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2012 progress report on Iceland and post-election perspectives

European Parliament resolution of 16 January 2014 on the 2012 Progress Report on Iceland and the post-election perspectives (2013/2932(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Treaty on European Union,
 - having regard to the decision of the European Council of 17 June 2010 to open accession negotiations with Iceland,
 - having regard to the results of the Accession Conference with Iceland,
 - having regard to the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council entitled ‘Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2012-2013’ and the accompanying Iceland 2012 Progress Report, adopted on 10 October 2012 (COM(2012)0600),
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on Iceland, and particularly those of 7 July 2010 on Iceland’s application for membership of the European Union¹, of 7 April 2011 on the 2010 progress report on Iceland² and of 14 March 2012 on the 2011 progress report on Iceland³,
 - having regard to the agreement of 14 January 2013 on the management of EU accession negotiations in the run-up to parliamentary elections, and to the governmental platform of 22 May 2013 held by the Progressive Party and the Independence Party,
 - having regard to the statements of 13 June 2013 by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland, Gunnar Bragi Sveinsson, and the Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, Štefan Füle,
 - having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Iceland fulfils the Copenhagen criteria, and accession negotiations with Iceland were opened on 27 July 2010 after approval by the Council;
- B. whereas 27 chapters have been opened for negotiation, of which 11 have been provisionally closed;
- C. whereas the newly elected Icelandic Government has put on hold the accession process and an assessment of the accession negotiations and the developments within the European Union in view of a debate in the Althingi on these issues that is currently underway;
- D. whereas the Icelandic Government has declared that the accession negotiations will not be continued without a prior public national referendum;

¹ OJ C 351 E, 2.12.2011, p. 73.

² OJ C 296 E, 2.10.2012, p. 89.

³ OJ C 251 E, 31.8.2013, p. 61.

1. Notes that, in accordance with Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union and pursuant to a favourable vote in the Althingi, the Icelandic Government applied for membership of the European Union on 17 July 2009;
2. Welcomes the prospect of having as a new Member State a country with a well-functioning democratic tradition and strong institutions and civil society;
3. Notes that Iceland has a good general capacity to adopt the obligations of membership, particularly given its participation in the European Economic Area;
4. Underlines the transparent and inclusive conduct of the accession negotiations and welcomes the opening of 27 negotiation chapters and the provisional closure of 11, marking the good progress made in the accession process;
5. Stresses that the European Union remains fully committed to continuing and completing the accession negotiation process;
6. Notes that recent public opinion polls show that a majority of Icelanders wish to finalise the accession negotiations;
7. Notes that Iceland continues to be classified as an applicant country;
8. Takes note of the decision of the Icelandic Government not to wait for the end of the accession negotiations before holding a referendum; looks forward to the parliamentary debate on, and review by the Althingi of, the assessment of the accession negotiations and the developments within the European Union; offers assistance in preparing such an evaluation; hopes that the relevant assessment can be finalised in due time and awaits further decisions on the way ahead, including a decision on whether or not to hold a referendum on the continuation of accession negotiations;
9. Hopes that the referendum will be organised in a foreseeable time frame;
10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the President of the Althingi and the Government of Iceland.