

# Press Releases: Secretary Pompeo's Travel to Iceland

Fact Sheet  
Office of the Spokesperson

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- The United States was the first country to recognize Iceland's independence in 1944. Over the past 75 years, the United States has developed a close relationship built on our strong defense cooperation, growing trade and investment, and people-to-people ties.

## **PARTNERS IN SECURITY**

- Under the 1951 Defense Agreement, the United States is committed to Iceland's defense, a commitment that is sacrosanct. In 2016, our governments signed a Joint Declaration reaffirming our commitment and partnership.
- Iceland's Keflavik Air Base supports U.S. and NATO operations in the North Atlantic and provides critical maritime and aerial domain awareness. The Icelandic Coast Guard operates Keflavik and undertakes crucial Search and Rescue operations in the Arctic.
- Iceland is a founding member of NATO, and together the United States and Iceland support pressing global priorities, including the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan and the Coalition to Defeat ISIS.

## **PARTNERS IN ECONOMIC PROSPERITY**

- The United States recently became Iceland's largest single trading partner, and our overall trade in 2017 topped \$800 million.
- Many U.S. brands and franchises have thrived in Iceland, including Costco, Hard Rock Café, KFC/Taco Bell, and Domino's. U.S.-based Carpenter & Company is currently constructing the first 5-star hotel in Reykjavik, which will be operated by Marriott.

## **PARTNERS IN VALUES AND PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE TIES**

- In 2018, 694,814 U.S. tourists visited Iceland, the largest group of foreign tourists to visit the island.
- The United States and Iceland maintain close ties in education and scientific research. In 2018, more than 400 Icelanders studied in the United States. Each year a collaboration between the U.S. Fulbright

Program and the National Science Foundation sends up to 10 American researchers to Iceland to conduct research on Arctic-focused topics.

- The United States and Iceland enjoy a rich history of supporting freedom and democratic values. In 1986 during the height of the Cold War, Iceland hosted the historic summit meeting between President Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev.

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