

E U R O P E A N E C O N O M I C A R E A
J O I N T P A R L I A M E N T A R Y C O M M I T T E E

26TH MEETING OF THE EEA JOINT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE 26th MEETING

Tromsø
Tuesday, 23 May 2006

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Statements by

- **H.E. Mr Anton KOZUSNIK, Austrian Ambassador to Norway, representing the President-in-Office of the EEA Council**
- **H.E. Mr Stefán Haukur JÓHANNESSON, Ambassador of Iceland to the European Union, EFTA President of the EEA Joint Committee and representing the EFTA President of the EEA Council**
- **Mr Matthias BRINKMANN, European Commission, representing the President-in-Office of the EEA Joint Committee**
- **Mr Bjørn T. GRYDELAND, President of the EFTA Surveillance Authority**

followed by an exchange of views

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Co-rapporteurs: **Mr Svein Roald HANSEN (Labour Party, Norway)**
Mr Paul RÜBIG (EPP/ED, Austria)

Addresses by specially invited personalities:

- **State Secretary Liv Monica STUBHOLT**, Ministry for Foreign Affairs,
Norway

- **Dr. Jan-Gunnar WINTHER**, Director of the Norwegian Polar Institute

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Co-rapporteurs: **Mr Franz HEEB** (Progressive Citizen's Party,
Liechtenstein)
Ms Ewa HEDKVIST PETERSEN (PES, Sweden)

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Elaborated by: **Ms Diana WALLIS** (ALDE, UK)
Mr Gudlaugur Thór THÓRDARSON
(Independence Party, Iceland)

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31 May 2006
SP/HO/SH

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- Adopted resolutions

1. Opening of the meeting

The President of the EEA Joint Parliamentary Committee, Ms Wallis, opened the meeting and welcomed all participants to Tromsø. Mr Hansen, Chairman of the Norwegian delegation, explained the situation concerning the strike of the Hurtigruten employees and that M/S Nordkapp had been harboured and that the Committee meeting therefore would be held in Tromsø.

2. Adoption of the Draft Agenda

Ms Wallis laid out the timetable of the meetings and how the agenda should be dealt with, proposing to take point 7 before point 5 this very morning. The agenda was adopted with this modification.

3. Approval of the minutes of the 25th meeting of the EEA JPC (1062048)

The draft minutes from the meeting of the EEA JPC, 22-23 November 2006 in Brussels, were adopted.

4. Development of the EEA Agreement and follow up to resolutions adopted at the 25th Meeting of the EEA Joint Parliamentary Committee

Statements by

- **H.E. Mr Anton KOZUSNIK, Austrian Ambassador to Norway, representing the President-in-Office of the EEA Council,**
- **H.E. Mr Stefán Haukur JÓHANNESSEN, Ambassador of Iceland to the European Union, EFTA President of the EEA Joint Committee and representing the EFTA President of the EEA Council,**
- **Mr Mathias BRINKMANN, European Commission, representing the President-in Office of the EEA Joint Committee,**
- **Mr Bjørn T. GRYDELAND, President of the EFTA Surveillance Authority,**

H.E. Mr Kozusnik, Austrian Ambassador to Norway, representing the President-in-Office of the EEA Council, highlighted the latest developments with regard to the EEA agreement. He referred in particular to the enlargement of the EEA agreement in parallel to EU enlargement, to the progress in implementing the financial mechanisms, and to the strengthening of the links between EEA members and Norway. He underlined the valuable input the inclusion of the new member states into the Internal Market meant for the EEA-EFTA countries.

H.E. Mr Kozusnik also assured the Joint Parliamentary Committee that the upcoming EEA Council will work towards enhanced efficiency of the EEA-EFTA contribution in all the relevant EU programs co-financed by the EEA-EFTA. In particular he referred to the perspective of the financial contributions in the timeframe 2007-2013.

Finally he touched upon the good functioning of the "Single Sky" - the common European airspace and open skies policy of the EU. The Ambassador concluded with a reference to the resolution the EEA JPC had adopted at its 25th meeting, and to those to be adopted at this current 26th meeting.

H.E. Mr Jóhannesson, Ambassador of Iceland to the European Union, EFTA President of the EEA Joint Committee and representing the EFTA President of the EEA Council, referred to the resolution adopted at 22-23 November in Brussels, underlining their importance for the good functioning of the Single Market. He also highlighted the Annual Report on the functioning of the EEA agreement honouring the constant participation of the EEA-EFTA in a large number of EU committees, particularly in the field of food safety and agricultural products. Research and technical development are at the heart of financial participation of EEA-EFTA in EU programmes.

Enlargement, as entered into force in parallel in EU and EEA-EFTA, has expanded efficiently EEA-EFTA relations, and will do so again in the next enlargement. H.E. Mr Jóhannesson underlined the importance of the EEA-EFTA financial contributions for EU-EEA/EFTA cohesion in the next 4 years, and the perspectives of the funds also put aside for financing NGO activities. He especially referred to the EEA-EFTA efforts in the frame of the Lisbon Strategy, as well in social policies and the energy sector.

Mr Brinkmann, European Commission, representing the President-in Office of the EEA Joint Committee, honoured the well functioning of the cooperating EEA-EFTA and EU in the Joint Committee, touching particular on food safety, civil aviation, environmental agreements, the service sector and the Lisbon Strategy. He concluded that EEA will continue to function well, also with a view to the upcoming accession of Bulgaria and Rumania to the EEA in parallel to EU membership. To achieve this objective of simultaneous accession is of foremost importance to the good functioning of the Internal Market.

Mr Grydeland, President of the EFTA Surveillance Authority, referring to the implementation of the acquis, underlined the excellent results in transposition of EU directives in the EFTA States, as shown by the annual figures. He also commented in more detail the cases the EFTA surveillance authority has been solving in negotiations or in EFTA court dealings. He also mentioned EFTA actions in the field of aviation and maritime security.

In the following debate Mr Bonde, Ms Hedkvist Petersen and Mr Thórdarson raised the issue of the transposition of EU directives, several aspects of enlargement and the financial mechanisms. Mr Brinkmann indicated the future use of the cohesion funds criteria, with regard to Bulgaria's and Rumania's accession. Mr Grydeland and Mr Jóhannesson referred to the specific problems related to the EU market access for fishmeal and also addressed the upcoming accession of Bulgaria and Rumania. There were also interventions from Mr Hansen, Mr Janowski, Mr Rübig and Mr Paasilinna, raising the issue of the very elevated costs of roaming as billed by the mobile telephone operators, and the importance of negotiations for EU membership with Turkey for the EEA-EFTA.

5. Consideration of the draft report on *Europe's High North - Energy and Environmental issues* (1065526)

**Co-rapporteurs: Mr Svein Roald HANSEN (Labour Party, Norway)
 Ms Paul RÜBIG (EPP/ED, Austria)**

After a coffee break the Chair Ms Wallis resumed the debate at 11.00 hours by welcoming particularly Mr Paasilinna, who attended this meeting in his quality as Deputy Chair of the European Parliament delegation to the EU-Russia Parliamentary co-operation Committee, creating a close link between the EP Russia Delegation and the EEA and Northern Dimension policy.

Ms Stubholt, State Secretary at the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, focused her intervention on specific challenges of the High North for international cooperation. Energy supply from Barents Sea becoming incredibly important (Norwegian and Russian exploration), therefore security, political stability and environmental sustainability in the Barents Sea are of high interest and put political responsibility of Russia, Canada and the USA into the limelight. The eighth Arctic Council member states are having a major effect on climate change. Norway has taken a lead role on the dialogue on the High North, both with EU and also Russia, Canada and the USA.

Dr Winther, Director of the Norwegian Polar Institute in Tromsø, informed the Committee with a Power Point Presentation about the impact of the climate change in the High North, global impacts as well as regional effects. Global effects will result from sea level rise due to the reduction of the ice coverage, of about 1 cm until end of the century. The impact of a warming Arctic will have different effects for the Arctic Sea. The Kyoto Protocol will not be effect full enough to cause a satisfactory reduction of the green house effect.

Following their presentation Ms Stubholt and Dr Winther proceeded to questions from Ms Hedkvist Petersen, Mr Thórdarson and Mr Rübig on specific approach concerning the political cooperation in the High North, with the subject of reducing the global warming. Mr Hansen and Mr Rübig, co-rapporteurs, introduced their draft report and resolutions.

6. Consideration of the draft report on *The Annual Report on the Functioning of the EEA Agreement in 2005* (1065687)

**Co-rapporteurs: Mr Franz HEEB (Progressive Citizen's Party,
 Liechtenstein)
 Ms Ewa HEDKVIST PETERSEN (PES, Sweden)**

Mr Heeb presented the draft report on *The Annual Report on the Functioning of the EEA Agreement*, and reiterated the questions tabled by the rapporteurs. Ms Hedkvist Petersen, co-rapporteur, referred to the amendment and proposed a modification to the paragraph on EEA-EFTA contributions. After Mr Hansen's, Mr Brinkmann's and Mr Thórdarson's comments, the Chair proposed certain modifications of several

paragraphs as agreed during this debate, also with regard to the amendment tabled by Ms Panayotopoulos.

7. Consideration of the working document on *The Implementation of EEA legislation* (1066093)

Elaborated by: **Ms Diana WALLIS (ALDE, UK)**
 Mr Gudlaugur Thór THÓRDARSON
 (Independence Party, Iceland)

The working document on the implementation of the EEA legislation was introduced by Ms Wallis. Mr Thórdarson intervened raising the follow up to be given and the procedure to be applied for it's further proceedings.

8. Vote on the draft resolutions

The draft resolutions on *The Annual Report on the Functioning of the EEA Agreement in 2005* (1065687) were adopted in unanimity, after being modified;

- para 8 by deleting the last 8 words,
- para 15 by deleting the second part,
- para 18 by adding: "expresses it's wish that a contribution should be continued",
- para 19 by introducing "the objectives" before "of the Lisbon Strategy"

The resolution on *Europe's High North - Energy and Environmental Issues* (1065526) was adopted unanimity, having included also by unanimity the amendments 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 and having adopted also amendment 6 with 1 abstention.

9. The working document on the Service Directive (1066083)

Briefing by Ms Diana Wallis (ALDE, UK)

Ms Wallis introduced the subject by explaining the state of the Service Directive, after a compromise with a large amount of amendments it had been adopted in the first reading in European Parliament. Further development would now depend on the Councils position with regard to the amendments. She underlined that the general Affairs Council would proceed to a first exchange of views on its upcoming meeting next 29 May. It was agreed that the Committee would reconsider this topic at its next meeting.

10. Future work of the EEA JPC

The Chair elaborated that the next meeting would have to deal with the working document on *the Implementation of EEA Legislation*. Mr Bonde proposed two further topics (soft legislation and decision making), Mr Hansen also proposed a topic (economic effects of enlargement) and Mr Rübzig proposed a reflection about Bulgaria and Rumania adhesion. Ms Panayotopoulos had suggested dealing with mobility of workers at the next JPC meeting.

The Chair concluded that further to the implementation report there should be only one additional report dealing with enlargement consequences, including also the financial uncertainties. Following Mr Thórdarson's intervention on including the fish meal issue at the next meeting the Chair reassured that the different points should be taken up in the next meeting agenda, but only 1 new report added to the work in progress.

11. Any other business

The Chair raised the issues of statements and the participation in EEA Council meetings to be taken up again with the upcoming Presidency in Office. Mr Thórdarson raised the problem of piratet fishing in international waters.

12. Next meeting

The Chair welcomed members to the next meeting and 27th meeting of the EEA JPC in Brussels on 10 October 2006.

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The Chair closed the meeting at 16.30 hours.

26TH MEETING OF THE EEA JOINT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE

23 May 2006

Tromsø

Norway

List of Participants

Iceland

Mr Guðlaugur Þór Þórðarson	Independence Party
Mr Jón Gunnarsson	Social Democratic Alliance
Mr Stígur Stéfansson	Secretary to the delegation

Liechtenstein

Mr Franz J. Heeb (Vice-President)	Progressive Citizen's Party
Mr Henrik Caduff	Patriotic Union Party
Ms Gunilla Kranz	Secretary to the delegation

Norway

Mr Svein Roald Hansen	Labour Party
Ms Laila Dāvøy	Christian Democratic Party
Ms Marianne Aasen Agdestein	Labour Party
Mr Steinar Gullvåg	Labour Party
Ms Tove Karoline Knutsen	Labour Party

Mr Gjermund Hagesæter	Progress Party
Mr Christian Syse	Secretary to the delegation
Ms Aud Loen	Secretary to the delegation
Ms Laila Høge	Secretary to the delegation

European Parliament

Ms Diana Wallis (President)	Member of the European Parliament, Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE), United Kingdom
Ms Ewa Hedkvist Petersen	Member of the European Parliament, Group of the European Socialists (PES), Sweden
Mr Jens-Peter Bonde	Member of the European Parliament, Independence/Democracy Group (IND/DEM), Denmark
Mr Mieczyslaw Edmund Janowski	Member of the European Parliament, Union for Europe of the Nations Group (UEN), Poland
Ms Etelka Barsi-Pataky	Member of the European Parliament, Group of the European People's Party (Christian-Democratic Group) and European Democrats (EPP-ED), Hungary
Ms Danutė Budreikaitė	Member of the European Parliament, Group of the Alliance of Liberals and

	Democrats for Europe (ALDE), Lithuania
Ms Jolanta Dickute	Member of the European Parliament, Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE), Lithuania
Mr Ján Hudacky	Member of the European Parliament, Group of the European People's Party (Christian-Democratic Group) and European Democrats (EPP-ED), Slovakia
Mr Paul Rübig	Member of the European Parliament, Group of the European People's Party (Christian-Democratic Group) and European Democrats (EPP-ED), Austria
Mr Reino Paasilinna	Member of the European Parliament, Group of the European Socialists (PSE), Finland

European Parliament Secretariat

Mr Henrik Olsen	Head of Secretariat
Mr Stefan Pfitzner	Deputy Head of Unit
Ms Emma Mollet	Administrative Assistant
Ms Vibeke Tuxen	Administrative Assistant

European Council Secretariat

Mr Georgios Kritikos	Desk Officer, Non EU Western Europe; EEA/ EFTA
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European Commission

Mr Peter Meyer	Principal Administrator
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EFTA Secretariat

Mr Harald E. Nybølet	Head of EEA Co-ordination Unit, EFTA
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Mr Andri Lúthersson	Officer, EEA Co-ordination Unit, EFTA
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Ms Margrethe Saxegaard	Officer, EEA Co-ordination Unit, EFTA
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Observers

Switzerland

Mr Eugen David	Christian-Democratic Party
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Ms Kathy Riklin	Christian-Democratic Party
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Mr Heiner Studer	Evangelical People's Party
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Mr Mario Fehr	Social Democratic Party
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Mr Erwin Jutzet	Social Democratic Party
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Mr Hans Ulrich Mathys	Swiss People's Party
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Mr Felix Müri	Swiss People's Party
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Ms Céline Nerny

Secretary to the delegation

EEA Consultative Committee

Mr Leif E. Nielsen

European Economic and Social
Committee

Speakers & Guests

H.E. Mr Anton Kozusnik

Austrian Ambassador to Norway, representing
the President-in-Office of the EEA Council

H.E. Mr Stefán Haukur Jóhannesson

Ambassador, Icelandic Mission to the European
Union, EFTA President of the EEA Joint
Committee and representing the EFTA President
of the EEA Council

Mr Matthias Brinkmann

Head of Unit, DG Relex, European Commission,
representing the President-in- Office of the EEA
Joint Committee

Mr Bjørn T. Grydeland

President of the EFTA Surveillance Authority

Ms Liv Monica Stubholt

State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Norway

Dr Jan-Gunnar Winther

Director, Norwegian Polar Institute, Tromsø

E U R O P E A N E C O N O M I C A R E A
J O I N T P A R L I A M E N T A R Y
C O M M I T T E E

26th MEETING

23 May 2006, Tromsø

RESOLUTIONS

Adopted pursuant to Rules 11 and 13 of the Rules of Procedure,
at the 26th meeting of the Joint Parliamentary Committee

in Tromsø, 23 May 2006

Resolution on ***The Annual Report on the Functioning of the EEA Agreement in 2005***

Co-rapporteurs: Mr Franz HEEB (Progressive Citizen's Party,
Liechtenstein)
Ms Ewa HEDKVIST PETERSEN (PES,
Sweden)

adopted unanimously

and

Resolution on ***Europe's High North: Energy and Environmental issues***

Co-rapporteurs: Mr Svein Roald HANSEN (Labour Party,
Norway)
Ms Paul RUBIG (EPP-DE, Austria)

adopted unanimously

Resolution

On the Annual Report on the Functioning of the EEA Agreement in 2005

The Joint Parliamentary Committee of the European Economic Area:

- A. in accordance with its task laid out by the EEA Agreement (Article 95, paragraph 4),
- B. emphasising that the EEA EFTA States are not third countries in matters concerning the Internal Market, but full participants,
- C. mindful of the importance of maintaining homogeneity within the EEA,
- D. noting that the information and consultation process provided for by the EEA Agreement is an essential tool for the EFTA States for the shaping of common rules,
- E. recalling its resolution on the functioning of the EEA in 1994 (adopted 29 May 1995), in 1995 (adopted 3 June 1996), in 1996 (adopted 14 April 1997) in 1997 (adopted 25 May 1998), in 1999 (adopted 16 March 2000), in 2000 (adopted 24 May 2001), in 2001 (adopted 20 June 2002), in 2002 (adopted 20 May 2003), in 2003 (adopted 27 April 2004), and in 2004 (adopted 25 April 2005),
 1. welcomes the Annual Report of the EEA Joint Committee for 2005 and agrees with the general assessment that the EEA is functioning well;
 2. encourages the EEA Joint Committee to draft a more comprehensive and analytical report for 2006 taking major EU developments and horizontal policy issues into account when assessing the functioning of the Agreement, enabling the Report to be understood by a wider audience, which could enhance the democratic scrutiny of the functioning of the Agreement;
 3. appreciates the statement delivered by the President-in-office of the EEA Joint Committee at the 25th EEA JPC, following the JPC resolutions adopted at the 24th meeting of the EEA JPC concerning the functioning of the EEA Agreement in 2004;
 4. welcomes the relatively high number of Joint Committee Decisions incorporated into the EEA Agreement during 2005;
 5. welcomes the ratification of the EEA Enlargement Agreement of all Contracting Parties in 2005;
 6. welcomes the relatively low number of EU acts under consideration on the EFTA side, notes that it is slightly lower than in previous year, and calls on the relevant parties to explain what exactly constitute an acceptable timeframe for considering EU acts;

7. welcomes the Joint Committee's decisions adopted in 2005 on: the EEA EFTA participation in the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control; the Community action programme in the field of civil protection; EEA EFTA participation in the European Railway Agency (ERA); EEA EFTA participation in the European Network and Information Security Agency (ENISA); the revision of Protocol 4 regarding the inclusion of several Mediterranean partner countries in the European cumulation system; certain special provisions in the field of competition for liner shipping companies and technology transfer agreements; the second Internal Energy Market package covering electricity and gas, and cross-border trade in electricity; EEA EFTA participation in the eContentplus Programme; EEA participation in the Sixth Environmental Action Programme; key priority act in the European Commission's Financial Services Action Plan; and, regulations on international accounting standards and directive on takeover bids in the field of company law.
8. regrets that the contracting parties have agreed not to pursue for the time being the incorporation of Regulation 733/2002 on .eu Top Level Domain and the incorporation of Regulation 2062/94 on the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work into the EEA Agreement;
9. welcomes that Norway ranked number 4 out of the 28 EEA States when it comes to transposing EU legislation into national legal order and that EEA EFTA States in general match the average for the 25 EU States;
10. expresses concern over the decrease in the number of EFTA comments on EC legislation which have been submitted to the EU side, and urges the EEA EFTA States to take actions with a view to enhanced participation in the EEA decision-shaping process at the earliest possible stage in the legislative process;
11. welcomes EEA EFTA comments submitted on general, horizontal policy issues to Heads of States and Governments and EU presidencies;
12. notes that the EEA EFTA side has expressed concern over the EU ban on the use of fishmeal in ruminant feed, is aware of the substantial economic interests involved and expresses its wish that the issue can be resolved in a timely manner;
13. notes that the EEA EFTA side has expressed concern over the European Commission's decision to open safeguard investigations on farmed salmon and calls on the relevant authorities to provide more information on this decision;
14. welcomes that good progress was made on EEA EFTA participation in the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), takes note of that this process has taken some time as participation is linked to the review of Chapter I of Annex I Veterinary Issues for Iceland, and urges the contracting parties to make provisions for an early EEA EFTA participation in EFSA;

15. expresses its concern over that the European Union Greenhouse Gas Emission Trading Scheme has still not been incorporated into the EEA Agreement;
 16. notes the increased role of agencies in the EU, underlines the need for EEA EFTA participation in EU agencies dealing with all matters covered by the EEA Agreement and welcomes the participation of the EEA EFTA States in the European Railway Agency (ERA) and in the European Network and Information Security Agency (ENISA);
 17. welcomes the findings of the EEA EFTA States' overview of the actual participation of EEA EFTA experts in the European Commission's committees and working groups and suggests that the survey be updated annually hereafter;
 18. welcomes the substantial contribution of the EEA EFTA States to the reduction of social and economic disparities and the high interest in the EEA Grants in beneficiary states and expresses the wish that a contribution will be continued;
 19. calls on the EEA EFTA States to pursue the objectives of the Lisbon Strategy in line with the EU Member States;
 20. calls on the EEA EFTA States to continue to pursue close monitoring of the Better Regulation Initiative as this policy could have important repercussions for the EEA EFTA States.
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Resolution

On Europe's High North: Energy and Environmental issues

The EEA Joint Parliamentary Committee of the European Economic Area:

- A. Recognising the new opportunities in petroleum exploitation in the High North – Barents Sea area that may potentially become one of Europe's most important petroleum sources in the not too distant future
- B. Recognising that the opportunities in the High North – Barents Sea area do pose imperative questions as to the major challenges of combining petroleum production with protection of the vulnerable marine environment
- C. Having regard to the current Second Northern Dimension Action Plan 2004-2006 (NDAPII) as endorsed by the European Council held in Brussels on 16 and 17 October 2003
- D. Having regard to the Northern Dimension Ministerial Conference in Brussels 20 November 2005 where the Foreign Affairs Ministers of the EU Member States, Iceland, Norway and Russia agreed on political guidelines for the future of the Northern Dimension
- E. Having regard to the European Commission's Green paper on a European strategy for sustainable, competitive and secure energy, on 8 March 2006 and the EU Presidency Council Conclusions on 23-24 March 2006
- F. Having regard to the Norwegian Government Paper: Opportunities and Challenges in the North 2005
 - 1. emphasises that the prospects of offshore petroleum activities in the High North – Barents Sea area underscore the importance of cooperation between the main actors involved as concerns environmental, energy security and availability, infrastructure, innovation and competitiveness as well as financing criteria for exploitation and management of the natural resources;
 - 2. stresses that the Arctic environment in general is a vital source of renewable and non-renewable natural resources which are of utmost importance not only for the nations and peoples in the area, but for Europe as a whole, including the European Economic Area;
 - 3. calls on relevant authorities to ensure that the exploitation of resources and the management of the marine environment in the High North – Barents Sea area is done in an environmentally sound and sustainable manner;

4. stresses that whilst natural resources extraction in the Arctic in general and more specifically the High North – Barents Sea could go on for many generations the resources are limited;
5. welcomes Russia's continued close cooperation with Norway, the EU and other partners in efforts to deal with the serious environmental problems that persist in North-west Russia.;
6. welcomes the Norwegian government's policy on the 'High North' and its intensified efforts to ensure the sustainable management of the area's rich natural resources such as the new coordinated system for monitoring the marine eco-system in the High North – Barents Sea area;
7. emphasises that the eco-system in the High North – Barents Sea area is vulnerable to pollution, over-exploitation and developmental strains and is under pressure as a result of not only the growing utilisation of natural resources but also long term pollution and climate change which has an intense affect on the Arctic in general;
8. underlines the importance of the Water Framework Directive, the Air Quality Directives, the IPPC directive and the Sixth Environmental Action programme and its Thematic Strategies for reducing the negative impact of pollutants in the Arctic environment;
9. calls on relevant authorities to evaluate, ratify, conclude and implement global environmental agreements such as the Kyoto Protocol, the Stockholm Convention on POPs, and the UN ECE LRTAP protocols on Heavy Metals and POPs;
10. calls on the parties to the Northern Dimension to agree on a clear cut, visible and dynamic policy, with strong political commitment by all partners that should reach beyond Europe to include the USA and Canada;
11. welcomes the shift in the Northern Dimension towards making it a regional expression in the North of the EU-Russia cooperation (PCA) and the "Four Common Spaces" and calls on the relevant authorities to create appropriate arrangements to link Iceland and Norway to this context, respecting the EEA Agreement;
12. calls on the establishment of a Northern Dimension partnership in energy where the focus is on sustainable development of existing natural resources, energy efficiency and renewable energy resources, where all Northern Dimension partners have a role to play;
13. calls on the Commission in future reviews of the Norwegian and EEA financial mechanisms to have regard to the possibilities of linkage between these contributions and the funding of the Northern Dimension;
14. calls on relevant authorities to improve cooperation and coordination between existing bodies for regional cooperation in the Northern and

Arctic regions so that they are more directly linked to the Northern Dimension policy;

15. welcomes the steps being taken within the European Parliament to host a first meeting of a Northern Dimension Parliamentary Forum to take place in the autumn of this year 2006 so bringing together for the first time all the stakeholders and elected representatives from the Northern Dimension partners;
16. stresses that the establishment of a Northern Dimension forum would substantially raise the profile of the ND, strengthen its foundations and provide a vehicle to increase co-ordination between the existing regional organisations in the Northern and Arctic regions and the EU and EEA institutions,
17. notes with concern that EU's import dependency is rising and unless the EU Member States make energy more competitive within the next decades, around 70% of the Union's energy requirements will be met by imports, compared to 50% today;
18. welcomes the European Commission's calls for a European strategy for sustainable, competitive and secure energy which will inevitably affect the High North – Barents Sea area;
19. welcomes that High North – Baltic Sea nations Russia and Norway are specifically mentioned as strategic partners in the European Commission Green paper on a European strategy for sustainable, competitive and secure energy;
20. stresses that a European strategy for sustainable, competitive and secure energy will also pose pertinent questions as to the EEA relevance of an internal energy market;
21. urges the EEA EFTA Member States to reflect upon the consequences if the European Commission extends the internal energy market to new third countries or develops closer cooperation in the field of energy.
