



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Brussels, 22 November 2010
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PRESSE 316

**Conclusions of the 34th meeting of the EEA Council
Brussels, 22 November 2010**

1. The thirty-fourth meeting of the EEA Council took place in Brussels on 22 November 2010 under the Presidency of Mr Össur SKARPHÉDINSSON, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland. The meeting was attended by Mr Jonas Gahr STØRE, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway, and by Mr. Kurt JÄGER, Ambassador of Liechtenstein to the EU, from the EEA EFTA side, as well as by Mr Olivier CHASTEL, Secretary of State for European Affairs of Belgium, representing the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, by Members of the Council of the European Union and by the Representative of the European Commission responsible for EEA Council matters, from the EU side.
2. The EEA Council noted that within the framework of the Political Dialogue the Ministers discussed Russia, Middle East (Gaza, Middle East Peace Process MEPP and the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee AHLC) and China.
3. The EEA Council welcomed the progress made in the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty and emphasised the importance of the continued good functioning of the EEA Agreement.
4. The EEA Council took note of the proposals on Economic Governance in the EU by the Commission and the European Council. It welcomed and encouraged the proposed measures to enhance policy coordination with a view to improve economic stability and sustainable economic growth in Europe.

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5. The EEA Council welcomed the EU's recent agreement on the establishment of a new EU System of Financial Supervision with three supervisory authorities in the areas of Banking, Insurance, and Securities, and looked forward to the new structure being operational as of January 2011. From a regulatory perspective the EEA EFTA States are fully integrated into the EU's internal market for financial services, and the EEA Council therefore welcomed the possibility for the EEA EFTA States to participate in the work of the supervisory authorities and looked forward to agreeing on the modalities of their participation. Furthermore, the EEA Council expressed hope that an agreement could also be reached for an appropriate form of participation of the EEA EFTA States' relevant authorities in the European Systemic Risk Board (ESRB).
6. The EEA Council took note of the adoption by the European Council of the Europe 2020 Strategy in June 2010. The EEA EFTA States are closely following the unveiling of the "Flagship Initiatives", which will contain many EEA relevant proposals. The EEA Council welcomed the contribution of the EEA EFTA States to the implementation of the Strategy.
7. The EEA Council welcomed the Commission Communication "Towards a Single Market Act - For a highly competitive social market economy: 50 proposals for improving our work, business and exchanges with one another", adopted by the Commission on 27 October 2010. The EEA EFTA States will follow the developments regarding the Communication closely and seek to contribute to further concretisation of its content, noting that the diverse initiatives envisaged in the Communication will revitalise and have immediate effects throughout the EEA.
8. The EEA Council underlined the importance of an interconnected and competitive European energy market foreseen in the Third Package for the Internal Energy Market, adopted in 2009. It welcomed the participation of the EEA EFTA States, inter alia in the establishment of new mechanisms between regulators and transmission system operators on a European level also strongly recalling the need for an EEA-wide perspective on the need for crucial energy infrastructure supporting security of energy supply.
9. The EEA Council looked forward to further progress being made in incorporating the Renewables Directive into the EEA Agreement. In this context, the EEA Council took note of the EEA EFTA States' large share of renewable energy sources.
10. The EEA Council reiterated the importance of maintaining close cooperation between the EU and the EEA EFTA States in energy and climate change policies, in particular in the areas of emission trading, the promotion of low carbon energy technologies, energy efficiency and renewable energy resources, as well as on carbon capture and storage (CCS). The EEA Council also welcomed the progress/imminent adoption of the aviation emissions scheme. The Ministers also noted the progress on the inclusion of the climate and energy package adopted in 2008.

11. The EEA Council welcomed the signing of the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms for the period 2009-2014 and emphasised the importance of all contracting parties finalising their respective internal procedures without delay. In this context, they also highlighted the importance of ensuring provisional application of the related agreements in order to allow for the prompt establishment of the new mechanisms.
12. The EEA Council emphasised the importance of an efficient finalisation of the implementation of projects and programmes financed under the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2004-2009 within the stipulated timeframes.
13. The Ministers welcomed the signing of Additional Protocols resulting from bilateral negotiations between the European Commission and Iceland and Norway concerning the review of the quota levels for certain fish and fishery products, and emphasised the importance of the parties finalising their respective internal procedures without delay in order to allow for the prompt implementation of the new tariff quotas.
14. Ministers welcomed the launching of negotiations between the EU and Iceland on Iceland's accession to the European Union.
15. The EEA Council noted the Progress Report of the EEA Joint Committee and, in particular:
 - noted the progress made on the Consumer Rights Directive and the EEA EFTA Comment sent in early October 2010;
 - noted the result of the negotiations on liberalisation of trade in agricultural products between the European Commission and Norway based on Article 19 of the EEA Agreement, hoped for an expedient implementation of the outcome and looked forward to the foreseen review of the conditions of trade in agricultural products in two years time, with a view to exploring possible concessions;
 - noted the outcome of the annual review concerning processed agricultural products, carried out in September 2010 within the framework of Article 2(2) of Protocol 3 to the EEA Agreement and agreed to continue the dialogue on the trade regime for processed agricultural products in Protocol 3;
 - welcomed the participation of the EEA EFTA States in EEA relevant EU Programmes, noting that these are co-financed by the EEA EFTA States. It emphasised the importance of including the EEA EFTA States in appropriate programmes thus contributing to building a more competitive Europe;

- took note of the progress made in the development of an Integrated Maritime Policy and welcomed the active involvement of the EEA EFTA States;
 - expressed its expectation for an early conclusion of the process of incorporation into the EEA Agreement of the Aviation Safety Regulation 216/2008 and the Audiovisual Media Services Directive.
16. The EEA Council recalled its commitment to the social agenda which is reinforced in the Europe 2020 Strategy, covering a wide range of areas such as employment, health, migration, social affairs, education and equal rights and reiterated the importance of how these issues will be followed up. The EEA Council underlined that in times of economic crisis it was important to make special efforts to meet social needs through innovation.
 17. The EEA Council welcomed the EEA EFTA contributions to the decision-shaping process of EEA relevant EU legislation and programmes through their participation in relevant committees, expert groups and agencies and by submitting EEA EFTA Comments.
 18. The EEA Council held an orientation debate on the European Energy Market.
 19. The Ministers stressed that it was in their common interest that the EEA Agreement was well known throughout the European Economic Area and urged all Contracting Parties to ensure that appropriate information on the Agreement is available.
 20. The EEA Council underlined the importance of inviting EEA EFTA Ministers to relevant informal EU Ministerial Meetings and Ministerial Conferences on the basis of EEA EFTA participation in the Internal Market, and expressed its appreciation to the incoming Hungarian Presidency for the continuation of this practice. The EEA Council also recalled the practice of inviting the EEA EFTA States - at the level of officials - to political dialogue meetings at the level of relevant Council Working Parties.
 21. The EEA Council noted the Resolutions of the EEA Consultative Committee adopted at its 18th meeting in Vaduz on 18-19 May 2010 on the Implications for the EEA of EU post-crisis financial reform and on Europe 2020 and the EEA.
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