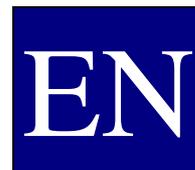




COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION



Council conclusions on Croatia

*3168th GENERAL AFFAIRS Council meeting
Brussels, 29 May 2012*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"The Council welcomes the Commission's monitoring report of 24 April 2012 on Croatia's accession preparations and the accompanying monitoring tables, and takes note of the findings and recommendations therein.

The Council has assessed thoroughly the monitoring report and tables and notes with satisfaction that, overall, Croatia's preparations for EU membership are on track and that Croatia has reached a considerable degree of alignment with the *acquis*. In this perspective, the Council calls on Croatia to use the time remaining until accession to step up its efforts in building on the reforms it has implemented and the track records it has developed in the accession negotiations, notably in the fields of judiciary and fundamental rights, justice, freedom and security, and competition policy, as well as the other areas of the *acquis* identified by the Commission as requiring further efforts. In this context, the Council endorses the specific recommendations in the Commission's report on the above-mentioned areas and looks forward to receiving from Croatia an update on progress at the EU-Croatia Stabilisation and Association Council in June.

In line with Article 36 of the Accession Treaty and with relevant European Council and Council conclusions, the Council reiterates the importance it attaches to the close monitoring of Croatia's fulfilment of all the commitments undertaken in the accession negotiations, including those which must be fulfilled before accession, and to Croatia's continued preparations to fully assume its membership obligations upon accession.

The Council notes the state of the ongoing process of ratification of the Accession Treaty and looks forward to welcoming Croatia as a member of the Union as of 1 July 2013 subject to completion of the remaining ratification processes by Member States. In this context, the Council invites the Commission to continue monitoring Croatia's preparations for accession and looks forward to the comprehensive monitoring report and updated monitoring tables to be presented by the Commission this autumn."

P R E S S