

# DIPLOMATIC HANDBOOK



PROTOCOL DEPARTMENT  
MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
REYKJAVIK  
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## Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to offer guidance and advice to diplomats and other members of Diplomatic Missions and their families who are entitled to privileges and immunities under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 18 April 1961. The Act on Accession of Iceland to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations No. 16/1971 (*Lög nr. 16/1971 um aðild Íslands að alþjóðasamningi um stjórnámband*) gives force of law to the Convention in Iceland.

The handbook outlines, in a summary form, how Iceland approaches its obligations to persons accorded privileges and immunities and describes how Missions and individuals may claim their various entitlements. The handbook also aims to describe the standards of behaviour expected of entitled persons in Iceland.

Entitled staff in Diplomatic Missions should draw attention of all members of their families to the contents of this handbook, as the points covered apply to all persons who have an entitlement to privileges and immunities.

Many of the provisions set in this handbook have general application to career consular officers and staff members of international organizations. Details of their application can be ascertained by contacting the Protocol Department.

The provisions of this handbook are directed first and foremost to Missions located in Iceland but many have application also to Non-resident Missions accredited to Iceland. The Protocol Department will provide further information on request.

Rules and regulations change from time to time and the information presented herein is subject to change without prior notice.

## 1. Protocol Department

The main responsibilities of the Protocol Department in relation to the *Corps Diplomatique* are the following:

### ***Appointments***

Diplomatic Missions notify the Protocol Department of the arrival and departure of members of Diplomatic Missions and their family members. The Department issues *Identity Cards* and publishes the *Diplomatic List and List of Honorary Consuls in Iceland* on the Ministry website.

The Department also deals with immigration queries affecting the members of Missions and private servants and their family members and acts as a liaison with the appropriate Icelandic authorities.

### ***Privileges and Immunities***

The Protocol Department ensures that Missions and their staff are granted the privileges and immunities to which they are entitled under the Vienna Convention.

The Department handles general enquiries about the Vienna Convention, as well as pursuing complaints involving members of Missions. It handles enquiries and complaints from Missions, members of the public, other Government Departments, solicitors and the police.

The Department authorizes the duty-free release of alcohol and tobacco. The Directorate of Administration and Consular Affairs of the Ministry (*Rekstrar- og þjónustusvið*), however, is responsible for the refund of VAT, petrol duty and the duty-free release of vehicles.

### ***Ceremonial***

The Protocol Department co-ordinates the arrival and departure arrangements of Heads of Missions and gives general advice to Missions on ceremonial, protocol and precedence queries, memorial services and other related matters.

In conjunction with the Office of the President of Iceland, other Government Departments and the Althingi, the Department arranges for the attendance of Heads of Missions at the following official functions:

- National Day Celebrations
- Opening of the Althingi
- Inauguration of the President of Iceland

### ***Security***

In liaison with the National Police Commissioner (*Ríkislögreglustjórnin*), the Protocol Department deals with the protection of diplomats and diplomatic premises, security arrangements for official and private VIP visits and security for international conferences.

The Department liaises with the police on the level of protection provided for Missions and their staff. Police officials also maintain direct contact with Missions and provide appropriate advice.

The Department also coordinates police arrangements in relation to demonstrations outside Missions or in connection with visits and conferences.

The Icelandic authorities are responsible for the protection of Missions and their staff. Firearms licences will not be granted for firearms which are intended for personal protection.

### ***Security during VIP Visits***

All security aspects of a VIP visit, including requests for protection, are dealt with by the Protocol Department, which liaises, as necessary, with the police authorities.

The carriage of firearms by protection officers accompanying VIPs during a visit requires the approval of the relevant Icelandic authorities. The Protocol Department should be notified by a Note Verbale of the names and passport details of protection officers, as well as their firearms and other equipment. As a general rule, the protection officers are accompanied by Icelandic police officers during the VIP visit.

### ***VIP Facilities***

The Protocol Department is responsible for the use of the VIP facilities at the Leifur Eiríksson Terminal at the Keflavík International Airport and also for access of Missions to the Terminal.

## **2. Arrival and Departure of Heads of Mission**

The first arrival of a nominated Head of Mission shall be notified to the Protocol Department by a Note Verbale. The nominated Head of Mission is met by the Chief of Protocol or a Protocol Officer upon first arrival at the Keflavík International Airport, the Reykjavík Airport or Reykjavík Harbour, if arrival occurs during normal working hours, Monday through Friday.

Shortly after arrival in Iceland the nominated Head of Mission should arrange to call on the Chief of Protocol. Copies of credentials and the letter of recall of his or her predecessor should be presented during this meeting.

The call on the Chief of Protocol is followed by calls on the Permanent Secretary of State of the Ministry and other senior officials of the Ministry. A mutually convenient time will be arranged for an appointment with the Minister for Foreign Affairs. A programme for these appointments is transmitted to the Mission. After the meeting with the Foreign Minister, the nominated Head of Mission is free to make calls on other government ministers. The nominated Head of Mission is, however, not expected to participate in official functions until after the presentation of credentials. He/she may, nonetheless, pay a call on the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps and other colleagues resident in Reykjavík.

The Protocol Department arranges for the presentation of credentials in cooperation with the *Office of the President of Iceland*. The ceremony takes place at an audience with the President of Iceland at the Official Residence, *Bessastaðir*. A detailed description of the procedures will be forwarded to the Mission in advance.

The Protocol Department should be notified of the final departure of a Head of Mission by a Note Verbale. Advice is requested at least three weeks prior to the departure date. The Department will seek a farewell call on the President of Iceland. At the agreed time, the Head

of Mission and his or her spouse will visit the President, usually at the Official Residence. Ministry staff are usually not represented at the farewell call. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, or a senior Ministry representative on the Minister's behalf, will host a farewell lunch for the departing Head of Mission and his or her spouse. The Head of the Mission and his or her spouse will be escorted to the airport by the Chief of Protocol or a Protocol Officer.

The Protocol Department should be informed of an appointment of a Chargé d'Affaires from the date of the final departure of a Head of Mission.

### 3. Notification of Arrivals and Departures

The Protocol Department shall be notified as soon as possible by a Note Verbale of the arrival and final departure of members of Missions, members of their families and their private servants. A completed form, ES1, *Notification to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs*, shall accompany the Note Verbale, with one photograph and a photocopy of the relevant pages in the passport of the person concerned.

The Protocol Department shall be informed of all changes in personal circumstances, e.g., arrival/departure of family members, changes in marital status and birth or death of family members.

The names of members of the diplomatic staff and their spouses are included in the *Diplomatic List and List of Honorary Consuls in Iceland*.

A departing member of a Mission, his/her family members and private servants are expected to leave Iceland within three months of the formal notification of the end of tour date. If, for exceptional reasons, a member of a Mission wishes to stay longer than three months, he/she should seek the approval of the Protocol Department in advance.

### 4. Visas and Residence Permits

Members of Missions who require a visa for entry into Iceland shall apply for a visa prior to their first entry into Iceland. The Protocol Department will provide information on where an application can be filed and on the application process. An application for a visa should be submitted well in advance of the departure for Iceland.

Diplomatic agents and members of the administrative, technical and service staff of Missions, as well as members of their families forming part of their respective households, are not required to have residence permits or visas during their assignment in Iceland.

The Protocol Department issues identity cards for members of Missions and their family members. The holders of such cards fall under the provisions of REGULATION (EC) NO. 562/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2006 establishing a Community code on the rules governing the movement of persons across borders (Schengen Borders Code).

Under Article 19(1)(d) of the Regulation, the specific rules set out in Annex VII to the Regulation shall apply to checks on holders of diplomatic, official or service passports. The

aforementioned identity cards constitute the cards referred to in Article 19(2) of the Regulation. The specific rules in Annex VII to the Regulation include the rules in point 4.3 to the effect that accredited members of diplomatic missions and of consular representations and their families may enter the territory of the Member States on presentation of the card referred to in Article 19(2) and of the document authorising them to cross the border. Border guards may not refuse the holders of diplomatic, official or service passports entry to the territory of the Member States without first consulting the appropriate national authorities.

The Protocol Department has prepared a document (*To whom it may concern*) which members of Missions and their family members are advised to carry with them for the purpose of facilitating movement across Schengen Borders.

Private servants of members of Missions (cooks, maids, drivers, etc.) who accompany a member of a Mission should apply for a resident permit. The application must be submitted to the Icelandic Directorate of Immigration (*Útlendingastofnun*). Private servants are exempt from requirements regarding work permits.

## 5. Family Members

Iceland recognizes the following as members of the family forming part of the household: spouses/partners and unmarried children up to the age of 21 years of age and unmarried children up to the age of 23 years who are attending recognized educational institution on a full time basis and form a part of the household.

Other relatives may be accepted in some cases if they are clearly resident with and financially dependent upon the member of the Mission concerned and are not engaged in paid employment. In certain cases, dependant parents who are resident with the member of the Mission may also be regarded as part of the household. If members of Diplomatic Missions wish to accredit relatives other than spouses and their children, they should notify such relatives to the Protocol Department, submitting the passport of the relative concerned and stating clearly that they wish such relatives to be accepted as members of the family forming their household. Each case is judged on its own merits.

## 6. Identity Cards

The Protocol Department issues identity cards to Heads of Missions, to members of the diplomatic, administrative, technical and service staff of Missions and to their families.

ID cards are not issued to persons who are Icelandic citizens or permanent residents of Iceland or to locally engaged members of staff. In the case of Non-resident Missions accredited to Iceland, ID cards are issued only to Heads of Mission and their spouses.

*Red ID cards* (Diplomatic identity cards) are issued to Heads of Missions and members of the diplomatic staff and to their family members.

*Blue ID cards* are issued to members of the administrative, technical and service staff and to their family members.

Application for ID cards shall be made to the Protocol Department by means of a Note Verbale submitting a completed form, ES1, *Notification to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs*, with one photograph and a photocopy of the relevant pages in the passport of the applicant.

If an ID card is lost or stolen it should be reported to the Protocol Department so that a replacement can be issued. ID cards must be returned to the Protocol Department at the end of a posting.

## 7. Employment of Family Members

The members of the family of members of Missions are entitled to work in Iceland, subject to Icelandic law, including the provisions of the Vienna Conventions.

In general, the right to work is subject to the granting of a work permit by the Directorate of Labour (*Vinnumálastofnun*) in accordance with the Foreign Nationals' Right to Work Act, No. 97/2002.

Under the Act, the following are exempt from requirements regarding work permits: Nationals of the Member States of the Agreement of the European Economic Area and the Convention Establishing the European Free Trade Association, of the Faroe Islands and other foreigners who come under the Agreement of the European Economic Area and the Convention Establishing the European Free Trade Association, with the specified restrictions and further provisions stated in regulations.

In addition, relatives of nationals of EEA States and EFTA States are exempted from the requirements, whatever their nationality.

Furthermore, a temporary work permit can be granted to family members of Mission members in cases where an agreement exists between Iceland and the sending State to that effect.

Family members do not enjoy immunity from civil and administrative jurisdiction in the case of actions relating to any professional or commercial activity exercised by them, and are liable to pay income tax on their income (see, e.g., Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, arts. 31(1)(c) and 34(d), cf. article 37).

## 8. Labour Law

Laws and wage agreements made between employers and employees' organisations deal with rights and obligations on the employment market. These include minimum wage rates. Labour unions safeguard the interests of employees. They provide information on wage rates and other rights established in wage agreements.

All employees must pay into a pension fund, which pays retirement and disability pensions. The employer also makes a contribution on behalf of the employee. Pension entitlements depend upon the contributions each employee has made. The employer is responsible for

forwarding the employee's payments to the pension fund, and deducting the equal amount from the employee's wages.

## 9. Social Security

In accordance with Article 33 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and Article 48 of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, members of Missions and career consuls and their families are exempt from social security provisions which may be in force in Iceland. This exception also applies to the private servants of Mission members and career consular officers, on condition that they are not nationals of or permanently resident in Iceland, and that they are covered by the social security provisions in force in the sending State or a third State.

Diplomatic agents and career consuls, members of the administrative and technical staff of Missions and their families, who are not nationals of, or permanently resident in Iceland, do not qualify for benefits under the Icelandic national health insurance system. This also applies to service staff and private servants and their families, provided that their sole income is the wages they receive from the sending State and provided that they are not nationals of or permanently resident in Iceland.

The Agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA) includes provisions giving entitlement to sickness and maternity benefits to nationals of EEA States employed in another EEA State, including privileged persons, provided they are entitled to public health care in their home country. The benefits shall be the same as those stipulated in the legislation of the country of stay or residence. Consequently, a person from another EEA State employed in Iceland is entitled to the same benefits as those provided for by the Icelandic legislation in case of sickness or maternity. Persons covered will have to pay any basic contribution to the Icelandic social security system, for instance the personal cost-sharing amounts, decided by the authorities in question, e.g., when visiting a doctor.

Persons serving at Missions or Career Consular Posts, who are permanently resident in Iceland and hence fully liable to taxation in Iceland, shall qualify for health insurance benefits.

Persons not covered by the aforementioned rules are encouraged to take out health insurance.

Persons not covered by the Icelandic national health insurance system who go to a hospital are advised to take their passports and proof of insurance with them. The hospital will normally send a bill to the insurer upon the completion of the required medical service. If the person does not have insurance the hospital will ask for payment immediately upon the completion of the required medical service.

## 10. Income and Capital Tax

Foreign States and international organizations are exempt from paying income tax (*tekjuskattur*) which is a state tax, according to the Act on Income Tax No. 90/2003, Article 4, and from paying capital tax according to the Act on Capital Tax No. 94/1996, Article 2.

Diplomatic agents and career consular officers stationed in Iceland and members of their families forming part of their household have limited tax liability in Iceland. The same goes for administrative or technical staff and members of their families. According to Act No. 90/2003, Article 3, tax liability extends to private income derived from sources in Iceland and income derived from shares in joint stock companies registered in Iceland and companies of similar status. The same applies to wages and other remuneration derived from sources in Iceland for personal work performed there.

Persons belonging to the service staff of Missions are exempt from taxation on wages received from the sending State, if the person in question is not a national of or permanently resident in Iceland.

Private servants of members of a Mission are exempt from taxation on wages received by reason of their employment.

Honorary consular officers are exempt from all dues and taxes on the remuneration and emoluments received from the sending State for the performance of their consular functions.

## 11. Property Tax and Stamp Duties

According to Act No. 4/1995 on the Income of Municipalities, Article 5, premises of foreign States are exempt from real estate tax (*fasteignaskattur*), collected by the municipalities, if they are used for the execution of official duties. Land lease fee (*lóðarleiga*) is not collected by the municipal authorities unless the foreign States own the land.

All owners of real estate in Iceland, including foreign States, are liable to pay municipal dues (*aðstöðugjöld*), in so far as the dues represent payment for electricity, water, garbage collection etc.

Rented premises are not exempt from the real estate tax and land lease fee. It is, however, the owner of the premises, not the tenant, who is liable for paying the real estate tax and the land lease fee.

Missions are entitled to relief from payment of stamp duty (*stimpilgjald*) by free stamping of the relevant documents on any properties they acquire, whether freehold or leasehold, as premises of the Missions.

## 12. Value Added Tax

The value added tax, VAT, (*virðisaukaskattur*, abbr. VSK) levied on goods and services in Iceland is an indirect tax and is incorporated in the price of goods or services. Therefore, VAT is not exempted in Article 34 of the Vienna Convention. All diplomats accredited to Iceland pay VAT on all purchases of goods and services. Exemption is, however, granted on certain goods and services for the official use of a sending State and for the private use of diplomatic agents and career consular officers stationed in Iceland, according to Regulation No. 470/1991 on reimbursement of VAT to foreign diplomats, with subsequent amendments.

When purchasing goods and services domestically, Missions and diplomatic agents are obliged to pay VAT under rules generally applied to such transactions in Iceland. Missions and diplomatic agents will be reimbursed for VAT on goods, with the exception of food products, providing it has been declared that such goods are for the exclusive use of a Mission or for the personal use of diplomatic agents and members of their families forming part of their household. VAT is reimbursed as a matter of courtesy and based on reciprocity to the extent stipulated in the Regulation. Missions and diplomats from States which do not reimburse VAT to Icelandic Missions or diplomats will not receive reimbursements.

Value added tax is reimbursed for work carried out on a building site for construction or improvements and maintenance of premises of a Mission, including the residence of the Head of Mission.

Furthermore, VAT is reimbursed for the rent paid for the use of premises of a Mission, including the residence of the Head of Mission.

Application for reimbursement of value added tax on form ES-5 shall be submitted to the Directorate of Administration and Consular Affairs, accompanied by invoices on which the application for reimbursement is based. Such invoices shall be consistent with the provision of Article 20 of the VAT Act No. 50/1988, with subsequent amendments. An electronic version of the application form must be submitted to [ES5-ES6@mfa.is](mailto:ES5-ES6@mfa.is).

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs verifies that the parties in question come under these rules and processes applications accordingly. Upon approval, the Ministry will return the invoices to the Mission in question with its endorsement of reimbursement and a request for processing to the Financial Management Authority (*Fjársýsla ríkisins*).

The element of customs and excise duties and VAT paid hydrocarbon oils (petrol, diesel fuel and fuel oil) for official vehicles and vehicles of members of Missions will be refunded.

Applications for reimbursement on form ES6 shall be submitted to the Directorate for Administration and Consular Affairs, accompanied by original invoices, and in electronic form to [ES5-ES6@mfa.is](mailto:ES5-ES6@mfa.is).

### 13. Customs Duties

Missions, consular offices, diplomatic agents and career consular officers and their families who are not nationals of or permanently resident in Iceland shall be exempt from customs duties on certain imported goods, including motor vehicles, alcoholic beverages and tobacco imported for official use, according to the Customs Act No. 88/2005, article 4, and Regulation No. 630/2008, Article 40.

The same applies to administrative and technical staff of Missions together with members of their families who are not nationals of or permanently resident in Iceland.

Exemption is granted by application directly to the Directorate of Customs (*Tollstjórnin*), except for the import of alcoholic beverages and tobacco, which also need a certification by the Protocol Department, and vehicles, which also need a certification by the Ministry.

Commercial goods samples for display at exhibitions are, in principle, not exempt from customs duties. Exemption may, however, be granted by application directly to the Directorate of Customs, under the express condition that all the items in the exhibition (except brochures) are to be re-exported.

## 14. Tobacco and Alcoholic Beverages

Missions as well as diplomatic agents and career consuls may be granted duty-free import of alcoholic beverages for their own personal use or for the personal use of members of their families forming part of their households.

Missions as well as diplomatic agents and career consuls may purchase alcoholic beverages exempt of duty and all taxes through the State Alcohol Monopoly (*Áfengis- og tóbaksverslun ríkisins*, abbr. *ÁTVR*).

Applications for import or release should be made on Form ES-1 *Exemption from Customs Duties on the Purchase or Importation by Diplomatic Missions and Diplomatic Agents of Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco*, obtained at the Protocol Department. The completed form signed by the Head of Mission and stamped with the official stamp of the Mission, should then be returned to the Protocol Department for authorization. The authorized form should be presented when the goods are to be released from the Customs warehouse or *ÁTVR*.

Missions may in certain cases serve duty-free alcoholic beverages in restaurants or similar premises provided that the Head of the Mission or his or her Deputy is the formal host, and that these premises are used for invited guests only and are not accessible to the general public.

## 15. Motor Vehicles

### ***Import and Purchase of Motor Vehicles***

Duty-free import of motor vehicles for the official use of the Mission is granted on condition that the vehicles are imported exclusively for official use. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs will accept the import of a reasonable number of such vehicles on the basis of the size of the Mission, among other factors.

Diplomatic agents and career consuls, who are not nationals or permanent residents of Iceland, shall be exempt from customs duties, value added tax (VAT), commodity tax (*vörugjald*) and vehicle tax (*bifreiðarskattur*) on motor vehicles imported by them. The same applies to motor vehicles purchased from an importing firm.

Members of the administrative and technical staff of Missions, who are not nationals or permanent residents in Iceland, are exempt from customs duties and other dues on one motor vehicle imported on arrival or purchased from an importing firm during their tour of duty in Iceland.

A vehicle registered on diplomatic number plates may be driven by members of the owner's family forming part of their households and by domestic staff on duty.

In order to import a motor vehicle free of duty, the person concerned must complete *Form ES-3, Notification to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Importation and Registration of Embassy Vehicles*, and return it to the Directorate of Administration and Consular Affairs. The competent official of the Ministry will sign the form, stamp it with the stamp of the Ministry and indicate whether or not the vehicle shall be entitled to bear CD-plates. The original and three copies of the form will be returned to the Mission. Copies of the notification shall then be presented to the Road Traffic Directorate (*Umferðarstofa*), the Chief of Police in the Reykjavík Metropolitan Area (*Lögreglustjórinn á höfuðborgarsvæðinu*) and, together with the Customs Declaration, to the Directorate of Customs (*Tollstjórinn*). Compulsory third party liability insurance shall be attained for the vehicle. The vehicle shall then be inspected by an authorized vehicle inspector.

### ***Return of Licence Plates***

When the owner of a motor vehicle with Icelandic CD licence plates is transferred to another posting, the licence plates shall be returned to the Road Traffic Directorate; alternatively, the foreign authorities concerned may confirm in writing to the Road Traffic Directorate, or through an Icelandic Mission abroad, that the licence plates have been destroyed. The plates may also be handed in to an Icelandic Mission abroad.

### ***Sale of Motor Vehicles***

Missions and members of Missions and private servants who have been granted duty-free import of a motor vehicle may sell them at any time. However, if sold to a person who does not enjoy the privilege of duty-free import, customs duty and other dues become payable by the buyer.

A special deduction from normal dues, depending on the age of the vehicle, that is, the time from the date the vehicle was first registered in Iceland or abroad until the time of customs clearance, shall apply.

When a vehicle is sold, whether in Iceland or abroad, or if the owner wishes to have the vehicle destroyed, the Mission shall complete *Form ES-4, Notification to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Removal of Embassy Vehicles from Registration* and return it to the Directorate of Administration and Consular Affairs. The form will be signed and stamped with the stamp of the Ministry and the Mission shall send the appropriate copies to the Road Traffic Directorate, the Chief of Police in the Reykjavík Metropolitan Area and the Directorate of Customs.

### ***Driver's Licences***

Members of Missions and private servants and members of their families may use a foreign driver's licence, issued by the sending State or their country of origin, while on tour of duty in Iceland in accordance with the provisions of Regulation No. 501/1997 on driver's licences.

Those members of Missions, private servants and members of their families who so wish may apply for an Icelandic driver's licence at the Chief of Police in the Reykjavík Metropolitan Area.

### ***Alcohol/Drugs, Speeding and Parking***

According to the Traffic Act No. 50/1987, Articles 44 and 45, driving whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs is prohibited. Exceeding the speed limit is also prohibited.

Members of Diplomatic Missions must comply with local parking regulations and pay any charges for parking meters and residents' parking spaces. Members of Diplomatic Missions should be aware that cars parked in such a way as to cause an obstruction or danger to other road users may be towed away.

### ***Seat Belts and Car Head Lights***

Seat belts are compulsory, according to the Traffic Act, for both drivers and passengers in all passenger vehicles except public city busses. Seat belts should be properly adjusted and worn by the driver and all passengers travelling in a motor vehicle. A car's head lights should always be switched on while it is being driven.

## 16. Consent for New Mission Premises

Act No. 30/1980, amending Act No. 19/1966, applies to the ownership and the right of use of real estate by Missions. Under the Act, contracts of sale and conveyances with respect to real estate for use as Chanceries or Residences of Heads of Missions, or with respect to real estate purchased by foreign States for use as residences for other members or the staff of its Missions shall be submitted to the Ministry of Justice (*Dómsmálaráðuneyti*) and shall not become valid until approved by that Ministry through an appropriate inscription.

Missions should inform the Protocol Department of their intention to use premises for Mission purposes. Similarly, they should inform the Protocol Department if they intend to cease using premises for Mission purposes.

## 17. Protection of Mission Premises and Demonstrations

Article 22 (2) of the Vienna Convention places Icelandic authorities under the duty "to take all appropriate steps to protect the premises of the Mission against any intrusion or damage". A Diplomatic Protection Liaison unit at the office of the National Police Commissioner (*Ríkislögreglustjórin*) ensures that Diplomatic premises receive adequate protection. In cases requiring immediate action, the Mission should contact the local police or call the emergency service by dialing 112.

The Icelandic authorities do not necessarily consider themselves under any legal obligation to pay compensation for damage resulting from an attack on diplomatic premises. However, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs will on an *ad hoc* basis review any claims made by Missions for payment for necessary repairs for damage due to politically related vandalism. Missions shall report incidents of vandalism to the police authorities and to the Protocol Department in a Note Verbale, indicating, in particular, in the opinion of the Mission, whether the incidents represent an ongoing threat and whether they were politically motivated.

Icelandic authorities expect all Missions, except those which own their premises and choose to act as their own insurers, to insure their buildings and their contents comprehensively against damage, including that resulting from vandalism.

The right to assembly, unarmed, is protected by the Icelandic Constitution, Article 74. The right to freely express opinion is also protected by Article 73. The police authorities are not entitled to prohibit demonstrations outside Missions unless this is necessary for the preservation of public order or for traffic requirements.

## 18. Flag and Emblem of the Sending State

The Mission and its Head shall have the right to use the flag and emblem of the sending State on the premises of the Mission, including the residence of the Head of the Mission, and on his or her means of transport (Article 20, Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations).

## 19. Polling Stations

Missions may open polling stations for elections in their sending States without special authorization.

## 20. Pets

For importation of all animals, including birds and fish, a special application form must be completed and returned to the Icelandic Food and Veterinary Authority (*Matvælastofnun*) according to Act No. 54/1990 on the importation of animals.

Dogs and cats must be quarantined for six to eight weeks upon arrival in Iceland on the island of Hrísey, Northern Iceland. There is usually a waiting list for the use of the quarantine facilities. A fee is charged for importation permits and for use of the quarantine facilities.

## 21. Firearms Licences

Firearms licences may be granted to a foreign national who is staying in Iceland, according to the Act on Weapons No. 16/1998 and Regulation No. 787/1998 on Firearms and Ammunition, with subsequent amendments, on the following conditions:

- That they are 20 years of age or older and legally competent
- That they have not violated the provisions of the penal code or the laws on alcohol, narcotics or firearms
- That they have sufficient mental maturity, are in good mental health, are not alcoholics or users of narcotic drugs and are capable of handling and owning firearms
- That they have sufficient knowledge on the use of firearms

An application should be lodged with the Chief of Police in the Reykjavik Metropolitan Area (*Lögreglustjórnin á höfuðborgarsvæðinu*).

## 22. Angling in Iceland

As a preventive measure against spreading infectious diseases of freshwater fish to Iceland from other countries, it is prohibited to use fishing equipment, including waders and rubber boots, which have been used while angling abroad, unless such equipment has been disinfected according to valid rules (immersion for 10 minutes in a 2% formaldehyde solution). A certificate of disinfection issued by an authorized foreign veterinary officer will be acceptable, if presented upon entry into Iceland.

Angling in Iceland requires the permission by the owner of the lake or river where one intends to fish.

## 23. Export of Art and Antiques

According to Act No. 105/2001 it is in many cases illegal to export art and antiques from Iceland. The Protocol Department should be consulted when there is doubt about the legality of export.

## 24. Import of Medicinal and Pharmaceutical Products

### ***Import in luggage from EEA States or the Schengen Area***

Medicinal products may be imported in luggage for personal use in an amount corresponding to a maximum of 100-days use, with the following exceptions:

Medicinal products classified as narcotic and addictive may be imported in an amount corresponding to a maximum of 30-days use, if the person is living inside the Schengen area, with regulated restrictions.

Medicinal products classified as narcotic and addictive may be imported in an amount corresponding to a maximum of 14-days use, if the person is living outside the Schengen area, with regulated restrictions.

Individuals may import an amount corresponding to a maximum of 30-days use of medicinal products classified as anabolic steroid hormones and their analogues or growth hormones and their analogues, according to a list of medicinal products prohibited in sports. Customs authorities may request proof of the need for the stated amount, e.g. by a doctor's certificate or a prescription.

### ***Import by mail from EEA States***

Medicinal products may be imported by mail for personal use in an amount corresponding to a maximum of 100-days use with the following conditions:

Individuals may import amount corresponding to a maximum of 30-days use of medicinal products classified as anabolic steroid hormones and their analogues or growth hormones and their analogues, according to a list of medicinal products prohibited in sports. Customs authorities may request proof of the need for the stated amount, e.g. by a doctor's certificate or a prescription. *Import of narcotic medicinal products is prohibited.*

### ***Import by mail from non-EEA States***

Medicinal products may not be imported by mail for personal use from non-EEA States.

In special cases the Icelandic Medicinal Control Agency (*Lyfjastofnun*) may grant an exemption from this general rule under specific conditions.

### ***Import of medicinal products in luggage from non-EEA States***

Medicinal products may be imported in luggage for personal use in an amount corresponding to a maximum of 100-days use, except that medicinal products under regulatory surveillance, that is, narcotics and addictive medicinal products or anabolic steroid hormones and their analogues or growth hormones and their analogues, may not be imported in luggage.

## 25. Flag Days in Iceland

According to Presidential Decree No. 5/1991, Icelandic Government Offices should display the Icelandic flag on the following days:

1. Birthday of the President of Iceland (currently 14 May)
2. New Year's Day
3. Good Friday
4. Easter Day
5. First Day of Summer (first Thursday after 18 April)
6. First of May
7. Whit Sunday (Pentecost)
8. Seamen's Day (usually the first Sunday in June)
9. Icelandic National Day, 17 June
10. 16 November, Birthday of Jónas Hallgrímsson (Icelandic Language Day)
11. First of December
12. Christmas Day

The flag is to be flown at half mast on Good Friday.

## 26. Schools in Iceland

Children of members of Missions may be admitted to the Icelandic school system. There are two kinds of comprehensive schools in Iceland, municipal and independent. Children of diplomats from EU/EEA countries and Switzerland also have a statutory right to preschool services, preschool classes, school-age child care, upper secondary school and equivalent forms of education on the same terms as children who are registered residents of Iceland.

There is one international school in Iceland, located in the municipality of Garðabær, where all teaching is done in English or Icelandic and English. The school is for children aged 6 to 13.

The Icelandic Academy is an independent school run in close cooperation with the international school in Iceland. The Icelandic Academy operates in Garðaskóli municipality

school in Garðabær and offers classes for children aged 14 to 16. It is then customary for Icelandic students to enrol in upper secondary school.

The upper secondary school Hamrahlíð College (*Menntaskólinn í Hamrahlíð*) offers the IB Diploma Programme, a comprehensive pre-university curriculum which is taught in English and intended mostly for the 16 to 19 age groups. The two-year course ends with standardised exams which are internationally recognized by most universities. The school also offers a preliminary year for younger students before they start the IB proper.

Icelandic universities offer many modules and a number of mainly post-graduate programmes in English.

## 27. Honorary Consuls

Under Act No. 4/1978 the provisions of the Vienna Consular Convention have the force of law in Iceland. More than 58 States have Honorary Consuls in Iceland.

The recognition procedure of an Honorary Consul of a foreign State is as follows:

The Missions shall submit a request for the recognition of an Honorary Consul to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs by a Note Verbale addressed to the Protocol Department, indicating the personal details of the Honorary Consul designate and including his/her curriculum vitae. It shall be accompanied by a letter addressed to the National Police Commissioner (*Ríkislögreglustjórnin*) and signed by the Honorary Consul designate consenting to the provision by the Commissioner to the Ministry of personal data of the Honorary Consul-designate relevant to the request for recognition (cf. Article 8 (1) of Act No. 77/2000 on the Protection of Privacy as regards the Processing of Personal Data).

After the Ministry for Foreign Affairs has given its consent for the appointment of an Honorary Consul and after receiving a letter of commission of the sending State, an *exequatur* document for the Honorary Consul, signed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, is issued by the Protocol Department.

The appointment of an Honorary Consul is published in the Icelandic Official Gazette (*Lögbirtingablaðið*). The Protocol Department also informs the competent authorities of the consular district of the appointment of an Honorary Consul.

The Protocol Department issues identity cards with a photograph for Honorary Consuls in Iceland.

Honorary Consuls in Iceland are permitted to have CC plates on their vehicles which, although they do not represent any privileges or immunities, indicate that the owner is a consul of a foreign State.

Honorary Consuls are, on the basis of reciprocity, exempt from custom duties on certain office equipment, according to Customs Act No. 88/2005, Article 3, and Regulation No. 797/2000 on Exemption of Custom Duties.

Honorary Consuls of foreign States in Iceland have a consular association, *Félag kjöræðismanna á Íslandi (Corps Consulaire)*, based in Reykjavík, in order to represent their interests and act on behalf of the members vis-à-vis the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The doyen of the Honorary Consuls is *ex officio* the chairman of the consular association.

## 28. Useful Addresses

### **Chief of Police in the Reykjavík Metropolitan Area (Lögreglustjórinn á höfuðborgarsvæðinu)**

Hverfisgata 113-115  
150 Reykjavík, Iceland  
Tel: 444 1000  
Fax: 440 1015

### **Directorate of Customs (Tollstjórinn)**

Tryggvagata 19  
101 Reykjavík, Iceland  
Tel: 560 0300  
Fax: 562 5826  
e-mail: [tollur@tollur.is](mailto:tollur@tollur.is)  
Website: [www.tollur.is](http://www.tollur.is)

### **Directorate of Immigration (Útlendingastofnun)**

Skógarhlíð 6  
105 Reykjavík, Iceland  
Tel: 510 5400  
Fax: 510 5405  
e-mail: [utl@utl.is](mailto:utl@utl.is)

### **Icelandic Food and Veterinary Authority (Matvælastofnun)**

Austurvegur 64  
800 Selfoss, Iceland.  
Tel: 530 4800  
Fax: 530 4801  
e-mail: [mast@mast.is](mailto:mast@mast.is)

### **International School in Iceland**

Löngulínu 8  
210 Garðabær  
Tel: 590-3106  
Fax: 590-3110  
e-mail: [isi@internationalschool.is](mailto:isi@internationalschool.is)

**Menntaskólinn við Hamrahlíð (Hamrahlíð College)**

Hamrahlíð 10  
105 Reykjavík  
Tel: 595-5200  
Fax: 595-5250  
Email: mh@mh.is

**Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Utanríkisráðuneytið)**

Rauðarárstígur 25  
150 Reykjavík, Iceland  
Tel: 545 9900  
Fax: 562 2373  
e-mail: postur@utn.stjr.is  
Webpage: www.mfa.is

**Ministry of Justice (Dómsmálaráðuneytið)**

Arnarhváli  
150 Reykjavík, Iceland  
Tel: 545 9000  
Fax: 552 7340  
Email: postur@dkm.stjr.is

**Parliament (Alþingi)**

við Austurvöll  
150 Reykjavík, Iceland  
Tel: 563 0500  
Fax: 563 0920  
Email: althingi@althingi.is

**National Audit Office (Ríkisendurskoðun)**

Skúlagata 57  
105 Reykjavík, Iceland  
Tel: 569 7100  
Fax: 562 4546  
Email: postur@rikisend.is

**National Police Commissioner (Ríkislögreglustjórinn)**

Skúlagata 21  
101 Reykjavík, Iceland  
Tel: 444 2500  
Fax: 444 2501  
Email: rls@rls.is

**Office of the President of Iceland (Skrifstofa forseta Íslands)**

Staðastað,  
Sóleyjargötu 1  
150 Reykjavík, Iceland  
Tel: 540 4400  
Fax: 562 4802  
Email: forseti@forseti.is

**Road Traffic Directorate (Umferðarstofa)**

Borgartún 30

105 Reykjavík, Iceland

Tel: 580 2000

Fax: 580 2001

Email: [us@us.is](mailto:us@us.is)