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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on a statement by the Commission
pursuant to Rule 110(2) of the Rules of Procedure
on Iceland's application for membership of the European Union

Cristian Dan Preda

on behalf of the Committee on Foreign Affairs

European Parliament resolution on Iceland's application for membership of the European Union

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission's Opinion on Iceland's application for membership of the European Union (SEC(2010) 153),
 - having regard to its resolution of 26 November 2009 on the Commission's 2009 enlargement strategy paper concerning the countries of the Western Balkans, Iceland and Turkey¹,
 - having regard to its resolution of 11 February 2010 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Regulation (EC) No 1085/2006 of 17 July 2006 establishing an Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) (COM(2009)0588 – C7-0279/2009 – 2009/0163(COD))²,
 - having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas, according to Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union, (any) European State may apply to become a member of the Union,
- B. whereas each country's progress towards membership of the European Union is a merit-based one and depends on its efforts to comply with the accession criteria,
- C. whereas on 17 July 2009 Iceland presented its application for membership of the European Union,
- D. whereas the Commission presented its Opinion on 24 February 2010, recommending that negotiations for accession should be opened with Iceland,
- E. whereas, since previous enlargements have undoubtedly been a success both for the European Union and for the Member States which joined it and have contributed to the stability, development and prosperity of Europe as a whole, it is essential to create the conditions needed to complete the accession process with Iceland and ensure that its accession will be a success too,
- F. whereas relations between Iceland and the European Union date back to 1973 when a bilateral free-trade agreement has been signed between the two,
- G. whereas Iceland is already cooperating closely with the EU as a member of the European Economic Area (EEA), the Schengen Agreements and the Dublin Regulation, and therefore has already adopted a significant part of the *acquis communautaire*,

¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA-PROV(2009)0097.

² Texts adopted, P7_TA-PROV(2010)0026.

- H. whereas Iceland has a well-established democratic tradition and high-level of alignment with the *acquis*,
- I. whereas since 1994 Iceland has been making an important contribution to European cohesion and solidarity through the Financial Mechanism under the EEA,
- J. whereas Iceland is contributing to EU peacekeeping missions and aligns itself regularly with the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy,
- K. whereas Iceland and its population have been severely hit by the global financial and economic crisis leading to the collapse of the Icelandic banking system in 2008,
- L. whereas following a referendum on 6 March 2010, an agreement with the governments of the United Kingdom and the Netherlands on the repayment of a 3.9 billion EUR loan has been rejected and the involved parties are expected to reach a new agreement,
- M. whereas public opinion and political parties in Iceland are divided on the question of EU membership; whereas public opinion towards EU membership has clearly shifted since summer 2009 and opposition to EU membership today has never been so high,

Political criteria

1. Welcomes the perspective of having as a new EU Member State a country with a strong democratic culture; underlines, in this context, that Iceland's accession will benefit both the country and the EU and will further enhance the Union's role as a world-wide promoter and defender of human rights and fundamental freedoms;
2. Stresses the excellent cooperation between the Members of the European Parliament and the members of the Althingi in the framework of the EEA Joint Parliamentary Committee and expects an equally fruitful collaboration in the new EP-Iceland Joint Parliamentary Committee that will be created after the beginning of accession negotiations;
3. Invites the Icelandic authorities to tackle the current distinction made between EU citizens concerning their right to vote and stand as candidate in local elections in Iceland;
4. Is of the opinion that the government of Iceland should adopt special mechanisms in order to ensure the independence of the judiciary and to avoid conflicts of interest;
5. Encourages Iceland to ratify the UN Convention against corruption and the Council of Europe Civil Law Convention on corruption;
6. Commends Iceland for its good record of human rights; invites, however, the Icelandic authorities to ratify the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, as well as the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
7. Encourages Iceland to follow the 2008 OSCE-ODIHR recommendations on hate crime;

Economic criteria

8. Notes that Iceland has a satisfactory track record in implementing its EEA obligations and in its ability to withstand competitive pressure and market forces within the EU;
9. Welcomes policies to further diversify Iceland's economy as a necessary step for the long-term economic well-being of the country;
10. Notes that while fiscal consolidation remains a key challenge, Iceland shows encouraging signs of economic stabilisation; is of the view that measures taken so far in the monetary field go into the right direction to strengthen financial and economic stability;
11. Welcomes the report of the Special Investigation Commission which may contribute to rebuilding national confidence; encourages follow up measures to the work of this Commission in order to address the pressing political, economic and institutional shortcomings described in this report;
12. Calls for reaching an agreement on the arrangements for the repayment of a 3.9 billion EUR loan to the governments of the UK and the Netherlands and points out that this is a bilateral issue which should not constitute an obstacle to launching accession negotiations with Iceland;
13. Takes note of Iceland's desire to become part of the euro zone, which can be achieved after becoming a member of the EU and when all necessary conditions are met;
14. Welcomes the approval of the second review of the IMF stand-by agreement aimed at currency stabilisation, bank restructuring and fiscal consolidation;
15. Is concerned about rising unemployment and high inflation, while noting recent signs of improvement;
16. Commends Iceland for its high rates of investment in education, research and development;

Capacity to adopt the obligations of membership

17. Notes that as an EEA member, Iceland already completely fulfils the requirements of 10 of the negotiating chapters, partly fulfils the requirements of 11 of the negotiating chapters, leaving only 12 chapters not covered by the EEA that need to be completely negotiated;
18. Invites the Icelandic authorities to address the key institutional weakness of the Icelandic economy, notably the organisation and functioning of the financial supervisory system and the deposit guarantee system;
19. Encourages Iceland to adopt an agricultural and rural development policy in line with EU policies, as well as to put into place the administrative structures necessary to implement these policies;
20. Calls on the Commission to involve the Icelandic authorities in the current debates on the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy;

21. Hopes on a constructive attitude when negotiating on the need of Iceland to adopt the European Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), in order to allow for a mutually satisfactory solution based on best practices at the end of negotiations;
22. Encourages Iceland to adopt measures in the field of fisheries policy that will allow it to make a transition towards the introduction of the CFP;
23. Notes that Iceland can bring a valuable contribution to EU environment and energy policies due to its experience in the field of renewable energies, particularly geothermic energy, the protection of the environment and the fight against climate change;

Regional cooperation

24. Considers Iceland's accession to the EU as a strategic opportunity for the EU to have a more active role and contribute to multilateral governance in the Arctic Region, by further anchoring the European presence in the Arctic Council;
25. Welcomes the fact that Iceland's accession to the EU would reinforce the North Atlantic dimension of the external policies of the Union;

Public opinion and support for enlargement

26. Calls on the Commission to provide material and technical support to the Icelandic authorities, in order to help them to organize a thorough and wide campaign of information on the implications of EU membership on all the Icelandic territory so as to allow for an informed choice of the Icelandic citizens in the future referendum on accession; encourages the Icelandic authorities to initiate a wide public debate and dialogue on EU accession;
27. Is of the view that it is crucial to present to the EU citizens clear and comprehensive information on the implications of Iceland's accession; calls on the Commission and Member States to make efforts to that end, considers it to be equally important to listen to and address citizens concerns and questions;

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28. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President/High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the Union, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the President of the Althingi and the Government of Iceland.