

Joint statement from Heimssyn (Iceland) and Nei til EU (Norway)

EFTA EEA support of a new "notification procedure" must be revoked immediately

It is with astonishment and dismay we observe that the Icelandic and Norwegian governments, on behalf of the EEA EFTA states, actively are encouraging the EU institutions to adopt a new "notification procedure (that) would contribute to better regulation at national level and benefit the Single Market in services" and be "more efficient in ensuring compliance with EU/EEA law".

The procedure implies that proposals considered for approval by national authorities at regional and municipal levels that might be relevant to the Services Directive, would have to be "screened" three months in advance. This would be done by an apparatus mandated by the European Commission or by the EFTA Surveillance Authority. **Such a procedure makes a mockery of democratically elected institutions and the idea of self-governance within the European Union, not to mention countries like ours, that are not even part of the EU.**

There have been numerous protests against this initiative from majors and municipalities all over Europe. Nevertheless, the Icelandic and Norwegian governments show no signs of withdrawing their support of the [EFTA Comments of 15 February 2019](#), ignoring the popular and regional resistance. This is a shameful act of arrogance towards the peoples and institutions of Iceland and Norway.

We fully support the concerns expressed by the EEA EFTA Forum of Local and Regional Authorities at [their meeting in Brussels 12 and 13 December](#) last year.

The Forum "stresses that the authority to carry out territorial planning is one of the cornerstones of the right to local self-government" and goes on to "emphasize the need for local and regional authorities to be able to adopt zoning plans to protect the urban environment, reduce climate emissions and safeguard other local or regional legitimate considerations, even though they might in exceptional cases entail restrictions on retail". Therefore, the Forum «Urges the Council and the European Parliament not to adopt a notification procedure, which might infringe with local and regional decision-making processes (...)».

Conclusively, we demand that our respective governments immediately revoke their opinion on the proposed notification procedure for draft national legislation under the scope of the Services Directive, which they have submitted through the standing committee of the EFTA states, in complete disregard of public opinion, of our democracy and of local governance.

On behalf of the EEA EFTA states, our governments must make it clear as crystal that any external interference or political «guidance» in the discourse and running of our regional and local institutions, whether elected or administrative, is unacceptable and might also be an infringement of the principle of subsidiarity as well as of the two pillar principle of the EEA.

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