



# The Storting and the EEA Agreement

Fact sheet from the Storting Library

Updated March 2025

## Milestones in the Storting

**1 December 1989**

The Storting gives the Government a mandate to negotiate with the EC on cooperation and adaptation to the EC's internal market.

**16 October 1992**

The Storting sanctions the EEA Agreement. 130 MPs vote in favour and 35 vote against.

**1 January 1994**

The EEA Agreement enters into force.

**8 December 1994**

The first meeting of the Storting's European Consultative Committee.

**9 June 1997**

The Storting sanctions the Schengen Agreement. The agreement was replaced by a new agreement, approved by the Storting on April 26, 1999.

**17 December 1998**

The Storting approves the Veterinary Equivalency Agreement.

**13 February 2007**

The Storting adopts measures to strengthen its work in EEA matters.

**9 April 2013**

The Storting considers the white paper on the EEA Agreement, which builds on the report "Outside and Inside – Norway's agreements with the European Union".

**13 June 2016**

The Storting approves Norwegian participation in the European Financial Supervisory Authorities.

**22 March 2018**

The Storting agrees to approve legal acts that are part of the Third Energy Package.

**17 June 2019**

The Storting agrees to approve legal acts that are part of a mutual climate agreement with the EU on joint emissions goals for 2030.

**1 June 2021**

The Storting agrees to approve the legal acts of the Fourth Railway Package.

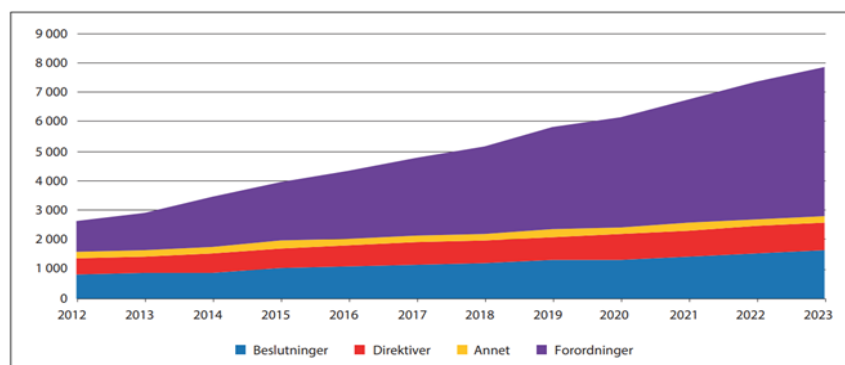
## How extensive is the EEA Agreement?



### Legal acts incorporated into the EEA Agreement

When the Storting endorsed the EEA Agreement in 1992, it contained 1,875 legal acts (directives, regulations, decisions and recommendations). Over the past decade, there have been between 400–600 legal acts to be incorporated into the EEA Agreement at any given time. To date, approximately 14,700 additional legal acts have been incorporated since 1992 (including acts incorporated by simplified procedure), of which 8,479 are still in force.

The figure below is from the Official Norwegian Report "Norway and the EEA: Development and Experiences" (NOU 2024: 7). It provides an overview of the development in the number of legal acts incorporated into the EEA Agreement from 2012 up to and including 2023, which were still in force as of 2023 (except legal acts incorporated by simplified procedure). The figure shows that the proportion of directives has decreased, while the proportion of regulations has increased. Regulations must be implemented in their entirety, whereas the state often has more options when implementing directives.



Figur 4.1 Utvikling i antall rettsakter, 2012–2023. Alle rettsakter unntatt rettsakter vedtatt etter forenklet prosedyre.

Kilde: EFTA-sekretariatet.

### NOU 2024: 7 Norway and the EEA: Developments and Experiences

In April 2024 the Official Norwegian Report (NOU 2024: 7) "Norway and the EEA: Developments and Experiences" was presented by the Eldring Committee. The report follows up on the NOU 2012:2 "Outside and Inside – Norway's agreements with the European Union". The mandate of the Committee was to examine Norway's experience with the EEA Agreement and other relevant agreements with the EU over the past ten years. The report describes key developments that are significant for the EEA Agreement and Norway's relationship with the EU in terms of administration, enforcement and experiences within key areas of society. A summary of the report is available in English. The Committee points out that the amount of EEA-related work in central and local government has increased significantly, and EU cooperation has expanded in breadth and depth. The EU increasingly seeks to address geopolitical challenges with broad, cross-sectoral initiatives and legislative packages that may pursue objectives beyond the regulation of the internal market. The EFTA Standing Committee established a Task Force on Files with Distinctive Horizontal Dimensions with a mandate to assess developments and make recommendations. The Task Force submitted its report in July 2024.

## Improving the Storting's work

In its recommendation of 2006-2007 (*Innst. S no. 115*), a unanimous Foreign Affairs Committee put forward a series of measures to strengthen the Storting's work within the field of the EEA Agreement. Among the results are:

- ♦ The Government must now make six-monthly statements to the Storting on European policy.
- ♦ The Storting's standing committees participate more regularly in the meetings of the European Consultative Committee.
- ♦ Involvement in EU/EEA interparliamentary cooperation has increased.
- ♦ The European Commission sends the Storting, via the EFTA Secretariat, legal acts that are considered relevant to the EEA. The Storting's administration gives information about these in a newsletter.
- ♦ The Storting has set up an office in Brussels, with office space in the European Parliament.
- ♦ The Storting's administration produces briefings for meetings of the European Consultative Committee and the Government's statements on European policy.
- ♦ The Storting Library publishes a weekly EU/EEA newsletter.
- ♦ The Storting arranges an annual study trip to Brussels for MPs.

## Interparliamentary cooperation

### European Parliament

Once a year, the Storting's [Delegation for Relations with the European Parliament](#) meets a corresponding delegation from the European Parliament. The objective is to debate and discuss issues of current interest.

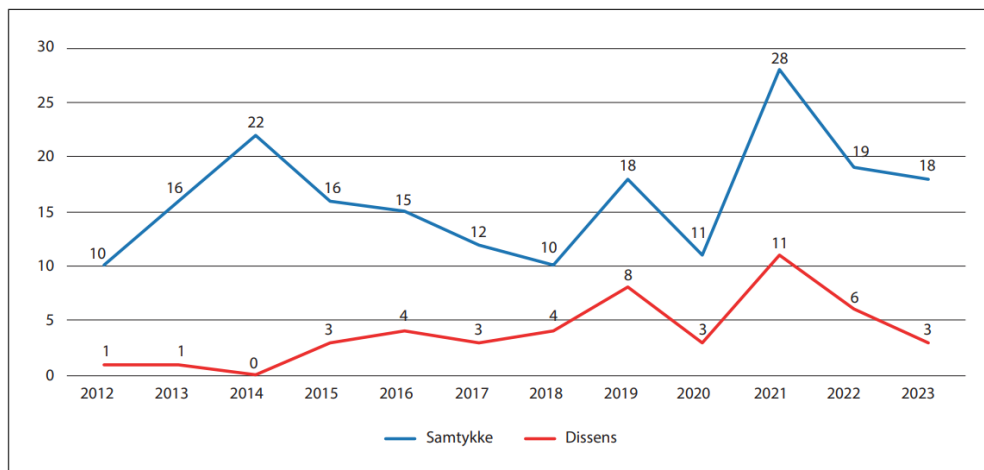
### EFTA and the EEA

The Storting's [Delegation to the EFTA and EEA Parliamentary Committees](#) has an advisory role towards the EFTA Council of Ministers and the EEA Council, and liaises with the other EFTA countries' national assemblies.

## The number of matters in the Storting

[The EEA Joint Committee](#) is responsible for incorporating new EU legal acts into the EEA Agreement. The incorporation of new legal acts requires unanimity between the three EEA EFTA states and the EU in each case. Certain legal acts are conditional on the approval of the Storting. This is the case if the act: 1) requires an amendment to existing legislation, 2) has consequences for the budget or 3) is of special importance.

[Since 1992, the Storting has dealt with approximately 494 so-called propositions for approval](#). In 75 of these, the Storting's decision was not unanimous. Figure 7.3 from the (NOU 2024: 7) below shows how many times the Storting has been asked to consent to EEA and Schengen matters in the period 2011–2023.



Figur 7.3 Antallet samtykkesaker og dissenser, 2011–2023.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Inkluderer registrerte saker i stortingssesjonene 2011/2012–2022/2023.

Up to and including the 2023/2024 session of the Storting, the Socialist Left Party has voted against a proposal for approval a total of 54 times, the Centre Party 51 times, the Red Party 37 times, the Christian Democratic Party and the Progress Party 9 times, the Green Party 7 times, the Liberal Party and Patient Focus 3 times, and the Labour Party twice. Individual votes are not counted in this overview.

## Meetings in the European Consultative Committee

[The European Consultative Committee](#) is the Storting's consultation body with the Government on EU/EEA questions of current interest. The committee comprises members of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, and members of the Storting's Delegation to the EFTA and EEA Parliamentary Committees. In general, the meetings take place before meetings of the EEA Joint Committee, the object being that the Storting must be consulted on legal acts that are to be incorporated into the EEA Agreement.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs is the government minister responsible for informing the consultative committee about matters of current interest. Other government ministers take part in the consultative committee's meetings as required. The Storting's standing committees are also invited to attend when matters within their remit are on the agenda. On average, the European Consultative Committee has held 7 meetings a year since its formation in 1994. Unless the consultative committee decides otherwise, the minutes of these meetings are publicly available.

## The Storting's scrutiny of European policy

Since 1994, the Government has published four white papers on Norway's relations with the EU and on EEA cooperation:

*Norway and Europe at the Dawn of a New Century* ([White paper no.12 \(2000-2001\)](#))

*EEA Cooperation 1994-2001* ([White paper no.27 \(2001-2002\)](#))

*The Implementation of European Policy* ([White paper no.23 \(2005-2006\)](#))

*The EEA Agreement and Norway's other agreements with the EU* (White paper no.5 (2012-2013))

The Storting's two most important means of scrutinizing the Government's European policy are meetings of the European Consultative Committee and the debate on the Government's six-monthly statements on European policy. MPs can also use oral and written parliamentary questions to examine the work of the Government.