



Resolution 965 (1991)¹

EFTA activities in 1989 and 1990: a changing EFTA in a changing Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Assembly has examined the 29th and the 30th annual reports of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and the report of its Committee on Economic Affairs and Development in reply thereto.
2. The Assembly recognises the essential contribution made by EFTA over three decades to enhanced trade in Europe and the world - the latest example being its efforts to establish a "European Economic Area" (EEA) with the twelve member states of the European Community.
3. The EEA treaty - which holds out the possibility of a largely integrated market of 360 million people - should, considering its complexity and far-reaching commitments, be seen as a long process rather than as a single destination. There is therefore all the more reason why this process will have to be continuously followed by the Assembly, apart from also remaining open to other partners.
4. Furthermore, the EEA offers Europe an additional source of economic and political stability, eventually permitting additional countries to join it by becoming members of EFTA, while some of its participants may accede to the European Community.
5. It is important that the EEA treaty be flexible and even-handed, and that it provide both the European Community and the EFTA countries with an equal say in matters of common concern, as regards not only the substance of the agreement but also the institutions set up to ensure its observance.
6. Certain parts of the proposed EEA treaty concern fields other than economic integration and trade proper, such as education and culture, social protection, public health, the environment, and legal and regional co-operation. It is important that work in these areas should not duplicate work already in progress in, or which could be done more usefully by, the Council of Europe.
7. The Assembly, in conclusion, asks the member states of EFTA and of the European Community :
 - 7.1. to ensure - as already pointed out in the Assembly's [Resolution 962 \(1991\)](#), on "1992", Europe and the world - that the EEA retains a maximum degree of openness vis-à-vis the rest of Europe and the world, thus offering the prospect of joining the EEA to European countries which wish to pursue economic integration but which may not be in a position to join the European Community ;
 - 7.2. also to offer developing countries fair trade conditions by refraining from protectionist measures ;
 - 7.3. to make full use of the Council of Europe as a privileged joint forum, not only for matters of common concern to EFTA and European Community countries, but also with regard to the rest of Europe in such areas as co-operation in the political, legal, cultural, educational, environmental and social fields, and in the promotion of democracy and human rights ;

1. See [Doc. 6457](#), report of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development, Rapporteur : Mr Demiralp. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 28 June 1991.



7.4. to grant the Parliamentary Assembly observer status with the "Parliamentary Conference of the EEA" that may form part of the EEA institutional framework. This is all the more justified considering the Assembly's role, since EFTA's creation in 1960, as a parliamentary forum for debates on EFTA activities, its increasingly pan-European membership and its longstanding concern for European integration.

8. Furthermore, the Assembly :

8.1. welcomes the accession of Liechtenstein, a longstanding associate member of EFTA, to the organisation in May 1991, and hopes that this example may be followed by other countries ;

8.2. welcomes the start of negotiations on free trade and co-operation between Turkey and EFTA countries, and hopes - considering the similar policies followed by Turkey and EFTA members vis-à-vis the European Community - that these negotiations will come to a positive conclusion ;

8.3. strongly supports the so-called "Gothenburg Declarations" made in 1990 by the EFTA countries on the one hand, and Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland on the other, and encourages EFTA to pursue these agreements - as well as its longstanding co-operation with Yugoslavia - so as to facilitate the integration of these countries into the European economic mainstream.