

# EQUALITY – The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union

Ambition and Realty in Germany, Iceland, Poland and Turkey



**-ICELAND-**



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EQUALITY - THE CHARTER OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION  
AMBITION AND REALTY IN GERMANY, ICELAND, POLAND AND TURKEY

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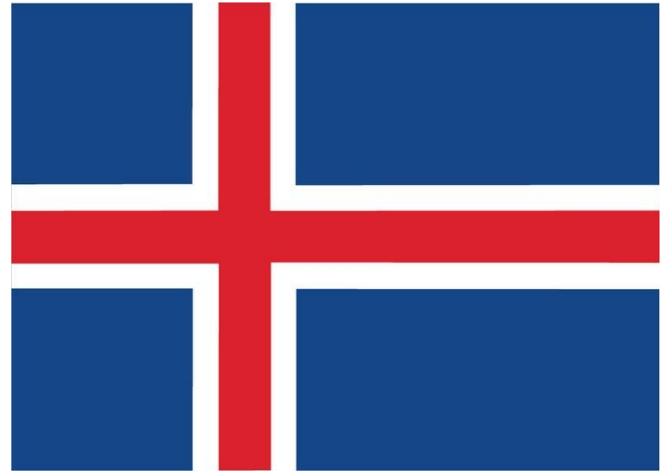
# ICELAND

## About Iceland

### The discovery of Iceland

Iceland is unique among European societies in having been founded as late as the Viking Age and in having copious written and archaeological sources about its origin.

The political and social situation in Norway and the British Isles led to mass emigration, and the fleeing Vikings found Iceland purely by chance. A number of Scandinavian sailors arrived on the island accidentally, having got lost on their travels, and it was one of these, Flóki Vilgerdason, who gave the country its current name: Ísland, or Iceland, Land of Ice.



The first permanent settler is considered to be a Norwegian chieftain named Ingólfur Arnarson who arrived in 871 and soon founded the town of Reykjavik, or "Smoking Bay" after the geothermal steam rising from the earth. Historic objects remaining from this important period of Iceland's past can be found in the National Museum of Iceland, including Viking horns, masks and sculptures.

### Parliament

As Iceland's population grew, so did the need for organisation at a national level. Thus, in 930, the Alþingi (Althing), or Icelandic Parliament, was established, making it one of the world's oldest existing parliaments. The Althing convened each summer in Thingvellir National Park, where representative chieftains, or Goðar, amended laws, settled disputes and appointed juries.

The parliament ran Iceland successfully for a number of years until they were faced with a complicated dilemma: should Iceland be pagan, the religion of most of the Norse-god worshipping settlers... or Christian, under pressure from Europe? Around the year 1000, under threat of a civil war between the two religious' groups, a chieftain was appointed to decide the future of the country. He decided that Iceland should convert to Christianity as a whole, but that pagans would be allowed to worship privatel

## Conflicts and Independence

The 11th and 12th centuries saw the diminishing control of the centralized parliament and different clans fighting for power instead, leading to a period known as the Sturlung Era in the first half of the 13th century, named after the most powerful Icelandic family at the time. During those years, confrontations between private militias and looting of farms and villages were constant: Iceland was in complete chaos.



Faced with the island in crisis, King Haakon of Norway saw an opportunity to take over the country, and in 1281 Iceland was absorbed into his kingdom. This political crisis was compounded by the eruption of the Hekla Volcano in 1104, which destroyed cattle and crops, and thus the country's economy. What's more, at the end of the 13th century the Black Death spread throughout Iceland and killed half the population.

In 1397, Iceland became part of the Kingdom of Denmark after Denmark and Norway joined under the Union of Kalmar. Danish domination over Iceland would last until the early 20th century, and the ensuing period of history was dark, marked by witch hunts in the Westfjords, pirate attacks in places like Vestmannaeyjar and more volcanic eruptions.

It wasn't until the 19th century that a strong nationalist sentiment emerged among the Icelandic population, prompted by similar movements across Europe and led by Jón Sigurðsson. In 1843 a new Althing was assembled and in 1874, a thousand years after the first settlement on the island, Denmark granted Iceland a constitution and home rule. However, Denmark kept control of foreign affairs, defense, and other government interests. In 1918, Iceland regained sovereignty as a separate kingdom but still under the Danish King. It wasn't until on 17 June 1944 that Iceland became fully independent no longer under the Danish crown.

## Iceland population and size

Iceland is 103,000 square km. It's about one-quarter larger than Ireland or more than twice the size of Denmark. The population is 372,520. Over the last 10 years there have always been more men than women in Iceland. But the difference is very subtle, approximately 48.74 % are female and 51.16% male. Two out of three Icelanders live in

the greater Reykjavik area. One third lives in coastal areas around the island. The central highlands are uninhabited. The biggest city outside of the Reykjavik metropolitan area is Akureyri which is located in the north and has approximately 17,000 inhabitants.

## Places to visit in Iceland

The **Blue Lagoon** is one of the biggest tourist attractions in Iceland. Home to one of 25 wonders of the world, Blue Lagoon Iceland is a place where the powers of geothermal seawater create transformational spa journey.

**Reynisfjara** is a world-famous black-sand beach found on the South Coast of Iceland, just beside Vik í Myrdal, which is the southernmost village on the mainland of Iceland. Although beautiful Reynisfjara can be very dangerous. Sneaker waves (also known as sleeper, king, or rouge waves) are huge coastal waves that can suddenly appear in a train of smaller waves. The sneaker waves are much larger than those in between and reach way further. The time between the giant waves can vary, sometimes, one comes right after the other, or there can be up to tens of smaller waves in between. The waves can rise very fast just before hitting the shore. This happens because the ocean floor deepens rapidly away from the coast. In addition, the ocean currents are very powerful and add to the danger.

**The golden circle** which consists of three equally stunning locations in Southwest Iceland: Gullfoss, Geysir and Þingvellir. **Þingvellir** National Park is a unique site in Iceland as its both historically significant as well as being a geological wonder. **Gullfoss** is one of Iceland's most iconic and beloved waterfalls, found in the Hvítá river canyon in Southwest Iceland. **Geysir** is a famous hot spring in the geothermal area of Haukadalur Valley, found in south-west Iceland.



## The Weather in Iceland

Iceland does have four seasons, although sometimes it doesn't feel that way. The weather changes all the time! This means Iceland's weather year-round is prone to many changes and surprises. You'll probably hear the joke "if you don't like the weather, wait five minutes!" when you're in Iceland. Many people think that Iceland is constantly frozen, but that is not the case. Iceland enjoys a much milder climate than its name

suggests. This is partly due to the Gulf Stream that flows along the west and south of Iceland, bringing warmth from the Caribbean. This warmth also means that the mild Atlantic air gets mixed with the cold Arctic air coming from the north and causes sudden and frequent weather changes.



## Living in Iceland

The minimum support criteria for an individual living in Reykjavík is ISK 224,333 per month (approx. EUR 1,480.00) according to the Welfare Division of Reykjavík City.

However, this amount does not necessarily reflect actual living costs, which can vary greatly depending on your lifestyle and spending habits.

Rough estimates of living costs for a single person

- Housing, including utilities: typically ISK 100,000/month and up
- Food and daily expenses: ISK 56,000/month and up
- Books and other study materials: ISK 40,000/semester and up
- Local public transportation: ISK 6,000/month and up
- Leisure activities: ISK 22,000/month and up

The average rent for a one-bedroom flat in Reykjavik is about 250.000 ISK (approx. EUR 1.500). But it'll cost more in the city center.

So that's a pretty similar rate for most European capital cities, such as London or Paris. But it's considerably more expensive than somewhere like Budapest, where you could rent an apartment for a few hundred dollars a month.

Iceland has to import a lot of food, so groceries and restaurants are usually more expensive than in other countries

### *Assignment*

1. What year and date did Iceland become fully independent?
2. What three stunning locations count for the golden circle in Iceland?
3. What joke might you hear regarding the weather in Iceland?
4. What is the minimum support criteria for an individual living in Reykjavík according to the Welfare Division of Reykjavík City?



## Reykjavík and places to visit in the capital

### Reykjavík

Reykjavík is the capital city of Iceland, the world's northernmost capital. Nearly two-thirds of the country's population lives in the capital area. Reykjavík has a vibrant cultural and design scene, with plenty of exciting adventure tours, vivid nightlife, modern museums, world-class restaurants, galleries, shops, bars and clubs. Reykjavík is famous for having a thriving nightlife scene and for hosting some of the best music festivals in Northern Europe such as Iceland Airwaves.

### Höfði House

Höfði House has a remarkable history connected to Icelandic relations with other nations. In October 1986 Höfði House was the setting of the famous summit meeting between Reagan and Gorbachev (former president of the soviet union), which was regarded as marking the beginning of the end of the Cold War. When the Baltic nations reclaimed their independence, Iceland was the first nation to recognise this, and a declaration to that effect was signed in Höfði House in August 1991. Most foreign heads of state who visit Iceland, will visit höfði house.



### Alþingi and alþingishúsið

Alþingi, which translates as "The Assembly of All", was the highest political institution of the the Viking Age commonwealth, both a legislature and a court. Founded in 930 at Þingvellir. Today's Alþingi is, of course, very different from the original institution. But it is still the most important political institution in Iceland. When Icelanders feel they need to have their voice heard, and feel that writing or calling their representative, signing petitions or voting in elections is not enough, they will gather at Austurvöllur square to remind the MPs that they represent the people, that Parliament is in fact still the Assembly of All.



Alþingishúsið houses Alþingi, The Icelandic parliament. It stands by Austurvöllur. The building was designed by the Danish architect Ferdinand Meldahl and built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Two extensions have been built to the house, Kringlan 1908 and Skálinn 2002.

## Harpan

Harpan is a concert hall and conference centre in Reykjavík, Iceland. The opening concert was held on May 4, 2011. The building features a distinctive colored glass facade inspired by the basalt landscape of Iceland.

Construction started in 2007 but was halted with the start of the financial crisis. The completion of the structure was uncertain until the government decided in 2008 to fully fund the rest of the construction costs for the half-built concert hall. For several years it was the only construction project in existence in Iceland.

The building was given its name on the Day of Icelandic Music on 11 December 2009, prior to which it was called The Reykjavík Concert Hall and Conference Centre. The building is the first purpose-built concert hall in Reykjavík and it was developed in consultation with artistic advisor Vladimir Ashkenazy and international consultant Jasper Parrott of HarrisonParrott. It houses the Iceland Symphony Orchestra and the offices of The Icelandic Opera.



## Typpasafnið (penis museum)

There is a penis museum, typpasafnið, located in Reykjavík, it houses the world's largest display of penises and penile parts. As of early 2020 the museum moved to a new location in Hafnartorg, three times the size of the previous one, and the collection holds well over 300 penises from more than 100 species of mammal. Also the museum holds 22 penises from creatures and peoples of Icelandic folklore.



## Nauthólsvík

Nauthólsvík is the only white beach here in Reykjavík. It is very small but there is no need for a bigger one because we only get like week or 2 of good weather here in Reykjavík. So, we try to enjoy them as much as possible, for example Nauthólsvík.



## Perlan

In 1939, a single hot water tank was constructed on Öskjuhlíð hill in Reykjavík, where Perlan stands today. It is 61 meters above sea level, which gives enough pressure to push water up to the 10th floor of a building, 38 meters above sea level. That sufficed to supply water anywhere in Reykjavík – even to the hill where Hallgrímskirkja church stands today. In the next two decades, five more tanks rose beside the first one. They were torn down and rebuilt in the late eighties.

In 1991, those six hot water tanks became the base of Perlan, a building open to the public. This project was largely at the behest of Davíð Oddsson, during his time as mayor of Reykjavík. Shaped and named after a pearl, it now characterizes Iceland's capital. Each tank can keep up to five million liters of hot water, with the volume of 5000 m<sup>3</sup>.

Some examples of what they are showing now is an ice-cave, northern lights and a volcano show.

## Assignment

1. What famous summit took place in Höfði 1986 and why was this meeting so important?
2. If you were to translate the word Alþingi into English how would it translate?
3. What is the only white beach in Iceland called?
4. What makes up the base of Perlan?

## Tækniskólinn

### Number of students

The Technical college of Iceland is the largest upper secondary school in Iceland with over 250 employees and almost 2,500 students in total in day school and in distributed studies.

Technical College Reykjavik was founded in 2008 but it's history goes back to the 19th century.



The school traces its origins to four pillars of vocational education in Iceland:

- The Navigational College, established 1891
- Reykjavík Technical College, established 1904
- Marine Engineering College, established 1915
- Technical College of Hafnafjörður, established 1928.

These institutions have merged into one, forming the largest vocational school in Iceland.



## Gender Distribution

In Reykjavík the gender imbalance is quite small for there is art and hairdressing, the gender distribution is about 60 percent of the students being male and about 40 percent female. In Hafnarfjörður the difference is a lot more of a landslide with it being about 95 percent more males and only 5 percent females. This is due to Hafnarfjörður teaching mostly only things like carpentry and becoming an electrician which are mostly male dominated jobs.

## What can you study?

Technical College of Reykjavík consists of 8 schools and the Technical Academy, offering around 50 study programs and 800 courses each semester.

Each school has its own headmaster as well as educational independence:

The majority of our study programs focus on education for industries. Our students also have the opportunity to graduate with a matriculation examination, which many choose to complete while completing vocational training.



In the school's premises in Hafnarfjörður, there are these courses: carpentry, electrical engineering, electronics engineering, plumbing, mechanical engineering, steel construction, turning, career and first year computer science.

The school's premises at Skólavörðuholt in Reykjavík are the study programs: carpentry, electrical engineering, electronics engineering, gold and silversmithing, painting, wallpaper and tablecloths, technical drawing, hairdressing, Icelandic dressmaking and embroidery, tailoring, dressmaking, and innovation path.

In the school's premises at Háteigsvegur in Reykjavík, the study programs are mechanical engineering, ship management, photography, graphic design, printing, bookbinding, and computer science.

You can also study for a master's degree. It is a course for students who have completed a journeyman's examination in a certified trade. You work on real projects and a strong connection needs to be created between the theoretical part of the study and the practical part. Each student completes a certain number of assignments, both individual assignments and collaborative assignments. The student connects his own

experience to a project and works from his own company / project, real or artificial. After 2 years then you are able to get the master's degree and you can create your own company and employ people under you.

### **Work expectancy after graduation**

You can expect to have a relatively easy time getting a job that is associated with what you studied with a certification in the industry from the school to set you up with a Master of what you studied.

You can also just get a master's degree yourself, this is a powerful course in management and operations that aims to make master craftsmen qualified to take care of teaching newcomers and able to run their own company. Study for a master craftsman is a course for students who have completed a journeyman's examination in a certified trade. The many specialties we offer training in provide students with certification in the industry of their choice and numerous options after graduation, both for employment and study at the university level.



### **Fun Facts**

The Technical college of Reykjavik is the largest school in the country with over 250 teachers and 2500 students and a total of 3 schools, one in Hafnarfjörður and two in Reykjavík.

The school was created on the 1st of July 2008 with the merge of Reykjavík Vocational School and Fjöltækniskólinn.

The technical school is divided into twelve sub-schools, each with its own principal. Each sub-school often has many study programs. The technical schools of the Technical College are as follows:

The School of Civil Engineering, Continuing education school, The handicraft school, School of Electronics, The Naval Academy, Technical School, The School of Information Technology, School of Mechanical Engineering, The Multimedia School, The Master's School, and the web school.



For the social life there is the Student Union of the Technical College, NST, that organizes various events, large and small, that appeal to all students. Events organized by NST include Morfís, Gettu betur, dances, singing competition and trips

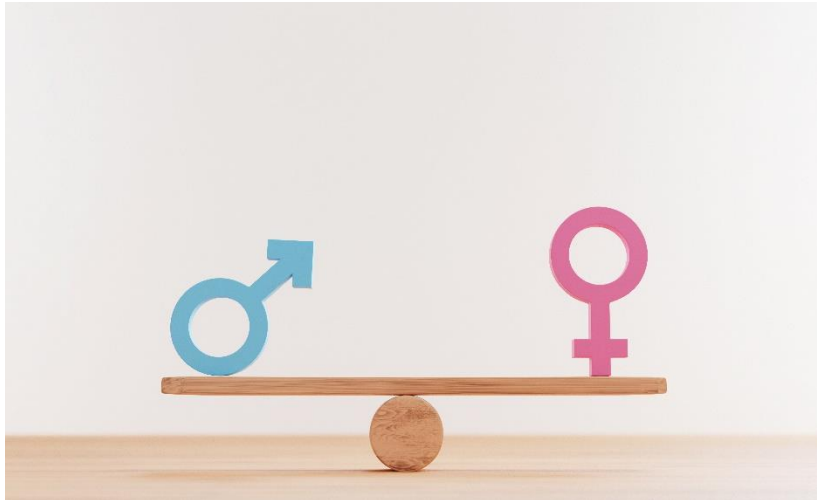
### *Assignment*

1. How many people work at Tækniskólinn?
2. Where is Tækniskólinn located?
3. What is the gender imbalance in Hafnarfjörður?
4. How many students are there in Tækniskólinn?
5. When was Tækniskólinn created?

## Gender equality

### Gender equality in Iceland

Iceland ranks high on life satisfaction, gender equality, a clean environment, and incredible nature. It has a Scandinavian-style modern welfare system, free education, and a low crime rate making it an excellent place to live.



Human rights are the natural entitlement of all persons, of whatever nation, regardless of their residence, gender, nationality, race, religion, language, or other status. All of us are equally entitled to enjoy basic human rights free from discrimination. They include a variety of interconnected and often inseparable rights.

Iceland is arguably one of the world's most gender-equal countries. It is listed as number one in the 2016 best places to work by The Economist's women index. It has been named the most feminist country in the world and has been listed number one on the World Economic Forum gender pay gap index since 2009.

Iceland has topped the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index in previous years due to women's political participation, high level of education, and equal access to health care among other factors. Women's equality is protected by law.

In 1996, registered partnerships were legalized for same-sex couples, making Iceland the fourth country worldwide to provide legal recognition to same-sex couples.

Iceland's equality index is 90 percent and the only thing that is different is that homosexual cannot donate blood if they have had sex of the same gender previous 3 months

Women's Equality is protected by Law.

### Adoptions in Iceland

How do you adopt a child in Iceland, you might ask? Well it is not that simple there is a 5 step program which has been created by Íslensk ættleiðing or Icelandic adoption and this program saw the light of day in 1978 and is the only legal adoption center in the country and has helped over 900 orphans find a forever lasting home here, this program



makes sure that a child which is being adopted has a good and stable home, goes to school has enough food to eat and clothes to wear.

To adopt a child you must: have a stable home, enough money to feed and clothe the child, an education, a steady job, no history of violence or prison, no mental or health problems, no history of cancer or other diseases and the list goes on and on but if you don't have any of those you might have to go on a waiting list which could be for years or if you are lucky only a few months but compared to other countries it is rather easy to adopt.



Children who are adopted don't face many problems in school because the community takes them in most of the time and usually are just nice, but the locals here don't see many kids who are adopted and may ask them about it and think it is strange but other than that most of the younger generations don't make fun of them or bully them because they are adopted.

Racism is at the minimum here and children of all races are treated the same by law enforcement, healthcare workers, and the locals as well, everyone is more or less treated the same.

## **Weddings and religion**

Most people in Iceland get married at least once in their life and it is not uncommon that people to marry 2 times or more some people don't even want to get married in Iceland two people don't just get together and get married after knowing each other for a few weeks but rather stay together for years before even getting engaged or married or even having children before they get married and that is the case for most people here and for some people are together and never get married, everyone has the right to not get married and there is little pressure from friends and family to get married soon even the Christian folks are in no hurry before getting married and even fornicate their love or in plain English have sex before marriage, people of the same gender can marry and have been able to for some time now and are not judged by the community that often and is very rare that someone has a problem with it.

Most people are Christian in Iceland but a very big part of the people here have no religion.

Many people go to church on Sundays mostly the elders but some young people and people of all races and colors and no one is judged or harassed there and people have

lunch at the church and trade stories and just talk in general and that makes up a good community of people and a trustworthy environment.



## Laws in the Iceland

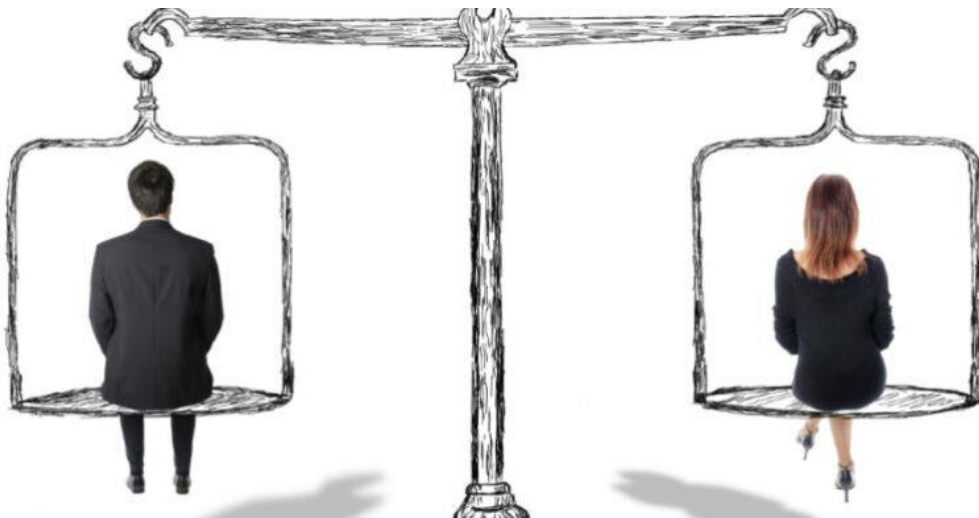
In Iceland like every other country, there are laws here very basic like don't steal and don't drive too fast otherwise you will get a fine or even prison time if you are unlucky but what stands most out in the laws in Iceland is the prison time in Iceland is only up to 17 years no matter the crime if you commit a crime that is very bad and the judge wants to give you more than 17 years you will be sent to another country in prison there but that happens almost never. The police in Iceland don't carry guns only a police bat, taser gun, and pepper spray, the police have guns in the trunk of their car and glove compartment but they need clearance from the station to use them that is why if there is a gun involved crime the swat is called out and they are the only law enforcement that can carry deadly weapons and they rarely have to use them there are about every 5 years the police has to use deadly force, it is safe to say that Iceland is quite safe. By law, you can only own a gun if you have a gun license and there are no automatic weapons allowed for personal use but if you own a gun you have to keep them in a blast-proof gun safe and the ammunition has to be in a secret compartment with a different key and it is a heavy crime to own an illegal weapon or unregistered weapon, and also all drugs are illegal and the legal drinking age is 20 years and pretty strict. pretty basic stuff. In Iceland like every other country, there are laws here very basic like don't steal and don't drive too fast otherwise you will get a fine or even prison time if you are unlucky but what stands most out in the laws in Iceland is



the prison time in Iceland is only up to 17 years no matter the crime if you commit a crime that is very bad and the judge wants to give you more than 17 years you will be sent to another country in prison there but that happens almost never. The police in Iceland don't carry guns only a police bat, taser gun, and pepper spray, the police have guns in the trunk of their car and glove

## Workplace

Everyone has the same right as the person working with them, people are protected by law and agreements with their company, you get paid monthly like most countries and you need to have education for most jobs but some like working at fast food, grocery stores and jobs like that you don't need education. Women can get jobs just as easily as men can and they have just as many rights as men when it comes to the workplace and can just as easily get promoted as men do and have the same salary if they have the same position in a bad workplace is not tolerated here and will be shut down rather quickly because we are a small country and everyone knows everything and such a thing is not tolerated for long. If a company fires a man or a woman just because she is a woman, person of color, homosexual, or any of that they can be sued for unjustly determination and can face many consequences or even fines for such a matter.



## Assignment

1. In what year were registered partnerships were legalized for same-sex couples?
2. Name at least three obligations you have to fulfill if you want to adopt a child in Iceland
3. What religion is the most common religion in Iceland?
4. What happens if you get sentenced to prison for more than 17 years in Iceland

## Elderly people

### Elderly people in Iceland

In 1982, the first comprehensive legislation on the issues of the elderly was introduced. Its purpose was to better organize services for the elderly. By connecting them to the health services of health centers and social services provided by the municipalities in 1989, the law was revised and a new law on the affairs of the elderly no. 82/1989, but they entered into force on January 1, 1990.

In recent years, there has been a proportional increase in the number of elderly people in Iceland. One out of every ten persons is now 60 years or older. By 2050, it is estimated that one out of five will be 60 years or older and by 2150 one out of three persons



People who have reached the age of 67 are considered elderly. Civil servants are required to retire when they reach the age of 70, and senior citizens' associations are open to all persons aged 60 and over.

The law includes the goals of enabling the elderly to live a normal home life for as long as possible and that the elderly are guaranteed services when they are needed and in accordance with the needs of each individual. Along with that, it is emphasized that the elderly enjoy equality and that their independence is respected.

Senior citizens in Iceland are given a pension by the state and, frequently, payments from a pension fund. The amount depends on how long they have lived in the country and their previous income.

Most elderly people live in their homes as long as they can (or their entire lives). Many will receive support from their municipality (i.e., with cleaning, preparing meals, drug dosages, or help bathing) or they take advantage of leisure activities for senior citizens.

People will pay for a portion of the costs themselves.

In 2022, population aged 65 years and above for Iceland was 15,3%. Population aged 65 years and above of Iceland increased from 9 % in 1973 to 15.3 % in 2022 growing at an average annual rate of 1.10%.

## Elderly people – nursing homes

Before you put your parents into a nursing home they need to get a health check and overall competence evaluation

A nursing home is a final resort because they won't accept you if there is any possibility that you can live with your family.

The cost of living in a nursing home varies from where you are but the average is around 1313 Icelandic kronas a day or:

- Euros : 9.48
- Zloty : 45.04
- Dollars : 9.11
- Lira : 167.82



If you are lucky enough to be selected into a nursing home you get:

- Your own apartment
- Full access to staff 24/7
- Nutritious Food
- Supervised walks
- Good company with other people your age

## Benefits for the elderly

When you turn 67 you can apply to get a cultural-card which allows you to get free access to almost all the museums in Iceland.

Things the elderly can do for free/discounted in Iceland:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● swimming/sauna</li><li>● museums/ theater</li><li>● the gym</li><li>● the Zoo</li><li>● ice skating</li><li>● skiing</li></ul> | <p><u>Other discounts:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● buying cars</li><li>● car wash</li><li>● car check up</li><li>● bakeries</li><li>● pharmacy</li></ul> |
|--|--|

## Elderly people in Iceland and social activities

Elderly citizens can attend the social activities and recreational activities in the service centers or in the community centers for the elderly that operate in most local communities in Iceland.

Associations for elderly citizens around Iceland work towards the general interests of the elderly, and they organize social activities, recreational activities, learning courses and cultural events. The associations are open to all who are 60 years and older and to their spouses too, even if they are younger.

The role of service centers is to reduce the risk of social isolation by ensuring that elderly people enjoy other people's company and recreational activities.

The service centers are open to all, and elderly citizens are welcome to whatever is most suitable for them.

There is a fee for the services provided, but the activities of the community centers are subsidized and the fee is reasonable.

The activities in the community centers are very diverse and efforts are made to find something suitable for all. For instance, the following are offered:

- creative activities and embroidery
- theatre visits and travels
- card games and choir work
- physical training
- courses and entertainment
- assistance with banking and shopping trips



### *Assignment*

1. When are people in Iceland considered to be elderly?
2. How many of the population in 2022 were 65 years and above in Iceland?
3. Where do most of the elderly people live in Iceland?
4. Before elderly people can apply for a nursing home what do they need to do?
5. What is the main role of service centers for the elderly?

## **Disabled people in Iceland**

By the Icelandic law, the disabled are entitled to general services and assistance. They shall have equal rights and enjoy living standards comparable to other members of society.

Disabled people have the right to education with appropriate support at all stages of education. They also have the right to guidance and assistance in finding suitable employment.

In general, all people in Iceland have the same rights whether they are old, disabled, young, men or women, people of color or foreign etc.

Persons between the ages of 18 and 67 years can apply to the Social Insurance Administration (Tryggingastofnun) for disability assessment where capability is assessed after illness, accident, or disability. It is a condition that rehabilitation has been exhausted or that a doctor confirms that rehabilitation does not apply.

Individuals' entitlement is based on their residence in Iceland from 16-67 years of age. The person must have lived in Iceland for at least the three years preceding application. The same applies to residence in another Nordic country under the Nordic countries' agreement on social insurance. The person must have been resident in Iceland for at least one year after age 16. Full payment is based on 40 years of residence in Iceland.

### **General services and assistance**

The Center for aid equipment at the Social Insurance Administration is responsible for issuing aid equipment to the disabled, and provides consultancy services. The approval of the Social Insurance Administration is required for contributions towards the cost of purchasing aid equipment.

Parents of disabled children and those providing children with services can borrow specialized development toys from toy collections maintained by the regional offices. The offices also provide various other services and parenting advice.

Disabled children and their families can seek the services of a support family. A child can stay with a support family for two to three days a month.

The regional offices for the disabled provide further information on how to become a support family or obtain the services of a support family.

A disabled person in Iceland has the right to get special care and equipment to help with their everyday life such as: transportation, social events planning, their own mental health and sports and exercise



### **Financial support and benefits**

Every disabled person has the right to get financial support and discounts to public services

- parental allowances for chronically ill or severely disabled children
- disability pension from another ACE state
- Tax discounts and deductions for disabled people
- grants or benefits due to disability or incapacity
- care allowance for dependents of disabled or chronically ill children

### **People with disabilities in the labor market**

Disabled people and people with reduced working capacity can apply to the Social Insurance Administration for disability assessment where their capability is assessed after illness, accident or disability. People then get disability benefits based on that assessment.

The Organization of the Disabled in Iceland, together with interest groups, non-governmental associations and local authorities, provide advice and information relating to the education and employment available to the disabled.

Disabled people have the same rights as everyone else in the labor market e.g. the right to paid maternity leave, sick days and holidays.

Support for those who need assistance with finding suitable employment in the private sector is provided through Vinnumálastofnun (The Directorate of Labor)



## Education for people with disabilities

Children with disabilities are entitled to preschool and primary school education in the municipality in which they have legal residence. A diagnosis analysis should occur upon or before entrance into school to ensure children receive the appropriate support services. There is a specialized school for primary school aged children with severe disabilities, in the Reykjavik area.



Children with disabilities in secondary schools shall, according to Icelandic law, have access to appropriate specialized assistance. Many secondary schools have specific departments, vocational study programs, and additional courses specifically designed to suit the needs of children with disabilities.

Fjölmennt adult education center, provides various courses for people with disabilities in addition to providing advice on other studies in collaboration with Mímir, education center continuing education school. Fjölmennt provides a broad variation of courses in adult education for people with different kind of learning disabilities, but mostly for people with moderate to severe and profound disabilities in area of cognitive learning disabilities, multiply disabilities and autism.

Courses can be focused on perception, communication, social participation, experience, leisure, knowledge or skills in different areas. Important aims in all the education is self-esteem, empowerment and quality of life. They have courses on health and lifestyle, technology and basic communication, computers as leisure activities, cooking and household, music, arts and crafts, social relations, personal growth and more.

The courses are usually once a week, for one semester at a time, but people can apply for most courses again as long as they wish. There is no upper limit in age, nor lower limit in function for attendants. Each semester around 400 persons attend to Fjölmennt's courses.



The University of Iceland offers a vocational diploma program in development therapy. Enrolment is every other year.

The Organization of the Disabled in Iceland, together with interest groups, non-governmental associations, and local authorities, provide advice and information relating to the education and employment available to the disabled.

Support for those who need assistance with finding suitable employment in the private sector is provided through the Directorate of Labor.



### *Assignment*

1. What rights do disabled people have in general in Iceland?
2. What rights do disabled people have in the labor market?
3. What rights to get special care and equipment to help with their everyday life do disabled people have?
4. What financial support and benefits do disabled people have?

## National / ethnic / religious minorities In Iceland

### Statistics

According to the newest statistics from Iceland in 2022 the foreign-born population made up 16.3% of the total population or around 61 thousand people. The largest groups of immigrants in Iceland come from Europe, with the largest groups being from Poland (34,2%) or around 21 thousand people, Lithuania (5.6%), and Romania (4,1%).



In addition, Iceland has seen a growing number of immigrants from non-European countries, such as the Philippines, India, and Nigeria. The number of immigrants from non-European countries has increased from 1.7% in 2000 to 5.3% in 2018, indicating a shift in the demographics of the foreign-born population.

### Integration

Immigration has also brought its own set of challenges to Iceland. For example, language barriers, cultural differences, and integration difficulties can sometimes result in tension and prejudice. In addition, the sudden influx of immigrants has put pressure on the country's social services and infrastructure.



In response to these challenges, the Icelandic government has developed a more open immigration policy and has made efforts to integrate immigrants into the society. The government has established programs to help immigrants learn the language, adjust to the culture, and find employment. It has also passed laws to protect their rights and ensure that they have equal access to social services and education.

And to accommodate polish immigrants in Iceland even more both movies and news sites are translated to polish.

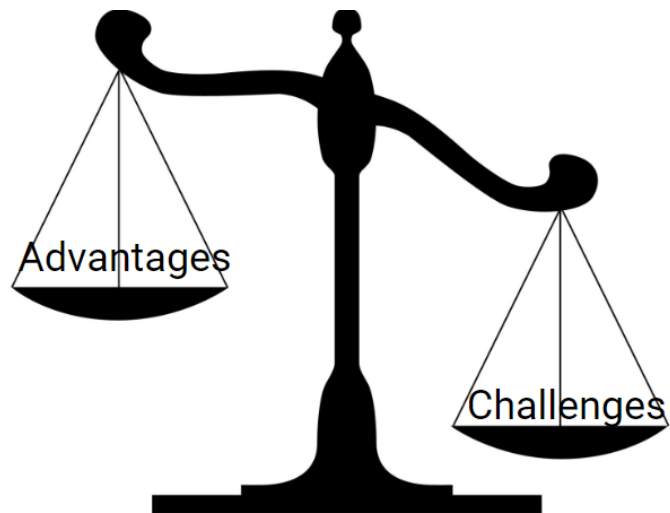
## Advantages and Challenges

Immigration brings both advantages and challenges to a receiving country, and Iceland is no exception. On the one hand, immigration can provide a valuable contribution to the economy and society by bringing new skills, perspectives, and cultural diversity. On the other hand, it can also pose difficulties for immigrants in terms of integration and cultural assimilation, as well as putting a strain on public services and infrastructure.

One advantage of immigration in Iceland is the influx of new skills and expertise that can contribute to the growth and development of the country. Immigrants can bring new ideas and energy that can help to spur innovation and creativity in various industries, such as tourism, healthcare, and education. They also contribute to the consumer base, which can help to stimulate economic growth.

Another advantage is that immigration can help to address the challenges posed by an aging population and declining workforce, by providing a much-needed boost to the economy.

However, immigration can also pose a number of challenges, particularly in terms of integration and cultural assimilation. Immigrants may struggle to adapt to the culture, language, and way of life in Iceland, and may face discrimination and prejudice. They may also encounter difficulties in accessing public services and finding employment.



So, while immigration in Iceland provides valuable contributions to the country, it also poses challenges that must be addressed. It is important for the government, society, and the private sector to work together to create a supportive and inclusive environment for immigrants, and to provide the resources and support they need to succeed.

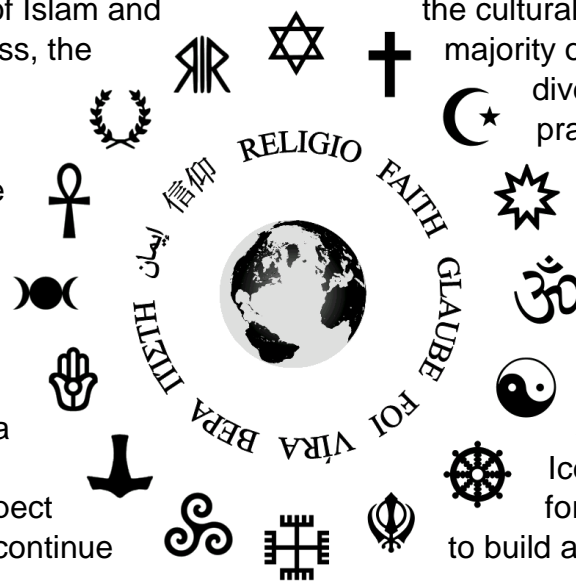
## Religious minorities

Iceland is known for its progressive and secular society, with a long tradition of religious tolerance. The majority of the population belongs to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland, with about three-quarters of the population being members. However, there are also a growing number of religious minorities in the country, including Buddhists, and Muslims.

According to recent statistics, approximately 4% of the population in Iceland identifies as members of non-Lutheran Christian denominations, such as Catholicism and the Pentecostal Church. Buddhism and other Eastern religions make up around 2% of the population, while Islam is the smallest religious minority, with around 1% of the population identifying as Muslim.

Despite its small size, the Muslim community in Iceland has faced a number of challenges in recent years, including prejudice and discrimination. This is partly due to a lack of understanding of Islam and the cultural differences that it represents. Nevertheless, the majority of Icelanders are supportive of religious diversity and tolerant of different beliefs and practices.

In conclusion, while the population belongs to Lutheran Church, number of religious country. Despite some diversity is generally tolerated, and there is a religious freedom in understanding and respect practices, Iceland can continue diversity and inclusivity.



majority of Iceland's the Evangelical there is a growing minorities in the challenges, religious accepted and strong commitment to Iceland. By promoting for different beliefs and to build a society that values

### Assignment

1. What percentage of Iceland's population is foreign-born?
2. What are some challenges that immigration has brought to Iceland?
3. What are some advantages of immigration in Iceland?
4. What religious minorities are present in Iceland?
5. How does Iceland generally view religious diversity?

## Refugees

### Refugees in Iceland

There are many reasons for refugees to flee their country. Some flee due to lack of food, others due to poor economic conditions and others due to armed conflicts. Some people are not welcome in their home country because of persecution by the authorities or other parties. Many people have to flee out of their houses and maybe leave everything behind so for groups of people that have no money and need to get out of their country they



will end up in a refugee camp. Then here in Iceland the government decides how many refugees we can take in and that amount is transported in groups to Iceland which brings them to Keflavik airport. But that's not always the case. Not all refugees come from a refugee camp. They can also just be fleeing their country because they don't support what's going on there. In those cases, they go to the airport and fly out to another country and in some cases maybe here to Iceland. Then. They would just rent a car and a hotel and it would technically just be a vacation but if they're not planning on going back they would have to go to the government and apply for citizenship here in Iceland. But here we are going to focus a little bit more on the other group that needs all the support they can get because they can't take care of themselves in the situation they're in and our goal here in Iceland is to support them and help them get in a stable situation until they can get a job and start taking care of themselves.

The year 2022 was a record year in the number of applications for protection, applications from Ukraine flooded in after the Russian invasion late February. Apart from Ukraine and Venezuela, the largest groups of applicants in 2022 came from Palestine, 232, Somalia, 100, Syria, 84 and Iraq, 73.

### Refugees and Education

Refugees who want to attend school have to go through a specific process that should not take a long time. The child and at least one parent or guardian must apply for the

following: residence permit, social security number, insurance and health certificate before they can start school. Then the school prepares for the arrival of the new student. For example, the new student has to be introduced to the main rules of the school, and show to him where his classrooms are. For the first few days, it's good to attach a few students to him to show him around the school.

Tækniskólinn has special classes for refugees and others that don't speak Icelandic. Admission requirements are to have another mother tongue or having grown up abroad. According to Icelandic law, students are ranked in order of priority by age, so that the youngest have the highest priority. In recent years, students aged 16–20 have been accepted and filled the groups, and no student is older than 25. Four levels are offered and students must indicate which level they wish for in a comment in the application. The first level is for those who know no Icelandic and so on. At the end of the Icelandic course for foreigners, it is expected that the students will be prepared for further studies in Icelandic secondary schools or have improved their Icelandic language skills so much that it will be useful to them in the labor market.



## **Refugee Assistance Programs**

There are many other, then education, assistance services that support the refugees e.g. the Red Cross and Hjálpræðisherinn they have a guide friend for refugees. In the project Guide Friends, refugees and Icelanders meet to get to know each other better. Refugees in Iceland mostly want to get to know Icelanders to expand their social network, to ask questions about life in Iceland or because it's fun to make friends and acquaintances in the new place. You can help these individuals or families by becoming a Guide Friend. Guide friends are volunteers who undertake to meet and get to know individuals or families who have recently received international protection in Iceland. Guide friends become friends of the newcomers, answer questions about life

in Iceland, talk about Icelandic culture and traditions and whatever else is on the participants' minds. They build bridges between people with different backgrounds and help them find their place in Iceland. Guide friends show the way. The goal of the project is mutual social integration. Participants make new friends, strengthen their network, gain new insight into the Icelandic system and learn about each other's culture and traditions.



There's also a leisure fund. The Refugee Leisure Fund is intended to support the children of refugees living in Iceland to pursue leisure activities that cannot be funded elsewhere. The fund can be allocated until children have received a residence permit in Iceland or for up to 4 years from when they receive refugee status or receive protection for humanitarian reasons. You can apply twice a year for each child. Up to ISK 30,000 is allocated for each child per year.

### *Assignment*

1. Why do some people have to flee their home?
2. What do refugees have to do to be allowed to live in Iceland?
3. From where are the five largest group that apply for protection here in iceland?
4. What is The Red Cross and Hjálpræðisherinn, and what do they do?
5. What are the requirements to attend the icelandic course in Tækniskólinn?



# ASSIGNMENTS - ANSWER KEY

## About Iceland

1. Iceland became fully independent no longer under the Danish crown, June 17<sup>th</sup> 1944.
2. The golden circle consists of these three equally stunning locations; Gullfoss, Geysir and Þingvellir.
3. You'll probably hear the joke "if you don't like the weather, wait five minutes!"
4. The minimum support criteria for an individual living in Reykjavík is ISK 224,333 per month (approx. EUR 1,480.00) according to the Welfare Division of Reykjavík City.

## Reykjavík

1. summit meeting between Reagan and Gorbachev (former president of the soviet union), which was regarded as marking the beginning of the end of the Cold War
2. Alþingi translates as "The Assembly of All",
3. The only white beach in Iceland is called Nauthólsvík
4. Six hot water tanks are the base of Perlan

## Tækniskólinn

1. Around 250 employees
2. Its located in three locations, Hafnarfjörður and two in Reykjavík
3. Its 95 percent males and 5 percent females
4. There are around 2500 students
5. It was created 1st of July 2008 with the merge of Reykjavík Vocational School and Fjöltækniskólinn.

## Gender Equality in Iceland

1. Registered partnerships were legalized for same-sex couples in 1996
2. you must: have a stable home, enough money to feed and clothe the child, an education, a steady job, no history of violence or prison, no mental or health problems, no history of cancer or other diseases
3. Christianity
4. You complete your prison sentence in another country

## **Elderly people in Iceland**

1. The age of 67 is considered to be elderly in Iceland.
2. In 2022, population aged 65 and above was 15,3% in Iceland.
3. Most of the elderly people live in their own homes, as long as they can.
4. Before elderly people can apply for a nursing home they need to get a health check and overall competence evaluation.
5. The role of service centers is to reduce the risk of social isolation by ensuring that elderly people enjoy other people's company and recreational activities.

## **Disabled people in Iceland**

1. The disabled have the same rights as everybody else, for example they are entitled to general services and assistance and the right to education.
2. Disabled people have the same rights as everyone else in the labor market e.g. the right to paid maternity leave, sick days and holidays.
3. Transportation, social events planning, their own mental health and sports and exercise.
4. Parental allowances for chronically ill or severely disabled children, disability pension from another ACE state. Tax discounts and deductions for disabled people. care allowance for dependents of disabled or chronically ill children.

## **National / ethnic / religious minorities In Iceland**

1. 16.3% or around 61 thousand people.
2. Language barriers, cultural differences, and integration difficulties, as well as pressure on social services and infrastructure.
3. Immigrants can bring new skills, perspectives, and cultural diversity, and help to address challenges posed by an aging population and declining workforce.
4. Buddhists, Muslims, and non-Lutheran Christian denominations, such as Catholicism and the Pentecostal Church.
5. Iceland is known for its religious tolerance, and despite some challenges, religious diversity is generally accepted and tolerated.

## **Refugees**

1. Some people flee due to lack of food, others due to poor economic conditions and others due to armed conflicts.
2. They would have to go to the government and apply for citizenship.

3. largest group comes from Ukraine, palestine, somalia, syria and iraq.
4. they are an assistance services that support refugees in many ways. They collect clothes and other needs, raise money and held courses for refugees.
5. The requirements are to have another mother tongue or have grown up aboard.