

Liberation Organization on behalf of the Palestinian Authority (1998), the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Mexico (2000), Jordan and Croatia (2001), Singapore (2002), Chile (2003), Lebanon and Tunisia (2004), South Korea (2005), the Southern African Customs Union (2006), Egypt (2007) and Canada (2008). Negotiations on free trade agreements are ongoing with the Gulf Co-operation Council and Thailand.

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, 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), was scheduled to become operational in the summer of 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: Dr Robert Aymar (France).

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: Store Strandstræde 18, DK-1255 Copenhagen K, Denmark.

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

email: nordisk-rad@norden.org

President: Erkki Tuomioja (Finland).

Nordic Development Fund (NDF)

Established in 1989, the NDF is a development aid organization of the five Nordic countries, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. NDF capital totals SDR 515m. and €330m. Credits are offered to developing countries, with poorer African, Asian and Latin American countries taking priority.

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).