



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 4 October 2005

12877/05

**PESC 818
COWEB 148
ELARG 66
COSDP 635**

INFORMATION NOTE

from : General Secretariat
date : 3 October 2005
to : Delegations

Subject : Council conclusions on Croatia
- Outcome of proceedings

Delegations are invited to find attached the Council conclusions on Croatia, as adopted by GAERC on 3 October 2005.

Croatia: opening of negotiations¹

The Council recalled that in March 2005 it had confirmed that Croatia was a candidate country for accession and had agreed that a bilateral intergovernmental conference would be convened by common agreement in order to open negotiations, as soon as the Council had established that Croatia was co-operating fully with the ICTY.

The Council warmly welcomed the report to the Croatia Task Force by the ICTY Chief Prosecutor that Croatia was now co-operating fully with the ICTY, as well as the clear commitment by the Croatian Prime Minister that full co-operation would be maintained until the last remaining indictee was in The Hague, and as long as required by the ICTY. It noted the Chief Prosecutor's assessment that, if Croatia continued to work with the same resolve and intensity, she was confident that Ante Gotovina would be transferred to The Hague soon.

The Council concluded that Croatia had met the outstanding condition for the start of accession negotiations, and that negotiations should therefore begin as soon as possible.

The Council confirmed that sustaining full co-operation with the ICTY would remain a requirement for progress throughout the accession process. The Council invited the Commission to continue to monitor this closely, on the basis of regular reports from the ICTY, and report to the Council if full co-operation is not maintained. The Council noted that an assessment of co-operation with the ICTY would form part of the Commission's reports to the Council on Croatia's fulfilment of the political criteria. The Council agreed that less than full co-operation with the ICTY at any stage would affect the overall progress of the negotiations and could be grounds for triggering the mechanism in paragraph 12 of the negotiating framework.

¹ The Council decided that these conclusions form part of the negotiating framework.