

Lebanon and Tunisia (2004), South Korea (2005), the Southern African Customs Union (2006), Egypt (2007), Canada and Colombia (2008), Albania, the Gulf Co-operation Council and Serbia (2009), Peru and Ukraine (2010). Negotiations on free trade agreements are ongoing with Algeria, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Montenegro, Russia and Thailand. There are currently Joint Declarations on Co-operation with Mercosur and Montenegro (2000), Mongolia (2007), Mauritius (2009), and Malaysia and Panama (2010).

Organization. The operation of the free trade area among the EFTA states is the responsibility of the EFTA Council which meets regularly at ambassadorial level in Geneva. The Council is assisted by a Secretariat and standing committees. Each EFTA country holds the chairmanship of the Council for six months. For EEA matters there is a separate committee structure.

Brussels Office (EEA matters, press and information): 12–16 Rue Joseph II, B-1000 Brussels.

Headquarters: 9–11 rue de Varembe, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland.

Website: <http://www.efta.int>

Email: mail.gva@efta.int

Secretary-General: Kåre Bryn (Norway).

Publications. *Convention Establishing the European Free Trade Association; EFTA Annual Report; EFTA Fact Sheets: Information Papers on Aspects of the EEA; EFTA Bulletin.*

European Space Agency (ESA)

History. Established in 1975, replacing the European Space Research Organization (ESRO) and the European Launcher Development Organization (ELDO).

Members. Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom. Canada takes part in some projects under a co-operation agreement.

Activities. ESA is the intergovernmental agency in Europe responsible for the exploitation of space science, research and technology for exclusively peaceful purposes. Its aim is to define and put into effect a long-term European space policy that allows Europe to remain competitive in the field of space technology. It has a policy of co-operation with various partners on the basis that pooling resources and sharing work will boost the effectiveness of its programmes. Its space plan covers the fields of science, Earth observation, telecommunications, navigation, space segment technologies, ground infrastructures, space transport systems and microgravity research.

Headquarters: 8–10 rue Mario Nikis, 75738 Paris Cedex 15, France.

Website: <http://www.esa.int>

Director-General: Jean-Jacques Dordain (France).

CERN – The European Organization for Nuclear Research

Founded in 1954, CERN is the world's leading particle physics research centre. By studying the behaviour of nature's fundamental particles, CERN aims to find out what our Universe is made of and how it works. CERN's biggest accelerator, the Large

Hadron Collider (LHC), became operational in Sept. 2008. One of the beneficial byproducts of CERN activity is the Worldwide Web, developed at CERN to give particle physicists easy access to shared data. One of Europe's first joint ventures, CERN now has a membership of 20 member states: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom. Some 6,500 scientists, half of the world's particle physicists, use CERN's facilities. They represent 500 institutions and 85 nationalities.

Address: CH-1211 Geneva 23, Switzerland.

Website: <http://www.cern.ch>

Director-General: Rolf-Dieter Heuer (Germany).

Central European Initiative (CEI)

In Nov. 1989 Austria, Hungary, Italy and Yugoslavia met on Italy's initiative to form an economic and political co-operation group in the region.

Members. Albania, Austria, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine.

Address: Executive Secretariat, Via Genova 9, 34132 Trieste, Italy.

Website: <http://www.ceinet.org>

Email: cei-es@cei-es.org

Nordic Council

Founded in 1952 as a co-operative link between the parliaments and governments of the Nordic states. The co-operation focuses on Intra-Nordic co-operation, co-operation with Europe/EU/EEA and co-operation with the adjacent areas. The Council consists of 87 elected MPs and the committees meet several times a year, as required. Every year the Nordic Council grants prizes for literature, music, nature and environment.

Members. Denmark (including the Faroe Islands and Greenland), Finland (including Åland), Iceland, Norway, Sweden.

Address: Ved Stranden 18, DK-1061 Copenhagen K, Denmark.

Website: <http://www.norden.org>

Email: nordisk-rad@norden.org

President: Henrik Dam Kristensen (Denmark).

Nordic Development Fund (NDF)

NDF is a multilateral development finance institution established by the five Nordic countries, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. Since operations started in 1989, the Fund has provided soft loans to 190 projects of Nordic interest in developing countries. It entered a new phase in 2009 and changed its focus to grant aid for climate change related projects.

Address: Fabianinkatu 34, PO Box 185, FIN-00171 Helsinki, Finland.

Website: <http://www.ndf.fi>

Email: info.ndf@ndf.fi

Managing Director: Helge Semb (Norway).