

EFTA Surveillance Authority (ESA)
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Your ref	Our ref	Date
	15/3147	16 June 2017

Reasoned Opinion regarding the market for taxi serviced in Oslo (the Authority's Decision no. 041/17/COL) - Request for extended deadline

Reference is made to the Reasoned Opinion of 22 February 2017 from the EFTA Surveillance Authority (the Authority) concerning certain provisions governing access of transport operators to the market for taxi services and their compliance with Article 31 (1) of the EEA Agreement.

The Ministry of Transport and Communications (the Ministry) is currently considering the Norwegian taxi legislation in light of the Authority's Reasoned Opinion, including an assessment of whether there are less restrictive measures that can secure a satisfactory and well-functioning taxi market. In the process of considering the taxi legislation, it is important to listen to relevant parties before concluding on a new regime. Norway is an elongated country with a relatively small and scattered population. This causes some challenges with regard to ensuring a satisfactory transport service throughout the country. With this in mind, it is important to conduct a thorough assessment of which consequences a deregulation in accordance with the Reasoned Opinion will have for the transport service in Norway, including developing alternative measures that can remedy potential challenges.

The main objective for Norwegian authorities is to ensure satisfactory transport services for the population both in cities and in rural areas, and to ensure the safety of passengers and taxi drivers. The Ministry is currently assessing the potential challenges to fulfil this objective. We are working on finding alternative solutions to the current legislation that will safeguard a satisfactory transport service, also in the rural areas. Today the service obligation, which is imposed on the taxi operators, ensures that a transport service is available all over the country, 24 hours a day.

The Ministry is also working on the follow up of the report from the Sharing Economy Committee, submitted on 6 February 2017, including reviewing the consultation statements.

The Ministry has put forward a proposition with amendments in the Professional Transport Act to the Parliament. The amendments are (i) a provision allowing ride sharing and (ii) a raise of the upper age limit for having a taxi licence from 70 to 75 years. In the consultation paper, the Ministry also proposed to repeal the obligation to be affiliated with a dispatch central. The consultation revealed several challenges with the proposal; including questions regarding the safety of the passengers should an unexpected incident occur. The Ministry needs more time to assess this proposal and to consider it in context with the Authority's Reasoned Opinion and the report from the Sharing Economy Committee. In particular, the Ministry is concerned with ensuring that the safety of the passengers will be safeguarded.

In the Ministry's opinion, it is important to see the different ongoing processes referred to above in context. It has unfortunately taken more time than the Ministry had initially foreseen to assess both the Authority's Reasoned Opinion and the proposals from the Sharing Economy Committee. The Ministry therefore kindly asks the Authority to extend the deadline to 21 December 2017. Extending the deadline will give the Ministry sufficient time to conclude the ongoing processes and provide the Authority with a more in depth and thorough reply to the Authority's Reasoned Opinion.

Yours sincerely

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This document is signed electronically and has therefore no handwritten signature