



**Address**  
**by the President of Iceland**  
**Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson**  
**on the arrival of the Viking ship Íslendingur**  
**at Brattahlid, Greenland**  
**14 July 2000**

Your Majesty  
Your Royal Highness  
Prime Minister of Greenland  
The crew of the Íslendingur  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

We are here to welcome the brave crew of the Íslendingur who have sailed the course taken by Leif the Lucky and Eirik the Red – their family and followers – across the perilous sea to Brattahlid. Their journey began on Iceland's National Day and their first call – a kind of honorary beginning – was in Dalasýsla in West Iceland, Leif the Lucky's birthplace. In the spirit of their Viking forebears, the crew who have now made port here in Greenland set off on horseback from Eiríksstaðir, Eirik the Red's old farmstead in Delays, where a replica Viking Age farmhouse has now been near the ruins which archaeological studies show were once the home of a family of settlers around the time when the Sagas of Icelanders describe the lives of Eirik the Red and his household.

Eirik and his son Leif took not only their family and livestock with them to Greenland, but also the culture and language which in Iceland enshrined the golden age of parliamentary democracy at Thingvellir and the sagas and poems which occupy a unique place in the European literary heritage. It therefore seems a fitting gesture for me to welcome the crew of the Íslendingur here today in the mother tongue of Leif the Lucky and Eirik the Red, Thjodhild, Gudrid and Thorfinn Karlsefni, the language which has lived on in Iceland over the thousand years since Leif's great discoveries to the West.

*Valiant crew of the Íslendingur!*

*You have travelled from afar, done battle with sea ice and strong ocean currents, and drawn on the same ingenuity and resourcefulness people did of old when they made the journey to which you are now paying tribute.*

*We welcome you here and pay tribute to your commitment and courage. This impressive voyage by the Íslendingur is a worthy beginning to the great festival that our friends here in Greenland are now holding to honour the memory of the great explorers for whom both Iceland and Greenland were home.*

*All of us send you our best wishes for your journey and we hope that, as you continue your voyage, the description of Leif's achievements in the ancient sagas will serve to bring you good fortune:*

*“Once he had made ready, Leif set sail. After being tossed about at sea for a long time he chanced upon land where he had not expected any to be found. Fields of self-sown wheat and vines were growing there; also, there were trees known as burly wood, and they took specimens of all of them, and some of the trees were so great that they could be used for building houses.*

*“Leif chanced upon men clinging to a ship's wreck, whom he brought home and found shelter for over the winter. In doing so he showed his strong character and kindness. He converted the country to Christianity and he saved people's lives. He was called Leif the Lucky.”*

Your Majesty  
Honourable Greenlanders  
Ladies and Gentlemen

With this ancient text from Eirik the Red's Saga I have wished good luck to the brave crew who with their voyage have paid tribute to the memory of remarkable explorers.

The Icelanders send the Greenlanders warm greetings and best wishes for their celebrations. We recall here those people who a thousand years ago linked our countries together. May our lives and work be in the spirit of the cooperation which forged bonds of friendship between our countries.

With these words the people of Iceland wish our friends the Greenlanders fortune and success on their path into the future.