

16. September 2011

Screening report

Iceland

Chapter 31 – Foreign, security and defence policy

Date of screening meetings:

Explanatory meeting: 7 April 2011

Bilateral meeting: 20 May 2011

I. CHAPTER CONTENT

The common foreign and security policy (CFSP) and the common security and defence policy (CSDP) are based on legal acts, including legally binding international agreements, and on political documents. The *acquis* consists of political declarations, decisions and agreements. Member States must be able to conduct political dialogue in the framework of CFSP, to align with EU statements, to take part in EU decisions and to apply agreed sanctions and restrictive measures.

II. COUNTRY ALIGNMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION CAPACITY

This part summarises the information provided by Iceland and the discussion at the screening meeting. Iceland indicates that it can accept the *acquis* regarding foreign, security and defence policy. Iceland indicates that it does not expect any difficulties to implement the *acquis* by accession. However, Iceland emphasises, as pointed out in II b. and II c., *inter alia* the specific character of Iceland's security and defence policy and that it is a country without a military.

The main objectives of Icelandic foreign policy include the promotion of human rights and freedoms, democracy, the rule of law, gender equality, social justice, and respect for established norms of international law. Iceland has been an active member of the United Nations (UN) since 1946. It was a founding member of the OECD in 1947 and of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in 1949. Nordic cooperation and Arctic policy are among the main pillars of Icelandic foreign policy. Iceland concluded a bilateral defence agreement with the United States in 1951. When invited, Iceland in most cases aligns itself with EU statements, declarations and demarches. In the first six months of 2011, Iceland has already aligned itself to 27 out of 34 invitations.

Iceland's Foreign Service Act No. 39/1971 provides the basis for the implementation of the foreign policy. The administrative structures are the following: the Icelandic Foreign Service consists of 244 employees with 18 embassies, 3 permanent missions and 3 consulates general.

II.a. CFSP – political dialogue

Iceland has close political consultations with Member States of the European Union on the basis of the 1995 Declaration of the European Economic Area (EEA) Council on Political Consultations, both in Brussels and in international organisations. Nordic cooperation is another important area of Icelandic political dialogue and cooperation.

Iceland has extensive dialogue and cooperation with Norway and Liechtenstein, as part of the EEA agreement. In 2007 Norway and Iceland signed a bilateral MoU on "cooperation in the field of security, defence and preparedness". Iceland also participates in the Enhanced Partnership in Northern Europe (E-PINE). Iceland has very close relations with the United States with regular "Strategic Dialogue" on issues pertaining to political, security and defence relations.

Political discussions, including on issues of economic cooperation, trade and fisheries, take place regularly at different levels with Russia. Iceland and Japan also have a regular political dialogue since 2006. They have built up close cooperation on many international issues e.g. within the United Nations and on maritime policies. Several high level visits have taken place in recent years.

Iceland also holds political dialogue on an ad hoc basis with Canada, China and India. There have been numerous high level visits at presidential and ministerial level with China and India in recent years.

Iceland stated that it has very good bilateral relations with Turkey and with several countries of the Western Balkans. Political discussions with Turkey, Western Balkans and European Neighbourhood policy countries take place on an ad hoc basis. Iceland recognised the independence of Kosovo* in 2008. Iceland takes part in the Mediterranean Dialogue in NATO. In the context of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) region, Iceland participates in the annual Nordic-African Ministerial Meeting with 10 African states.

II.b. CFSP and CSDP – political strategy

Iceland is committed to be ready to fully and actively participate in the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), by the date of accession, taking into account that Iceland is a country without military. Iceland also stressed that it will not establish military conscription. Furthermore, Iceland pointed out that within the framework of the Treaties, the specific character of Iceland's security and defence policy should not be prejudiced and thus it will maintain its competences in its security and defence affairs. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is in charge of general supervision and implementation of all aspects of foreign policy; it is responsible for and has a coordinating role regarding in matters relating to the CFSP and CSDP. The Director-General for International and Security Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs acts as a Political Director. The post of 'European Correspondent' is under preparation.

The Icelandic Parliament participates in Icelandic foreign policy via its Foreign Affairs Committee. A proposal for a parliamentary resolution on forming a National Security Policy for Iceland has passed the first reading in Althingi and been referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, where it is currently under consideration. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs issues an annual report on the foreign policy, which is debated in the Parliament.

Sanctions and restrictive measures

The Act on the International Sanctions No 93/2008 provides for a legal basis to implement the sanctions decided by the UN Security Council and the EU. Restrictive measures and economic sanctions are implemented either through legislation from the Parliament or regulations enacted by the executive power.

Iceland has implemented all UN Security Council restrictive measures and is in the process of implementing most of the EU's restrictive measures. It is committed to implementation of restrictive measures in accordance with the EU *acquis*.

Conflict prevention

Iceland stresses the need for a comprehensive approach to conflict prevention and for mainstreaming conflict prevention into development policy, cooperation with international

* Under UNSCR 1244/99.

and regional organisations as well as with civil society. Iceland is cooperating with the EU within the UN and other international organisations and aligns itself with the various EU statements related to conflict prevention.

Non-proliferation and WMD/SALW strategy

Iceland strongly supports international and regional efforts on disarmament, arms control and non proliferation. It aims for the elimination of all Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) and inhumane conventional weapons and minimisation of the risk of conventional weapons by limiting amounts, types and spread without compromising legitimate defence interests. Main priorities include the elimination of nuclear weapons and the eradication of illicit trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). The legal basis includes the Act on the Control of Services and Items that may have Strategic Significance, No 58/2010. Other laws also apply such as the Weapons Act and the Act on Chemical Weapons Convention. Iceland routinely aligns with the EU's statements in this field. Iceland aligned itself with the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Export in 1998.

Iceland participates in international export control regimes/instruments including Australia Group, Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), Chemical Weapons Convention and The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (HCOG). The Ministry for Foreign Affairs is responsible for the implementation of export regimes/instruments.

With regard to the SALW control, Iceland has no unified national control strategy. Nevertheless, its control strategy is manifested in several laws, in particular the Weapons Act No 16/1998 and the Export Control Act No 58/2010. Firearms are strictly controlled in Iceland. There is a national registration system and a database.

Cooperation with international organisations

Iceland stated that it has very good cooperation with international organisations, such as the UN, NATO, the OECD, the OSCE and the Council of Europe. It participates actively in the Arctic Council, the Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (CPAR), the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC), the Northern Dimension, the Nordic Council of Ministers and the West Nordic Council. Iceland regularly supports the EU positions in the UN. It supports the EU's request for observer status in the Arctic Council. Iceland has ratified most international human rights instruments. Iceland ratified the Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court (ICC) in 2000.

Security measures (classified information)

An EU-Iceland security agreement, which entered into force in March 2007, allows for the exchange of classified information. As a NATO member, Iceland has security measures comparable to the EU in place. This allows the secure handling of classified information. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs coordinates access to premises, security clearances, classified documentation and electronic communication. Legislative acts applicable in this field include Defence Act No. 34/2008, amended by 98/2010, Data Protection Act No. 77/2000 (amended) and General Penal Code, Act No. 19/1940 (amended).

II.c. CSDP – contributing capacities

Iceland stated that is ready to support the CSDP. However, Iceland does not have its own military, so it will participate in the CSDP to the extent possible without any armed forces of its own, as it has done in NATO. Iceland also pointed out its wish that its status as a country without a military would be taken into account regarding engagement in ATHENA. Furthermore, Iceland informed that it does not wish to participate in the European Defence Agency.

With regard to administrative capacity, participation in crisis management operations is organised by the Iceland Crisis Response Unit (ICRU) which is under the Directorate for International Development Cooperation of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The Ministry has a stand-by roster for seconded experts to participate in the crisis management operations. ICRU organises many trainings and seminars.

Crisis management

Iceland shares the objectives of the EU in crisis management and conflict prevention. It has aligned itself with major EU policy declarations. The main objectives of the Icelandic policy include promotion of peace and stability, human rights and gender equality, post conflict assistance and support to civil society. Iceland - EU Framework Agreement on the participation of Iceland in the EU crisis management operations was concluded in 2005. It provides the basis for Iceland's involvement in CSDP operations.

Crisis management is part of the Strategy for Iceland's Development Cooperation 2011-2014. Direct financial contributions to the ICRU are 11% Icelandic ODA. Act No. 73/2007 on ICRU Art. 1(1) stipulates that the Ministry for Foreign Affairs may participate in international crisis response schemes and send civilian experts on crisis response assignments for that purpose. Iceland has also a very active policy on gender mainstreaming into crisis management operations. Gender ratio in ICRU expert positions is already 45% female and gender equality in Iceland's contribution to election monitoring missions was achieved in 2010.

ICRU has the main responsibility for recruiting and training civilian personnel for the international crisis management operations. Since 2001, ICRU has participated in KFOR and Council of Europe actions in Kosovo; UNPROFOR, and EUPM in Bosnia and Herzegovina; EU's Concordia in FYROM; in UNIFEM in Serbia; in ISAF and UNIFEM in Afghanistan; in EOD team and NATO training mission in Iraq; in SRSA, UNMAS, UNIFIL and UNRWA in Lebanon; in SLMM in Sri Lanka; in UN DPKO and UNIFEM in Liberia and in UNICEF and WFP operations in Sudan. Present countries of deployment include Afghanistan, Middle East, Western Balkans, Eastern Europe and Central Asia. This includes long term cooperation with UNIFEM/UN Women on gender issues and cooperation with the OSCE on election monitoring.

III. ASSESSMENT OF THE DEGREE OF ALIGNMENT AND IMPLEMENTING CAPACITY

In this chapter, Iceland is well prepared for accession. Overall, Iceland has reached a high level of alignment in the area of foreign, security and defence policy. Iceland has aligned with most EU declarations and decisions and has participated in CSDP operations since 2003. It

plays an active part in regional organisations in northern Europe and cooperates closely with other Nordic countries.

Despite its relatively small size, the Iceland's foreign ministry has sufficient capacity to implement the provisions of the CFSP.

III.a. CFSP – political dialogue

Iceland has good relations with most EU's strategic partners and regional neighbours. It participates in the political dialogue in the context of the EEA Council and supports EU's foreign policy objectives. Nordic cooperation and Arctic policy are among the key foreign policy priorities. Iceland will be able to participate in the CFSP in this policy area.

III.b. CFSP and CSDP – political strategy

Iceland has largely supported EU foreign policy for several years. By accession, Iceland needs to be able to align with all EU positions and contribute actively to the shape, formulation and execution of CFSP. It has a developed diplomatic network and the necessary mechanisms which, with certain adjustments (e.g. administrative/security measures), will be able to fully participate in the CFSP and the CSDP.

With regard to the sanctions and restrictive measures Iceland already aligns itself with most EU decisions when requested. The adequate legal framework for implementation is in place.

Iceland has mainstreamed conflict prevention in its development cooperation and crisis management policies. It supports the EU activities and statements in this area.

In relation to non-proliferation and weapons of mass destruction / small arms and light weapons (WMD/SALW) strategy, Iceland participates in international export control regimes and instruments concerning the non-proliferation of WMDs. It complies through national laws and control systems with international commitments on small arms and light weapons, including with the aims of the EU strategy on SALW.

With regard to cooperation with international organisations, Iceland is an active member of most international organisations and agreements. It also participates actively in regional organisations involving the northern regions of Europe. It supports the EU positions in the UN and has ratified most international human rights instruments

With regard to the security measures for classified information, Iceland has reached in general a good level of preparation for accession. However, given that the EU's own security rules are evolving, it is expected that Iceland will need to align itself to these rules by the date of the accession. An EU-Iceland security agreement, which entered into force in March 2007, allows for the exchange of classified information. No particular implementation problems have been identified.

III.c. CSDP – contributing capacities

With regard to EU crisis management, Iceland is well prepared for accession. It has already participated in the EU's CSDP military operation in the former Yugoslav

Republic of Macedonia (CONCORDIA 2003), and in the civilian mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUPM 2003-2009) on the basis of the EU- Iceland Framework Agreement on participation in crisis management operations concluded in 2005.

Although Iceland is a NATO member, it does not have its own military. Iceland has limited resources to contribute to EU military crisis management operations, but it is nevertheless able to offer its expertise in the areas of human rights, gender equality and post-conflict assistance.