

EEE 1602/1/10
REV 1

LIMITE

CONCLUSIONS

Subject : Conclusions of the 33rd meeting of the EEA Council
Brussels, 10 May 2010

1. The thirty-third meeting of the EEA Council took place in Brussels on 10 May 2010 under the Presidency of [[x] Foreign Affairs of Spain.] The meeting was attended by Ms Aurelia FRICK, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liechtenstein, Mr Össur SKARPHÉDINSSON, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland and Mr Jonas Gahr STØRE, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway, by Members of the Council of the European Union and by the Representative of the European Commission.
2. The EEA Council noted that within the framework of the Political Dialogue, [the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and] the Ministers discussed Middle-East, Iran and Russia.
3. The EEA Council welcomed the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty on 1 December 2009 and underlined the importance that the implementation of the Treaty would have with regard to the continued good functioning of the EEA Agreement.

4. The EEA Council took note of the efforts made to coordinate a comprehensive action to restore global growth and to rebuild confidence in the financial markets. It underlined the need for continued focus on coordinated and timely action among governments with regard to exit strategies, in order to secure the medium- and long-term sustainability of public finances.
5. The EEA Council stressed the importance of safeguarding the good functioning of the internal market. In this context, Ministers welcomed the EU's initiative to deal with cross-border crisis management within the banking sector. They underlined that enhanced cooperation on the European level and worldwide was vital in order to strengthen financial supervision and to improve the regulation of financial services. Ministers welcomed the ECOFIN's agreement of October 2009 on the European Systemic Risk Board (ESRB) based on the need for a strengthened macro prudential oversight of the European financial system. Ministers also welcomed the ECOFIN's agreement of December 2009 on the European System of Financial Supervision (ESFS) based on decentralised supervision with strengthened cooperation and underlined the significance of the participation of supervisors from the EEA EFTA Member States in these new structures once they had been established. Furthermore, the EEA Council confirmed its support for the EU regulatory initiatives and reiterated the need to improve, where necessary, the practical application of supervisory and prudential rules provided for by the EU banking directives.
6. The EEA Council took note of the Commission Communication on the Europe 2020 Strategy as well as of the conclusions on the Strategy adopted by the EU Council on 16 March 2010. The EEA EFTA States are closely following the development of the Strategy, with a view to participating in relevant parts. The EEA Council welcomed the contribution of the EEA EFTA States to the Strategy.
7. The "Flagship Initiatives" set out in the Commission Communication on the Europe 2020 Strategy provide a good basis for reflections on how to focus efforts on the appropriate areas and could significantly contribute to the implementation of the Strategy.

8. The EEA Council reiterated the importance of the Third Liberalisation Package on energy, and underlined the importance of the involvement of the EEA EFTA States in an interconnected European energy market and in the establishment of new mechanisms between regulators and system operators on European level. The EEA Council welcomed the implementation of the Climate and Energy Package published in July 2009. The importance of continuous close cooperation between the EU and the EEA EFTA States in the area of energy and climate change was underlined, and especially on the emission trading scheme, the promotion of low carbon energy technologies, energy efficiency, renewable energy resources, as well as on carbon capture and storage (CCS).
9. The EEA Council welcomed the incorporation into the EEA Agreement of the Directive on National Emission Ceilings for Certain Atmospheric Pollutants.
10. The EEA Council noted the progress made on incorporating the Renewables Directive into the EEA Agreement. It noted that the EEA EFTA States already have a high share of renewable energy sources.
11. With around 1100 projects still in the implementation phase under the EEA and the Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2004-2009, Ministers emphasised the importance of all parties focusing on the implementation of projects, funds and programmes to meet the implementation deadline of 30 April 2011.
12. The Ministers welcomed the initialling at negotiators' level of the agreed minutes on the EEA Financial Mechanism 2009-2014 with new financial contributions from the EEA EFTA States for the reduction of economic and social disparities in the EEA. They also welcomed the initialling at negotiators' level of agreed minutes on a new bilateral Norwegian Financial mechanism for the same period and underlined the importance of related agreements on provisional application in order to proceed in the implementation of the new mechanisms. The Ministers urged all contracting parties to finalise their internal procedures as soon as possible.

13. The Ministers welcomed the initialling at negotiators' level of agreed minutes 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, as laid down in the respective Additional Protocols to their bilateral Agreements with the European Economic Community.
14. Ministers took note that the Commission had recommended that negotiations for accession to the European Union should be opened with Iceland.
15. The EEA Council noted the Progress Report of the EEA Joint Committee and in particular:
 - welcomed the active participation of the EEA EFTA States in the relevant parts of the Single Market Review and looked forward to the upcoming 2012 initiative to complete the Single Market;
 - welcomed the incorporation of the Services Directive into the EEA Agreement;
 - welcomed the finalisation of the necessary national parliamentary procedures by all the EEA EFTA States regarding the Food Law Package and that the Package had entered into force on 1 May 2010;
 - noted the progress made on the Consumer Rights Directive;
 - on the ongoing issue of further liberalisation of trade in agricultural and processed agricultural products, welcomed the agreement reached at negotiators' level in the negotiations between the European Commission and Norway on further liberalisation of trade in agricultural products on the basis of Article 19 of the EEA Agreement, and hoped for an expedient formalisation and implementation of the outcome. It further encouraged the European Union and Norway to engage constructively in the review process within the framework of Article 2(2) of Protocol 3 to the EEA Agreement;

- welcomed the participation of the EEA EFTA States in EEA-relevant EU Programmes, promoting common interests towards a more competitive and innovative Europe. The programmes are co-financed by the EEA EFTA States. The EEA Council welcomed the participation of the EEA EFTA States in the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010 and looked forward to the European Year of Volunteering 2011, with the EEA EFTA States participating;
- welcomed the participation of the EEA EFTA States in the Galileo programme;
- welcomed the participation of the EEA EFTA States in the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, i.e. the Bilbao Agency;
- welcomed further developments of the Integrated Maritime Policy and reiterated the importance of close involvement of the EEA EFTA States. It looked forward to the Commission's policy document outlining projects and initiatives aimed at further developing the policy;
- reiterated its commitment to the renewed social agenda, covering a wide range of areas such as employment, health, migration, social affairs, education and equal rights and underlined the importance of how these issues will be followed up. The EEA EFTA States will continue to follow closely the proposed directives and policy initiatives, within the scope of the EEA Agreement. The EEA Council underlined the importance of innovation to meet social needs during the economic crisis, and in particular the efforts to combat poverty and social exclusion.

16. 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.

17. The EEA Council held an orientation debate on Europe 2020 – implications for the EEA.
18. The Ministers underlined the importance for the Contracting Parties to ascertain that relevant actors throughout the European Economic Area remain well informed about the EEA Agreement.
19. The EEA Council underlined the importance of inviting EEA EFTA Ministers to attend 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 Belgian 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.
20. The EEA Council noted the Resolutions of the EEA Joint Parliamentary Committee adopted at its 34th meeting in Vaduz on 29 March 2010 on *The Annual Report on the Functioning of the EEA in 2009, The Common Fisheries Policy and the EEA and EEA and regional cooperation: New Channels for dialogue*.
