

European Parliament Resolution on relations between the EC and the EFTA in the EEA (30 October 1992)

Caption: On 30 October 1992, the European Parliament adopts a Resolution on economic and trade relations between the European Community and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries in the European Economic Area (EEA).

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European Parliament Resolution on economic and trade relations between the European Community and the EFTA countries in the European Economic Area (30 October 1992)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to the Luxembourg Declaration of 1984 on the strengthening of relations between the EEC and EFTA, the outcome of the EEC-EFTA ministerial meetings in November 1988 and March 1989, the statements by the President of the Commission, Jacques Delors, in January and October 1989 on the need for change in and improved structuring of EEC-EFTA relations and the subsequent statements by Vice-President Andriessen on the same subject,

— having regard to its resolutions on EEC-EFTA relations of 14 December 1989 ⁽¹⁾, 5 April 1990 ⁽²⁾, 14 March 1991 ⁽³⁾, 14 June 1991 ⁽⁴⁾ and 14 February 1992 ⁽⁵⁾, all concerning developments in the negotiations on the EEA, and its resolutions of 12 June 1990 ⁽⁶⁾,

— having regard to the opinions of the Court of Justice of 14 December 1991 and 10 April 1992 on the draft agreement on the EEA,

— having regard to the agreement establishing the EEA signed on 2 May 1992,

— having regard to Rule 121 of its Rules of Procedure,

— having regard to the motion for a resolution by Mr Mendes Bota on the negotiations between the European Community and the EFTA countries about the creation of the European Economic Area (EEA) (B3-0231/91),

— having regard to the motion for a resolution by Mr McCartin and others on dumping of Norwegian fresh salmon on EC markets (B3-0053/90),

— having regard to the report of the Committee on External Economic Relations and the opinion of the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education and the Media (A3-0306/92),

A. whereas the EEC and EFTA countries have historically had principles, values and concepts of society in common and these principles and values have now become established throughout the continent of Europe,

B. whereas the EEC is by far the most important partner of the EFTA countries, accounting for about 60% of their foreign trade, and EFTA is the EEC's main supplier, accounting for more than 25% of non-Community imports,

C. considering the development of trade and cooperation between the two parties since 1984,

D. whereas the EFTA countries and the EEC have repeatedly demonstrated their joint desire since 1984, and especially since 1989, to establish more structured relations and whereas the process of unification in the Community's internal market is accelerating,

E. whereas the two parties have shown a growing interest in consolidating and extending the framework of cooperation beyond the four freedoms, and this in relation to the entirely new problems posed by the turbulent development of the situation in Central and Eastern Europe,

F. whereas the changes that have occurred in the East, especially in the last two years, have given rise to a situation very different from that obtaining at the time the Commission negotiating received its brief,

G. Whereas the disappearance of the antagonism between the two political systems in Europe has created

new possibilities in terms of international politics for the members of EFTA and has enabled some of them to apply for membership of the EC,

1. Notes with satisfaction the establishment of a European Economic Area, which will create the world's largest integrated economic market and is bound further to increase the already extensive trade between the two parties and to consolidate the supremacy of the thus integrated new area in world commercial relations;
2. Considers that the agreement on the EEA is not at variance with the prospect of accession, but forms part of the same process and represents a step down this road;
3. Considers that the agreement represents a significant step forward compared with previous free trade agreements between the EEC and the EFTA countries, since it will in essence extend the four freedoms of the internal market to these countries and broaden cooperation to include other important sectors;
4. Points out, however, that the agreement does not yet establish a customs union or an organized single market of the 19 countries and that it does not provide for a common policy on foreign trade with third countries, which may continue to be subject to — albeit simplified — frontier controls and differentiated commercial policy positions; notes, on the other hand, the will hitherto shown by the EFTA countries to join with the Community in increasing trade with third countries;
5. Hopes that the practical implementation of the agreement will create the conditions for the establishment of a customs union, a common policy on trade with third countries and the completion of the internal market, with the disappearance of frontier controls;
6. Believes that the decision of four EFTA countries to apply for membership of the European Community must be seen in the context of:
 - (a) the new European political framework, which has brought an end to the distinctive arrangement of two systems divided by economic and military pacts and to the reasons for exercising particular care in relations between East and West; and
 - (b) the fact that the agreement on the EEA entails a high degree of integration and obligations for these countries without, however, permitting them to play a full part in the future decision-making process in the same way as the Community countries;
7. Emphasizes the importance of the fact that the applications for membership were made just as the Community had decided to progress towards Political and Monetary Union;
8. Believes that, after ratification of the Maastricht Treaty, the EC's legislation on the organization of the market will be used increasingly in support of the common social, environmental, industrial and foreign policy and as an instrument in achieving the conditions for monetary union and that, in this context, the deliberations of the Joint Parliamentary Committee will assume an important coordinating role;
9. Believes that, in economic terms, both parties are bound to derive benefits and advantages from the EEA;
10. Believes that the derogations from the four freedoms for which the agreement provides, though limited, must be temporary in nature and that everything possible must be done to ensure that they are withdrawn even before the appointed date;
11. Believes that the absence of any reference to agriculture in the agreement (even though existing bilateral agreements on processed agricultural products are improved) underlines the difficulty there is in reconciling

different systems of agricultural support; believes therefore that a satisfactory resolution of the agricultural issue within GATT is essential if enlargement negotiations with EFTA countries are to succeed;

12. Regards the bilateral agreements with Austria and Switzerland in the transport sector as a compromise resulting from a state of necessity, which is not entirely satisfactory to any of the parties involved; hopes, therefore, that this will be a temporary measure and urges the Commission to address this problem by taking measures relating to these two countries under the policy concerning transport infrastructure of Community interest after due regard is taken of the unique environmental problems in these two countries;

13. Notes with satisfaction that the free movement of persons is accompanied by the affirmation of principles and the establishment of standards which guarantee social security and equal treatment; regrets the absence of agreements on the abolition of frontier checks on the free movement of persons; calls on the EFTA states to abolish their internal frontier controls as a matter of priority;

14. Believes that the free movement of capital in the EEA will benefit economic integration, but hopes that it will be achieved through effective cooperation on monetary policy and through new agreements on fiscal harmonization;

15. Welcomes the introduction of a financial mechanism in support of economic cohesion in the EEA which should be used to help the less-developed countries and regions of the Community; urges that the resources for which provision has been made be subject to control by the Joint Parliamentary Committee;

16. Believes that one of the most important tasks of the Joint Committee is to evaluate the economic impact of the EEA in the partner states and to recommend, where appropriate, increased financial aid for the EFTA states and structural adjustments to bring those states in line with the Community's structural programmes;

17. Notes with satisfaction that the EFTA countries will be required to speak with one voice when dealing with the Community during the implementation of the agreement (the 'two-pillar' principle);

18. Considers the procedure provided for changing the *acquis communautaire*, integrating the new standards and resolving any disputes to be particularly complex and intricate;

19. Is concerned that these procedures may weaken the European Parliament's role and therefore considers it essential to lay down new interinstitutional procedures between the Council, Commission and Parliament, providing for a constant flow of timely information on the drafting of proposals, from the time of their initial formulation, and on any amendments thereto, so that any imbalance to Parliament's disadvantage may be avoided;

20. Underlines that, in protection of Parliament's prerogatives in connection with the legislation procedure for both the Community and the EEA, the Commission shall be held fully responsible to the Parliament through the latter's standing committees and plenary sessions as provided for in the EEC Treaty;

21. Believes, moreover, that, in order to protect its privileges, Parliament must also deliver an opinion on its possible extension to cover the EEA when taking its decision on the Community Act;

22. Considers that enlargement of the EEA with new countries requires Parliament's assent pursuant to Article 238 of the Treaty;

23. Considers that the Joint Parliamentary Committee for which the agreement provides will enable some useful comparative and investigative work to be done on the administration of the EEA and will also be commensurate with Parliament's overriding interest in protecting its autonomous privileges; calls on the Council to ensure that the President of the EEA Council attends meetings of the Joint Parliamentary Committee when it so requests;

24. Notes with satisfaction that the agreement provides for the coordination of the Community's and

EFTA's activities, if in their mutual interests, both in international organizations and in their cooperation with third countries;

25. Hopes that this arrangement will open the way to further and closer coordination of action in the dealings of the 19 states with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in particular and with the developing countries in general;

26. Believes it right that the contracting parties before the end of 1994 consider which adjustments might be made to the Agreement;

27. Reminds the Member States' governments that prior to any possible enlargement of the European Community, the democratic rights of the European Parliament must be substantially strengthened, and the decision-making processes within the Community must become more efficient and transparent;

28. Further hopes that the EEA will open the way to concerted action to address the many problems in the Baltic region;

29. Points to the fact that in the context of a possible enlargement of the EC the Maastricht Treaty provisions will form an integral part of the *acquis communautaire* to be accepted by any applicant country;

30. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council and the EFTA Parliamentary Committee.

(1) OJ No C 15, 22.1.1990, p. 336.

(2) OJ No C 113, 7.5.1990, p. 172.

(3) OJ No C 106, 22.4.1991, p. 123.

(4) OJ No C 183, 15.7.1991, p. 360.

(5) OJ No C 67, 16.3.1992, p. 196.

(6) OJ No C 175, 16.7.1990, pp. 49 & 51.