

EEA CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

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EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA

Revised

RULES OF PROCEDURE

of the

EEA CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

EXTRACT FROM THE AGREEMENT ON THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA

(signed in Oporto on 2 May 1992)

"Cooperation between economic and social partners

Article 96

1. *Members of the Economic and Social Committee and other bodies representing the social partners in the Community and the corresponding bodies in the EFTA States shall work to strengthen contacts between them and to cooperate in an organized and regular manner in order to enhance the awareness of the economic and social aspects of the growing interdependence of the economies of the Contracting Parties and of their interests within the context of the EEA.*

2. *To this end, an EEA Consultative Committee is hereby established. It shall be composed of equal numbers of, on the one hand, members of the Economic and Social Committee of the Community and, on the other, members of the EFTA Consultative Committee. The EEA Consultative Committee may express its views in the form of reports or resolutions, as appropriate.*

3. *The EEA Consultative Committee shall adopt its Rules of Procedure."*

RULES OF PROCEDURE

(Adopted by the EEA Consultative Committee at its Constituent meeting held on 8 February 1994 in Brussels, revised at its meeting held on 23 January 1996 in Brussels as a consequence of the accession to the EU of Austria, Finland and Sweden on 1 January 1995, and further revised at its meeting held on 26 June 2002 in Egilsstadir, and on 15 May 2008 in Longyearbyen).

CHAPTER I

Article 1 - Composition

The EEA Consultative Committee (EEA-CC) set up under Article 96 of the EEA Agreement shall have eighteen members. Nine of these shall be appointed by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and nine by the EFTA Consultative Committee (CC).

Article 2 - Terms of reference

1. The EEA-CC's area of competence shall embrace all economic and social matters of relevance to the EEA.
2. The EEA-CC may express its views in the form of reports or resolutions, as appropriate.
3. The EEA-CC shall exercise the right of initiative implicitly given to it by the EEA Agreement by means of decisions taken at its plenary sessions.
4. The EEA-CC shall help to strengthen relations between the economic and social partners of the EU and EFTA.

Article 3 - Appointment of members

EEA-CC members shall be appointed by the EESC and the CC from among their members. The CC shall be represented by members designated by the EFTA States for which the EEA Agreement has entered into force. The members thus appointed shall remain in office until their appointing body decides otherwise.

Article 4 - Observers

1. EEA-CC meetings may also be attended by observers.

2. To this effect, the following bodies may each appoint an observer: BusinessEurope, ETUC, and relevant organisations related to Group III of the EESC.

3. Other observers, including members of the CC from countries not participating in the EEA, nominated by European socio-economic organizations, may also be invited by the Bureau to attend EEA-CC and Bureau meetings in order to take part in debates on particular topics.

4. Requests by such organizations to take part in this way may be channelled in the first instance through a recognized group of the EESC or the CC.

Article 5 - Replacement

The members appointed by the two Committees, as well as the observers appointed respectively by BusinessEurope, the ETUC, relevant organisations related to the Group III of the EESC, and members of the CC from countries not participating in the EEA may be replaced at any time by their appointing body.

Article 6 - EEA authorities and the EEA-CC

1. The President of the EEA Council may appear before the EEA-CC to be heard by it.

2. The competent authorities of the EEA, as well as those of the EU and EFTA, may also take part in EEA-CC proceedings.

Article 7 - Chair

1. The two EEA-CC Co-Chairpersons shall be elected for a period of two years by the members representing the EESC and the CC respectively.

2. The Co-Chairpersons may be replaced in the exercise of their duties, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the two Committees.

Article 8 - Bureau

1. The EEA-CC shall elect a Bureau which shall be responsible for the preparation, coordination and organization of EEA-CC plenary sessions. The Bureau shall also carry out the necessary duties between plenary sessions.

2. The Bureau shall have six members: three from the EESC and three from the CC, including the Co-Chairpersons.

3. Bureau members shall be appointed for a period of two years in accordance with each Committee's Rules of Procedure. However, they may be replaced at any time by their appointing body.

4. In determining the composition of the Bureau, the fullest possible account shall be taken of the representation of the different Member States and the categories of economic and social activity on the two Committees.

CHAPTER II - ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Article 9 - Plenary Sessions

1. The EEA-CC shall meet at least once a year, alternately in an EU Member State and an EFTA State.
2. Following a Bureau decision, and for duly motivated reasons, the EEA-CC may hold extraordinary meetings in Brussels to coincide with EESC and CC plenary sessions.
3. The different interest groups (Employers, Trade Unions, and Various Interests) may hold preparatory meetings immediately prior to a plenary session of the EEA-CC.

Article 10 - Decision-taking

1. For EEA-CC decisions to be valid, a majority of EEA-CC members must be present as well as a majority of members delegated by each of the two Committees.
2. In principle, EEA-CC Reports and Resolutions shall be arrived at by consensus.
3. If, however, the only way of preventing the work of the EEA-CC from becoming deadlocked is by recourse to a vote, then a vote can be taken.
4. Diverging views may be appended to EEA-CC reports and resolutions in order to provide a fuller understanding of the positions held by the social partners.
5. Diverging views are written statements emanating from the different interest groups.

Article 11 - Procedure

1. Where recourse is had to a vote, a decision is deemed to have been taken when there is a qualified (two-thirds) majority of EEA-CC members in favour, provided there is, too, a simple majority amongst EESC members on the one hand, and amongst CC members on the other.
2. If at least three members present so request, voting may be by name.

3. Explanations of vote may be made, such explanations being recorded in the Record of Proceedings of the meeting in question.

Article 12 - Publication

1. Reports and Resolutions shall be sent to the EEA decision-making bodies as well as to relevant EU and EFTA bodies, and published in the EEA section of the Official Journal and the EEA Supplement thereto.

2. The respective secretariats of the two Committees shall disseminate the reports and resolutions, mainly to the European socio-economic organizations.

Article 13 - Agenda

1. Plenary agendas shall be drawn up by the Bureau, taking account of topics being discussed at EEA level and taking into account proposals from the two Committees and from members themselves.

2. The agenda shall be adopted at the start of each plenary session. It may include an "other business" item for discussion at the end of the meeting.

Article 14 - Bureau meetings

1. In principle, the Bureau meetings shall be held in connection with the EEA-CC plenary sessions.

2. However, the Bureau may meet at other times where the urgency of a subject so warrants.

Article 15 – Co-Rapporteurs

1. To ensure that an EEA-CC resolution or report is approved in good time, a plenary session or the Bureau may decide to appoint two or more Co-Rapporteurs, in equal number from EESC and CC members of the EEA-CC, to draw up proposals for submission to the plenary session. EESC and CC members should be consulted in order to appoint the Co-Rapporteurs. The two Secretariats jointly define a convenient procedure of information and consultation of their respective members.

2. The Co-Rapporteurs may be assisted by experts, appointed by the EESC and/or the CC respectively on the basis of their specialist knowledge.

3. The Co-Rapporteurs jointly agree the way of drafting the reports and resolutions of which they are in charge. The two Secretariats jointly ensure a balanced drafting of the EEA-CC documents.

Article 16 - Secretariat

1. The secretariat shall be provided by the EESC or CC secretariats in accordance with the meeting venue.
2. The two secretariats shall work in close coordination.

CHAPTER III - FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

Article 17 - Operational expenditure

EEA-CC operational expenditure shall be met by the EESC or the CC depending on the meeting venue.

Article 18 - Members' expenses

EEA-CC members' travel and subsistence expenses shall be reimbursed in accordance with each Committee's rules.

CHAPTER IV - FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 19 - Languages

1. The official languages of the EEA-CC are those officially recognized as such by the EU and the EFTA States respectively.
2. The EEA-CC **working language** shall be English. French, German or another language shall also be used to ensure a proper carrying out of meetings.¹
3. If an EEA-CC member wishes to add a further language to those mentioned above, that member shall bear the ensuing additional costs.

Article 20 - Revision of the Rules of Procedure

1. The present Rules of Procedure may be revised when necessary.

¹ Provision will be made by the requesting Secretariat for covering the cost thereof

2. Following a decision by a plenary to revise the rules, the Bureau will draw up the necessary proposed revision of the rules.
3. The voting procedure as described in Article 12 will apply.
