



Council of the
European Union

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NOTE

From:	Presidency
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Letter from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland

Delegations will find attached a copy of a letter addressed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland to the Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
ICELAND

Reykjavík, 12 March 2015

Dear Edgars, Dear Commissioner Hahn,

Since taking office in 2013, the Government of Iceland has implemented a clear new policy on the EU accession negotiations.

This policy has been reiterated at the meeting of the Government on 10 March 2015 with the adoption of this letter containing further clarifications.

Core elements of that policy were, as a first step, to put the accession negotiations on complete hold, to dissolve the negotiating structures and to commission an assessment of the accession process as well as of developments in the EU. In addition and in line with putting the accession process on complete hold, the Government decided to refrain from participating in all activities related to its candidate status.

In meetings between the Prime Minister of Iceland and the President of the European Commission and the President of the European Council in July 2013 this new policy was explained. On those occasions it was made clear by the two leaders of the EU institutions that clarity regarding the application process would be welcomed. Furthermore, extensive contacts took place between Iceland and the EU in relation to IPA projects in the latter part of 2013.

Since then the assessment of Iceland's accession process has been finalized and the issue discussed at length in the Icelandic Parliament. Contracts on IPA projects have been terminated by the Commission.

Recently we held consultations with you on the state of play of the accession process.

With reference to the above, the Icelandic Government wishes to clarify further its intentions. The Government of Iceland has no intentions to resume accession talks. Furthermore, any commitments made by the previous Government in the accession talks are superseded by the present policy.

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Latvian Presidency of the Council
of the European Union
H.E. Edgars Rinkēvičs

Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy
& Enlargement Negotiations
Mr. Johannes Hahn

In light of the above it remains the firm position of the Government that Iceland should not be regarded as a candidate country for EU membership and considers it appropriate that the EU adjust its working procedures accordingly.

Let me reiterate the importance of continued close relations and cooperation between the EU and Iceland based, in particular, on the EEA Agreement. The Government is committed to close relations independently of any accession considerations.

Furthermore, the Government wishes to emphasize the importance it attaches to unity and cooperation at difficult times in European history when basic elements of security and economic prosperity are being tested.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Gunnar B. Sveinsson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Gunnar" being more prominent and the last name "Sveinsson" following in a similar style.

Gunnar B. Sveinsson
Minister for Foreign Affairs