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10. Regrets that the six sessions of talks between the Chinese authorities and His Holiness the Dalai Lama have failed to achieve results, and calls for a constructive dialogue to be opened without preconditions, with a view to reaching a comprehensive political agreement, including a sustainable solution with regard to the cultural and political autonomy of Tibet and religious freedom and true minority rights for the Tibetan people in other neighbouring Chinese provinces;
11. Calls on the Council, and in particular the Presidency, closely to monitor developments, and to ensure that the EU adopts a consistent common position and that decisions taken on the basis thereof are duly implemented, and considers that EU diplomatic representatives in Beijing should take the initiative of visiting the region in order to report back to the Council about the current situation;
12. Reiterates, in this regard, its call on the Council to appoint a special envoy for Tibetan issues in order to facilitate the dialogue between the parties and closely follow the negotiations once they are resumed;
13. Endorses the statement by His Holiness the Dalai Lama that the Olympic Games are a great opportunity for freedom for all the Chinese people;
14. Calls on the EU Presidency-in-Office to strive to find a common EU position with regard to the attendance of the Heads of Government and of State and the EU High Representative at the Olympic Games opening ceremony, with the option of non-attendance in the event that there is no resumption of dialogue between the Chinese authorities and His Holiness the Dalai Lama;
15. Urges the People's Republic of China to stop scrutinising and judging Olympic athletes on the basis of their political views and threatening to ban them from the Olympic Games if they dissent from the Chinese Government's official position;
16. Looks forward to His Holiness the Dalai Lama's visit to the European Parliament to address the plenary session scheduled for late 2008, and calls on its Conference of Presidents to explore the possibility of an earlier visit;
17. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the governments and parliaments of the applicant countries, the President and Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China, the President of the Chinese People's National Congress, the International Olympic Committee and His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Croatia: 2007 progress report

P6_TA(2008)0120

European Parliament resolution of 10 April 2008 on Croatia's 2007 progress report (2007/2267(INI))

(2009/C 247 E/03)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the decision adopted by the Council on 3 October 2005 to open accession negotiations with Croatia,
- having regard to its resolution of 25 April 2007 on Croatia's 2006 progress report ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to the Croatia 2007 Progress Report, published by the Commission on 6 November 2007 (SEC(2007)1431),

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 74 E, 20.3.2008, p. 675.

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- having regard to the conclusions of the General Affairs and External Relations Council of 10 December 2007 concerning Croatia,
 - having regard to the visit of a delegation of the Committee on Foreign Affairs to Croatia on 6 to 7 February 2008,
 - having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (A6-0048/2008),
- A. whereas Croatia is well on the way to full membership of the European Union, continuing to meet the Copenhagen criteria and successfully implementing the Stabilisation and Association Agreement,
- B. whereas Croatia is a democratic European state which supports European integration and is committed to overcoming existing divisions and achieving reconciliation between peoples, all of which entails a voluntary delegation of powers in certain key policy areas, and whereas Croatia has made substantial and successful efforts in this regard, which have produced visible results,
- C. whereas Croatia's EU accession process has wider regional implications, is seen as a test of the commitments made by the EU to the Western Balkans, and may become a significant incentive for all other countries concerned,
- D. whereas Croatia has continued to meet the Copenhagen political criteria, has been recognised as having a functioning market economy, and has largely continued to implement the Stabilisation and Association Agreement without major difficulties,
- E. whereas Croatia's serious commitment to accession negotiations has borne fruit and bodes well for the EU integration process of Croatia as well as of other countries in the region,
- F. whereas in the past two years of negotiation Croatia has made substantial and commendable progress in most areas covered by the corpus of Community law,
- G. whereas increased efforts and renewed political commitment are required in order to address some of the more problematic sectors where serious reforms are necessary before Croatia can join the European Union,
- H. whereas the Presidency Conclusions of the 2003 European Council in Thessaloniki indicate that the future of all the Western Balkan countries lies effectively in the European Union, as confirmed in a number of Parliament's resolutions,
- I. whereas the statement issued by the EU and the Western Balkan countries, unanimously approved by the Foreign Ministers of the European Union and of the Western Balkan countries on 11 March 2006 in Salzburg, underscores the importance of good neighbourly relations and the need to find mutually acceptable solutions to outstanding issues with neighbouring countries,
1. Congratulates the Croatian authorities on the positive results achieved so far, particularly with regard to the number of negotiation chapters which have been opened;
 2. Considers that the objective of the ongoing accession negotiations is to agree on measures that may be necessary in order to facilitate integration, with a clear commitment on the part of the candidate country to accept and implement the *acquis* and adhere to the political objectives of the Treaties, and that they should not be used as a lever to settle bilateral political disputes falling outside the scope of the *acquis* and the objectives of the process;
 3. Welcomes the fact that Croatia has made good progress in meeting the benchmarks for opening new chapters, and support the Croatian government and parliament in their efforts to meet the benchmarks for the remaining chapters;

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4. Is pleased to record that much of Croatia's corpus of law has been aligned with EU standards, but reminds the Croatian authorities that it is now crucial to speed up the development of administrative capacity required in order to implement the new legislation; in this regard, calls on the Croatian authorities to open up this process and involve civil society in the monitoring of the implementation;
5. Urges Croatia to speed up the process of public service reform in local and regional self-government, and to supply the necessary resources and training for the implementation of these reforms;
6. Commends the steps which have been taken in the crucial area of judicial reform, but shares the Commission's view that further improvements are necessary, particularly with a view to:
 - further reducing the backlog of pending cases, not least by promoting more vigorously amongst judges recourse to alternative forms of dispute resolution;
 - enhancing the independence, impartiality and professionalism of the judiciary, in particular the appointment and management of the careers of judges and state attorneys, including training;
 - giving renewed impetus to the process of rationalising the court system and ensuring that infrastructural investments are in keeping with the newly developed 'judicial map';
7. Congratulates the Croatian authorities on their continued efforts towards an impartial prosecution of domestic war crimes, and urges them to exercise continuous vigilance in order to avert the risk of ethnically biased rulings and to ensure that all measures are in place to protect the integrity of the judicial process; calls in this context for urgent additional measures for the protection of witnesses, including the adoption of strengthened legal provisions;
8. Welcomes the fact that Croatia is continuing to cooperate fully with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY); is concerned, however, about the negative impact which the judgments of the ICTY in the Vukovar war crimes cases has had on public opinion in Croatia;
9. In this context, calls on the Croatian authorities to ensure strict compliance with the conditions for the provisional release of defendants arraigned before the ICTY;
10. Welcomes the strengthening of the mandate of the Office for the Prevention of Corruption and Organised Crime (USKOK) and the increased number of corruption cases which are being prosecuted, and looks forward to successful investigations in high-level corruption cases; calls for these efforts to be maintained in order to eradicate the — in some cases unacceptably high — level of corruption, which undermines the economic development of the country;
11. Congratulates Croatia on its exemplary Constitutional Law on National Minorities (CLNM) and commends it for the measures taken to facilitate the integration of minorities into mainstream social and political life;
12. Welcomes the important decision to appoint a representative of the Serb minority as Deputy Prime Minister with responsibility for regional development, reconstruction and refugee returns;
13. Encourages the government and the parliament to pursue efforts to ensure the elimination of all forms of discrimination and prejudice, including vis-à-vis the Roma community; calls in this context for the adoption by the government of a global anti-discrimination strategy and its effective implementation at state and local level;

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14. Recalls, moreover, the need to ensure effective implementation of the CLNM, particularly with regard to bilingual teaching in schools and bilingualism in public administration and the planned employment guarantees concerning the adequate representation of minorities within the judiciary and public administration; calls on the Commission to ensure that sufficient attention is paid, under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), to the implementation of the provisions of the CLNM;
15. Considers that international confidence-building measures are a key element in ensuring the stability of the country and of the surrounding Balkan area;
16. Takes the view that Croatia's educational system, whilst preserving and enhancing the cultural and social traditions of each national community, should strongly promote greater integration and cohesion within Croatian society;
17. Calls for the sustainable reintegration of wartime refugees, and points out in this respect the need for the development and timely implementation of housing, employment and social measures for refugees which are commensurate with the challenge;
18. Is pleased to note the sustained growth recorded by the Croatian economy; hopes that this growth will result in increased employment opportunities; commends the work carried out by HitroRez in reducing the administrative burden on business, and looks forward to similar results in other sectors;
19. Welcomes the reforms adopted in the environmental protection sector; calls on the government to consider measures and policies addressing the detrimental effects of climate change, in line with EU targets; calls for the establishment of a more comprehensive inter-sectoral dialogue to ensure ecologically sustainable development;
20. Urges the Croatian authorities to re-assess the efficiency of the current system of environmental protection measures, including the development of coastal water-treatment plants, differentiated waste collection and heat recovery plants and the elimination of illegal rubbish dumps, and to increase the coordination between all the accountable bodies; also calls in this context for an awareness-raising campaign aimed at increasing public attention towards the environment;
21. Welcomes Croatia's Pre-Accession Economic Programme and notes that it envisaged the adoption in March 2008 of the long overdue National Restructuring Programme for the Shipbuilding Industry; reminds the Croatian authorities that progress in this area, besides being a requirement of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement, is of crucial importance for accession negotiations; calls on the Commission to facilitate, via the IPA, the implementation of the restructuring programme;
22. Insists that new legislation should be rapidly implemented, since this provides a reliable yardstick against which to assess the country's preparedness for membership, a preparedness based on facts and not merely on the adopted legislation, especially as far as judicial reform, the fight against corruption and economic reforms are concerned;
23. Calls on the Croatian government to ensure that public invitations to tender are issued as required by Community law;
24. Has learned with concern about recent criticism voiced by the Commission with regard to the way in which EU funds are being managed by Croatian authorities and urges them, with the assistance of the Commission, to address as a matter of urgency the administrative weaknesses identified so as to allow the lifting of the temporary suspension of contracting under the Phare 2006 programme (with a total financial envelope of EUR 68,5 million) and the reinstatement of the initial allocation for the financial year 2008 under IPA Component 1, following a reduction of EUR 5 million;
25. As regards bilateral issues that are still unresolved, reminds all the parties concerned of the principle *pacta sunt servanda*;

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26. Welcomes the decision of 13 March 2008 by the Croatian Parliament not to apply the Ecological and Fishing Protection Zone to EU Member States until a common agreement in the EU spirit is reached; is confident that, this issue having been finally resolved, decisions on the opening of new chapters can be rapidly taken;
27. Welcomes the readiness shown by Croatia in resolving its outstanding border issues with Montenegro, as witness the agreement reached between the two Prime Ministers on 12 March 2008; welcomes, moreover, the informal agreement in principle reached by the Prime Ministers of Croatia and Slovenia on the issue of arbitration, and asks both sides to implement that agreement and to endorse the result of the arbitration by a clear decision by the two countries' parliaments;
28. Recalls that addressing border-related issues in particular is defined as a priority for Croatia in its Accession Partnership; expresses in this respect concerns which remain over the commencement of the Pelješac bridge construction works in October 2007 despite opposition voiced by Bosnia and Herzegovina over uncertain sea borders; notes that construction work on this project is currently halted, and calls for a negotiated resolution of this issue between the two states;
29. Commends Croatia on the continual progress it has made in the field of regional cooperation and at the same time urges it to continue on this path in the field of good neighbourly relations, since both these areas are crucial for European integration;
30. Calls on Croatia to maintain its constructive attitude and continue to play a positive role in the region in order to support and strengthen the consolidation of Bosnia and Herzegovina;
31. Shares with the Commission the view that, with increased efforts on the part of Croatia and continuous support by the EU institutions, accession negotiations should, in any event, be concluded in 2009;
32. Calls in this context on the Commission to step up its efforts and increase the resources allocated for the preparation, processing and finalisation of negotiating material so that the EU can respond rapidly and efficiently to progress made by Croatia in meeting the relevant opening and closing benchmarks;
33. Urges the Croatian authorities to involve civil society groups (NGOs, the academic community, trade unions) in the EU accession process;
34. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States and Croatia.

Combating cancer in the enlarged European Union

P6_TA(2008)0121

European Parliament resolution of 10 April 2008 on combating cancer in the enlarged European Union

(2009/C 247 E/04)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 152 of the Treaty,
- having regard to Articles 163-173 of the Treaty,
- having regard to Decision No 1350/2007/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2007 establishing a second programme of Community action in the field of health (2008-2013) ⁽¹⁾,

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 301, 20.11.2007, p. 3.