

# Resolution on the 2010 progress report on Croatia

2010/2995(RSP) - 14/12/2010

The Council adopted a series of conclusions on the **enlargement strategy**. These may be summarised as follows:

Welcoming the communication from the Commission of 9 November 2010 on the [Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2010-2011](#), as well as the Opinions on Montenegro and Albania, and the progress reports on Turkey, Croatia, Iceland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, the Council states that it broadly shares the Commission's assessments.

The Council reaffirms the strong support of the EU for taking the enlargement process forward but states that **key challenges remain to be negotiated in most enlargement countries**. Sound macro-economic and fiscal policies and EU-related reforms can help to overcome the economic crisis and to achieve sustainable growth. Strengthening the rule of law, including through judiciary reform and stepping up the fight against corruption and organised crime, remains crucial and requires sustained efforts. Public administration reform is also important for EU policies to function properly. Social and economic inclusion of vulnerable groups, including the Roma, should be improved. Problems affecting freedom of expression and the media remain a particular concern. Regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations are essential parts of the enlargement process. They contribute to reconciliation and a climate conducive to addressing open bilateral issues. The Council encourages all parties concerned to address bilateral issues, falling outside areas of EU competence and/or contractual obligations towards the EU, in a constructive spirit and taking into account overall EU interests.

As the countries concerned meet the standards which have been set, including notably those linked to democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights and freedoms, the EU is committed to working with them to advance to the next steps in the process. The Council welcomes the strengthened link between priorities identified for the (potential) candidate countries and the programming of financial assistance, in particular through the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA).

**As regards Croatia**, the Council welcomes Croatia's good overall progress towards meeting the membership criteria. **Accession negotiations have reached their final stage and preparations for the drafting of the Accession Treaty have progressed steadily. Conclusion of the negotiations is within reach.**

Encouraging progress has been made in many areas, including in the field of rule of law and the fight against high-level corruption. At the same time, further efforts are required, inter alia as regards judicial independence and efficiency, the fight against corruption at all levels, as well as in the fields of public administration reform, the rights of persons belonging to minorities, refugee return and war crimes trials.

The Council encourages Croatia to step up its efforts to fulfil the remaining benchmarks, including the build-up of convincing track records, in particular as regards **competition policy and judiciary and fundamental rights**.

It also welcomes:

- the generally good cooperation of Croatia with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY);

- Croatia's active role in regional cooperation, the improvement in its relations with neighbouring countries and its efforts aimed at reconciliation in the region. It welcomes the entry into force of the Arbitration Agreement on the border issue with Slovenia on 29 November 2010.

Lastly, building on the results of the Accession Conferences of July and November 2010, the Council hopes that further progress can be registered on this occasion.