

Pursuant to Article 121 of the Standing Orders of the Croatian Parliament,

Proceeding from the strategic goal of the Republic of Croatia to become a full member of the European Union, which has been confirmed by submitting an application for membership of the European Union on 21 February 2003,

Building upon the Resolution of the Croatian Parliament on the Accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union of 18 December 2002 and the Declaration of the Croatian Parliament on the Fundamental Principles of Negotiations on Full Membership of the Republic of Croatia in the European Union on 19 January 2005,

Noting the conclusions of the European Council from June 2004 and of the EU Council of 3 October 2005 on granting a candidacy status to the Republic of Croatia and opening negotiations on the accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union,

Having regard to the General Position of the European Union on Negotiations with the Republic of Croatia, adopted by the EU Council on 16 March 2005,

Welcoming the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Croatia of 7 April 2005 on establishing a negotiating structure for the accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union, as well as the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Croatia of 15 April 2005 on the procedure of drafting and adopting negotiating positions of the Republic of Croatia in negotiations on the accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union,

Noting with satisfaction that the Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the Republic of Croatia and the European Communities and their Member States came into force on 1 February 2005,

Aware of the significance of an efficient implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement for successful accession negotiations,

Being grateful to the European Union for pre-accession assistance and an open possibility to participate in the programmes of the European Community,

Reiterating the historic significance of the accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union and the responsibility entailed in a successful conduct of negotiations with the European Union,

Accepting the goals, values and principles upon which the European Union is founded, set forth in the (founding) Treaties of the European Union,

Underlining that the political goal of the Republic of Croatia is to preserve the indivisibility, integrity and unity of the state territory, as well as the continuity and protection of its tradition, culture, language and social values as foundations of the Croatian national identity,

Aware of the expectations of the Croatian public from the accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union with regard to promotion of economic and social relations in society and improvement of the quality of living of its citizens,

Stressing the significance of the Declaration (the Statement) and recommendations of the Joint Parliamentary Committee of the Croatian Parliament and the European Parliament of 5 October 2005,

Reaffirming that the national interest of the Republic of Croatia is to reach a successful conclusion of the negotiations and to become a full member of the European Union as soon as possible,

In line with the proposal of the National Committee on the implementation of the conclusion of 20 January 2005, at its session of 14 October 2005 the Croatian Parliament adopted the following

R E S O L U T I O N
on the strategic guidelines for negotiations
between the Republic of Croatia and the European Union

1. The goal of the Republic of Croatia in negotiations on the accession to the European Union is to achieve full membership of the European Union, which shall be founded on the principles of equality, partnership and solidarity among the Member States, while preserving and promoting national identity and diversity.

2. Membership of the European Union should be achieved under the most favourable conditions and as soon as possible, while advocating the principle of an individual approach of the Union to the Republic of Croatia in the accession process.

The Croatian Parliament therefore calls upon the Government of the Republic of Croatia to conduct the negotiations on accession to the European Union in a high-quality and efficient manner, while fully protecting the national interests and with the aim of concluding them within a time limit which would enable the citizens of the Republic of Croatia to participate in the next elections to the European Parliament in 2009.

3. The Croatian Parliament is determined, within its competences and in co-operation with the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the President of the Republic of Croatia, to continue making considerable efforts during negotiations so that all the political, economic, legal and institutional criteria for membership of the European Union may be met by 2008 and the Republic of Croatia may achieve full preparedness for accession to the European Union.

In compliance with this goal, and respecting the current pace and achievements in aligning the legislative system of the Republic of Croatia with the *acquis communautaire* and standards of the European Union, the Croatian Parliament shall strengthen its co-operation with the Government of the Republic of Croatia so that the process of alignment is conducted in a quality manner and in line with the stipulated deadlines.

4. The Republic of Croatia must promote and preserve its special identity as a Central European, Mediterranean and Danubian country in the accession negotiations.

5. Requesting that the Croatian language is accepted as one of the official and working languages of the EU institutions upon integration into the EU, the Croatian Parliament supports the intention of the Government of the Republic of Croatia to conduct negotiations on a large number of chapters in Croatian.

6. The Republic of Croatia should ensure during accession negotiations that its political, economic and financial position within the EU is proportional to its power in comparison with other Member States. Furthermore, the Republic of Croatia should ensure its efficient and full participation as a member of the European Union in the work of all EU institutions, within the scope equivalent to the one of the existing Member States of similar size.

7. The national goal of the Republic of Croatia in the accession negotiations is to obtain the most favourable and feasible transitional periods for those segments of the *acquis communautaire* where there is not, or there shall not be, a sufficient level of readiness for their full alignment and implementation at the moment of accession to the European Union.

8. It is necessary in the accession negotiations to ensure adequate transitional periods and, if possible, exemptions for the fields of particular interest to the Republic of Croatia, in which a prior efficient preparation and adjustment of the Croatian economy is required so as to ensure its undiscriminated participation on competitive markets of the EU. Such transitional periods should be based on actual needs, and their duration should depend on the analysis and assessment of time required for the adjustment of the Croatian economy. The need for adequate transitional periods refers in particular, but not exclusively, to the following chapters: agriculture and rural development, environment, acquisition of real estate and state subsidies.

- With regard to agriculture, it is of particular importance to agree on adequate transitional periods and mechanism related to the amount and pace of direct payments to Croatian agricultural producers from the budget of the European Union, determining of production quotas for particularly sensitive products, and deadlines for attaining quality standards.

- The need for transitional periods as regards the acquisition of property rights originates from the fact that there is currently a significant difference in the purchasing power of Croatian citizens and citizens of individual EU Member States, as well as from the importance to create an appropriate framework for the application and harmonisation of regulations pertaining to the protection of nature and the environment, natural, historic and cultural heritage, the maritime demesne, physical planning, urban planning, construction, and acquisition and disposal of agricultural land.

- Due to the need for considerable investments and complex technical solutions required to attain European standards, environmental protection is one of the financially most demanding areas of harmonisation with the *acquis communautaire* of the European Union, where the achievement of full alignment should be considered as a long-term task.

- Special transitional periods shall also be required for state subsidies in sectors such as shipbuilding and the steel industry, where an adequate period is necessary for the implementation of feasible restructuring programmes with the aim of creating economically sustainable industries capable of participating in the common EU market on an equal footing.

9. Having regard to the final goal and intention to provide a higher and better standard of living for Croatian citizens, the Croatian Parliament underlines in particular that the negotiations on accession to the European Union should be accompanied by continuous internal reforms which shall make possible the continuation of development of a stable and prosperous society and a state which is capable of fulfilling its rights and obligations after becoming a member on an equal footing and contributing to the further development and activities of the European Union.

The Croatian Parliament therefore encourages the Government of the Republic of Croatia to continue and accelerate the implementation of the National Programme for the Integration of the Republic of Croatia into the European Union, in particular of the priorities outlined in the Opinion of the European Commission on the Application of the Republic of Croatia for Membership of the European Union and in the European Partnership. Against this background, the Croatian Parliament encourages the Government of the Republic of Croatia to adopt the required strategic documents and programmes as soon as possible, the most important among them now being the National Development Plan, the National Strategy of Balanced Regional Development, the Strategy of Rural Development, the Strategy of Industrial Development and the Strategy of Aligning Legislation in the Field of Environmental Protection. It is also necessary to take further measures for the purpose of

restructuring the economy, particularly in production, agriculture, transportation, tourism and public services, as well as for the purpose of promoting a knowledge-based economy.

10. The Croatian Parliament invites the Government of the Republic of Croatia to also pay particular attention in the implementation of reforms and preparations for full membership to the following elements:

- full implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the Republic of Croatia and the European Communities and their Member States, and efficient activities within the framework of the Stabilisation and Association Council and other bodies established under that Agreement, while being aware at all times that timely and efficient implementation of the Agreement is the main criterion on the basis of which the European Union shall assess the ability of the Republic of Croatia to accede to the Union,

- further strengthening of the institutional capacity of the state administration of the Republic of Croatia as the main operative competent authority for accession negotiations, ready for an efficient implementation of the *acquis communautaire* of the European Union,

- maintaining the reached level of full implementation of the Copenhagen criteria and the criteria from the Stabilisation and Association Process, including the co-operation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia,

- efficient and responsible use of pre-accession assistance and participation in the programmes of the European Community, which should be used to the maximum possible extent for the implementation of required internal reforms and for achieving the fullest possible alignment with the *acquis communautaire* of the European Union, as well as for quality preparations of the Republic of Croatia to carry out the agricultural, regional, structural and cohesion policies of the European Union,

- further intensification of the political dialogue with the European Union, which shall contribute to better mutual understanding, further approximation of positions of the EU and the Republic of Croatia, and general promotion of interests of the Republic of Croatia.

11. The Croatian Parliament invites to the adoption of a comprehensive communication strategy of the Republic of Croatia, which shall ensure quality rising of awareness of Croatian citizens about the functioning of the European Union, but also the awareness of EU citizens about the Republic of Croatia as a future member of the EU. In this connection, it is of utmost importance to actively include all segments of Croatian society in a broad public debate on the membership of the Republic of Croatia in the European Union and its effects, as well as adequate activities of the media, so that the citizens may decide on the accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union at a referendum following the conclusion of negotiations.

12. This Resolution shall be published in the Official Gazette.

File number: 910-04/05-01/08

Zagreb, 14 October 2005

THE CROATIAN PARLIAMENT

PRESIDENT
OF THE CROATIAN PARLIAMENT
Vladimir Šeks, m.p.