



European Economic Area
Consultative Committee

Joint statement from the 31st meeting of the European Economic Area Consultative Committee

The 31st meeting of the European Economic Area Consultative Committee (EEA CC) took place on 14-15 March 2023 in Stockholm, Sweden. It was co-chaired by Ellen Nygren from the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and Kristin Hansen from the EFTA Consultative Committee. The objective of the Consultative Committee, as set out in the EEA Agreement, is to strengthen contacts between social partners and civil society in the EEA, to cooperate in an organised and regular manner to enhance awareness of the economic and social aspects of the EEA, and to provide input through resolutions into deliberations of the EEA Joint Committee.

1. The EEA CC emphasises the importance of close cooperation of like-minded partners such as the EU and EEA EFTA States based on common values in times of geopolitical uncertainty. The stability of this relationship should be appreciated and nurtured and must not lead to complacency.
2. The EEA States are all active participants in the Single Market which was created 30 years ago. The EEA EFTA States have been firmly grounded in the Single Market for 29 years, since the entry into force of the EEA Agreement, and have made valuable contributions to the building and implementation of the market.
3. After the 30th EEA CC meeting that took place on 11 May 2022 in Bergen the Consultative Committee expressed their solidarity with Ukrainian social partners and civil society. One year after the Russian invasion, this commitment stands and is reiterated. If Ukraine were to lose the war against Russia, it would be catastrophic for democracy worldwide. The EEA States must do everything in their power to prevent 'war fatigue' and support Ukraine for as long and with whatever it takes, including with humanitarian aid and infrastructure.
4. The EEA CC, in a resolution and report on the energy resilience in the EEA in view of the geopolitical landscape, underlines that the energy crisis is first and foremost a result of a sudden undersupply following Russia's invasion of Ukraine and endorses the need for short time measures. It furthermore supports the intention of ensuring that Europe's electricity market design is well-adapted to an electricity system that moves towards climate neutrality, with the objective of delivering affordable electricity prices for consumers and businesses.
5. The Committee welcomes the first important steps of the European Political Community (EPC) in the resolution and report which will be adopted on the future cooperation of the EPC. It emphasises that the EPC, if successful, should send a clear message to anti-democratic regimes that violations of human rights, freedom of speech, democracy, rule of law and legal certainty and aggression against neighbouring countries is unacceptable, and violators will face a common European response, possibly sanctions. The Committee is of the view that

future bilateral, regional meetings and EPC discussions should focus on how to better solve any problems between the members and to maintain a continent of stability and peace.

6. The EEA CC met with Eva Sjögren, Director General for EU Affairs in Prime Minister's Office, as representative of the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the European Union to discuss priorities of the Presidency and European competitiveness and productivity.
7. The EEA CC also had a dialogue with Jørn Gloslie, Director at the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He represented the Norwegian Chairmanship of the EFTA Standing Committee. The discussions dealt with relevant developments of the EEA Agreement and current EU/EEA EFTA issues.
8. It was agreed that the 32nd meeting of the EEA Consultative Committee will most likely be held in Iceland in the first half of 2024.