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Norway and the EEA Agreement

"Norway and the EU share basic attitudes and values. Norway's cooperation with the EU is important for Norwegian companies, for value creation and for Norwegian society in general. The Government intends to manage Norway's current agreements with the EU well, and will make active use of the opportunities provided by these agreements to promote Norway's interests," said Minister of Foreign Affairs Espen Barth Eide.

The Government has today 12 October presented a white paper on the EEA Agreement and Norway's other agreements with the EU to the Storting. These agreements form the basis for Norway's European policy, a policy that is to be characterised by clear political priorities and sound management.

"The EEA Agreement ensures equal treatment and predictability for Norwegian companies. Three quarters of Norway's exports are to EU and EFTA countries. The EEA Agreement gives Norwegian companies security. We therefore wish to play an active part in developing legislation for the internal market," said Minister of Foreign Affairs Espen Barth Eide.

"The EEA Agreement is also important for all Norwegian citizens because of the rights it gives to live, study, work and settle in all the EEA countries. These are rights that most of us take for granted today," Mr Eide said.

The scope of the EEA Agreement and the degree of commitment it requires are greater than that of any other international agreement Norway is party to. "The Government is aware of the democratic challenges this entails. From the Government's perspective it is crucial that our efforts relating to the EEA Agreement and our other agreements with the EU ensure the highest possible degree of openness, participation, and effective management," Mr Eide said.

"In the white paper, the Government attaches importance to making full use of the opportunities open to Norway under the EEA Agreement. We need to take a proactive approach and set clear priorities and we will actively promote Norwegian interests. We will also make active use of the opportunities available to us in implementing the legislation. In cases where the development of legislation is not compatible with Norwegian interests, the Government will use the opportunities provided by the agreement to safeguard Norway's interests," Mr Eide said.

"It is important to ensure good working conditions and to protect collective rights. In our cooperation with the EU in the time ahead, we will give priority to issues relating to working life. It is crucial for the Government that the Norwegian model for working life is maintained," Mr Eide said.

The Government will continue its close cooperation with the EU in key areas such as energy, climate change and the environment. It will also seek to improve market access for Norwegian seafood in the EU, and to continue Norway's cooperation with the EU on fisheries.

The Government will also further develop its close cooperation with the EU in the field of foreign policy.