

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0594/09
by Johan Van Hecke (ALDE)
to the Council

Subject: Investment in Croatia

The Czech Presidency has indicated one of its priorities to be relations with the Western Balkans. It aims to open a number of blocked chapters in the accession negotiations with Croatia. However, there are a number of major obstacles to the country's accession in the fields of corruption and foreign investment. The latter, although encouraged by the EU, has not had positive results for everyone - for example, for the Belgian company Buggenhout-Vanderstraeten n.v., which, in 1990, invested in a venture in Croatia. The establishment grew rapidly but after 15 years was robbed and had its assets stripped by the Croatian partner in the business. To this day, the Belgian company has been unable to obtain the assistance of the Croatian courts or authorities in recovering its lawful property or any of its investment.

Will the Council raise the issue of the need for protection of foreign investment in the course of the accession negotiations? Is it possible to bring pressure to bear on this candidate Member State, in the light of this incident, to consolidate a sound judicial system?