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Council of the EEA

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## DRAFT MINUTES

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Subject: Draft Minutes of the 60th meeting of the EEA Council Brussels, 21 May 2025

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**DRAFT MINUTES**

**of the 60th meeting of the**

**EEA COUNCIL**

**Brussels, 21 May 2025**

**(Check against delivery)**

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The EEA Council held its 60th meeting in Brussels on 21 May 2025.

The meeting was chaired by Mr Michał Baranowski, Undersecretary of State, Ministry of Economic Development and Technology of Poland. Mr Baranowski was accompanied by Mr Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ, Commissioner for Trade and Economic Security, and for Interinstitutional Relations and Transparency, and Mr Matti MAASIKAS, Managing Director for Europe, representing the European External Action Service (EEAS).

The EEA EFTA side was led by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Environment and Culture of Liechtenstein, Ms Sabine MONAUNI. Iceland was represented by Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ms Þorgerður Katrín GUNNARSDÓTTIR and Norway by Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Espen BARTH EIDE.

The EEA EFTA side also included Mr Kurt JAEGER (Secretary-General of the European Free Trade Association – EFTA), and Mr Arne RØKSUND (President of the EFTA Surveillance Authority – ESA).

### **Opening statement of Minister Mr Michał BARANOWSKI on behalf of the European Union**

Dear colleagues from Liechtenstein, Iceland and Norway, from the EFTA Secretariat and from the EFTA Surveillance Authority,

First of all, on behalf of the Council of the European Union, allow me to wish you and your delegations a very warm welcome.

I take also the opportunity to welcome to this session Sabine MONAUNI, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Environment and Culture of Liechtenstein, representing the Chair of the Standing Committee of the EFTA States.

Before we go into the substance of our agenda, I would like to express my thanks to you and to the EFTA Secretariat for the excellent cooperation in finalising the arrangements for this 60th session of the EEA Council.

I am looking forward to a fruitful exchange and discussions!

### **Opening statement of Minister Ms Sabine MONAUNI on behalf of the EEA EFTA side**

Thank you, Chair, for your welcoming words. We see this forum as a valuable opportunity to strengthen EEA cooperation, especially at a time when competitiveness, trade and economic security are high on the European agenda. We look forward to a constructive discussion and exchange of views with our EU partners.

### **Intervention of Minister Mr Michal BARANOWSKI on behalf of the European Union**

Let us now move to the formal agenda of our EEA Council, as set out in document 1601/25.

As we have done in the past, and in order to gain time, I hope that we can agree to deal with items 1 to 5 of our agenda without further discussion, and therefore note our agreement on the agenda and the other documents related to those items.

### **Intervention of Minister Ms Sabine MONAUNI on behalf of the EEA EFTA side**

Thank you, Chair, we can agree to this.

### **Intervention of Minister Mr Michal BARANOWSKI on behalf of the European Union**

Thank you very much.

Items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the agenda are therefore adopted.

1. **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

The EEA Council adopted the Agenda, as set out in doc. 1601/25.

2. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

The EEA Council approved the Minutes of the 59<sup>th</sup> meeting of the EEA Council, which took place in Brussels on 25 November 2024, as set out in doc. 1602/25.

3. **PROGRESS REPORT BY THE EEA JOINT COMMITTEE**

The EEA Council took note of the Progress Report by the EEA Joint Committee, as set out in doc. 1603/25.

4. **ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT CONCLUSIONS**

The EEA Council adopted the Conclusions of the 60<sup>th</sup> EEA Council meeting, as set out in doc. 1604/25.

5. **RESOLUTION OF THE EEA JOINT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE adopted following its 62nd meeting in Oslo on 21 November 2024 on the Annual Report of the EEA Joint Committee on the Functioning of the EEA Agreement in 2023**

The EEA Council took note of the Resolution.

## **6. ASSESSMENT OF THE OVERALL FUNCTIONING OF THE EEA AGREEMENT**

### **Intervention of Minister Mr Michal BARANOWSKI on behalf of the European Union**

Let us move on to item 6 on the agenda, concerning the assessment of the overall functioning of the European Economic Area Agreement.

Last year was a historic moment in our relations as we have celebrated the 30th anniversary of the entry into force of the EEA Agreement. The Agreement has always been the bedrock of our close and special partnership. It has never been more important than it is now, both in the current geopolitical context and in terms of its size. At the time of its inception, the EEA counted only 18 states, but it has since grown to encompass 30 states and nearly half a billion people. We continue to stand together, defending our common values such as democracy, rule of law and the commitment to an international rules-based order, in solidarity and in unity.

On the EEA Agreement, Commissioner Šefčovič will provide a detailed report on recent developments and concrete progress achieved since last November. Before giving him the floor, I would like to highlight some important developments that have taken place since our latest EEA Council in November 2024. We would like to welcome the incorporation of key pieces of legislation into the EEA Agreement, such as health technology assessment. We are also pleased with the substantial reduction of the backlog in the financial services area, including incorporation of acts on markets in crypto-assets and digital operational resilience for the financial sector.

We hope discussions can soon be concluded on important pending legislations. The Presidency would like to highlight energy, as well as the oldest pending acts in the package on genetically modified food and feed, and still pending acts in the field of competition (Procedural State Aid Regulation).

Furthermore, we would like to welcome the continued joint determination to incorporate the relevant EU acquis into the EEA Agreement.

Finally, I would like to express our satisfaction that we are able to adopt EEA Council conclusions today, and that the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms have now been launched, with the signature of the first Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Poland on 23 April. This sends a strong and important signal of unity. We remain, and will continue to be, as closer partners as ever.

I will now give the floor to Commission Vice President Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ.

Maroš, you have the floor.

### **Intervention of Commissioner Mr Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ on behalf of the Commission**

Dear Ministers, Representatives of the EEA EFTA institutions, Ambassadors, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Commission, I am pleased to share with you our assessment of the functioning of the EEA Agreement.

Firstly, let me remark that following last year's celebrations of 30 years of the EEA, we have reached the 30-year mark also with Liechtenstein, which joined in 1995 and is chairing on the EEA EFTA side this semester.

I am pleased that we have agreed comprehensive EEA Council Conclusions. Our agreement to work together so closely is all the more important in a context of continued global geopolitical turbulences.

Let me also appreciate your continued close alignment vis-à-vis the Russian war against Ukraine, both in the sanctions regime against Russia and in humanitarian, financial and military support provided to Ukraine. I am pleased that further discussions will take place in the political dialogue on common foreign and security policy with HRVP Kallas right after this meeting.

In terms of our core business, the implementation of the EEA Agreement and the incorporation of the EU acquis into the EEA Agreement, I refer to the progress report of the EEA Joint Committee. Since the last meeting of the EEA Council on 25 November 2024, we have adopted 173 Joint Committee Decisions incorporating 282 legal acts.



In this period, we incorporated important pieces of legislation in key areas such as rules of origin, health technology assessment, transport (cross-border exchange of information and interoperability of electronic road toll systems) and financial services (markets in crypto-assets and digital operational resilience for the financial sector).

I am particularly pleased with significant progress in the field of financial services, where the number of acts in the backlog was again reduced substantially. These developments are essential for the good functioning of the Agreement and the internal market we share, and we need to push forward the work to ensure the timely incorporation of the other outstanding pieces of legislation.

I mentioned in our previous meetings, and I will repeat again that there is no room for complacency. There is still an extensive backlog of old pending files which we should aim to decrease.

One important field where the old backlog is substantial is energy. In our previous meeting, I proposed a joint ambition to incorporate a package of energy acts by today's meeting. While not finalised yet, I am very pleased that incorporation of the three Directives (Energy Efficiency Directive, Renewable Energy Directive II, and Energy Performance of Buildings Directive) is progressing well with a joint objective of incorporation ahead of the summer break. We appreciate significant efforts dedicated to this progress both at technical and political level. We see this as a first step towards the full incorporation of the energy acquis backlog into the EEA Agreement.

Regarding other significant acts, also brought up previously in our EEA Council meetings, let me also recall the Helicopter Offshore Operations Regulation (HOFO). We do not take concerns about aviation safety and weather and climate conditions lightly. I am therefore glad that a dialogue between Norwegian Civil Aviation Authority and EU Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) was established to pave the way towards its incorporation into the EEA Agreement.

Finally, as mentioned previously, the Regulation on genetically modified food and feed from 2003 has still not been incorporated into the EEA Agreement. I am pleased this is beginning to move. I hope the meeting of 14 May will lead to solutions.

As we all know – the work does not end with the adoption of Joint Committee Decisions. These decisions need to enter into force as soon as possible after their adoption to ensure a level playing field across the entire EEA.

Constitutional requirements are an integral part of the EEA framework. We appreciate that the number of pending ones - older than six months - has decreased substantially from over 30 last year to just above 20 now. We appreciate the fact that you have prioritised this.

Once in force, sufficient attention has to be paid to the proper enforcement of the acts incorporated into the EEA Agreement. In this context, I would like to thank the EFTA Surveillance Authority for our work together in the Surveillance Policy Dialogues.

Finally, as you know, the EEA Agreement provides for a Financial Mechanism for the EEA EFTA States to contribute towards reduction of the economic and social disparities within the Union. I am pleased that the package on the new EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms has been provisionally applied and will soon fully enter into force. The first agreement with a beneficiary State was signed on 23 April – in fact with Poland, the largest beneficiary State with a total allocation of over € 920 million over the 7 year-period.

I would like to urge quick conclusion of the remaining agreements, so that the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms can address the needs on the ground without further delays and accompany increased EU investment into social and economic cohesion.

With this in mind, I thank you for the excellent cooperation and progress made over the past half year.

I look forward to our next meeting in the autumn.

Thank you.

#### **Intervention of Minister Mr Michal BARANOWSKI on behalf of the European Union**

I will now give the floor to the EEA EFTA states for their statements.

## **Intervention of Minister Ms Sabine MONAUNI on behalf of the EEA EFTA side**

Dear Ministers, Commissioner, colleagues,

We stand at a watershed moment in history. How we navigate these seismic shifts in the global landscape will shape our joint future.

To set the scene for our assessment of the EEA cooperation, I want to highlight three concurrent and interlinked challenges Europe is facing today. These challenges impact our cooperation and thereby the functioning of the EEA Agreement, directly and indirectly.

The first is Russia's continued full-scale war against Ukraine. This illegal invasion has brought European security and solidarity to the fore. Europe is expected to boost its defence industrial capacity considerably. This will have an impact on the Internal Market.

The second pressure point is Europe's continued quest to enhance its competitiveness. The widening innovation gap between Europe and global competitors threatens long-term prosperity. This must be addressed by encouraging investment, fostering innovation to enable sustainable growth, and tackling the need for a skilled workforce.

The third concern are the ongoing trade tensions and erosion of the rules-based trading system. No one gains from the return of tariffs and trade barriers, and it is essential that these developments do not impact our close partnership that is based on equal access to our common Internal Market.

The key message we wish to convey is simple: we are stronger when we face these challenges together. In the EEA, our cooperation is grounded in a dependable and dynamic Agreement, built on the shared values of democracy, human rights, the rule of law and a commitment to the international rules-based order. This common foundation is especially important in these testing times. The challenges we face should strengthen our resolve to stay united on our shared path of close cooperation and solidarity.

Ladies and gentlemen,

For over three decades, this path has delivered tangible benefits for all 30 EEA States. The EEA cooperation continues to create opportunities and drive solutions for the 450 million people who together shape our Internal Market. While 2024 marked 30 years since the EEA Agreement entered into force, Liechtenstein celebrates 30 years of participation in the world's largest Internal Market this year.

Throughout the three decades of our unique partnership, the EEA EFTA States have followed developments in EU legislation closely. In today's geopolitical climate, we support the EU's ambition to decarbonise while maintaining a competitive and strong economy – as set out in the Clean Industrial Deal. Its objective of aligning the green transition with industrial competitiveness resonates with our Member States, and we welcome the EU's ambition to make sustainability an engine of profitability for European industries.

The EEA EFTA States play an active role in empowering the Internal Market and in reinforcing Europe's competitiveness. Liechtenstein's innovative machinery industry contributes to a safer, greener and more efficient construction sector across the EEA. Iceland and Norway are frontrunners in the production and use of renewable energy, and lead the development of CCS technologies that will play a key role in securing Europe's sustainable future.

The Draghi report was a wake-up call for us all. To achieve a stronger and more competitive economy, we welcome balanced and constructive proposals to simplify and streamline EU legislation. Administrative burdens create a strain on companies, especially SMEs. Nearly all our EEA EFTA companies are SMEs, so these measures are especially important for our economies.

Meanwhile, the EEA EFTA States have paid increasing attention to new EU initiatives that aim to boost competitiveness and bolster economic security. These are often broad in scope and target multiple policy areas simultaneously. Many of them have an impact on both Internal Market policies that fall within the scope of the EEA Agreement, and other policy areas such as trade or customs that fall outside its scope as such.

The Internal Market is an important tool to meet global challenges. This also underscores why safeguarding the homogeneity and a level playing field within the Internal Market continues to be of paramount importance. Economic security is an important objective, and is best achieved with a strong and homogeneous Internal Market.

Against this background, we welcome a future-oriented, constructive and strategic dialogue at the appropriate level to further this goal together and avoid any fragmentation of the Internal Market, or the creation of an uneven playing field.

Ministers, Commissioner, colleagues,

Now, on to our core work: retaining the homogeneity of the Internal Market. The EEA EFTA States continue to prioritise the timely incorporation of legal acts into the EEA Agreement.

In the six months since our last meeting, we have incorporated 282 legal acts, including long-outstanding legal acts. Much dedication has gone into working on more challenging files on both sides.

Keeping the backlog as low as possible remains a key priority. The EEA EFTA States continue to try to ensure greater coordination and more efficient procedures on our side. These efforts will hopefully pay dividends in the future.

Since our last meeting, many important legal acts have been incorporated into the EEA Agreement. These include new rules on the assessment of health technologies and rules on cross-border enforcement to enhance road safety, as well as important decisions related to digital operational resilience for the financial sector and on markets for crypto assets. Significant progress has also been made towards the incorporation of key pieces of energy legislation relating to energy efficiency and renewable energy, with draft decisions having been submitted to the EU in April. Once these acts are incorporated, together with a large volume of linked secondary legislation, the backlog in the field of energy will be reduced by around 50%.

The number of JCDs awaiting the fulfilment of constitutional requirements where the six-months deadline has passed has remained relatively stable since our last meeting in November. We stay mindful of the goal to keep the number of constitutional requirements as low as possible.

The EEA EFTA States welcome the implementation and provisional application of the Agreement on the EEA Financial Mechanism – as well as the Agreement on the Norway Grants – for the period 2021 to 2028. We look forward to the effective and timely implementation of the funds, which will contribute to the agreed thematic priorities: European green transition; democracy, rule of law and human rights; and finally social inclusion and resilience. To this end, we are actively engaged in MoU negotiations with all Beneficiary States to conclude the negotiations as soon as possible. Their speedy conclusion is a common priority, and we welcome that the MoUs with Poland were already signed last month.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We value the EEA Council as a vital forum for deepening cooperation between the EEA EFTA States and the EU – especially in times of both challenge and change. We also welcome the adopted Council Conclusions, which illustrate the comprehensive nature of our relationship and its constructive spirit. To address the pressure points outlined today, all 30 EEA States must work together and draw on their individual strengths and shared capacities. In a rapidly evolving world, one thing remains clear: together, we are stronger.

To conclude, I want to extend our thanks to the Polish Presidency for its constructive cooperation and efforts to facilitate our participation in informal EU Council meetings. We look forward to working with the Danish EU Presidency in the second half of this year.

Thank you.

### **Intervention of Minister Ms Sabine MONAUNI on behalf of Liechtenstein**

Dear Ministers, dear Commissioner, dear colleagues,

Today is in fact the tenth EEA Council I personally attend. It is the first time, however, that I do so as Foreign Minister, while between 2016 and 2021 I was wearing the hat of Liechtenstein's ambassador to the EU. I will honor today's personal tenth anniversary by doing something, I always wished to do: Being sweet and short.

First, the new Liechtenstein Government is as committed to the EEA Agreement as the last one. The new Prime Minister and I come with many years of practical experience with the Agreement in different roles and responsibilities. We will do everything we can to continue the success story, particularly in light of the fact that the Agreement's membership may face changes.

Second, as we celebrate 30 years of the entry into force of the EEA Agreement in Liechtenstein, we asked our people and enterprises what they think of it these days. The support remains overwhelming. 88 % of the Liechtenstein population considers the EEA Agreement a good agreement for our country. Similarly high approval rates were received from companies. Jacques Delors' famous observation that "you cannot fall in love with the Single Market", may thus not be entirely true for the Liechtenstein people.

Third, Liechtenstein needs and wants a strong Europe. We will continue to be as flexible and fast as we can in order to make our contribution, be it to European competitiveness through our open and innovative economy, be it to economic security by being a reliable long-standing contributor to trustworthy European value chains and to European unity by implementing EU sanctions efficiently and effectively and supporting Ukraine as best as we can.

Third and a half: We are aware that words need to be met with deeds. All obstacles to homogeneity need to be tackled in a spirit of cooperation: The backlog, constitutional requirements or EU legal acts with relevance to the Internal Market or trade defence measures that risk treating the EEA EFTA States as third countries. For this, we all need to do our homework and be ambitious about the dialogues we have and the solutions we find.

I and my Government are highly motivated to making this possible and to keep at least true to my goal of being short, I end here.

### **Intervention of Minister Ms Þorgerður Katrín GUNNARSDÓTTIR on behalf of Iceland**

Commissioner, Ministers, colleagues,

It is a source of great joy to address this forum for the first time in my new capacity as Foreign Minister. Throughout the years, I have been - and remain - a staunch supporter of the EEA cooperation. In particular, I recognise the great benefit the agreement has delivered to the Icelandic society and European cooperation. 31 years of a more prosperous Iceland and Europe.

As you are no doubt aware, my government has put the future of Iceland's place in the European cooperation on its agenda by holding a referendum on continuing negotiations on accession of Iceland to the EU no later than in the year 2027. Honestly, I would like to speed up that process. However, until such time, my Government and I will remain fully committed to our important cooperation in the EEA.

Commissioner, Ministers, colleagues,

Iceland welcomes the growing emphasis on competitiveness as this is, together with inclusive growth, a key factor in building resilient societies. We particularly welcome the recent Omnibus-proposals to lighten the load for our businesses. We encourage the Commission to continue on this path to alleviate the regulatory burden of our businesses where possible. That aligns with the manifesto of my government.

The EEA Agreement, which has integrated our economies and supply chains, is of course a solid platform for us to enhance competitiveness in a mutually beneficial manner. It is important that we develop the internal market, so we continue to push aside barriers to trade and opportunity - not erect new ones.

The EU programmes continue to be an essential part of our relationship and have a vital role to play for topics such as competitiveness, and now increasingly security and defence. As the Commission prepares proposals for the upcoming programme period, the EEA EFTA States underline that all means should be explored to allow for future programme participation to be ensured for the mutual benefit of all EEA parties, in line with the EEA Agreement and reflecting the close relationship between the EEA EFTA States and the EU.

Our cooperation has perhaps never been more important than actually now. A cooperation of countries that share such values as freedom, rule of law, human rights, democracy and open and fair trade – something that apparently cannot be taken for granted these days, looking East - or even West.



I would like to express our satisfaction over the progress to conclude Memorandum of Understandings with the 15 beneficiary states to operationalize the Agreement on the EEA Financial Mechanism for the period 2021-2028. We are particularly pleased to have concluded with Poland recently.

We also welcome the adoption of the Conclusions of this meeting. As last year we would emphasise that fisheries policy is outside the scope of the EEA Agreement and such issues should more appropriately be addressed in other fora.

That said, Iceland is keen to enhance cooperation with the EU in more areas. We particularly welcome the start of talks on deeper cooperation in the field of health and on secure connectivity. On fisheries and ocean matters, the relations between Iceland and the EU have perhaps never been as positive as now. We are closely aligned on Foreign and Security Policy and climate measures. Now more than ever we need to continue to protect and promote our common values and the rules-based international order, as well as the noticeable backlash on climate action. So, there is a lot to build on and many opportunities.

To conclude, I would like to thank the outgoing Polish presidency for the constructive cooperation during their term and look forward to cooperating with the Danish presidency when we are in the Chair on the EFTA-side. In particular, I would also like to thank Maros and his team for the engagement and dedication to the EEA Cooperation.

Thank you.

### **Intervention of Minister Mr Espen BARTH EIDE on behalf of Norway**

The Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Espen Barth Eide, based his statement on the following:

#### **Introduction**

- The Agreement entered into force when the world was opening up, and multilateral cooperation and rules-based trade were being strengthened.
- The Agreement was important then. It is even more important now living in a world closing in, where tariffs are back, and WTO and the trade rules are being challenged.
- A strong sense of pragmatism from both the EEA EFTA States and the EU has guarded our shared single market and ensured the good functioning of the EEA Agreement.
- The EEA Agreement is the cornerstone of the Norwegian economy and Norway's relationship with the EU– and so much more. It represents the shared commitment of 30 countries to a multilateral world anchored in peace, free trade, the rule of law, democracy, and human rights. Norway remains committed to our shared values.
- A new composition in the Norwegian government: Everyone is a very strong supporter of the EEA. Our lifeline in these times. More crucial than ever to continue our close partnership and pragmatic approach to shared challenges.



## Single market

- A unified and well-functioning single market is essential for Norwegians and our fellow Europeans alike. Norwegian companies are integral to European value chains such as defence and space industries, maritime, energy, and decarbonisation. Restrictions on trade in the EEA would be harmful to all parties.
- Norway does not take the EEA Agreement and its obligations and benefits for granted.
- It is in our joint interest and a shared responsibility to reduce the backlog. My government has intensified its work to see where we can contribute to bringing the number down. PM Støre has been clear on the ministers' responsibility for incorporating relevant acts into the EEA Agreement. I am glad that on some of the oldest files we have made good progress since we last met.
- We are working on incorporating the Renewables Directive, the Energy Efficiency Directive and the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive from the Clean Energy Package, hopefully before the summer recess. These directives together with their delegated and implementing acts will reduce the energy-related backlog by 50%. Also, on GM Food and Feed and the Procedural State Aid Regulation, I am hopeful that we will make progress in the coming months.
- As the single market is rapidly developing to respond to geopolitical challenges, we need to be part of the conversation about its future. Only through active involvement can we safeguard our shared interests.

## Green transition and energy

- Norway supports the Clean Industrial Deal, and a policy approach based on more pragmatism, technology-neutrality, and cost-efficiency. Norway has resources, experience, and expertise which are key to succeeding with the green transition. The Longship full-scale CCS-project will become operational next month, a major milestone in the rollout of CCS solutions in Europe. The Green Alliance between Norway and the EU provides a political framework for further developing our cooperation.
- Norway will remain a stable, predictable, and reliable energy partner to Europe. Production of natural gas will be at the current high level for the next few years. Reducing emissions from oil and gas production, including through electrification, is a priority. We aim to cut emissions from our oil and gas production by 50% by 2030 and to net zero by 2050.

## Positive development on security, preparedness, and defence cooperation

- Complements to the Polish Presidency for its focus on security in a broad sense: civil resilience, health, energy security etc.
- One year since EU-NO Security and Defence Partnership – important milestone.
- Another milestone: today's signing of the Joint Statement on Strengthening EEA Foreign and Security Policy Cooperation.
- Norway fully supports the EU's growing role in European defence and security and contributes actively to EU missions, joint exercises, and training efforts.
- Our defence industry is closely tied to the EU's industrial base, and we appreciate the ambitious ReArm Europe plan with the inclusion of the EEA EFTA States. Norway is already taking an active part in major EU programmes like ASAP and EDIRPA, helping boost Europe's overall defence readiness.
- Norway is engaging strategically in EU-led defence research and capability development, with full participation in the European Defence Fund and a clear intention to join the upcoming European Defence Industrial Programme.

## Ukraine

- Norway firmly supports Ukraine in the face of Russia's illegal aggression. Norway is closely aligned with the EU in its support to Ukraine and will maintain this commitment for as long as necessary.
- We contribute both funding and personnel to EU efforts, including the EU Military Assistance Mission in support of Ukraine. We will shortly conclude an agreement on a third voluntary financial contribution of NOK 1 billion (EUR 86 mill.) to the European Peace Facility, as part of joint European efforts to urgently donate ammunition to Ukraine.
- Up to 100 Norwegian instructors will continue supporting the EU Military Assistance Mission in 2025.
- Norway has increased its overall military and civilian support to Ukraine for 2025 to NOK 85 billion (EUR 7,5 mill.), reflecting the long-term nature of our engagement.

## Secure Connectivity

- Europe must work together on strategic autonomy and resilience. We are pleased with the progress made in the formal negotiations on Norway's participation in the EU's Secure Connectivity programme.
- Looking ahead, future space cooperation between Norway and the EU should be based solely on the EEA Agreement.

## Health preparedness cooperation

- Norway shares the EU's ambition to strengthen European health preparedness and crisis response. We support further development of joint EU capacities for health emergencies, recognising the value of a coordinated European response.
- Norway is already a committed partner in the EU's Civil Protection Mechanism, including through the Norwegian Emergency Medical Team and a rescEU air ambulance based in Norway.
- Norway is pleased that EU now is ready to start negotiations on health preparedness cooperation. We hope for swift negotiations, starting this week.

## EEA and Norway Grants

- Very pleased with the signing of the MoU with Poland under the EEA and Norway Grants 2021-2028, as the first – and largest – agreement for this funding period. Through this contribution important partnerships are being built.

## **Intervention of Minister Mr Michal BARANOWSKI on behalf of the European Union**

Maroš, do you have further comments on this topic?

Colleagues, would you like to add anything to the discussion?

As there are no further comments, we can close this item.

## **7. ORIENTATION DEBATE: Economic Security and the European Economic Area**

### **Intervention of Minister Mr Michał BARANOWSKI on behalf of the European Union**

Let us now turn to the next item on the agenda, our orientation debate on Economic Security and the European Economic Area.

Dear colleagues, the global situation has not improved since our previous discussion on economic security. As you may know, economic security is a core priority of the Polish presidency. The Polish Presidency supports activities strengthening European security in all its dimensions: external, internal, information, economic, energy, food and health.

EU ministers discussed economic security at the Foreign Affairs Council on 15 May. They reiterated that economic security is a priority for the EU and recalled the need for a broad and coordinated approach.

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, the tariffs imposed by the US on its trading partners, as well as the global race for technological leadership in critical areas such as digital, health and defense/space have significantly increased barriers to trade – ranging from tariffs to non-market policies and practices. These developments and the current geo-political situation increase our concerns about economic security and mean we need to take practical steps to address these concerns.

Since the publication of the European Security Strategy in June 2023, we have made progress in better understanding where our dependencies, weaknesses and risks lie – but also the strengths and opportunities that the EEA has. We need to keep the proper balance between minimizing the risks and protecting ourselves and maximizing the benefits of openness.

Let me update you on where we stand on the implementation of the European Economic Security Strategy on the side of the Council of the European Union. We are seeing good progress in the review of the Foreign Direct Investment screening regulation that will ensure that all Member States have a screening mechanism in place, with better harmonised national rules, a common minimum scope where all Member States must screen foreign investments, and which will cover intra-EU investments where the investors are ultimately controlled or owned by individuals or businesses from a non-EU country. We hope to be able to launch the trilogue negotiations with the Parliament and the Commission before the end of our Presidency.

On Export Controls, following up to the White Paper, we are working on options for EU export controls on critical emerging technology where multilateral export controls are lacking. We are also working at ensuring better coordination on our export control policy, and we have recently released a Recommendation on coordination of national control lists.

On outbound investments, we discussed the Commission Recommendation on outbound investments calling on EU Member States to review outbound investments of their companies into non-EU countries with regard to three technology areas of strategic importance: semiconductors, artificial intelligence and quantum technologies.

On research security we adopted a Council Recommendation to reinforce our security in May 2024.

With that, I would like to pass the floor to the European Commission, followed by the EEAS, for their considerations on the subject.

Maroš, please you have the floor.

### **Intervention of Commissioner Mr Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ on behalf of the Commission**

Commissioner Mr Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ, based his statement on the following:

Thank you, Chair, for the opportunity to discuss economic security today.

The EU and the EEA EFTA States are each other's privileged partners. Our close interlinkages naturally mean that if the economic security of one of us is at risk, it has the potential to affect the others, too.

We are in a moment of profound change, with Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, geopolitical and geo-economic tensions, and the real risk of fragmentation of the global economy.

I would like to dive in more general terms into our work in the field of economic security and then inform you very briefly about the situation with the US and China. But mostly, I will be interested in hearing from you about latest developments in your respective countries and have a discussion about how you see things going forward to ensure economic security.

#### **Economic Security**

- The Commission is advancing its work on Economic Security, as laid out in the European Economic Security Strategy (2023). Our approach is country-agnostic and focuses on strengthening our economic security whilst maintaining the EU's openness.
- The Strategy is based on three pillars: 1/ promote [e.g. supporting key industry, deepening the Single Market], 2/ protect [e.g. strengthening the use of our tools] and 3/ partner [e.g. working with like-minded countries].

There are three main areas of work:

- Continuous risk assessments across all risk areas including on the four critical technologies (AI, quantum, semiconductors, biotech), with initial results being ready shortly.
- Reflection on the mitigation toolbox, notably whether it is fit to address these risks.
- Doubling down on the cooperation with like-minded partners. The exchanges with you are of high importance to us and we are open to identifying further synergies.

Huge work to be done in Customs Union area: EU Customs Authority; Customs IT hub / digitalization; risk assessment; strengthened work with e-commerce (parcel flooding EU market: 4.3 billion parcels in 2024)

## Relations with the US

The US is of course our biggest trading partner, with trade in goods and services having doubled over the last decade, surpassing EUR 1.6 trillion. Changes to this relationship naturally have an impact on our prosperity, competitiveness and economic security.

As a result, the US import duties on EU goods will cause harm on both sides of the Atlantic. The universal additional tariffs potentially have significant negative impacts on the global economy as a whole.

The EU has put on hold for 90 days the EU's countermeasures adopted in response to the US tariffs on steel and aluminium. We now need the US to engage and to show readiness to make progress towards a fair and balanced solution – and in the meantime, we continue preparations for all possible scenarios.

We are looking at further rebalancing measures to counter the multitude of additional US tariffs on EU exports and ensure a level playing field in the longer term:

- on 8 May, the Commission published a list of products imported from the US for possible inclusion in a package of countermeasures, launching a public consultation and seeking input from all concerned stakeholders. I can only invite you to react as well if you have not done so yet, the deadline for contributions is 10 June;
- As we have just announced, we are preparing for litigation at the WTO to preserve and reinforce a multilateral, rules-based trading system;
- We monitor possible risks of trade diversion and are seeking to work directly with the Chinese in this respect;
- We have made it very clear that we stand ready to use all available tools in our trade defence instrument toolbox.

And we have increased our efforts to diversify our trade and investment ties with partners around the globe. And indeed, our negotiations are currently multiplying, from Mercosur to Mexico to the digital trade agreements with South Korea and Singapore, to opening FTA negotiations with the United Arab Emirates to reopening talks with Malaysia and pushing forward with India and engaging with other partners.

Across the board, we see third countries showing strong interest in strengthening trade ties with us.

## Relations with China

China is a crucial supplier of goods that none of us can easily source from elsewhere in the short term. This means that we must continue to engage with China, there is no other way: our market remains open to imports from China.

But we must derisk, simply because we cannot allow ourselves to be overly dependent on one trading partner and also because of China's distortive policies and practice of trade weaponisation. We have open lines of communication with China to engage on these issues. And we have made it clear that we will tackle any negative impact on the EU through our autonomous tools, in a measured and rules-based manner.

This includes potential trade diversion from China to the EU, as a consequence to US tariffs. The Commission is scrutinising actual import data very carefully to see how import volumes for individual products evolve:

We have set-up an Import Surveillance Task Force, which is elaborating an automated tool that will allow to monitor import trends closely so that any surge can be identified quickly and compared with complementary data.

In addition, President von der Leyen and Prime Minister Li discussed setting up a mechanism to track possible trade diversion and ensure any developments are duly addressed.

And lastly, here too, in the longer term, part of our answer to the situation with China clearly lies in the diversification of our trade ties – as I have already briefly outlined.

## Conclusion

Concluding, I can reassure you that the EU will not turn to hasty retaliation or more protectionism.

We will continue to play to our strengths, we will continue to keep our economy open while protecting it, we will remain consistent and reliable.

Thank you.

## **Intervention of Mr Matti MAASIKAS on behalf of EEAS**

Managing Director Mr Matti Maasikas based his statement on the following:

- The EU cannot achieve economic security on its own and needs to cooperate with partners sharing the same interests to assess risks and take mitigating measures.
- The High Representative/Vice President with the support of her services is working to “contribute to the work of developing a new economic security doctrine” [HRVP’s Mission Letter, see background].
- The EU’s Strategic Compass opened the way for the adoption of Security and Defence Partnerships with key partners. A key component of those SDPs (except with Moldova) is the “external aspects of economic security”. The delineation between economic security and traditional security is increasingly blurred. Just like we now routinely speak of hybrid threats, we can speak of hybrid security.
- This is reflected in our security and defence dialogue where we discuss, for example, cyber security, the protection of under-water pipelines and cables, which are essential for maritime security, and of other elements of critical infrastructure to protect and defend against hybrid threats or warfare.
- These elements are at the heart of our security and defence cooperation, in full cooperation with the Commission.
- EEAS is working on some of these topics to feed into various discussion items in the next security and defence dialogues with Iceland and Norway.
- We are encouraged by seeing how economic security is also becoming central to your national strategies and approaches.
- In this respect, we have read with attention Norway’s national security strategy published two weeks ago, in which economic security figures among the key priorities, alongside strengthening defence capabilities and preparedness, as well as enhancing the resilience of society.
- During my discussions last week in Vaduz, we touched with our Liechtenstein interlocutors upon topics such as cyber security, foreign interference and manipulation of information, which are highly relevant to ensuring economic resilience.



- As regards Reykjavik, we understand that Iceland's civil protection policy and security strategy are under review, with legislative proposals expected to be brought to parliament.
- It is important that we keep discussions channels open and active in all those areas, which are of key interest for all of us.
- We would be interested to hear from you what discussions or cooperation you have with EU MSs bilaterally or with other partners (UK, Canada, even the US, etc.) on matters pertaining to economic security.

### **Intervention of Minister Ms Sabine MONAUNI on behalf of Liechtenstein**

Dear Ministers, dear Commissioner, dear colleagues,

It is good that we talk about economic security again as geopolitical developments continuously add to the urgency of this policy agenda.

From the perspective of the EU-EEA EFTA partnership, the EU Economic Security Strategy – like an onion - has different layers that provide a basis for our cooperation. At the onion's core, the EEA EFTA States can be an integral part of EU measures to strengthen its economic security by incorporating relevant EU legal acts based on the EEA Agreement. If we incorporate the Chips-, Critical Raw Materials- or Net-Zero Industry Acts, we jointly promote what is then not only the EU's but Europe's economic security. The same would apply if we were to incorporate the FDI Screening and Foreign Subsidies Regulations or the Cyber Resilience Act: We would jointly protect Europe's economic security. From a perspective of homogeneity and highly integrated value chains between the economies of EEA Member States, nothing seems more obvious.

As the onion's next layer, we can take a more differentiated approach reflective of the often cross-sectorial nature of EU initiatives in the field of economic security and be creative. We can carve out, add definitions and exemptions or explanatory declarations when incorporating EU legal acts. We have 30 years of experience with the EEA Agreement to guide us and no reason to not add new solutions to our joint toolbox if need be.

Eventually and as the outermost layer of the onion, we can be the partners the EU seeks, be it in the field of technology, innovation or raw materials. We know each other well and we trust each other. Most obviously, we will be the EU's partners in strengthening the international rules-based economic order and multilateral institutions, such as the WTO.

As one can see, we have a wide array of options, which is good. However, it also requires us to fully understand each other's interests to eventually opt for the solutions that reflect them best. It therefore only seems natural to further enhance the already good dialogue between the EU and the EEA EFTA States in a field of such high relevance for Europe's geostrategic autonomy.

And despite 30 years of partnership, there is still a lot to learn from each other. Liechtenstein, for example, has over 600 industrial companies. They invest a sum equivalent to around 8.9 percent of GDP in research and development. This results in innovative, high-quality products and has certainly helped a small country like ours to secure an important degree of economic autonomy.

We have also found ways to respond to our common challenge of skills shortage as best as we can. In Liechtenstein's dual vocational training system, attendance of a specialist vocational college alternates with working days at a selected company. This provides young people with comprehensive theoretical and practical training at the same time. The system allows us to build up a pool of highly qualified, practice-oriented specialists that is well tailored to the needs of our economy.

It is these soft and systemic factors that can make the difference and a valuable contribution to Europe's economic security too. There is, thus, much potential in this field to explore the strength of our partnership even further.

Lastly, I would like to comment on a related matter. It is extremely difficult to predict what will happen next in the area of trade, in particular cross-Atlantic. In light of these uncertainties, the rules-based Internal Market is a reliable cornerstone for EU- and EEA EFTA-countries alike. Its four freedoms paved the way for the establishment of reliable supply chains among strongly like-minded partners sharing the same values.

It is important and warranted that the integrity of the Internal Market is maintained, including in cases where the EU is taking safeguard measures to protect this market. We therefore strongly advocate for exempting the EEA EFTA States from such safeguard measures, as was the case in 2018 with regard to EU global steel safeguards.

This task too, we hope, can be faced in our long-practiced spirit of partnership.

I thank you.

## **Intervention of Minister Ms Þorgerður Katrín GUNNARSDÓTTIR on behalf of Iceland**

Dear Commissioner Šefčovič thank you for an important overview of our status,

Ministers, colleagues,

The Polish presidency perfectly captured the current mood with its motto: “Security, Europe!” Security in its broadest sense is at the top of the agenda, not only among us politicians and policy-makers, but also with the public at large. As Europe is currently facing serious, complex and interconnected threats, there is growing recognition that strengthening our economic security is an essential part in building up our overall security and resilience.

This also implies an emerging economic security dimension to the EEA co-operation. Indeed, the Norwegian Prime Minister, Jonas Gahr Støre, recently remarked that the EEA Agreement is among Norway’s most important security agreements. And I absolutely agree, it is also for Iceland. The EEA Agreement is based on our shared commitment to free and open markets. Our openness to trade can also make us vulnerable to threats to our economic security from actors that wish to disrupt our value chains, attack our critical infrastructure or apply economic coercion. We need to find an appropriate balance between maintaining our commitment to open markets and free trade, while strengthening our economic security.

Dear friends,

This is a delicate balancing act. It has not been made any easier with the current global trade tensions, as the trade disruption and diversion can have serious consequences for our economic security. In this context, it is inevitable to mention the uncertainty resulting from recent US trade policy announcements. These measures are regrettable and will negatively impact global trade if they persist. The US remains an essential partner and a very close ally to Iceland as well. We welcome the Union’s measured approach in response to these announcements. Dialogue and willingness to engage and negotiate are always the best responses to settling disagreements with close partners.

Unfortunately, a less favourable global trade environment will negatively impact European businesses and industries. We recognize that potential trade diversion and unfair trade practices will increase the pressure on the Union to take protective measures. We have a shared interest in ensuring that free trade remains fair, it must remain fair, and that protectionist measures and unfair trade practices do not distort competition in our common internal market. At the same time, a level playing field in the internal market must also be unhindered access to our markets – as is guaranteed by the EEA Agreement. We the EEA EFTA countries, therefore, urge the EU to ensure that trade within the EEA will not be negatively impacted by potential trade defence measures, including safeguard measures.

We have repeatedly raised our concerns, both within the EEA context and bilaterally. We have also emphasized that it is in our mutual interest to ensure that potential trade defence measures do not disrupt the security of supply for EEA wide value chains, including for strategically important industries. We very much appreciate the EU's openness to maintaining a close dialogue and look forward to continuing to be in close contact.

Increased global trade tensions and uncertainties reinforce the importance of strengthening our co-operation on economic security. The EU's Economic Security Strategy from 2023 recognized the importance of partnership, and the EEA EFTA States and the EU are natural partners and allies in strengthening our mutual economic security.

Indeed, the EEA Agreement provides us with the framework to work together on some of the most pressing issues that relate to economic security. This includes areas such as research security, security of critical infrastructure and screening of foreign investments – all issues that are highlighted in the 2023 Economic Security Strategy.

So we need to strike the right balance that allows us to maintain the openness that has marked our co-operation for more than 30 years, while also developing capabilities to respond to current threats to our economic security.

The response should not be to raise new barriers or restrictions to our co-operation. Rather, we need to find ways to respond to these threats together, for example by strengthening our co-operation in screening against malign investors, working together to enhance research security and strengthening the security of our critical infrastructure.

The threats that we face to our economic security are very serious – and we must be able to meet them. But a successful approach to strengthening our economic security must also ensure that we continue to reap the benefits of our close co-operation. We must not let the threats we face define our partnership. Instead, we should use the strength of our partnership to find ways to meet these threats together.

Thank you.

## **Intervention of Minister Mr Espen BARTH EIDE on behalf of Norway**

The Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Espen Barth Eide, based his statement on the following:

- First, I would like to echo the sentiments expressed by my EEA EFTA colleagues: economic security is a natural part of the EEA. Moreover, we need to see economic security in a broader security perspective. I am glad these points were equally emphasised by the EU.
- Moreover, I am grateful that EEAS mentioned the first-ever Norwegian national security strategy – a historic milestone for us.
- Since we are touching upon history: I am old enough to have been an adult during the Cold War.
- At that time, global commerce was split into two completely separate blocs. The countries of my esteemed colleagues Michał Baranowski and Maroš Šefčovič traded eastwards, whereas my own country traded westwards.
- In the nineties, with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, we witnessed the emergence of a new era — one of globalisation, trade optimism, shared rules, and multilateralism through the WTO. It was a time when geopolitics often took a backseat in discussions on trade and the global economy.
- Today, geopolitics has returned with full force.
- However, we are not in a new Cold War – and we should avoid ending up in one.
- Norway agrees with the EU's de-risking strategy regarding China, rather than a full de-coupling. We acknowledge key interdependencies — as illustrated by my iPhone, which contains components from China.
- The gist of the matter is to find a balance between trading with everyone while retaining our security.
- To do so, we need to cooperate.
- Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein are too small on our own. However, we are full members of a large single market.

- Additionally, although the EEA EFTA States are not part of the EU's Common Commercial Policy, we share many of the EU's core values and interests in trade matters.
- These EU–EEA EFTA linkages take many forms. For example, situations may arise where we need to explain Norway's adoption of EU legal acts such as CBAM. Moreover, they underscore the importance of the EU knowing who invests in the EEA EFTA States – and vice versa.
- Our shared values and interests extend to a common belief in the rules-based world order.
- In trade talks with the US, it is essential that we uphold these commitments — including those under the WTO.
- This is the reason our conversation with the Americans remains just talks and not negotiations.
- Norway remains committed to free trade — but not at the expense of our national security. We must ensure our openness does not leave us vulnerable.
- An economic security strategy is the way forward to avoid both the distinct trading blocs of the Cold War and the naïve relationship to trade that marked the nineties and early 2000s.
- I welcome the European Commission's suggestion to task one of our existing committees with further examining economic security.

#### **Intervention of Minister Mr Michal BARANOWSKI on behalf of the European Union**

Does the Commission and the EEA EFTA side wish to make any further comments?

This point is now closed.

## **8. OTHER BUSINESS**

### **Intervention of Minister Mr Michal BARANOWSKI on behalf of the European Union**

Finally, that brings us to Item 8 on our agenda: 'Other business'. Would anyone wish to raise an issue under this item?

It does not seem to be case.

### **Intervention by Minister Ms Sabine MONAUNI on behalf of EEA EFTA side**

Thank you, Chair. On behalf of the EEA EFTA States, I would like to express our appreciation for the excellent dialogue we have had in this meeting, as on previous occasions.

We are grateful to the Polish Presidency, the European External Action Service, the European Commission and the Council Secretariat for the good and constructive cooperation over the last months. We look forward to welcoming you to the next EEA Council at the EFTA House in the autumn.

This forum continues to play an important role in supporting our close cooperation under the EEA Agreement. Today's discussions underline the importance of ensuring our joint economic security. As geopolitical challenges intensify – including growing trade barriers and increased protectionist tendencies – the Internal Market continues to be a cornerstone of openness, stability and resilience across all 30 EEA States.

### **Closing remarks by Minister Mr Michal BARANOWSKI on behalf of the European Union**

Thank you. We have come to the end of this session of the EEA Council. I would like to thank you all for the interesting discussions and close this part of the meeting.

I would also like to thank everyone from the EEA EFTA States, as well as the EFTA Secretariat, the EFTA Surveillance Authority, the EU Member States and the EU institutions for contributing to and participating in this meeting.

The meeting is closed.

16 May 2025

**60th meeting of the EEA COUNCIL**

**(Brussels, 21 May 2025)**

**JL 50.7**

**INDICATIVE LIST OF PARTICIPANTS - PLENARY SESSION**

**Liechtenstein Delegation**

**(EEA EFTA Chair)**

H.E. Ms Sabine MONAUNI	Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Environment and Culture
H.E. Mr Pascal SCHAFHAUSER	Ambassador, Mission of the Principality of Liechtenstein to the EU
Ms Andrea ENTNER-KOCH	Director of EEA Coordination Unit
H.E. Mr Martin FRICK	Director of Office for Foreign Affairs
Ms Ina LUEGER	Senior Advisor to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Environment and Culture
Ms Nuscha WIECZOREK	Deputy Head of Mission, Mission of the Principality of Liechtenstein to the EU



### **Icelandic Delegation**

H.E. Ms Þorgerður Katrín GUNNARSDÓTTIR	Minister for Foreign Affairs
H.E. Mr Kristján Andri STEFÁNSSON	Ambassador, Mission of Iceland to the EU
Ms Ingileif FRIDRIKSDÓTTIR	Political Advisor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs
Mr Ingólfur FRIDRIKSSON	Deputy Director General, European Affairs, Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Mr Finnur Thór BIRGISSON	Deputy Head of Mission, Mission of Iceland to the EU
Ms Katrín SVERRISDÓTTIR	Director of EEA Cooperation, Mission of Iceland to the EU

### **Norwegian Delegation**

H.E. Mr Espen Barth EIDE	Minister of Foreign Affairs
H.E. Mr Anders EIDE	Ambassador, Mission of Norway to the EU
Mr Frode ANDERSEN	Director-General, Department for European Affairs and International Trade, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Mr Jørn GLOSLIE	Deputy Head of Mission, Mission of Norway to the EU
Ms Mette JØRANLI	Deputy-Director General, EEA Section, Department for European Affairs and International Trade, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Ms Hege M. K. HANSEN	Senior Advisor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

## **EU Council Presidency**

Mr Michał BARANOWSKI	Undersecretary of State, Ministry of Economic Development and Technology
Ms Maria SZYMAŃSKA	Deputy Director, Department for European Affairs, Ministry of Economic Development and Technology
Ms Katarzyna CHAJEC	EFTA WP Chair, Permanent Representation of Poland to the EU, Economic and Trade Section
Ms Anna MROCZKOWSKA-KRAWCZYK	EFTA WP Deputy Chair, Permanent Representation of Poland to the EU, Economic and Trade Section

## **European Commission**

Mr Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ	Commissioner, Trade and Economic Security; Interinstitutional Relations and Transparency
Mr Jan DOPHEIDE	Member of Cabinet of Commissioner Šefčovič
Mr Nicolas VON LINGEN	EU Chair of EEA Joint Committee, Head of Unit SG.H3 - EEA, Switzerland, Andorra, Monaco, and San Marino

## **EU Council Secretariat**

Ms Helene HOLM-PEDERSEN	Director, DG RELEX, Enlargement and Europe
Mr Efstratios PEGIDIS	Political Administrator, DG RELEX, Enlargement and Europe

## **European External Action Service**

Mr Matti MAASIKAS	Managing Director, Directorate Europe
Ms Claude VÉRON-RÉVILLE	Special Envoy for Arctic matters, Head of Division Western Europe, Arctic and Regional
Ms Luciana SANDU-PENKER	Deputy-Head of Division Western Europe

## **EFTA Secretariat**

Mr Kurt JAEGER	Secretary-General
Mr Knut HERMANSEN	Deputy Secretary-General
Mr Thordur JONSSON	Deputy Secretary-General
Ms Marit C. Schage ANDRIA	Director, Internal Market Division
Mr Pétur GUNNARSSON	Head of EEA Policy Coordination, EEA Coordination Division
Ms Karoline Lumholdt MATHISEN	Head of EEA Legal Coordination, EEA Coordination Division

## **EFTA Surveillance Authority**

Mr Arne RØKSUND	President
Mr Árni Páll ÁRNASON	College Member
Ms Melpo-Menie JOSEPHIDES	Director Legal & Executive Affairs

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**EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA  
Council of the EEA**

**Brussels, 13 May 2025  
(OR. en)**

**EEE 1603/25**

**REPORT**

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From:	European Commission
Subject:	Progress report of the EEA Joint Committee

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**Decision making**

1. The EEA Joint Committee has adopted 177 Joint Committee Decisions (JCDs) incorporating 282 legal acts since the 59<sup>th</sup> meeting of the EEA Council on 25 November 2024. In the period from 1 January to 8 May 2025, the EEA Joint Committee has adopted 117 JCDs incorporating 194 legal acts. In comparison, during the period from 1 January to 26 April 2024, the EEA Joint Committee adopted 110 JCDs incorporating 214 legal acts.
2. As of 16 April 2025<sup>1</sup>, there were 610 legal acts outstanding where the compliance date in the EU had passed, compared to 561 acts on 2 October 2024. Since November 2024, therefore, the overall number of legal acts outstanding has increased. Of the 610 legal acts outstanding on 16

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<sup>1</sup> The date reflects the most recent issue of the Monitoring List prior to the Joint Committee meeting on 8 May 2025. This is a list of all outstanding acts where the compliance date passed two weeks prior to the Subcommittees I-IV meeting.

April 2025, 246 acts are still in the early stages of the incorporation process, where the compliance date in the EU has passed less than six months ago.

3. As of 16 April 2025, the number of JCDs awaiting the fulfilment of constitutional requirements where the six-month period had expired was 22, compared to 23 in October 2024.
4. Important decisions incorporated since the 59<sup>th</sup> meeting of the EEA Council on 25 November 2024 include:
  - Decision No 300/2024 on the alignment of reporting obligations in the field of legislation related to the environment,
  - Decision Nos 308/2024 and 309/2024 amending Protocol 4, on rules of origin,
  - Decision No 310/2024 on establishing the general requirements for proofs of origin issued electronically under Article 17(4) of Appendix A to Protocol 4 to the Agreement on the European Economic Area,
  - Decision No 1/2025 on health technology assessment,
  - Decision No 30/2025 on facilitating cross-border exchange of information on road-safety-related traffic offences,
  - Decision No 31/2025 on the interoperability of electronic road toll systems and facilitating cross-border exchange of information on the failure to pay road fees in the Union,
  - Decision No 40/2025 on digital operational resilience for the financial sector,
  - Decision No 41/2025 on markets in crypto-assets,
  - Decision No 68/2025 incorporating Directive 2021/2118 relating to insurance against civil liability in respect of the use of motor vehicles, and the enforcement of the obligation to insure against such liability,

- Decision No 70/2025 incorporating Directive 2019/2034 on the prudential supervision of investment firms and Regulation 2019/2033 on the prudential requirements of investment firms,
- Decision No 85/2025 incorporating Directive 2019/2121 as regards cross-border conversions, mergers and divisions,
- Decision 118/2025 incorporating Regulation 2023/606 as regards the requirements pertaining to the investment policies and operating conditions of European long-term investment funds (ELTIF).

### **Decision shaping**

5. The EEA EFTA States are participating in 15 EU programmes and 18 decentralised agencies, as well as in activities of 6 executive agencies.
6. Since the last meeting of the EEA Council on 25 November 2024, the EEA Joint Committee has taken note of EEA EFTA Comments on the following subjects:
7. EEA EFTA Participation in EU Programmes 2028-2034
8. The Proposed Amendment to the Measuring Instruments Directive (MID)
9. The Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the screening of foreign investments in the Union and repealing Regulation (EU) 2019/452 of the European Parliament and of the Council

## Briefings in the Joint Committee

10. In the period from 25 November 2024 to 8 May 2025 the EEA Joint Committee has received briefings on:
11. Report by Special Adviser Sauli Niinistö: *Safer Europe - Strengthening Europe's civilian and military preparedness and readiness*
12. Commission Work Programme 2025
13. Clean Industrial Deal
14. State of play of the EEA and Norway Financial Mechanisms 2021-2028 in the beneficiary States, including an update on the Memoranda of Understanding with the beneficiary States

## Status of issues outstanding

15. The discussions on the following issues have not yet been concluded:

### *Energy:*

Directive 2012/27/EU on energy efficiency; Regulation (EU) 2017/460 establishing a network code on harmonised transmission tariff structures for gas; Regulation (EU) 2017/459 establishing a network code on capacity allocation mechanisms in gas transmission systems and repealing Regulation (EU) No 984/2013; Regulation (EU) No 312/2014 establishing a Network Code on Gas Balancing of Transmission Networks and Regulation (EU) 2015/703 establishing a network code on interoperability and data exchange rules; Directive (EU) 2018/844 amending the energy performance of buildings directive and the energy efficiency directive; Commission Regulation (EU) 2016/631 establishing a network code on requirements for grid connection of generators; Regulation (EU) No 1227/2011 on wholesale energy market integrity and transparency (REMIT); Commission Regulation (EU) 2017/2196 establishing a network code on electricity emergency and restoration; Regulation (EU) 2019/942 establishing a European Union Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators,

*State Aid:*

Council Regulation (EU) No 734/2013 amending Regulation (EC) No 659/1999 laying down detailed rules for the application of Article 93 of the EC Treaty,

*Food Chain:*

Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003 on genetically modified food and feed (GM Food and Feed);  
Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/2122 on personal consignments,

*Transport:*

Regulation (EU) 2016/1199 on helicopter offshore operations (HOFO);

*Competition Policy:*

Directive (EU) 2019/1 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2018 to empower the competition authorities of the Member States to be more effective enforcers and to ensure the proper functioning of the internal market (“ECN+ Directive”); Directive 2014/104/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 November 2014 on certain rules governing actions for damages under national law for infringements of the competition law provisions of the Member States and of the European Union,

*Financial Services:*

Directive 2014/49/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 on deposit guarantee schemes (recast) - DGS III,

*Environment:*

Directive (EU) 2016/2284 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 December 2016 on the reduction of national emissions of certain atmospheric pollutants, amending Directive 2003/35/EC and repealing Directive 2001/81/EC,



### *Statistics:*

Regulation (EU) 2016/1952 of the European Parliament and of the Council 26 October 2016 on European statistics on natural gas and electricity prices and repealing Directive 2008/92/EC; Commission Regulation (EU) 2017/2010 of 9 November 2017 amending Regulation (EC) No 1099/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council on energy statistics, as regards the updates for the annual and monthly energy statistics; Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2018/1799 of 21 November 2018 on the establishment of a temporary direct statistical action for the dissemination of selected topics of the 2021 population and housing census geocoded to a 1 km<sup>2</sup> grid.

16. The Joint Committee has reiterated its determination to work towards the rapid conclusion of these issues.

### **Financial Mechanisms**

17. The Agreement on the EEA Financial Mechanism and the Agreement on the Norwegian Financial Mechanism for the period 2021–2028 were signed on 12 September 2024 and were provisionally applied as of 1 December 2024 (EEA FM) and 1 November 2024 (Norwegian FM). On the same day in September, the two additional protocols on market access for fish between the EU and Norway, and between the EU and Iceland, were also signed. For the new period of the EEA and Norway Grants, the EEA EFTA States will contribute a total of EUR 3.268 billion to 15 Beneficiary States in the EU.

18. The three priority areas for the period 2021–2028 are:

- Green transition;
- Democracy, rule of law and human rights;
- Social inclusion and resilience.

19. For the period 2014–2021, the EEA and Norway Grants allocated a total of EUR 2.8 billion. The period of eligibility in projects under both Mechanisms ended in April 2024. The final date for eligibility for support under the Fund for bilateral relations is 30 April 2025.