

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

SEC(92)1856 final

Brussels, 14 October 1992

Recommendation for a

COUNCIL DECISION

EXTENSION OF THE EEC-EFTA AGREEMENT
IN THE FIELD OF TECHNICAL REGULATIONS

(presented by the Commission)

Recommendation for a

COUNCIL DECISION

Extension of the EEC-EFTA Agreement
in the field of technical regulations

1. Objective

The aim of this proposal is to ask the Council for authorization to negotiate bilateral agreements in the form of exchanges of letters with the EFTA countries with a view to extending the Agreement laying down a procedure for the exchange of information in the field of technical regulations (Council Decision 90/518/EEC).

The tenor of the agreement would be as follows:

The two parties

would agree to extend the Agreement concluded between the European Economic Community, on the one hand, and the Member States of the European Free Trade Association, on the other, laying down a procedure for the exchange of information in the field of technical regulations (Council Decision 90/518/EEC) until the date of entry into force of the Agreement on the European Economic Area.

2. Grounds

The EEC-EFTA Agreement laying down a procedure for the exchange of information in the field of technical regulations (Council Decision 90/518/EEC) entered into force on 1 November 1990. It provides a link between the respective information procedures within the EEC and between the EFTA countries.

The main aim of the exchange of information between the two systems is to ensure the transparency of information in two administrative procedures. It falls within the general framework of the bilateral free-trade agreements concluded between the Community and each of the EFTA countries. It does not concern trade in goods directly, but the exchange of information on draft national regulations concerning goods. It is a useful instrument for preventing the creation of technical barriers to trade.

The current Agreement was concluded for an initial trial period of two years, at the end of which it was either to be subject to joint revision or to be extended for a period to be determined.

As the Agreement expires on 1 November 1992 and the EEA Agreement, which lays down a system similar to that of the Agreement, does not enter into force until 1 January 1993, it is appropriate, for the sake of continuity, to extend the Agreement concluded by Council Decision 90/518/EEC by means of bilateral agreements in the form of exchanges of letters.

It is accordingly proposed that the Council authorize the Commission to negotiate bilateral agreements in the form of an exchange of letters between the Community and the EFTA countries with a view to extending the Agreement laying down a procedure for the exchange of information in the field of technical regulations. A preliminary draft letter is annexed hereto.

ANNEX

Your Excellency,

The Agreement between the European Economic Community, on the one hand, and the Republic of Austria, the Republic of Finland, the Republic of Iceland, the Kingdom of Norway, the Kingdom of Sweden and the Swiss Confederation, on the other, laying down a procedure for the exchange of information in the field of technical regulations will expire on 1 November 1992, after an initial period of two years.

At the same time it is foreseen that the Agreement on the European Economic Area will enter into force on 1 January 1993, subject to successful termination of the ratification procedures by the contracting parties.

As the provisions of the current Agreement on exchange of information about technical regulations allow for a renewal for a further period to be determined, and following the outcome of the consultations between the Commission and the EFTA member countries on this subject, I herewith propose that we agree on an extension of the said EEC-EFTA Agreement until the EEA agreement enters into force.

I would be grateful if you could indicate your agreement to the foregoing.

Yours faithfully,

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

1. Budget heading involved

None

2. Legal basis

Agreement between the EEC, on the one hand, and the Republic of Austria, the Republic of Finland, the Republic of Iceland, the Kingdom of Norway, the Kingdom of Sweden and the Swiss Confederation, on the other, laying down a procedure for the exchange of information in the field of technical regulations (Council Decision 90/518/EEC).

3. Description and grounds

Extension of the EEC-EFTA countries Agreement laying down a procedure for the exchange of information in the field of technical regulations. The general framework is that of the commitment by the EEC and the EFTA countries to create a European Economic Area; the more specific framework is that of the existing cooperation in the field of barriers to trade.

4. Financial impact on staff and operational appropriations

None

5. Impact on resources

None

6. Monitoring arrangements

Ordinary monitoring

IMPACT ON COMPETITIVENESS AND EMPLOYMENT

Draft Council Decision authorizing the Commission to extend the Agreement concluded between the European Economic Community and the Member States of the European Free Trade Association laying down a procedure for the exchange of information in the field of technical regulations (Council Decision 90/518/EEC).

1. Administrative and financial obligations for firms

None

The Agreement as such does not concern firms in any way but contains procedural provisions for the implementation by the Community of an agreement with the EFTA countries laying down a procedure for the exchange of information on national draft technical regulations. It accordingly entails no administrative or financial obligation for firms.

2. Competitiveness and employment

The measure itself has no impact on competitiveness and employment. The aim of the exchange of information in the field of technical regulations between the EEC and the EFTA countries is to prevent the creation of technical barriers to trade, and hence to facilitate the free movement of goods, thereby promoting competitiveness and employment in a European Economic Area.