

INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE ON THE
ACCESSION OF ICELAND TO THE EUROPEAN UNION

NEGOTIATING POSITION OF ICELAND

Chapter 25
Science and Research

Summary of the negotiating position

1. Chapter 25 on Science and Research is covered by the EEA Agreement. The EEA ensures Iceland's participation and financial contribution to relevant EU programmes, policies and objectives under this chapter on an ongoing basis.
2. Iceland accepts the *acquis communautaire* with respect to Chapter 25 on Science and Research as of 14 January 2011¹. Iceland will have implemented any outstanding *acquis*, as of that date, under this chapter by the date of accession.
3. Iceland has the legislative and institutional framework necessary to continue to implement the *acquis* in this chapter.
4. Iceland does not request special arrangements, derogations or transitional periods under this chapter.

EEA Agreement

Iceland has been a party to the agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA) since its entry into force in 1994. As a result, Iceland has participated in the single market for more than 16 years and implemented all relevant EU legislation with respect to the four freedoms, as well as in other important areas such as research and development, education, social policy, the environment, consumer protection, tourism and culture. The EFTA Surveillance Authority (ESA) regularly monitors Iceland's performance under the EEA Agreement and publishes information about Iceland's implementation record twice yearly in an internal market scoreboard.

In those chapters covered by the EEA, Iceland has built its legislative framework and institutional framework to comply with and implement relevant EU legislation. Chapter 25 on Science and Research is covered by the EEA Agreement, and the Agreement ensures Iceland's participation and financial contribution to relevant EU programmes.

Legislative Framework

The legislative framework is in place to continue to implement the *acquis*, bearing in mind that the transposition of EU rules into the national legal order is not required under this chapter.

¹ Date of bilateral screening meeting

Iceland has been associated with the EU's Framework Programmes on Science and Research through the EEA Agreement since 1994. Iceland participates in the activities of the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) for Research and Technological Development.

The research and innovation system in Iceland is based on two legislative acts from 2003 (2/2003 and 3/2003) and Act No. 75/2007 on Government Support for Technology, Research and Industry Development.

Iceland is fully committed to the objectives of the European Research Area (ERA) and participates in related programmes and activities. In particular, Iceland has been active in research areas covering agriculture, renewable energy, health and marine related issues. Science and research policy in Iceland takes into account all changes and developments within the ERA.

The national policy on science and research is outlined in a three year policy plan issued by the Prime Minister's Office. The policy for 2010-2012 is dedicated to the importance of fostering and strengthening research and innovation in Iceland under the guiding principles of cooperation and sharing; quality and rewards and international research and innovation.

The main instruments to implement priority areas defined by the Science and Technology Policy Council (STPC) are competitive funds for research and innovation. Funding decisions are based on bottom-up processes and peer reviews, and are open to applications from anyone regardless of institutional affiliation. All publicly funded research, including grants from the European Union, are subject to ethical principles of the FP and rules on taxation and import duties.

Iceland does not possess coal and steel resources and does not intend to participate in the European Research Fund for Coal and Steel.

Iceland is not engaged in nuclear research and has not participated in research projects under the Euratom FP. Consultations will be held with the scientific community on defining priorities and future activities under the Euratom Framework Programme.

Iceland has contributed approximately 2.7 to 3.0% of its GDP to development and research over the past decade. However, the recently published „Iceland 2020 - Governmental Policy Statement for the Economy and Community“ sets out more ambitious targets for the research and development sector in the future. By the year 2020, R&D spending should account for 4% of GDP, the high tech sector's share of GDP should increase to 10% and its share of total export earning should increase to 15%.

Institutional framework

The institutional framework is in place to continue to implement the *acquis* in this chapter.

The Science and Technology Policy Council (STPC) is the main body responsible for developing and adopting the general policy for science and technology in Iceland. Four government ministers

have permanent seats on the Council and the Prime Minister, who chairs the Council, can call upon four additional ministers. Sixteen other individuals have permanent seats in the Council, of which two are nominated by the Confederation of Icelandic Employers and four are fully or partly from the private sector. Policy implementation is under the responsibility of relevant ministries or independent governmental organisations.

The Icelandic Centre for Research (Rannis), a public institute under the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, is responsible for promoting, supporting and monitoring Iceland's participation in the Framework Programme. Rannis employs a staff of 23 and appoints national contact points for each research theme within the FP. The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture nominates representatives for the management committees of each theme.

A lot of research and technological development in Iceland is organised through universities. There are seven higher education institutions in Iceland and they all fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education Science and Culture under the Higher Education Institution Act No 63/2006. There is much emphasis on quality assurance of higher education institutions both concerning research and teaching. The higher education institutions are responsible for internal quality control. However, the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture monitors the quality of the education offered under the Rules on Quality Control of Teaching and Research in Higher Education Institutions no. 321/2009, Rules on Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions no. 1067/2006 and Rules on Doctoral Studies no. 37/2006.

There are a number of public research centres in Iceland. They include the Marine Research Institute, the Icelandic Institute of Natural History, the Icelandic Meteorological Office, Matís-Icelandic Food research, Landspítali- University Hospital, the Innovation Centre in Iceland, the Institute of Freshwater Fisheries and the Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic studies. There are also a number of smaller research centres located throughout the country.

There is a strong tradition in Iceland for private institutions to finance their own research. An Innovation Centre has been established as a powerful support system and knowledge centre for entrepreneurs and small businesses in Iceland. The Innovation Centre houses the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN), which is aimed at assisting small and medium size companies to establish co-operation between Iceland and Europe, both in business as well as in technical matters. The EEN also helps Icelandic businesses to find research grants and opportunities in cooperation within the EU.

The administrative capacity in Iceland is sufficient to continue implementing the *acquis* and participating in relevant programmes and projects under Chapter 25 on Science and Research

Acceptance of the *acquis*

Iceland accepts the *acquis communautaire* in Chapter 25 on Science and Research as of 14 January 2011. No transitional periods, derogations or special solutions are requested under this chapter.