

## E-10 1<sup>st</sup> TERM COUNTRY PROFILES

### CROATIA

#### General Information

<i>Official Name:</i>	Republic of Croatia
<i>Capital:</i>	Zagreb
<i>Population:</i>	4,491,543
<i>Major Languages:</i>	Croatian, Serbian, and English
<i>Major Religions:</i>	Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Muslim, and Christian
<i>Regional/Economic Organizational Membership:</i>	ACCT, Australia Group, BIS, BSEC, CE, CEI, EAPC, EBRD, FAO, IADB, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICC, ICCT, ICRM, IDA, IFAD, IFC, IFRCs, IHO, ILO, IMF, IMO, IMSO, Interpol, IOC, IOM, IPU, ISO, ITSO, ITU, ITUC, MIGA, MINURSO, MINUSTAH, NAM, NSG, OAS, OIF, OPCW, OSCE, PCA, PFP, SECI, UN, UNSC, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNIFIL, UNMEE, UNMIL, UNMIS, UNMOGIP, UNOCI, UNOMIG, UNWTO, UPU, WCO, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO, and the ZC etc.

#### Governmental System

Croatia's government is based on the Austro-Hungarian law system with Communist law influences. The government is a presidential, parliamentary democracy. Croatia gained its independence from Yugoslavia June 25, 1991.

The executive branch consists of a chief of state, a head of government, and a cabinet. The president is the chief of state and is elected by popular vote for five-year terms. The head of government is made up of five members. These members consist of the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, and three others. The Prime Minister is appointed by the president and approved by the Assembly; he is usually the leader of the majority party or the majority coalition. The cabinet is a Council of Ministers chosen by the Prime Minister and approved by the parliamentary Assembly. The current president is Stjepan Mesic, and the current prime minister is Ivo Sanader. The next presidential election is to be held in January 2010.

The legislative branch consists of a unicameral Assembly or Sabor. The Assembly is made up of 153 seats. These members are elected from party lists and win based on popular vote. They serve four-year terms. The next election is to be held in November 2011.

The judicial branch consists of a Supreme Court and a Constitutional Court. Judges for both of

these courts are appointed for eight-year terms and are elected by the Judicial Council of the Republic. The Judicial Council of the Republic is elected by the Assembly.

## **Foreign Policy**

Croatia is a European country located at the southern region of the continent to the west of Italy. In the early nine hundreds Croatia was organized into its first state. The Republic of Croatia had its most recent break towards independence in 1991 when it broke off from Yugoslavia. Croatia's government should seem vaguely familiar in that it is a presidential/parliamentary system with three branches. Croatia is like most other European states in that the dominant religion is Christianity (more specifically Catholicism). The economy in Croatia is based around service, accounting for about 70% of the total GDP.

## **Issues Summary**

Issue 1: Environment → Air pollution (from metallurgical plants) and resulting acid rain is damaging the forests in this country; coastal pollution from industrial and domestic waste; landmine removal and reconstruction of infrastructure consequent to 1992-95 civil strife.

Issue 2: Health → Highly pathogenic avian influenza has been identified in this country; it poses a negligible risk with extremely rare cases possible among US citizens who have close contact with birds.

Issue 3: Economy → Once one of the wealthiest of the Yugoslav republics, Croatia's economy suffered badly during the 1991-95 war as output collapsed and the country missed the early waves of investment in Central and Eastern Europe that followed the fall of the Berlin Wall. Since 2000, however, Croatia's economic fortunes have begun to improve slowly, with moderate but steady GDP growth between 4% and 6% led by a rebound in tourism and credit-driven consumer spending. Inflation over the same period has remained tame and the currency, the kuna, stable. Nevertheless, difficult problems still remain, including a stubbornly high unemployment rate, a growing trade deficit and uneven regional development. The state retains a large role in the economy, as privatization efforts often meet stiff public and political resistance. While macroeconomic stabilization has largely been achieved, structural reforms lag because of deep resistance on the part of the public and lack of strong support from politicians. The EU accession process should accelerate fiscal and structural reform.

Issue 4: Bosnia and Herzegovina → dispute remains with Bosnia and Herzegovina over several small disputed sections of the boundary related to maritime access that hinders ratification of the 1999 border agreement; the Croatia-Slovenia land and maritime boundary agreement, which would have ceded most of Pirin Bay and maritime access to Slovenia and several villages to Croatia, remains un-ratified and in dispute; Slovenia also protests Croatia's 2003 claim to an exclusive economic zone in the Adriatic; as a European Union peripheral state, Slovenia imposed a hard border Schengen regime with non-member Croatia in December 2007.

Issue 5: Drug Trafficking → Croatia is a transit point along the Balkan route for Southwest Asian heroin to Western Europe; has been used as a transit point for maritime shipments of

South American cocaine bound for Western Europe.

### **Relationship with the United Nations**

In 1991 Croatia first declared independence from the USSR. Croatia was first recognized as an independent nation and admitted as a member-state by United Nations on January 15, 1992. Croatia was elected to the UN Security Council on October 17, 2007 as a non-permanent member for the 2008-2009 term. Croatia was elected to the UNSC as a member of the Eastern European Regional Group. Croatia's current permanent representative to the United Nations is Neven Jurica. He first took the office in February 2008; one month after Croatia assumed a role on the United Nations Security Council. Croatia holds membership with multiple groups such as hold membership on the Executive Board on UNICEF, the United Nations children fund, and membership on, UNEP, the Executive Council of the UN Environmental Programme. On May 16, 2006, Croatia was elected to the UN Peacebuilding Commission for one-year mandate. In March 2006, Croatia donated to the Central Emergency Response Fund. This donation represented a fundamental shift from an aid receiving country to an aid giving country.

### **Relationships with other United Nations Security Council Members**

China: China and Croatia established diplomatic relations on May 13, 1992. They both plan on expanding military cooperation with each other, and share some trade. Croatia supports the one-China policy.

Viet Nam: Croatia and Vietnam share diplomatic and economic relations.

Indonesia: Croatia and Indonesia have had small but growing trade in recent years. Indonesia uses the seaports of Croatia as a way into the market of the European Union.

France: Croatia is set to become member of both the European Union and NATO, both of which France is a member of. They share some trade and military cooperation.

United Kingdom: As with France, the United Kingdom is a member of NATO and the EU, which are preparing for the induction of Croatia into their ranks. Both will most likely agree on issues due to this bond.

Italy: Issues stemming from World War II now exist between Italy and Croatia. There are both territory and ethnic minority human rights. Italian immigrants claim land in Croatia they owned decades ago, but Croatia states they have no ownership. Also, Croatia has claimed fishing zones in the Adriatic Sea, which conflicts with Italian property. However, both are members of the EU, NATO, and the Mediterranean Union, so they will usually vote together on issues of common interest.

Libyan Arab Jamahiriya: Croatia and Libya have been discussing plans to increase economic trade, health improvement cooperation, and allowing Croatia construction, infrastructure, and road companies the opportunity to build in Libya. All this has strengthened ties between the two countries.

Burkina Faso: Croatia, in becoming a member of NATO and the EU, will work with those countries in providing stability in Africa. Croatia is likely to support any action that helps countries like Burkina Faso with its economy and human security issues.

South Africa: Both being newly developed democracies; they have entered into trade agreements to boost each other's economies.

Russian Federation: Croatia and Russia have both entered into trade and economic agreements. However, since Croatia is vying to become a member of NATO and the EU, it will most likely side with the U.S. and U.K. over Russia.

Belgium: Both countries are members of the Mediterranean Union and Belgium is a member of NATO and the EU, of which Croatia is trying to gain membership to. Therefore, these two countries are likely to vote together on issues that come before the Security Council.

United States: The United States has had a very active role in helping Croatia since 1992. The U.S. has worked to ensure that democracy and a market-oriented society roots itself in Croatia. It has also worked to overcome the past of Communism, ethnic wars, and authoritarian government. Being a leader of NATO, the U.S. will continue to help Croatia financially and militarily. Croatia, therefore, is likely to side with the United States on issues that come before the Security Council.

Panama: Panama and Croatia developed diplomatic relations in 1996. They share some trade.

Costa Rica: Croatia and Costa Rica developed diplomatic relations in 1995. They are still building their alliance together. They share some trade and will likely agree on most issues.