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SNP MEP hails Icelandic EU bid

Press Release by SNP MEP Alyn Smith

SNP MEP **Alyn Smith** has today hailed the formal decision by the Icelandic Parliament, the Althingi, to apply to the EU for membership. Smith, a member of the European Parliament's Switzerland Iceland and Norway Delegation and regular visitor to Iceland has taken part in numerous meetings with the Icelanders discussing the pros and cons of EU membership, including a formal address to a conference organised by the Foreign Affairs Committee last year. Speaking from Strasbourg Smith said:

"I have said in all my meetings that the decision on applying for membership is entirely a matter for the Icelanders, but that they would be welcomed with open arms if they decide to apply. I am personally delighted that they have decided to join, and Icelandic accession will be all but a formality, except for the EU's disastrous fisheries policy. The European Commission has already this year accepted 100% the SNP's case that the CFP has failed comprehensively, and total reform is now very much underway and I am delighted that the prize of Icelandic membership of the EU will give an added urgency to those discussions.

"With Scotland being such a close neighbour I have taken a close interest in Icelandic attitudes to the EU, because we are part of the EU but not a member state, and they are a member state but not part of the EU! It appears they have now decided to change that, and with an independence referendum in Scotland due next year hopefully Scots will decide to normalise our own status in the EU as well.

"As members of the EEA and EFTA Iceland is already pretty well compliant with the EU norms and rules, so we will not need to discuss much other than how many MEPs Iceland will have and what their Commissioner will do. Accession for Iceland, and Scotland too, is essentially a legal formality subject only to the politics being right.

"Iceland will be a voice for reform, another Northern European socially progressive voice for changing the EU, and I look forward to continuing our co-operation as our Icelandic neighbours join our family of nations."

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