



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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## **Croatia - Accession Partnership**

On the basis of the political agreement reached by the Council on 12 December 2005, the Council adopted a Decision on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the accession partnership with Croatia (15672/05).

The Accession Partnership is an important document to focus Croatia's preparations for accession following the start of accession negotiations on 3 October 2005. The Accession Partnership updates the previous European Partnership with Croatia on the basis of the findings of the 2005 Commission's Progress Report on Croatia and identifies new priorities for action. The new priorities are adapted to the country's specific needs and stage of preparation and will be updated as necessary. The Accession Partnership also provides guidance for financial assistance to Croatia.

# **P R E S S**

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Rue de la Loi 175 B - 1048 BRUSSELS Tel.: +32 (0)2 285 8239 / 6319 Fax: +32 (0)2 285 8026  
[press.office@consilium.eu.int](mailto:press.office@consilium.eu.int) <http://ue.eu.int/Newsroom>

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Croatia is now expected to develop a plan with a timetable and specific measures to address the priorities of the Accession Partnership. These priorities, which relate in particular to Croatia's capacity to meet the criteria defined by the Copenhagen European Council of 1993 and the conditions set for the Stabilisation and Association Process, have been selected on the basis that it is realistic to expect that Croatia can complete them or take them substantially forward over the next few years. A distinction is made between short-term priorities, which are expected to be accomplished within one or two years, and medium-term priorities, which are expected to be accomplished within three to four years.

The advancement of the accession negotiations with Croatia will be guided by Croatia's progress in preparing for accession. This will be measured, inter alia, against the implementation of the Accession Partnership, as regularly revised.

The Thessaloniki European Council on 19 and 20 June 2003 endorsed the introduction of Partnerships as a means to materialise the European perspective of the Western Balkan countries within the framework of the Stabilisation and Association Process. A European Partnership with Croatia was subsequently adopted by the Council on 13 September 2004. Furthermore, the Council last week (14 February) adopted a Regulation (amending Regulation (EC) No 533/2004), which provides for a change of the name of the 'European Partnership' for Croatia to 'Accession Partnership', in order to align the name with that used for the Partnership for Turkey, as both are candidate countries which have started accession negotiations. A revised Accession Partnership with Turkey was adopted by the Council on 23 January 2006.