

The Foreign Service of the Future:

Guarding Iceland's Interests in a Fast-Changing World

Executive summary

At no time has the velocity and depth of world trade been as high as now and never before has further growth in international trade been as important. Today's international relations are subject to rapid changes and for a smaller state, which is largely dependent on external trade, the importance of strengthened relations with neighbours, traditional markets and emerging markets further afield, has never been as great as now. Iceland is faced with opportunities and challenges which are essentially global in nature and each day the Icelandic foreign service has to find ways and means to organise its work towards the main tasks of safeguarding Iceland's interests. The report *The Foreign Service of the Future: Guarding Iceland's Interests in a Fast-Changing World* is a product of a Special Steering Group appointed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs in March 2017 with the mandate to make recommendations on how to use the Ministry's current human and financial resources in a more effective way to execute Government foreign policy. The Steering Group's aim was to look five years into the future and make practical and realistic recommendations on how the foreign service can prioritise its work with a view to reach the main goals of effectiveness and flexibility.

The work of the foreign service is wide in scope and the Steering Group applied a wide-ranging consultation process with a number of stakeholders in preparing the report and recommendations. Six working groups within the Ministry were established, each tasked with making concise analysis of selected areas as well as practical recommendations on how to make better use of funds and personnel in that area. In a complex and globalised world the Icelandic foreign service has interests and duties that need to be shared in a relatively small administration. Clear prioritising and flexibility is therefore paramount. It is important that the Icelandic foreign service has the means to compensate its natural limitations with increased coordination and make better use of specialised knowledge, skills and resources from a wide range of Icelandic stakeholders. The implementation of Iceland's foreign policy is most effective when it becomes the common tasks of all Icelanders who wish to contribute.

The report *The Foreign Service of the Future: Guarding Iceland's Interests in a Fast-Changing World* is organised in four main chapters. Each chapter portrays an analysis of the most relevant fields in the foreign service's work, describes the main undertakings of the foreign service and looks towards opportunities and challenges that may arise in the coming five years. The report weighs both the strengths of the foreign service and the challenges that need to be addressed and the Steering Group recommendations reflect this analysis. The Steering Group has made over 150 recommendations which are organised in the following 18 clusters:

Recommendations on more systematic work on climate change, Arctic issues, and regional cooperation

Recommendations on security and defence

Recommendations on increased emphasis on free trade and export opportunities

Recommendations on increased trade representation and protection of interests in emerging markets

Recommendations on more effective implementation of the EEA Agreement

Recommendations on development cooperation

Recommendations on consular services

Recommendation on a systematic framework for honorary consuls

Recommendations on active cooperation with Icelandic institutions and organisations

Recommendations on generating public debate on foreign affairs

Recommendations on stronger continuing education

Recommendations on improvements to the organisational structure of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Recommendations on changes regarding Iceland's diplomatic missions and related staffing

Recommendations on temporary work-related residence abroad

Recommendations on improvements in human resources

Recommendations on improved utilisation of technology

Recommendations for improved work facilities in the foreign service

Recommendations for improved information sharing and image building

Members of the Steering group

Sturla Sigurjónsson, Permanent Secretary of State, Chairman

Andri Lúthersson, Director of Information

Jörundur Valtýsson, Director-General, Directorate for International and Security Affairs

María Erla Marelsdóttir, Director-General, Directorate for International Development Cooperation

Sigríður Á. Snævarr, Ambassador

Urður Gunnarsdóttir, Press Officer

Recommendations on more systematic work on climate change, Arctic issues and regional cooperation

1. Consultation and harmonisation domestically on policy-making and representation concerning global climate change, Arctic affairs, natural resources, and matters relating to the sea shall be systematised more fully under the leadership of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Thereafter, the arrangements for participation in international work in these areas shall be reviewed.
2. Projects relating to the Arctic Council, Barents Regional Council, Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), regional institutions for the affairs of the sea and fishery management, the EU's Northern Dimension, West Nordic Council, and Nordic Council of Ministers shall be better integrated, with the aim of strengthening and deepening them and achieving better use of funding. This shall also be done with reference to chairmanship of the Arctic Council and Nordic cooperation in 2019-2021.
3. Current policies on climate, business, and development shall be harmonised, in part with the aim of systematically sharing Icelandic expertise in the field of renewable energy and other areas pertaining to climate change and adaptation to it. Particular emphasis shall be placed on projects that increase the share of renewables in energy production in the Arctic region, including geothermal power, in cooperation with businesses and institutions.
4. A strategy shall be prepared for the utilisation of Iceland's foreign embassies vis-à-vis Arctic Council member states and observer states, and standing committees vis-à-vis affiliated international institutions, with the aim of increasing Iceland's visibility and importance in matters relating to climate change, Arctic affairs, and issues related to the sea, including via the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO).
5. Dissemination of information on challenges, threats, opportunities, and cooperation in the Arctic region to the general public, the business community, and NGOs shall be increased, in cooperation with Arctic institutions in Akureyri and affiliated parties such as the Arctic Circle assembly and Arctic Iceland. Cooperation with local authorities shall be expanded in particular.
6. Increased participation by Icelandic scientists and scholars in wide-ranging research in the Arctic region shall be encouraged, including with a special research timetable, in cooperation with universities and research institutions. It follows from this that, among other things, Iceland will be an increasingly viable location for events and conferences in this field.
7. Work shall be done, in consultation with the Ministry of Justice, on the development of a search and rescue cluster in Iceland, in accordance with the findings of the 2016 task force on rescue and safety in the northern seas.

Recommendations on security and defence

8. An appraisal shall be carried out of current law and regulations pertaining to safety and defence, including the Act on Icelandic Peacekeeping, no. 73/2007, and the Defence Act, no. 34/2008, for the purpose of clarifying and strengthening the regulatory framework with comprehensive legislation, also with reference to the new national security policy for Iceland.
9. A security and defence action-plan shall be prepared, including factors such as Iceland's contributions and priorities as regards defence preparedness and participation in relevant multilateral cooperation. Particular consideration shall be given to NATO communiqués and the obligations deriving from them, and development of bilateral defence cooperation with the United States.
10. Action shall be taken to make the execution of defence plans for Iceland more effective as regards both the Icelandic authorities and NATO countries, and to harmonise the participation of other ministries and institutions, as well as the Foreign Affairs Committee of Parliament and the National Security Council.
11. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs' role in ensuring practical support from NATO countries and neighbouring countries in response to potential terrorist acts, should Icelandic law enforcement institutions' resources prove insufficient, shall be defined. This pertains, among other things, to the 2006 and 2016 joint statements between Iceland and the US and to cooperation with other Nordic countries.
12. The execution of a new risk assessment for Iceland by the National Security Council and regular contingency exercises on behalf of the Council shall be encouraged.
13. The position of Defence advisor to the Permanent representation at NATO that handles day-to-day communications with NATO Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) and the United States European Command (USEUCOM) shall be defined. The Defence advisor shall also act as deputy military representative in Brussels and will carry out other related tasks at the NATO headquarters.
14. The Permanent representation at NATO shall be responsible for relations with the EU in the field of security and defence.
15. Improvements shall be made to the flow of information between Iceland's Permanent representation at NATO, the UN, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and other Icelandic representatives vis-à-vis other foreign parties when security matters are discussed, with the aim of harmonising points of emphasis and public representation, including on respect for international law and human rights.
16. Discussions shall be initiated with the Ministry of Justice concerning possible participation by representatives of the Icelandic Coast Guard and the National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police in meetings of NATO specialists regarding these institutions' sphere of activity.

Recommendations on increased emphasis on free trade and export opportunities

17. Increased emphasis shall be placed on the conclusion and management of free trade agreements, particularly through EFTA, or bilateral agreements if consensus cannot be reached within EFTA. Consultation with Icelandic stakeholders shall also be enhanced.
18. The possibility of improving trade terms with the United States and expediting the review of the free trade agreement with Canada shall in particular be assessed.
19. Iceland's negotiating team in EFTA free trade negotiations shall be strengthened with participation in negotiation rounds by experts from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs' Directorate for External Trade and Economic Affairs, supporting the Permanent Mission in Geneva.
20. Following the establishment of an export and marketing council, stakeholders shall be invited to consultations on Iceland's trade policy and the key priorities over the next few years, including in trade negotiations.

Recommendations on increased export service and protection of interests in emerging markets

21. An export and marketing council shall be established no later than 1 January 2018, with the appointment of representatives from the Government, the business community, and the labour movement. The council shall participate in the formulation of Iceland's external trade policy.
22. The operational framework of Promote Iceland, as well as its role and activities, will be reviewed in cooperation with the business community.
23. Alongside continued cultivation of conventional economic sectors, increased emphasis will be placed on building up knowledge and capacity needed to better service growth and innovation businesses in foreign markets.
24. The export service offered by the foreign service will be promoted and strengthened by providing increased services to Icelandic businesses in foreign markets. As a part of this process the number of trade representatives abroad will be increased, with first priority on North America and Asia.
25. Opportunities and challenges in emerging markets will be identified, including in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, with emphasis on identifying new opportunities for Icelandic companies to do business in these markets.
26. The feasibility of using the Iceland Naturally project as a model in other parts of the world, outside North America, will be examined.
27. Tasks related to export services, culture and public diplomacy, will be combined in a new department within the Directorate for External Trade and Economic Affairs. Promotion of culture will remain unchanged.
28. Existing export marketing areas, until now mainly defined by countries, will be redefined in larger regions where trade representatives will collaborate closely as teams. In light of Brexit, a special emphasis will be put on strengthening trade representatives' work and work procedures in Europe.
29. The foreign service will increase its consultation with exporting companies, centres for promotion of arts and culture, other ministries and Promote Iceland on policy-making. Furthermore the foreign service will seek consultation on special projects and efforts in the area of marketing and exports in the area of culture and creative industries.
30. The cooperation and coordination between trade and development cooperation will be strengthened, with the aim to better inform Icelandic companies of cooperation opportunities in developing countries.
31. Greater emphasis will be put on examining possibilities created by Nordic cooperation when it comes to seeking new markets and in business development and using public diplomacy and the Nordic brand for creating new business opportunities.

Recommendations on more effective implementation of the EEA Agreement

32.. Iceland's representation within the EEA shall be strengthened, with the main objective of affecting issues of interest at the decision-shaping level in EU institutions. To this end, the Ministry's Directorate for External Trade and Economic Affairs shall be strengthened so as to enable it to expand its work on identifying issues early in the policy-making process; furthermore, procedures for cooperation between ministries on the formulation of Iceland's position on proposals for new EU legislation shall be reviewed so as to support this objective. In addition, formal consultation with the social partners, local authorities, and civic organisations shall be increased.

33. The Directorate for External Trade and Economic Affairs' harmonisation role in connection with EEA cooperation shall be strengthened, and cooperation with other ministries shall be increased with the aim of improving work habits and results relating to the adoption and implementation of EEA rules. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs shall concern itself in particular with two-pillar issues and whether rules should be adopted in the EEA, and shall support other ministries in resolving such issues.

34.. Efforts shall be made to implement rules in order to make them less onerous for Icelandic stakeholders. Procedures shall be developed so as to ensure that the following are included in the comments on bills of legislation regarding implementation of EEA rules: which provisions pertain directly to the rules; which provisions go further than the rules stipulate, and why; and how much flexibility there is to implement them in a less onerous manner.

35. A portal shall be established on the Ministry for Foreign Affairs website, where the general public and stakeholders can submit comments on possible improvements in the implementation of EEA rules. This shall include issues requiring a review of existing regulatory provisions, such as instances where they are incompatible with conditions in Iceland. Such comments would be forwarded to the European Commission.

36. Those ministries that do not have representatives working in the embassy in Brussels shall be encouraged to solve the matter as soon as possible, as the involvement of the entire Government Offices is essential. For practical reasons, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs shall be granted budgetary allocations to cover the cost of these representatives' residence and employment in Brussels.

37. Consultation with Parliament on the implementation of the EEA Agreement shall be increased, and once a year the Minister for Foreign Affairs shall present a list of Iceland's priorities vis-à-vis the EU to the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee. In addition, the Minister shall address Parliament twice a year with a report covering matters of current importance in the EU and Iceland's challenges and interests with respect to EEA cooperation. Moreover, information shall be submitted to Parliament concerning strategic documents and proposals for new European legislation on a more frequent basis.

38. Public access to information on the EEA Agreement, including new European legislation in preparation, shall be expanded. Among other things, the public shall be granted access to the Government Offices' EEA database, and information about EEA Agreement, including strategic

documents and proposals for new European legislation, shall be made accessible on the Ministry for Foreign Affairs website.

39. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs shall invite Government Offices employees who work on EEA-related matters to regular information and training meetings and shall begin a review of the manual on treatment of EEA issues.

40. It shall be proposed to the Prime Minister's Office that the task force on EEA implementation should remain active and should present a comprehensive appraisal of the progress made in implementing its recommendations for improvement.

Recommendations on development cooperation

41. The Act on Iceland's International Development Cooperation, no. 121/2008, and the Regulation on the Implementation of International Development Cooperation, no. 894/2009, shall be reviewed.
42. A parliamentary resolution on a policy for Iceland's international development cooperation for 2018-2022 and an action plan for 2018-2019 shall be presented before Parliament in coming months. The policy shall be based on the UN Global Goals /UN Sustainable Development Goals, and the implementation shall be better integrated into Iceland's comprehensive foreign policy.
43. Agreements made with operational partners shall aim to fall within the time frame of the development policy in force each time.
44. The contents of the recommendations made in the Development Assistance Committee's (DAC) 2017 peer review shall be examined, with the aim of completing as many reforms as possible before the DAC mid-term review in 2019.
45. Emphasis shall be placed on cooperation with the Icelandic private sector with the goal to stimulate economic growth in developing countries and provide them with support in the field of trade. Particular emphasis shall be placed on utilising Icelandic expertise and promoting it within international organisations and the UN University, as Icelandic companies and institutions have to offer wide-ranging competences/know-how that could support economic growth in developing countries. An analysis of this shall be prepared before year-end 2017, in cooperation with the Promote Iceland agency, and recommendations shall be presented to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.
46. Consultation and cooperation with Parliament, NGOs, and the academic community, in the field of international development cooperation, shall be strengthened.
47. Action shall be taken to increase public knowledge, both in Iceland and abroad, about the impact of Iceland's international development cooperation. The aim shall be to use 1% of ODA, which is handled by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, in this way.
48. The Directorate for International Development Cooperation shall establish a temporary department that will administer Iceland's coordination role for the Nordic-Baltic Constituency at the World Bank in 2019-2021.

Recommendations on improved services to Icelanders abroad

49. Measures shall be taken to ensure that, without exception, all foreign service employees, either those required to move or those hired locally, receive increased training in procedures for consular services before they begin work abroad. s

50. Each diplomatic mission office shall have an employee responsible for consular services in the office's jurisdiction.

51. A template on use of social media shall be prepared for mission offices so as to facilitate and coordinate the gathering and sharing of information on events or conditions in high-risk areas abroad, and on the location and health/safety of Icelanders who may be in those areas.

52. The procedures of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and other ministries and institutions involved in consular services shall be harmonised and efforts made to enhance formal cooperation, possibly through service agreements, in connection with specified projects abroad.

53. Contracts concerning use of the Skógarhlíð Rescue Coordination Centre's facilities and expertise for coordinated responses to hazardous events affecting large numbers of Icelanders abroad shall be finalised.

54. Renewal of equipment for passport issuance shall be expedited, and the number of mission offices with such equipment shall be increased. In addition, an appraisal of the potential cost and arrangements concerning mobile equipment for the provision of such services to Icelanders in distant locations shall be carried out, and discussions shall begin with Registers Iceland concerning how passport issuance for Icelandic citizens abroad can be facilitated.

55. More explicit statutory authority shall be requested, and service agreements shall be concluded, allocating fees charged for visa issuance abroad towards labour costs in connection with locally hired staff abroad or honorary consuls who carry out these tasks.

56. A new regulation shall be adopted to update the Ministry for Foreign Affairs' tariff, increasing fees for off-hours calls to work in connection with passport issuance so as to reflect the actual cost of such services, as is the case with other Government Offices. This regulation shall be reviewed on a regular basis.

57. Renewed cooperation shall be sought with the Church of Iceland or other religious institutions concerning various services and assistance to Icelanders in the foreign locations where they are most numerous.

58. Harmonised rules shall be adopted on the gathering and sharing of information from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and mission offices concerning consular services provided, and the information shall be published regularly on the Ministry's website.

Recommendation on a systematic framework for honorary consuls

59. The manual for honorary consuls shall be reviewed.
60. An intranet for honorary consuls shall be established.
61. Rules on selection, appointment, and retirement of honorary consuls shall be clarified and communicated more clearly to consuls, including unequivocal provisions on termination of service.
62. Honorary consuls shall be tasked explicitly with placing emphasis on consular services and trade promotion in their work, and a new consular department in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs shall handle matters relating to consuls and provide them with information and assistance.
63. The location and number of honorary consuls shall be reviewed with the aim of expanding the network, particularly in emerging market-countries.
64. Consular conferences shall be held in Iceland every four to five years, and participants shall be invited with ample advance notice.
65. Fixed criteria shall be established for recognition of honorary consuls, including in cooperation with the committee on the Order of the Falcon, and practice in the other Nordic countries shall be taken into account.

Recommendations on active cooperation with Icelandic institutions and organisations

66. A special online calendar shall be established for the Government Offices, where all ministers' and permanent secretaries' planned meetings with foreign interlocutors will be recorded, thereby facilitating harmonisation and reciprocal sharing of information. The new, harmonised Government Offices website shall be used for this purpose.

67. Consultation and harmonisation within the Government Offices with respect to international cooperation and communications with foreign parties shall be strengthened under the leadership of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

68. Arrangements for the Minister for Foreign Affairs' reporting to Parliament shall be changed, replacing the general annual report and discussion of foreign affairs with more in-depth topical reports and discussions on key issues, including focus on the future.

69. Harmonisation of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Foreign Affairs Committee of Althingi shall be increased as regards tasks abroad, so that the Committee can support the Government's efforts or work on individual issues. This includes Committee meetings held abroad. The same would apply, as appropriate, to other Althingi Parliamentary committees dealing with external relations.

70. The custom shall be reinstated of inviting newly appointed heads of mission and ambassadors residing in Iceland to meet with the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee to discuss the work venue and key points of emphasis there, as was done in earlier times in the foreign service.

71. Cooperation with Parliament shall be sought in connection with temporary staff member exchange, so as to facilitate reciprocal sharing of information between institutions and expand employees' expertise.

72. The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs shall call regular meetings inviting stakeholders who are in regular communication and collaboration with the foreign service, so as to share information on current and up-coming key topics of importance.

73. The possibility shall be investigated of recruiting experts – for example, from the business or academic community – to work temporarily for the foreign service on specified projects. The legal and financial side of such an arrangement shall be looked into.

Recommendations on generating public debate on foreign affairs

74. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs shall suggest to the Prime Minister's Office, with reference to the Act on a National Security Council, no. 98/2016, that a research centre for foreign affairs and defence be established at the University of Iceland Institute of International Affairs. The National Security Council and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs would hire a project manager, and the board would include representatives from the Ministry of Justice, Parliament, the University of Iceland, and the press, as well as the above-mentioned ministries. The objective of the centre would be to strengthen education and information sharing about these issues.

75. It shall be determined whether the lectures, speeches, and presentations on foreign affairs and defence that are held regularly at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs could to some extent be made open to individuals, organisations, or institutions for which the topics have relevance.

76. Institutions, organisations, and companies shall be given the option of receiving regular information on visits to Iceland by Icelandic diplomats working abroad, so that they have the option of meeting on specified topics.

Recommendations on stronger continuing education

77. A task force shall analyse the possibilities in Iceland for training and continuing education that is relevant and useful to the foreign service, including by making use of the expertise in the sector. On this basis, a plan shall be made with the aim of improving individual and overall performance. In addition, information on domestic and foreign parties that sponsor individuals' continuing education shall be made available.

78. A team of computer scientists, super- users, and regular users shall be established with the aim of strengthening employees' technological skills. Work shall be done with individuals and small groups so as to define the needs of each one and provide the knowledge needed. Furthermore, distance learning-friendly educational videos shall be produced.

79. Specialised language studies shall be offered.

80. Local employees shall be offered regular, structured re-education – including training in archiving, technological, and citizen services – that would take place partly in Iceland.

81. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs Translation Centre shall be entrusted with compiling terminology databases for terms used in diplomatic work.

82. The human resources department shall create a special database containing information on registration, incentives, and employee feedback on continuing education.

83. A theme day shall be held in the foreign service, where all employees are given the opportunity to enter and update information on themselves (intranet – name directory – employee document) and conduct a self-assessment of their technological skills.

84. A re-education day shall be held twice a year, with mandatory short seminars provided for employees.

85. Courses in human resources management and project management shall be held for employees responsible for large-scale projects or organisational units.

86. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs archive would be entrusted with compiling a quality manual with descriptions of important procedures for foreign service staff members' general use. The manual would include plans and estimates, job descriptions, project descriptions, checklists, and templates to ensure adherence to proper procedure in both common and infrequent projects.

Recommendations on improvements to the organisational structure of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs

87. The Act on the Icelandic Foreign Service, no. 39/1971, shall be reviewed, including harmonising it with subsequent legislation.
88. A Permanent Secretary's Directorate and a Directorate for Defence shall be established, and the Protocol Office shall be formally established as a Directorate.
89. The departments shall be organisational units in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs offices without changes in staff members' terms of employment, cf. the Act on the Government Offices of Iceland, no. 115/2011. At the same time, care shall be taken not to reduce flexible division of tasks, and departments shall be changed as needed.
90. The Permanent Secretary's Directorate shall comprise the following departments: 1) information & communication and analysis; 2) human resources; 3) ambassadors and special diplomatic envoys residing in Iceland;¹ 4) administrative oversight and foreign service operations.
91. The Protocol Directorate shall comprise the following departments: 1) general protocol issues and services to foreign diplomatic missions;² 2) honorary consuls' affairs.
92. The Directorate for Administration shall comprise the following departments: 1) budgeting and policy-making;³ 2) operations and accounting; 3) development cooperation finances;⁴ 4) archive; 5) technology and IT; 6) cafeteria.
93. The Directorate for Legal and Executive Affairs shall comprise the following departments: 1) general regulatory, administrative, and legal EEA matters; 2) national law and the law of the sea; 3) consular services.
94. The Directorate for Development Cooperation shall comprise the following departments: 1) bilateral development cooperation; 2) multilateral development cooperation; 3) humanitarian aid; 4) trade and regional cooperation.
95. The Directorate of External Trade shall comprise the following departments: 1) European affairs and EEA Agreement implementation; 2) economy and culture; 3) free trade agreements; 4) air traffic, investment, and dual taxation agreements; 5) economic affairs and bilateral communications; 6) Translation Centre.
96. The Directorate of International and Security Affairs shall comprise the following departments: 1) international defence; 2) human rights and bilateral political communications; 3)

¹ Staffed with ambassadors residing in Iceland, who will be registered vis-à-vis some of the countries with which Iceland has a political relationship but where there are no Icelandic diplomatic mission offices. It shall be possible to entrust these ambassadors with special projects in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and temporary projects abroad. The presidential ruling on diplomatic mission jurisdictions shall be reviewed accordingly. In addition, special emissaries who handle cross-functional matters shall be there.

² At all times, one of the lawyers working in the Legal and Administrative Office shall have the title Deputy Director of Protocol, including due to the implementation of the Vienna Convention.

³ According to the Act on Public Finances, no. 123/2015.

⁴ Transferred from the Development Cooperation Office to the Operations and Services Office for the sake of consistency and efficiency.

environment and natural resources; 4) the Arctic region and related regional cooperation; 5) Nordic cooperation.

97. The Directorate of Defence shall comprise the following departments: 1) operations and exercises; 2) multilateral defence cooperation; 3) defence-related operations and services; 4) participation in multilateral operations

Recommendations on changes regarding Iceland's diplomatic missions and related staffing

98. The Embassy in Austria shall be closed and bilateral representation assigned to an ambassador residing in Iceland. A diplomat based in Vienna will carry out the duties of a permanent representative vis-à-vis OSCE and UN institutions as needed, assisted by a locally hired secretary.
99. The activities of the consulate general in Winnipeg shall be analysed with respect to tasks and costs, in consultation with Althingi and the main stakeholders, with the aim of finding new ways to strengthen the links between Iceland and West Icelanders throughout North America.
100. The position of deputy chief of mission to the Embassy in Sweden shall be abolished. An ambassador and locally hired staff members will continue the Embassy work.
101. The position of deputy chief of mission to the Embassy in Norway shall be abolished, based on the experience from Sweden.
102. The position of deputy chief of mission to the Embassy in Denmark shall be abolished, based on the experience from Sweden.
103. The position of deputy chief of mission to the Embassy in India shall be abolished. An ambassador and locally hired staff members will continue the Embassy work.
104. Ways to further streamline operations at the Embassy in Finland shall be sought.
105. A diplomatic mission office shall be established in East Asia and tasked with handling export services in the region.
106. A consulate general shall be opened in California in the US and will handle export services and interests in the digital sector on the American West Coast.
107. The Embassy in Mozambique shall be closed as has previously been announced.
108. Accreditation to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg shall remain unchanged and the Permanent Representative to the Council of Europe is the residing Ambassador in Paris.
109. The sphere of activity of the current embassies in Uganda and Malawi shall be expanded, first with the appointment of an ambassador to Uganda, and will include political and trade-related tasks. Representation of these two countries and others on the continent shall be handled there, as will representation of regional organisations. The number of honorary consuls in Africa shall be increased at the same time.
110. Additional diplomats will be posted to the Permanent representation in New York and the Embassy in Paris to work on development cooperation matters. In Paris the diplomat will also be assigned to issues related to humanitarian aid at the Permanent Representation in Geneva.
111. The activities of the Icelandic representation to relevant international organisations in Rome, including the FAO, shall continue, in cooperation with the Ministry of Industries and Innovation.
112. Another local trade representative shall be hired at the Embassy in Japan.

113. A local trade representative shall be hired at the Embassy in Canada and will work under the supervision of the Consul General in New York.

114. One more local employee shall be hired for the Consulate General in New York, restoring the number of staff members to pre-crisis level from before 2008.

115. A needs analysis shall be carried out concerning potential increases in the number of diplomatic mission offices in coming years, including temporary representation in connection with Iceland's chairmanship of regional organisations.

Recommendations on temporary work-related residence abroad

116. The objective shall be set that at least one Ministry for Foreign Affairs employee shall be transferred abroad for work purposes each year, either to a ministry in another country or to an international institution; that is, in addition to development cooperation or peacekeeping projects. The purpose of the stay abroad shall be defined in advance, and it shall be ensured that the knowledge gained will be utilised upon the employee's return to Iceland.

117. Advertisements of available positions in international and multilateral organisations and institutions shall be monitored systematically and the positions advertised in Iceland so as to encourage qualified Icelanders to apply.

Recommendations on improvements in human resources

118. Attempts shall be made to strengthen cross-training and interdisciplinary expertise in Ministry for Foreign Affairs offices as regards functions such as international and safety matters defence, environment and natural resources, and development cooperation.
119. Alongside changes in diplomatic mission office staffing, professional offices shall be enabled to prioritise so that experts working in the Ministry are entrusted with increased responsibility in participation at meetings in standing committees, embassies, and international institutions in the relevant functions.
120. A position shall be taken before year-end 2017 on the recommendations in the report *Átak til ánægju*, which were presented in autumn 2016.
121. Work shall be completed on setting explicit criteria concerning the conduct of foreign service employees, including those required to relocate who are employed long-term by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs because of the Ministry's needs.
122. Foreign service shall adopt a human resources policy to supplement the Government Offices human resources policy.
123. A plan for gradually increasing numbers of interns in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and at diplomatic mission offices shall be prepared.
124. Employees' use of diplomatic and other titles in their work for the Ministry for Foreign Affairs shall be reviewed.

Recommendations on improved utilisation of technology

125. Implementation and training in new technology solutions shall be improved, as shall user assistance.

126. Work shall be done towards the implementation of the international standard on information security (ISO 27001) so as to fulfil modern requirements concerning data handling.

127. Computer connections between the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and diplomatic missions offices shall be strengthened with ensured transmission capacity to Iceland, including with respect to processing of passport applications, teleconferencing equipment, and telecom security.

128. Secure electronic communications shall be established between the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and those diplomatic mission offices that regularly receive classified information.

129. The aim shall be to send IT department employees to all diplomatic mission offices once a year to upgrade equipment and conduct training sessions.

130. One so-called power user who can assist close colleagues shall be trained in each operational unit of the foreign service.

131. Efforts shall be made to increase smart device use, the number of laptop computers in diplomatic mission offices shall be increased, and teleconferencing equipment shall be set up in all of them.

Recommendations for improved work facilities in the foreign service

132. A systematic review shall be conducted of the size, operating expenses, and utilisation of housing owned or leased by the Government abroad, with the aim of promoting continued streamlining and mergers to the extent possible.

133. While a decision is being made on the construction of new joint housing for the Government Offices, it is recommended that an appraisal be carried out of the buildings at Rauðarárstígur 25 and 27, with the aim that utilisation of the buildings will meet the Ministry for Foreign Affairs' needs in coming years. Furthermore, consideration shall be given to more minor changes so as to make the work environment more pleasant, and to ensure that reception areas and space used for meetings with foreigners and guests are in good condition and reflect Icelandic design and art more effectively.

134. Cooperation shall be sought with the City of Reykjavík concerning improved approach to and/or parking spaces outside Rauðarárstígur 25, including for foreign guests.

Recommendations for improved information sharing and image building

135. An information policy shall be developed for the foreign service.
136. Dissemination of printed public relations material and other printed matter to diplomatic mission offices shall be discontinued entirely, and such materials shall be made available on the web.
137. The Ministry shall create a strategy for improved utilisation of technology and electronic services so as to enhance efficiency and economy in operations.
138. A plan shall be developed for using Iceland's chairmanship of international and multilateral organisations and institutions for general promotion of Iceland and the promotion of Iceland's foreign policy and interests.
139. Regional consultation among directors of Icelandic diplomatic mission offices shall be systematised more fully through teleconferences with the participation of the Permanent Secretary and/or office manager and through annual on-side meetings of the relevant directors. In addition to general exchange of information, the purpose shall be to seek increased synergies with respect to trade services and cultural promotion.
140. Meetings of all directors of Icelandic diplomatic mission offices shall be held in Iceland in late summer every other year.
141. The Minister for Foreign Affairs' schedule shall be accessible to the public to the extent possible.
142. Short promotional videos and graphic materials on the tasks of the foreign service shall be produced, and statistical summaries shall be prepared, including information graphics.
143. All employees shall attend courses in the use of social media, and it shall be ensured that those who are sent abroad to work have received training in this area.
144. The appearance of reports, slide presentations, business cards, logos, and signatures on e-mails shall be harmonised so as to ensure integrity of presentation and appearance. The aim shall be to do this in cooperation with other ministries, so that the appearance of such materials is harmonised across the Government Offices.
145. A campaign shall be undertaken so as to improve the flow of information, both between the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and diplomatic mission offices and between mission offices. This shall be done in part by defining functions and specifying the appropriate recipients of information.
146. Staff meetings shall be held in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs every three months, with webcasts and, as applicable, participation of mission offices, where all staff members receive information on key projects ahead.
147. Screens shall be installed on all floors of the Ministry's offices at Rauðarástígur 25 and 27, showing the schedule for the current day and week.
148. The campaign for the use of the intranet shall be continued.

149. Internal use of e-mail shall be reduced to the extent possible and other programs used, particularly for informal communications.

150. A campaign shall be undertaken to ensure that talking points and slide presentations on the Icelandic authorities' emphases in key functions are accessible on the intranet and updated regularly.

151. Foreign ambassadors' visits to Iceland shall be announced on the intranet with advance notice; for example, for delivery of confidential information, so that such opportunities can be used for consultation.