Democracy and Human Rights on the Way of Transition

Case Study- Republic of Croatia: Does Croatia Meet Political Criteria of Guaranteeing Democracy and Human Rights with a View to the Country’s Accession into the European Union?

Master’s Thesis in European Master’s Program in Human Rights and Democratization (E.MA), European Inter-University Centre in Human Rights and Democratization, EIUC, 2010/2011

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1. List of Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AP</td>
<td>Accession Partnership</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSOs</td>
<td>Civil Society Organization</td>
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<td>ECHR</td>
<td>European Convention on Human Rights</td>
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<td>ECJ</td>
<td>European Court of Justice</td>
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<td>ECtHR</td>
<td>European Court on Human Rights</td>
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<td>EEC</td>
<td>European Economic Community</td>
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<td>EIDHR</td>
<td>European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>FCNM</td>
<td>Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities</td>
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<td>FDI</td>
<td>Foreign Direct Investment</td>
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<td>HRHN</td>
<td>Human Rights House Network</td>
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<td>ICTY</td>
<td>International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia</td>
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<td>MFAEI</td>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integrations (Republic of Croatia)</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>ODIHR</td>
<td>Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<td>OJ</td>
<td>Official Journal of the European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>OSCE</td>
<td>Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAA</td>
<td>Stabilisation and Association Agreement</td>
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<td>SAP</td>
<td>Stabilisation and Association Process</td>
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<td>TA</td>
<td>Treaty of Accession</td>
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<td>TEU</td>
<td>Treaty on European Union</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>USKOK</td>
<td>Office for the Fight against Corruption and Organized Crime in Croatia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# 2. Table of Contents

1. List of Abbreviations ........................................................................................................................................... 0

3. Introduction ....................................................................................................................................................... 4

4. The Perspective of Democracy in Republic of Croatia ......................................................................................... 5


4.3.1. “Hypo Alpe Adria Group” Affair .................................................................................................................. 19

4.3.2. “Podravka” Affair ............................................................................................................................................ 20

4.4. Fragile Concept of Human Rights in Croatia .................................................................................................... 24

4.4.1. Human Rights Protection in the Republic of Croatia .................................................................................... 25

4.4.2. Freedom of Expression in Croatia Oppressed ............................................................................................. 28

4.4.2.1. Croatian Public Television Case ............................................................................................................. 29

4.4.2.2. Murder of the Private Newspaper Agency Case .................................................................................... 30

4.4.3. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly in Croatia Violated ..................................................................................... 31

4.4.3.1. Gay Pride Parade in Split ...................................................................................................................... 31

4.4.3.2. “Varsavska Street” Peaceful Protests Violently Oppressed by the Police ............................................. 33

5. Croatia as a Member State of Council of Europe .................................................................................................. 35

5.1. Organization and Importance of the Council of Europe for its Member States – Democratization, Rule of Law and European Human Rights System ................................................................................. 36

6. Relations between European Union and Republic of Croatia as Future Member State .................................. 41

6.2. The Treaty on European Union with its Common Values Regarding Member States ................................ 44

6.3. The Legal Framework of European Union Enlargement ................................................................................... 46

6.4. The Conditions for Accession ........................................................................................................................... 48

6.4.1. The Geographical Criterion ....................................................................................................................... 48

6.4.2. The Copenhagen Criteria ........................................................................................................................... 49
6.4.2.1. The Copenhagen Political Criteria ................................................................. 50
6.4.2.2. The Copenhagen Economic Criteria ............................................................. 53
6.4.2.3. Capability to Take on the Obligations of Membership .................................... 55
6.4.2.4. The Requirement of Institutional Reform ......................................................... 56
6.4.3. The Evolving Conditions for Accession .............................................................. 56
6.4.4. Key Priorities for Croatia in order to meet criteria for EU membership .................. 58
6.5. Ending of Accession Negotiations with Croatia ...................................................... 59
   6.5.1. Closing of the last few Chapters of the SAA Caused Contentious Reactions in Croatia ...... 61
   6.5.2. Monitoring the Implementation of the Accession Partnership ................................. 68
      6.5.2.1. Commission’s Conclusion on Croatia in 2010 .................................................. 68
      6.5.2.2. Monitoring continues until the Date of Accession .............................................. 76
   6.5.3. Transparency of the Accession Negotiations for Croatian Citizens? ....................... 77
   6.5.4. Citizen’s voice on Croatian Accession to the European Union ............................ 78
7. Concluding Remarks .................................................................................................. 79
8. Additions ..................................................................................................................... 83
   List No.1. The UN Conventions in Area of Human Rights Protection Ratified by the Republic of Croatia: ......................................................................................... 83
   List No.2. The International Treaties in the Area of Human Rights which the Republic of Croatia has ratified: ................................................................................................. 84
   List No. 3. Chapters in Stabilization and Association Agreement signed between European Union and Republic of Croatia .................................................................................................. 87
3. Introduction

After almost six years of negotiations, member states of the European Union on 24th June 2011 decided that Croatia is finally ready for ending of negotiation process for European Union membership, just before Croatian Independence Day on 25th June and celebration of the 20 years anniversary of Croatia’s independence and sovereignty.

Croatian political elite believes that under the European Union framework, Croatia can secure peace, stability and prosperity to its citizens, thus moving from difficult and turbulent past experiences during and after the Homeland War in Croatia.

However, there is still a huge space for Croatia and its political leaders to approve confidence and support given from the European Union but also from its citizens. To the European Union Croatia had to approve taking off fundamental reforms including political, social, economic and judicial system, but to its citizens Croatia must to approve how are those reforms taking place in daily life affecting ordinary citizens under the same conditions as ruling political elite.

Croatia accepted democracy, rule of law and human rights as basic and constitutionally guaranteed principles, but the question is: Are Croatian political, social, economic and judicial system applying those guaranteed principles to the citizens of Croatia without exception? Through this paper I will try to address this issue, regarding current situation in Croatia.

However, Croatian government, current and future, has in front of them two years challenging period for convincing the 27 member states of the European Union and Croatian citizens that reforms are lasting and irreversible, not consummated only with harmonizing of national legislation with the European Union legislation, while democracy, rule of law and human rights are the only accepted driving forces ruling the lives of the Croats since guaranteed as highest values of the constitutional order of the Republic of Croatia and the ground for interpretation of the Constitution.

Is Croatia successfully transformed itself into sustainable “democracy, rule of law and human rights” based state is the question which has to be answered by the acts of government and functioning of overall system in the next two years.

At the very end, citizens are those who will decide if Croatia is going to be 28th Member State of the European Union from the 1st July 2013.
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