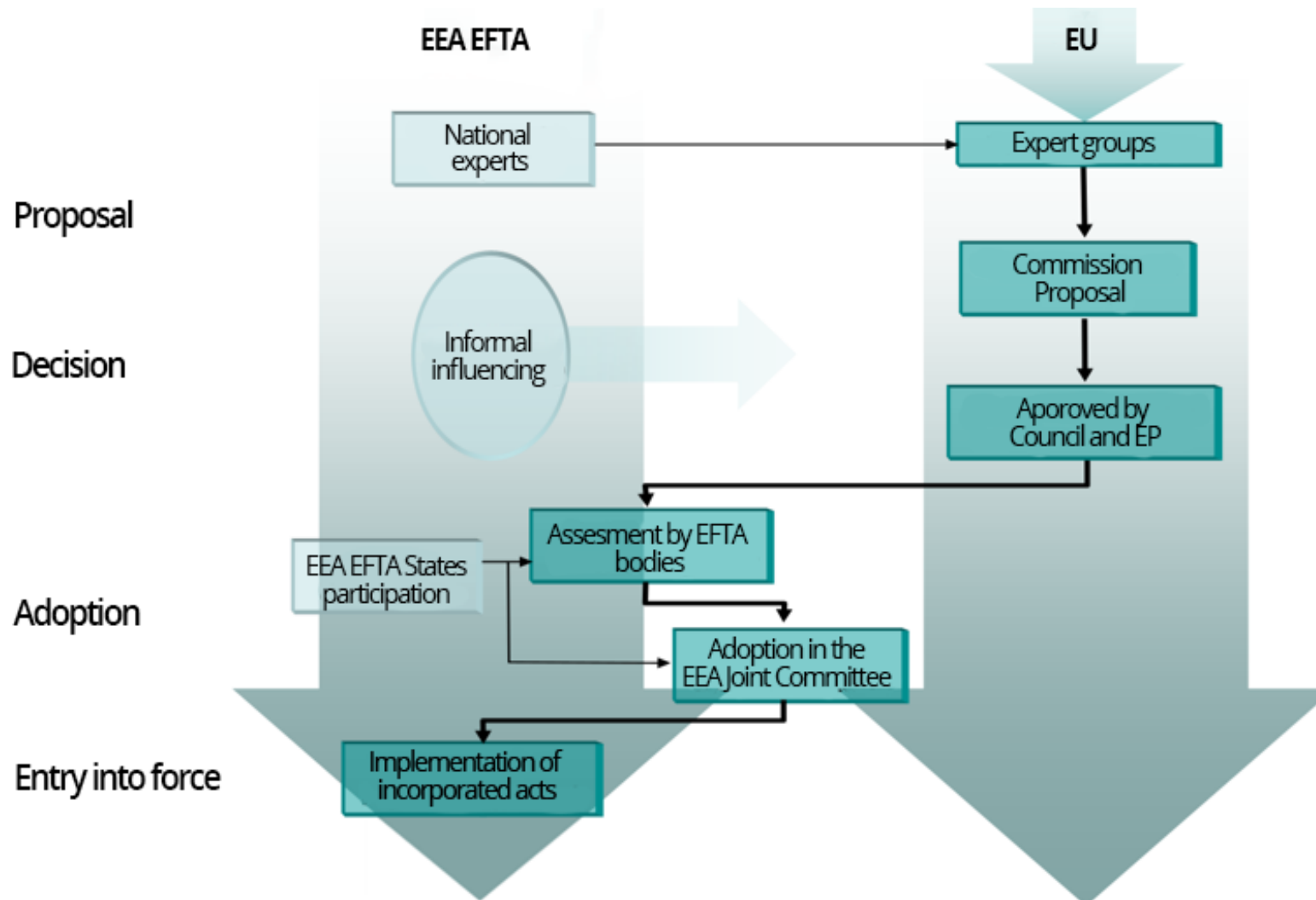
# Two main strands of the EEA work

- **Decision shaping** – Participation in the development of EU legislation before EU adoption
- **Decision making** – Incorporation of an adopted EU, EEA relevant legislative act into the EEA Agreement

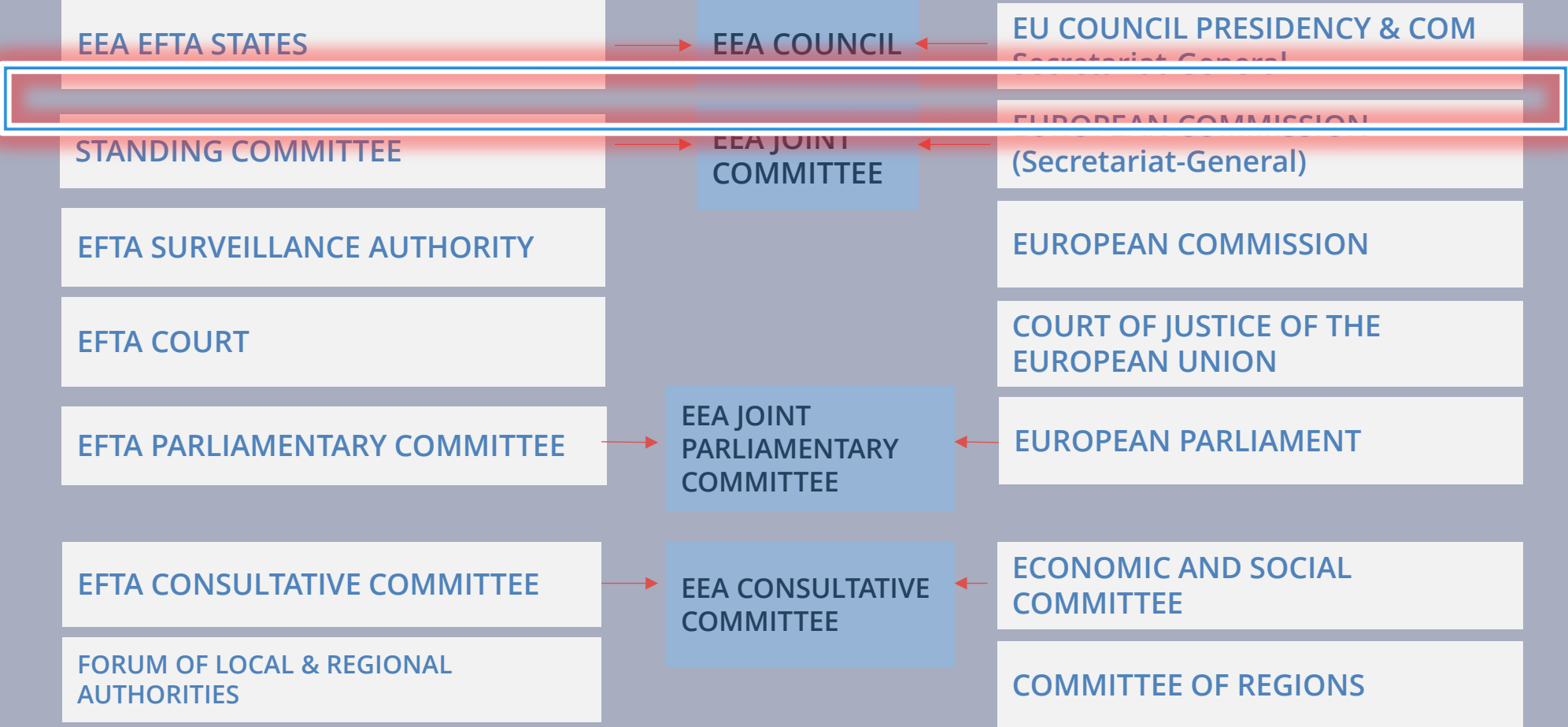


# From EU to EEA

## participation and engagement throughout the process



# Decision making within the Two Pillar Structure





# Standing Committee of the EFTA States

## Subcommittee I Free Movement of Goods

## Subcommittee II Free Movement of Services and Capital

## Subcommittee III Free Movement of Persons

## Subcommittee IV Flanking and Horizontal Policies

## Subcommittee V Legal and Institutional Matters

### WORKING GROUPS

- Competition Policy
- Customs Matters
- Customs Security Matters
- Energy Matters
- Food Chain
- Intellectual Property Processes
- Agricultural Products
- Public Procurement
- State Aid
- Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)\*

\* Assisted by sector-specific expert groups

- Company Law
- Electronic Communications, Audiovisual Services and Information Society\*
- Financial Services
- Postal Services
- Transport
- Services

\* Assisted by the Expert group on Data Protection

- Free Movement of Persons, Employment and Social Policy
- Recognition of Professional Qualifications
- Social Security

- Budgetary Matters
- Civil Protection
- Consumer Affairs
- Cultural Affairs
- Education, Training and Youth
- Enterprise Policy
- Environment
- Gender Equality, Anti-Discrimination and Family Policy
- Heads of National Statistical Institutes
- Health and Safety at Work and Labour Law
- Public Health
- Research and Development

# Decision making





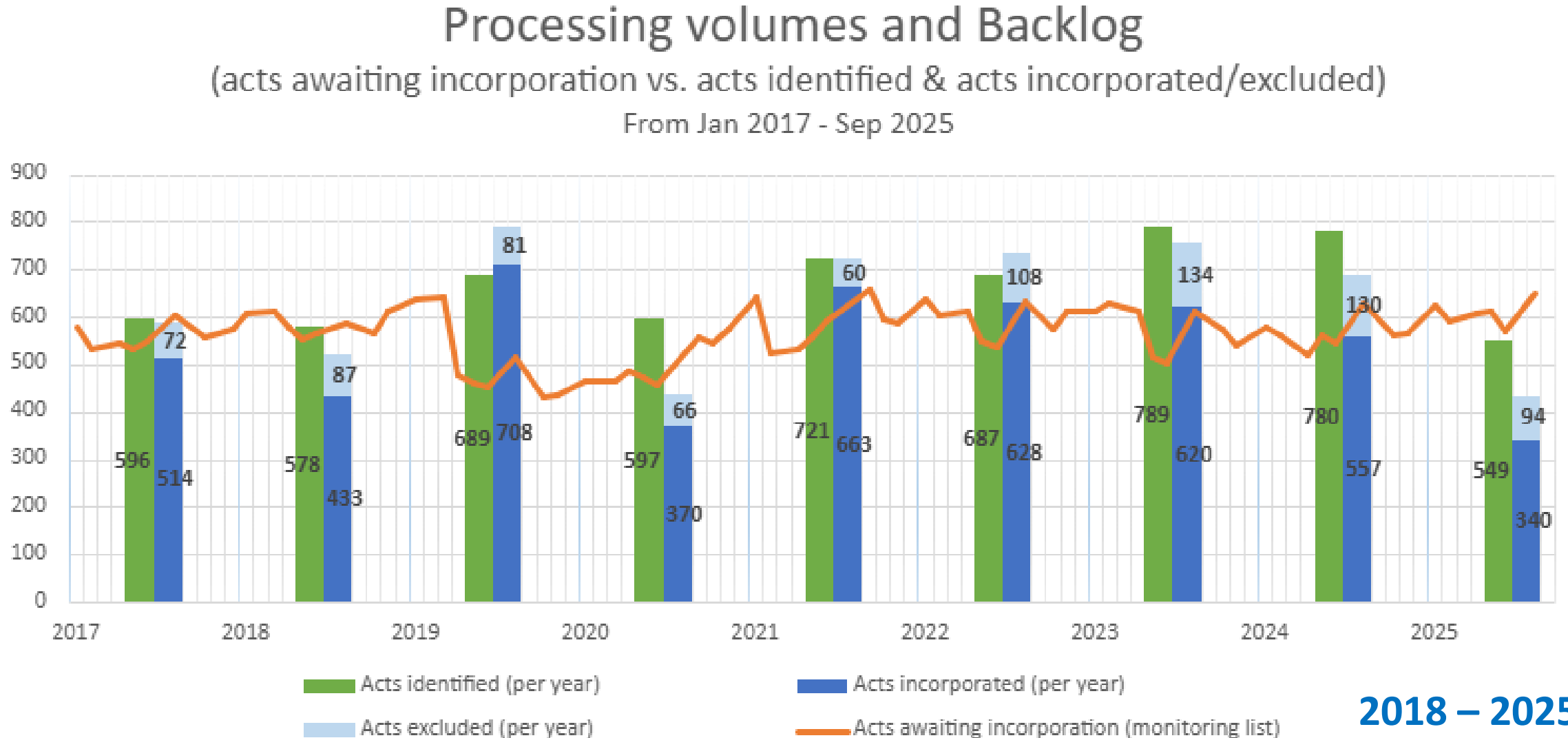
# Numbers and key sectors

- Legal acts incorporated into the EEA Agreement
  - **1.875 acts** when signing the Agreement in 1992
  - **15 000 acts** incorporated since the signing
  - **8 800 acts** in force today
- **Food and Veterinary area** – 212 – 38 % of all the acts incorporated in 2024
- Other high-volume sectors
  - *Goods - TBT*
  - *Financial Services*
  - *Transport, Environment and Energy*
- High on the Agenda ahead
  - Acts with **distinct horizontal challenges**
  - **Omnibus** – EUs Simplification agenda
  - **New Program Period**



# Processing volumes and backlog

Acts awaiting incorporation vs acts identified and acts incorporated or excluded



2018 – 2025/09

# The EEA Agreement in Europe of today

- **The EEA Agreement has remained robust and resilient**
- **EU adapts more, and more complex legislation**
  - The nature of the EEA agreement – inherent delay of incorporation
  - Ongoing and new initiatives are followed by new legislation that effects the Internal Market and thereby EEA
    - Timely incorporation of essence and strategic choices must be made
- **Challenges in managing the EEA Agreement**
  - EU law and EEA law have different scope
  - Increased regulatory powers to EU agencies
  - The Geopolitical situation reflects EU developments
    - Internal market legislation with a touch of e.g. trade policy, industry policy, security issues and customs code
- **Brussels Q3 2025 – The new game continues**

New Program period in the making – New Legislation keeps coming  
Geopolitical challenges continues – Cooperation is a key





# **EEA knowledge and close cooperation**

- Essential to ensure a well-function Agreement across the EEA**



## **Thank you for your participation!**

