



Council of the
European Union

Brussels, 22 July 2024
(OR. en)

11505/1/24
REV 1
PV CONS 39
AG 139

DRAFT MINUTES
COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
(General Affairs)
25 June 2024

1. Adoption of the agenda

The Council adopted the agenda set out in document 11241/24.

2. Approval of 'A' items Non-legislative list

11451/24

The Council adopted all "A" items listed in the document above, including all linguistic COR and REV documents presented for adoption. Statements to these items are set out in the Addendum.

Legislative deliberations

(Public deliberation in accordance with Article 16(8) of the Treaty on European Union)

3. Directive on Transparency of Interest Representation on behalf of Third Countries

1**C** 10805/24

Policy debate

The Council held a policy debate.

4. Any other business

None.

Non-legislative activities

- | | | |
|----|--|----------|
| 5. | Preparation for the European Council meeting on 27 and 28 June 2024: Conclusions
<i>Exchange of views</i> | 9694/24 |
| 6. | Values of the Union in Hungary/Article 7(1) TEU (reasoned proposal)
<i>Hearing</i> | 10419/24 |
| 7. | Any other business | |
| | (a) Mapping of activities for tackling disinformation and strategic communication
<i>Information from Lithuania</i> | 11381/24 |
| | (b) Future of Europe: Presidency Progress Report
<i>Information from the Presidency</i> | 11234/24 |

1 First reading

C Item based on a Commission proposal

Statements to the non-legislative "A" items set out in doc. 11451/24**Agreement on the EEA and Norway Financial Mechanisms and the Additional Protocols with Norway and Iceland:****(a) Council Decision on the signing and provisional application***Adoption***(b) Council Decision on the conclusion***Agreement in principle**Request for the consent of the European Parliament***Ad "A" item 19:****STATEMENT BY HUNGARY**

“Hungary continues to maintain the identified concerns regarding the complete implementation of the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms in the period of 2014-2021 in connection with the implementation of the country specific allocation due to Hungary. Hungary reserves the right to take further appropriate measures regarding the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms in the period of 2014-2021.”

JOINT STATEMENT BY BELGIUM, GERMANY, DENMARK, SPAIN, ESTONIA, FRANCE, IRELAND, THE NETHERLANDS, POLAND AND SWEDEN**“on imports into the European Union of certain fish and fisheries products originating in Norway**

In the spirit of cooperation and compromise and acknowledging the importance of the agreement on the EEA financial mechanism as well as in recognition of its contribution to cohesion within the EEA, Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Spain, Estonia, France, Ireland, The Netherlands, Poland and Sweden agree to the additional protocol to the agreement between the European Economic Community and the Kingdom of Norway (on imports into the European Union of certain fish and fisheries products originating in Norway) as part of the package.

The aforementioned Member States also understand the protocol as a confirmation of the importance of the European market for Norwegian fisheries products and welcome the further economic integration between Norway and the European Union. A similar spirit of cooperation and compromise should also be exercised by Norway towards the European Union in fisheries negotiations.

Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Spain, Estonia, France, Ireland, The Netherlands, Poland and Sweden recall that several important issues in fisheries policy that affect Norway and the European Union remain unsolved, inter alia the acceptance of Norway of the historic EU quota for Arctic cod in the Svalbard area in the framework of the Treaty of Paris, comprehensive sharing arrangements of the Coastal States for wide-spread pelagic stocks in the North-East Atlantic (mackerel, blue whiting, Atlanto-Scandian herring), the lack of scientific substantiation behind the generic ban of beam trawl fisheries in Norwegian waters and the discontinuation of cross-border fishing in the Skagerrak. The aforementioned Member States call on Norway to return to a constructive cooperation with the European Union in fisheries matters and to work towards tangible results that resolve the beforementioned issues.

More broadly, the important and fruitful relation between the European Union and Norway should reflect an overall balance and should not be impaired by difficulties in fisheries matters. In particular, in light of the renewed tensions in Europe and in the North East Atlantic, the aforementioned Member States call on Norway to work in good faith for the full unity of the European Economic Area.”

STATEMENT BY THE COUNCIL AND THE COMMISSION

“The Council and the European Commission recognise that the EEA Financial Mechanism reflects the benefits drawn by the EEA EFTA States from their participation in the internal market and takes account of the aim of promoting the continuous and balanced strengthening of trade and economic relations between all Contracting Parties to the EEA Agreement in accordance with Article 115 of the EEA Agreement.

The Council and the European Commission take note of the provisions of the two Financial Mechanisms concerning the consultations with the European Commission that shall take place at strategic level during the negotiations of the Memoranda of Understanding between the Beneficiary States and the EFTA States / the Kingdom of Norway, with a view to promoting complementarity and synergies with EU cohesion policy (Article 4(2) of both Financial Mechanisms).

The Council and the European Commission also take note of the provisions of the two Financial Mechanisms concerning the assistance that the European Commission may provide to the Beneficiary States during the consultations on the provisions for the implementation of the Financial Mechanisms, before the issuance of those provisions for implementation by the EFTA States / the Kingdom of Norway (Article 9(4) of both Financial Mechanisms).

In these consultations, the European Commission will aim to ensure that the concerns and interests of the Beneficiary States are reflected with regard to the principles of good governance, mutual cooperation, good faith and partnership, taking into account their needs and any substantial difficulties they may experience on the implementation of the financial mechanisms, including in relation to the common values, and principles of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights. It will do this with a view to reaching the swift signing and conclusion of the Memoranda of Understanding between the Beneficiary States and the EFTA States / Kingdom of Norway. Attention will also be paid to the right of a Beneficiary Member State to be heard where measures such as the suspension of payments and the recovery of funds are concerned.

The Council and the Commission take note that the Union may, in accordance with the relevant procedures under the Treaties, bring disputes on the interpretation or application of the EEA financial mechanism before the Joint Committee, pursuant to Article 111 of the EEA Agreement. The EEA Council may consider any issue giving rise to a difficulty, according to Article 89 of the EEA Agreement.”