



European Commission



THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA TURNS 25

AN ENGINE OF FREEDOM AND PROSPERITY SINCE 1994

25 YEARS

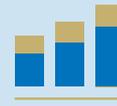
In 2019, the Agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA Agreement) celebrates its 25th anniversary.



The EEA helps to strengthen the role of the EU/EEA countries in the world. This is a way for non-EU Member States to participate in one of the biggest markets in the world (worth more than €16 trillion).



The Agreement brings together the EU's 28 Member States and the three European Free Trade Association (EFTA) states of Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein in the Single Market.



The Agreement brings tangible benefits for almost 520 million people, and guarantees the same level of protection and standards.

WHAT POLICY AREAS DOES THE EEA COVER?

The EEA Agreement guarantees equal rights and obligations within the Single Market for the 31 EEA states. It covers the four freedoms – free movement of goods, services, capital and persons –, as well as competition, State aid, consumer protection, company law, environment, social policy, and statistics. In addition, the EEA Agreement opens the way for cooperation in policies such as research and technology, education, training and youth, employment, tourism, culture, civil protection, enterprise, entrepreneurship and small and medium-sized enterprises.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THE EEA?

The European Economic Area makes everyday life easier for citizens and businesses. It allows people, goods, services and money to move around the Single Market almost as freely as within one country. Thanks to the EEA, the citizens of the 31 countries enjoy greater prosperity, economic opportunities, consumer and environmental protection, international influence around the world. It brings people more choice and better prices, and it means fewer barriers for businesses.

Almost 520 million people can live, work and move in the 31 EEA countries.

Investment: EEA countries can participate in the Juncker Plan through cross-border investment projects.

Education: participation for all members in the Erasmus+ Programme.



Health and safety standards: all EEA countries apply similar rules on health and hygiene standards when importing products from third countries, thus raising standards across the world.

Healthcare: the European Health Insurance Card gives people access to medically necessary, state-provided healthcare during a temporary stay in any EEA country.

Consumer rights: People in all EEA countries can cancel or return online purchases within 14 days. No reason required. Customers can return faulty goods within 2 years at no extra cost.

No roaming charges: people can call, text and use data in any EEA country just like at home.

Passenger rights: In the EEA, customers can claim compensation from the airline if they arrived at their final destination with a delay of over 3 hours.

Competition: people can choose their energy provider and switch telecoms providers in a fast and easy way.

Data protection: citizens have more control over their personal data and how it is processed by third parties, including exercising the right to be forgotten.