

EU - ICELAND JOINT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE

**1st Meeting
4-5 October 2010
Reykjavík, Iceland**

RECOMMENDATIONS¹

On EU-Iceland accession negotiations to the EU and EU-Iceland relations

Adopted on 5 October 2010

- A. Aware of Iceland's application for European Union membership, submitted to the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the EU on 17 July 2009, the decision of the European Council of 17 June 2010 to open accession negotiations with Iceland, and the formal opening of the accession negotiations at the EU-Iceland Intergovernmental Conference on 27 July 2010;
- B. Conscious of the past extensive interparliamentary cooperation between the European Parliament and the Althingi, the Parliament of Iceland;
- C. Mindful that a Joint Parliamentary Committee between the European Parliament and a candidate country national parliament is an integral part of an accession process, providing a forum for parliamentary scrutiny and oversight and a formal dialogue with the candidate country government and the European institutions.
- D. Recognisant that the decision whether or not Iceland will join the European Union on the basis of the Treaty to be negotiated rests in the hands of the people of Iceland by referendum, followed by necessary amendments to the Icelandic Constitution, and with the member states through ratification.

¹ *The Joint Parliamentary Committee, in accordance with Rule 3 of its Rules of Procedure, addressed the following Recommendations to the European Parliament, to the Althingi and to the Government of Iceland, to the Council of the European Union and to the European Commission.*

On Iceland's application for membership of the European Union

1. Welcomes the first meeting of the Accession Conference between the Council of the EU and Iceland on 27 July 2010;
2. Takes note of the Negotiating Framework with Iceland, agreed by the General Affairs Council of the EU on 26 July 2010, setting out the principles governing the negotiations and describing the substance of the negotiations as well as the negotiating procedures;
3. Takes note of the General Position of the Government of Iceland presented at the ministerial meeting opening the Intergovernmental Conference on the Accession of Iceland to the European Union on 27 July 2010;
4. Recognises Iceland's close cooperation with the EU as a member of the European Economic Area (EEA) and a signatory to the Schengen Agreements and the Dublin Regulation;
5. Recognises Iceland's important contribution to European cohesion and solidarity through the Financial Mechanism under the EEA since 1994 Iceland;
6. Honours Iceland's non-military tradition and commends Iceland's contribution to the civilian crisis management operations under EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy; recognises the long-term security interest for Iceland in preserving its non-military tradition and belonging to a strong European family promoting peace and pursuing policies against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction;
7. Recognises that the accession of Iceland would add to the geographical completeness of the EU and strengthen the Northern Dimension of the Union;

On the political criteria of EU membership

8. Highlights Iceland's well-established democratic tradition and a high degree of alignment with the *acquis*; emphasises, in this context, that Iceland's accession can benefit both the country and the EU;
9. Highlights the excellent cooperation between the Members of the European Parliament and the Members of the Althingi in twenty EU-Iceland Interparliamentary Meetings since 1987, and within the framework of the EEA Joint Parliamentary Committee for over 16 years, and welcomes the strengthening of mutual relations between the two parliaments in the light of Iceland's European Union membership application, in particular the establishment of the EU-Iceland Joint Parliamentary Committee facilitating the accession process;
10. Commends the Icelandic authorities for measures already adopted in the past months for ensuring the independence of the judiciary;
11. Commends Iceland for its excellent human rights record in terms of treaty

commitments;

On the economic criteria of EU membership

12. Notes that Iceland has a generally satisfactory track record in implementing its EEA obligations and in its ability to withstand competitive pressure and market forces within the EU; notes, however, that further efforts are needed in order to ensure full compliance with the EEA *acquis* and that these matters are effectively monitored by the EFTA Surveillance Authority;
13. Welcomes policies to further diversify Iceland's economy as a necessary step for the country's long-term economic well-being;
14. Points out that the environment is a priority for the EU and welcomes Iceland's strong involvement in environmental policies;
15. Notes that, while fiscal consolidation in Iceland remains a key challenge, Iceland shows encouraging signs of economic stabilisation; regards monetary measures taken so far as steps in the right direction for improved financial and economic stability;
16. Acknowledges the determined and systematic approach taken by the Icelandic authorities since the economic and financial crash to establish causes and remedies; in particular commends the reports of the Special Investigation Commission and of the Althingi Parliamentary Review Committee and encourages further work to address the pressing political, economic and institutional shortcomings described in the reports;
17. Takes note of Iceland's declared wish to become part of the euro-zone as a key to long-term economic stability; underlines that this ambition can be achieved if the Icelandic people vote in favour of membership in a national referendum and once all the necessary conditions have been met;

Iceland's capacity to assume the obligations of EU membership

18. Notes that, as an EEA member, Iceland is at an advanced stage of compliance with the requirements of 10 of the negotiating chapters and largely fulfils the requirements of 11 chapters, leaving only 12 chapters not covered by the EEA that need to be negotiated in full;
19. Notes that the European Commission has underlined the need for Iceland to pursue efforts to align its legislation with the *acquis* in order to meet the accession criteria based on the results of the accession negotiations upon entry into the Union;
20. Notes the difficult pedoclimatic and structural conditions as well as the remoteness that characterise Icelandic agriculture as well as the importance of the agricultural sector for food security; notes the importance of thorough preparations for adopting in due course an agricultural and rural development policy in line with EU policies and with the results of the accession negotiations; calls on the European Commission to involve the Icelandic authorities in the current debates on reform of the Common Agricultural

Policy;

21. Recognises the fundamental role that the fisheries sector plays in Iceland's economy and culture; commends Iceland's sustainable management of its marine resources and invites both the EU and the Icelandic authorities to adopt a constructive attitude in negotiations on the requirement for Iceland to adopt the European Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), which is currently under revision, so that the outcome may be a mutually satisfactory solution based on best practices, the unique geographical characteristics of Iceland, and protecting the interest of both fishermen and consumers in the EU, as well as in Iceland;
22. Encourages Iceland and the EU to resolve the outstanding issues concerning whaling activities during the accession negotiations;
23. Notes that Iceland can make a valuable contribution to EU environment, energy policies and sustainable development through its experience and knowledge in the field of, among others, renewable energies and the fight against climate change;

Arctic regional cooperation

24. Recognizes the growing opportunities and challenges in the Arctic Region and welcomes Iceland's possible accession to the EU as a strategic opportunity for both the EU and Iceland, which would enable the EU to play a more active and constructive role, and to contribute to multilateral governance, in the Arctic Region;

Public opinion and support for enlargement

25. Emphasises the need for a broad, well-informed public debate about EU accession, involving civil society in the process and addressing the concerns of Icelandic citizens about EU membership so that the Icelandic people will be in the best possible position to make their own informed choice on whether to vote in favour of or against membership in a national referendum.