



EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

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Proposal for a

COUNCIL DECISION

**on the position to be adopted, on behalf of the European Union,
within the EEA Joint Committee concerning an amendment to Protocol 31 to the EEA
Agreement, on cooperation in specific fields outside the four freedoms
(Budget Line 02.03.01)**

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

1. CONTEXT OF THE PROPOSAL

In order to ensure the requisite of legal security and homogeneity of the Internal Market, the EEA Joint Committee is to integrate all the relevant EU legislation into the EEA Agreement as soon as possible after its adoption and also allow for the participation of the EEA EFTA States in EEA relevant EU actions or programmes.

2. LEGAL BASIS, SUBSIDIARITY AND PROPORTIONALITY

Article 1(3) of Council Regulation (EC) No 2894/94 concerning arrangements for implementing the EEA Agreement provides that the Council establishes the position to be adopted on the Union's behalf on such Decisions, on a proposal from the Commission.

The Commission submits the Draft Decision of the EEA Joint Committee for adoption by the Council as the Union's position. The Commission would hope to be able to present it in the EEA Joint Committee at the earliest possible opportunity.

3. RESULTS OF EX-POST EVALUATIONS, STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS AND IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

The draft Decision of the EEA Joint Committee (annexed to the proposed Council Decision) aims to amend Protocol 31 to the EEA Agreement on cooperation in specific fields outside the four freedoms in order to continue the cooperation of the Contracting Parties to the EEA Agreement in Union actions funded from the general budget of the European Union concerning " Operation and development of the internal market of goods and services".

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THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 114 in conjunction with Article 218(9) thereof,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 2894/94 of 28 November 1994 concerning arrangements for implementing the Agreement on the European Economic Area¹, and in particular Article 1(3) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

Whereas:

- (1) The Agreement on the European Economic Area² ('the EEA Agreement') entered into force on 1 January 1994.
- (2) Pursuant to Article 98 of the EEA Agreement, the EEA Joint Committee may decide to amend, inter alia, Protocol 31 to the EEA Agreement.
- (3) Protocol 31 contains provisions and arrangements concerning cooperation in specific fields outside the four freedoms.
- (4) It is appropriate to continue the cooperation of the Contracting Parties to the EEA Agreement in Union actions funded from the general budget of the European Union regarding the operation and development of the internal market of goods and services.
- (5) Protocol 31 to the EEA Agreement should therefore be amended in order to allow for this extended cooperation to continue beyond 31 December 2015.
- (6) The position of the Union within the EEA Joint Committee should be based on the attached draft decision,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

The position to be adopted, on behalf of the Union, within the EEA Joint Committee on the proposed amendment to Protocol 31 to the EEA Agreement, on cooperation in specific fields outside the four freedoms, shall be based on the draft decision of the EEA Joint Committee attached to this Decision.

¹ OJ L 305, 30.11.1994, p. 6.

² OJ L 1, 3.1.1994, p. 3.

Article 2

This Decision shall enter into force on the date of its adoption.

Done at Brussels,

*For the Council
The President*