



Proposal of the Central Committee on ASÍ's policy and core values in international affairs

The Icelandic Confederation of Labour (ASÍ) bases its international policy on the core values of the Icelandic and international labour movement. The policy is intended to protect the human rights of workers and the free and independent labour movement worldwide, and to ensure that globalisation, economic systems and technological change serve working people. All ASÍ positions on international affairs shall be based on, and guided by, the objective of safeguarding the social rights of working people, with dignity and human rights as guiding principles.

ASÍ participates actively in the work of European and international trade union organisations in order to influence policy-making in employment, social and economic affairs.

Fundamental priorities and core values of ASÍ

- Human rights and labour rights

The protection and enforcement of workers' fundamental rights at work, in accordance with International Labour Organization conventions and other multilateral and international human rights treaties, form the basis of ASÍ's international work.

- Collective strength and cooperation

Cross-border cooperation within the labour movement strengthens the position of all workers. Iceland's cooperation and collaboration with other countries should serve the interests of society as a whole and be based on democratic public debate and decision-making.

- Democracy and social justice

Support for democratic societies and democratic practices must go hand in hand with the fight against oppression, abuse of power, discrimination, violence and armed conflict. Poverty and the denial of rights affecting some are problems and responsibilities for us all.

- Combating discrimination and exploitation

Opposition to discrimination on any grounds, and action against social dumping, wage theft, forced labour and child labour, are prerequisites for a healthy society and labour market.

- Fair globalisation

A demand for fair trade, social protection and responsible international economic systems. International trade and economic systems should serve social interests, not profit alone, and should support sustainable development.

- A sustainable future

Ensure that climate action and technological change lead to decent jobs that provide working people with security and a future. There are no jobs on a dead planet.

ASÍ's vision and priorities

- The important role of the labour movement in developing the economy, in cooperation with other social partners, should be recognised. ASÍ has a responsibility to monitor and oppose developments that weaken acquired rights and to defend the Icelandic labour market model, which has delivered significant gains for workers.
- Iceland's position in international cooperation should be further strengthened, and the opportunities and benefits arising from that cooperation should benefit workers in the Icelandic labour market. ASÍ and its affiliated unions have a responsibility to press for Icelandic companies operating internationally to comply with the international agreements to which Iceland is a party. They must also uphold the demand that public bodies do not direct business towards international actors that violate human rights or work against the human rights of working people and the labour movement.
- Increasing internationalisation and the opening of the labour market must be met by strengthening the position of foreign workers in Iceland and ensuring that they are not used to undermine pay and conditions or weaken labour market rights.
- Iceland should set clear objectives in economic, employment and social policy so that the Icelandic economy is progressive and internationally competitive, delivers sustainable economic growth, full employment, good jobs and social equality. This requires:
 - An employment policy aimed at creating more and better jobs, based on a skilled workforce, initiative and innovation, adaptability and gender equality. Strong continuing education and other learning opportunities are the most important tools for achieving these objectives.
 - Social objectives for a labour market based on security, while also providing flexibility that benefits both workers and businesses.
 - An objective of decent living standards for all, and a labour market and economy that are a source of greater quality of life, with shorter working hours, increased opportunities for continuing education, and a better balance between labour market participation and private life.
 - Economic policy aimed at strengthening economic stability and thereby better safeguarding the competitiveness and growth potential of the Icelandic economy.
 - Action against the trend in international relations whereby respect for international rules has declined and greater emphasis is placed on the rights of the powerful. This development has included:
 - The growing influence of powerful multinational corporations and systematic efforts to undermine the work and position of trade unions, including by weakening the enforcement of international agreements on which their rights and obligations are based.
 - The enormous accumulation of wealth by a small group that uses its financial power to undermine the fundamental rights of working people and supports political forces that oppose workers' social rights is weakening the foundations of both democracy and welfare.
 - Alongside this, a system of corruption has emerged in which capital flows into the pockets of those who serve the interests of this group, while respect for law and legal rights is diminishing. This is a cross-border development, and Iceland is no exception.

Explanatory notes

International relations have always been important and are becoming increasingly so. This applies to the labour movement no less than to others. It is therefore important for ASÍ to define its core values in this area so that they can provide guidance to ASÍ's institutions. These core values do not constitute policy-making on individual issues, such as a position on EU membership or on a referendum on whether accession negotiations should be opened.

Over recent decades, ASÍ has participated increasingly in cooperation within the labour movement at Nordic, European and international level. Through this work, ASÍ has taken part in the labour movement's struggle for improved pay, conditions and rights in Europe and throughout the world. Examples include the international fight for human rights, the fight against child labour and efforts to secure social clauses in trade agreements. A large part of this work takes place through direct cooperation within the labour movement, while some takes place within international organisations such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), in which the governments of the world participate. In Iceland, ASÍ has sought to use its influence to shape the policy of the Icelandic authorities in this work. A general and formal ASÍ policy on international affairs has not, however, been clearly defined; instead, positions have been developed on individual issues, with the broader policy reflected in those positions.

ASÍ Congresses and the Central Committee have adopted resolutions on various matters as they have arisen. Views on these issues in recent years are therefore primarily found in individual resolutions and memoranda. These views are also well documented on ASÍ's history website, which also provides an overview of developments in international participation. This proposal on ASÍ's fundamental policy and priorities is based on positions expressed in resolutions adopted by annual meetings, Congresses and the Central Committee, and is submitted to the International Affairs Committee for further work in preparation for the ASÍ Congress in autumn 2026.