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

VELIMIRA SKROBONJA, LL.M.
Author

Dr. JORG GERKRATH
Professor of European Law at the University of Luxembourg
Supervisor

Dr. JEAN-PAUL LEHNERS
Professor of Global History at the University of Luxembourg
Co-supervisor

University of Luxembourg, July 2011.
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<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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<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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<td>USKOK</td>
<td>Office for the Fight against Corruption and Organized Crime in Croatia</td>
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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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Skrobonja, Velimira

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