



EUROPEAN FREE TRADE ASSOCIATION
ASSOCIATION EUROPÉENNE DE LIBRE-ÉCHANGE

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING CO-OPERATION
BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN FREE TRADE ASSOCIATION AND THE
EUROPEAN CO-OPERATION FOR ACCREDITATION IN THE FIELD OF
CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT**

European Free Trade Association, hereafter EFTA, represented by Kjartan Jóhannsson,
Secretary General

and

European Co-operation for Accreditation, hereafter EA, represented by Lars Ettarp,
Chairman,

- Recognising that the co-operation and activities within EA should operate in compliance with European wide legislation;
- Recognising the importance of confidence in calibration, testing, certification, inspection and other conformity assessment activities for the proper functioning of the Single Market, the European commercial policy and EFTAs strategy on technical assistance to third countries;
- Acknowledging the mutual benefit that can be realised through a close co-operation between EA and the European wide programmes in the field of research and development with regard to the development of harmonised methods for measurement and testing;
- Taking note that the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade refers to accreditation as a means of ensuring adequate and enduring technical competence of conformity assessment bodies;
- Emphasising that the needs of industry, consumers and public authorities must be fully reflected in the activities of EA in order for these to bring added value;
- Considering that accreditation is a system set up under the aegis of public authorities and is thus a service to society and should therefore not be a profit making activity;
- Stressing the importance that the activities of conformity assessment bodies be founded on a sound technical basis as well as ensuring independence, impartiality and integrity in their operations when this is required;

- Considering the work being done by EA to ensure a common accreditation practise throughout Europe, by means of multilateral agreements based on peer assessment;
- Considering that the EN 45000 standards and accreditation are being relied upon in an increasing number of areas covered by European policy, such as industry, agriculture, foodstuffs, environment, transport, public procurement etc;
- Considering EFTAs willingness to consult and co-operate with and involve EA on technical matters related to the implementation and operation of European policy in the field of conformity assessment.

Have reached an agreement on the following provisions, to be implemented and promoted by each of them:

- The European Co-operation for Accreditation confirms its commitment to operate in line with and in support of European policy, in particular with regard to the Single Market, the European commercial policy and technical assistance to third countries. This entails inter alia:
 - operating in an open, transparent and competent manner;
 - be responsive towards requests from the EFTA Secretariat and the national authorities of the EFTA countries;
 - be responsive towards international obligations;
 - being accountable and receptive to the needs and concerns of its stakeholders, private and public, national and European;
 - to continue developing and maintaining EAs multilateral agreements based on peer assessment in order to ensure a common accreditation practice and a consistent and credible application of the EN 45000 series of standards throughout Europe.
1. EA will as far as possible take on board advice and guidance offered by EFTA on policy matters related to accreditation.
 2. In the area of research and development, EFTA and EA will, within the limits of their respective framework, encourage activities and their co-ordination in the fields of mutual interest, for example concerning traceability of measurements, inter laboratory comparisons, proficiency testing, the impact of conformity assessment on quality etc., with the aim of promoting harmonised systems of measurement and testing essential to ensure the efficient operation of the Single Market and other European wide policies and the competitiveness of European industry.
 3. EFTA shall endeavour to seek the advice and co-operation of EA on technical matters related to accreditation, in particular in view of promoting a harmonised, consistent and credible application of the EN 45000 standards in relation to European policy, for example in relation to the notified bodies system under the New Approach directives.

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4. EFTA may call upon EA and its expertise in developing specific arrangements to support EFTA initiatives.
5. The Parties to this Memorandum shall endeavour to keep each other informed of policies and activities under development that are of mutual interest.
6. The Parties to this memorandum shall endeavour to verify its functioning and implementation on a regular basis, or at any time at the request of any of the Parties.

Done in two originals in the English language, each of the Parties acknowledging receipt of his copy.

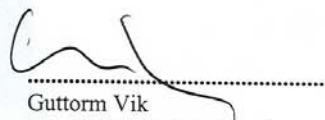
Brussels,

For EA



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Lars Ettarp
Chairman

For EFTA



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Guttorm Vik
Deputy-Secretary General
on behalf of
Kjartan Jóhannsson
Secretary General