



Ratification of the Agreement on the Participation of the Republic of Croatia in the European Economic Area

The Agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA) was signed at Oporto on 2 May 1992 and entered into force on 1 January 1994. The Agreement guarantees equal rights and obligations within the Internal Market for individuals and economic operators in the EEA. It provides for the inclusion of EU legislation covering the four freedoms — the free movement of goods, services, persons and capital — throughout the 30 EEA States.¹ In addition, the Agreement covers cooperation in other important areas such as research and development, education, social policy, the environment, consumer protection, tourism and culture, collectively known as “flanking and horizontal” policies.

Article 128 of the EEA Agreement provides that upon becoming a member of the European Union, a country shall apply to become a Party to the Agreement on the European Economic Area.

The Republic of Croatia acceded to the European Union on 9 December 2011 and became a Member State on 1 July 2013. Under Article 6 (5) of the Act of Accession of the Republic of Croatia, Croatia undertook to accede, under the conditions laid down in the Act, to the Agreement on the European Economic Area. In this respect, Croatia applied to become a Contracting Party to the European Economic Area Agreement. The terms and conditions for such participation are to be the subject of an Agreement between the Contracting Parties and the applicant State.

In this regard, the Agreement on the Participation of the Republic of Croatia in the European Economic Area was signed on 11 April 2014. The Agreement has been in provisional application from 12 April 2014, and it is still not in force since a few Member States have not yet ratified it. These Member States include Ireland, France, Italy, Slovenia and Malta.

In accordance with the procedure to be followed with regard to ratification to international agreements mandated by the European Union, laid down in the proviso to Article 4(2) of the European Union Act (Chapter 460 of the Laws of Malta), the Government of Malta is submitting the text of the Agreement on the Participation of the Republic of Croatia in the European Economic Area before Parliament's Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs, following which it shall be ratified and come into force one month following this submission.

¹ The 27 EU Member States and the 3 EEA EFTA States (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway).