

Conference

“The European Accession Process and Chambers of
Commerce nad Industry: Best Practices Projects”

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Accession process of Croatia and Contribution of the Business Community



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PRESENTATION OVERVIEW



- **Basic facts about Croatia**
 - Geographic profile
 - Economic profile
- **Short EU – Croatia relations chronology**
- **Negotiations – current situation**
- **Activities of the Croatian Chamber of Economy (CCE) in Croatian EU Accession process:**
 - Informing
 - Lobbying
 - Education
 - Accession Negotiations
 - EU projects



CROATIA'S GEOGRAFIC PROFILE

- **Area:** 56,538 km²
- **Population:** 4.4 mil
- **Coastline:** 1,778 km
- **Islands:** 1,185
- **Capital:** Zagreb

CENTRAL
EUROPEAN
COUNTRIES



MEDITERRANEAN
SEA

CROATIA'S ECONOMIC PROFILE



	2000	2005
• GDP (bn USD)	18.4	38.5
• GDP per capita (USD)	4,152	8,677
• GDP, real growth rates (%)	2.9	4.3
• inflation (%)	4.6	3.3
• industrial output growth (%)	1.7	5.1
• unemployment rate (%)	21.1	13.1 (ILO)



SHORT EU - CROATIA RELATIONS CHRONOLOGY



- May 1999 - European Commission (EC) proposed the creation of the **Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP)**
- May 2000 - EC presented the **CARDS** programme
- 24 November 2000 - Zagreb Summit – the beginning of negotiations between the EU and Croatia on the conclusion of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA)
- 29 November 2001 – **signing of Stabilisation and Association Agreement**
- 21 February 2003 – Croatia submitted the **Application for membership**
- 20 April 2004 - EC issued a **positive opinion (avis)** on the Croatian application for membership in the European Union
- 18 June 2004 - Croatia acquired **candidate status** for membership
- 3 October 2005.- Accession **negotiations** between the Republic of Croatia and the European Union **opened**



NEGOTIATIONS – CURRENT SITUATION



- **Screening process (for all 33 chapters) completed in the planned one-year period**
- **until now EC presented 13 Screening reports to Croatia**
- **in 6 of them EC imposed benchmarks for opening of negotiations**
- **one chapter opened and provisionally closed (Research and Development)**



Activities of the Croatian Chamber of Economy (CCE) in Croatian EU Accession process realised through:

- CCE Representative Office in Brussels (from 2000)
- Euro Info Correspondence Centre Zagreb (from 2003) and Relay Centres (from 2005)
- CCE employees - Negotiation Working Groups Members
- CCE Departments, Centres, Associations



ACTIVITIES



- Informing
- Lobbying
- Education
- Accession Negotiations
- EU projects



CROATIAN CHAMBER OF ECONOMY

INFORMING



About:

- EU single market, doing business in EU, legislation, trade aspects...
- changes in Croatian business environment and legislation caused by EU Accession Process...

Through:

- web site (www.hqk.hr, www.euroinfo.hr)
- publications (EU news, EU Enlargement and Economy, Guidebook on EU Information Providers in Croatia, EU Programmes in Croatia etc.)
- awareness-raising events (round-tables, meetings and seminars)
- providing answers to inquires

LOBBYING



- through European institutions and associations
- ten years of cooperation with **Eurochambres**
- CCE member of the lobbying institutions which gather national sectorial organisations or individual companies for protection of its interests before the EU institutions



- **CCE is a member of:**



UEAPME – European Association of Craft, Small and Medium Entrepreneurship



EUROCOMMERCE – European lobbying institution for commerce



PLASTICS EUROPE - Association of Plastics Manufacturers



CEFIC - European chemical industry council

FEAP - Federation of European Aquaculture Producers

EMEC - The European Marine Equipment Council



NEGOTIATIONS



- CCE employees participate in negotiations **in 20 of 35 Chapters**
- participate as members of Negotiation Team and in Working Groups for the preparation of negotiations
- **40-50 members** of the Working Groups
- **2 members of the Negotiation Team** responsible for very important and difficult chapters:
 - **Agriculture and rural development, Fisheries, Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy, Consumer and health protection**
 - **Statistics and Regional Policy and the Co-ordination of Structural Instruments**



EDUCATION



- CCE organises several EU related seminars and events **a month** in its Headquarters and County Chambers
- TAIEX seminars: normally for civil servants, but CCE actively **motivates and includes** member companies
- Topics covered:
 - Impact of EU accession process on individual sectors
 - EU tenders and public procurement in EU
 - EU programmes (SAPARD, Framework Programmes for R&D)
 - EU standards and practices for individual sectors (HACCP, CE marking, intellectual property rights etc.)



Participation in EU projects



Projects:

- Partners (Regional CARDS)
- EICC Zagreb, Relay Centres (CARDS)
- several cross-border projects (Interreg)
- projects in bilateral assistance programmes (Flemish programme for Central and Eastern Europe)



Benefits:

- experience in EU project management
- business cooperation
- business education and transfer of EU best practices
- improvement of service to member companies



EXAMPLE OF CCE EU PROJECT – Euro Info Correspondence Centre



- Euro Info Centres *inform, advise and assist* SMEs in all fields concerning EU (today 300 EICs in more than 40 countries)
- EICC Zagreb, first EIC in Croatia, established in 2003 with the support of the European Commission within the CARDS programme and hosted by the CCE
- To be closer to companies in other regions – EICC Relays were established in 2005 in Pula, Rijeka, Osijek, Split and later in Dubrovnik (project supported within CARDS programme)
- **Task:** to be the first contact point for the Croatian companies in all EU-related matters
- **Activities:** EICC News, publications, seminars, web-site, etc...
- EICC Zagreb is currently supported by the EC and implements new two-year CARDS 2004 project



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Thank you for your attention!