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**Second meeting of the Accession Conference with Iceland at
Deputy level
Brussels, 30 March 2012**

The second meeting of the Accession Conference with Iceland at Deputy level was held today in Brussels. The Conference opened and provisionally closed negotiations on two chapters, namely Chapter 28 - Consumer and Health Protection and Chapter 31 - Foreign, Security and Defence Policy, and opened negotiations on a further two chapters, namely Chapter 8 - Competition Policy and Chapter 15 - Energy. This marks another significant step forward in the accession negotiations with Iceland.

The European Union delegation was headed by Jeppe Tranholm-Mikkelsen, Denmark's Permanent Representative to the EU. The Icelandic delegation was led by Stefán H. Jóhannesson, Iceland's Chief Negotiator to the EU.

Chapters opened and provisionally closed

Regarding Chapter 28 - Consumer and Health Protection and Chapter 31 - Foreign, Security and Defence Policy, given the high level of Iceland's state of preparedness and its fulfillment of obligations regarding the *acquis* of these two chapters, the EU considered that, exceptionally—in line with point 32 of the Negotiating Framework—benchmarks for the provisional closure of these chapters were not required. Therefore, the EU noted that at this stage these chapters do not require further negotiations.

Furthermore, the EU underlined that it would devote particular attention to monitoring all specific issues mentioned in its common positions, including Iceland's administrative capacity.

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Monitoring of progress in the alignment with and implementation of the *acquis* will continue throughout the negotiations, and the EU will, if necessary, return to the above-mentioned chapters at an appropriate moment.

Finally, with regard to Chapter 31 - Foreign, Security and Defence Policy, the Parties agreed that a Declaration by the present EU Member States and Iceland shall be annexed to the Final Act of the Accession Treaty stating that the provisions in the Treaty on the European Union governing the Common Security and Defence Policy do not prejudice the specific character of the security and defence policy of Iceland as a country without armed forces. Furthermore, the provisions in the Treaty on the European Union covering the Common Foreign and Security Policy, including those governing the Common Security and Defence Policy, will not affect the existing legal basis, responsibilities and powers of Iceland in relation to the formulation and conduct of its security and defence policy.

Chapters opened

Regarding the opening of negotiations on Chapter 8 - Competition Policy and Chapter 15 - Energy, the Union has closely examined Iceland's present state of preparations. On the understanding that Iceland has to continue to make progress in the alignment with and implementation of the *acquis* in these two chapters, the EU noted that there are benchmarks that need to be met for provisional closure of the chapters, namely:

Chapter 8 - Competition Policy

- Iceland continues to demonstrate a satisfactory enforcement record in the field of antitrust, the control of mergers and of State aid.

Chapter 15 - Energy

- Iceland presents an Action Plan to align its legislation on minimum stocks of crude oil and/or petroleum products with the *acquis*, which should include legislative alignment, establishing structures, acquiring storage capacity and gradually increasing the stock levels in terms of days of consumption and net imports.
- Iceland presents a timetable to conform with the provisions of Directive 2009/72/EC as regards the ownership of its Transmission System Operator in terms of independence from power companies and independence from other companies engaging in the generation, distribution or sale of electricity, and,
- Iceland presents a more detailed timetable to implement the nuclear safety and radiation protection *acquis*.

The Conference also considered Iceland's requests for transitional measures and special arrangements on minimum stocks of crude oil and/or petroleum products, on common rules for the internal market in electricity, and on energy performance of buildings, energy end-use and energy services.

In more general terms, the EU underlined that it would devote particular attention to monitoring all specific issues mentioned in its common positions, with a view to ensuring Iceland's administrative capacity to implement the relevant *acquis*.

With today's Conference, of the 35¹ negotiation chapters, 15 chapters have been opened for negotiations of which 10 chapters have been provisionally closed. A further Accession Conference, this time at Ministerial level, is planned in June in order to take the process further forward.

¹ Including Chapters 34 (Institutions) and 35 (Others) which are not screened.