



WELCOME TO ICELAND

Greetings from the President of Iceland Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson

When members of the Round Table assemble in Iceland it is worth noting that you have now entered into a unique experience.

In many ways Iceland is a primary example of how sophisticated culture can thrive in small societies. Such is the fermentation of arts and culture, music, literature, drama and visual arts to be found on our unique island surrounded by the North Atlantic Ocean.

Nature itself, the mountains, rivers, lakes, magnificent colours of the lava and heaths, and walks in valleys and fjords, provide magnificent opportunities to witness the creation of the Earth at first hand.

The Bible describes how God created the Earth in six days and then decided to rest. The only problem with this holy text is that the Almighty apparently decided no to rest when it came to Iceland. Here the creation of the Earth has continued to this very day.

The creative forces of nature have also profoundly influenced the culture and the artistic life of my country. Today, Reykjavik is the nation's artistic and cultural centre, a true powerhouse of innovation and diversity. There is a choice of 20-30 theatre performances in the city every week, along with numerous concerts. At weekends from autumn to spring, so many new art exhibitions are opened that even the most devoted lovers of culture cannot manage to visit them all.

A further dimension is added by being able to discuss your Icelandic experience and recall fond memories over a fine meal at the country's quality restaurants. Iceland's unique seafood and highland lamb are so exquisite that many people promise themselves to visit the country again – just for a meal!

I hope the members of the Round Table will enjoy your visit to Iceland. We treasure the friendships that have been created by such journeys.