
Iceland Votes on Reopening Long-Stalled EU Membership Talks



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Reykjavik, August 28 : Icelanders will vote Saturday on whether to reopen accession negotiations with the European Union, more than a decade after membership talks were suspended.

The referendum, the first direct vote on pursuing EU accession talks, comes amid economic concerns and growing geopolitical uncertainty in the North Atlantic.

A “Yes” vote would authorize the government to reopen negotiations but would not mean immediate EU membership. Any eventual accession treaty would require approval in a second referendum.

Iceland is already closely integrated with Europe through the European Economic Area, Schengen Area and European Free Trade Association, participating in the EU single market while having no vote on many rules it adopts.

The country first applied for EU membership in 2009 following the global financial crisis, but negotiations stalled after a change of government in 2013.

The issue has returned under a coalition formed in December 2024, with inflation, high interest rates and concerns over economic stability driving renewed debate.

The vote remains too close to call, with recent polls showing nearly even support.

Fisheries and agriculture remain major concerns. A “Yes” would launch fresh negotiations, while a “No” would keep Iceland’s current relationship with the EU unchanged.