

# ICELAND AND THE EU

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# KEY QUESTIONS ON ICELAND'S APPLICATION

- Why not before?
- Why now?
- What next?
- What meaning for Europe?

# WHY NOT BEFORE?

- History – recent independence
- Geography (peripheral and Nordic) →  
strategic reliance on USA ('realist' logic)  
limited 'soft security' issues  
Nordic syndrome? - 'identity' vs integration
- Economic profile: attachment to natural resources, globalization experienced mainly through tourism and (latterly) finance, minimal industry
- Political/governance features: balance in Althingi, long R-wing dominance, little strategic capacity

# The alternative solution...

- (NATO membership)
- EEA since 1992 (in force 1994)
- Schengen since 1999 (Nordic Passport Union logic)
- Further opt-ins eg EUROPOL; EUROJUST; Prüm Treaty, ESDP ops (ICRU), CFSP commonalities

# WHY NOW?

- Strategic opening since 2006 (US pull-out, gradual widening of 'security' concepts - but polarization)
- Impact of 'kreppa' on public, focus on need for financial shelter AND political renewal
- Impact on political constellation: Social Democrats (Samfylking) → default government leaders (at least for now)

## ACTIONS SO FAR

- Parliamentary vote 16 July (NB coalition disunity, Left Greens split)
- Application made in Stockholm 23/7, confirmed by Council 27/7
- Rehn brings questionnaire 8 September
- Questionnaire returned 23/10 (record speed but....)

# WHAT NEXT?

- Official negotiating plans
- Key issues: (Iceland) fish, agriculture, (EU) financial cleanup, economic renewal/stability, government capacity
- Referendum on results
- Public opinion – currently less positive than before kreppa (why), but ....?

# THE LARGER CONTEXT

- How does this fit into the big enlargement picture?

North-West and South-East –

- respective chances of overcoming 'fatigue'?
- more or fewer particularities?
- big/small balance?



# LARGER CONTEXT (2): OTHER LEFT-OUTS

- Faroes
- Norway (EEA angle) (Nordic angle)
- Who else...?

# LARGER CONTEXT (3): THE EU AND THE ARCTIC

- General resurgence of interest: climate, economic, strategic
- Relevance of Iceland's position
- Common ground with EU agenda (on basis of Commission Communication Nov 2008)??
- Is this an extra motive for Iceland?
- Is it an extra motive for the EU (or which part thereof)?

**FINALLY:** expect the unexpected!