

EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA

STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE EFTA STATES

DECISION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE EFTA STATES

No 2/2002/SC

of 30 May 2002

on public access to EFTA documents

THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE EFTA STATES,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

The following EEA related EFTA documents are public:

- EEA Agreement
- Consolidated Version of the Annexes and Protocols to the EEA Agreement
- EEA Supplement to the Official Journal
- List of adopted EEA Joint Committee Decisions
- Awaited notifications under Article 103
- Celex list
- Information sheets on selected programmes in the field of Subcommittee IV
- EFTA Chair working programme
- EEA Joint Parliamentary Committee resolutions
- EFTA Consultative Committee opinions
- EEA Consultative Committee resolutions
- EEA Council agendas
- EEA Council conclusions
- EFTA Standing Committee agendas
- EFTA Standing Committee conclusions
- EFTA Parliamentary Committee agendas and minutes
- EEA Joint Parliamentary Committee agendas and minutes
- EFTA Consultative Committee agendas and minutes

- EEA Consultative Committee agendas and minutes
- EEA EFTA comments
- EEA Joint Committee agendas
- EEA Joint Committee minutes (upon approval of the European Commission)
- EEA Joint Committee Decisions
- Annual Report of the EEA Joint Committee
- Lists of proposals for EC legislation of possible relevance to the EEA Agreement (EC 'pipeline acquis')
- Lists of adopted EC legislation under consideration for incorporation into the EEA Agreement
- EEA related statistics produced by EFTA Statistical Office
- All other EEA related official documents not classified as confidential

Article 2

1. As regards EEA related EFTA documents not listed in Article 1, the principles described under the headings 'OTHER EFTA DOCUMENTS' and 'HOW TO OBTAIN PUBLIC ACCESS TO OTHER EFTA DOCUMENTS' in the Annex to Decision of the EFTA Council No 2 of 1997 ('GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC ACCESS TO EFTA DOCUMENTS'), approved by the Standing Committee on 27 June 1997, shall apply.
2. Decision of the EFTA Council No 2 of 1997 and the Annex thereto are attached to the present decision for information purposes.

Done at Brussels, 30 May 2002.

For the Standing Committee

The Chairman

Gunnar Snorri GUNNARSON

The Secretary-General

William ROSSIER

ANNEX

DECISION OF THE COUNCIL No 2 OF 1997

(Adopted at the 9th meeting at on 18 June 1997)

GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC ACCESS TO EFTA DOCUMENTS

THE COUNCIL,

Desirous to achieve increased transparency and active provision of information on EFTA activities to the public,

Convinced of the usefulness of giving the public the widest possible access to EFTA documents,

Having regard to the draft guidelines transmitted for the consideration of the EFTA Council by the Standing Committee of the EFTA States from its meeting of 26 September 1996.

DECIDES:

The guidelines for public access to EFTA documents as set out at Annex to this Decision are hereby approved and can be made available to the general public.

This decision shall enter into force as soon as it has been adopted by the Standing Committee of the EFTA States.

ANNEX

GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC ACCESS TO EFTA DOCUMENTS

These guidelines apply to requests addressed to the EFTA Secretariat for public access to EFTA documents:

PUBLIC EFTA DOCUMENTS

The following EFTA documents are public:

- The Stockholm Convention;
- Free Trade Agreements with third countries;
- Joint Declarations on co-operation;
- EFTA Annual Reports.

The following EFTA/EEA documents are public:

- EEA Agreement;
- The Consolidated Version of the Annexes to the EEA Agreement and the EEA Supplement to the Official Journal;
- EEA Council Agendas;
- EEA Council conclusions;
- EEA Joint Committee Agendas;
- EEA Joint Committee Decisions;
- Agendas of the Standing Committee of the EFTA States;
- Lists of adopted EEA Joint Committee Decisions;
- Lists of proposals for EC Legislation of possible relevance to the EEA Agreement (EC "pipeline acquis");
- Lists of adopted EC legislation under consideration for incorporation into the EEA Agreement;
- Information sheets on selected programmes in the field of Subcommittee IV.

Most of the above information is available on the EFTA Homepage (www.efta.int)

OTHER EFTA DOCUMENTS

The principle of openness is applied to the greatest extent possible. Public access to EFTA documents applies with due regard for provisions governing the protection of classified information. However, classification of any given document does not necessarily exclude it from public release. Access may be refused when disclosure could undermine:

- The protection of the public interest (public security, international relations, etc.);
- The protection of the individual and of privacy;
- The protection of commercial and industrial secrecy;
- The protection of the EFTA's financial interests;
- The protection of confidentiality as requested by the person who has supplied the information, or as required by the Legislation of the Member State that supplied the information;
- The protection of the institution's interest in the confidentiality of the proceedings.

HOW TO OBTAIN PUBLIC ACCESS TO OTHER EFTA DOCUMENTS

When receiving requests to public access for other EFTA documents, the Secretariat shall submit such requests to EFTA delegations for approval, which shall address them without delay. Should a request be denied, the instance of recourse is the EFTA Council for documents concerning functions carried out in Geneva, and the Standing Committee of the EFTA States for documents concerning functions carried out in Brussels.'
