Civil Society Capacity Building to Map and Monitor Security Sector Reform in the Western Balkans, 2009–2011

Context Analysis of the Security Sector Reform in Croatia 1989 – 2009

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List of Abbreviations

BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
HDZ	Hrvatska demokratska zajednica (Croatian Democratic Union)
HV	Hrvatska vojska (Croatian Army)
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
JNA	Jugoslavenska narodna armija (Yugoslav People′s Army)
MAP	Membership Action Plan
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
PfP	Partnership for Peace
PM	Prime Minister
SAP	Stabilisation and Association Process
SDP	Social Democrat Party
SSR	Security Sector Reform
WTO	World Trade Organisation
ZNG	Zbor narodne garde (Croatian National Guard)

Introduction

This document will provide the chronology and a brief analysis of relevant events for the security sector reform (SSR) in the Republic of Croatia. It will be divided into three major categories where the following years – 1990, 1995 and 2000, i.e. the events that occurred then, will be regarded as main turning points that have determined the way SSR in Croatia developed. These are the following:

- 1990 – First multiparty elections, initiation of the national state-building process;
- 1995 – Liberation of occupied territories (military-police operations *Flash* and *Storm*), conclusion of *Erdut Agreement* that led to peaceful re-integration of Eastern Slavonia in 1998 (territorial integrity achieved);
- 2000 – Paramount political changes, end of semi-authoritarian regime, beginning of the real transition, process of accession to euroatlantic community.

The first turning point in the chronology of relevant events for the security sector in the Republic of Croatia was a conduct of the first multiparty elections that have taken place in the 1990. As a crucial precondition for the establishment of democratic system, they represented a first formal step towards the process of post-socialist transition.

Given the fact that first years of a new Croatian state were marked with war for independence and occupation of part of its territory, the second turning point was 1995 when Croatia managed to regain control over the large part of its territory which represented one of main preconditions for consolidation of entire state as well as any kind of SSR.

Despite the fact that Croatia gained its full territorial integrity only in 1998 with peaceful reintegration of Eastern Slavonia, what was mentioned here as well, the 1995 events (military–police operations Flash and Storm) reconnected continental and coastal part of the country which enabled it to function properly again and therefore they were given priority in defining the second turning point.

Taking into account the nature of Croatian political system and elites that were running it during the 90's, the political changes in 2000 represented an event of paramount importance for the future of Croatian democracy and its position at the international arena. Also, the constitutional changes that followed and new dynamics of euroatlantic accession processes contributed to the general process of reformation, including the SSR, and therefore the 2000 was chosen to be a third turning point in this chronology.

Period 1: Initial phase of state-building 1990 – 1995

This subsection deals with the first period of chronology that was marked by the first multiparty elections, initiation and first phase of national-state building, Homeland War and clear lack of any sign of SSR. It also offers a short elaboration of the way former federal state dissolved and Croatia gained independence that would hopefully help the reader to understand better the SSR process in Croatia.

In order to understand current developments, it is recommendable to take the recent past into consideration and to try to peek at the way former Yugoslavia dissolved and Croatia gained its independence and sovereignty.

After the death of Tito[1], whose political figure and personality generally represented the integrative factor for the preservation of the 'Fraternity and Unity myth', the differences between the republics with regards to the constitutional arrangement and future of federation started to show up. Internal tensions that had broken up the Communist party of Yugoslavia stimulated the authorities of federal republics to organise the first free multiparty election that marked the beginning of an end of the former federation.

At the same time, the geostrategic importance of Yugoslavia dramatically declined with the collapse of bipolar system of international

[1] Josip Broz Tito – President of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, died in 1980.

relations, and that gave the possibility to the nationalists to take their part in the process of dissolution of Yugoslav federation.

As a result the war broke out, bringing an end to *political stability* that was preserved by the two big global poles from outside and by the military and police repression from within. The fighting continued to spread rapidly mainly owing to the procedural vacuum in relations between the leading European countries that emerged after the end of the Cold War. This led to a significant lack of capacity of European post-Cold War mechanisms that were supposed to be able to prevent the armed conflict and/or terminate the one that already started. Lack of common EC position on security dysfunctions in former Yugoslavia enabled armed conflict to develop, which resulted in occupation of more than 30% of Croatian territory.

Hence, it is obvious that unlike the most of the ex-socialist states in Central and Eastern Europe that have found the opportunity to change their systems and to start with their path towards the EU and NATO in the year of 1989 *simply* by changing their political system, Croatia unfortunately had to take a different, much more difficult road to get to where it is now[2].

Hence, as a country that was, let alone Slovenia, the most developed among the ex-socialist countries, instead of being able to use it to advance further towards the EU (at that time EC) and NATO, it was forced to cope with problems of war-torn country, as well as to fight for recognition of its sovereignty at the international arena.

Apart from that, internal political life was not bringing along the development of democracy and rule of law, not to speak about meeting

[2] It was forced to fight the war for its independence, significant part of it territory had been occupied for almost four years, communication between its continental and coastal part almost made impossible and any kind of development blocked.

some essential criteria required for accession to Euro-Atlantic community that number of ex-socialist countries started to tackle. The first multi-party election brought to power HDZ (*Hrvatska demokratska zajednica* – Croatian Democratic Union) under leadership of ex-communist dissident and nationalist historian Franjo Tudjman who was elected president.

It is important to underline that HDZ was a movement, rather than a party, organised with one very clear goal – Croatian independence, having under its umbrella groups of modernisers, as well as right-wingers and ex-communists who share the same already mentioned idea of Croatian statehood. However, even other ex-communist countries, in the period of struggle for their independence or just for the change of the old communist regime, have had the same or similar experience – Slovenia with *DEMOS*, Poland with *Solidarnosc* etc.

But the crucial difference between them on one side and Croatia on the other[3] is that the Croatian movement of HDZ, unlike ones in other countries, did not vanish from the political scene or split to several parties after fulfilling its main cause, but remained in power using semi-authoritarian methods and showing very modest efforts to become 'one of the subjects of Western-like political life' in the country.

So, opposite to predictions and estimations from late 80's, in mid 90's Croatia became perceived as a part of a backward south-eastern region with low transitional potentials, rather than a part of central-European group of advanced transition countries.

It is obvious that armed conflict made transitional processes (i.e. the transformation of society, economic and political system in the country) of marginal significance, given the fact that the defence of a young state

[3] Having said that, one should not forget the fact that only Croatia was forced to fight the long and devastating war for independence.

against the aggression and secession of its parts was given a status of absolute priority.

One may conclude that the war and occupation dramatically endangered territorial integrity of the country, and hence negatively affected any kind of capacity for democratic consolidation as such. Notwithstanding the fact that 15th January 1992 brought the international recognition of Croatian sovereignty, some parts of its territory remained occupied even until 1998 and peaceful reintegration of Eastern Slavonia. Problem of Croatian democratic consolidation was affected by the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) as well, owing to the fact that development on the ground led to the creation of parallel Croatian authorities in the country loyal to the government in Zagreb that, owing to the fact that territorial integrity of BiH at that time was rather questionable, kept the issue of Croatia's eastern borders open due to secessionist aspiration from its side.

Generally speaking, the democratic transition in Croatia in the 90's was conducted in a very turbulent environment, speaking both about the development in the country and in the region, marked mainly by war, destruction and violation of various kinds of rights incorporated in the basis of developed democratic world.

Institutional/Sectoral Analysis

This subsection concentrates on the shape of security sector in Croatia during given period, the way it was created from scratches in a very turbulent environment, how it functioned and what were its main problems at that time with regards to the SSR.

In general, during the first period of this context analysis (1990 – 1995) that was mostly marked by the aforementioned armed conflict, Croatia's

security sector had been built from scratches in a very difficult environment. Following a decision of president Tudjman[4], the first organised form of armed forces was created in April 1991 and called Croatian National Guard. (*Zbor Narodne Garde – ZNG*). Owing to political and legal reasons, the guard was formally under the institutional umbrella of the Ministry of Interior. However, because of paramount security threat on the ground and a need to make it as operational as possible, at the same time it was put under the command of the Croatian Ministry of Defence which on September 21 formed the Command of the Croatian National Guard (*Glavni Stozer*). Nevertheless, it is obvious that the initial system of command was critically underdeveloped, especially given the circumstances in which it was about to function, and additionally complicated with the fact that two ministries were in parallel charge of the armed forces. Furthermore, given a complex situation on the field, a significant amount of responsibility and work was transmitted on the local community headquarters, mainly formed and led by political appointees who did not necessarily have military knowledge and know-how, apart from those earned while serving in the former JNA.[5] It was obvious that human capacity was one of main problems of new Croatian armed forces, especially owing to the fact that there was a clear lack of staff and co-operation between so-called two clubs of officers – ex-JNA officers and those who were not.

The major role of the guard was to prevent further occupation of the territory, to defend the cities and critical geostrategic positions, as well as to ensure the retreat of JNA forces from their compounds in the country. Those tasks were conducted more professionally and successfully only after the formation of Croatian Army (*Hrvatska vojska*

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[4] *The Decree of Formation of the Croatian National Guard* – 20th April 1991.

[5] Therefore, there was a clear lack of coordination, so various units, while being in the same formation, did not have a single chain of command.

– *HV*) and aforementioned Command in September 1991, on basis of new Defence Law, when serious mobilisation and formation of units took place, chain of command and other institutions were formed, thereby paving the way for planning of use of force.[6]

The army was developed during years of international embargo on import of weapons and military equipment, while fighting a several times stronger side on Croatian territory. In such an environment (war, more than a third of territory occupied, difficult communication between different parts of the country), the importance of role of security sector in general, especially the one of military and intelligence, was undisputed. These circumstances, coupled with democratic deficits of political nomenclature in the country, created an atmosphere in which it is very difficult to speak about civil or democratic oversight of the security sector.

The intelligence system was showing a wide range of problems, mainly with regards to the way it was legally regulated and organisationally arranged. That kind of situation was not offering an adequate institutional setting, which had opened the opportunity for improvisation in the conduct of operations, significant lack of efficiency and opportunities for abuse of power. The situation seemed to be even more complicated if we take into account the fact that, in an environment marked with obvious lack of clear regulatory structure and weak oversight system, state services used to extend their filed of operations at the expense of other state agencies, frequently limiting the outreach of civil society organisations and other components of civilian sector.[7]

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[6] On 1st October 1991, big military-territorial zones, including their headquarters, were formed in cities of Osijek, Bjelovar, Zagreb, Karlovac, Rijeka and Split.

[7] For related information see Zunec, Ozren; Domisljanovic, Darko: *Obavjestajno sigurnosne sluzbe Republike Hrvatske – stanje i nacela preustroja za razdoblje konsolidacije demokracije*, Naklada Jesenski i Turk, Zagreb, 2000, p. 125.

Police did not differ much from the other branches of security sector, mainly owing to the fact that it earned an undisputable credibility in the Homeland War and therefore questioning the institutional framework and procedures, not to speak about the transparency and accountability, was out of question in that period.

One may conclude that was definitively a period of underdeveloped security institutions, low standards of transparency, accountability and openness of the system in which security sector actors sometimes even dominated the political scene, so it would not be an exaggeration if one concludes that at that time actually there was no SSR whatsoever.

Period 2: Era of democratic deficit (1995 – 2000)

This subsection focuses on the general context in the second period of chronology, which was marked by the noticeable democratic deficits and lack of political will for the real post-socialist transition from the side of the political elites in power. On top of that, the consequences of war surely did not contribute to the efficiency of state system in general, not to speak about the security sector. It should provide a brief general intro for the sectoral analysis that follows.

With two successful military-police actions (Flash and Storm) in 1995 and peaceful reintegration of Eastern Slavonia the territorial integrity of the Republic of Croatia had been regained. This was a major precondition for any form of democratic consolidation in post-conflict period. However, it did not happen mainly owing to the significant lack of political will of Croatian authorities at that time.

The 90's represented a decade of absolute domination of HDZ, where elections processes became a tool for the legitimation of the party in power and different electoral systems were used in accordance with interests of political elites in different electoral periods.

Despite their instrumentalisation and a very frequent conduct, high expectations from the elections in the initial stage of the post-communist period made them relatively legitimate among general public.

It is clear that the political elites, by switching various systems, tried to track the preferences of the electorate and use the institutional framework to meet their needs.

The political system itself tells enough about the character of governance, owing to the fact that its semi-presidential form with strong position of the president, coupled with various mechanisms that ensured domination of the party in power and cemented with lack of political culture in the country, made the constitutional declaration about multi-party system rather questionable and the level of democratisation dependent on ruling party's political will.

Elected directly from the people and undisputed leader of the ruling HDZ, the president has governed Croatia almost entirely unchallenged. So, in fact, while pledging pure democracy, a form of one-man rule was imposed and the government mainly represented 'a communication channel' between him and various state bodies responsible for implementation.[8]

At the same time, the consequences of such a policy have been felt on the economic field, especially during the last part of his time in power, when severe economic problems started to show up that could not be swept under the carpet as consequences of war.

In general, it is clear that the 90's were not successful with political transformation, so the country found itself lagging behind the other transitional ones that showed significantly lower transitional potential in early 90's.

Having achieved formal international recognition of its statehood and liberation of the occupied territories, country nominally met main

[8] Also, one of main shortfalls of his time in office was mistreatment of independent media and misuse of state-owned media for political purposes.

preconditions to finalise the first phase of its state-building process and start 'the real transition'. However, as it was outlined earlier, it takes political will to initiate such a process and that is basically the main reason why we can conclude that 'the real transition' started with political changes in late 1999 and early 2000.

Institutional/Sectoral Analysis

This subsection deals with the analysis of the security sector in given period, the way it was organised, how the civil oversight functioned and the sector was reformed. It concentrates on main problems that negatively influenced the process and the environment in which it operated.

Given the character of political system in Croatia during the 90's, it was obvious that president's cabinet had a decisive influence on state administration bodies dealing with foreign and security policy, i.e. on definition of their main determinants and eventual processes, such as SSR. At that time, having in mind difficult state of the economy in post-war period and lack of any clear strategy of development of security sector, SSR was more Security Sector Reduction than Security Sector Reform. Namely, it was clear that the process was motivated only by a need for downsizing and cost-cutting of the sector, rather than driven by some advanced criteria or the process of democratisation[9].

In documents, which were supposed to deal with SSR, in that period, this issue was not treated properly, particularly from the point of view of the civilian or independent control of security sector.

[9] That kind of development can be explained also with the fact that at that time Croatia was not taking part in processes of accession to euroatlantic structures as other European transitional countries.

In that period it was obvious that there is a lack of political will for creation of adequate political framework for SSR, not to speak about transparency and accountability and foreign assistance on the basis of conditionality. This problem was twofold: first there was still the question whether inner political situation provides the appropriate framework for the democratically conducted security sector reform and if yes, whether political elites in respective countries were able to reach political agreement with the aim of establishing proper regional security cooperation, which will not be blocked by the remnants of the recent violent conflicts among some of them. In this period the answer to that was clearly negative.

As it was previously mentioned, the downsizing, rather than reform, dominated the context of security sector during the last half of the 90s, especially when speaking about the military and police. Apart from that, both had undisputable position within the society, built upon the successes in the Homeland War and the fact that they contributed a lot to the existing Croatian statehood. Furthermore, in accordance with the nature of the political system and the type of dominant political culture, the military and the police were frequently (miss)used for the political purposes of existing political nomenclature.

Furthermore, the parliamentary oversight of the security sector, especially of the intelligence, was far from the satisfactory level, with inappropriate and incomplete legal structure, that resulted in its lack of effectiveness[10]. The analysis of the regulation of the system that was supposed to provide an oversight of the security sector in general, and of the intelligence in particular, leads us to the conclusion that these elements of the national security structure were under strict control of

[10] The lack of political will and culture also significantly contributed to that.

the political party in power, but not of the state institutions as well, especially not under those where opposition parties participated.[11]

On top of that, during the first ten years of Croatian independence, there was an obvious lack of serious debate about the situation within the security sector and its need to reform, mainly owing to the fact that the discussion about its main goals, basic principles, size, main tasks and responsibilities was constantly avoided by the political elites in power. Apart from previously mentioned lack of political will, the fact that Croatia did not participate in any form of Euro-Atlantic accession process undoubtedly negatively contributed to the overall situation in the security sector. This is exactly why democratic changes in 2000 that opened the country to the world in general, and to aforementioned Euro-Atlantic accession processes itself, represent the most important milestone in the process of democratisation of the country, i.e. its contemporary history.

[11] Influence of politics, even of the particular private interests as well, on their functioning and effectiveness, together with numerous examples of illegal activities with the aim to protect influential politicians from investigation and prosecution, contributed significantly to overall lack of transparency and accountability of the system in general. For more details see Zunec, Ozren; Domisljanovic, Darko: *Obavjestajno sigurnosne sluzbe Republike Hrvatske – stanje i nacela preustroja za razdoblje konsolidacije demokracije*, Naklada Jesenski i Turk, Zagreb, 2000, p. 127 – 133.

Period 3: Country on the reforms track (2000 – present)

This subsection covers the main features of the period of 'real transition' that started with political and constitutional changes in 2000 and lasts until today when the country finally started investing a recognisable amount of energy and political will into general reforms process, including the SSR.[12]

On the 3rd January 2000 a centre-left coalition of six opposition parties led by the Social Democratic Party (SDP) won the parliamentary elections. Almost at the same time, following the death of Franjo Tudjman, HDZ candidate failed to reach the second round in presidential elections, thus ending the period of their domination. It undoubtedly opened new opportunities for Croatia's transitional reforms conduct and Euro-Atlantic accession process that have been blocked for long owing to already mentioned reasons.

One of crucial preconditions for a new start was a structural change in the political system, i.e. reductions of unnecessarily strong position of the president and improvement of the position of parliament in it. It was important also to depoliticise the organs of state, which have represented the bastions of nationalist party support for the past decade, in order to create reliable institutions and be able to bring under parliamentary scrutiny especially the army, police and security services.

[12] It was important to mention that despite the fact that this section covers the period until the end of 2009.

Constitutional changes that have taken place in the 2000 contributed to creation of more efficient future state apparatus, compatible with the difficult tasks of reforms process and EU and NATO accession before it.
Besides this, unlike its predecessor, the new government has shown clear political will to fulfil its obligation to fully co-operate with the ICTY. Also, very soon after taking power, it made it clear that issues of most serious international community's concern, such as return of refugees and regional co-operation will be placed very high on the government list of priorities[13], as well as that some 'unpopular' measures like rationalisation in the sector of economy and state administration, especially downsizing of large and costly security sector, will be conducted.

Shortly after these political changes, it was clear that democracy has made a recognisable progress and that hard line one-party rhetoric has been replaced with much more moderate one, opening the space for democratic dialogue and compromise on various fields.
Of course, as in any other country in the phase of transitional reforms, the conduct of the process was not being welcomed by all parts of the society. The resistance was strongest among the population that was traditionally right-wing oriented, who perceived the intensified co-operation with the ICTY and other countries from the region, being the elements of the EU/NATO conditionality, as a something barely acceptable.[14] The reasons for that could be found in the fact that they

[13] Full co-operation with the ICTY, return of refugees and regional co-operation were three main conditions for the normalisation of relations with the international community, and with the EU in particular.

[14] Co-operation with the ICTY, that included the extradition of high-ranking Croatian military personnel who played an important role in the Homeland War, was sometimes even treated by them as a national treason, while regional co-operation always represented a danger of sliding backwards into new/old form of ex federal state.

were not informed so well and regularly misused by the representatives of some parts of political spectrum who recognised the request for transparency on the Euro-Atlantic accession path as something dangerous for their controversial attitude in politics and privatisation during the 90s. Apart from that, oversimplified approach of international community to regional co-operation in this part of Europe, based on positive examples from some other parts of region whose structure and recent history is clearly incomparable with the case of Southeast Europe, surely did not help at all[15]. These organised forms of resistance sometimes showed a significant capacity for pressure and represented a serious threat to the stability of the government during the first two years of the coalition, while different positions on these issues even forced its restructure in that period as well. In that sense, responsiveness from the international community and a clear improvement of the Croatia's position in the international arena, and in particular on its accession track to the transatlantic community, were of utmost importance for the transitional enthusiasm of the society in general.

Analysing the political changes in the country, one should not forget to outline the important steps taken by the international community – EU and NATO in particular – that noticeably stimulated new reformist course of the country. First of all, the EU initiated the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP) in 2000, a political framework that opened a perspective of full-fledged membership in the EU for the countries in the region and hence enabled the EU conditionality mechanism to function properly. Apart from that, Croatia became a member of Partnership for Peace (PfP) in May 2000 that in certain way may be regarded as a

[15] Namely, attempts to directly apply the regional model of co-operation from some other regions, without taking into account the specifics of this part of Europe, proved not to be efficient.

formal initiation of the conduct of reforms process on the way to NATO membership, which had an enormous impact on SSR in the country.

Increased reformist efforts were followed by various displays of acknowledgement of Croatian success on its transitional track and country joined World Trade Organisation (WTO) in November 2000, had been invited to join the NATO's Membership Action Plan (MAP) in May 2002 that was created to assist the country that wishes to join the alliance by providing advice and practical support on all aspects of preparation of membership, with direct paramount impact on SSR process.

The Adriatic Charter, as a formal expression of US support for the NATO bid for Albania, Croatia and Macedonia had been signed in May 2003, speeding-up the whole process and on the other hand the country was granted a status of candidate country for membership in the EU in June 2004. Stabilisation and Association Agreement entered into force in February 2005 and Croatia opened the accession negotiation process with the EU in October 2005.

This period was marked with intense reforms process in order to meet the criteria of accession to the transatlantic structures within mentioned frameworks of cooperation with them. Of course, it is self-understandable that recognisable amount of reforms have had a direct impact on the SSR.

On top of that, Croatia was selected to the UN Security Council as a member for the period 2008 – 2009, which represented an international recognition of the general success of reforms process and was indirectly related to SSR as well. For the first time in history, the country was involved in the highest international body dealing with global problems and was given a chance to contribute to them (including the SSR efforts worldwide).

Probably one of most important confirmation of the relative success of SSR process during the decade, as well as the whole process of democratisation of the country is a NATO membership achieved in April 2009. It meant fulfilling all NATO membership criteria and achieving one of two major foreign policy goals. However, the process has definitively not ended with the NATO membership, owing to the fact that SSR is a moving target. Namely, NATO as an alliance, including all its members, is constantly investing efforts into SSR and into constant adjustments to the dynamics of contemporary international relations and security challenges still and therefore one may conclude in that sense that there is plenty of work ahead for Croatia.

Institutional/Sectoral Analysis

This subsection concentrates on details about SSR in the period when Croatia focused on reforms process and started making concrete steps in the process of accession to the euroatlantic structures. It examines the way two processes interlinked and influenced each-other and how it affected the SSR.

This entire convenient political environment has prepared the basis for the creation of the main documents which have supposed to be the starting point for SSR along the criteria of EU and NATO. The main regulations concerning security sector, and security sector reform (SSR) as well, are based on two strategies: National Security Strategy and National Defence Strategy, which are still the basic document concerning this issue. Simultaneously in 2005 Strategic Defence Review has been also produced and enacted as well as Long Term Defence plan (2006-2015). All those documents are under reviewing and it is expected that they will be adapted to the new development in the

forthcoming period. This endeavour is supposed to be accomplished up to the end of the year and will be followed by two additional substrategies: military and defence ones. It is not expected that it will contain major changes concerning the main official executive organs which are formally answerable for all segments of security sector and these are according the Law of Intelligence (2006) the following:

a. President of the Republic
b. National Security Council and Council for Coordination of Intelligence Services
c. Government of the Republic
d. Croatian Parliament
e. Counter–intelligence Agency
f. Security and Intelligence Agency
g. Military Security Agency
h. Council for Civilian Oversight of Security and Intelligence Agencies (nominated by Croatian Parliament)[16]

The proper question is which institutions or segment of societies are supposed to oversight these sectors. According to the Constitution, which installs a parliamentary political system, main agents for implementing legal and institutional democratic oversight of defence and security in Croatia, are legislative institutions, which means the Parliament, and political and executive institutions, which means the Office of the President and the Government. Although the role of civil society is not particularly mentioned in the Constitution, it is in a very nature of democracy building that this segment of society should have a relevant role, depending of its ability and capability.

[16] Of course, these institutions do not represent the entire security sector.

In Croatia there are still some shortcomings in reaching the proper level of effective democratic oversight of the concerned sectors, especially with respect to the role of civil society. One of the examples refers to the establishment of the parliamentary civil independent committee for civil oversight of the respective sectors, as a body with representatives of almost all branches of society (academia, civil society, media, etc). This body is supposed to play this role on behalf of the civil society. However, once it was established by the civilian experts and the analysts, its work had been faced with a kind of informal or unspoken disregard and at the end of the day the chairman of the committee, a much respected professor and expert, had resigned. The committee went on working, not electing new chairman, under the oversight of the Parliamentary Committee for Internal Affairs and National Security, which as a matter of fact, abolished its democratic independency. So formally, the democratic oversight exists, but the civil society is still left out. Nevertheless, according to the several reports of international institutions which are dealing with security sector reform, Croatia has reached proportionally satisfactory level in the field of security sector reform, compared with the other countries in the region, although a lot of work remains to be done in this respect. It remains to be seen how this issue will be treated in new strategy. This would be the main indicator how, in fact security sector in Croatia is really independent, and whether the NATO accession really contributed in reaching this achievement.

Hence, as for now, it is quite unclear whether NATO accession will upgrade civilian oversight of security sector moreover it has lot to be done in this area in various fields. There are no official possibilities to extend this oversight, especially after the attempt with Council for Civilian Oversight has basically failed. Civil society is practically excluded, although there are approximately 30 public institutes in Croatia, but none of these are specialised in security issues. There are some

independent efforts to deal with these problems from the analytical point of view, but mainly within the scope of research on various segments of international relations and the role of Croatia in this sphere. Institute for International Relations has educated young group of experts for dealing with these issues and developed substantial cooperation in this field with the most prominent global institutions. However Institute is not fully specialised in security sector because these problems are only the part of its more comprehensive research. At the Faculty of Political Science, there is a group of experts dealing with security issues and they organised post graduated study dealing with the national security. The dean of this faculty is the former security adviser of the President of the Republic and resigned chairman of failed Council for Civilian Oversight. Now he has no influence in formulating security policy in the country. There is no feasible system of permanent consultations, no hearings by Parliament or relevant committees and no request for special independent reports.

There are not many private institutes dealing with this issue and their activities are mainly focused on a more general scope (security, international relations, transparency etc.).The general public may obtain a copy of certain policy documents, while others are classified. An approval authority within the Government or Parliament (Committee for Internal Affairs and National Security) decides what document may be public on a case-by-case basis.

The Croatian Intelligence Agencies are formally accountable for policy and operations to the Head of State and the Government. Their management and guidance falls under the authority of the National Defence and Security Council, which represents an *ad hoc* body which includes the president, the prime-minister and other high-ranking officials responsible for defence and security.

This Council meets very seldom, only by some exceptional occasion which are bound to some very alarming security issues, mostly twice in a year. Operational accountability is the responsibility of the Council for Coordination of Intelligence Agencies, which also meets very rarely and financial accountability is in the hand of Government and Parliament. In 2006, Croatia adopted a new Law on Intelligence which confirms the Constitutional responsibility for then work of the intelligence services. The management of the intelligence community is defined in the Law on the Security and Intelligence System. Yet parliamentarians and governmental bodies are still unable to perform all their legal duties. Parliamentary bodies do not have a professional staff capable of offering expert support to MPs on issues related to national security. The same situation exists within the Government whereby some groups within the intelligence system are taking on the role of expert and advisory groups.

The Croatian Parliament, being the highest body of legislative branch of power, enjoys a number of authorities in the field of national security. In accordance with article 80 of the Constitution, the Croatian Parliament decides on war and peace and also adopts the Strategy of National Security and the Strategy of Defence, which cover both issues. Other authorities, which are given to the Parliament in accordance with the same article, are being worked out in detail in the acts concerning national security, which, as an issue, is more or less considered within the frame of defence activities. Based on such a classification, the Parliament is authorised to "supervise the work of the Government of the Republic of Croatia and other holders of public authority responsible to the Croatian Parliament, in conformity with the Constitution and Law". This illustrates that the Croatian Parliament has significant authorities in the field of national security. The Committee for Internal Policy and National Security is primarily supposed to deal, within its mandate, with this issue. As this issue has also foreign affairs aspect,

the Committee for Foreign Affairs is involved, as well as the Committee for Finance and Budget.

The main rationale for the fact that Parliament is not quite willing or is not competent enough for effective oversight of the security sector including SSR is the fact that members of these committees are, at the moment, not very much aware of how to exercise this job. The 4-year mandate is too short for mastering the problem, especially to be able to define tiny lines or distinctions between security and defence or to scrutinise all segments of the transition from defence to security activities. One of the explanations is Croatia's very recent and painful legacy of defending its territory against the armed aggression from the neighbouring country.

That is why the defence community, and consequently MPs, are very reluctant to accept the distinction between defence and security. At times when Croatia was forced to defend its territory, its national interest and national security with arms, the perception of security and defence was the same. Defending territory has meant fostering security. In peacetime, and especially during the process of approaching NATO, when NATO is likely to guarantee collective security, the notion of security is no longer identical with defence. But it is still the same to the military and officers arriving form and being raised in the war. For the sake of successful reform this approach should be changed, but it will take time.

On the other hand, some of the military are likely to keep up with the identification of both issues, conceiving that as a sort of guarantee to maintain position and privileges. The same cannot be said for MPs, but they might be manipulated if they are not prepared or competent enough. In order to prepare them to master this very new and complicated area, the Parliament should use the services of so called

staffers, who are supposed to be specialised in specific problems, such as in this case, the security and defence sector reform. They should be employed as experts in given parliament's committees, providing the members with expertise, and their association with MP's should not be limited to their mandates. They should be non-party experts and their work should be focused more to the expert and less to the political aspect of the problem.

Whether the fact that Croatia is now the full-fledged member of NATO will enhance the competence and, what is even more important, augment political will for the oversight and if the SSR in Croatia meets the NATO and EU standards, remains to be seen. The best indicator will be the assessment how the new above mentioned and, allegedly to NATO standards, adapted strategies will consider this issue.

There is some uncertainty between offices of the Prime Minister and the President for control over institutions of security sector, like the intelligence services and the military. Specific is the posture of dividing authorities concerning military issues. The President of State has final power over the armed forces, and the Government (through institution of civilian minister) is controlling military institutions – budget, planning etc. So with the two sided and opposite controlling partners, and it was obviously the final idea, there is no possibilities of misuse the military as a basis of personal or political power. At the same time that provokes difficulties because decisions have to be mutual and signed by the both. So, to a certain extent, due to the competence confusion the security community, including the intelligence, is not under effective democratic control. This fact endangers national security in broader terms, because it lessens the effectiveness of security community in its ability to cope with new non-conventional threats such as terrorism, illegal traffic,

WMDs etc. The rapid solution of this problem is one of the main prerequisites of the further reform.

There are some possibilities for the media and individual citizens to have the right of access to some information, but there is still very strong culture of secrecy within the Government. However, sometimes the media is finding the way to classified information. According the Law, individual citizens and the media are permitted to obtain information from the Government and to publish them. However, they have the problem to execute this right, because there is not protection for "whistle blowers" in Croatian law. Journalists have a right to protect their sources, however a public poll on security sector reform in Croatia has yet to be conducted. Supposedly, the Council for Civilian Oversight of Security and Intelligence Agencies is empowered to receive and investigate complaints from individual citizens. In cases of violations of human right and citizen liberties, this body is obliged to send reports to the President, Prime Minister, President of the Parliament and the State Attorney. However these possibilities are very seldom used. There is also an Ombudsman's office empowered to receive and investigate complains. Nevertheless its authority is very limited. There is no data on public attitudes to security services agencies with particular reference to accountability.

Though the Croatian media is free, diverse media segments lack adequate experts for security matters. This is especially the case in the fields of SSR and moreover, in the field of civil–military relations, which is very important element of SSR. Generally, each media segment is assigned only one reporter. Furthermore, the media tends to pursue the path of tabloid press seriously neglecting the need for quality research.

Conclusions

It seems to be obvious that the process of state-building, democratisation and SSR, at least when we analyse the Croatian example, represents the long-lasting process that has its own historical, political and societal context[17], as well as its stages that are clearly represented within the chronological framework of this paper.

The initial period of state-building (1990-1995) was marked with the armed conflict in Croatia and occupation of almost a third of its territory, while the period of democratic deficit (1995-2000) represented an era of semi-autocratic regime with all its negative sides and consequence. Hence, it is clear that the first two stages, given their very nature and environment explained on previous pages, had only a little in common with real processes of democratisation and almost nothing to do with the SSR.

Unlike that, the period that started with the electoral and constitutional changes in 2000 opened new perspectives for the country to initiate necessary transitional reforms, including the SSR, and take part in the

[17] In that sense, it is worth mentioning the well known Heiner Hanggi's categorisation of SSR context. Acknowledging the fact that each country adopting SSR represents a special case and that there is in general no single model for that, for analytical purposes he developed the following categorisation of SSR context – developmental context, post-authoritarian context and post-conflict context. Rethinking Croatian case in this way, one may conclude that, while having also limited amount of elements of the first and the third, it predominantly fits into second category (post-authoritarian context) in which post-authoritarian distortions dominated the SSR context and external players, like EU and NATO, played an important role in transition process. For more details on that subject see Bryden, Alan; Нднggi, Heiner (eds.): *Reform and Reconstruction of the Security Sector*, Geneva Centre for Democratic Control of Armed Forces, Geneva, 2004, p. 3-21.

accession process to the EU and NATO. This has brought a new dynamics to both, internal and foreign policies in Croatia, stimulating a constant upgrade of the institutional apparatus required for a successful finalisation of these two processes that would help Croatia to find its place in the transatlantic club.

In that sense, it is recommendable to reflect upon the institutional settings once again, mainly owing to the fact that they, together with mechanisms of implementation, represent the main precondition of a successful SSR.

The Croatian Parliament has significant authorities in the field of national security, but for the time being, it still doesn't exercise them to the full extent. Such a condition ensues in part from the role which the Parliament played in the political life of the Republic of Croatia in the recent past. In that period, the Croatian Parliament found itself under control of the institutions of the executive branch and it was only after the amendments to the Constitution in 2000 and 2001 that the Parliament was given an opportunity to act independently within the Croatian political system. Analysis of the legal regulations proved that the authorities of the Croatian Parliament in the field of oversight of the security services are rather well elaborated and regulated in detail (there is even a special body).

Crucial authorities in the field of security are retained by the executive branch of government and distributed between the Government and the President of the Republic of Croatia. By applying a number of mechanisms which stand on its disposal in control over the work of the Government and public administration, the Croatian Parliament is empowered to monitor the implementation of security policy and development of the Armed Forces. However, these authorities haven't been exercised frequently on issues concerning national security. Instead of monitoring the work of the Government in the field of national security

and calling the attention of the Government when a law is being violated or not being implemented, the Croatian Parliament is not fulfilling some of its legal obligations. The best illustration is the failure to establish authentic independent council for oversight security and intelligence agencies. This council has remained under the control of Government and in that way has missed its legitimate and constitutional role. Development of national security of the Republic of Croatia could only be guaranteed if all the institutions of the political system fulfil their legal authorities and obligations.

There are no other institutions which are mandated for making, be official or unofficial, decisions in this field. The civil society organisations are still suffering from lack of capacity and inadequate political culture in which they would normally be perceived as equal partners from the side of state administration. The war veterans have a plethora of organizations, but they seem to be organised mainly for the purpose of taking care for their financial interest (pensions, privileges, etc.). There is a potential within these groups to initiate some activities, but they didn't so far express any interest to contribute or to influence the process of SSR, or when they have done so, there was a clear lack of responsiveness from the side of state administration.

Furthermore, there is still a feeling of general lack of interest for the security sector, owing to the fact that society is more concerned with issues related with the economy, employment and standard of citizens. However, on the other side, in general Croatian public opinion, the security sector, including army, police, intelligence, still has some kind of exceptional status, although not comparable with the one they had only a decade ago, which is putting them in the privileged position, especially *vis-a-vis* potential detailed transparency requests. Still, the fact that Croatia is now part of the NATO and is in the final stage of the integration into the EU will undoubtedly continue to affect this field

positively. Apart from the fact that being part of EU and NATO means respecting very demanding standards of membership in various fields, including the SSR, there is an undeniable fact that both the EU and NATO are moving targets and they are constantly changing in order to be able to tackle contemporary challenges of globalised world. This should be a reminder to the political elites on the national level that membership in those two does not represent an end of transformation in any way, just a change of an environment in which we are constantly changing.

Annex 1: Key Political Actors Analysis

Type of Actor	Interests	Strategies	Capabilities	Relations
LEGISLATIVE BRANCH – THE PARLIAMENT				
PRIOR TO 2000 Highest body of legislative branch of power (in a semi-presidential system)	Political orientation: in accordance with predominating HDZ majority Motivation: should have been as in any other democratic system – on contrary, it was a theatre that served as a tool for broader legitimation of semi-autocratic regime	Limited democratic and institutional means of politics. Marginal influence, overshadowed by very strong position of the president. Declaratively democratic and pro-European, which differed significantly from the way it functioned.	Very limited – absolute dominance of the semi-authoritarian president of the state/party – in the semi-presidential system (French model burdened with lack of political culture).	Main allies: 'friends of the regime', regardless of their position within society. Main opponents: everybody else – political opposition in the country and its supporters, few independent media and intellectuals.
AFTER 2000 Highest body of legislative branch of power (in a parliamentary system)	Political orientation: less depending on the predominant political option Motivation: closer to the well-known idea about the role of parliament	In general, recognisable democratic and institutional means of politics. Relying on its empowered role after the constitutional changes (parliamentary system), incl. the security related issues.	Significantly stronger, especially *vis-a-vis* the executive branch – supervises its work, incl. security related issues, decides on war and peace, accession to international frameworks (like EU and NATO), authority over budget, strategic documents and laws etc. Serious problem – lack of qualified staff for SSR oversight.	Main allies: difficult to list – irrelevant Main opponents: difficult to list – irrelevant

EXECUTIVE BRANCH (PRESIDENT & GOVERNMENT)				
PRIOR TO 2000 Semi-authoritarian regime – absolute domination of the president over the government	Political orientation: conservative, nationalist. Motivation: access to power, overthrow of remnants of previous regime, Croatian independence and sovereignty.	Limited democratic and institutional means of politics. Very strong position of the president. Pronounced used of media campaigning, populism. Declaratively democratic and pro-European, while practicing lack of respects for human rights and democracy, pursuing controversial policies towards the neighbourhood.	Absolute dominance of the semi-authoritarian president of the state/party – in the semi-presidential system (French model, no cohabitation, lack of political culture), government and parliament completely overshadowed by the president's role. Relying on old pro-nationalist anti-communist part of population and diaspora, using war and occupation of territory for political legitimation.	Main allies include groups of anti-communist intellectuals, diaspora and state-controlled media ('friends of the regime'). Main opponents: political opposition in the country and its supporters, few independent media and intellectuals.
AFTER 2000 Democratic executive branch (in a parliamentary system)	Political orientation: less depending on the predominant political option (era of coalitions) Motivation: preserving political power, euro-atlantic accession processes	In general, recognisable democratic and institutional means of politics. Different position/attitude towards the legislative branch after the constitutional changes (parliamentary system), incl. the security related issues.	Capabilities rationalised (significantly declined), especially *vis-a-vis* the legislative branch – subject to supervision of its work, incl. security related issues, by the parliament. The president and government still share some authority over foreign and security policy and issues related to it – however, under 'the scrutiny' of the parliament. Serious problem – lack of qualified staff for SSR conduct.	Main allies: difficult to list – irrelevant Main opponents: difficult to list – irrelevant

HDZ – political party				
PRIOR TO 2000 Political movement/party: democratic (very limited), pro-regime.	Political orientation: conservative, nationalist. Motivation: access to power, overthrow of remnants of previous regime, Croatian independence and sovereignty.	Limited democratic and institutional means of politics. Very strong position of the president. Pronounced used of media campaigning, populism. Declaratively democratic and pro-European, while practicing lack of respects for human rights and democracy, pursuing controversial policies towards the neighbourhood.	Absolute dominance of the semi-authoritarian president of the state/party – in the semi-presidential system (French model, no cohabitation, lack of political culture), government and parliament completely overshadowed by the president's role. Relying on old pro-nationalist anti-communist part of population and diaspora, using war and occupation of territory for political legitimation.	Main allies include groups of anti-communist intellectuals, diaspora and state-controlled media. Main opponents: political opposition in the country and its supporters, few independent media and intellectuals.
AFTER 2000 Political party, democratic.	Political orientation: Christian-Democrat political party (centre-right) Motivation: Access and preservation of political power	Democratic institutional means of politics, accession to EU and NATO.	An opposition party until 2003 – after that, running the government, but in coalitions (no more unlimited political power) – parliamentary system – reduced powers of the executive, improved role of the legislative (the parliament). Very powerful organisational network.	Supporters: significantly softened rhetoric and changed character of the party (incl. cleansing of its membership) led to spread of supporters – from centre to the right at the political spectrum Main opposition: Social Democratic Party (main opposition party) and other parties in opposition

SDP – political party				
Political party: democratic.	Political orientation: Social democratic, successor to old communist party. Motivation: access to power.	Democratic and institutional means of politics. In general – respects main principles of democracy and human rights.	Early to mid 1990s very low support among the population and other institutions, including security sector (marked as communist). Increasing popular support during late 90's – syndicates, urban, young population – vast base – everybody who was disappointed with HDZ. Inherited developed organizational network, but during last few years – a decline in cohesiveness of the party. Currently in opposition, minor capacity to affect reforms process and political life (let alone presidential elections) before next parliamentary elections (2011).	Main allies during 1990s others in political opposition, media; international actors. Recently: declining support in business community as well as some media. Main opponents: HDZ and anti-communist intellectuals, even some former members.

HRT State Media				
Regime supportive actor	Political orientation: during 1990s, state media supported the government and ideology: changed after the 2000 and political changes in the country (the fall of HDZ, SDP–led coalition in power) Motivation: access to state budget support.	Informing the public and spreading the message that the parties in power want (before the 2000). Limited reporting of human rights abuses and limited investigative activities in human rights area. Limited democratic credential due to strong link with ruling elites and questionable commitment to independence of media. After the 2000, positive changes stimulated by new political environment and appearance of competition (private media).	In the early 1990s HTV was the single source of information in many parts of the state, but as private media grew HTV lost its support. A lot if its staff has left, but the staff is generally cohesive along political party lines (less visible nowadays then before). Limited capacity to influence pace of reforms as it follows official government lines.	Main allies: government, political parties in power. Main opponents: the private media.
Private Media				
Various, but mostly democratic.	Political orientation: various, some pro–government some anti–government, depending on the ownership structure. Motivation: economic gain, share of the media market, popular trust.	Investigative journalism, propaganda, agenda–setting, opinion promotion. Overall, solid record of human rights reporting, especially in the recent decade, and with minor exceptions, pro–democratic stance and reporting.	Since mid– and late 1990s growing support among the population. As a group private media are not cohesive and often engage in mutual attacks. Journalists protect common interest through their association. Some capacity to influence the pace of reforms, by influencing the public perception of policies, and agenda setting.	Main allies: depending on the ownership structure, political parties, single politician, private enterprises. Main opponents: competing media houses, including the state media.

War Veterans				
Limited commitment to democracy	Political orientation: nationalist, rightist. Motivation: protection of their members' rights and privileges.	Method of action: association, protest, membership in political parties. Respect of human rights: very limited, as conflict veterans are accused and investigated for human rights violations during the war. Democratic credentials: Limited, apart from popular support during the conflict.	Support base: Among the nationalist part of the population, in particular friends and families of war victims. Group cohesion: Pritty cohesive. Some influence over the pace of security reforms due to possession of weapons and still existing networks between members.	Main allies: some political actors: mostly right-wing oriented, diaspora Main opponents: difficult to determine – no 'open confrontations' with veterans owing to their war credentials – *ad hoc* opponents (civil rights movements and monitoring organisations, left oriented movements and minor parties etc.)
Business Community				
Regime actors, but not too democratic	Political orientation: depending on the party in government, Overall, during 1990s majority supported HDZ which administered the privatization. Closely related to current corruption scandals and investigations. Motivation: primarily, economic gain; political influence, as a means to greater economic gain.	Method of political action: financing political parties and electoral campaign in exchange for preferential treatment. Human rights and democratic credentials: no specific commitment, although some instances of violation of workers' rights have occurred.	No wide popular support base, but large financial base on disposal and support among politicians. Not cohesive in political terms, and politics often used to harm the competition. Limited influence over the SSR reform, let alone the relation to public procurement corruption scandals related to SSR (military trucks etc.)	Main allies: politicians and political parties. Main opponents: no major opponents.

International Organizations				
Pro-democratic	Political orientation: most with no particular political orientation, however some donors and foundations do prefer working with political actors from one end of the political spectrum. Motivation: stabilization and security of the region and Croatia; democratic consolidation.	Method of political action: pressure and conditionality, assistance (technical, expert, financial), support for specific population groups and NGOs. Respect for human rights and democracy: very committed to respect for human rights, some with juridical authority over this area (ICTY), and support and promotion of democracy.	Support base: civil sectors, intellectuals and limited popular support. Not too cohesive but still united over the goals of democratization and security. Substantial leverage over the pace of security reforms, thanks to financing the reforms and political conditionality for membership.	Main allies: civil sector, political parties (some more than others). Main opponents: no significant opponents, marginal groups advocating against membership in EU and NATO.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE SECURITY SECTOR REFORM EVENTS IN THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

Here we will provide the chronology of relevant events for the security sector reform (SSR) in the Republic of Croatia. It will be divided into three major categories where the following years – 1990, 1995 and 2000, i.e. the events that occurred then, will be regarded as main turning points that have determined the way SSR in Croatia developed. These are the following:

- 1990 – First multiparty elections, initiation of the national state-building process;
- 1995 – Liberation of occupied territories (military-police operations *Flash* and *Storm*), conclusion of *Erdut Agreement* that led to peaceful re-integration of Eastern Slavonia in 1998 (territorial integrity achieved);
- 2000 – Paramount political changes, end of semi-authoritarian regime, beginning of the real transition, process of accession to euroatlantic community.

1990 – 1995

- Constitutional changes in Socialist Republic of Croatia paved the way for the democratisation of the society and changes in electoral legislation that created the preconditions needed for the conduct of the first multiparty elections;

- Parliament of the Socialist Republic of Croatia decides on the organisation of first multiparty parliamentary elections;
- First multiparty parliamentary elections conducted (April/May 1990) – triumph of the new party (Croatian Democratic Union /*Hrvatska demokratska zajednica – HDZ*/, led by Franjo Tudjman) with the idea of independent national state high on the agenda;
- For the first time in modern Croatian history, the multiparty Parliament (*Sabor*) was constituted (30th May 1990);
- In central part of Croatia (Lika) so-called 'Serbian Autonomous Region' formed, initiation of Serbian rebellion in Croatia – August 1991 (so-called *Balvan Revolution*), rapidly spreading all over Croatian territory with the support of the federal army (JNA);
- New Constitution of the Republic of Croatia adopted (22nd December 1991), defining the country as independent, democratic, with multiparty and market system;
- Referendum on independence held (19th May 1991 – more than 94% of population in favour);
- In accordance with the outcome of the referendum, the parliament adopted The Declaration on the Establishment of Independent and Sovereign Republic of Croatia (25th May 1991 – The Statehood Day);
- Formal establishment of the General Staff of Croatian Armed Forces (21st September 1991);
- Declaration of Independence of the Republic of Croatia (8th October 1991 – The Independence Day);
- The Opinion of Badinter Commission (the commission of international law experts – 7th November 1991) – the SFRY does not exist anymore (main conclusion);

- Recognition of Croatian independence by the 12 countries of the EC (15th January 1992), initiated process of recognition worldwide;
- Croatia became a member of the UN (22nd May 1992), a process of admittance to various international organisations started;
- In general – the period of armed conflict, security sector built from scratches in a very difficult environment, military developed under the international embargo on weapons import, while fighting a several times stronger side;
- In such an environment (war, 1/3 of the territory occupied, difficult communication between different parts of the country), essential role of military, intelligence services and police, difficult to speak about civil oversight of the security sector;
- Period of weak institutions, low standards of transparency, accountability and openness of the system – main actors – military, police, intelligence etc, the SSR not existing at all.

1995 – 2000

- Territorial integrity regained – operations *Storm* (May 1995) and *Flash* (August 1995) – reconnecting the continental and coastal part of the country;
- Conclusion of *Erdut Agreement* (November 1995) that led to peaceful re-integration of Eastern Slavonia in 1998 and finalisation of the process of regaining control over the whole territory by the country's authorities;
- Initiation of the process of post-conflict stabilisation and normalisation; process of strengthening of the state apparatus;

- Centralisation of the political system, French model of semi-presidential political system with very strong role of the president, coupled with the lack of political culture made the parliament and the government marginalised in political system;
- Weak opposition, except the one of the president, and weak institutions contributed to the image of a semi-authoritarian system;
- Direct influence of the president's cabinet on state administration bodies dealing with foreign and security policy, i.e. on definition of these policies in general, as well on SSR;
- SSR was more Security Sector Reduction than a Security Sector Reform – motivated only by a need of downsizing and cost-cutting of the security services after the end of war, not driven by some advanced criteria or the process of democratisation;
- Partial international isolation at that time, Croatia was not a part of processes of accession to transatlantic structures as other European transitional countries;
- Main actors – the president, his cabinet, police, secret services and informal economic elites close to the office of the president;

2000 – Present

- Parliamentary elections (3rd January 2000) – end of an era of semi-authoritarian regime – triumph of a six-party coalition led by the Social-Democratic Party;
- Presidential elections – another defeat of the HDZ – moderate independent candidate – Stjepan Mesic – (last president of ex-Yugoslav Presidency) elected (February 2000);

- Zagreb Summit (November 2000) between the EU and the region – Stabilisation and Association Process initiated – perspective for full-fledged EU membership, EU conditionality mechanism – indirect impact on the SSR process ;
- Constitutional changes (December 2000) – from semi-presidential to parliamentary system – presidential authorities significantly downsized – role of the parliament and the government enhanced;
- Membership in the Partnership for Peace of the NATO Alliance (May 2000) – a formal initiation of process of accession to NATO – enormous importance for the process of SSR (meeting the NATO criteria);
- Membership in WTO (World Trade Organisation) in November 2000 – not directly linked to the SSR, but an important step on the way towards the euroatlantic structures;
- Stabilisation and Association Agreement signed with the EU as the first form of contractual relations between the two parties ever (October 2001), speeding up the process of EU integration, meeting the criteria – important for the SSR;
- Invitation to join the Membership Action Plan received at the Reykjavik meeting of the North Atlantic Council (May 2002) – launched to assist those countries which wish to join the Alliance in their preparations by providing advice, assistance and practical support on all aspects of NATO membership – based on development of annual plans to meet the membership criteria, implementing them, reporting about it to NATO – directly linked to SSR – utmost importance;
- The Adriatic Charter, as an expression of formal US support for the NATO bid of Albania, Croatia and Macedonia, signed in Tirana (May 2003) – speeding-up the process;

- European Commission issued a positive opinion (*Avis*) on Croatian application for full–fledged membership in the EU (April 2004);
- Republic of Croatia acquired candidate status for membership in the European Union (June 2004);
- Stabilisation and Association Agreement entered into force (February 2005);
- Accession negotiations between the Republic of Croatia and the European Union opened (October 2005);
- This period marked with intense reforms process in order to meet the criteria of accession to the transatlantic structures within mentioned frameworks of cooperation with them – recognisable amount of reforms efforts directly linked with the SSR;
- Croatia selected to the UN Security Council as a member for the period 2008 – 2009; international recognition of the general success of reforms process – related to SSR as well; – for the first time in history, the country is involved in the highest international body dealing with global problems – a chance to contribute to them (including the SSR efforts worldwide);
- NATO Bucharest Summit (April 2008) – an invitation to join NATO officially received;
- At the Strasbourg/Kehl NATO Summit (April 2009) Croatia became a full–fledged member of NATO, thus fulfilling one of two major foreign policy priorities (EU and NATO membership) – confirmation of the SSR success;
- However, the process has not ended with the NATO membership, SSR is a moving target – NATO as an alliance (including all its members) are constantly investing efforts into SSR – still plenty of work ahead for Croatia.

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