



IRMO



**Joint Workshop
of the PfP Consortium Study Group
“Regional Stability in South East Europe”**

and the

Institute for Development and International Relations

**“Croatian Membership in the EU –
Implications for the Western Balkans”**

Programme and Workshop Outline

26 – 28 September 2013

Zagreb, Croatia

Purpose

The Study Group Regional Stability in South East Europe has been assessing the post-conflict development in Western Balkan countries and its implications for the region and beyond since 1999. Embedded in the wider academic framework of both the PfP Consortium of Defense Academies and Security Studies Institutes as well as the security-political research in the Austrian Ministry of Defence and Sports, its main focus is to elaborate major conflict areas and propose possible solutions to local authorities and international actors alike. During the last two decades, the region of the Western Balkans has been on the daily agenda of Transatlantic, European and Austrian institutions with the goal of enhancing capabilities in the field of conflict management and peace support. Recent developments in the region have given rise to the main topic of the upcoming 27th workshop of the Study Group entitled “*Croatian Membership in the EU – Implications for the Western Balkans*” to be convened at Hotel Dubrovnik, Zagreb/Croatia from 26 to 28 September 2013.

Partners

The partners to this project are

- Institute for Development and International Relations (www.irmo.hr)
- Austrian Ministry of Defence and Sports (Austrian National Defence Academy and Directorate General for Security Policy Vienna), Vienna/Austria
- PfP Consortium Study Group “Regional Stability in South East Europe” (www.pfpconsortium.org)

Topic Outline

On 1st July 2013 Croatia officially became a full-fledged member of the European Union, thus fulfilling both foreign policy goals (EU and NATO membership) and making a huge step ahead in the process of its long-term consolidation. After a painful and energy-consuming process of reforms in every segment of society (applying for EU membership in 2003, starting negotiation in 2005 and signing the accession treaty in late 2011), the country finally met all criteria for membership in the EU and hence became eligible for full-fledged membership without any further monitoring system by the EC in place. In order to achieve that, it had to cope with significantly stricter criteria and patterns of their application that reflect both complexity of Croatia’s transitional framework and current EU attitude towards further expansion.

On the other hand, the countries of the region are currently in different stages of their reforms/accession processes and it is very difficult to predict the pace of the developments in the period to come. The issue of long term consolidation of BiH is far from being resolved. Moreover, the name issue is still a heavy burden of Macedonia’s EU and NATO accession processes. Finally, Belgrade-Prishtina dialogue and related developments such as the possible initiation of accession talks with Serbia and negotiation on the SAP with Kosovo in the period to come, represent a significant step ahead. However, the full implementation of these agreements has yet to take place and it’s still difficult to anticipate the final resolution of the problem.

Regardless of that, the last EC's Monitoring Report (March 2013) on Croatia sends somewhat optimistic note for the future: "Croatia has demonstrated its ability to fulfil all commitments in good time before accession. EU membership offers many and substantial opportunities for Croatia and the EU. These opportunities now need to be used, so that Croatia's participation in the EU will be a success – to the benefit of Croatia itself, of the Western Balkans region, and of the EU as a whole."

The aim of this workshop is exactly to try to detect the consequences of Croatia's accession to the EU both for the former and the latter, but also for the countries of the Western Balkans. It would be interesting to see what would be the impact on political and economic life in Croatia, Western Balkans countries and the EU itself, if any. Also, the workshop would give us the opportunity to hear the perception of the ongoing trends by major foreign actors that have recognisable influence on the developments in South East Europe (EU, NATO, US, Russia).

It is clear that long-term stabilisation of the entire South East Europe has no alternative and while it should predominantly be a task for the local political elites (local ownership), to a certain extent it remains the responsibility of the EU, and Croatia as its new member in particular. Therefore, it is important to try to explore the new Croatia's role as a bridge between the EU and countries of the region that are still not a part of it.

Other than that, for many of these countries, Croatian membership brings the EU for the first time to their borders, which may cause a positive spill over effect and enhance the processes of Europeanization in respective countries and contribute to their enthusiasm for the reform processes before them. That would be very important for the long-term stabilisation of South East Europe and its accession to the Euroatlantic structures. However, this may also create challenges in particular vis-à-vis freedom of movement, cross border cooperation and trade.

Key questions:

- 1) What are the main political and economic implications of EU accession for Croatia (costs, benefits, challenges, opportunities, responsibilities...)?
- 2) What kind of impact will that have on the dynamics of the reforms/accession processes of other SAP countries? What are the views from SAP countries?
- 3) What impact will Croatian accession to the EU have on regional co-operation?
- 4) What are the economic and political challenges created by Croatia's accession for the rest of the Western Balkan states?
- 5) How will it affect the overall legitimacy of the EU and its enlargement policy in the region as a whole?
- 6) Is there any change in perception of decisive foreign actors about the Euroatlantic perspectives of the region following the Croatian accession to the EU?

Programme

Thursday, 26 September 2013

till 18.30 Arrival of the participants

19.30 – 21.00 **Welcome Reception**

Introduction

Ernst M. FELBERBAUER, Austrian National Defence Academy, Vienna

Words of Welcome

Amb. Andrea IKIĆ-BÖHM, Austrian Ambassador to the Republic of Croatia

Dinner Speech

Mladen STANIČIĆ, Institute for Development and International Relations, Zagreb

Friday, 27 September 2013

07.00 – 09.00 **Breakfast**

09.00 – 09.15 **Introduction to the PfP Consortium and Administrative Remarks**

Ernst M. FELBERBAUER, Austrian National Defence Academy, Vienna

09.15 – 09.45 **Opening Remarks**

Ana-Maria BOROMISA, Institute for Development and International Relations, Zagreb

Hrvoje MARUŠIĆ, Assistant Minister for European Affairs, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia, Zagreb

Amb. Heidemaria GÜRER, Austrian Ministry for European and International Affairs, Vienna

09.45 – 11.15 **PANEL 1: New Political/Economic Environment for Croatia – Challenges and Expectations**

Chair: Predrag JUREKOVIĆ, Austrian National Defence Academy, Vienna

Višnja SAMARDŽIJA, Institute for Development and International Relations, Zagreb: *“Implications of Croatia’s Membership for the Western Balkans Region and the EU”*

Ana-Maria BOROMISA, Institute for Development and International Relations, Zagreb: *“Possible Economic Effects”*

Gordan BOSANAC, Centre for Peace Studies, Zagreb: *“Repercussions for the Society”*

- 11.15 – 11.45 **Coffee Break**
- 11.45 – 13.15 **PANEL 2: Western Balkans – Integration vs. Stagnation after the Croatian EU Accession**
- Chair:** Sandro KNEZOVIC, Institute for Development and International Relations, Zagreb
- Franz-Lothar ALTMANN, Bucharest University:
“Chances and Challenges from an EU Perspective”
- Matthew RHODES, George C. Marshall Center for Security Studies, Garmisch-Partenkirchen: *“NATO 2014: An ‘Enlargement Summit’?”*
- Nilufer NARLI, Bahçeşehir University, Istanbul:
“A Turkish View on EU Enlargement in the Western Balkans”
- 13.15 – 14.15 **Lunch**
- 14.15 – 15.45 **PANEL 3 (part 1): Croatian Accession to the EU – Potentials for Positive Spill-over Effects?**
- Chair:** Filip EJDUS, University of Belgrade
- Damir KAPIDŽIĆ, Faculty of Political Science, Sarajevo:
“Repercussions for the Consolidation of Bosnia-Herzegovina”
- Marko VUJAČIĆ, European Research Academy – EURAK, Belgrade:
“Lessons Learnt for Serbia’s European Ambitions”
- Florian QEHAJA, Kosova Center for Security Studies, Prishtina/Priština:
“Kosovo – Closing the Gap on the Region”
- 15.45 – 16.15 **Coffee Break**
- 16.15 – 17.45 **Interactive Discussion**
- Moderation:** Franz-Lothar ALTMANN, Bucharest University
- 19:00 – 21:00 **Dinner** (individual)

Saturday, 28 September 2013

07.00 – 09.00 **Breakfast**

09.00 – 10.30 **PANEL 3 (part 2): Croatian Accession to the EU – Potentials for Positive Spill-over Effects?**

Chair: Ernst M. FELBERBAUER, Austrian National Defence Academy, Vienna

Dane TALESKI, Doctoral Candidate, Central European University (CEU), Budapest: *“Macedonia – Ways out of the Deadlock”*

Alba CELA, Albanian Institute for International Studies, Tirana: *“Albania after Croatia’s EU Accession and the National Parliamentary Elections”*

Rajko RADEVIĆ, Centre for Security Studies, Podgorica: *“National and Regional Aspects regarding Montenegro’s Negotiations with the EU”*

10.30 – 11.00 **Coffee Break**

11.00 – 12.30 **Plenary Session: Interactive Debate for Policy Recommendations and Workshop Outlook**

Moderation: Predrag JUREKOVIĆ, Austrian National Defence Academy, Vienna

12.30 – 12.45 **Closing Remarks**
MG (ret.) Johann PUCHER, former Austrian Security Policy Director

12.45 – 14.00 **Lunch**

14.00 **Departure to the Side Programme/Individual Departures**

Sunday, 29 September 2013

Individual Departures