

Declaration of EFTA Council on the EEA (Gothenburg, 13–14 June 1990)

Caption: On 13 and 14 June 1990, at the end of their meeting held in Gothenburg to mark the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), the Heads of Government and Ministers of the EFTA Member States issue a joint declaration in which they set out their position before the negotiations with the Twelve on the European Economic Space (EES), later to become the European Economic Area (EEA).

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EES - a historic step towards a new Europe

The EFTA heads of government and ministers met in Gothenburg, Sweden, on 13-14 June 1990. They took several important political decisions regarding the EES, Eastern Europe, and relations with third countries. They also celebrated EFTA's 30th Anniversary in the presence of Jacques Delors, president of the EC Commission.

Declaration of EFTA Heads of Government and Ministers meeting in Gothenburg, Sweden, 13 and 14 June 1990

Europe is changing, a new architecture is being put in place, and new responsibilities are being assumed. Affirming the determination of the EFTA countries to make a significant contribution to these developments, the Heads of Government of the EFTA countries and the EFTA Council at Ministerial Level met in Gothenburg, Sweden, on 13 and 14 June 1990 on the occasion of the celebration of the 30th Anniversary of the European Free Trade Association and issued the following Declaration.

1. We, the Heads of Government and Ministers, welcome the profound changes taking place in Europe and the new and challenging opportunities for the establishment of closer bonds built on common values and mutual renders landing, which will promote a Europe characterized by peace, democracy, prosperity and justice. The idealization of the Internal Market and like further development of the European Community, the establishment of a close and wide-ranging EFTA-EC partnership within a dynamic and homogeneous European Economic Space and the move in Eastern Europe towards democracy, prosperity and justice represent historic steps towards a new Europe.
2. We note with pride the achievements of EFTA during its 30 years, contributing to the prosperity, stability and economic growth of the Member countries, not least through flourishing trade based on the dismantling of barriers both among EFTA Member countries as well as between them and the European Community. We recall the evolution of EFTA from the establishment of free trade in industrial goods among its Member countries in 1966, followed by the Free Trade Agreements between the EFTA countries and the EC in the early seventies, creating the world's largest free trade area, leading to the Luxembourg Declaration adopted in 1984 by EFTA and EC Ministers extending co-operation between these two partners beyond trade and pointing the way towards the creation of a dynamic European Economic Space.
3. We are now on the verge of taking a new step forward in the integration of Europe by forging a close and structured partnership with the EC, as envisaged in our Oslo Summit Declaration. We expect to start in the immediate future negotiations, following the adoption by the EC Council of an EC negotiating mandate.

The EFTA countries have made their aims and positions clear for these negotiations both with regard to substantive issues and legal and institutional aspects.
4. The EES treaty should be broad and comprehensive and should, as jointly defined by EFTA and EC Ministers on 19 December, achieve the free movement of goods, services, capital and persons, as well as strengthen and broaden co-operation on an equal footing in flanking and horizontal policies, such as environment, research and development, education and social policy. In some areas, exceptions justified by considerations of fundamental interests, or transitional arrangements, will be called for.
5. We note that the relevant EC legislation to be integrated in one way or another into the EES Treaty as the common legal basis has been broadly identified and would, in principle and without prejudice to the negotiations, be acceptable. A satisfactory solution will have to be found to the question of joint management and development of EES legislation before the EFTA countries can take a final position on the integration of the relevant EC legislation as the common legal basis for the EES.
6. An appropriate legal and institutional framework will be required in order to safeguard the homogeneity of the EES and to exploit its potential mutual benefits. Such a framework should provide for the right of both sides to launch EES initiatives, for joint shaping of EES rules and joint decisions thereon, as well as for

equally strong and reliable surveillance and enforcement procedures throughout the EES and a joint judicial body with comprehensive and exclusive competence in EES matters.

The establishment of a genuine joint decision-making mechanism in substance and form is a basic prerequisite for the political acceptability and legal effectiveness of an agreement. We are convinced that arrangements to that effect can be reconciled with the need to safeguard the decision-making autonomy of each party. The institutional arrangement should ensure that neither side is presented with a *fait accompli* and provide for an appropriate participation of the 19 countries concerned and the EC Commission. In this context, we confirm our interest in conducting within the EES a dialogue with the European Community also at the ministerial level.

7. The EFTA countries have presented common positions with one voice throughout the high-level talks, and will continue to do so during the negotiations. Regarding the institutional role of EFTA in a future EES, we reaffirm our commitment in the Oslo Declaration to strengthen EFTAs structures as required by the joint solutions developed in the new process.

8. We recall the decision of EFTA and EC Ministers of 19 December 1989 to commence formal negotiations in the first half of 1990 and to conclude them as rapidly as possible. We reaffirm our aim that negotiations should be concluded within the year and that the entry into force of the resulting treaty should be set for 1 January 1993.

9. We stress the importance of continued co-operation on the basis of the Luxembourg Declaration of 1984, in order to provide for concrete and early results in some areas of co-operation, and in order to provide important input for the negotiations on an EES agreement.

10. The creation of the EES is of profound importance for the vitality of Europe and for the realization of its significant potential. Working together as partners, the EC and the EFTA countries would be able to enhance the prosperity, social development and cultural dimensions of Europe for the benefit of all its citizens. Together, they would also be better placed to deal with environmental concerns, as well as with the reduction of social and economic disparities between regions.

11. We warmly welcome the commitments made by the newly emerging democracies in Europe to political pluralism, rule of law, respect for human rights and the establishment of a market economy. We pledge our willingness to contribute actively to the consolidation of these developments and to the restructuring of the economies concerned. We express the view that a closer partnership between the EC and EFTA within an EES would be of great political importance for the reshaping of the European architecture and would strengthen the common capacity to offer inspiration and support to the new democracies of Europe.

12. We stress the importance of the conclusion of declarations on co-operation between the EFTA countries and the Republic of Hungary, the Republic of Poland and the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic covering such areas as trade, economic, industrial, technical and scientific co-operation, tourism, transport and environmental protection. These declarations, and the similar Bergen Declaration concluded with Yugoslavia in 1983, will play an important role in the intensification and further evolution of the relations between the EFTA countries and the countries concerned. Close contacts between the European Community and the EFTA countries would be important in these endeavours.

13. We note that exploratory talks between the EFTA countries and Turkey on the possibilities for concluding a free trade agreement will soon be initiated. We are prepared to consider appropriate steps in regard to other markets where we experience significant discrimination.

14. The Uruguay Round to be concluded in December this year is now entering its final phase. We reaffirm our commitment to make every effort to contribute to a successful outcome of the Round which should improve access to markets, strengthen and reform existing rules and disciplines, extend the GATT system to the new areas under negotiation as well as lay a foundation for the further strengthening of the multilateral trading system based on contractual rights and obligations. Substantive results in all these areas will lead to

an improved and modernized GATT strong enough to resist protectionism, unilateralism and other tendencies which erode the rule-based multilateral system. We also underline the complementary and mutually reinforcing nature of the Uruguay Round and the creation of the European Economic Space open to the world.