



**Convention on the Elimination  
of All Forms of Discrimination  
against Women**

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination  
against Women**

**Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under  
article 18 of the Convention**

**Seventh and eighth periodic reports of States parties due in 2014**

**Iceland\*\***

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\*\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



## Introduction

This is the combined seventh and eighth periodic report by the Government of Iceland on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, submitted under article 18 of the Convention. The report was prepared in accordance with the Compilation Guidelines on the Form and Content of Reports to be submitted by States Parties to the International Human Rights Treaties (HRI/GEN/2/Rev.6). It contains information on the legislative, judicial, administrative and other measures Iceland has adopted since the submission of its previous reports which give effect to the provisions of the Convention. In particular, the report addresses the issues raised in the concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women adopted after consideration of Iceland's sixth periodic report (CEDAW/C/ICE/6) at its forty-first session in July 2008 (CEDAW/C/ICE/CO/6).

## Part I

### General information

For general information on Iceland and its people, political structure and legal framework under which human rights are protected, reference is made to the core document concerning Iceland (HRI/CORE/1/Add.26 of 24 June 1993). In this regard, it should however be pointed out that various changes have taken place since the submission of the above-mentioned document, and work is now in progress on updating the information it contains. Reference is also made in to the general observations in the previous reports by the Government of Iceland.

### Acceptance of international human rights norms

The Icelandic Government signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women on 24 July 1980. The date of ratification was 18 June 1985. The Optional Protocol to the Convention was accepted on 6 March 2001. The Icelandic Government accepted the Inquiry procedure under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the same date. Regarding the scope of restrictions, limitations or derogations from the provisions of the treaties, justifying circumstances and the time-frame envisaged for their withdrawal, reference is made to the common core document.

### Article 1

#### The definition of gender-based discrimination

In its concluding observations on the last periodic report by Iceland (CEDAW/C/ICE/CO/6), the Committee voiced its concerns on the fact that the definition of "discrimination against women", found in Article 1 of the Convention, was not fully reflected in Icelandic legal text.

In February 2008 a new Act on Equal Status and Equal Rights of Women and Men, (hereinafter "the Gender Equality Act", No. 10/2008) was adopted. In Article 2 of the new law, the terms (gender-based) *direct* and *indirect discrimination* were defined in Icelandic law for the first time. As stated in previous reports by the Icelandic Government the terms had previously been defined in Regulation

No. 47/2003, on the functions of the Centre for Gender Equality. The definitions of Article 2 were based on Article 1 of the CEDAW Convention and EU acts adopted by the EEA EFTA states.

In spring 2014, the definitions found in Article 2 were changed when Act No. 62/2014, amending the Gender Equality Act, No. 10/2008, with subsequent amendments, was approved by the Parliament. The catalyst for the changes were remarks made by the EFTA Surveillance Authority (ESA), that the definitions of *direct* and *indirect discrimination*, *sexual harassment* and *gender-based harassment* found in the Gender Equality Act were incompatible with the definitions found in Article 2, Paragraph 1 of Directive No. 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation, and Article 3 of Directive No. 2010/41/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2010 on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity and repealing Council Directive 86/613/EEC.

The wording needed to be rephrased to better encompass the directives. The ESA made a few more comments on the definitions in the Act which was met with the above-mentioned amendments that were made in spring 2014.

The ESA remarks alluded to the fact that the previous definition of the term *direct discrimination* did not explicitly mention that it was possible to make a comparison to a past or hypothetical situation, thus not allowing for a complainant to illustrate the discrimination through comparison with a made-up situation regarding an individual of the opposite sex.

The new definitions of the terms as stated in Article 2 of the revised Gender Equality Act are as follows:

***Direct discrimination:*** When one individual is treated less favourably than another individual of the opposite sex is treated, has been treated or would be treated in comparable circumstances.

***Indirect discrimination:*** When an apparently impartial requirement, standard of reference or measure would be less favourable for an individual of either of the sexes compared with an individual of the opposite sex, unless legitimately justifiable by a legal objective where the means to obtain that objective are appropriate and necessary.

***Gender-based harassment:*** Behaviour connected with the gender of the person affected by it is unwelcome and has the purpose or effect of offending that person's sense of decency and creating conditions that are threatening, hostile, degrading, humiliating or insulting for that person.

***Sexual harassment:*** Any type of sexual behaviour that is unwelcomed by the person affected by it and has the purpose or effect of offending the person's sense of decency, especially when the behaviour leads to threatening, hostile, degrading, humiliating or insulting circumstances. The behaviour can be verbal, symbolic and/or physical.

***Gender-based violence:*** Violence based on gender which results in, or could result in, physical, sexual or psychological injury or suffering on the part of the

victim, as well as a threat to that effect, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of freedom, both in private life and in a public venue.

Reference is made to the previous reports by the Government of Iceland.

## **Article 2**

### **Subparagraphs a) and b)**

#### **Legislation on Gender Equality**

The principle of equality is specifically addressed in a provision in the Constitution of the Republic of Iceland (see Article 65 of the Constitution, No. 33/1944, *cf.* the Constitutional Law Act, No. 97/1995), stating that men and women are to have equal rights in every respect. Iceland has also had a special statute intended to ensure equality between women and men and their equal status in all respects since 1976.

The new Gender Equality Act, No. 10/2008, included actions to implement and monitor the policy represented.

Material changes were made to the Gender Equality Act in spring 2014. Apart from the new definitions discussed in Article 1 of this report, reforms were made to the Act in such a way that the Minister now has the right to introduce a regulation on the further execution of the Gender Equality Act, e.g. in order to establish an Equal Pay Standard. The idea is to create a system that can confirm that women and men working for the same employer are paid equal wages and enjoy equal terms of employment for the same jobs and jobs of equal value. The completed standard was published in December 2012. For a further discussion on the Equal Pay Standard, reference is made to Article 4 of this report.

Further reference is made to the previous reports by the Government of Iceland.

### **Subparagraph c)**

**The Gender Equality Complaints Committee.** The Gender Equality Complaints Committee (*Kærunefnd jafnréttismála*) received 11 complaints in 2009. Two of these concerned violations of the Gender Equality Act related to unlawful dismissal, two involved wage discrimination, four involved job appointments, one involved handicapped access, one involved a position in graduate study and one involved procedural rules. One of the complaints was found to constitute a violation of the Gender Equality Act; the committee came to the conclusion that five did not. Two cases were retracted and two were dismissed.

Five cases were referred to the committee in 2010. Four of them involved job appointment issues and one involved sexual harassment. In one of the cases the committee found no violation, another was dismissed and the third did not undergo formal treatment.

The committee reviewed eight cases in 2011. Four involved job appointments; one involved unlawful dismissal and one involved wage discrimination. Finally there were two complaints, one involving the denial of participation in a trip planned by the housewives' leave committee and another one concerning a special discount

provided solely to women. Violations were found in two of the cases, while three were not found to constitute a violation. Two were dismissed and one was retracted.

Twelve cases were reviewed by the committee in 2012. Five complaints concerned job appointment or hiring, four concerned discrimination regarding the National Registry, two involved wage discrimination and one involved a situation where only women were offered a position. Violations were found to have taken place on three occasions; in four cases no violations were found, two cases were retracted and three complaints were dismissed.

Five cases were submitted to the Complaints Committee in 2013. Three of them concerned engagement in employment; one concerned both dismissal from employment and engagement in two positions and one concerned wages and terms of service. In three cases, the committee found that no violation of the Gender Equality Act had taken place; in the other two, violations were found to have taken place.

The Gender Equality Complaints Committee received two cases by April 2014, which are still under examination at the time of writing.

### **National Courts**

During the period since the last report was filed, the Supreme Court has delivered judgement in three cases dealing with gender equality. Two of them involved job appointments while the third case involved wage discrimination. All three cases ended with the defendant being acquitted.

Supreme Court Case No. 686/2008 involved *I*, an applicant for the position of Principal of the Agricultural University of Iceland. In total, 14 applicants applied for the position. The university council gave an opinion on the list of candidates before all applicants were invited to a job interview at the Ministry of Agriculture. The Minister of Agriculture appointed *Á* but *I* asked for reasons from the ministry. In the granted reasoning, *Á* was said to have a clear image of the future of Icelandic agriculture and the position of the University within that image. *I* filed a complaint to the Parliamentary Ombudsman and also referred the case to the Gender Equality Complaints Committee. Subsequently, *I* filed a court case demanding that the court recognize that the appointment constituted a violation against the Gender Equality Act and that she be granted compensation. *I* stated that, based on education and job experience, she was better suited to do the job than the appointed applicant. She claimed the gender-related issues had determined the appointment and that the reasoning given by the ministry had been inadequate. The district court took the view that when *Á* and *I* were compared, *Á* was the more attractive choice. Additionally, *Á*'s performance in the job interview had been better than the performance of *I*. The court could not find that the appointment had been based on unreasonable standards. The court concurred with the defendant, the Icelandic State, that gender-related issues had not been a deciding factor in the case and rejected *I*'s demands. The Supreme Court upheld the district court judgment.

Supreme Court Case No. 25/2009 involved *A*, one of four applicants for the job of associate professor in computer sciences at the faculty of engineering at the University of Iceland. A panel of judges deemed that two applicants were qualified for the post. The department of engineering discussed the findings of the panel of judges and decided to appoint *K*. In a letter to the Vice-Chancellor of the University, the department stated that *K* was the more suitable applicant of the two. On the

demand of the dean of the faculty, further reasoning was provided but subsequently the Vice-Chancellor confirmed the appointment. *The Centre for Gender Equality* filed a case on behalf of *A* demanding recognition of the fact that the Gender Equality Act had been violated with the appointment of *K*. Compensation was also demanded. The district court found no violation of the Act. It upheld the Vice-Chancellor's decision and acquitted the University. The Supreme Court upheld this decision.

Finally, Supreme Court Case No. 267/2011 concerned sexual harassment charges, wage concerns and compensation for personal injury. *A* filed claims against *B*, a company she claimed owed her unpaid wages, together with a demand for compensation for sexual harassment she claimed to have endured at the hands of her superior within the company. *A* stated that the reaction of the company had not been in accordance with the severity of her claims and that subsequently, she had been unable to do her job within the company. The Supreme Court rejected the claims made by *A*, that she had endured sexual harassment according to the formal definition of the word according to law. Furthermore, the Court found no evidence of *A* being treated wrongly within the company. The Supreme Court acquitted the company of the claims made by *A*.

#### **Subparagraphs d)-g)**

Over the last few decades the Icelandic parliament has regularly passed four-year action plans on measures to implement gender equality. A new parliamentary resolution on a four-year gender equality action plan was passed by the parliament under the Gender Equality Act, No. 10/2008, in 2011. The Action Plan is divided into several chapters, each addressing a different focus. Each chapter enumerates the projects to be tackled, with a time-frame, the names of the entities responsible and an estimate of the cost involved.

Further reference is made to the subsequent discussion under Article 3.

### **Article 3**

#### **Action programme on gender equality**

As stated in earlier reports from the Icelandic Government, the parliament has, over the past few decades, regularly passed four-year action plans on measures to implement gender equality under Article 11 of the Gender Equality Act, No. 10/2008. Within a year of general elections, the Minister of Social Affairs and Housing is to present to the parliament a motion for a parliamentary resolution on a plan after having received proposals made by the ministries, the Centre for Gender Equality and the Gender Equality Council. The Gender Equality Action Plan is to include projects intended to secure gender equality in Icelandic society. The parliamentary resolution on the gender equality action plan for the years 2011-2014 was passed by the parliament in 2011. This was the fifth resolution adopted on the subject since 1986. The Action Plan is divided into several chapters, each addressing a different focus. The current Action Plan is divided into different chapters on:

1. The Administration,
2. The labour market — the Gender Pay Gap,
3. Gender and Power,

4. Gender-based Violence,
5. Education and Gender Equality,
6. Men and Gender Equality,
7. International Activities,
8. Follow-up and Revision.

A further description of the current plan is as follows.

- I. Tasks to be handed out by the administration:
  1. Gender Mainstreaming of Policies and Actions of the Government by a Council of Ministers on Gender Equality.
  2. Establishment of an ISK 30 million project fund for gender equality.
  3. Gender mainstreaming into the policy formulation and decision-making of ministries and government institutions, including:
    - a. The establishment of a Steering Group involving senior managers in ministries.
    - b. Special meetings of ministers, senior officials and experts on gender equality about policies, priorities and methods in gender equality.
    - c. Training for the staff of ministries and institutions on gender mainstreaming.
    - d. Annual recommendations for at least two projects within the competences of each Ministry as pilot projects, to be completed by the end of each year.
    - e. Measures or key figures in all major areas of the activities of ministries and institutions should be analysed so that there are always available data disaggregated by gender supporting policies and decisions. Areas where regular collection of information is deficient should be identified and corrective action taken.
  4. Appointment of gender equality representatives of the ministries.
  5. Gender budgeting.
  6. The establishment of a code of ethics for ministers and state civil servants.
  7. The establishment of a 40:60 gender criteria when appointing committees, councils and boards.
  8. Efforts should be made to ensure that all State institutions work according to gender equality programme with detailed objectives and actions in accordance with Paragraph 2, Article 18 of Act No. 10/2008, on Equal Status and Equal Rights of Women and Men.
  9. Studies and projects that have been carried out by grants from the Gender Equality Fund to be made available on the website of the Government Offices for the purpose of maximum benefit relating to actions for gender equality.
  10. The preparation of official statistical reports, interviews and opinion surveys comply with Article 16 of the Act on Equal Status and Equal Rights of

Women and Men, No. 10/2008, by disaggregating the information by sex, where appropriate.

11. A gender equality checklist accompanies bills, in which whether and how the bill affects gender equality is outlined.

II. Tasks concerning the labour market (Responsibility: the Ministry of Welfare and the Ministry of Finance):

1. Preparation of a 7-step action plan to fight the gender pay gap, including:

a. The appointment of an executive committee on gender wage equality

b. The establishment of an equality standard and systematic education on its implementation

c. Technical enhancement of the salary administration system of the State in order to enable significant and regular appraisals of the salaries of men and women in ministries and government institutions

d. Analysis of the success of job evaluations of municipalities for the purpose of reducing the gender pay gap

e. Initiation of co-operation with the social partners' organisations on the implementation of the Roadmap of wage equality

f. The publishing of a pamphlet to guide the interpretation of the provisions of the Act on Equal Status and Equal Rights of Women and Men, on equal pay for equal work

g. Issuing a checklist for the directors of institutions on criteria regarding the revision of wages so that wage equality objectives can be achieved

2. Analysis of the gender pay gap in rural areas.

3. Analysis of the gender pay gap in fisheries and agriculture and educational opportunities in the professions.

4. A survey should be conducted of the frequency of parents taking parental leave and its impact on the division of labour in homes and the labour force participation of women and men.

5. A committee appointed in accordance with the priorities of the Equal Status Council in 2010 shall survey the means designed to help active participants in the labour market to reconcile their work and family life.

6. Assessment of how the activities of various capital funds benefit each sex and revision of the allocation rules if the allocations turn out to deficit either sex among the grantees.

7. Re-activation of the Women's Loan Guarantee Fund to support women's entrepreneurship by providing guarantees on loans.

8. A judicial appraisal of the interpretation of the Equal Rights Act in the opinions of the Gender Equality Complaints Committee.

III. Tasks regarding gender and power:

1. A working party should be appointed to examine the working environment and working conditions of elected representatives in local



governments with a gender perspective and their impact on women's participation in local government activities.

2. Update and maintenance of the database of gender equality in local government.

3. Proportion of women on the boards of companies and institutions. Information should be disseminated and promotional material drafted to raise awareness of the entry into force of Act no. 13/2010, stipulating that in companies and private companies employing more than 50 employees on average per year, both sexes shall be represented on the board when the board is composed of three members or more.

IV. Tasks regarding gender based violence:

1. A new action plan against gender based violence.

2. A bill amending the Act on restraining orders should be presented to the Althing in order to enact an authorisation for competent bodies within the criminal justice system so that an individual who exerts violence against members of the household is made to leave the household. The so-called "Austrian way" should constitute the basis of this work.

3. The therapy option "Men Take Responsibility" should be strengthened and offered around the country.

4. Measures to prevent prostitution.

5. The position of disabled women should be examined with the purpose of analysing the position of these individuals who are at risk of violence, abuse and exploitation.

V. Education and gender equality:

1. A handbook for young people with information about gender and gender equality, published in 2010 should be systematically followed up by promotional activities.

2. Equality education in kindergartens and primary schools.

3. Courses in gender studies and gender equality studies should be introduced to secondary schools in the field of gender equality.

4. Education on gender equality should be established within universities.

5. The participation of boys and girls in social life should be investigated with the objective of promoting equal opportunities for boys and girls.

6. The reasons why girls pursue professions that have been identified as traditional women's professions and boys those that have been identified as traditional male professions should be analysed.

7. The contents of teacher education should be revised and universities should be encouraged to introduce mandatory courses on gender studies to all students.

8. It should be investigated why fewer women than men apply for grants from the Icelandic Film Centre.

9. Funds under the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture that operate on the basis of the Act on public support for scientific research should systematically collect information on the gender composition of expert councils, applicants and grantees, and grant amounts in all categories for the year 2012.

VI. Men and gender equality:

1. A working party should be appointed to make recommendations on how to increase the participation of men in discussions about gender equality and increase men's involvement in equality work.

VII. International activities:

1. Iceland's National Action Plan for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) No. 1325 on Women, Peace and Security from 2000 should be revised by presenting clear and time-bound objectives. Account should be taken of subsequent Security Council resolutions adopted within the context of Resolution 1325.

2. Pilot Project on the Gender Equality Studies and Training Programme.

3. The Ministry for the Environment and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs should continue to promote gender perspectives in climate negotiations.

4. A study of the impact of different behaviour of the sexes on the climate in Iceland.

VIII. Follow-up and revision

1. The Gender Equality Representatives of the ministries should carry out a follow-up to the government's action programme for gender equality at the level of their ministries in co-operation with the Centre for Gender Equality and the Expert on Gender Equality at the Government Offices.

Altogether there are 42 projects, each of which is explained in the parliamentary resolution. At the beginning of the Gender Equality Forum (a Forum that the Minister is obliged to call within a year of parliamentary elections and again two years after) the Minister of Social Affairs and Housing is to present a report on the situation and developments in gender equality issues. The Minister's report includes an assessment of the status and success of the projects covered by the current gender equality Action Plan. The Action Plan runs until the end of 2014. Many of the projects mentioned above have been realised. Preparations for a new plan have already begun and a parliamentary bill is to be proposed in the autumn of 2014.

### **International collaboration to promote gender equality**

#### **Nordic collaboration**

Iceland participates in a number of Nordic gender equality projects. Most of these are carried out in connection with the Nordic Council of Ministers, under which a special ministerial committee, MR-JÄM, and a special officials' committee, ÄK-JÄM, deal with gender equality issues.

1. In 1974, the Nordic Council of Ministers began formal collaboration on gender equality issues. Since its inception, the main theme of the gender equality collaboration has been equal rights in the labour market. The focus has been shifted

towards equal pay, the abolition of the gender-separated labour market, the integration of family life and employment and the economic implications of part-time jobs. Other themes include projects regarding gender equality legislation as a whole, the different gender presentation in the media, maternity/paternity leave, the increased economic and political powers conferred to women and the fight against gender-based violence, prostitution and human trafficking. Finally, open discussion of men and male stereotypes have been prevalent. Youth issues, i.e. gender stereotypes and gender-based choice of education, have been discussed. Recently, the challenges of the multi-cultural society have been taken to consideration.

2. In the last four decades, the Nordic Council of Ministers has supported researches in the field of gender equality, at home or abroad. The Nordic countries have co-hosted events at the summits of the *Commission on the Status of Women* where the results of the Nordic cooperation have been presented. In 1988 the first Nordisk Forum conference was held. A second conference with the same name took place in 1994. Finally, in a year when the Nordic collaboration was chaired by Iceland, the third conference was held in June 2014.

3. In 2014 Iceland is chairing collaboration between the Nordic countries. Nordic collaboration on gender equality issues is now 40 years old, and the occasion is to be marked by a conference in Iceland in August 2014 on the results achieved and the future aims of the Nordic countries in this sphere. Concurrently with the conference, there will be a meeting of the Nordic and Baltic ministers who deal with equality issues. The priorities to be addressed by the Government of Iceland in the sphere of equality during this year when Iceland is leading Nordic collaboration are: equality on the labour market, participation by men in gender-equality work, methods of reducing gender-based violence, collaboration within the West-Nordic region and collaboration in the sub-Arctic area.

4. In June 2014, a conference on masculinity was held in the University of Iceland where a spotlight was cast on various studies on the subject. In September, a meeting of professionals on methods and measures in the fight against gender-based violence will be held. In October, a conference on the status of women and men in the Arctic Region will be held in Akureyri. Iceland also contributed to collaboration with Greenland and the Faroe Islands with a conference on equality in the labour market and the personal life in the Faroe Islands in May 2014.

### **Participation in UN co-operation**

#### *Commission on the Status of Women*

Iceland was elected to the UN Commission on the Status of Women in spring 2004, formally taking a seat on the commission in 2005. At the 52nd session of the Commission in 2008, Iceland's four-year term came to an end. In its work within the Commission, the Icelandic government has put emphasis on co-operation with NGOs, e.g. UNIFEM, the Icelandic Women's Rights Association and the Educational and Counselling Centre for Victims of Sexual Violence (*Stígamót*), and has readily sent representatives from NGOs to Commission meetings.

- At the 53rd session of the Commission in 2009, where the principal theme was: "The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS", the Icelandic delegation put emphasis on the unpaid and often invisible work done by women which is

often underappreciated. The connection between women and global warming was cast under the spotlight, as well as a research showing that few women have a say in decisions regarding environmental matters. The 54th session of the Commission in 2010 was dedicated to the review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Women's authority at all levels was discussed, as was gender-based violence. The Nordic countries co-hosted two side events at the summit. At one, the ministers responsible for gender issues in their respective countries discussed the results of the previous 15 years and what still remained to be done. The other event scheduled was a panel of experts in which the states involved discussed the most serious issues at hand, such as power struggles, global warming and the implementation of UNSCR 1325. In 2011, where the principal theme was access and participation of women and girls to education, training, science and technology, including the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work, the Icelandic delegation emphasized its policy of women's empowerment, especially in peace talks and participation in development aid. At the 56th session of the Commission in 2012, where the prime theme was the empowerment of rural women and their role in the eradication of poverty and hunger, development and the solution of current challenges, the Icelandic Government put emphasis on its gender-equality policy with special emphasis on action to combat violence against women, how the gender pay gap was being tackled and how women's participation in private companies could be increased. At the 57th session of the Commission in 2013, the priority theme was the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls. Representatives from the ministries of welfare and foreign affairs participated in the summit. The agreed conclusions took account of Iceland's topics of emphasis, i.e. sexual health, action against domestic violence and emphasis on male responsibility. At the 58th session of the Commission, the priority theme was Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls. The Icelandic delegation took an active part and the Icelandic Minister of Welfare led the ensemble of Nordic ministers at the session since Iceland was chairing Nordic collaboration in 2014. The Nordic states hosted a panel discussion on *Promoting Gender Equality and Empowering Women and Girls through Education*. The Nordic states also hosted a seminar with professionals where challenges hindering equality in the educational system and in the labour market, issues which still provide a challenge for the Nordic states.

#### *HR Council*

Iceland has an observer's role at the meetings of the UN Human Rights Council. Nordic co-operation in this sphere is extensive and the Nordic countries recently co-hosted a special event at a council summit concerning action against violence against women and how children are indirectly affected. Iceland defended its periodic report in 2011. Amongst the 84 requests directed towards the Icelandic Government, a couple concerned gender issue reform. The Icelandic Government has also sent its remarks and observations to other states. The next periodic report on behalf of Iceland is scheduled to take place in the autumn of 2016.

The Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice carried out an official mission to Iceland at the invitation of the Government,

from 16 to 23 May 2013; Iceland's standing invitation dates back to 2000. The aim of the working group was to discover, analyse and reflect on the best possible practices to prevent such gender discrimination. A draft Report of the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice on its mission to Iceland was sent in spring 2014. On 16 June 2014, the Ambassador to the Permanent Mission of Iceland in Geneva addressed the Council. He stressed that in a global context, Iceland had scored high when it comes to gender equality. The ambassador also discussed the work in progress on Iceland's family policy for the period up to 2020 and the difficulty of finding a way to increase men's participation in the social discussion. The growing problem of hate speech against women on the internet and the proposal of three anti-discrimination bills to Parliament in its next legislative session, implementing three EU directives concerning equal treatment in the labour market, equal treatment in relation to social protection and equal treatment in administration were also discussed, amongst other subjects.

#### *UN Women*

UN Women is named as one of the four key institutions in Iceland's international developmental co-operation. Contributions to the institution amounted to ISK 131.5 million in 2012. General contributions to developmental co-operation amounted to ISK 70 million in 2012. Contributions were also made to funds against gender-based violence. Two of the five countries of emphasis in Iceland's international development cooperation are countries with unstable political situations; Palestine and Afghanistan. The implementation of UNSCR 1325 is central to Iceland's support to both countries. In Palestine, Iceland supports UN Women and local women's rights NGOs. In Afghanistan, Iceland supports the UN Women country office and seconds a gender equality expert to the ISAF in Kabul.

#### *The UN Population Fund*

The Icelandic Government regularly contributes to UNFPA. In 2012, the Government also contributed to the co-operation of UNFPA and UNICEF which aims to abolish *female genital mutilation/cutting* — *FGM/C*. The projects spans 16 countries in Africa and reaches out to societies where the procedure constitutes a firm tradition.

#### *Other UN-based collaboration*

In a speech held at the UN General Assembly in September 2012, the Icelandic minister of foreign affairs mentioned the democratic process in Northern Africa and the Middle East following the "Arab Spring" and the importance of gender equality concerning social structure. The minister also reiterated that violence and discrimination on grounds of sexual inclination or sexual self-consciousness would not be tolerated and that it was a common goal for all nations to ensure human rights for all. Iceland is an active participant in the gender equality and human rights discussion which takes place within the third committee and has put emphasis on the integration of gender policies in all UN co-operation. The third committee met in October and November 2012. Iceland approved a number of resolutions, including one on female genital mutilation.

The Icelandic Government has for years welcomed groups of refugees in collaboration with UNCHR. Lately, the emphasis has been put on groups formerly

described as “women in peril”, i.e. single mothers with children. In 2012 three Afghan families, women and their children who had been staying in refugee camps in Iran, were welcomed to Iceland.

During a UN conference from 2 July-27 July 2012, where an international treaty on arms transactions was discussed, the Icelandic delegation took a full part, emphasising that the treaty should contain norms on gender-based violence in order to prevent violence against women and girls.

### **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals**

Iceland has responded to a questionnaire on implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in the context of preparations for the global Beijing+20 review in 2015. Iceland has included the Millennium Development Goals in its developmental work. The Icelandic International Development Agency (ICEIDA) has successfully implemented gender mainstreaming in its day-to-day work and has published a gender equality policy that is active in all its missions. Iceland itself has attained the goals put forward in MDG3 and has extensive data available to monitor these achievements. Iceland has been successful in a global context when it comes to gender equality. It ranks number 1 on a list of countries with the highest levels of gender equality, according to the 2013 Global Gender Gap Index published by the World Economic Forum. This is the fifth consecutive year where Iceland is at the top of the list.

### **EEA and EU co-operation**

Iceland has participated in the gender equality programmes of the European Union under the Agreement on the European Economic Area. The Centre for Gender Equality (*Jafnréttisstofa*) has both participated in and directed projects under the EU’s gender equality programme.

On grounds of the EEA collaboration, an EFTA Working Group on Gender Equality, Anti-Discrimination and Family Policy follows the status of gender equality and prevention against minority discrimination within the EU. The Committee holds meetings twice a year. It reviews new EU measures and follows up on events and discussion on the subject within the EU. Iceland has an observer at the EU Advisory Committee on Gender Equality and participates in the EU Strategy for equality between women and men. As an EFTA state, Iceland does not participate directly in the European Institute for Gender Equality but has provided statistical data through collaboration. Iceland was represented in the gender equality committee at the Council of Europe before its dissolution in 2012. EEA EFTA experts follow closely all developments within the EU in the areas of family policy including the rights of the child. They also monitor the activities of the European Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA). The EEA EFTA States participated actively in the relevant strands of the PROGRESS Programme and the Daphne III Programme on Community action to prevent violence against children, young people and women, and to protect victims and groups at risk in 2007-2013. The EEA EFTA States plan on participation in the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme within the Multiannual Financial Framework (2014-2020).

## **Other international co-operation**

### *NATO*

Iceland's permanent committee at NATO aims at fulfilling the National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, with successful results in many aspects. Within NATO, the Icelandic delegation helps manning working groups on women, peace and security. Iceland took the initiative of a letter to the Secretary General, emphasising the role of the Resolution in the actions taken by NATO.

### *The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe*

Iceland's permanent mission at the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe has put special emphasis on equal rights matters, bans on discrimination on the basis of, e.g., sexual orientation, actions against human trafficking and the process of UNSCR 1325. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs has assisted with projects fighting trafficking, e.g. in Belarus and in the Council of the Baltic Sea States.

Since 2008, the Icelandic Government has supported the *Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling*, a Palestinian NGO working for women's rights, fighting gender-based violence and providing women with legal aid. A Belarusian project run by Icelandic Red Cross was also supported. The aim of the project is to fight human trafficking by informing young people about the dangers and by assisting trafficking victims when they return home.

### *The GEST Programme*

The Gender Equality Studies and Training Programme (UNU-GEST) was established in 2009 as a joint project between the University of Iceland and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and became part of the United Nations University in 2013. The objective of the GEST Programme is to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in developing countries and post-conflict societies through education and training. Its main target group is professionals working for government and civil society organizations in developing countries and post-conflict societies undergoing reconstruction.

### *Climate Change*

In international negotiations on measures to combat climate change, Iceland has argued for gender equality and increased participation by women in decision-making and response measures, and it has achieved considerable success in this area. For example, at the 18th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Doha, Qatar, at the end of 2012, a theme day dedicated to gender equality was held for the first time. A special decision was approved at the session covering gender equality, dealing, amongst other things, with improved gender balance in the institution involved in the Convention, and gender equality issues were established as a permanent feature of the agenda of future sessions of the Conference. The European Union submitted the draft proposal on the decision, but Iceland played a large part in its subsequent handling. At the Doha session Iceland, together with Norway, Denmark and Uganda, mounted a successful side event designed to integrate gender equality considerations with governmental work on climate change. The aim is, primarily, to include gender equality considerations in measures to combat climate change and in

measures to adjust to climate change and improve people's ability and skills in order to tackle challenges in the spheres of gender equality and climate change.

Further reference is made to previous reports.

#### **Article 4**

##### **Special temporary measures aimed at accelerating gender equality**

Gender divisions are evident on the Icelandic labour market. Studies both in Iceland and abroad indicate that this fact contributes to how great gender-based wage differentials are, and it can probably be expected that no single measure would be more likely to have a positive effect on gender-based wage differentials than to break down the gender divisions on the labour market.

In Article 2 of the 2008 Gender Equality Act, as amended in 2014, the term *special measures* is specifically defined as measures intended to improve the situation of women or enhance the possibilities of women or men of acquiring gender equality in areas where it is lacking. As stated in Article 22 of the Act, special measures that share this goal do not contradict the Act — even if they are not specially stated as such.

##### **Gender Equality Regarding Wages**

In December 2011 the Minister of Welfare (now the Minister of Social Affairs and Housing) appointed an Executive Committee on Gender Wage Equality, the role of which was to supervise and coordinate measures designed to reduce gender-based wage discrimination in accordance with item 1 of Point 12 in the Four-year Plan of Action on Gender Equality, passed by the parliament in May 2011. Amongst other things, the committee was entrusted with coordinating measures to reduce gender-based wage discrimination and working on the production of a plan of action, including a time-scheme for its implementation.

A Plan of Action on Gender Equality Regarding Wages, produced by the Government and the social partners, was unveiled in October 2012. It set forth projects intended to promote greater wage equality. On the same occasion, a collaborative declaration was signed between the Government and the social partners' organisations, following which the Minister appointed a task force to supervise the measures set out in the Action Plan. Amongst the duties of the task force were the coordination of studies of gender-based wage differentials, the preparation of a programme to publicise and introduce the Equal Pay Standard, a special campaign and counselling programme for enterprises and institutions to work against gender-based wage differentials and the preparation of materials to reduce it. The Action Plan also stated that the Government was to raise awareness among employers and those active on the labour market regarding ways of facilitating the integration of the demands of family and working life, and that a programme was to be drawn up to reduce gender-based differences in career choice, the aim being to break down gender barriers on the labour market. These projects are, materially, closely related to the campaign against the gender pay gap, and the Minister has commissioned the task force to prepare a plan of action in the relevant areas.

In accordance with the Action Plan, a committee is in operation in the Ministry of Finance, consisting of two representatives from the Association of University Graduates, two from the Union of State and Municipal Employees and the same



number from the Association of Heads of Public Institutions and two from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs. The committee is charged with four main functions. Firstly, it is to examine data in the state's wage system and identify the explanatory variables that can be regarded as relevant in explaining the gender pay gap. Secondly, it is to examine the structure of collective wage agreements with a view to establishing how far the gender pay gap can be attributed to features in the system. Thirdly, the committee is to prepare guidelines for heads of state institutions on how to respond if an examination of wages paid reveals a gender pay gap, and fourthly, it is to act in an advisory capacity to the Ministry of Welfare in preparing a schedule for publicising the Equal Pay Standard.

One of the aims of establishing the committee is to have an examination made of the registration of jobs, educational qualifications and length of working experience recorded in ORRI, the state human resources and data system and assess the explanatory variables that may be recognised as relevant, and also whether other relevant explanations should be given consideration when analysing the gender pay differentials. Work on classifying jobs in the public sector is not yet complete, but over the past year or two the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs has, in collaboration with the National Financial Management Agency and Statistics Iceland, worked on the ÍSTARF classification system, registering the jobs worked in state entities, which has also improved registration in ORRI. The ÍSTARF registration system is a prerequisite for undertaking a comprehensive and coordinated study of wages in the public and private sector in Iceland; it is planned that civil servants will be included in the surveys by Statistics Iceland in future. Categorisation in the ÍSTARF system is also necessary in order to be able to make international comparisons regarding jobs and wages.

A plan of action on the integration of family life and professional life will be based on the report by a task force appointed to examine the matter which was submitted in April 2013. The plan lasts for four years, i.e. until the end of 2016. The aim is that by that time, the gender-based wage differentials that exist on the Icelandic labour market shall have been reduced considerably. According to the plan, the Government, as the party responsible for equality issues, is to

- 1) Establish a task force to function as the forum for consultation and collaboration between the Government and the organisations of the social partners on gender equality regarding wages.
- 2) Launch an experimental project on the introduction of a wage equality standard.

Attention is given to models in the other Nordic countries, and the academic community and professional associations are consulted. It is envisaged that the plan of action will mark out long-term measures with a particular emphasis on raising the numbers of men working in traditional women's professions and of women working in traditional men's professions. The task force has been extremely active; mention may be made of two open seminars on gender divisions on the labour market which were held on 13 and 26 February 2013. The first of these examined the position of men in what are traditionally women's lines of work (care-giving and teaching); the second examined the position of women in what have been traditionally men's occupations (computer science and technical work).

The Act No. 13/2010 amended the Public Limited Companies Act and the Private Limited Companies Act. The amendments included important provisions regarding gender ratios on the boards of directors and in the executive management of these companies. The aim of these provisions is to achieve a more even balance in the ratios of men and women in positions of influence in both public and private limited companies. Further reference is made to the discussion in Article 11.

### **Human Resource Database**

Regarding the private sector, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, in collaboration with Statistics Iceland and the National Financial Management Agency (*Fjárfýsla ríkisins*), is to see to registration in the state information and human resource database. Detailed procedural rules are to be followed in order to ensure that the data is suitable for comparative purposes. Regular surveys of the payroll accounts of enterprises and institutions are expected to produce the desired results when it comes to evening out the differences between men's and women's wages. Correct job categorisation and registration of educational qualifications, length of working experience and other factors that influence wages are necessary steps to be taken before wage surveys are made within institutions. The Personnel Department of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs has prepared guidelines on the best methods of conducting wage surveys with the aim of ensuring that gender-based wage discrimination is not practised in state bodies.

### **Gender-Responsive budgeting**

The collaborative declaration made by the government which took power in 2009 stated that Gender-Responsive Budgeting was to be used as a guideline in budgeting and economic management. Accordingly, a steering committee on Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB) was established in April 2009. This was appointed by the Minister of Finance and included representatives of the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Welfare, the Centre for Gender Equality and the Centre for Women's and Gender Studies, and also the Government's expert in gender equality. The appointment of the steering committee was the first time an attempt has been made to introduce comprehensive GRB in state financial planning in Iceland.

In April 2011 the Government approved a three-year plan on gender-responsive budgeting for 2011-2014, for all ministries to participate in. Each ministry chose a main policy area to focus on for the period and was made to issue an intermediate report in the 2013 budget proposal.

The objective in gender-responsive budgeting is to make the impact on the genders visible, so it is possible to respond to and re-evaluate policies, expenditures, and sources of income in accordance with objectives for equality. The budget should be used in a systematic way to equal the status of women and men and promote the fair allocation of public funds, as well as fair raising of public revenue. Gender-responsive budgeting should be integrated into all policy making, decision making, and in the daily operations of public administration. If analysis reveals gender discrimination, this should lead to changed decisions so that public allocation of resources and revenue-raising is fair and in accordance with the needs of both genders.

Work is currently in progress on Iceland's family policy for the period up to 2020. This is based on the Government's Policy Statement regarding a family-

friendly society in which all citizens have access to equal opportunities and security and enjoy legally-enshrined rights. Formulation of the policy will include, amongst other things, allowance for various family structures. Social equality, access by all types of family to equal rights and the avoidance of discrimination on grounds of race, disability, religion or sexual orientation is to be guaranteed. Ways must be sought to ensure economic security of the family and security regarding housing. Work will be done on ensuring a balance between working life and family life and even out the responsibilities borne by parents for housework and care of children. Emphasis is to be given to ensuring measures to protect people against violence in intimate relationships and to provide support to combat alcohol and substance abuse.

Further reference is made to Article 11 of this report, as well as the previous reports by the Government of Iceland.

### Article 5

In its concluding observations on the last periodic report by Iceland (CEDAW/C/ICE/CO/6), the Committee voiced its concerns about the persistence of stereotypical attitudes towards women and information suggesting that both women and men consider the wage gender gap to be acceptable.

Gender equality is not about women alone but involves women and men and the economic, social cultural and political structures of society. For some time now, priority has been given to involving men in the debate on gender equality in Iceland. Under the new Gender Equality Act of 2008, the Centre for Gender Equality, as a special institution operating under the supervision of the Minister of Welfare and responsible in the field covered by the Act, was required to “raise the level of activity in equality issues by measures including increasing the involvement of men in work on equality”.

Under the Government’s Gender Equality Action Plan for 2011-2014, a task force was appointed in 2011 to make proposals on how male participation in debate on gender equality issues could be increased and how men could be involved to a greater degree in equality work. The task force was also to analyse the standing of men in society and the scope they had for becoming involved based on new, changed, premises. The aim was to obtain proposals on, amongst other things, how a greater choice of education and employment could be offered to men, and also other choices of roles available to them, and to work against the stereotyped images of the sexes and increase the degree to which men were involved in family life. Attention was to be given to negative aspects of male experience and conduct, such as risk behaviour, violence and suicide. The task force submitted its report to the Minister in April 2013 with fifteen proposals on ways of involving men more in the debate on gender equality. In its work, the task force sought to strike a balance between various dissimilar views on the role of men in the debate, and the task force was appointed with a view to creating a basis for discussion between persons from different backgrounds and with different experiences of gender equality issues. The task force chose to restrict the material under discussion to five areas of emphasis. This was seen as facilitating the presentation of the material and providing a clearer framework for discussion within the group. The report, submitted with proposals to the Minister of Welfare, is therefore divided into the following five chapters: Men and Violence — gender-based violence; Men and Caregiving Policy — maternity/paternity leave and custody of children; Men, Health and Quality of Life; Men,

Pornography and Prostitution; Men, Education and the Gender-Divided Labour Market.

It is clear that gender-based stereotypes affect the choice of education for many young people. The choice of education subsequently affects the choice of employment later on. There are few role models for boys in lines of profession that have to do with upbringing and care for the elderly, while women lack role models in industrial and technological subjects. Thus, stereotypes limit the freedom of the individual to express talents, regardless of gender. Traditional “women’s jobs” usually offer lower wages than “men’s jobs”.

An application has been filed for funding of a project on prevention on gender-based choice of education and employment, to come into action in 2014 and be concluded in 2015. The project is a part of the Action Plan on gender equality. The project will mainly consist of research and collecting of data. The information gathered will be put in context with academic knowledge on the integration of gender-equality viewpoints and the results of similar researches carried out in other Nordic countries. The project is expected to inspire a complete policy against gender-based choice of education and employment. It is envisaged that the final product of the project will be a webpage or an electronic handbook and a report. Further reference is made to Article 10 of this report.

It is regarded as a priority in Iceland to ensure that both parents have the same scope for attending to their families and pursuing work outside the home, and experience has shown that one of the key factors in being able to combine professional and family life is that both parents should be entitled to maternity/paternity leave. Further reference is made to Article 11 of this report.

Further reference is made to previous reports by the Government of Iceland.

## **Article 6**

### **Trafficking in human beings**

A National Action Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings for the years 2013-2016 was adopted on 26 April 2013, replacing the one that ran from 2009 to the end of 2012. The objective of the last Action Plan was to enhance coordination between parties in dealing with trafficking in human beings in order to prevent human trafficking in Iceland and to study trafficking in human beings further. Furthermore, it specified actions that were aimed at prevention and education regarding this matter and aimed to ensure that aid and protection to victims is provided. Emphasis was placed on actions that aimed at facilitating the prosecution of the perpetrators. At the same time, the intention was to initiate necessary legislative amendments. The priorities included: (a) the ratification of the Palermo Protocol and the Council of Europe’s 2005 Convention on Action against Human Trafficking, and the legislative amendments the ratifications require; (b) the establishment of the supervisory specialist and co-ordination team; (c) the establishment of a specially trained police unit to investigate alleged cases of human trafficking; and (d) education and training of various professional groups that may encounter possible victims of human trafficking in their work. About half of the measures defined have been completed, and new ones have been allowed for in the new action plan.

Responsibility for these issues was transferred from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security (now the Ministry of Welfare) to the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights (now the Ministry of the Interior) on 1 October 2009. The Minister of Justice and Human Rights appointed a Specialist and Coordination Team on Human Trafficking in October 2009.

The team's role was wide-ranging: it was expected to maintain an overview and knowledge of human trafficking activities in Iceland, to follow up tip-offs about human trafficking, recognise potential victims of human trafficking and guarantee them protection and assistance. Furthermore, the team was expected to record alleged cases of human trafficking and provide education and awareness-raising concerning human trafficking and act in an advisory capacity to the Government on human trafficking issues. During the period from October 2009 to the end of 2010, the team examined the cases of nine alleged victims of human trafficking: seven women and two men. Seven of these cases involved trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation. These cases called for different types of measures, including helping a victim to find support structure in her/his country of origin through the International Organization of Migration and providing extensive social support and health care for rehabilitative purposes. In one of the cases, offers of assistance were rejected. During this period, one judgement was delivered in which the court handed down a conviction for a human trafficking offence, while in two cases the defendants were acquitted of charges of human trafficking. Among the changes made under the last Plan of Action against Human Trafficking has been Iceland's ratification of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime of 2000 and the Protocol to it to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (one of the "Palermo protocols"). Iceland ratified the Convention on 13 May 2010 and the Protocol on 22 June the same year. As a measure in preparation for the ratification, Article 227 a of the General Penal Code was amended so as to bring the definition of trafficking in human beings into line with that of the Palermo Protocol, and the Act No. 72/2011, which took effect on 10 June 2011, raised the maximum punishment for offences against Article 227 a, on human trafficking, from 8 to 12 years' imprisonment. Also, under the Act No. 115/2010 two new categories of residence permit were added to the Foreign Nationals Act, No. 96/2002. These are designed to guarantee the interests of victims of human trafficking in accordance with the European Convention against Trafficking in Human Beings of 2005. These are, on the one hand, a six-month residence permit to give victims time for recovery and reflection, and on the other a one-year renewable residence permit. Further reference is made to the response to the concluding observations in this report.

The target of the Action Plan for 2013-2016 is to establish an efficient and permanent system to deal with human trafficking; a system embracing the knowledge and measure required to respond to the problem and take action against crimes of this type. The plan defines 25 measures, the main priorities being on preventive measures and awareness-raising designed to build up an efficient and permanent system to combat human trafficking more effectively and to aid its victims. These include support and protection for the victims, coordination of approaches and consultation between entities, a regular assessment of risks in connection with cases of trafficking in human beings in Iceland and assessment of the results of measures taken to tackle the problem.

**Sexual offence cases**

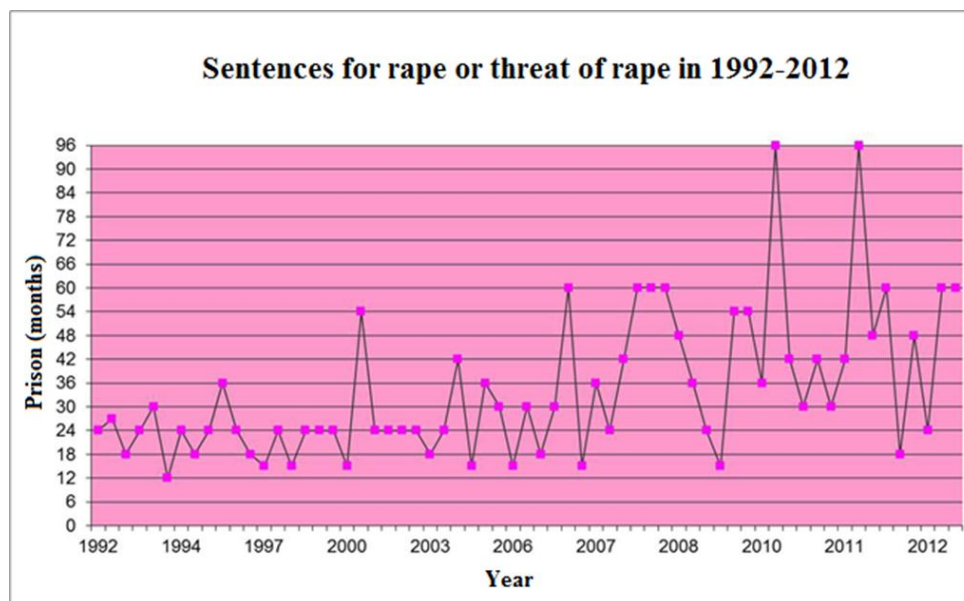
In 2007, the Althingi adopted amendments to the General Penal Code dealing with sexual offences. Further reference is made to previous reports.

Seventy-one cases were referred to the Department of Public Prosecutions in 2007 involving violations of Articles 194-199 of the General Penal Code (No. 19/1940, with subsequent amendments), covering rape and other offences against the sexual freedom of the individual. Forty-nine cases were dropped, but indictments were issued in 19. Acquittals were rendered at the district court level in two cases and convictions in 17 cases. Appeals were lodged against 11 of these judgements with the Supreme Court, which acquitted one appellant and convicted ten. In 2008, 46 cases were referred to the Directorate of Public Prosecutions, of which 14 resulted in indictments. Seven of these cases led to convictions at the district court level. Seven appeals were lodged with the Supreme Court and it rendered acquittals in three of them. In 2009, 42 cases were referred to the Directorate of Public Prosecutions, of which 14 resulted in indictments. Seven of these cases led to convictions at the district court level, and six in acquittals; one case has yet to be judged, as the accused left the country. Altogether, six cases were appealed against to the Supreme Court, which delivered a verdict of acquittal in one case and convicted in the other five.

In 2010, 49 cases were referred to the Directorate of Public Prosecutions. Twenty-three indictments were issued; 24 cases were dropped and investigations were curtailed in two. Sixteen of the indictments led to convictions at the district court level and seven to acquittals. Thirteen cases were referred to the Supreme Court; in nine cases the Supreme Court upheld convictions, rendering acquittal rulings in four.

In 2011, 64 cases were referred to the Directorate of Public Prosecutions. Twenty-seven indictments were issued and 32 cases were dropped. Investigations were curtailed in four cases, and one was sent abroad for treatment. Of the 27 cases in which indictments were issued, acquittals were rendered in 10 cases and convictions in 15; two remain to be judged. Appeals were lodged with the Supreme Court in 14 cases. The Supreme Court rendered convictions in nine cases and acquittals in three; two cases are yet to be judged by the Supreme Court.

A professor at the University of Iceland has made a study of the sentences handed down for rape convictions (Article 194, Paragraph 1) or in cases involving convictions for threat of rape. The research showed that in 1977-2002 the average sentence was between one and two years in prison, except when the violence was excessive or other special circumstances had effect. Since then, the sentences have increased in length.



Source: Scandinavian Research Council for Criminology, 2012.

In the period 1992-2012, 65 sentences were handed down in the Supreme Court in cases of rape or threat of rape. Two of the 65 court sentences are not presented in the table above since the length of the sentence was affected by very special circumstances each time. If the 21-year long period is divided in two, the average length of sentences rises considerably in the period after 2003. In the 1992-2003 period, there is more consistency in the length of sentences. In all instances, save one, a prison sentence of 1-3 years was handed down. The median court sentence for rape was two years. In 13 out of 25 judgments, the sentence was 2 years in prison. A heavier sentence was imposed in 4 cases but a lighter sentence was the outcome of 8 cases in the period. The average sentence of the period was therefore just under 2 years in prison.

The period 2004-2012 saw greater diversity. Out of the 38 sentences in the period, only 4 were 2-year prison sentences. The sentence was lighter in 6 cases while 28 cases ended with a longer prison sentence than 2 years, out of which 7 cases saw sentences for five years in prison and 2 cases ended with 8-year prison sentences. The longest prison sentences were handed down in the period 2010-2012 but the entire period sees a constant rise in length of prison sentences. If the period is divided in three, 2004-2006 saw the average of 2.2-year long prison sentences, the average of 2007-2009 amounted to 3.4 years and 2010-2012 saw average sentences of 4.1 years.

The first conclusions of a study of the handling of rape cases in the justice system were submitted to the Minister of the Interior in April 2013. Amongst other things, these showed that the vast majority (98%) of the victims in reported cases of rape are female, and the perpetrators are male. One of the features of these cases is a large age difference between perpetrator and victim. About 40% of the victims are under the age of 18, and are thus children in the eyes of the law. The perpetrators, on the other hand, are generally older, though there are occasional examples of very young perpetrators, even down to the age of 12. This indicates that the cases which are investigated generally involve a difference in standing and maturity. The study

also examines factors influencing the handling of these cases by the police and by the Department of Public Prosecutions. The second part of the study was based on interviews with 20-25 specialists who are involved with the handling of rape cases in the justice system, the aim being to establish their attitudes towards the subject and whether changes are needed and if so, what form they should take.

### **Prostitution**

In 2009 the parliament adopted amendments to the General Penal Code, dealing with prostitution, making the purchasing of sexual services illegal. Those caught paying for prostitution can face a fine or up to one year in prison. Before this change in the legislation, selling and buying sexual services was legal in Iceland. Selling sex was illegal in the country until 2007, when a change in the General Penal Code decriminalized prostitution. Profiting from prostitution by others continued to be illegal. The actual form of payment or reimbursement — whether it is made in cash, alcohol or drugs, items or some form of assistance, favour or service — makes no difference. Legislation of this type is often referred to as “the Swedish way” and is based on the view that it is the responsibility of the legislature to stand against the sale of sexual favours, as it is unacceptable to regard the human body as a saleable good. It should be mentioned that there was broad support among members of the women’s movement for the criminalization of the purchase of the services of prostitutes.

In March 2010 the parliament passed an amendment to the Restaurant, Guesthouse and Entertainment Act, No. 85/2007, with subsequent amendments, banning commercial displays of nudity (strip-tease acts) in restaurants. This includes an absolute prohibition on the commercial exploitation of nudity of employees or other persons on the premises.

Further reference is made to the chapter containing Iceland’s response to the concluding observations of the Committee.

### **Committee on violence against women**

A committee on violence against women was established in 2007 and appointed until the end of 2010. The main task of the committee was to follow through the action plan against domestic violence and sexual violence directed against women.

Reference is made to previous reports by the Government of Iceland.

### **Protection of victims**

A new Code of Criminal Procedure was adopted when Act No. 88/2008 came into force on July 1 2008. Previous changes to the Code of Criminal Procedure in order to enhance the legal status of victims of sexual violence had been made in 1999. In that instance, the changes included making children under the age of 18 exempt from having to testify formally more than once in cases where they were possible victims of sexual violence, in order to spare them from having to recall the violent acts more than once. This new format came under scrutiny since it was thought to lead to more acquittals. However, the system was not changed when the new Code of Criminal Procedure Act was passed. Instead, other changes were made in order to ensure sensitive and considerate investigations and a fair trial, e.g. regarding informal questioning by the police in order to prepare the possible victim



for taking the witness stand and ensuring that the judge presiding when testimony is given at the investigative stage also handles the case at a later stage in the court proceedings. This serves also to ensure the principle of immediacy.

Reference is made to previous reports by the Government of Iceland.

### **Training of the police**

The Ministry of the Interior launched a co-operational process on the treatment of rape cases with a large meeting in the ministry in 2010 at which the various aspects of rape case treatment were discussed. The ministry acted as an intermediary in establishing regular meetings between the Emergency Reception Centre, the police and the Director of Public Prosecutions and also wrote letters to the ministries of Welfare and the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture raising awareness of the findings of the co-operation.

Over the past two years, a special allocation has been made to the police forces in the metropolitan and Suðurnes areas for the operation of a special research team to combat organised crime in Iceland. Under a parliamentary resolution passed on 11 June 2012, the team was commissioned with examining, in addition, organised crime connected with prostitution and human trafficking. A detailed analysis and recording of the extent of prostitution and its manifestations has been prepared, and the work of the team in this area has led to several investigations that are currently in progress connected with prostitution, in particular the purchase of prostitutes' services. It is planned to continue this work, and also to examine other types of human trafficking, e.g. in connection with forced labour. Reference is made to previous reports by the Government of Iceland.

### **Domestic violence**

In 2006 the Althingi adopted amendments to the provisions of the Code dealing with domestic violence, as stated in a previous report. The new legislation introduced heavier punishments in cases where it is considered that the close relationship between the perpetrator and the victim has led to gross violations. The aim was also to give individuals better protection against offences committed by closely related persons through marriage or within the family and to make the legal remedies available in cases of domestic violence more effective.

In its concluding observations on the last periodic report by Iceland ([CEDAW/C/ICE/CO/6](#)), the Committee voiced its concerns at the lack of updated detailed information on the use and effectiveness of restraining orders in cases of domestic and sexual violence in the state party.

The Exclusion Orders and Ejections Act, No. 85/2011, has now replaced the Restraining Order Act, No. 122/2008. The new Act includes a fundamental change, giving the police power to impose exclusion decisions and eject the accused from homes in cases of domestic violence, following "the Austrian Model". The aim of these changes is to make these resources more effective and more efficient so victims do not have to wait for up to 3 days for a court judgment as the older legislation required them to do. The provision gives victims undoubtedly increased protection since the police are able to arrest the offender right away in the beginning of the case and hold him for up to 24 hours or until formal decision has been made on an exclusion order and the ejection of the offender from the home. The process of these cases is now more efficient and increases protection for those who are

victims of offences and seek the assistance of the police. The police experience is that the conduct and procedures of these cases are easier since the decision-making has been transferred to the police right from the beginning, meaning obviously a much shorter procedure than it was under the old law. So far it cannot be said that cases have increased in number due to the change in legislation: there have been fewer than 10 cases since the law entered into force. It must be noted in this context that exclusion orders (restraining orders) under the law are not used solely for the benefit of a criminal investigation: they can also be used even though no charge has been filed or where a charge and a claim of punishment have been filed. So far there has been no criminal case where the offender has violated the exclusion order.

In 2006, Iceland's first Plan of Action on Domestic and Sexual Violence was approved, covering the period 2006-2011. The plan was divided into two parts, addressing adults on the one hand and children on the other.

In 2010, preparations began on a new Action Plan on Domestic Violence. The Minister of Social Affairs and Social Insurance (now the Minister of Social Affairs and Housing) appointed a committee to prepare a new plan for the years 2012-2026. The committee was to pay particular attention to the connection between gender-based violent offences, their prosecution and handling in the justice system. The committee was also entrusted with the formulation of a position on implementing the Council of Europe's Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention) and redefining projects in the light of the Convention. Iceland was one of the first states to sign the Convention in March 2011. The committee decided to examine the findings of studies that had been produced on the basis of the first Action Plan, and also to focus on where the main weaknesses could be identified in the justice system.

The committee submitted its report in June 2012. No action plan was submitted to the Government, since on examination it was found that it would be too extensive and costly.

A collaborative team dealing with domestic violence was appointed in 2013. This consists of representatives of the Ministry of Welfare, the Ministry of the Interior, the Centre for Gender Equality, the Women's Refuge, the Association of Local Authorities, the police and the Child Protection Agency (*Barnaverndarstofa*). Its role is to apply the coordinated policy on measures against domestic violence that was adopted in 2011. It is intended to enter into collaborative agreements on certain services and to oversee the execution of experimental projects. It is also intended to establish permanent collaboration between the social services, the child welfare authorities, the health services, the Centre for Gender Equality, the police and NGOs. The team will strive to have all the local authorities in Iceland set themselves plans of action and also examine where screening will be located in the social and health services.

*Keeping the window open* is a police pilot project between Suðurnes Police district and Suðurnes social services on domestic violence. The project started on 1 February 2013 and is already considered to be a success. The start of the project was the notion that too few domestic violence cases came up for examination in the justice system, not enough investigations were brought to completion and very few perpetrators were convicted. The primary reason for this was that the victims did not want assistance from the police. The police concluded that this was due to a lack of support for victims and perpetrators. All changes made to the day-to-day work of

the participants in the project, were made within the frame of the Icelandic law and have not involved any additional cost for the participating institutions.

The pilot project is based on cooperation between police and social services. When the police respond to a call where there is a suspicion that domestic violence is involved, the police always request additional assistance from social workers from the social services to establish solid contact and give the victims all the assistance they need. They also provide a lawyer for the victims. With this approach, victims are more likely to consider leaving the violent relationship. Legal protective measures, such as restraining (exclusion) orders and the ejection of the perpetrator from home are employed more frequently and the perpetrators are informed of possible therapy options.

The findings of a new quantitative study of violence against disabled women by the University of Iceland's Social Science Institute for the Ministry of Welfare were published in May 2013. This was the first study of its type to be carried out in Iceland, and it is seen as giving an important insight into the many manifestations of violence against disabled women, illustrating the circumstances in which it occurs and the consequences it has. It was based on interviews with thirteen women who had all suffered violence in many forms both in childhood and as adults. The aim was to describe the nature of violence against disabled women and to examine the difference between violence perpetrated by individuals against disabled women, on the one hand, and institutionalised violence on the other. It was also designed to illustrate the circumstances in which violence of this type occurs and the consequences it has, how the danger of its occurrence is linked to the standing of disabled women in society and, finally, to propose methods of preventing violence against disabled women.

In July 2013 the Ministry of Welfare and municipalities in the Suðurnes region published a brochure entitled *Is domestic violence a part of your life?*, which has been distributed to every home in the Suðurnes region. The brochure is a part of a vigilance campaign in the Suðurnes region to prevent violence against women. It discusses the different types of violence and provides information on where to seek help. The vigilance campaign is managed by the Suðurnes Watch, which operates under the auspices of the Ministry of Welfare's Wellbeing Watch.

As is stated above, Iceland was one of the first states to sign the Council of Europe's Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention) in March 2011. In autumn that year, the Ministry of the Interior had an examination made of the contents of the Convention and the steps needed to adapt Icelandic legislation (statutes, regulations, implementation and procedures, etc.) so as to be able to ratify the Convention and be confident that the provisions would be compatible with Icelandic law. The Committee on Procedural Law was then commissioned with examining the amendments needed to Iceland's Penal Code in order to ratify the Convention.

### **The Women's Refuge (Kvænnaathvarfið)**

In its concluding observations on the last periodic report by Iceland (CEDAW/C/ICE/CO/6), the Committee recommended that the State party allocate sufficient financial resources to ensure that all women who are victims of violence have access to immediate and appropriate means of protection and access to safe shelters throughout the country.

The aim of the organization running the Women's Refuge (*Kvennaathvarfið*) is to provide refuge facilities both for women and their children when the situation in the home makes it impossible for them to go on living there because of domestic violence, whether in the form of physical assaults or mental cruelty, practiced by the husband or cohabiting partner or other persons in the home, and also for women victims of rape. It is also the organization's aim to provide counselling and information and to stimulate publicity and discussion of the problem of domestic violence.

#### Admissions and interviews at the *Women's Refuge* 2008-2011

	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total admissions	549	605	864	671
Interviews*	419	487	746	546
Stay periods	130	118	118	107
Number women without children	81	74	79	62
Number of women with children	49	44	39	45
Number of children	77	60	54	67
Total number of clients	341	319	375	299

Source: *Women's Refuge's Annual report for the years 2010 and 2011.*

\* Interviews during stay are not included in this figure.

In 2009 the women spent an average of 11 days at the refuge, seven days less than the year before. The average number of days that children spent at the shelter was 10 days. On average, six individuals stayed at the shelter every day, four women and two children. The average length of time spent by individuals at the shelter in 2010 was 15 days. On average, women with children stayed for longer period than those without children did, and women of foreign origin stayed longer than Icelandic women did. The length of time that children spent at the shelter was 23 days. On average, there were four women and four children at the refuge every day during 2010. The number of interviews taken during that year was 746, which was a record. On average, each woman that registered at the centre attended two interviews during the year. In 2011 the women spent an average of 15 days at the refuge. The average time that children spent at the shelter was 23 days. On average there were eight individuals staying at the shelter each day, four women and four children.

On arrival at the Women's Refuge, either to stay or to attend a counselling session, the women are asked the reason for their visit. Most give more than one reason; for example, mental cruelty is generally found together with physical violence. In most cases, they are also seeking support to get through a difficult phase in their lives. It is much more commonly the case that women apply to the Women's Refuge because of mental cruelty than because of physical violence; mental cruelty can be no less serious a situation. It can take the form of threatening behaviour, financial dominance, isolation and degradation.

The number of women applying to the Women's Refuge indicates not so much the extent of gender-based violence in Iceland but rather whether or not the victims know of the services provided by the refuge and whether they are prepared to use

them. Studies indicate that the actual extent of violence is far greater than the statistics from the Women's Refuge suggest, and it is therefore seen as a positive thing that the number seeking assistance there should be large rather than small. On arrival at the Women's Refuge, either to stay or to attend a counselling session, the women are asked the reason for their visit. Most give more than one reason; for example, mental cruelty is generally found together with physical violence. In most cases, they are also seeking support to get through a difficult phase in their lives. It is much more commonly the case that women apply to the Women's Refuge because of mental cruelty than because of physical violence; mental cruelty can be no less serious a situation. It can take the form of threatening behaviour, financial dominance, isolation and degradation. More women give mental cruelty, physical violence and sexual abuse as the reasons for their visits to the refuge than used to be the case; in the same way, more now come to the centre because of threats and persecution than before. This is worrying, as it seems that violence is assuming a harsher form, but the reason may also be increased awareness of gender-based violence and the forms that it can take.

### **The project *Karlar til ábyrgðar* ("Men's Responsibility")**

The "Men's Responsibility" project was re-launched in May 2006, offering specialised treatment for men who indulge in violence in the home in Iceland.

From the time when the project was revived in May 2006 until the end of 2010, 108 individuals attended one or more therapy sessions. From January to August 2010, 25 new men came for therapy sessions, in addition to which 13 continued with their therapy sessions that had begun the previous year. During this period, twelve women attended sessions in the capacity of spouses/partners. Group therapy sessions were fully booked throughout 2010. In 2011, 32 new men attended sessions and 19 continued with treatment that had begun the previous year. Twenty spouses attended therapy sessions in 2011. The group therapy sessions were fully booked all year (with 6 persons in each group).

### **The Centre for Sexual Abuse Victims (*Stígamót*)**

In 2010, 526 individuals turned to the Educational and Counselling Centre for Victims of Sexual Violence (*Stígamót*). The corresponding number was 593 in 2011 and 664 in 2012. On average, 90% of these persons are women. More than half of those who made use of the centre's services for the first time in 2010-2012 were aged 18-39.

Persons received by *Stígamót* for the first time: breakdown by sex.

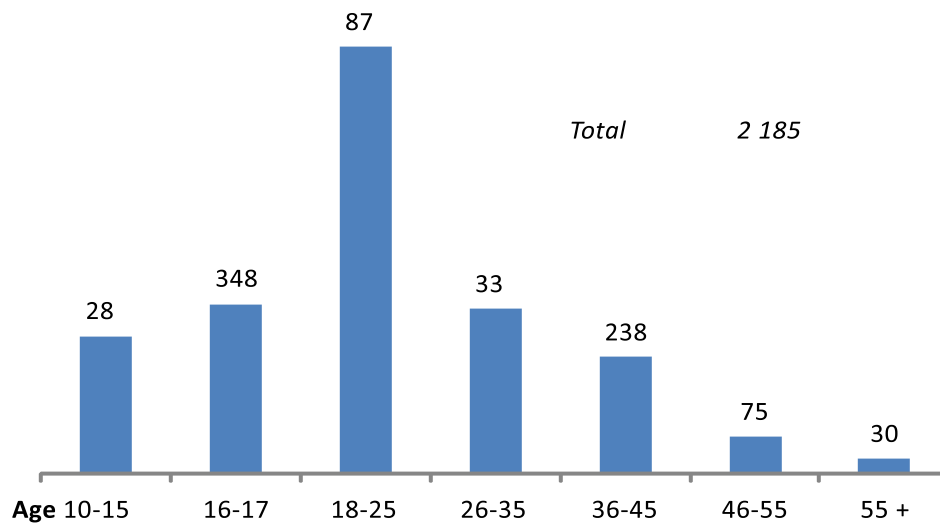
### Age division of individuals seeking help at the Centre for Sexual Abuse Victims, 2010-2012

	2010		2011		2012	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
<17 years	10	4.0%	17	6.1%	15	5.7%
18-29 years	137	54.6%	150	54.0%	128	48.5%
30-39 years	46	18.3%	46	16.5%	54	20.5%
40-49 years	28	11.2%	37	13.3%	37	14.0%
50-59 years	17	6.8%	19	6.8%	19	7.2%
>60 years	3	1.2%	7	2.5%	6	2.3%
No information	10	4.0%	2	0.7%	5	1.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Stígamót.

There are many reasons why individuals turn to the Centre for Sexual Abuse Victims: rape, prostitution, incest and sexual harassment. In September 2011 the centre opened a reception centre, *Kristínarhús*, intended specifically for women leaving backgrounds in prostitution and/or human trafficking. They were able to stay there in private rooms for short or long stays, and various services were available to them. In 2012 twenty women and nine children lived in the centre for a total of 1,148 nights. At the end of 2013, *Kristínarhús* ceased operations. The Centre for Sexual Abuse Victims took the decision to focus instead on other projects, mainly violence against disabled women and male sufferers of violence. The Ministry of Welfare and the Women's Refuge have discussed the possibility of granting victims of human trafficking a temporary refuge while the further investigation takes place.

### Age and number of persons applying to the Emergency Reception Centre following rape, 1993-2012



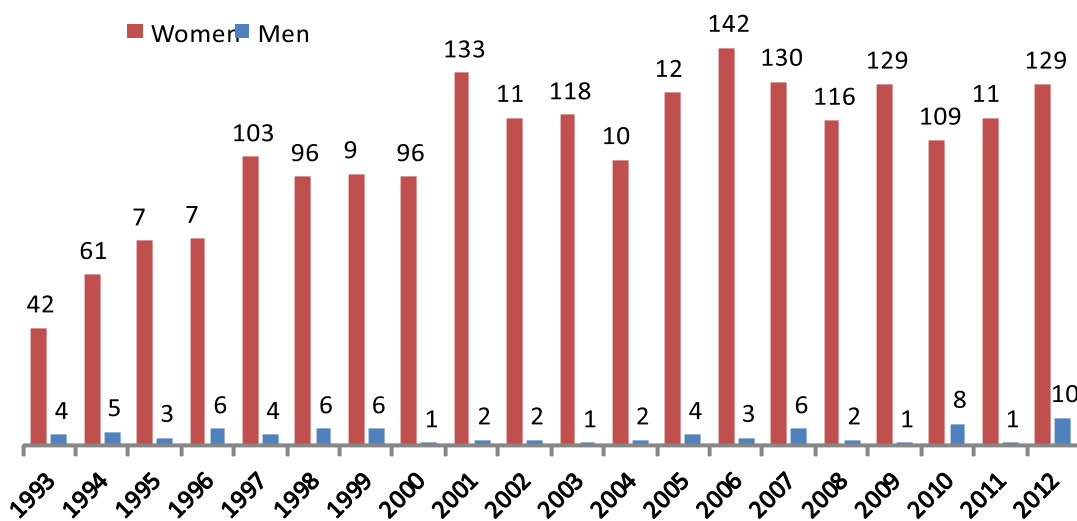
Source: Emergency Reception Centre, 2013.

### Emergency Reception Unit for Victims of Sexual Abuse

An Emergency Reception Unit for Victims of Sexual Abuse is in operation in the Casualty Department of the National Hospital (*Landspítalinn*) in Reykjavík and at the Akureyri Hospital. The services of nurses, doctors and psychologists are available at these units, and a team of lawyers also provides legal advice to victims and assists them in their dealings with the police and the courts. In 2010, 117 individuals sought the assistance of these emergency units; in 2011 the figure was 118 and in 2012 it was 139. From the time when the unit opened in 1993 up to the end of 2012, 2,187 people had applied to it following rape. The largest group consist of women aged 18-25, and women account for over 95% of the total. Over 70% of the cases handled by these units are classified as rapes, and in more than a third of cases, the victims say they were drunk or under the influence of drugs when the offence was committed.

Women constitute the great majority of the visitors to the Emergency Reception Centre, though the number of male visitors has increased in the last couple of years. Overall, over 70% of cases handled by the Emergency Reception Centre are defined as rape while more than a third of reported cases took place while the victim was in a state of drug- or alcohol-induced coma.

### Gender ratio of visitors to the Emergency Reception Centre



Source: Emergency Reception Centre, 2013.

**Sex offences****Information from the police and the Director of Public Prosecutions**

	<i>Cases Registered</i>	<i>Indictments</i>	<i>Convictions</i>	<i>Acquittals</i>
2007	71	19	16	3
2008	46	14	4	10
2009	42	14	6	7
2010	49	23	12	10
2011	64	27	10	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>43</b>

*Number of alleged violations of Articles 194-199 of the General Penal Code.*

In 2007-2011, 272 cases were received by the Director of Public Prosecutions as violations of Articles 194-199 of the General Penal Code, No. 19/1940, with subsequent amendments. Ninety-seven of these resulted in indictments. Of the 97 cases in which indictments were issued and court proceedings instituted, 48 led to convictions and 43 to acquittals. Cases in which charges are pressed are not recorded separately. The register also contains statistics on cases that remain open, e.g. because the perpetrator has not been found.

The Ministry of Interior has started co-operation with EDDA — Centre of Excellence concerning an investigation into the treatment of rape cases within the Icelandic judicial system. The investigation is modelled after similar projects in Denmark and Sweden.

**Violence against children**

Under the Legal Competence Act, No. 71/1997, a person becomes legally competent on attaining the age of 18 years. The Child Protection Act, No. 80/2002, and the Children Act, No. 76/2003, also identify “child” as an individual under the age of 18. Iceland has furthermore ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child under Act No. 19/2013, in which children are identified as persons under the age of 18.

A prerequisite for the ratification of the Lanzarote Convention was the passing of the amendments to the General Penal Code in June 2012 regarding child prostitution, pornography and trafficking in order for the statute of limitation only to begin to run when the child reaches the age of 18, irrespective of the child’s age when the violation takes place. The amendments also aimed to strengthen the penalization of sexual violence against children, and included heavier penalties when violence involves children under the age of 15.

The first part of the plan of action on violence in homes and sexual abuse, which was approved by the government in September 2006, covered measures that the government intended to take in order to prevent violence against children, and also to assist those who have suffered violence and abuse. The fundamental assumption is that it is always the adult who is responsible if a child suffers violent treatment, and that the perpetrator should suffer the consequences, since this type of conduct cannot be tolerated. The projects in the plan of action are based on this, and



are therefore primarily concerned with adults. The action plan also embraces measures aimed at providing individually-tailored treatment for children who have suffered violence in the home or sexual abuse. These include an emphasis on supporting and developing the work of the Children's House (*Barnahús*), publicizing its services and seeking ways to do more to meet the needs of children who have suffered violence or abuse of any type. Last but not least, emphasis is placed on enabling the perpetrators of violence against children to undergo treatment in order to break the pattern of repeated violence, and on treatment services for children with inappropriate sexual behaviour.

In April 2012, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and the Ministry of Welfare signed a 3-year agreement on a collaborate project aimed at increasing awareness and developing competence in dealing with sexual offences against children. The main goals of this project, referred to as the *Awareness Awakening (Vitundarvakningin)*, are to promote interdisciplinary cooperation and to promote social awareness by dissemination of information about sexual offences against children amongst children themselves as well as among people who have direct contact/communication with children in connection with their work. This is managed by a Task Force with representatives from the respective Ministries which has received separate budget for this purpose. It should be noted that this effort is directly inspired by the Council of Europe's "*One in five*" campaign and the ratification of the Lanzarote Convention. The main components of this project include the following.

An educational puppet theatre called "The Kids on the Block" has been produced for children in the early years of elementary school. This is an interactive programme that is designed to educate children about personal safety, sexual abuse, the importance of telling someone they trust about it, and services available. A school counsellor, a social worker, a nurse or a psychologist is present at every performance. Following the show, a letter is sent to parents or guardians of all the children in the audience with information on how further preventive material and information for grown-ups can be obtained. The letter has been translated into the six foreign languages that are most common in Iceland. The programme has been implemented in collaboration with *Blátt Áfram* ("Straight Forward") an Icelandic grassroots child sexual abuse prevention organization and the plan is to present it for 7-year-old children in all elementary schools in the country. Already 320 performances have taken place; typically three shows are needed for each school.

A short film, "*Get a Yes*," has been produced for children in secondary schools. This film addresses the line between healthy sex and sexual violence as well as the harmful effects of pornography. *Get a Yes* was premiered on the 30 January 2013 in all Icelandic schools for 15-18 years old pupils. The previous day it was featured on television at prime time and followed up in the media over the following days. A teacher's guide was produced to accompany the film. It can also be used as instruction for adults on how to discuss these issues with young people. The film is available with subtitles in seven languages. The film is available for everyone on the website *faduja.is* which contains information and guidelines for teachers and guardians, to be used in discussion about the main themes in the film. The impact of the film has already been evaluated and the results are very positive.

A short film, “*Stand-by-yourself*,” has been produced for children in the middle classes of elementary school. (This is still in the making). The target-group and aims of the film are similar to those in the films mentioned above.

In April 2013 the Government approved a multi-dimensional Action Plan on the protection of children from sexual abuse and exploitation and on services to child victims of these offences. This Action Plan contains 27 defined actions of which 15 are defined as priority actions. These actions are aimed at further coordination and collaboration between the various agencies working in this field including the child protection services, the police, the prosecution and the medical services. Included in these actions are new facilities and increased number of staff in *Barnahús*, an increase in allocations to the police and the prosecution to deal with sexual abuse cases and the establishment of a national council, and also regional mechanisms, for coordination between the child protection services, the police and the prosecution to improve response and work procedure in child sexual abuse cases.

## **Part II**

### **Article 7**

#### **Subparagraph a)**

##### **Women’s representation in Parliament and local government**

In 2015, one hundred years will have passed since the acquisition of the right to vote and to stand for election by women in Iceland aged 40 and older; this right was extended to them by an amendment of the Constitution on 19 June 1915. It was not until 1920 that women in Iceland achieved full suffrage on a par with men. Thus, the years 1915 and 1920 are important milestones towards full gender equality in terms of democratic participation in Iceland.

Over the past three decades the number of women elected has been rising steadily: after the general election of 1979 women accounted for only 5% of parliamentarians; this number rose to 25% after the 1995 election and to 35% following the election of 1999.

It can be asserted with some confidence that the increased demands made after the economic crisis of 2008 to have women involved to a greater degree in government resulted in an increase in the numbers of women in politics and across the senior levels of public administration. Women now account for 40% of elected representatives both in local government and in parliament, where their numbers peaked at 43% of MPs after the general election of 2009. The outcome of the general election of 2009 was that 36 men (57.1% of the total) and 27 women (42.9%) were elected; this was an increase of 7 women compared with the election results of 2007. Never before had so many women been returned as full MPs; the previous record, after the 1999 elections, had been 35%. The results in the election of 2013 were 38 men (61.3%) and 25 women (39.7%). The gender proportions in the outcomes of recent parliamentary elections in Iceland can be attributed to the fact that it is now more common for women to be placed in the upper seats on political parties’ electoral lists than it used to be and more women are now standing for election in the rural constituencies. Thus, women now have far more chance of being elected than they had a few years ago.

### Local Council Elections

Local council elections were held in all 76 municipalities in Iceland on 29 May 2010. According to *Hagtiðindi*, the statistical reports of Statistics Iceland, 112,233 men stood as candidates (49.7%) and 113,622 women (50.3%). In 58 municipalities the election was by proportional representation and in them 185 candidate lists were fielded. In four of these municipalities, candidates were elected without opposition as only one list was fielded. There were 2,846 candidates who stood for election in these 58 municipalities; 1,513 (53.2%) were men and 1,333 (46.8%) were women. On the whole, the balance between the genders was more equal in 2010 than it had been before, where the proportion of women fielded by the political parties ranged between 46% and 51%, with 46% on the lists of other entities.

The proportion of women among the candidates had never been greater: in the previous municipal council elections, in 2006, it had been 43.8%. There were both male and female candidates in all 59 of the municipalities where election was by proportional representation. In nine municipalities there were equal numbers of candidates of each gender; in 2006 this had been the case in eight. Of all candidate lists, irrespective of where they were fielded, 56 (30.3%) included as many women as men in 2010, against only 15 in 2006. Men were in a majority among the candidates in 41 municipalities, with women forming 40-49% in 37 of them and 30-39% in the remaining four. In eight municipalities women were in the majority of candidates. There were more women than men on 34 lists (18.4% of the total), and more men than women on 95 lists (51.6% of the total). The ranking of candidates on the lists in the local council elections of 2010 was such that men headed the lists in 139 cases (75%) and women in 46 cases (25%). On the other hand, women candidates occupied second place on 115 lists (62%) and men on 70 (38%). 512 principal representatives were elected to the municipal councils. Of these 308 (60.2%) were men and 204 (39.8%) were women. Never before have so many local councillors been women; the previous record, of 35.9%, was in the 2006 elections. When the statistics are analysed from the point of view of numbers of inhabitants in the various local government areas, it appears that the proportion of women is highest (45%) in areas with 300-999 inhabitants where elections went ahead on the basis of candidate lists. In areas with more than 1,000 inhabitants, the proportion of women is found to be 39%; in areas of 299 or fewer inhabitants, the proportion is 34%. Women were elected in larger numbers where elections in 2010 proceeded on the basis of candidate lists than where all inhabitants are, in effect, candidates unless they specifically decline election. In the 59 areas where such list elections were held, 59.1% of those returned were men and 40.9% were women. In 18 areas, home to just over 1% of the electorate, elections were not based on lists (i.e., all inhabitants were potential candidates). There, 94 councillors were elected: 61 men (64.9%) and 33 women (35.1%). The highest ratios of men were in municipalities with 299 inhabitants or fewer and where everyone was potentially a candidate: 67.1%.

Information from the local elections that took place in 2014 has not been gathered yet.

### Presidential Elections

Iceland's presidents are elected directly by the electorate. The first presidential election was held in 1952, and the most recent one in 2012. Twenty-two people have stood for election, including six women. Five individuals have served as President,

including one woman, Ms Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, who was elected with 33% of the vote in 1980, becoming the first elected female president in the world. She served as President for 16 years, from 1980 to 1996. In the election in 2012 there were six candidates, three of whom were women. Mr Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson was elected with 52.8% of the vote. He is currently serving his fifth term as President. The runner-up, with 33.2% of vote, was Mrs Þóra Arnórsdóttir.

### **Constitutional Assembly Elections**

A special Constitutional Assembly was held in Iceland in 2010. Under the Constitutional Assembly Act No. 90/2010, the President of Iceland was, in collaboration with the Constitutional Committee, to call a Constitutional Assembly to revise the Constitution of the Republic of Iceland. Elections to the Constitutional Assembly were held on 27 November 2010 and the assembly was to meet in February 2011. The assembly, consisting of 25 people standing as individuals and chosen by the electorate with the whole country as a single constituency for the purpose of the election, was to work for 2-4 months and prepare a draft revision of the Constitution, taking into account the outcome of a national consultative meeting on the Constitution that had been held on 6 November 2010. That meeting had been attended by 950 people from all over the country, aged between 18 and 91 with almost exactly equal gender balance in the group. Provision was made in the Constitutional Assembly Act for some flexibility in the number of members; if either gender were underrepresented in the election results, the number could be raised from 25 to as many as 31 to secure a better balance. In practice, it did not prove necessary to do so, however. Altogether, 522 people stood for election to the Constitutional Assembly, 364 (70%) men and 159 (30%) women. The average age of all candidates, 47, was the same for both women and men. The oldest man was 80 and the youngest 19; the oldest woman was 66 and the youngest 22. The outcome of the election was that 15 men (60%) and 10 women (40%) were elected.

### **Women in the Leading Role**

Leading up to the local council elections in 2014, female members of all political parties unified in a trans-political action programme in the name of gender equality. The first act consisted of encouraging people to place the logo of the movement as their Facebook profile picture. The logo was introduced at a press conference. The political participants who spoke at the meeting stated the importance of allowing the voices of all women to be heard, regardless of political agenda.

### **Subparagraphs b) and c)**

#### **Women's Representation in Public Decision Making**

In 1970, the first woman took a seat in the Icelandic Government. Until 2006, women served only as ministers of Social Affairs, Education and Health; since then, women have served as Minister for Foreign Affairs, as Prime Minister, as Minister of Finance and Minister of the Interior; it is to be noted that they have not yet held the portfolios of Agriculture and Fisheries. In 2009, women became 50% of the cabinet for the first time and Ms Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir became the first female Prime Minister of Iceland. A new Government led by Sigmundur Davíð Gunnlaugsson took over on 23 May 2013. The cabinet consists of nine ministers, six (66.6%) men and three (33.3%) women. The out-going cabinet, the second led by Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir, had consisted of 10 ministers, four (40%) women and six (60%) men.

**Gender ratio on committees, boards and councils in 2012**

<i>Ministry</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Women %</i>	<i>Men %</i>
Prime Minister's Office	64	75	139	46%	54%
Ministry of Industries and Innovation	173	273	446	39%	61%
Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs	110	151	261	42%	58%
Ministry of the Interior	141	224	365	39%	61%
Ministry of Education, Science and Culture	373	504	877	43%	57%
Ministry for the Environment and Natural Resources	141	187	328	43%	57%
Ministry for Foreign Affairs	136	185	321	42%	58%
Ministry of Welfare	419	391	810	52%	48%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 557</b>	<b>1 990</b>	<b>3 547</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>56%</b>

Under Article 15 of the Gender Equality Act, No. 10/2008, care is to be taken when making appointments to state and municipal committees, councils and governing boards to ensure that the proportions between the genders are as even as is practicable, with not less than 40% of seats occupied by each gender when there are more than three members. This also applies to public limited companies and enterprises which are in majority state or municipal ownership.

In 2008 women accounted for 37% of the members of committees, councils and boards within the Government ministries. In 2009 and 2010 this figure was 40%; in 2011 it was 43% and in 2012 it reached 44%. In 2012, 148 new committees, councils and boards were appointed. The composition of each was in conformity with the law in 100 cases, i.e. 68% of the total of new committees, etc., beginning work within the ministries that year. The Centre for Gender Equality sought explanations of the appointments made to 48 committees (etc.), and examination is currently in progress as to whether these appointments were covered by the exemption provisions which state that deviations may be made from the main rule of nominating both a man and a woman when there are objective reasons. The examination has revealed that in about half the cases where appointments did not meet the requirements of Article 15, the exemption provisions applied.

Women and men working in the ministries and government bodies have equal opportunities as regards representing the government in the international arena and participating in the work of international organizations. According to statistics from 2013 the proportions between the sexes in the Government delegations are as follows:

<i>Position</i>	<i>% Men</i>	<i>% Women</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Number</i>
Permanent Secretaries	50%	50%	100%	8
General Directors	63%	37%	100%	65
Specialists	43%	57%	100%	327
Other employees	20%	80%	100%	139
<b>Total</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>539</b>

*Source:* Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, 2013.

An interesting fact is that more women than men work in ministries which handle educational and cultural matters, health and social matters, the environment and natural resources and interior matters. Other ministries are more evenly divided between the sexes but women outnumber men in six ministries out of eight.

### Ministry employees by sex in September 2011 and 2012

Year	2011			2012		
	Women	Men	Number	Women	Men	Number
Prime Minister's Office	53%	47%	30	48%	52%	33
Ministry of Education, Science and Culture	66%	34%	87	67%	33%	85
Ministry for Foreign Affairs	52%	48%	110	55%	45%	105
Ministry of Industries and Innovation	58%	42%	81	58%	42%	88
Ministry of the Interior	67%	33%	78	70%	30%	73
Ministry of Welfare	66%	34%	105	68%	32%	104
Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs	49%	51%	68	49%	51%	79
Ministry for the Environment and Natural Resources	70%	30%	33	68%	32%	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>592</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>601</b>

Source: Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, 2013.

### Government employees by ministries and gender in September 2011 and 2012

Year	2011			2012		
	Women	Men	Number	Women	Men	Number
Supreme Administration	52%	48%	314	50%	50%	314
Prime Minister's Office	54%	46%	79	53%	47%	80
Ministry of Education, Science and Culture	57%	43%	5 481	57%	43%	5 455
Ministry for Foreign Affairs	54%	46%	260	53%	47%	272
Ministry of Industries and Innovation	44%	56%	995	46%	54%	1 043
Ministry of the Interior	36%	64%	2 893	37%	63%	2 865
Ministry of Welfare	81%	19%	9 248	81%	19%	9 246
Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs	51%	49%	834	52%	48%	854
Ministry for the Environment and Natural Resources	43%	57%	760	43%	57%	732
<b>Total</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>20 864</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>20 861</b>

Source: Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, 2013.

### Judges

The prescribed number of district court judges was 38 up until 2010, when the number was raised to 43. The increase came in the form of two men and three women, all of whom were appointed to the district court in Reykjavík. Women account for a little fewer than 42% of district court judges. This is an increase since 2008, when only 32% of district court judges were women. Most of the female judges work at the district courts of Reykjavík and the Reykjanes peninsula. Of the

eleven assistants to district court judges, eight are women and three are men. Each of the eight district courts in Iceland is chaired by a court chairman. In June of 2013, seven men and one woman were employed as district court chairmen. There were 10 assistants to court chairmen, eight women and two men.

In 2011, the number of judges at the Supreme Court was increased from ten to twelve. Since then, there have been twelve active Supreme Court judges: two women and ten men. This ratio has not changed since 2011. In 2012, two male Supreme Court judges stepped down, to be replaced by other two men. In 2013 a male judge was absent on leave and was replaced temporarily by a female judge. There are five assistants to Supreme Court judges; four women and a single man. The position of Supreme Court office manager is occupied by a man.

### Judges in 2009-2013

	2009			2010			2011			2012			2013		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Supreme Court	9	7	2	9	8	1	12	10	2	12	10	2	12	10	2
District Courts															
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>18</b>
Reykjavik	22	14	8	25	14	11	25	15	10	25	15	10	25	12	13
West Iceland	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0
West Fjords	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0
Northwest Iceland	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0
Northeast Iceland	3	3	0	3	3	0	3	3	0	3	3	0	3	3	0
East Iceland	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1
South Iceland	2	1	1	3	2	1	3	2	1	3	2	1	3	2	1
Reykjanes Peninsula	7	4	3	8	5	3	8	5	3	8	5	3	8	5	3

Source: National Court Committee and the Supreme Court, 2013.

The National Court Committee was founded in 1998. Its main responsibilities are the financing of the judiciary, the coordination of rules for the district courts, deciding the number of judges and other employees at each district court, etc. Under Article 13 of the Judiciary Act, No. 15/1998, the committee consists of five representatives. In 2013 it consisted of three men and two women.

### District commissioners and police officers

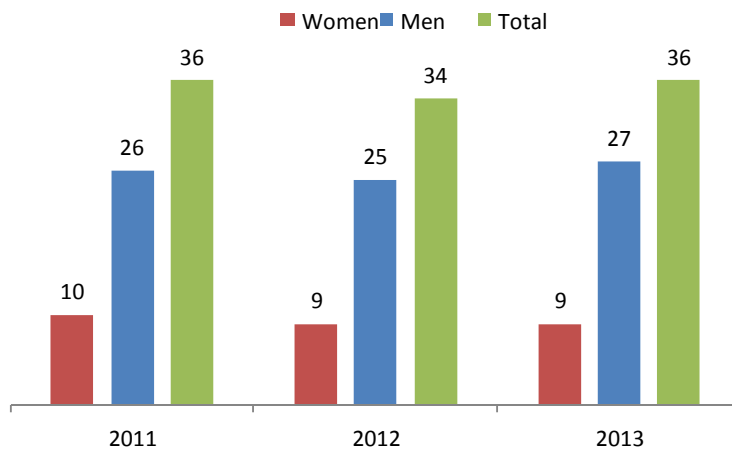
There were 24 district commissioners in Iceland in 2013, including six women (25%). This is the same ratio as in 2009 and 2011, according to a report on the status of gender equality in 2009-2011. Women account for just fewer than 13% of the entire national police force. No woman served as Chief Superintendent until 2014. Amongst constables, men account for about 83% of the force while women account for about 17%. The rank in which the highest percentage of women (18.9%) within the police force is that of Detective Chief Inspector.

## Article 8

### Women in the diplomatic service

Since 1998, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs has given special attention to engaging women staff in order to achieve a more even balance between the sexes in the diplomatic service. Traditionally, women have been in a minority within the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The first female ambassador was not appointed until 1991. Since then the percentage of female ambassadors has risen considerably. Women form a majority of employees in the ministry.

### Female and male ambassadors 2011-2013



The Ministry for Foreign Affairs has given prominence to projects in which young people who are embarking on their careers are given an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the work of the Icelandic Foreign Service and work in international organisations at first hand. Women have been in the majority of those who have been engaged under this scheme. Since 2002 the ministry has taken on student trainees; their training takes place entirely in Iceland's ministries and standing committees overseas, and lasts six months. In 2008 two men and three women took part in the trainee programme; in 2009 two men and three women took part; in 2010 four men and two women were engaged in the positions; in 2011 six women took part; in 2012 six men and three women took part while finally in 2013 a single man and five women took part in the trainee program. All in all, 15 men and 22 women have taken part in the trainee program in the period 2008-2013.

### Junior Professional Officers

Iceland finances various Junior Professional Officer Positions with the United Nations; these officers are engaged in positions in United Nations projects in various parts of the world. In 2008 six women and one man were engaged to these positions; in 2009 there were four women but no men while in 2010 there was just one woman but no men. Between 2011 and 2012 there were no Junior Professional Officers employed and in 2013 there was a single officer, a woman. Out of those officers, only one was hired in the period 2008-2013, the single woman hired in 2013. Others were hired in 2005-2007. The engagements are for terms of up to three years.



## **International Peacekeeping**

Iceland has no armed forces and participates in international peacekeeping missions through contributions to multilateral organizations and the secondment of civilian experts, as part of international development cooperation. Peacebuilding is one of three focus areas in Iceland's Strategy for International Development Cooperation 2013-2016, and gender equality and women's empowerment are defined as cross-cutting issues. The Icelandic peacekeeping unit has worked hard on evening out the male/female ratio amongst specialists. A breakthrough was achieved in this aspect in 2011 when more women than men operated. In 2012 a majority of specialists on field were women, outnumbering their male colleagues by 11 to 5.

"Women, Peace and Security" is one of four key areas of emphasis in the Gender Equality Policy for Iceland's development cooperation 2013-2016. Iceland adopted its first National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security on 8 March 2008. The initial NAP was reviewed in 2011 and a new NAP has been adopted for the period 2013-2016. The NAP plays an important role in Iceland's contribution to peace-building. Before deployment, all personnel seconded to peacekeeping missions receive training on gender equality and the implementation of UNSCR 1325, provided by the National Committee of UN Women in Iceland.

### **Article 9**

The Icelandic Citizenship Act, No. 100/1952, was amended under the Act No. 65/2010 so that foreign women and Icelandic men, who become parents through assisted fertilisation, receive the same rights as those who become parents through more traditional measures. Act No. 81/2007 entailed that the child is granted an Icelandic citizenship if the parents get married before the child reaches the age of 18. Other changes, relevant to Article 9, have not been made to the Icelandic Citizenship Act since the last report.

Reference is made to the previous reports.

## **Part III**

### **Article 10**

#### **Subparagraphs a)-d)**

##### **Education**

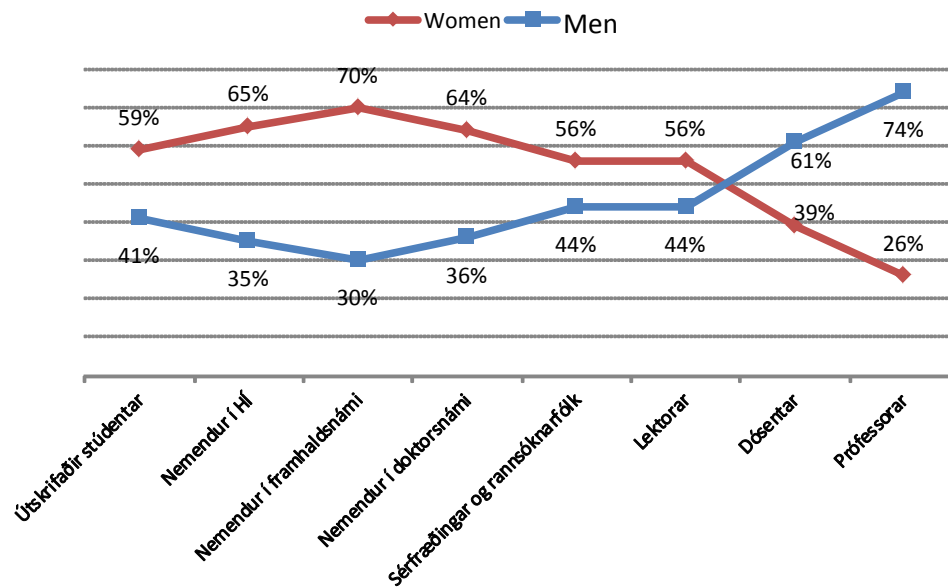
In Iceland, school attendance is compulsory from the age of 6 to 16. Girls and boys have equal access to education at all levels of education. Girls and boys have attended high school in almost equal proportions since 1975 and in 2011, girls accounted for 57% of matriculated school leavers and boys 43%. The proportion of women graduating at university level has increased over the last decades. In 1975 women accounted for 24% of graduates, in 1985 the figure was 50% and in 2011 it was 64%.

The concern regarding education and training is the gender-segregated choices that boys and girls make. This is not only a problem related to education, as the workforce is, as a consequence, also highly gender-segregated. In some fields of education there are signs that gender segregation is declining. In 2011 women represented higher ratios of students in all faculties of the University of Iceland,

with the exception of the Engineering and Natural Sciences Faculty, where they accounted for 40%. Within the departments in the Engineering and Natural Sciences Faculty there were variations in the gender proportions in 2011. Women formed the lesser proportion (13%) in the Electrical and Computer Engineering department, but the greater (63%) in the Biology and Environmental Sciences department. Men were in the majority in Electrical and Computer Engineering. The most even balance was in the Geological Sciences department, where 47% of students were women. In the Faculty of Education, on the other hand, women are in the majority in all departments, forming 82% of the total. The lowest proportion of men (27%) is found in the Sports, Leisure Interests and Social Pedagogy department. Women are also in the majority in all departments in the Faculty of Health Sciences, though the proportion of men has risen there in recent years, from 21% in 2008 to 24% in 2011. There is a wide variation from one department to another. For example, 99% of students in the Nursing department in 2011 were female; in the same year, women accounted for 81% in Pharmacology and 69% in Psychology.

Two open seminars on gender divisions on the labour market which were held on 13 and 26 February 2013. The first of these examined the position of men in what are traditionally women's lines of work (care-giving and teaching); the second examined the position of women in what have been traditionally men's occupations (computer science and technical work). The task force maintains a page on Facebook where its activities may be examined: [facebook.com/#!/launajafnretti](https://www.facebook.com/#!/launajafnretti). A new project on gender equality in the labour market will build on the work done in previous projects. The project is to be funded by the project fund for gender equality.

No systematic measures have been taken at the University of Iceland to increase numbers of students of the gender that is in a significant minority in the individual departments. Nevertheless, some departments have, for example, considered designing publicity materials with pictures of both women and men in them. A report which the university commissioned stated that such measures were not sufficient as regards the Social Counselling, Nursing and Electrical and Computer Engineering departments. Other, more effective, means than those that have been used in recent years for increasing the numbers of students of the under-represented gender would be required, as the means used to date appear to have produced practically no results.



Article 23 of the Gender Equality Act, No. 10/2008, states that the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is to monitor compliance with gender equality in schools and educational institutions, including sports and leisure activities. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is to monitor developments in these areas of society as regards gender equality. A gender equality counsellor is to be employed at the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science to monitor the application of the provisions of the Article, and give relevant parties advice on gender equality issues, including affirmative actions to promote gender equality.

The Ministry issues the National Curricula for pre-schools, junior schools and senior schools under the statutes applying to the school level in question. These National Curricula are of equivalent status to government regulations, and lay down details on the application of statutes and regulations. They identify the aims and structure of work in the schools, how teaching is organised, what criteria and educational standards are set and the speed at which teaching is to proceed. New National Criteria were approved for all school levels in 2011, containing six fundamentals that are to underpin all teaching. These fundamentals address the ability to “read” society, culture, the environment and the natural world, and also future vision and the ability and will to influence and play an active role in maintaining one’s community, and also to change and develop it. One of the fundamentals is equality. A pamphlet, published in 2013, addresses educational equality at all levels of the school system and how opportunities can be created in school work to allow pupils to develop on their own premises in a spirit of tolerance and equality. The schools have already begun to implement these fundamentals, and it will be interesting to see how this work develops.

Major changes have taken place over the last few decades regarding the gender spread of students at university level. In 1975 only 48% of university students were women; this number had risen to 63% by 2009. In the autumn 2010, women accounted for 62.3% of all students at university level, and they have formed the majority of university graduates since 1996. In 2009, 524 women graduated with a master’s degree, 60% of the total number of graduates. In 2008, 15 women and 13 men finished their doctorate studies at Icelandic universities. Female students outnumbered their male counterparts in 61.4% of the 262 possible courses of study at Icelandic universities in 2009. In autumn 2011, women outnumbered men in 58.2% of the 282 courses of study.

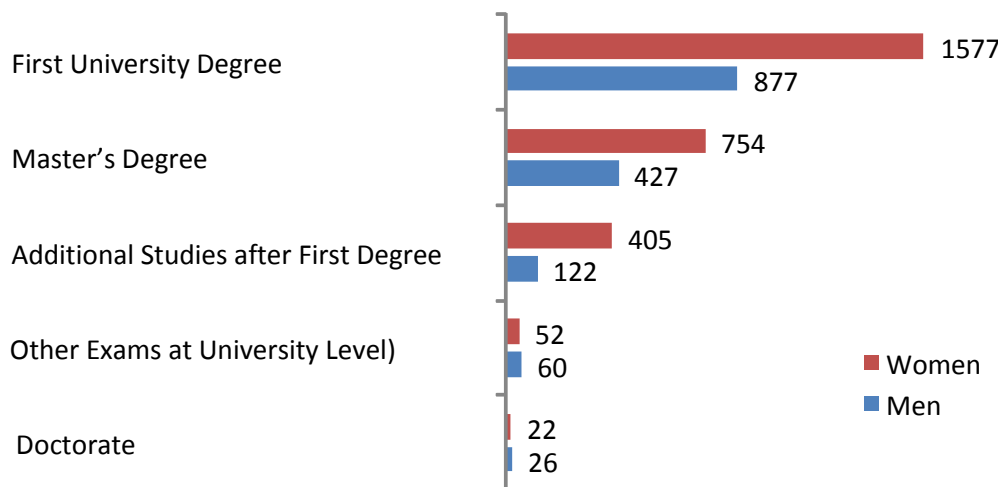
The University of Iceland offered a special Diploma in practical gender equality studies, evaluated at 30 ECTS units.

According to information from 2012, women outnumber men at every upper school level except a special additional level intended for industry-related studies. All in all, 27,216 women attended school at secondary or university level, compared to 21,507 men. Women thus account for 52% of students at secondary level.

**Qualifications from secondary school by course and sex in 2010-2011**

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Men (Quantity)</i>	<i>Women (Quantity)</i>	<i>Men %</i>	<i>Women %</i>
General Basic Course	84	42	42	50	50
Work Related Basic Course	6	1	5	16.7	83.3
Industrial Basic Course	76	72	4	94.7	5.3
Qualifying Exam	941	287	654	30.5	69.5
Trade Rights	599	234	365	39.1	60.9
Industrial Final Exam	691	525	166	76	24
Journeyman's Examination	560	447	113	79.8	20.2
Trade Secondary School Exam	634	299	335	47.2	52.8
General Secondary School Exam	2 627	1 094	1 533	41.6	58.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>6 218</b>	<b>3 001</b>	<b>3 217</b>	<b>48.3</b>	<b>51.7</b>

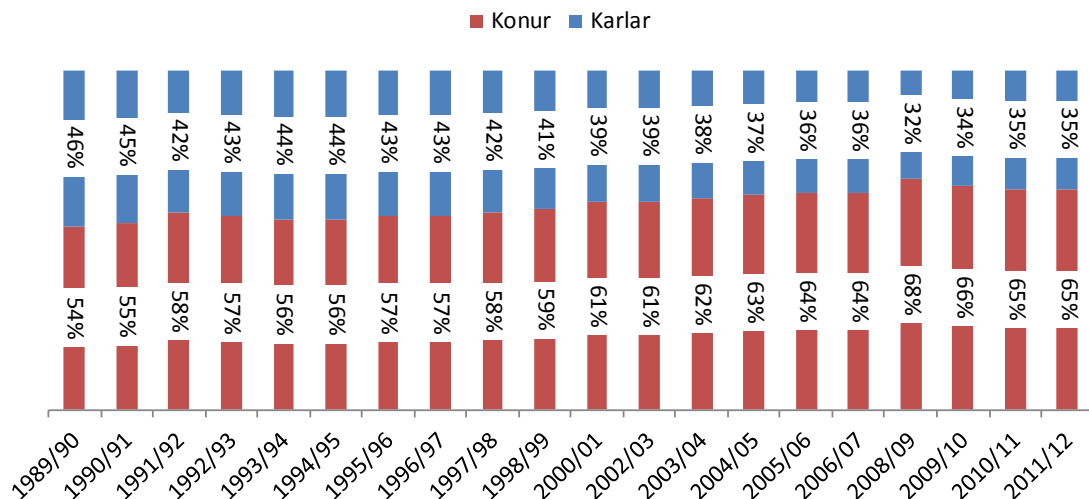
Women also outnumber men as graduates from university studies. In 2010-2011, 4,281 students graduated at university level or completed their doctorate degrees. Just fewer than 65% of the alumni were women. The number of graduates had risen by 4.8% since 2009-2010.

**Number of university graduates by course and sex, 2010-2011**

Source: Statistics Iceland, 2012.

In September 2012 a report on the status of gender equality issues within the University of Iceland 2008-2011 was released. The following graphics are based on information from the report.

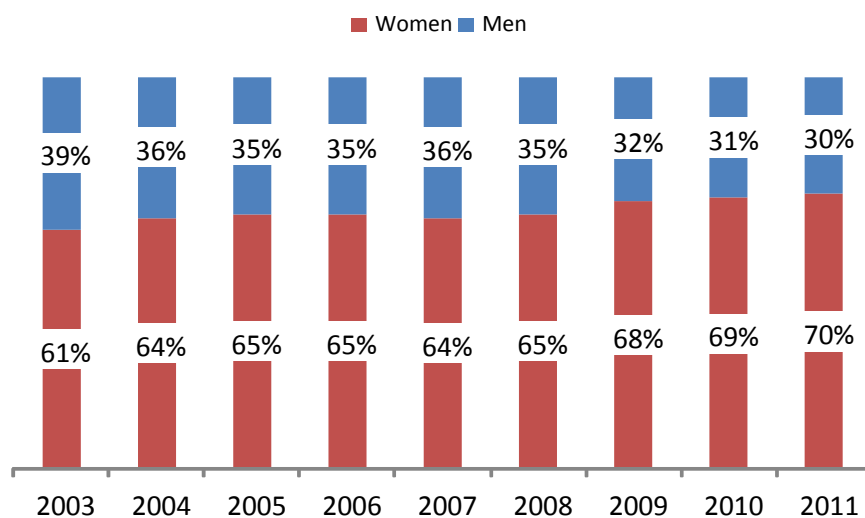
### Male/female ratios at the University of Iceland, 1989-2011



Source: University of Iceland, 2012.

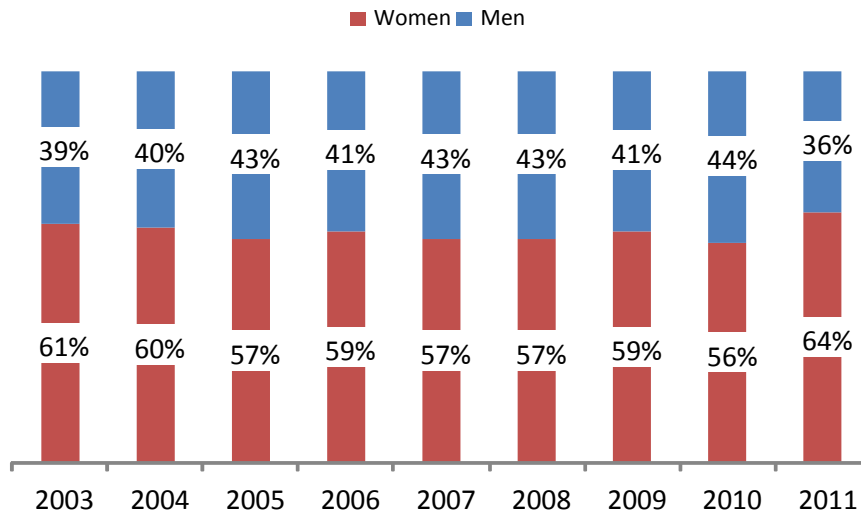
Women also outnumber men at graduate study levels at the University of Iceland: 70% of students at the Master's level and 64% of doctorate students.

### Male/female ratios at Master's degree level at the University of Iceland, 1989-2011



Source: University of Iceland, 2012.

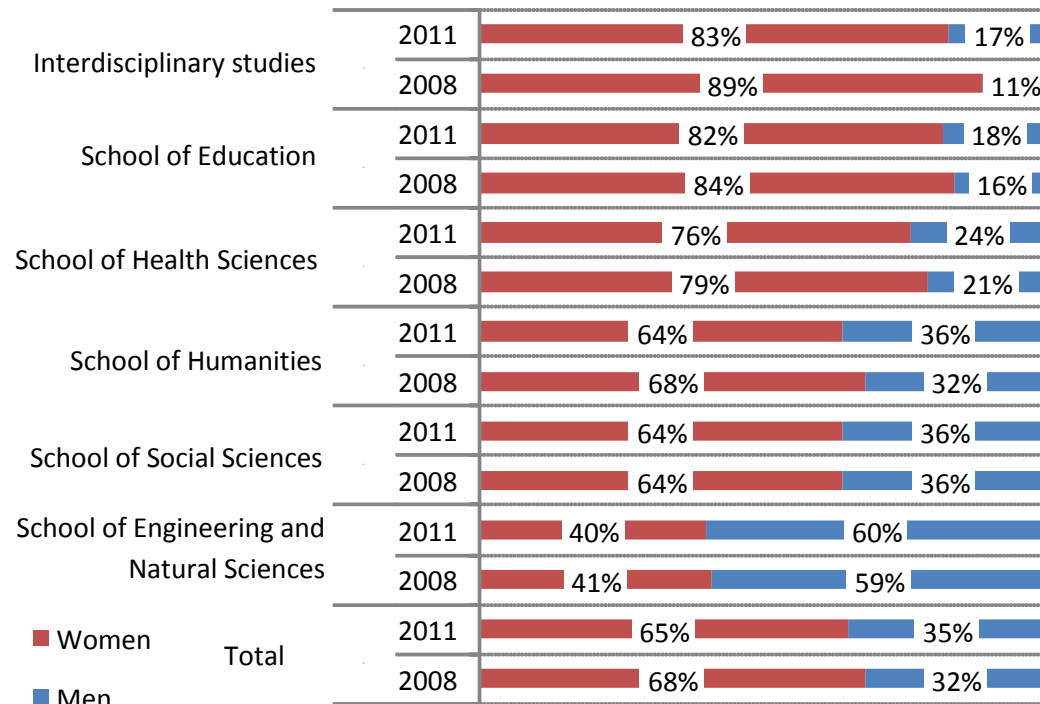
**Male/female ratios of doctorate students at the University of Iceland, 1989-2011**



Source: University of Iceland, 2012.

Women are in a majority at every faculty of the University, except the faculty of Engineering and Natural Sciences where they account for 40% of the students.

**Male/female ratios of students at the University of Iceland, 1989-2011**



Source: University of Iceland, 2012.

More than half of university graduates since 1980 have been women. They accounted for 80-90% of graduates in the teaching profession in the years 1995-1998. This has not yet been reflected in the proportion of women in leading positions in the school system. Nevertheless, it can be said that there has been some increase in the number of women as principals and/or vice-principals in compulsory and upper secondary schools.

### **Science**

Funds operating under the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and according to the laws on governmentally supported scientific research have systematically collected information on applicants and grant recipients, broken down by gender, in order to evaluate how the funds assist each gender and to prevent gender discrimination. Information has also been gathered on the viewpoints that come into play when committees issuing grants are appointed. The final objective of the project is to see whether equal capital is granted to male and female-driven projects.

EDDA — Centre of Excellence is a forum for contemporary critical studies in the fields of sociology, politics and culture with an emphasis on equality and variety. EDDA has made a priority of multi-disciplinary studies and has established a broad network of contacts with universities and research institutes both in Iceland and abroad. EDDA has also organised conferences and other events and sought to exert an influence on public policy-making. Over the past three years, EDDA has supported many research projects in the field of gender equality and has organised more than 40 events in the fields defined as its focus, including conferences, seminars and lectures.

MARK, a centre for research into variety and gender studies, is a forum for study and awareness-raising in the field of human rights, discrimination, equality, gender studies and variety in the University of Iceland's Faculty of Social Sciences. MARK was established in 2011 for the purpose of carrying out, and encouraging, studies in these fields, establishing contact with academics and research centres both in Iceland and abroad, training students in research techniques, forging closer links between teaching and research, providing counselling and research-related services and improving awareness of the fields under study. MARK has a five-man committee which works together with a consultative council composed of interested persons and players in the centre's fields of interest who provide advice and support to the board.

The Centre for Women's and Gender Research at the University of Iceland (RIKK) is a multi-disciplinary institution that has been in operation since 1991 and is a leader in the field of women's studies, gender studies and equality issues in Iceland. Its main aim is to promote research in the field of gender studies and to publicise and disseminate research findings. It does this by means of holding courses, lectures and conferences and by issuing publications. RIKK is intended to provide information and advice on women's and gender studies, cultivate contact with research bodies both in Iceland and abroad and support and encourage the pursuit of women's studies in the various departments and faculties of the University of Iceland.

Further reference is made to previous reports.

**Subparagraph d)**

Reference is made to the previous reports by the Government of Iceland.

**Subparagraph e)**

Education, continuing education and retraining programmes of various types are on offer for people on the labour market, and the range and quality of these courses has increased greatly in recent years.

A special research fund, the Gender Equality Fund, was established in 2005. The fund has the goal of encouraging gender-based research and enhancing gender equality. Special emphasis is put on projects carried out by young scientists and doctorate projects. The first grant from the fund was awarded in 2006. Two more grants were awarded before the economic collapse put the project on hold in 2008. In 2012, grants were awarded again. Out of 13 applicants, grants were offered to five projects. The researches and projects which receive grants from the fund are to be made accessible online in order to be of even more use the fight for gender equality.

The project fund for gender equality has been mentioned earlier in this report in connection with the government action plan. The fund has granted ISK 20 million to various projects, including ISK 4 million to the Ministry of Welfare to finance the post of project manager on the action plan gender wage equality, ISK 2 million to the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture to help with education on gender equality in primary schools, ISK 1.5 million for the establishment of the European Centre for Women and Technology at the University of Reykjavík, etc.

Reference is made to the previous reports by the Government of Iceland.

**Subparagraph f)**

Girl dropout has not been seen as a major problem in the Icelandic society since considerably fewer girls drop out of school than their male counterparts. However, male dropout has been a growing concern. In 2014, the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture introduced two main goals regarding educational reform, that 90% of primary school students reach adequate reading levels and that the percentage of students finishing secondary school education rise to 60%. In order to fight dropout, the plan is to rearrange and shorten the secondary school cycle. Further reference is made to the previous reports.

**Subparagraph g)**

In 2005 the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture gave support to the Centre for Gender Equality for a study of stereotypes in sports and the media (Sports, Media and Stereotypes). This study was part of a European project and was directed by the Centre. Other countries involved were Austria, Italy, Lithuania and Norway. One finding of the study was that women are grossly underrepresented in sport coverage in the media: 87.14% of sport-related news stories focused on men while women were in the limelight in only 9.7% of cases. Media coverage on women in sports implies that their participation is less serious than male participation in sports. Very few women work as sports reporters.



At the same time, an effort was made to establish gender equality within the sports movement, e.g. with emphasis on subsidies for projects regarding the participation of girls in sports. A subsidy was granted from the Ministry's Sports Fund to give support girls' basketball. Many associations within the sports movement have started working on action plans to eradicate gender discrimination. A special fund has been established under the National Olympic and Sports Association of Iceland to assist advanced female athletes. Members of the national association can apply for the title of "role model association" if they pass certain standards, i.e. regarding gender equality. Eighteen associations received this designation in 2008.

#### **Subparagraph h)**

In 2010, the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture released an informative handbook (*Kynungabók*) concerning sex-related issues and gender-equality matters. The manual was an initial part of a new educational policy in which equality, democracy, literacy, sustainability, creativity and health should be guiding principles in all school-oriented projects. The aim of the release is to give a realistic image of the gender status in society and encourage young citizens to consider the different aspects of gender moulding and the influence it has on the lives of young people. The handbook was aimed at people aged 15-25, reaching students at three school levels. The aspiration is that the release will be useful to all concerned with upbringing and instruction. The handbook was printed in a large print-run and copies were sent to schools, libraries and other government institutions. A web page connected to the project has been updated from time to time. Printed copies available but users are mainly advised to access the web page. Further reference is made to the previous reports.

#### **Article 11**

##### **Paragraph 1, subparagraphs a)-c)**

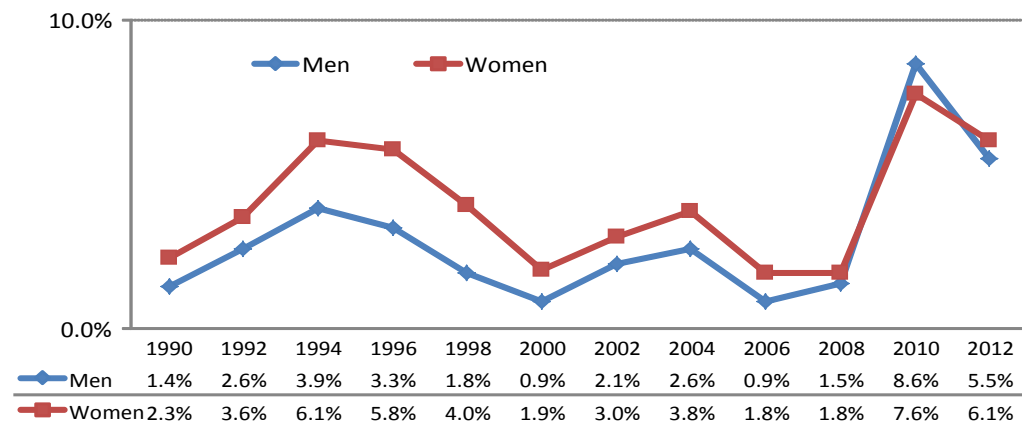
##### **Women's participation in the employment market**

Employment rates in Iceland have been high both for women and men. Women have been almost as economically active as men since the 1970s. The number of people in employment in the fourth quarter of 2013 stood at 176,200 and the proportion in terms of the working-age population was 77%. Overall, the number of people in employment rose by 7,800 between the fourth quarter of 2012 and the fourth quarter of 2013, an increase of about 2 percentage points. The proportion of women in employment stood at 78.2%, their numbers having risen by 4,000, and that of men at 79.3%. At the same time in 2012 the proportion of working women was 76.1% and that of men was 81.3%.

**Figures on the Icelandic employment market, 2012**

	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>
Employees, total	86 100	94 000
Ratio	48	52
Participation — ages 16-74, %	78	83
Ratio of employees — ages 16-74, %	73	78
Full employment (>35 hours/week), %	65	86
Partial employment (<35 hours/week), %	35	14
Average number of working hours/week	35	44
Average number of working hours/week for full employment	41	47
Unemployment, %	5.7	6.4

Of those in employment in Q4 2013, 144,000 (73.4%) were in full-time jobs and 46,900 (26.6%) were employed part-time. The full-time figure had grown by 2,500 since Q4 2012 and the part-time figure by 5,300. Of women in employment, 61.7% were in full-time employment in Q4 2013; the corresponding figure for men was 84.3%. An average of 8,400 people were unemployed in Q4 2013, representing 4.5% of the workforce. While the number of jobless people was more or less the same as in Q4 2012, the proportion was 0.2 percentage points higher. The unemployment rate in Q4 2013 was 4.4% among women and 4.6% among men; the corresponding figures for Q4 2012 were 4% and 5.4%.

**Unemployment rates 1990-2012**

Source: Statistics Iceland, 2013.

Among those who were employed in a particular week chosen for study in Q4 2013, the average working week was 38.9 hours: 34.2 hours for women and 43.1 hours for men. The average length of time worked by those in full-time employment was 44.9 hours per week: 41.4 for women and 47.2 for men. The average for part-time workers was 21.8 hours per week: 22.5 for women and 21.8 for men. In Q4 2012, the average working week was found to consist of 38.7 hours:

34.3 for women and 46.7 for men. The average for full-time employment was 44.2 hours and for part-time work it was 21.7 hours.

### **Working hours**

The working week grew a little shorter in the period 2006-2009 for both sexes. In 2005, the average working week for people aged 16-74 years was 42.2 hours. This number had fallen to 41.9 hours in 2007. According to Statistics Iceland, the average working week has grown even shorter since, amounting to 46.1 hours a week in 2008, 39.6 hours in 2009 and 39.5 hours in 2010.

Men averaged 46.2 hours a week in 2008, 43.8 hours a week in 2009 and 43.6 hours a week in 2010. Women averaged 35.8 working hours a week in 2008, 34.9 hours a week in 2009 and 34.8 hours in 2010. In this period, the working week has become 2.5 hours shorter for men while women have only lost one hour of their weekly average in the same period.

Taking the working hours of those in full employment, 46.3 hours a week was the 2008 average. Out of those numbers, men averaged 48.9 hours a week, while women averaged 42 hours a week. The total average in 2009 was 44.8 hours, 47.0 hours a week for men against 41.3 hours a week for women. The foregoing numbers suggest that the working hours have fallen each week and this applies to both sexes. Women in full employment also seem to work fewer hours a week than men, even if the difference is declining from year to year.

In 2012, the Minister of Welfare at the time appointed a working group on the coordination of family and employment life. Representatives from Confederation of Icelandic Employers, Icelandic Confederation of Labour, Federation of State and Municipal Employees, the Association of University Graduates, The Icelandic Women's Rights Association, Federation of Icelandic Women's Societies and the Feminist Association of Iceland. The tasks of the group consisted of working along the general action plan, provide employers and active participants in the employment market with ways to integrate family and work life, follow up on the work of previous committees on the subject and finally to investigate the feasibility of shortening the working week to 36 hours.

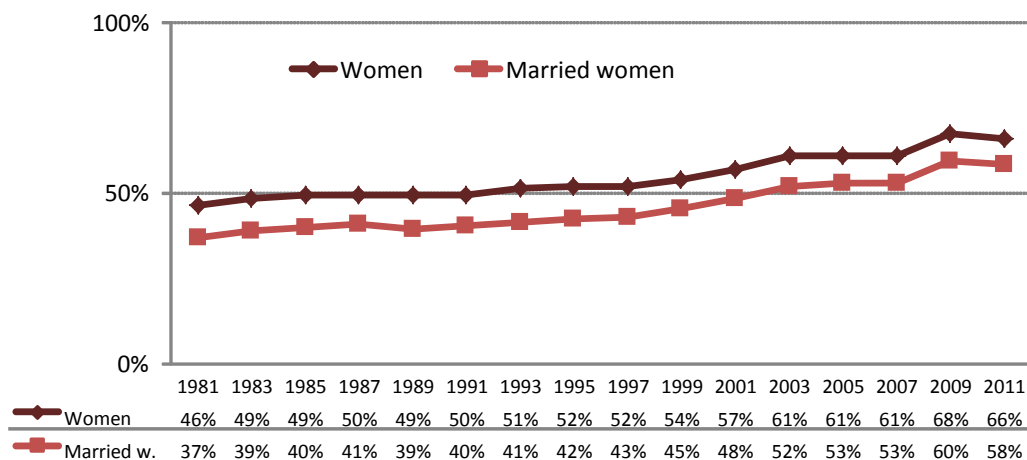
At a meeting of the Nordic ministers involved in gender equality issues in 2011, a recommendation was made to the committee of officials to reinforce collaboration on gender equality matters. A work group on equal pay has been established with the aim of forming a Nordic network of specialists within the ministries responsible for gender equality where information on legislation, research, measures and collaboration can be shared. The work group has collected information on the state of affairs in the Nordic countries, as well as helping to establishing a research project on the economic implications of having more women than men in part-time jobs. The working title of the research is *Part-time Jobs, Gender and Income Distribution* and the aim is to release it in two parts, covering the chair terms of Sweden and Iceland.

### **Equal Pay**

Equal pay has been one of the main topics in the struggle for gender equality on the Icelandic labour market. Studies indicate that gender-based wage differentials have not been eliminated, even though some important progress has been made over

the past year or two. Many studies of the gender pay gap have been carried out in Iceland, employing various methods. The differential remaining after all other factors have been allowed for and only gender remains is known as the “non-adjusted gender wage differential”. Studies in the past few years have established this figure at 7-18%, depending on the methods used and, not least, on the groups or geographical regions of the country on which the surveys are based.

#### Wages of women as ratio of wages of men 1981-2011



Source: Statistics Iceland, 2011.

A study made by Statistics Iceland in 2010 at the request of the social partners and covering the wages of 185,000 people in the private sector during the period 2000-2007 showed a gender pay gap of 9%. While there is still a significant difference between aggregate earnings of men and women, it has become smaller over the past decade because women are now, on average, working longer and men are working shorter hours. In the 1980s, women’s aggregate earnings were only just over half of men’s; in the latest surveys, the proportion lies in the range 68-82%. Part of the explanation for this is that women’s participation in the employment market has risen steadily. Even though women are still in a minority in managerial and influential positions, they account for more than half the experts among the specially-qualified workers in Iceland. The ratio of women in specialist positions will probably rise still higher, since over 60% of the graduates emerging from Iceland’s universities each year are now women.

Projects are currently under way to eradicate the persistent problem of the gender pay gap. Chief among these are the Equal Pay Standard and the Plan of Action on Gender Equality Regarding Wages, which have been discussed earlier in this report.

As a part of Iceland’s year chairing Nordic collaboration on gender equality in 2014, a pair of conferences will be held in November. The first conference focuses on part time jobs and their influence on gender equality on the labour market. The other conference will be co-hosted by the Nordic workgroup on wage equality and equality in the labour market and the Icelandic work group on wage equality. The focus will be the theme of wage equality. At the Women in Parliament Global

Forum, held in Brussels on November 27th 2013, Iceland was named the Global Winner in Closing the Gender Gap for outstanding achievement in the field.

### **Maternity/paternity leave**

It is regarded as a priority in Iceland to ensure that both parents have the same scope for attending to their families and pursuing work outside the home, and experience has shown that one of the key factors in being able to combine professional and family life is that both parents should be entitled to maternity/paternity leave. The parliament passed ground-breaking legislation on maternity/paternity and parental leave in 2000, which included one of the most generous paternity leave entitlements in the world. The joint leave entitlement was extended from six months to nine; parents who are active in the labour market are paid 80% of their average salaries during leave and the payments come from a specific fund, financed through an insurance levy. Furthermore, parents have equal rights, as the leave is distributed evenly between both parents. Fathers have three months' non-transferable leave, mothers have three months and the parents then have three months to share as they wish. The law of 2000 has been a success, as 90% of fathers use their right to paternity leave. Recent studies indicate that the positive effects of the Icelandic paternity leave include a more equal distribution of domestic responsibilities as well as a more equal standing in the labour market in the first years following the leave. After the financial crisis in autumn 2008 it was clear that disbursements from the Maternity, Paternity and Parental Leave fund would have to be reduced, and maximum disbursements were cut three times, but were raised again in 2012 and now amount to ISK 370,000 per month. Another consequence of the economic recession was that a planned extension of the total leave period from 9 months to 12 was shelved, but it is hoped to put this into effect as soon as state finances permit.

Another key factor in enabling parents to integrate family life and careers outside the home is access to day care for children following the end of parental leave. In December 2012 there were 265 pre-schools (kindergartens) in operation in Iceland and there were 472 registered "day parents" in the country in 2011.

### **Gender-based career choice**

Reference is made to the discussion in Article 5 of this report, as well as to the previous reports by the Government of Iceland.

### **Occupations by gender 2006-2012 (%)**

	2006	2007	2009	2010	2011	2012
Senior officials and managers	8.6	9.3	10.1	8.7	9.0	10.2
Men	11.1	12.0	12.7	11.0	10.6	12.0
Women	5.5	6.1	7.2	6.2	7.2	8.1
Professionals	17.5	17.6	20.7	17.7	21.4	21.6
Men	15.5	15.8	17.8	14.4	16.7	16.4
Women	19.9	19.7	24.1	21.3	26.5	27.2
Associate professionals	15.4	15.8	17.6	17.7	15.7	15.5
Men	11.1	11.4	12.9	14.4	13.2	13.5

	2006	2007	2009	2010	2011	2012
Women	20.4	21.2	22.8	21.3	18.4	17.6
Clerks	7.4	6.9	5.5	5.2	4.7	4.5
Men	2.6	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.8	1.8
Women	13.1	12.8	9.6	8.8	7.8	7.4
Commercial workers, service providers	19.8	20.7	19.4	20.5	21.0	21.3
Men	13.4	14.5	14.8	15.3	15.2	15.2
Women	27.4	28.1	24.6	26.2	29.4	27.8
Farmers and fishermen	4.8	4.1	3.9	4.5	4.7	4.4
Men	7.1	6.1	6.1	7.0	7.9	7.2
Women	2.1	1.6	1.5	1.7	1.2	1.5
Skilled artisans	13.2	12.1	11.3	11.9	12.2	11.3
Men	21.6	20.0	19.5	20.9	21.0	19.1
Women	3.2	2.7	2.3	2.2	2.7	3.0
Machine minders	5.7	5.6	5.1	4.5	4.7	4.7
Men	9.8	9.8	8.6	7.7	7.9	8.1
Women	0.9	0.7	1.1	1.0	1.2	1.0
Unskilled workers	7.6	7.9	6.3	5.9	5.6	6.6
Men	7.6	8.7	5.7	5.9	5.7	6.7
Women	7.5	7.0	6.9	6.0	5.5	6.4

Source: Statistics Iceland.

As the table shows, women do not feature largely in the ranks of farmers, fishermen, artisans and machine minders. On the other hand, they are present in larger numbers in office work and services. The balance is more even among specially qualified workers and specialists, but women still form a small group among managers and government officials in Iceland. A survey on the root causes of low participation of women in the fishery industry has not been completed.

A Plan of Action on Gender Equality Regarding Wages to reduce gender-based differences in career choice, the aim being to break down gender barriers on the labour market, has been prepared. The collaborative declaration made by the government which took power in 2009 stated that Gender Responsive Budgeting was to be used as a guideline in budgeting and economic management. Accordingly, a steering committee on Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) was established in April 2009. Further reference is made to Article 4 in this report.

### **Women in business management**

In its concluding observations on the last periodic report by Iceland (CEDAW/C/ICE/CO/6), the Committee urged the State party to strengthen its efforts to increase the number of women in high-ranking posts. The Committee also encouraged the State party to enforce without delay the legal provision requiring institutions or companies employing more than 25 persons to prepare gender equality programmes or to make special provisions regarding gender equality in their employment policies.

The increased demand following the economic crisis to have women more involved in the governance of the country did not transcend into the business sector. The aim of having women take more part in managerial and influential positions in the Icelandic labour market has long been part of Government policy on gender equality, but progress in this area in the period 1990-2012 was far slower than was hoped. Women accounted for 15% of managers in 1999; this proportion rose by 7 percentage points to reach 22% in 2012. Women are more common in managerial positions in small and medium-size enterprises than in large ones: only 13% of managers in Iceland's 100 largest companies in 2011 were women. The proportion of women on company boards amounted to 22% in 1999 and 24% in 2011; in other words, little change occurred over these 12 years.

The "Gender Equality Marks" (*Jafnréttiskennitala*) project was continued in 2008, where the boards of the 100 largest companies in Iceland were examined in order to find the proportion of female board members. Other government run projects have aspired to encourage women to carry out their business ideas and support women running small or medium-sized enterprises.

In order to increase the numbers of women in managerial positions in the business world, the Government took the step of introducing a provision on gender ratios on the boards of limited companies in the Public Limited Companies Act, No. 2/1995, with subsequent amendments, in March 2010; this applies to limited companies with more than 50 employees on an annualised basis. Article 63 of the Public Limited Companies Act addresses the question of gender ratios and an almost identical provision is to be found in Article 39 of the Private Limited Companies Act, No. 138/1994, with subsequent amendments, the only difference being the general rule that in limited companies there are to be at least three directors on the board while private limited companies may have as few as one or two. This means that all companies with 50 employees or more, on average, must comply with the law regarding gender ratios on their boards. Companies with fewer than 50 employees, on average, do not need to worry about gender ratios on their boards. Public limited companies with more than 25 employees are also obliged to consider gender ratios when engaging managers and to send the Company Register information on the gender ratios among their managers, staff and board members.

The companies to which these provisions apply were given a three-year adaptation period, i.e. until 1 September 2013. The explanatory notes to the bill which became law in Iceland explained that the aim was to promote more equal ratios of women and men in influential positions in both public and private limited companies; it was assumed that it was important for variety to be represented in the business sector and that certain dangers were implicit in the traditional arrangement by which managers were predominantly of one gender, of similar ages and background in terms of education and experience. The Ministry of Industries and Innovation is monitoring the situation in corporate boardrooms and the changes resulting from the new legislation. The latest figures indicate that the trend is in the right direction, particularly in larger enterprises, though the aim of the law, to ensure at least that at each gender accounts for at least 40% of the board of directors in companies with 50 or more employees has yet to be fulfilled. However, many companies have yet to hold their annual general meetings for the current year (2014), and it will therefore be of greater importance to examine the situation at the end of this year.

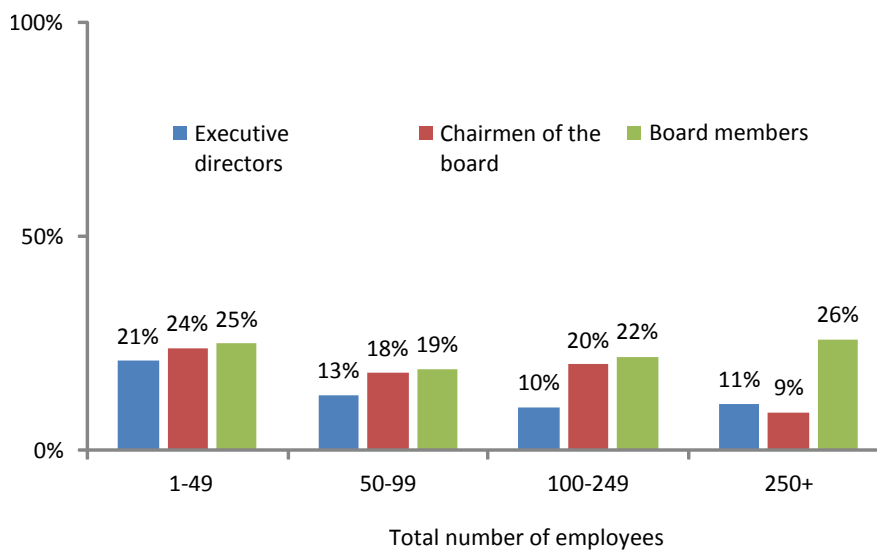
### The ratio of women in managerial position in enterprises, 2013

<i>Number of employees</i>	<i>Number of enterprises</i>	<i>Ratio of women</i>	<i>Change since 2012</i>
Executive directors			
1-49	9 946	21.3%	-4.5%
50-99	156	13.5%	0.0%
100+	175	9.7%	4.2%
Chairmen/board members			
1-49	30 113	24.5%	-5.0%
50-99	594	23.2%	0.8%
100+	734	26.8%	4.3%

Source: Ministry of Industry and Innovation, 2013.

The table shows the state of affairs in the autumn of 2013. As can be seen, the ratio of women in managerial positions in enterprises affected by the law has gone up, already indicating the effect of the change.

### Ratio of women in managerial positions in enterprises by size in 2011



Source: Ministry of Industry and Innovation, 2013.

In 2011 the ratio of women amongst executive directors in Icelandic enterprises was 20%, while women made up for 24% of all chairmen and board members. As portrayed in the table above the ratio of women in managerial positions is usually higher in smaller companies.

### Women and the Media

The media have been a male-dominated field for a long time. The number of female members of the Association of Icelandic Journalists has been growing in the last decades. Women accounted for 18% of its membership in 1980 and 30% in



1995; in 2007 the figure was 36% and in 2011 it was 37%. Despite this increase, few women have held the positions of News Editors and Chief Editors of daily newspapers. No woman has been the manager of a TV station and only a few women have been TV News Editors.

The Icelandic media market has undergone great changes since the economic crisis struck in 2008. The number of days on which newspapers were published was reduced, many journalists lost their jobs, changes occurred in the ownership of the media and their operations were restructured. A study made in 2012 showed that seven of every ten journalists and news broadcasters were male, and that the typical Icelandic journalist/news journalist was 42 years old, male, with just less than 14 years' working experience in the profession. Female journalists, on the other hand, were typically seven years younger, with just over eight years' experience on average. Male journalists had slightly higher wages, though the difference was not significant, but female journalists were twice as likely to hold a master's degree and far more likely to have pursued specialised studies in Journalism in the course of their education.

Another study, carried out in 2013, showed that female journalists wrote far fewer news items than did their male counterparts. Only 23% of the news items examined were written by women, and news reports by women were less likely to appear on the front page. It was also found that there was a substantial difference regarding what men and women wrote about. Reports on sport, business and politics were written almost exclusively by men: 97% of sports news reports, 95% of business and economic news and nearly 92% of coverage about politics. Women, on the other hand, wrote just over half of the reports examined that dealt with cultural issues and health during the period under study and 66% of the items that were classified as "entertainment" and "gossip".

A committee on the review of the Women's Loan Guarantee Fund and related matters proposed in July 2006 that loan guarantees for women, and also establishment grants, be secured in the public support system, and at the same time that the position, and later the policies, of the public funds in operation be reviewed. In March 2011, an agreement was signed on the resurrection of the Women's Loan Guarantee Fund, under the name of *Svanni*. The fund is run by the Ministry of Welfare, the Ministry of Industries and Innovation and the municipality of Reykjavík. The initial project had a lifespan until the end of 2014, but the project will continue under the new action plan on gender equality for the period 2015-2018.

*Svanni* provides women with loan guarantees in collaboration with the bank Landsbanki. The fund grants half of the loan guarantee; the bank grants the other half. The prerequisite for a grant is that at least 50% of the project must be owned by a woman and the idea must be innovative and job-creating in the long run. Grants have been awarded four times. In autumn 2011, 21 applications were examined by the board of the fund and five loan guarantees were granted. In 2012, 20 applications were made. The administration granted two loan guarantees. In autumn 2013, 20 applications were received and two loan guarantees were granted. More information on the project can be found on the website *svanni.is*.

- Since 1991 the Ministry of Welfare has awarded grants once a year to women entrepreneurs in Iceland amounting to ISK 35,000,000 per year, with the aim of encouraging women to start up their own companies and to increase their

access to finance. Grants are awarded by the ministry but the fund is hosted by the Directorate of Labour.

The prerequisite for a grant is that at least 50% of the project has to be owned by a woman, the idea has to be innovative and job-creating in the long run. Grants are awarded for making business plans, marketing, product development and a wage grant to start up a company. The project cannot be in direct competition with other services on the market.

Applications are made available on the site *atvinnumalkvenna.is*. The applications are evaluated by an advisory board. The application procedure starts in January each year and the grants are usually awarded in April-May. The grantees have one year to finish their projects before they have to turn in a report where they evaluate the project and turn in an overview of the costs involved.

**Paragraph 1, subparagraph e)**

Reference is made to previous reports.

**Paragraph 1, subparagraph f)**

In June 2010, the Government agreed on a plan of action to combat harassment and violence at the workplace, in schools and elsewhere in society. A project management committee on actions against bullying was formed and consisted of representatives from three ministries, focusing on following through the suggested actions against harassment. These were the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, the Ministry of Welfare and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs. The focus was put on extensive cooperation, not only to ensure a good result but also to encourage discussion and interest in the subject on a vast scale.

Consistent with the plan, the Ministry of Welfare reviewed the existing Regulation, No. 1000/2004, on actions against harassment (bullying) at the workplace. A committee was established on the subject, led by the Ministry but consisting of representatives of the social partners. On 16 April 2013, the Ministry of Welfare presented on its website for review a Draft Regulation on Actions Against Bullying, Sexual Harassment and Violence at the workplace. Several comments were received. Work is currently taking place to ensure that the necessary legal changes are made before the regulation can be issued.

Further reference is made to the discussion on the definition of sexual harassment discrimination in Article 1 of this report.

A seminar on the subject was held in April 2013, with the theme “Harassment in the Workplace — Visibility, Results and Directive Responsibility”. The focus was shifted to a survey of the subject based on extant studies, which shows that in 2008 and 2010, harassment was recorded in 10% of instances, both among men and women. The seminar was a part of an attempt to increase direct knowledge and capability to prevent bullying and respond appropriately in instances of harassment in the workplace.

**Paragraph 2**

Reference is made to the discussion on maternal/paternal leave as well as the integration of family and professional life presented earlier in this Article, as well as to previous reports by the Government of Iceland.

**Article 12****Paragraph 1****Access to health care services**

Reference is made to previous reports.

**Women's health****Smoking**

Smoking frequency has been measured four times a year. The first statistics for 2012 supported earlier indications that smoking frequency had dropped considerably. Among people over 18 years, 14.2% admitted smoking daily while 2.3% smoked less often than daily. There was some difference between men and women, while 16.1% of men were daily smokers, only 12.4% of women stated the same. The highest frequency of smoking was found among 18-34 year olds. Among 18-24 year old men, 22% were smokers while 25% smoked among the 25-34 year olds. Among women, 21% of all women in the ages 18-24 smoke while 11% of women in the age group of 25-34 smoke.

**Smoking habits of 15-79 year olds, 1990-2011**

		<i>Have never smoked</i>	<i>Stopped for Over a year</i>	<i>Stopped for less than a year</i>	<i>Occasional smokers</i>	<i>Daily smokers</i>
Total	1990	41.1	20.7	4	3.9	30.3
	1995	41.8	22.2	3.6	5.6	26.8
	2000	47	20.5	5.8	3.8	22.9
	2005	46.7	26.5	3.7	3.6	19.5
	2006	45.5	27.2	4.7	3.3	19.3
	2007	46.6	26.4	4	3.6	19.4
	2008	46.4	27.3	4.8	3.7	17.8
	2009	48.4	28.7	3.9	3.2	15.8
	2010	49.1	29.2	3.4	3.9	14.3
	2011	48	29	4	4.6	14.4
	Men	1990	36.3	24.6	3.9	4.4
1995		39.2	24.8	3.8	5.5	26.7
2000		44.1	22.9	5.4	4.4	23.3
2005		46.6	27.2	3.9	2.8	19.5
2006		43.3	28.4	4.3	2.7	21.3
2007		45.1	26.9	3.9	3.4	20.7
2008		44.3	27	5.5	2.9	20.3
2009		48	29.2	3.7	3.2	15.9

		<i>Have never smoked</i>	<i>Stopped for Over a year</i>	<i>Stopped for less than a year</i>	<i>Occasional smokers</i>	<i>Daily smokers</i>
	2010	48.7	29.3	3.9	3.6	14.5
	2011	47.3	30.1	3.3	4.8	14.6
Women	1990	45.6	17.1	4.1	3.3	29.9
	1995	44.5	19.6	3.3	5.7	26.9
	2000	49.8	18.2	6.2	3.2	22.5
	2005	46.7	25.8	3.6	4.3	19.5
	2006	47.6	26.1	5	3.8	17.4
	2007	48.1	25.9	4	3.8	18.2
	2008	48.5	27.6	4.1	4.5	15.3
	2009	48.7	28.3	4.2	3.2	15.7
	2010	49.5	29.1	3	4.3	14.1
	2011	48.7	27.9	4.8	4.4	14.2

Source: Statistics Iceland, 2012.

There are many indications that snuff consumption has increased among Icelanders and that snuff is being used as chewing tobacco. In light of this information, a thorough study was made of the use of smokeless tobacco among Icelanders, in addition to the usual survey of the ratio of smokers. Over 3,000 persons over 18 years of age from all over the country were included in the sample, of which 48% responded. There is limited information on the snuff or chewing tobacco usage of women in Iceland but evidence shows it to be uncommon.

Studies on the frequency of smoking confirm that the number of smokers, both men and women, are falling.

### **Sexually Transmitted Diseases**

By the end of 2012, the Epidemiological Medical Officer had been notified of 300 cases of HIV infection in Iceland. Of these, 66 patients were diagnosed with AIDS and 39 had died as a result of the disease. Ninety women were among the 300 cases of HIV and 10 women had been diagnosed with AIDS. Six of the 39 fatalities following AIDS infection were women.

### **Life expectancy**

For many years, Icelandic women scored highest in the world in terms of life expectancy, but they have now been overtaken by other European countries. In 2010, mean life expectancy for women was 83.7 years, which placed Iceland in ninth place in Europe in this respect. Mean life expectancy for women at birth was 83.9 years in 2012. Over the five-year period 2006-2010, the average length of women's lives was 83.3 years. During 2011, 1,985 people resident in Iceland died (998 men and 987 women). The mortality rate was 6.2 per 1,000 inhabitants, and had fallen slightly since 2010.

## **Cancer**

Since 1964 there has been a programme of screening for cervical cancer and since 1973 a programme of screening for breast cancer. Women aged 20-69 are advised to have a check for cervical cancer every other year; women aged 40-69 are advised to have breast screening/mammography every other year.

The mean number of women diagnosed with cancer each year in 2006-2010 was 660, an increase from the corresponding figure of 609 for the period 2001-2005. There has been a considerable increase in the number of women diagnosed with breast cancer. In the period 2001-2005 the mean annual figure was 159, while in 2006-2010 the corresponding number was 194. The mean number of cases of vaginal cancer diagnosed each year in 2001-2005 was 17; for the period 2006-2010 it was 15. Active screening programmes for breast cancer and vaginal cancer are in operation in Iceland and participation levels in them are good.

The health authorities began vaccination against HPV (human papilloma virus) in autumn 2011 in accordance with a resolution passed by the parliament in 2010. Such vaccination is now included in the general vaccination programme for children and covers all girls in Grade 7 in junior schools. 17 instances of HPV infections were diagnosed each year in 2001-2005 but in 2006-2010 the number of diagnoses dropped to 15.

In 2011, 1,283 patients were diagnosed with chlamydia in Iceland, 784 of them women. A breakdown of the last few years' cases by age indicates that women are infected earlier in life than men; this reflects the pattern of sexual activity among the young, as it is known that girls become sexually active at a younger age than boys.

In the first nine months of 2011, 23 new cases of gonorrhoea were diagnosed, of which 7 were women. The average age of infected individuals is 30 years.

## **Disability**

More women than men in Iceland are disabled. Figures for persons with 75% disability or rehabilitation assessments show that for 2011, 2012 and 2013, women accounted for 60% of the total.

## **Surrogacy**

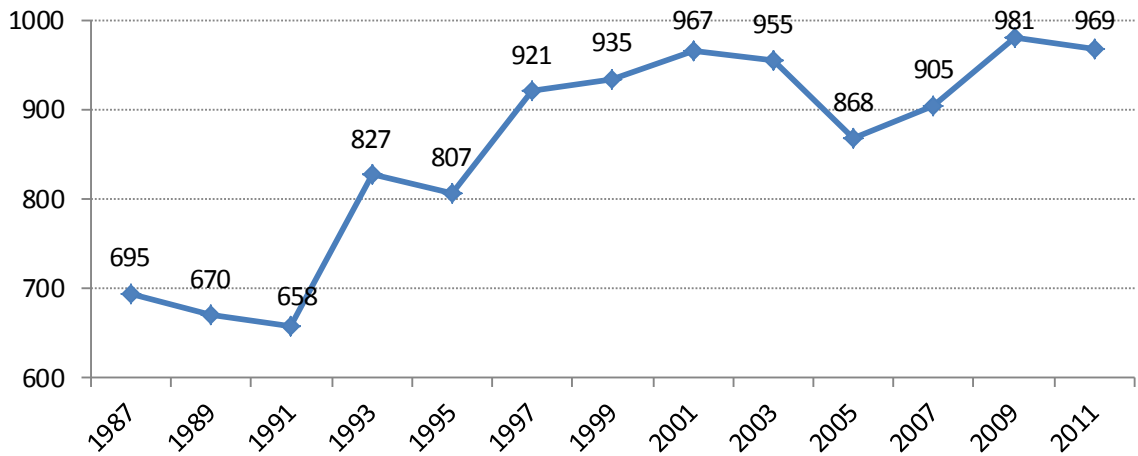
In 2008 the Minister of Welfare was given the task of forming a committee to prepare legislation allowing surrogacy for benevolent purposes. The subject was discussed by parliament in 2014 where the Minister of Health reported that the committee was still at work, but a bill is expected to be proposed in future.

Further reference should be made to previous reports by the Government of Iceland.

## **Abortions**

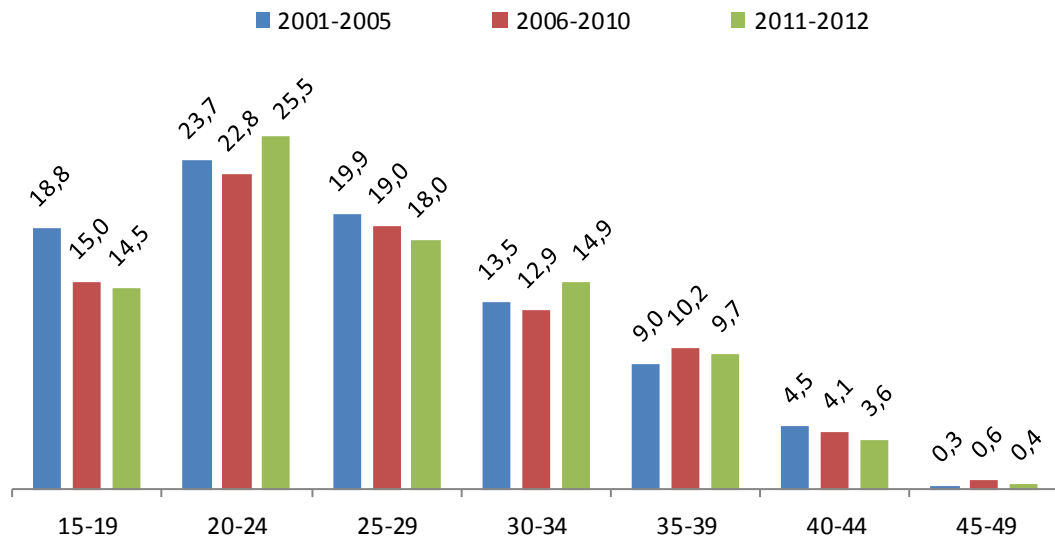
The first law that permitted abortions in Iceland dates from 1935, being replaced in 1975 with a more liberal law. Now women have the right to have an induced abortion before the end of the 12th week of pregnancy. In 2011, 969 abortions were performed in Iceland, which was similar to the figures for the preceding years. This represents 216 abortions per 1,000 live births in 2011.

## Number of abortions in 1998-2011



Source: Statistics Iceland, 2012.

## Abortions per 1,000 women by age



Source: Directorate of Health, 2013.

As the table shows, the number of abortions has declined significantly among women under the age of 20 over the last decade and a half. Fewer hospitals and health care centres have offered the operation in recent years. Ninety per cent of all abortions in 2012 took place at the National Hospital in Reykjavík, while 8.1% of abortions were performed at the Akureyri Hospital. The total number of abortions has risen since 2008, from under 900 a year to 980 in 2012. The number of sterilization operations carried out on women has fallen in recent years, and they now account for about 27% of all operations performed.

## Paragraph 2

### Childbirth

In 2010, 4,907 children were born in Iceland, of which 2,384 were girls. In 2011, 4,492 children were born, of which 2,166 were girls; 4,533 children were born alive in Iceland in 2012, of which 2,216 were girls. The average age of the mothers has changed little in recent years; in 2008-2012 it lay in the range 29.6 years (2008) to 29.9 years (2011 and 2011). Mothers' average age at the birth of their first child was 26.9 years in 2012. One woman died during pregnancy in 2011; no women died in childbirth in 2010.

### Number of childbirths in 2007-2012

	1959	1960	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Childbirths:	4 837	4 916	4 560	4 835	5 026	4 907	4 492	4 533

Source: Statistics Iceland 2013.

The infant mortality rate in 2011 was 0.9 per 1,000 live births and 1.1 per 1,000 live births in 2012. This is the lowest recorded rate in Europe.

Due to economic reasons, the options parents have when choosing the place of birth of their children has been narrowed. Downsizing at local healthcare centres has forced parents-to-be to travel to larger centres in order to receive necessary birth care. There has been an increase in the number of home births since the previous decade. While only 26 children were brought into the world at home in 2003 and 25 in 2004, the number in 2011 was 94.

### Births in Iceland in 2011 by location

Place of birth	Number of births	Twins or triplets	Total	Ratio
The National Hospital, Reykjavík	3 241	52	3 293	73.3%
Akureyri Hospital	393	4	397	8.9%
Akranes Health Care Centre	300	3	303	6.8%
Suðurnes Health Care Centre	138	0	138	3.1%
Selfoss Health Care Centre	91	0	91	2.1%
Ísafjörður Hospital	59	0	59	1.3%
Neskaupstaður Hospital	63	0	63	1.4%
Vestmannaeyjar Hospital	36	0	36	0.8%
Sauðárkrókur Hospital	2	0	2	0.0%
Höfn Health Care Centre	3	0	3	0.1%
Births en route to hospital	1	0	1	0.0%
Home births	94	0	94	2.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4 421</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>4 480</b>	

Source: Register of childbirths, the National Hospital, 2012.

According to information from the National Hospital's register of childbirths, 192 children were born to 175 mothers in 2011 after assisted fertilization. In 2010, 182 children were born to 170 mothers after assisted fertilization. The ratio of children conceived by assisted fertilization rose from 3.8% in 2010 to 4.3% in 2011. In the years 2007-2009 the ratio was between 3.3% and 3.4%. In 2008, a new law took effect, allowing single women to undergo assisted fertilization. Up until that time, only married women or those in registered relationships were allowed to undergo such treatment.

### Article 13

#### Subparagraphs a) and b)

Reference is made to the previous reports.

#### Subparagraph c)

Work and travel grants are awarded to artists each year under Act No. 57/2009 and Regulation No. 834/2009. They are awarded from six funds: one for designers, one for painters, one for writers, one for artists, one for musicians and one for composers. The parliament is officially in charge of allocating the grants but recipients are chosen by a board of directors and individual committees for each fund.

In 2014, 773 applications were received from individuals and groups, out of which 245 applicants received grants.

#### 2014 artist grants

<i>Fund</i>	<i>Total number of applications</i>	<i>Individual grant recipients</i>	<i>Male grant recipients</i>	<i>Female grant recipients</i>	<i>Group grant recipients</i>
designers' fund	49	9	3	6	5
painters' fund	220	61	32	29	4
writers' fund	183	70	40	30	0
performing artists' fund	155	4	1	3	16
musicians' fund	94	20	9	11	4
composers' fund	73	23	20	3	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>774</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>40</b>

Source: Work and travel grants for artists; press release, 2014.

#### 2013 artist grants

<i>Fund</i>	<i>Total number of applications</i>	<i>Individual grant recipients</i>	<i>Male grant recipients</i>	<i>Female grant recipients</i>	<i>Group grant recipients</i>
designers' fund	46	10	0	10	4
painters' fund	222	59	29	30	2
writers' fund	185	73	43	30	0
performing artists' fund	116	5	0	5	2



<i>Fund</i>	<i>Total number of applications</i>	<i>Individual grant recipients</i>	<i>Male grant recipients</i>	<i>Female grant recipients</i>	<i>Group grant recipients</i>
musicians' fund	111	23	12	11	2
composers' fund	92	24	21	3	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>772</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>10</b>

*Source:* Work and travel grants for artists; press release, 2013.

Women are in the majority among designers and performing artists who receive grants. However, men constitute a great majority of composers who receive grants. Among writers, slightly more men than women receive grants. Among musicians and painters there is no significant difference between grant recipients by gender.

Reference is also made to the discussion in Article 10, subparagraph (g) of this report. Further reference is made to the previous reports.

## **Article 14**

### **Women in the rural areas**

The population of Iceland at the beginning of 2014 was 325,671, consisting of 162,353 women and 163,318 men; 116,970 people (35.9%) live outside the capital region; of this number 59,770 (51.1%) are male and 57,200 (48.9%) female. Areas outside the capital region are designated as "the rural areas".

Unemployment rates were the same for men in the capital region as in the rural areas in 2008 (1.5%) but in 2009 the number had risen to 10.0% in the capital region compared to 6.7% in the rural area. Women's rates were 1.5% within the capital region in 2008 compared to 2.4% in the rural areas. In 2009 more women were without employment within the capital region (7.3%) than in the countryside (6.6%).

In the Strategic Regional Plan for Iceland for the years 2010-2013, equality and participation by both sexes in the economic scene are defined as special factors to be taken into account. The Icelandic Regional Development Institute has begun work to analyse the reasons behind the gender-based wage differential in order to prepare a proposition for an action plan aiming to eliminate the pay gap in rural Iceland. The project is a result of the integration of gender- and equality viewpoints in connection with the revision of the Strategic Regional Plan for Iceland for the years 2010-2013. Sufficient funding is yet to be secured for the research project on the alleged pay gap in the various areas of the country but the plan is to follow up on the research biannually.

A research project on the wages men and women receive for work in agriculture and at sea was to be launched in 2014. The two fields of work are prominent in most rural areas in Iceland. The project is also aimed at the selection of related school subjects at secondary school and university level offered to men and women.

Reference is made to the discussion in Article 3 on the 56th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, where the prime theme was the empowerment of rural women, and in which Iceland participated.

Further reference is made to the previous reports.

**Article 15**

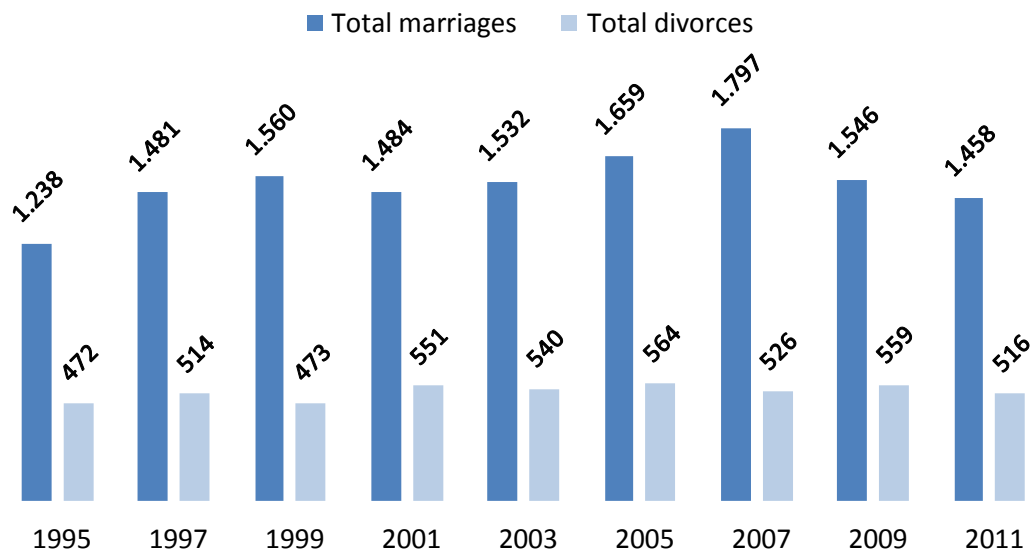
Reference is made to the previous reports.

**Article 16****Paragraph 1, subparagraphs a)-b)**

Reference is made to the previous reports.

**Subparagraph c)**

- There were considerably fewer marriages in 2009 than in the years before. Church weddings have declined in number, while civil wedding services have not. The divorce rate has changed little in the last 25 years, and about 35% of all marriages end in divorce. According to Statistics Iceland, 1,546 couples got married in 2009, which is a considerably smaller number than in the previous years. In 2007, a record 1,797 couples got married in Iceland. In 2011, even fewer couples got married, 1,458 couples. The vast majority of marriages follow common-law marriages: around 83% of all couples got married after living for a time in common-law marriages.

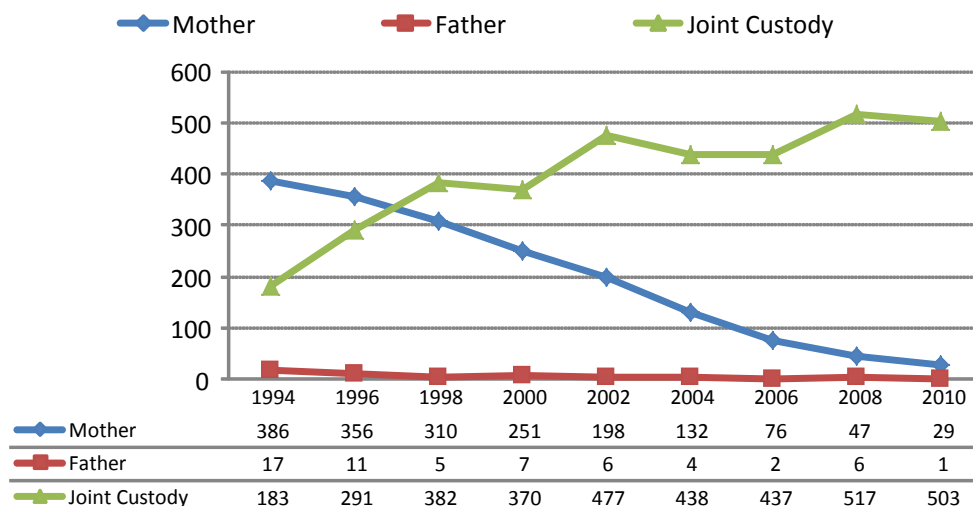
**Marriages and divorces in Iceland, 1995-2011**

Source: Statistics Iceland, 2012.

- Individuals are considerably younger when establishing common-law marriages than when getting married. In 2011, 516 divorces took place in Iceland. The divorce ratio has been consistent over the last 25 years.
- According to Statistics Iceland's information, joint custody has been the norm for divorced parents since 2002; the procedure became legally available in 1992. Joint custody was decided on in 90.7% of cases in 2008, involving 517 children. At the same time, 47 children were raised by their mother and 6 children raised by their father. More and more parents opt for joint custody. In 2009, 596 parents had joint custody, in 92% of instances. Mothers were

made sole custodians of 41 children and fathers were granted custody of four children. In 2010, joint custody was agreed on in 94.5% of instances. In 2011, mothers were made sole custodians of 58 out of the 615 children while only one child was given into the sole custody of the father. Joint custody was decided on in all other cases.

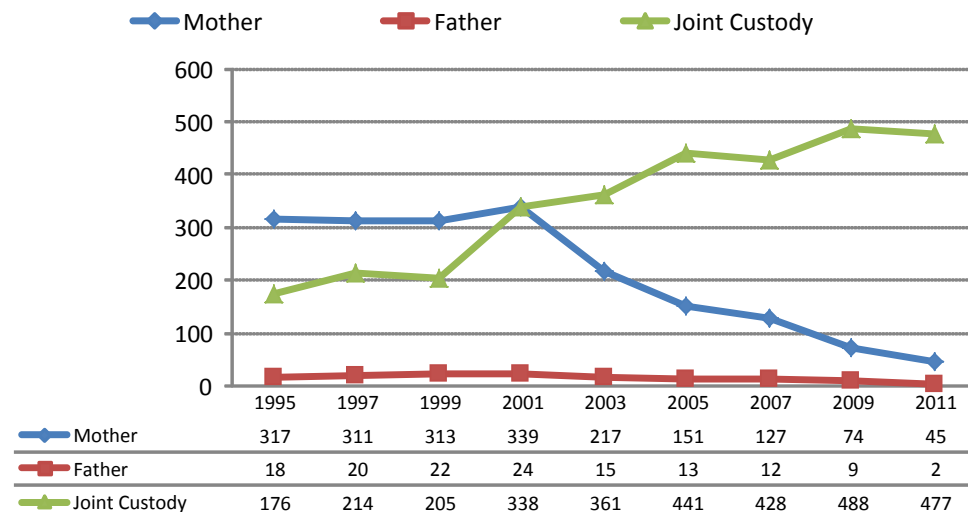
### Custodians 1994-2011



Source: Statistics Iceland, 2012.

Joint custody is more common following a split after common-law marriage, compared to when a marriage ends in a divorce. This has led to greater gender equality, since parents share the responsibility of the upbringing instead of leaving the task entirely to the mother, as was the norm for many decades.

### Custody following divorces 1994-2011



Source: Statistics Iceland, 2012.

**Subparagraphs d)-h)**

Reference is made to the previous reports by Iceland.

**Paragraph 2**

Reference is made to the previous reports by Iceland.

**Response to the concluding observations of the Committee**

On 8 July 2008, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women considered Iceland fifth and sixth periodic reports (CEDAW/C/ICE/5 and CEDAW/C/ICE/6). In its concluding observations (CEDAW/C/ICE/CO/6), the Committee requested Iceland to provide, within two years, written information on the steps undertaken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraph 24 of the concluding observations. A response by the Icelandic Government to the recommendations was sent in May 2011 and was reviewed on the forty-ninth session of the Committee in July 2011.

**The implementation of Act No. 61/2007 on Prostitution**

The Icelandic Penal Code has been amended since the sixth report on the implementation of the Convention was submitted by the Government of Iceland and the subsequent examination at the forty-first session of the Committee.

Under Act No. 54/2009, which was passed on 30 April 2010, Article 206 of the Penal Code (law No. 19/1940) was, in accordance with the Swedish precedent, amended in such a manner as to penalize the purchase of prostitution while the selling of services by the prostitute remains unpunished.

Purchasing or promising payment for prostitution is punishable by fines or imprisonment up to one year (under the first paragraph). If the violation occurs against a minor the perpetrator can be fined or imprisoned for up to two years (under the second paragraph). Under the third paragraph, any person who bases his employment or living on prostitution practised by others shall be imprisoned for up to four years. Under the fourth paragraph, the same punishment applies to deceiving, encouraging or assisting a child under the age of 18 to engage in prostitution. The same punishment also applies to taking steps to have any person move from or to Iceland in order to derive his or her support from prostitution (the fifth paragraph). The sixth paragraph states that any person who employs deception, encouragement or mediation in order to encourage other persons to have sexual intercourse, or other sexual relations, in return for payment, or to derive income from prostitution practised by others, e.g. by renting out premises or by other means shall be imprisoned for up to four years, or fined or imprisoned for up to one year if there are extenuating circumstances. And finally, under the seventh paragraph, any person who, in a public advertisement, offers, arranges or seeks to have sexual intercourse with another person in return for payment shall be fined or imprisoned for up to six months.

A number of cases have been tried in the Icelandic courts where the above mentioned provisions have been applied. On 2 June 2010, the first cases were brought before the Reykjavík District Court against 11 alleged buyers of prostitution. As a result, nine men were fined, seven for the amount of ISK 80,000, one for ISK 40,000 and one for ISK 120,000, and two were acquitted.

In Supreme Court Case No. 105/2010 the defendant was found guilty of violations of the third, sixth and seventh paragraphs of Article 206 of the Penal Code. The defendant, *X*, was found to have made a profession of prostituting *E*, *F* and *G* and acted as an intermediary, e.g. by renting a house for the operations, having the victims photographed and advertising prostitution online. In consideration of the gravity of *X*'s crimes, including the smuggling of narcotics, and the magnitude of the prostitution operations, *X* was sentenced to three and a half years in prison.

**Reinforcing existing measures to prevent and combat trafficking, especially of women and girls, and investigate such cases thoroughly**

The parliament adopted a National Action Plan (NAP) against Human Trafficking in March 2009. The Action Plan is available in English online. The objective of the Action Plan was to enhance the coordination of actions that are necessary to prevent human trafficking in Iceland, and to further study trafficking in human beings. Furthermore, it specified actions aimed at prevention and education regarding this matter and to ensure that aid and protection of victims was provided. Emphasis was placed on actions aimed at facilitating the prosecution of the perpetrators.

A specialist and coordination team against human trafficking was established in October 2009 following the adoption of the Action Plan. The specialist and coordination team was established to ensure a comprehensive overview and knowledge of human trafficking in Iceland. The team was composed of representatives from the Ministry of the Interior (formerly the Ministry of Justice), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Welfare (formerly the Ministry of Social Security and Social Services and the Ministry of Health), the National Commissioner of Police, the Directorate of Immigration and the NGOs *Kvænnaathvarfið* (the Women's Refuge) and *Stígamót* (the Education and Counselling Centre for Victims of Sexual Abuse).

The role of the team was to follow up tip-offs of human trafficking, to identify possible victims and to grant the victims a recognized position as such, to ensure protection and assistance to victims, collect information and carry out educational and awareness-raising activities with respect to issues of human trafficking. The team also provided consultation to government authorities and supervised the implementation of the Action Plan against Human Trafficking. An emergency team was established; this is in charge of the first steps to assist and protect victims of human trafficking, such as providing emergency services, a safe refuge, interpreting services and legal aid, operated within the specialist and coordination team on human trafficking.

A new National Action Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings for the years 2013–2016 was adopted on 26 April 2013, replacing the one that ran from 2009 to the end of 2012. Further reference is made to Article 6 of this report.

Human trafficking falls within the scope of the General Penal Code, No. 19/1940, Article 227 a of the Penal Code on human trafficking was amended by Act No. 149/2009, adopted in the parliament on 18 December 2009, in order to bring the Icelandic legal definition of human trafficking into harmony with the European Convention on Actions against Trafficking in Human Beings and the

Palermo Protocol. The relevant articles are as follows (*unofficial English translation*):

**Article 6, point 20**

*Penalties shall also be imposed in accordance with the Icelandic Penal Code on account of the following offences, even if these have been committed outside the Icelandic State and irrespective of who the offender is:-*

[...]

*20. For offences stated in the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, May 3, 2005.*

**Article 227 a**

*Anyone convicted of the following acts, one or more, for the purpose of sexually using a person or for forced labour or to remove his/her organs shall be punished for human trafficking by up to 8 years imprisonment:-*

*1. Procuring, transporting, transferring, housing or accepting someone who has been subjected to unlawful force under Article 225 or deprived of freedom as defined in Article 226 or threatened as defined in Article 233 or subjected to unlawful deception by awakening, strengthening or utilizing his/her lack of understanding concerning circumstances or by exploiting his/her position of vulnerability.*

*2. Procuring, transporting, transferring, housing or accepting an individual younger than 18 years of age.*

*3. Rendering payment or other gain in order to acquire the approval of the exploitation by a person having control over another person.*

*The same penalty shall be applied to a person accepting payment or other gain under indent 3 of the first paragraph.*

*If a violation according under the first paragraph is committed against a child, this shall be considered as an aggravating factor when deciding the severity of the punishment.*

*The same penalty shall be applied to anyone that becomes guilty of the following acts, one or more, for the purpose of facilitating human trafficking:*

*1. To forge a travel or identity document.*

*2. To procure or provide such a document.*

*3. To retain, remove, damage or destroy a travel or identity document of another person.*

**Prosecuting and punishing traffickers in accordance with the gravity of their crime**

The maximum penalties/sanctions for such offences were eight years imprisonment, as stated above. Act No. 72/2011, which took effect on 10 June 2011 raised the maximum punishment for offences against Article 227 a, on human trafficking, from 8 to 12 years' imprisonment. Three cases have been tried before Icelandic courts pertaining to human trafficking, along with other charges.

(a) On 1 December 2009, an Icelandic citizen of Equatorial Guinean origin was sentenced by the District Court of Reykjanes in case No. S-676/2009. The defendant was acquitted of a charge of human trafficking but sentenced, for pimping and other offences, to imprisonment for two and a half years. On 3 June 2010, as a result of an appeal to the Supreme Court, the period of imprisonment was extended to three and a half years (see case No. 105/2010, discussed above). The alleged victim of human trafficking in this case was a woman of Slovenian citizenship recruited through Spain. The victim received extensive assistance without regard to the outcome of the court case.

(b) On 8 March 2010, five Lithuanian citizens were found guilty by the District Court of Reykjanes in case No. S-1064/2009 on a charge of human trafficking; one was acquitted. The others were sentenced to five years' imprisonment. On 16 June 2010, as a result of an appeal to the Supreme Court, one was sentenced to five years' imprisonment and four to four years' imprisonment. The victim in this case was a young woman of Lithuanian citizenship recruited in Lithuania. It is worth noting that in this case the sentence was based on a proven intent of sexual exploitation, while the actual sexual exploitation had not occurred due to early intervention. The victim has received extensive and prolonged assistance.

(c) On 9 July 2010, an Icelandic citizen of Equatorial Guinean origin (the same perpetrator as in the first case cited above) was sentenced by the District Court of Reykjanes in case No. S-190/2010. The defendant was acquitted of a charge of human trafficking but sentenced, for pimping and other offences, to imprisonment of 15 months. The victim in this case was a young woman of Equatorial Guinean origin who has received extensive assistance.

Further reference is made to Article 6 in this report.

### **The investigation of illegal strip clubs by conducting research and surveys**

The 1990s saw the establishment of a number of strip clubs in Iceland. The striptease acts took either place on tables in open areas or in enclosed spaces as "private dances". Originally, the dance was viewed as art and the women who were brought to the country to work in the strip clubs were granted temporary work permits as artists. A special legal definition of strip clubs was not provided until Act No. 66/2000, amending Act No. 67/1985, was passed. Subsequently, distinct municipalities could set further conditions for the granting of operation licences for such restaurants. Such conditions were introduced in Reykjavík in 2002, when private dances were banned and nude dancers were banned from entering into the crowd. The ban was later found to be legal by the Supreme Court of Iceland.

Strip dancing was effectively outlawed by Act No. 85/2007, although exemptions could be passed for individual restaurants. The provisions allowing for exemption permits were later rescinded in 2010. These remained legal, with restrictions, until March 2010, when the parliament passed Act No. 18/2010 annulling the exemption provision in Article 4 of Act No. 85/2007 on restaurants and night clubs under which these clubs operated.

Late 2013, a proposal was made in parliament for the revision of rules regarding the granting of operating licences for restaurants, in order to prevent so-called "champagne clubs", which exploit the nudity of the staff and offer access to

members of staff in private spaces. The proposal is currently being discussed by the Judicial Affairs and Education Committee.

This means that strip clubs are now illegal in Iceland and have either closed down or changed their operations. The police monitor the operation of night clubs and as of now no violations against Act No. 18/2010 have been investigated by the police.

The police have conducted an investigation of the “champagne clubs” in Reykjavík, due to allegations about prostitution, money laundering and narcotic commerce taking place. According to the police, investigation of “champagne clubs” in Reykjavík is in its final stages. Once the investigation is finished, the Director of Public Prosecutions will decide the next steps. The police have also focused on new platforms for prostitution. It is a concern that following the demise of the champagne clubs, internet date sites and local bars and restaurants might have become a platform for prostitution.

**Increasing international cooperation efforts to prevent trafficking, ensuring the protection of the human rights of women and girls who are victims of trafficking and establishing a legal framework for victim and witness protection.**

*Increasing international cooperation efforts to prevent trafficking*

Iceland cooperates on these issues with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Nordic Council of Ministers, the United Nation Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Council of Europe. Regional cooperation within the framework of the CBSS is especially beneficial in dealing with highly practical issues and problems that are relevant for the region. Iceland takes an active part in its task force on trafficking in human beings. Among its projects are studies on cooperation mechanisms within the countries and region in collaboration with UNODC, on the collection and dissemination of data within the countries and in the region, training for diplomatic and consular personnel on trafficking in human beings, a project on identification of human trafficking in the form of exploitation for labour, and a study on memoranda of understanding and best practices in that area.

*Ensuring the protection of the human rights of women and girls who are victims of trafficking*

Victims of human trafficking in Iceland, regardless of their nationality or legal status in the country, or potentially former alleged violations of Icelandic law, are granted all necessary services, whether medical, social (including appropriate housing), financial or legal, once they have been brought to the attention of — or referred to — the specialist and coordination team against human trafficking in Iceland (action 2 of the National Action Plan against Human Trafficking), which operates according to the “low threshold policy”. Up to that point they may have resided in women’s shelters, obtained counselling from counselling centres for victims of sexual violence or from local authorities (social services), to name just some examples of previous forms of assistance, which are also provided regardless of their legal status. The composition of the specialist and coordination team is such as to ensure a comprehensive and holistic approach to victim assistance. Once alleged victims have obtained residence permits as such (see paragraphs 18 and 19



below), they have all the legal rights that that implies. Yet another point to be made is that potential victims can, in court proceedings, be granted the right of anonymity to the public and the right to testify under the absence of alleged perpetrators or through video/audio links if necessary. In the case of minors that are potential victims of trafficking in human beings (which has not yet arisen in Iceland) the National Action Plan against Human Trafficking stipulates that those cases are to be handled on the basis of the Act on Child Protection (actions 10 and 11 of the Plan).

*Establishing a legal framework for victim and witness protection*

Although discussions have taken place in parliament, there are no special legal provisions on the protection of victims or witnesses to human trafficking in Iceland. The Ministry of Interior is presently conducting an assessment on whether legal amendments need to be made regarding this. The National Commissioner of Police adopted guidelines in 2010 on the handling of human trafficking cases where it is stipulated that a risk assessment is to be made in each case and protection measures applied accordingly. This procedure has been followed in the cases that have already been handled in Iceland, resulting, in some cases, in extensive protection measures for both victims and witnesses and installation of surveillance and security equipment of their residences.

**The ratification of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children and the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.**

The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime was ratified by Iceland on 13 May 2010 and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, was ratified by Iceland on 22 June 2010.

As stated in Article 6 of this report, the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings was ratified by Iceland on 23 February 2012 and took effect vis-à-vis Iceland on 1 June the same year.

**Report on (a) statistical data related to trafficking and prostitution and (b) information on the impact of the decriminalization of prostitution on the enjoyment of women's human rights.**

In its concluding observations ([CEDAW/C/ICE/CO/6](#)), the Committee recommended that the next periodic report contain statistical data related to trafficking and prostitution and information on the system put in place as well as progress made in the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.

As stated in Article 6 of this report, the Council of Europe's Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings was ratified by Iceland on 23 February 2012 and took effect vis-à-vis Iceland on 1 June the same year. Further reference is made to Article 6 of this report.

Information on prostitution and human trafficking was gathered from the National Commissioner, the Police Commissioners of Reykjavík and Suðurnes, social service providers in Akureyri, Hafnarfjörður, Kópavogur, Reykjanesbær and

Reykjavík, the Education and Counselling Centre for Victims of Sexual Violence and the Women's Refuge.

As is mentioned above, the act of prostitution is not punishable under Icelandic law. Article 206 of the Penal Code is not limited to acts of prostitution. Various reasons and motives can lead persons into prostitution. Prostitution can be a way for young people to finance their lifestyle. Amongst persons in prostitution, a history of sexual violence, the lack of parental supervision during upbringing and narcotic abuse are common themes. Women in poverty are also known to prostitute themselves in order to support themselves and their children. The aftermath of prostitution often does not become clear until after many months of therapy.

The extent of prostitution in Iceland is hard to measure. The borders between prostitution and human trafficking are not always clear, as is noted in reports by the Educational and Counselling Centre for Victims of Sexual Violence.

The Ministry of Welfare is currently involved in talks with the Women's Refuge regarding temporary hosting of human trafficking victims while further work takes place.

According to information from the National Commissioner, a considerable increase has taken place in the number of registered violations of Article 206 of the Penal Code, as shown in the table below. The table shows only the number of cases that have come before the National Commissioner where a violation of Article 206 has taken place. Prostitution victims are therefore not included in the numbers.

#### Registered violations of Article 206 of the Penal Code

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013
Number of Violations	37	13	24	175*

\* Provisional figure.

Each case can encompass various violations, both by a single or multiple perpetrators. The table includes all registered violations in the time period.

The Reykjavík Police Commissioner has handled the cases of 30 individuals who have been defined as prostitution victims in the years 2011-2014.

	Total	Icelandic Citizens	Foreign Citizens	<20 Year Olds	21-30 Year Olds	>30 Year Olds
Women	23	11	12	4	7	10
Men	7	7	0	3	2	2

The *Kristínarhús* Reception Centre opened in September 2011. The Educational and Counselling Centre for Victims of Sexual Violence took the initiative of opening the Reception Centre, aimed especially at women escaping from prostitution or human trafficking situations. The state supplied the necessary operation funding for the Reception Centre and additional funds were gathered through a fund-raising campaign. Additionally to its main task, the Centre was also given support to host visitors to Reykjavík scheduled for an interview with the Educational and Counselling Centre. The Reception Centre had sufficient room for 4-5 women in separate rooms.

From its inception until it closed, 27 women stayed at the Reception Centre: 15 foreigners and 12 Icelandic citizens. Thirteen of the visitors had mental problems, while 15 visitors were dealing with narcotic abuse. In 2011 five women dwelled at the Reception Centre, running up 127 staying nights from the opening in September till the end of the year. In 2012, 20 women and 9 children stayed at the Reception Centre for a total of 1,148 nights. Most of the women were under the age of 40 but two were over 50. Of the 20 women, 15 stayed at the Reception Centre due to prostitution or human trafficking. In 2013, five children stayed at the Reception Centre but the exact number of women staying at the Centre is unclear. All the women staying at the Centre were under the age of 40. Together, they clocked up 1,000 nights over the year, some staying only a couple of nights but others the entire year.

In 2012 additional funding of ISK 15 million was granted to the Reception Centre. The Ministry of Interior granted ISK 6 million to help assist possible victims of human trafficking, and ISK 700,000 was granted to install security cameras on the premises of the Reception Centre. A special ISK 25 million grant was made in 2013 towards operating the Centre.

After a two-year long experimental period, the Reception Centre was closed in January 2014. Operating the Reception Centre proved to be a complex and complicated matter. The gathering of so many women in one place was not found to be a suitable solution. Many of the women were dealing with mental or narcotic-abuse problems. The employees and volunteers at the Centre had an especially hard task dealing with the children. The Educational and Counselling Centre explained that further funds would have had to be granted in order to provide professional assistance to the visiting women in view of their complicated situations.

Simultaneously to the announcement of the closing of the Reception Centre, the Educational and Counselling Centre asked for the funds provided to be used in order to improve other parts of the functioning of the organisation: improved services to individuals outside the Reykjavík area, additional services to men in need and to disabled persons. The Educational and Counselling Centre asked for the funds provided for the Reception Centre to be used to create two new positions on the aforementioned projects. The funding for the Reception Centre in 2014 went to the organisation in order to attend to the projects in question.

The consequences of the closing down of the Reception Centre are minimal for other matters than the investigation of human trafficking cases. Without sound housing solutions, police authorities and volunteers will have a harder time gaining the trust of victims. With housing provided, the victims of trafficking and prostitution become more visible. The danger is that the progress made in the therapy so far will be lost. Service providers to prostitution victims have not felt any repercussions from the closure of the Reception Centre. The Women's Refuge did not experience an increase in visits following the closure.

Even after the closure of the Reception Centre, there are other options available to those wanting to leave prostitution. The municipal social services offer information and instructions regarding social rights and social and personal support, in accordance with Article 16 of the Local Authorities' Social Services Act. Professionals at municipal level provide social therapy to prostitution victims. If a victim is in charge of a child an examination of the child's circumstances is made, and if necessary, the child protection authorities are alerted.

The Educational and Counselling Centre provides advice and interviews and organises self-help groups for individuals wanting to leave prostitution. It has also offered to coordinate actions on the matters of individuals wanting to leave prostitution. The group in question is not thought to be in need of special housing solutions.

Prostitution in Iceland seems to be in close connection with narcotic commerce. Therapy institutions have offered their assist to narcotic addicts. The Women's Refuge is open to all victims of prostitution.

In the light of the number of registered violations of Article 206 of the Penal Code, it is important that all social service and healthcare providers, including therapy providers, keep an eye open for the possibility that a service recipient may be a victim of prostitution or human trafficking. Accessible assistance, delivered without prejudice, must be provided. State employees have to be well informed on the symptoms of prostitution and possible solutions for the victims. Professionals working with individuals wanting to get out of prostitution have to be motivated. The experience of the Reception Centre shows that prostitution victims may have a hard time leaving their former employment behind. Continuing cooperation between social and healthcare authorities must take place, with the participation of NGOs. Cooperation with the police authorities must also be increased. Intra-governmental co-operation in the field of human trafficking has yielded good results.

**Information on the impact of the decriminalization of prostitution on the enjoyment of women's human rights**

Only a short time has passed since prostitution was decriminalized, i.e., since Article 206 of the Penal Code (No. 19/1940) was amended yet again by Act No. 54/2009, which was enacted on 30 April 2010, as has been described above. Thus, only limited knowledge of the impact of the decriminalization exists, and there are no reliable studies or statistics that can be cited.

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