

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?

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1. List of Abbreviations

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

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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.