Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

**Resolution 1093 (1996)**[1]

# Activities of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) (reply to the 33rd and 34th annual reports)

Parliamentary Assembly

1. To its four member states - Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland - the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) remains a valuable instrument for trade between them, as well as with the European Union, other European countries and the rest of the world. It illustrates that increasingly close economic and trade relations may be pursued without their political counterpart, thus providing the European countries concerned with an alternative to the European Union.

2. The Assembly welcomes EFTA's close relations with the European Union - in the case of Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein through the European Economic Area - and its recent free trade agreements with numerous countries in central and eastern Europe. They constitute a major contribution to free and open trade in Europe as a whole, as well as to the work of the World Trade Organisation in favour of global trade liberalisation.

3. The Assembly, in conclusion, asks the member states of EFTA and the European Union further to adapt the cumulation agreement they have reached on a technical level - by which agreement materials originating from the European Union, EFTA and associated countries in central and eastern Europe can be combined within a large European free trade area - and generally do their utmost to ensure better market access for exports from central and eastern Europe to the European Economic Area.

4. The Assembly furthermore asks the member states of EFTA:

4.1. to continue to expand and intensify their links especially with the countries in central and eastern Europe, thereby assisting them in their economic development and facilitating entry into the European Union for those among them who so wish;

4.2. to work towards transforming its co-operation agreements with various countries into free trade agreements as early as feasible.

1. See Doc. 7526, report of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development, rapporteur: Mr Buzatu. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 29 May 1996.