



**COUNCIL OF
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PRESSE 204

**Second meeting of the Accession Conference with Iceland at
Ministerial level
Brussels, 27 June 2011**

The second meeting of the Accession Conference with Iceland at Ministerial level was held today in Brussels to open negotiations on Chapter 5 - Public Procurement and Chapter 10 - Information Society and Media, and to open and provisionally close negotiations on Chapter 25 - Science and Research and Chapter 26 - Education and Culture. Today's meeting marked the start of substantial accession negotiations with Iceland, following the opening of negotiations on 27 July 2010, and good progress achieved in the analytical examination (screening) of the EU *acquis*.

The European Union delegation was headed by János Martonyi, Hungary's Minister for Foreign Affairs. The Icelandic delegation was led by Össur Skarphéðinsson, Minister for Foreign Affairs and External Trade.

Chapters opened

Regarding the opening of negotiations on Chapter 5 - Public Procurement and Chapter 10 - Information Society and Media, the Union has closely examined Iceland's present state of preparations. On the understanding that Iceland has to continue to make progress in the alignment with and implementation of the *acquis* in these two chapters, the EU noted that there are benchmarks that need to be met for provisional closure of both chapters, namely:

Chapter 5 - Public Procurement

- Iceland continues its legislative alignment with the *acquis*, including on remedies and defence procurement, and demonstrates that it will be fully prepared to ensure the implementation and enforcement of the EU requirements by the date of accession.

P R E S S

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Chapter 10 - Information Society and Media

- Iceland continues the alignment with the *acquis* concerning the regulatory framework for electronic communications, notably the implementation of provisions on the independence of the National Regulatory Authority, and demonstrates that it will be fully prepared to ensure the implementation and enforcement of the EU requirements by the date of accession.
- Iceland continues the alignment with the *acquis* in the fields of audiovisual policy and information society services, in particular as regards full transposition by the date of accession of the AVMS directive as well as the e-commerce directive and its provisions on commercial communications and intermediary service providers.

In more general terms, the EU underlined that it would devote particular attention to monitoring all specific issues mentioned in its common positions with a view to ensuring Iceland's administrative capacity to implement the *acquis* in both chapters.

Chapters opened and provisionally closed

Regarding Chapter 25 - Science and Research and Chapter 26 - Education and Culture, given the high level of Iceland's state of preparedness and its fulfilment of obligations regarding these two chapters, and bearing in mind the limited scope of the *acquis* in both, the EU considered that, exceptionally—in line with point 32 of the Negotiating Framework— benchmarks for the provisional closure of these chapters were not required. Therefore, the EU noted that at this stage these chapters do not require further negotiations.

Furthermore, the EU underlined that it would devote particular attention to monitoring all specific issues mentioned in its common positions with a view to ensuring administrative capacity and adequate availability of budgetary and administrative resources.

Monitoring of progress in the alignment with and implementation of the *acquis* will continue throughout the negotiations.

The EU will, if necessary, return to these chapters at an appropriate moment.

With today's Conference, of the 35¹ negotiation chapters, the first 4 screened chapters have been opened for negotiations of which 2 chapters have been provisionally closed. Further Accession Conferences will be planned, as appropriate, in order to take the process forward in the second half of the year.

¹ Including Chapters 34 (Institutions) and 35 (Others) which are not screened.