

Universal Periodic Review
(26th session, October-November 2016)
Contribution of UNESCO to Compilation of UN information
(to Part I. A. and to Part III - F, J, K, and P)

Iceland

I. BACKGROUND AND FRAMEWORK

Scope of international obligations: Human rights treaties which fall within the competence of UNESCO and international instruments adopted by UNESCO

I.1. Table:

<i>Title</i>	<i>Date of ratification, accession or succession</i>	<i>Declarations /reservations</i>	<i>Recognition of specific competences of treaty bodies</i>	<i>Reference to the rights within UNESCO's fields of competence</i>
Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960)	Not state party to this Convention	Reservations to this Convention shall not be permitted		Right to education
Convention on Technical and Vocational Education. (1989)	Not state party to this Convention			Right to education
Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972)	19/12/1995 Ratification	NA	N/A	Right to take part in cultural life
Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)	23/11/2005 Ratification	NA	N/A	Right to take part in cultural life
Convention on the Protection and		NA		

Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005)	01/02/2007 Acceptance		N/A	Right to take part in cultural life
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II. INPUT TO PART III. IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT APPLICABLE INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW TO ITEMS F, J, K, AND P

Right to education

1. NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK

1.1. Constitutional Framework

1. The [Constitution of Iceland \(17 June 1944\)](#), as amended in June 1999, stipulates in its **article 76** “The law shall guarantee for everyone suitable general education and tuition.”
2. **Article 65** provides that “everyone shall be equal before the law and enjoy human rights irrespective of sex, religion, opinion, national origin, race, colour, property, birth or other status. Men and women shall enjoy equal rights in all respects.”

1.2. Legislative Framework

3. Pre-Primary School Act of 2008¹

- i. “The pre-primary school level is governed by the **Pre-primary School Act of 2008**. The Act's **first article** defines pre-primary schools as the first level of the educational system and under the Act, pre-primary schools are to provide education and care for children below the age at which compulsory education begins i.e. usually the year in which the child turns six years old. Children’s interests and welfare shall be the primary mission of all pre-primary school activities and learning through play shall be encouraged in a creative environment.
- ii. According to the Pre-primary School Act, the local municipalities are responsible for the operation of pre-primary schools. [...]”²

4. Compulsory School Act of 2008³

¹ http://eng.menntamalaraduneyti.is/media/MRN-pdf/Preschool_Act.pdf ,
<http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/docs/f871e6b9cfe4e8430427bf57cf6abd87ce32c193.pdf>

² Eurydice, Iceland, Early Childhood Education and Care,
https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Iceland:Early_Childhood_Education_and_Care,

³ http://eng.menntamalaraduneyti.is/media/MRN-PDF-Althjodlegt/Compulsory_school_Act.pdf,
<http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/docs/646774f7029c61a06e6c77e4a10ce0ef5634bce5.pdf>

- i. According to **article 3** of this law, “compulsory education shall generally be of ten years in duration, [...]. All children, in general between the ages of 6 and 16, are required to attend compulsory school.”
- ii. [Article 19 of the Compulsory Act 2008](#): “Pupils have the right to have their special needs met regarding studies in compulsory school, without discrimination and regardless of their physical or mental attainment.”
- iii. [Article 24 para.12 of the Compulsory Act 2008](#): “The objectives and practice of study and instruction shall aim at preventing discrimination on the basis of origin, gender, sexual orientation, residence, social class, religion, health condition, handicap or situation in general.
- iv. All school activities shall encourage a healthy lifestyle and take into account the variation of personality, development, talent, abilities and interests of each individual pupil.”
- v. “The **Compulsory School Act of 2008** stipulates that all children and adolescents between the ages of six and sixteen are required to attend school, and consequently there are no admission requirements for Icelandic compulsory schools. It is the duty of the local municipalities to ensure that all children from the age of six to sixteen have the opportunity to attend school. Under the law, compulsory education begins in the calendar year that the child turns six and ends at the close of the spring term the year in which the child reaches the age of 16. Parents can apply for their child to begin its schooling earlier or later than its peers or they may be asked to give their consent that the child begins its schooling earlier or later than its peers. Under the Compulsory School Act, head teachers of compulsory schools have the authority to grant such exemptions after referring the case to the local education office and receiving its assessment.”⁴
- vi. A new Compulsory School Act No. 91/2008 was adopted in 2008. One of the main emphasis is to increase the municipalities’ authority of compulsory school affairs and strengthen school autonomy. Also to ensure that compulsory school children get the appropriate study support and that specialist services are coordinated with the main focus on the child’s needs. Evaluation and monitoring of school operations is strengthened in order to encourage progress and improvements to compulsory school activities. The responsibilities, rights and duties of children and parents are clarified and participation of parents in school activities is increased.⁵
- vii. This law makes attendance at school compulsory for all children aged 6-16 (ten-year programmes) and stipulates that “compulsory school instruction in public schools shall be provided to pupils without charge.” It also provides that “School transportation shall be free of charge for pupils.” The **National Centre for Educational Materials** under the auspices of the Ministry of Education develops and publishes educational materials for compulsory school and distributes them to compulsory school pupils free of charge.
- viii. Article 17 of the law specifies that children and adolescents who need special education because of specific learning difficulties or because they have emotional or social problems and/or are handicapped, have a right to special support in instruction in their studies. The main policy is that such instruction should take place in their local home school. If a pupil's parents or guardians, teachers or other specialists feel that the pupil is not receiving suitable instruction in its home school, the parents or guardians may apply for the pupil to attend a special school. The instruction can be on a one-to-one

⁴ Eurydice, Iceland, Organisation of Single Structure Education,

https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Iceland:Organisation_of_Single_Structure_Education

⁵ http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/national_summary_sheets/047_IC_EN.pdf

basis or take place in a group within or outside the mainstream classroom, in special departments within schools or in special schools. A **regulation (no. 386/1996) for special education** is based on the law.

5. Upper Secondary School Act of 2008⁶

- i. A new Upper Secondary School Act entered into force in 1 August 2008. The upper secondary schools have to July 2011 to fully comply with provisions of the Act.
- ii. One of the main objectives of the Act is to enforce pupils' rights to acquire education by the duty of the authorities to provide education until the age of 18. Also to decentralise considerably the organisation of study programmes and curricula by providing upper secondary schools with flexibility and freedom for structuring their study programmes. Quality of education is emphasized by strengthening internal and external evaluation of school activities.
- iii. "The **Upper Secondary School Act** primarily defines the framework for education at that level, its objectives and the role and responsibility of the State and local municipalities and other parties that are involved in providing education at this level."⁷
- iv. [Article 2 of the Upper Secondary School Act](#) states that: "The upper secondary school prepares pupils for employment and further studies. It shall strive to strengthen its pupils' skills in the Icelandic language, both spoken and written, develop moral values, sense of responsibility, broadmindedness, initiative, self-confidence and tolerance in its pupils, train them to apply disciplined, autonomous working methods and critical thought, teach them to appreciate cultural values and encourage them to seek further knowledge"

6. Higher Education Act of 2006⁸

- i. "The new **Higher Education Act No. 63/2006**, entered into force on 1 July 2006, required all higher education institutions to adopt the three-cycle degree structure in line with the Bologna process. In the same year, a National Qualifications Framework was adopted, and according to the Act all programmes offered by higher education institutions were to be accredited by the Ministry of Education by 2008."⁹
- ii. Act on the Education and Recruitment of Teachers and Head Teachers in Pre-School, Compulsory School and Upper Secondary School¹⁰

⁶ http://www.nymenntastefna.is/media/frettir/Upper_secondary_school_Act.pdf ,

<http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/docs/12ca3a7ee82a4499b97d23728c938587e3e2ae1d.pdf>

⁷ Eurydice, Iceland, Secondary and Post-Secondary Non-Tertiary Education,

https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Iceland:Secondary_and_Post-Secondary_Non-Tertiary_Education

⁸ http://eng.menntamalaraduneyti.is/media/MRN-pdf/Higher-Education-Act-63_2006.pdf

<http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/docs/c4302bba1d6bbe121f56a326a363340f09869b53.pdf>

⁹ IBE, World Data on Education, 7th ed., 2010-2011, Iceland, p. 5,

http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/WDE/2010/pdf-versions/Iceland.pdf

¹⁰ <http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/docs/a9952c4d02a9c74c5901a808b0c8dc1871406078.pdf>

- iii. “The objective of the **Act No. 87** of 12 June 2008 on the education and recruitment of teachers and head teachers in preschool, compulsory school and upper secondary school, is to ensure that the education of those who practice teaching and take care of upbringing in preschool, compulsory and upper secondary schools is relevant to their occupation and responsibility. According to this new legislation, starting from autumn 2011 the minimum requirement for teachers at all school stages is a master’s degree instead of a three-year bachelor’s degree. The Act contains provisions relating to the occupational qualifications and recruitment of the different categories of teachers and head teachers, and qualifications requirements to obtain a licence from the Ministry of Education (only licenced teachers can be recruited).
- iv. According to the Act, the content of education for preschool, compulsory and upper secondary school teachers is defined in detail in a specific regulation issued by the Ministry of Education taking into account the minimum requirements for the relevance of teacher certification studies as well as the relevance of professional subjects. This Act repealed the former the Act No. 72/1996 on the rights and duties of compulsory school teachers and principals.”¹¹

7. Regulation concerning the language of instruction

- i. According to a **1996 regulation** concerning the instruction in Icelandic for pupils whose mother tongue is not Icelandic, such pupils shall, as far as it can be arranged and with the agreement of the local municipality in question, receive instruction in their own mother tongue. The aim of such instruction is to ensure that these students practice both languages, and thus maintain their mother tongue by actively using it.¹²

8. Adult Education Act¹³ 2010

- i. “The most important act concerning adult education and training is the Adult Education Act, which was adopted in **2010**. This Act focuses on competences for the labour market, stating that important objectives of adult education are to develop solutions to meet industry’s demands for increased knowledge and competences among employees and to provide opportunities for people to increase their vocational skills. The main target groups of adult education are people with little formal education and with reduced educational and professional opportunities. These groups are to be provided with suitable education and training, not only to increase their employability, but also to increase their opportunities for active participation in society. Beyond the needs of these specific target groups, the Act also aims to increase the general educational level and to strengthen the educational system as a whole. The Act includes articles on accreditation and certification, evaluation and quality control, funding, information provision and recognition of prior learning. The Act does not apply to education that is based on legislation for upper-secondary or higher education.”¹⁴

1.3. Institutional Framework

¹¹ IBE, World Data on Education, 7th ed., 2010-2011, Iceland, p. 4,

http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/WDE/2010/pdf-versions/Iceland.pdf

¹² <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/en/worldwide/unesco-regions/europe-and-north-america/iceland/profile-of-education.html>

¹³ <http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/docs/1b3c13396d708bd60e8b69aa102f9a070a63f0b9.pdf>

¹⁴ Eurydice, Iceland, Adult Education and training,

https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Iceland:Adult_Education_and_Training

9. The educational system is divided into four levels: “pre-school (*leikskóli*) up till 6 years of age. Governed by the Pre school Act, No. 758/ 1994; compulsory (primary and lower secondary in a single structure – *grunnskóli*) 6 – 16 years of age. Governed by the Compulsory School Act, No. 66/1995; upper-secondary (*framhaldsskóli*) 16 – 20 years of age. Governed by the Upper Secondary School Act, No. 80/199”¹⁵
10. In 1995, legislation concerning **compulsory schools** was passed. In comparison with previous legislation, the greatest change is that in 1996 municipalities took over the operation of schools at the compulsory level. The legislation primarily defines the framework for education at this level, its aims, the role and responsibility of the state and the municipalities. More detailed provisions regarding the implementation of compulsory education are to be found in regulations which the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture issues on the basis of the law in effect. The law concerning compulsory education stipulates that education shall be mandatory for children and adolescents between the ages of six and sixteen. The law determines the length of the academic year and the minimum number of lessons to be given each week and defines which subjects are obligatory. The school year lasts for nine months, beginning between the 21st of August and the 1st of September and ending between the 31st of May and the 10th of June. According to the law the minimum number of school days is 170 but following the teachers’ new wage-contract, the number of school days will be 180. Classes are held five days a week. The law makes it the duty of parents to see to it that their children register for and attend school. The law also specifies the duty of the state and local municipalities to see to it that instruction, as decreed by law, be given. Compulsory education is organised in a single structure system, i.e. primary and lower secondary education form part of the same school level and usually take place in the same school. There are no entrance requirements at this school level, and all children are accepted at the age of six years. The enrolment rate is 100%.”¹⁶
11. “**Upper secondary education** is governed by the Upper Secondary School Act of 1996. The Act primarily defines the framework for education at that level, its aims, the role and responsibility of the state and local municipalities, as well as other parties involved in providing upper secondary education. More detailed provisions regarding the implementation of upper secondary education are to be found in regulations which the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture issues on the basis of the law in effect. In addition, the Ministry issues National Curriculum Guidelines which, among other things, describe the objectives and contents of individual programmes of study.
12. Upper secondary education is not compulsory, but anyone who has completed compulsory education has the right to enter a course of studies in an upper secondary school. All schools at this level, like other schools in Iceland, are co-educational.
13. Education at upper secondary level is free of charge but students pay an enrolment fee and purchase their textbooks. Students in vocational education pay a part of the cost of materials they use.
14. Students may enter upper secondary schools at the end of compulsory schooling in the year they turn sixteen. In recent years, around 90% of the students who completed compulsory education have entered upper secondary education directly thereafter; the dropout rate

¹⁵ [The Educational System in Iceland](#), Ministry of Education, 2002

¹⁶ [The Educational System in Iceland](#), Ministry of Education, 2002 p.17

during upper secondary schooling has, however, been considerable. The law concerning upper secondary education allows for varied admission requirements to different programmes of study at the upper secondary level according to what demands are made by the programme of study in question. However, all students have the right to education at this level. A general programme of study is intended for students who need further preparation to enter academic or vocational programmes of study. The school year, which lasts for nine months, is divided into autumn and spring terms. Students generally attend 32 to 40 lessons per week, with each lesson lasting 40 minutes”.¹⁷

1.4. Policy Framework

i) General information

15. A fundamental principle of education in Iceland is that everyone should have equal opportunity to acquire education, irrespective of sex, economic status, residential location, and cultural or social background. The main purpose of compulsory schooling is to prepare pupils for life and work in a continuously developing, democratic society. The organization of the school as well as its work shall, therefore, be guided by tolerance, Christian values and democratic co-operation.¹⁸

16. “**The national Curriculum Guide for Compulsory Schools** describes the pedagogical and educational role of the compulsory school and its general policy for teaching and the organisation of teaching the national Curriculum Guide details provisions on school subjects and fields of education and also on emphases and proportions”¹⁹

ii) Inclusive Education

17. “Equality education refers to both the content of education, study methods and learning environment. Equality is an umbrella concept that involves a number of factors the following are some of these factors in an alphabetical order: age, class, culture, descent, gender, disability, language, nationality, outlook on life, race, religion, residence, sexual orientation at every school level, education for equality should address how these factors can establish discrimination and privileges for people (...)”²⁰

iii) Quality education

18. Evaluation of school activities is part of the supervisory work of schools and school authorities in order to ensure the rights of pupils and promote school improvement. the

¹⁷ [The Educational System in Iceland](#), Ministry of Education, 2002 p.24

¹⁸ <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/en/access-by-country/europe-and-north-america/iceland/profile-of-education.html>

¹⁹ The National Curriculum Guide for Compulsory Schools, Ministry of Education, published in 2014 p. 7 accessible at: http://brunnur.stjr.is/mrn/utgafuskra/utgafa.nsf/xsp/.ibmmodres/domino/OpenAttachment/mrn/utgafuskra/utgafa.nsf/E7DE015E63AA2F2C00257CA2005296F7/Attachment/adalnrsk_greinask_ens_2014.pdf

²⁰ The National Curriculum Guide for Compulsory Schools, Ministry of Education, published in 2014 p. 20 accessible at: http://brunnur.stjr.is/mrn/utgafuskra/utgafa.nsf/xsp/.ibmmodres/domino/OpenAttachment/mrn/utgafuskra/utgafa.nsf/E7DE015E63AA2F2C00257CA2005296F7/Attachment/adalnrsk_greinask_ens_2014.pdf

Ministry of Education, Science and Culture “objectives of evaluation and supervision are primarily divided into three parts firstly, it is to examine whether school activities are in line with the provisions of law, regulations and the national Curriculum Guide; secondly, to improve the quality of educational work and encourage improvements, ensure that the rights of pupils are observed and that they are provided with the service that they are entitled to in accordance with law; thirdly, it is to provide information about school activities, their results and development Schools are responsible for internal evaluation but the Ministry of Education, and depending on circumstances, local authorities carry out the external evaluation External evaluation comprises, for example, evaluations of school activities as a whole or specific aspects of these activities, comprehensive evaluation of the activities of individual schools, evaluation of school subjects and aspects of learning, and supervision of internal evaluation of schools additionally, the Ministry of Education is responsible for supervising that local authorities fulfil their relevant responsibilities created by laws on schools furthermore, the Ministry of Education is to supervise the status and development of the educational system to that end, the Ministry of Education collects diverse data on school management, for example, through participation in international surveys of learning outcomes and other aspects of educational work”²¹

iv) Curriculum

19. The educational policy that appears in the National Curriculum Guide is based on six fundamental pillars on which the curriculum guidelines are based, these fundamental pillars are:

- i. literacy,
- ii. sustainability,
- iii. health and welfare
- iv. democracy and human rights,
- v. equality,
- vi. creativity »²²

20. The concepts that the fundamental pillars are based on are to be reflected in the working methods, communication and atmosphere of schools they should be evident in all educational activities and in the content of school subjects and fields of study, both regarding the knowledge and the skills that children and youth are to acquire fields of study can be specialisation of the tasks of school activities, across subjects and school levels the fundamental pillars are an intrinsic part of all curriculum guides at all school levels and their stipulations for all school activities:

- Choice of material and content of study, teaching and play should reflect the fundamental pillars

²¹ The National Curriculum Guide for Compulsory Schools, Ministry of Education, published in 2014 p. 26/27 accessible at: http://brunnur.stjr.is/mrn/utgafuskra/utgafa.nsf/xsp/.ibmmodres/dominio/OpenAttachment/mrn/utgafuskra/utgafa.nsf/E7DE015E63AA2F2C00257CA2005296F7/Attachment/adalnrsk_greinask_ens_2014.pdf

²² The National Curriculum Guide for Compulsory Schools, Ministry of Education, published in 2014 p. 14 accessible at: http://brunnur.stjr.is/mrn/utgafuskra/utgafa.nsf/xsp/.ibmmodres/dominio/OpenAttachment/mrn/utgafuskra/utgafa.nsf/E7DE015E63AA2F2C00257CA2005296F7/Attachment/adalnrsk_greinask_ens_2014.pdf

- Working methods and techniques that children and youth learn are influenced by ideas which appear in discussions of the fundamental pillars
- Procedures of teachers and other school personnel are to be based on the fundamental pillars and thus encourage independence, initiative and development of school activities
- When school activities are evaluated, it should be observed whether and how the fundamental pillars are reflected in study, teaching and play”²³

v) Gender equality

21. Equality refers to both the content of education, study methods and learning environment. Equality is an “umbrella concept that involves a number of factors including gender equality at every school level, education for equality should address how these factors can establish discrimination and privileges for people.”²⁴

2. COOPERATION

22. Iceland is **not party** to the 1960 UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education.

23. Iceland **did not report** to UNESCO on the measures taken for the implementation of the 1960 UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education within the framework of the:

- Sixth Consultation** of Member States (covering the period 1994-1999),
- Seventh Consultation** of Member States (covering the period 2000-2005),
- Eighth Consultation** of Member States (covering the period 2006-2011).

24. Iceland **did not report** to UNESCO on the measures taken for the implementation of the 1974 UNESCO Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms within the framework of the:

- Fourth Consultation** of Member States (covering the period 2005-2008),
- Fifth Consultation** of Member States (covering the period 2009-2012).

25. Iceland **did not report** to UNESCO on the measures taken for the implementation of the 1976 UNESCO Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education within the framework of:

- the **First Consultation** of Member States (1993)

²³ The National Curriculum Guide for Compulsory Schools, Ministry of Education, published in 2014 p. 15 accessible at: http://brunnur.stjr.is/mrn/utgafuskra/utgafa.nsf/xsp/.ibmmodres/domino/OpenAttachment/mrn/utgafuskra/utgafa.nsf/E7DE015E63AA2F2C00257CA2005296F7/Attachment/adalnrsk_greinask_ens_2014.pdf

²⁴ The National Curriculum Guide for Compulsory Schools, Ministry of Education, published in 2014 p. 20 accessible at: http://brunnur.stjr.is/mrn/utgafuskra/utgafa.nsf/xsp/.ibmmodres/domino/OpenAttachment/mrn/utgafuskra/utgafa.nsf/E7DE015E63AA2F2C00257CA2005296F7/Attachment/adalnrsk_greinask_ens_2014.pdf

ii. the **Second Consultation** of Member States (2011).

26. Iceland is **not party** to the 1989 UNESCO Convention on Technical and Vocational Education.

Freedom of opinion and expression

1. Constitutional and Legislative Framework:

27. Article 73 of the Constitution of Iceland guarantees the right to freedom of opinion and belief²⁵, and explicitly prohibits all forms of censorship or other similar limitations to freedom of expression. However, restrictions can be made in the case of publications in which the interests of public order or the security of the State are at stake, according to the same Article.

28. Media is further regulated through several acts, including: the Media Law²⁶ which aims to promote freedom of expression and to establish a coordinated regulatory framework for media services; the Broadcasting Act²⁷, which defines the role of the Broadcasting License Committee that issues broadcasting licenses; and finally the Act on Competition²⁸, which gives the right to authorities to request information regarded as necessary for the investigation of individual cases.

29. Additionally, the Information Act of Iceland²⁹ guarantees transparency in government administration and the right of access to information.

30. Defamation is regarded as a criminal offense with punishments in the form of a fine or imprisonment up to two years, according to the Penal Code.³⁰ However, the new media law, adopted in 2011, has reduced the number of crimes of defamation, since journalists can no longer be held responsible for potentially libellous quotes for their sources (Section IX).³¹

31. The Icelandic Media Commission, Fjölmiðlanefnd, monitors advertising, sponsorship and product placement in audiovisual media and tracks programming that can be harmful for a

²⁵ https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Iceland_2013?lang=en

²⁶ <http://www.pfs.is/library/Skrar/English/Legislation/Media-Act-38-English-translation-nov-2011-1.pdf>

²⁷ <http://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/is/is098en.pdf>

²⁸ http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text.jsp?file_id=190557 (Article 19)

²⁹ <http://eng.forsaetisraduneyti.is/media/English/information-act-no-140-2012.pdf>

³⁰ http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text.jsp?file_id=190914#LinkTarget_700

³¹ <http://eng.menntamalaraduneyti.is/media/MRN-pdf/Media-Act-38-English-translation-nov-2011.pdf>

child's development. The Minister of Education, Science and Culture appoints five persons to the Media Commission for the terms of four years at a time.³²

2. Media Self-Regulation:

32. The Icelandic Press Council adopted the Rules of Ethics in Journalism³³, which promotes the public's right to information, freedom of expression and criticism.

33. Self-regulatory institutions in Iceland include the International Modern Media Institute (IMMI) and the **Blaðamannafélag Íslands** (Islandic Union of Journalists), which aim to protect freedom of information, expression and speech.

3. Safety of Journalists

34. UNESCO recorded no killing of journalists in Iceland so far. Journalists operate in a safe environment.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

Right to education

35. **Recommendations made within the framework of the first cycle of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, considered on (please check the date on the following web site: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/Documentation.aspx>)**

36. Latest observations reported on December 2011 - [view](#)

37. **61. The following recommendations enjoy the support of Iceland:**

- i. 61.12. Ensure adequate human rights education and training for all professionals working with children (Slovenia);
- ii. 61.13. Coordinate preventive measures for the elimination of this trend (of cases of violence and sexual abuse of children) and develop preventative training programs, in particular for teachers and other professionals working with children (Uruguay);
- iii. 61.14. Formally incorporate education about child sexual abuse and its prevention into the training of teachers and other professionals working with children, health professionals, lawyers and police officers (Slovenia);

³² <http://fjolmidlanefnd.is/english/>

³³ <http://www.rjionline.org/MAS-Codes-Iceland-Rules>

- iv. 61.28. Put in place measures aimed at integrating minorities, reducing their vulnerability to exploitation and discrimination and guaranteeing their access to work in accordance with their educational qualifications and professional experience (Spain);
- v. 61.29. Ensure that immigrants gain access to professions reflecting their educational level and professional experience (Iran);
- vi. 61.31. Intensify efforts to improve the situation of students with an immigrant background in order to increase enrolment and to avoid drop-outs (Ghana);
- vii. 61.34. Assess possible action to overcome the issue referred to in paragraph 52 of the National Report regarding the worrisome dropout rate for pupils of immigrant background, which may be partly due to lack of skills in the Icelandic language (Chile).

62. The following recommendations enjoy the support of Iceland which it considers to be already implemented or in the process of implementation:

- i. 62.3. Take proactive and sustained measures to eliminate stereotypical attitudes about the roles and responsibilities of women and men, including through awareness-raising and educational campaigns directed at both women and men and the media (Republic of Moldova);
- ii. 62.7. Establish a community education program to raise awareness of domestic violence against women and options open to them to bring an end to this crime (Australia);
- iii. 62.14. Take necessary measures to ensure that no child is subject to religious practice that confines their religious freedom or the liberty of parents to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions (Sweden);

38. Analysis:

Iceland has, to the extent of our knowledge, taken significant measures to ensure the right to education. The National Curriculum Guide notably promotes literacy, equality and human rights education and constitutes a valuable guide for educational institutions throughout the country. Iceland has nevertheless, as far as we know, not taken additional measures toward improving health, sexual and human rights education. In addition, to the extent of our knowledge, Iceland has not yet taken concrete measures to improve access to education for disadvantaged groups, especially migrants.

39. Specific Recommendations:

- i. Iceland should be strongly encouraged to ratify the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education.
- ii. Iceland should be strongly encouraged to further submit state reports for the periodic consultations of UNESCO's education related standard-setting instruments.
- iii. Iceland should be encouraged to continue the implementation of the National Curriculum Guidelines as well as monitoring the educational institutions to supervise its implementation

- iv. Iceland could be encouraged to further implement equal access to education, especially for migrants
- v. Iceland could be encouraged to include health, sexual and human rights education in its curriculum

Cultural Rights

40. As a State Party to the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972)³⁴, the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), and the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005), Iceland is encouraged to fully implement the relevant provisions that promote access to and participation in cultural heritage and creative expressions and, as such, are conducive to implementing the right to take part in cultural life as defined in article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. In doing so, Iceland is encouraged to give due consideration to the participation of communities, practitioners, cultural actors and NGOs from the civil society as well as vulnerable groups (minorities, indigenous peoples, migrants, refugees, young peoples and peoples with disabilities), and to ensure that equal opportunities are given to women and girls to address gender disparities.

Freedom of opinion and expression

41. Iceland is further recommended to decriminalize defamation and place it within a civil code that is in accordance with international standards.³⁵

Freedom of scientific research and the right to benefit from scientific progress and its applications

42. Iceland, in the framework of the 2015-2017 consultations related to the revision and monitoring of the Recommendation on the Status of Scientific Researchers is encouraged to report to UNESCO on any legislative or other steps undertaken by it with the aim to implement this international standard-setting instrument, adopted by UNESCO in 1974. Iceland did not submit its 2011-2012 report on the implementation of the 1974

³⁴ Periodic report on the implementation of the 1972 Convention in the Europe region is available at: <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/2015/whc15-39COM-10A-en.pdf>.

³⁵ See for example, General Comments No 34. of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), 2006 Recommendation of the 87th Session Human Rights Committee, the recommendations of the UN Special Rapporteurs on the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, and Resolution 1577 (2007) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

Recommendation. In providing its report in 2015-2017 on this matter, Iceland is kindly invited to pay a particular attention to the legal provisions and regulatory frameworks which ensure that scientific researchers have the responsibility and the right to work in the spirit of the principles enshrined in the 1974 Recommendation.