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**Third meeting of the Accession Conference with Iceland at
Ministerial level
Brussels, 12 December 2011**

The third meeting of the Accession Conference with Iceland at Ministerial level was held today in Brussels to open and provisionally close negotiations on Chapter 6 - Company Law, Chapter 20 - Enterprise and Industrial Policy, Chapter 21 - Trans-European Networks and Chapter 23- Judiciary and Fundamental Rights, and to open negotiations on Chapter 33 - Financial and Budgetary Provisions.

In addition, the Conference confirmed at Ministerial level the opening and provisional closure of Chapter 2 - Free Movement of Workers and Chapter 7 - Intellectual Property Law, which were opened and provisionally closed in the Accession Conference with Iceland at Deputy Level, in Brussels, on 19 October 2011.

Today's meeting marked another significant step forward in the accession negotiations with Iceland and the EU commended Iceland for the progress it has made this year. Moreover the process of analytical examination (screening) of the EU the *acquis* has almost been completed

The European Union delegation was headed by Maciej Szpunar, Under-Secretary of State for legal and treaty affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland. Commissioner Štefan Füle represented the European Commission. The Icelandic delegation was led by Össur Skarphéðinsson, Minister for Foreign Affairs and External Trade.

P R E S S

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Chapters opened and provisionally closed

Regarding Chapter 6 - Company Law, Chapter 20 - Enterprise and Industrial Policy, Chapter 21 - Trans-European Networks and Chapter 23 - Judiciary and Fundamental Rights, given the high level of Iceland's state of preparedness and its fulfilment of obligations regarding the *acquis* of these four chapters, 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, including Iceland's administrative capacity.

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

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

Chapter opened

Regarding the opening of negotiations on Chapter 33 - Financial and Budgetary Provisions, 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 this chapter, the EU noted that this chapter may only be provisionally closed once agreement has been reached with regard to Iceland's request for transitional corrective measures concerning the EU Budget and once the EU agrees that the following benchmark is met, namely:

- Iceland increases its administrative capacity and adopts an action plan for its further development and the preparation of procedural rules to ensure it will be able, from accession, to correctly calculate, forecast, account for, collect, pay, control and report to the EU on own resources in line with the *acquis*.

In more general terms, the EU underlined that it would devote particular attention to monitoring all specific issues mentioned in its common position, with a view to increasing Iceland's administrative capacity to ensure the correct calculation, forecast, collection, payment and control of own resources and reporting to the EU for implementation of the own resources rules.

With today's Conference, of the 35¹ negotiation chapters, 11 chapters have been opened for negotiations of which 8 chapters have been provisionally closed. Further Accession Conferences are planned next semester in order to take the process forward.

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