

**Keilir Aviation Leaders Forum on Airports and Airlines Winter Operations
October 10, 2011 Keflavik Airport, Iceland
Presentation of Chairmen, Moderators, Panelists and Speakers**



Dr. Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson

President of Iceland
Bessastadir, Iceland

Patron of the Aviation Conference

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The President of Iceland

The President of Iceland is the country's head of state and the only representative chosen by the entire electorate in a direct election. The office of President was established in the Constitution of the Republic of Iceland which took effect on 17 June 1944.

The fifth President of the Republic is Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson. He was elected in 1996, assuming office on August 1st that year. He was re-elected in 2000, 2004 and again in 2008.

The President is elected for a term of four years. Under the Constitution, the President delegates executive power to governmental authorities. The President and the Parliament exercise legislative power. When bills have been passed they are submitted to the President within two weeks to become effective as law. If the President refuses to approve the bill, it nevertheless takes effect, but must then be subjected to a general referendum as soon as possible and becomes invalid if it is rejected; otherwise, it remains in force.

In the absence of the President, presidential powers are exercised by the Prime Minister, the Speaker of the Alþingi and the President of the Supreme Court.

The official residence of the President of Iceland is at Bessastaðir, near Reykjavík.

The fifth President of the Republic of Iceland Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson was born in Ísafjörður in May 14th 1943. His parents were Grímur Kristgeirsson and Svanhildur Ólafsdóttir Hjartar.

Ólafur Ragnar matriculated from the Reykjavík Grammar School in 1962, took his BA degree in Economics and Political Science at the University of Manchester in 1965 and completed his Ph.D. in Political Science at the same university in 1970, becoming the first Icelander to earn a doctorate in this discipline.

Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson was appointed a lecturer in Political Science at the University of Iceland in 1970 and created the foundations for the teaching of the subject, then a new addition to the syllabus of the university. In 1973 he was appointed the first Professor of Political Science at the same university and during the period 1970-1988 he built up the Political Science department. In most of his research he focused on the Icelandic governmental system, and on the smaller European democracies, participating with local and international experts in the field.

Early in his career, Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson began playing a role in public affairs in Iceland.

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For example, he directed radio and television programmes in the years 1966-1971 which were an innovation in mass media in Iceland and aroused a great deal of public attention. He was a member of the Young Progressives from 1966 to 1973 and was on the executive committee of the Progressive Party in the years 1971-1973. In 1974 Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson stood as a parliamentary candidate for the Liberal-Left Alliance, taking a seat in the Alþingi as a deputy member in 1974 and 1975.

From 1978 to 1983, Ólafur Ragnar served in the Alþingi as the People's Alliance member for Reykjavík, and as the same party's member for Reykjanes from 1991 to 1996. He was chairman of the parliamentary group of the People's Alliance from 1980 to 1983 and chairman of its executive committee from 1983 to 1987. He was editor of the newspaper Þjóðviljinn from 1983 to 1985, and was elected Leader of the People's Alliance from 1987-1995. In the years 1988-1991 he was Minister of Finance in a government headed by Steingrímur Hermannsson.

Ólafur Ragnar has been active in various other societies and organizations. He was a member of the Economic Council from 1966 to 1968, the Broadcasting Council from 1971 to 1975. He was Chairman of the Icelandic Social Science Association in 1975, and a member of the board of Landsvirkjun, the leading power company of Iceland, from 1983 to 1988, and a Vice-Chairman of the Icelandic Security Commission from 1979 to 1991.

He was a member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe from 1981 to 1984 and again in 1995-1996, was a chairman of the preparatory committee for the Council of Europe conference "North-South: the Role of Europe" in 1982-1984 and was Chairman and later President of the international organization Parliamentarians for Global Action from 1984 to 1990, serving on its council until 1996.

Among many international awards he has received is the Indira Gandhi Peace Prize which he received on behalf of PGA. Ólafur Ragnar was a member of the committee of the Peace Initiative of Six Heads of State in the years 1984-1989, and was awarded honorary doctorates by the universities of Ås (Norway) in 1997 and Manchester in 2001.

Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson is the author of a large number of academic articles that have appeared in both Icelandic and overseas periodicals.

On November 14th 1974, he married [Guðrún Katrín Þorbergsdóttir](#) (b. August 14th 1934, d. October 12th 1998), daughter of Þorbergur Friðriksson and Guðrún Beck. Their twin daughters (b. 1975) are Guðrún Tinna, a graduate in Business Studies, and Svanhildur Dalla, a graduate in Political Science and Law.

On May 14th 2003, he married [Dorrit Moussaieff](#) (b. January 12th 1950), daughter of Shlomo and Alisa Moussaieff.

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http://en.keilir.net/keilir/about_keilir/gallery/conference_-_day_2

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**A Greeting
from
the President of Iceland
Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson
Patron of the Conference**

Last year the Keilir Aviation Academy hosted a timely and successful conference on the lessons to be learned from the surprises Mother Earth can still come up with. The Eyjafjallajökull eruption became both the core and the symbol of that much-needed debate. The distinguished gathering of aviation leaders, experts, representatives and officials contributed to making the industry better prepared for next time.

Now Iceland is again bringing aviation stakeholders together. The reason is the need to improve winter operations. The failures last December are still vivid in the minds of millions of people. To be stopped at the airport when you are already in Christmas mood is not a formula for enjoyment!

Why Iceland? – you might ask. The reason is simple. Not only is our country the home of the largest collection of volcanoes in Europe but we also host the biggest glaciers in Europe and guard some gateways to the Arctic. For centuries, winter weather has been a challenge to our nation.

Yet, despite these testing conditions, Iceland has become a successful airline hub in the North-Atlantic, connecting America to Europe for decades; flying when others decided to wait. Short airstrips in narrow fjords have trained our pilots to cope with winter conditions; an experience which has served them well in the international arena.

For all these reasons – and many more – the Keilir Aviation Academy decided to build on last year's success and serve again as a venue for a global dialogue on how airports and airlines can successfully maintain winter operations.

It will be a pleasure to welcome you all.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson'.

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