



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Brussels, 19 April 2011
9325/11
PRESSE 109

PRESS RELEASE
**Twelfth meeting of the Accession Conference at Ministerial
level with Croatia**
Brussels, 19 April 2011

The twelfth meeting of the Accession Conference with Croatia at Ministerial level was held today in Brussels. Its main result was to allow EU and Croatia to provisionally close Chapter 11 - Agriculture and rural development ; and Chapter 22 - Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments. These two key chapters for European integration are highly significant both in terms of their policy and budgetary impact, and of their relevance for citizens. They also required a very sizeable amount of preparatory work.

The European Union delegation was headed by János Martonyi, Hungary's Minister for Foreign Affairs. The Croatian delegation was led by Gordan Jandroković, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration.

In light of the positions of the Parties, and of the considerable progress made with preparations in all areas under negotiation, the Conference was able to provisionally close these two chapters. Furthermore, the Conference considered proposals for transitional arrangements and derogations in Chapter 11 - Agriculture and rural development in areas such as direct payments, common market organisation and rural development. The Conference also considered a proposal for a derogation under Chapter 22 - Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments concerning the implementation of Article 93(1) of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006.

The EU will, if necessary, return to these chapters at an appropriate moment.

Details on the chapters provisionally closed at the Conference are provided below:

P R E S S

Rue de la Loi 175 B - 1048 BRUSSELS Tel.: +32 (0)2 281 6319 Fax: +32 (0)2 281 8026
press.office@consilium.europa.eu <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/Newsroom>

9325/11

1
EN

Chapter 11 - Agriculture and rural development

The negotiations on Chapter 11 - Agriculture and rural development were opened on 2 October 2009. At this meeting of the Conference the EU noted that, in order for the chapter to be provisionally closed, Croatia would have, *inter alia*, to present its implementation plan for the establishment of an Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS), Land Parcel identification system (LPIS), and the setting up of a Paying Agency; present an implementation plan in order to be fully prepared for the application of the single Common Market Regulation in the areas of Sugar, Fruits & Vegetables and Milk, and demonstrate sufficient progress towards the setting up of the Single Common Market Organisation.

At today's meeting, the EU commended Croatia for decisive progress allowing for the provisional closure of this chapter. The EU also underlined that it would devote particular attention to monitoring all specific issues mentioned in its common position with a view to ensuring the further strengthening of Croatia's administrative capacity, in particular with regard to the paying agency, the Integrated Administration and Control System, the single Common Market Organisation as well as the direct support schemes. The EU also underlined the importance of a continuous and sustainable effort which has to be made in order to be fully compliant by accession. The EU will continue to monitor progress closely throughout the negotiations.

Chapter 22 - Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments

The negotiations on Chapter 22 - Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments were opened on 9 October 2009. At this meeting of the Conference the EU noted that, in order for the chapter to be provisionally closed, Croatia would have, *inter alia*, to prove a satisfactory functioning of the decentralized implementation system under IPA (Pre-Accession Instrument) and an adequate and mature project pipeline; submit an advanced and comprehensive draft of its National Strategic Framework (NSRF) document which would outline key priorities and expected results of Cohesion Policy assistance; and adopt an institutional set up for the implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy and individual Organizational Development Strategies.

At today's meeting, the EU noted Croatia's good preparations making possible the provisional closure of the chapter. The EU also highlighted that it would devote particular attention to monitoring all specific issues mentioned in its common position with a view to ensuring Croatia's administrative capacity for a timely and efficient programming, implementation and monitoring of Structural Funds/Cohesion Fund programmes. The EU will continue to monitor progress closely throughout the negotiations.

Since the start of negotiations on 3 October 2005, 34 (out of 35) chapters have been opened for negotiations and 30 chapters have been provisionally closed. Further Accession Conferences are planned this semester with a view to finalise accession negotiations.