



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Brussels, 21 December 2006  
17047/06 (Presse 374)

## **Second meeting of the Accession Conference at deputy level with Croatia**

The second meeting of the Accession Conference with Croatia at deputy level was held today in Brussels, following the start of accession negotiations on 3 October 2005. The aim was to open negotiations on three chapters: Chapter 17 - Economic and Monetary Policy; Chapter 20 - Enterprise and Industrial Policy and Chapter 29 - Customs Union.

For each of the chapters, and on the basis of negotiating positions, the Union has closely examined Croatia's general state of preparedness in each area. Taking into account Croatia's present state of preparations - and on the understanding that Croatia will continue to make progress in the alignment with and implementation of the *acquis* - the EU notes that in order for the chapters to be provisionally closed benchmarks need to be met.

In the case of Chapter 17 - Economic and Monetary Policy, Croatia needs to align its legal framework in order to ensure full central bank independence, and to allow the full integration of its central bank into the European System of Central Banks (ESCB).

# **P R E S S**

In the case of Chapter 20 - Enterprise and Industrial Policy, Croatia needs to provide the European Commission with a comprehensive industrial policy strategy, with particular emphasis on the restructuring of key loss-making sectors; this strategy should in particular include a thorough analysis of the current and future estimated competitiveness of industry and of its key sectors and address how sectors, including steel and shipbuilding, will return to viability under market conditions through restructuring and other measures.

In the case of Chapter 29 - Customs Union, Croatia needs to:

- continue to adopt legislation in the limited remaining areas requiring further alignment;
- demonstrate that Croatia applies its customs rules in a consistent and homogeneous way across its customs offices, notably in the areas of declaration processing, origin, simplified procedures, counterfeit, selectivity of controls and risk analysis;
- present to the Commission a comprehensive and coherent strategy towards IT Interconnectivity, and reach sufficient progress in developing all the related IT interconnectivity systems.

In more general terms, Croatia also needs to devote particular attention to the specific issues highlighted in the EU positions with a view to ensuring sufficient administrative capacity.

The Union will closely monitor Croatia's progress in the alignment with and the implementation of the *acquis* in these chapters throughout the negotiations.