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# **I Love You, I Love You Not. Exploring the Icelandic Public Opinion towards EU Accession**

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## Abstract

After the outbreak of the Icelandic banking crisis in 2008, the country seemed to be preparing to join the European Union (EU). But, after a short pro-EU period in the public debate, things went back to the normal Eurosceptic sentiment. This Master's thesis tries to find out which are the main reasons behind the anti-EU stance in the Icelandic population. With the help of a literature review, interviews and an extensive survey, it was possible to discover that the protection of the Icelandic fishery and agriculture sectors bothers the Icelanders the most. A second idea in people's heads is that Iceland is too small to successfully let its voice be heard in the EU, and thus to protect its key interests. In general, the population adopts a rational cost-benefit analysis to come to the conclusion that their country is better off on its own. Icelanders do not want to join the EU since they think it would not be in the interest of their country. Sentimental issues, such as the lack of an identity connection with the European mainland or the protection of (what some see as) their whaling tradition have less prominence in this debate.