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**Thirteenth meeting of the Accession Conference at Deputy
level with Croatia
Brussels, 6 June 2011**

The thirteenth meeting of the Accession Conference with Croatia at Deputy level was held today in Brussels, which allowed the EU and Croatia to provisionally close Chapter 13 - Fisheries. Fisheries is a core chapter in the accession negotiations and highly significant because the Union has exclusive competence in the area of the conservation of marine biological resources under the common fisheries policy, as well as for the conclusion of international agreements in that area.

The European Union delegation was headed by Ambassador Péter Györkös, Hungary's Permanent Representative to the EU. The Croatian delegation was led by Ambassador Vladimir Drobnjak, Chief Negotiator for Accession Negotiations with the EU.

The negotiations on Chapter 13 - Fisheries were opened on 19 February 2010 at an Accession Conference at Deputy level. At this meeting of the Conference, the EU noted that, in order for the chapter to be provisionally closed, Croatia would have to ensure *inter alia* sufficient administrative and operational capacities at all levels, in particular in order to discharge properly its future responsibilities in terms of inspection and control; adopt a new law on structural measures, market measures and State aid fully aligned with the *acquis*; and adopt an institutional framework for the implementation of the European Fisheries Fund.

At today's meeting, and in light of the positions of the Parties and the considerable progress made with preparations in all areas under negotiation in this chapter, the Conference was able to provisionally close the Fisheries chapter. The European Union also underlined that it would devote particular attention to monitoring all specific issues mentioned in its common position with a view to ensuring Croatia's administrative capacity, in particular with regard to its inspection and control obligations under the Common Fisheries Policy, the alignment of the use of its traditional fishing gears with the *acquis* as well as the phasing out of the specific category of subsistence fisheries.

P R E S S

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The Conference also considered proposals for transitional arrangements in the field of resource and fleet management.

Furthermore, at the Conference, the EU recalled that, in accordance with the EU Common Position on this chapter, and in the light of the 4 June 2004 agreement and the relevant European Council and Council conclusions, the EU calls on Croatia to continue to fully respect its commitment not to apply any aspect of the Croatian Ecological and Fisheries Protection Zone to the EU Member States until a common agreement in the EU spirit is found.

Since the start of negotiations 34 (out of 35) chapters have been opened for negotiations and 31 chapters have been provisionally closed. A further Accession Conference is planned this month with a view to finalising the accession negotiations.
