Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 821 (1984)[1]

Activities of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) in the period July 1981 to December 1983

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Having taken note of the 22nd annual report (Doc. 4984) and a number of reports of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) describing the activities of EFTA in the period from 1 July 1981 to 31 December 1983 and also of the report of its Committee on Economic Affairs and Development (Doc. 5163) ;

2. Noting with concern that the longest and deepest post-war recession has led to unprecedented levels of unemployment throughout the European region and has contributed to a proliferation of protectionist measures and to monetary instability ;

3. Convinced that, due to the close interdependence of the European economies, a lasting improvement of the economic situation cannot be achieved by national efforts only, but needs :

3.1. a strengthening of economic co-operation between EFTA and the European Community ;

3.2. a better international synchronisation of economic policies among OECD countries, leading to a sustained economic recovery ;

4. Recalling, in this connection, the policy recommendations formulated in its Resolution 809 (1983) in reply to the report on the activities of OECD in 1982 ;

5. Recalling the deep commitment of the EFTA countries to an open and reciprocal free trade system, and their insistence on a further liberalisation of trade, particularly in regard to technical barriers to trade ;

6. Noting with satisfaction :

6.1. the complete abolition on 1 January 1984 of customs tariffs for industrial products under the free trade agreements between the EFTA countries and the European Community, thus providing for an almost entirely free trade system for industrial products now encompassing seventeen Council of Europe member states with more than 300 million inhabitants ;

6.2. the simplification as of 1 April 1983 of the rules of origin provided for in the free trade agreements for engineering products ;

7. Welcoming the fact that, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Free Trade Agreements in 1983, both the EFTA Councils and the Council of the European Communities confirmed their preparedness to expand and deepen their cooperation under these agreements, and in other fields as well ;

8. Welcoming also the new impetus to the EFTA-Yugoslavia co-operation given by the first joint meeting at ministerial level in June 1983, during which the mutual interest in improving the structure and the volume of the overall co-operation was reiterated in a special declaration, with particular emphasis on industrial co-operation, trade, tourism and transport ;

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1. Assembly debate on 8 May 1984 (2nd Sitting) (see Doc. 5163, report of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development). Text adopted by the Assembly on 8 May 1984 (2nd Sitting).

9. Commending the favourable trade development between the EFTA group and Spain due to the progressive removal of customs barriers in accordance with the EFTA-Spain Agreement, but concerned about the persisting trade imbalance between Portugal and Spain to the disadvantage of Portugal ;

10. Welcoming the ongoing contribution of the EFTA Industrial Development Fund to the general improvement of Portugal's economic structure and noting that the Fund is now recording a substantial operating surplus which guarantees its continuance ;

11. Noting with interest that the governments of the EFTA countries decided to convene a summit meeting in May 1984 at Visby (Sweden) which can be expected to give new orientations for the activities of EFTA ;

12. Convinced that a broader and more intensive co-operation between the EFTA countries, the European Community and the other member states of the Council of Europe is both desirable and feasible ;

13. Noting in this connection the joint declaration adopted at the European Community-EFTA ministerial meeting held on 9 April 1984 in Luxembourg, on the extension of co-operation beyond the Free Trade Agreements,

14. Stresses that, in the implementation of such co-operation, care should be taken to avoid a dissipation of effort, so as to aim at the achievement of greater European unity for the benefit of all Council of Europe and EFTA countries ;

15. Invites the governments of the member countries of EFTA and the European Community :

15.1. to explore all possibilities for co-ordinating economic policies in the European region, whenever it is in the mutual interest and appropriate, in order to give greater impetus to an economic recovery ;

15.2. to continue their efforts in eliminating non-tariff barriers to trade, in particular through the further simplification of the rules of origin ;

15.3. to strengthen co-operation on the prevention and removal of technical barriers to trade, in particular those that might result from the strengthening of the internal Community market ;

15.4. to take fresh initiatives aiming at the harmonisation of the regulations applied in international travel and to imports of goods in small consignments of a non-commercial nature ;

15.5. to co-operate in the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and craft trades in the EFTA countries on the lines of the Action Programme for a Community Policy on SMEs adopted on 9 December 1983 in Strasbourg ;

15.6. to co-operate on the harmonisation of trademark legislation in the European free trade area following the envisaged introduction of a Community trademark system ;

15.7. to consider the possibilities of strengthening their co-operation in the field of scientific and technical research ;

16. Invites EFTA and the EFTA countries :

16.1. to discuss at the EFTA Summit in May 1984 the role EFTA can play in strengthening European economic co-operation and related matters, with a view to enabling the EFTA countries, where appropriate, to act in a concerted manner vis-à-vis the European Community and other international organisations such as GATT and OECD ;

16.2. to bear in mind Assembly Resolution 805 (1983) on European co-operation in the 1980s when examining future activities of EFTA ;

16.3. to continue and enlarge the scope for cooperation with Yugoslavia in order to support the economic development of that country ;

16.4. to explore possibilities for extending such co-operation to those European countries which already benefit from the generalised preference systems granted by five EFTA countries ;

16.5. to resist protectionist pressures, and to contribute to further progress towards the liberalisation of world trade in the relevant international forums, in particular GATT and OECD, while taking due account of the specific needs of the developing countries, in particular the least-developed ones ;

16.6. to make greater use of the Council of Europe as a political forum to foster co-operation between the EFTA countries and the European Community ;

17. Reminds EFTA member states of paragraph 9.vii of its Resolution 762 (1981) in which it asks them to pursue their efforts to further liberalise intra-EFTA trade in fishery products, given the importance of that industry in several EFTA countries, and invites them to examine the possibility of extending this liberalisation to the EFTA-European Community area ;

18. Invites the Council of Europe member states which have not yet done so to adhere to the Pharmaceutical Inspection Convention and the Hallmarking Convention, as well as the various reciprocal recognition schemes for particular types of products worked out in EFTA to overcome technical barriers to trade.