

**ADMINISTRATIVE COOPERATION ARRANGEMENT
BETWEEN
THE FINANCIAL MECHANISM OFFICE
AND
THE EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this administrative cooperation arrangement is to establish a cooperation framework between the Financial Mechanism Office (hereafter: FMO) and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (hereafter: FRA) - jointly referred to as the 'Sides'. Its overall objective is to strengthen synergies and coordination of the Sides' actions in support of fundamental rights in the European Union (hereafter: EU).

2. The Sides and their objectives

The EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014-2021 have been established by the EEA EFTA States Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway in order to reduce economic and social disparities within the EEA and to strengthen bilateral relations between the Donor and Beneficiary States. All programmes and activities funded by the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014-2021 are based on the common values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and the respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. The day-to-day management of the financial mechanisms has been delegated to the FMO.

The objective of the FRA is to provide the EU institutions, bodies and agencies, as well as the EU Member States when they implement EU law, with assistance and expertise relating to fundamental rights. The FRA provides independent, evidence-based advice to support the EU and its Member States to fully respect fundamental rights when they take measures or formulate courses of action.

Given the complementarity of the objectives pursued by the Sides and the synergies they have achieved so far through ad-hoc thematic cooperation, the Sides consider it mutually beneficial to reinforce and further develop their cooperation, previously based on the Letter of Intent covering cooperation under the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2009-2014, signed by the Sides on 7 February 2014.

3. Goals of cooperation and complementary action

Cooperation between the Sides will remain based on their shared goals and values, having regard to the respective objectives of the FRA and the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014-2021.

Given their different, yet complementary competences, cooperation between the Sides can bring significant added value to existing efforts aimed at promoting fundamental rights in the EU. To achieve this, the Sides will consider initiatives facilitating that FRA's evidence-based advice supports the

design, implementation and assessment of programmes and projects funded by the FMO in common areas of work.

4. Forms of cooperation

FRA may offer to undertake activities at one or more of the following levels:

- *Strategic level:* Advice to the Donors and Beneficiary States on their activity

FRA may advise the Donor States on the suitability, feasibility and scope of their activities in Beneficiary States. FRA may also advise the Donors and the Beneficiary States in the planning of Programme Areas falling under the FRA's field of expertise.

- *Programme level:* Advice on selected programme areas

FRA may provide advice on selected programmes. FRA may advise the FMO's Programme Operators in the Beneficiary States and the Donor States on the preparation and implementation of their programmes by sharing its expertise, including regarding best practice and standards in the areas of FRA's work. This may involve *inter alia*, assisting the Beneficiary States in applying FRA's evidence-based advice.

- *Project level:* Project implementation

Additionally, the FRA may contribute to the implementation of projects funded by the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014-2021 related to FRA's work.

The Sides may undertake additional forms of co-operation, such as co-organising conferences, to further facilitate and develop their synergies as needed.

5. Modalities of cooperation

The modalities of FRA's involvement in the forms of co-operation under section 4 of this arrangement shall be defined in specific exchanges of letters between the Directors of the FMO and FRA. The Sides envisage that these exchanges of letters indicate the scope of FRA's involvement in each particular activity.

Commensurate with the tasks attributed to FRA, the Sides envisage that FMO makes a financial contribution to the FRA budget to be defined in specific exchanges of letters between the Directors. Additionally, the secondment of national experts from the Donor or Beneficiary States to FRA may be funded by the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014-2021.

The Sides shall keep each other informed of and consult on matters of common interest relating to the implementation of this agreement.

The Sides intend to inform relevant stakeholders about their cooperation, including through their annual activity reports. FRA envisages to refer to the support received from the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014-2021, whenever implementing activities funded by the Mechanisms.

Consultation and exchange of information and documents shall be without prejudice to the Sides' respective applicable legislation and/or policies, which may require safeguarding the confidential and restricted character of certain information and documents. In some cases, exchange of information

under this arrangement may be subject to prior authorisation from third parties concerned, including the person and/or organisation from which the information emanated

The Sides envisage to invite each other to send observers to meetings or conferences relating to the implementation of this arrangement convened by the Sides or under their auspices. They intend that such invitations shall be subject to the procedures and rules applicable to such meetings or conferences.

6. Evaluation of cooperation

The Sides intend to meet at least once a year at the level of Directors to update one another on developments, evaluate their cooperation, and discuss new cooperation initiatives.

7. Miscellaneous

This Arrangement is not intended to create obligations binding under international law.

8. Contact points

All communication related to the implementation of this Administrative Cooperation Arrangement should be directed to the relevant contact persons.

- Contact person for the FRA: Andreas Accardo, Head of Director's Office,
Andreas.accardo@fra.europa.eu.
- Contact person for the FMO: Finn Denstad, Inter-institutional Coordinator,
finn.denstad@efta.int

Brussels, 15 December 2016


For the FMO



Ståle Risa
Acting Director

Vienna, 15 December 2016

For the FRA



Michael O'Flaherty
Director