COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION

EN

Brussels, 19 February 2010
6694/10 (Presse 35)

Ninth meeting of the Accession Conference at Deputy level with Croatia, Brussels, 19 February 2010

The ninth meeting of the Accession Conference with Croatia at Deputy level was held today in Brussels. In the light of the positions of the Parties, the Conference was able to open Chapter 13 - Fisheries and Chapter 27 - Environment, which are very demanding chapters in the accession process and require a lot of preparation.

The EU underlined that on all these chapters, monitoring of progress in the alignment with and implementation of the *acquis* would continue throughout the negotiations. The Union will, if necessary, return to these chapters at an appropriate moment.

Details on the specific chapters are provided below:

Chapter 13 - Fisheries

On the basis of the negotiating position of Croatia for this chapter, the Union has closely examined Croatia's general state of preparedness in this area. Taking into account Croatia's present state of preparations - and on the understanding that Croatia will continue to make progress in the alignment with and implementation of the *acquis* - the EU underlined the main issues regarding the benchmarks to be met by Croatia for the provisional closure of the chapter, namely:

– Croatia ensures sufficient administrative and operational capacities at all levels, in particular in order to discharge properly its future responsibilities in terms of inspection and control, including the setting up of a satellite-based vessel monitoring system, and achieves substantial progress with regard to fleet management and catch and landing registration.

– Croatia adopts a new law on structural measures, market measures and State aid fully aligned with the *acquis*.

– Croatia adopts an institutional framework for the implementation of the European Fisheries Fund including the formal designation of institutional structures (with specific tasks and responsibilities) for the operational programme.

The EU and Croatia also considered proposals for derogations and transitional measures concerning resource and fleet management, structural measures, market policy and state aid.

Furthermore the European Union 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 and control capacity and its capacity to complete legal alignment in all the areas under this chapter. The Union will closely monitor Croatia's progress in this chapter throughout the negotiations. The Union will, if necessary, return to this chapter at an appropriate moment.

Chapter 27 - Environment

On the basis of the negotiating position of Croatia for this chapter, the Union has closely examined Croatia's general state of preparedness in this area. Taking into account Croatia's present state of preparations - and on the understanding that Croatia will continue to make progress in the alignment with and implementation of the *acquis* - the EU underlined the main issues regarding the benchmarks to be met by Croatia for the provisional closure of the chapter, namely:

– Croatia adopts legislation aimed at transposing the *acquis* in the field of water quality, notably the new Water Act and the new Water Management Financing Act and makes further significant progress in legislative alignment in this sector by adopting implementing legislation.

– Croatia adopts legislation aimed at transposing the *acquis* in the field of industrial pollution control and risk management and ensures that definitions, notably related to installations, are aligned with the *acquis*.

– Croatia continues its alignment with the *acquis* in the remaining sectors of this chapter and demonstrates that it will be fully prepared to ensure the implementation and enforcement of the EU requirements at the date of the accession.

– Croatia continues capacity building of the administrative bodies at all levels, including inspection services, in line with the Action Plan, further improves coordination of work and demonstrates that all appropriate administrative structures will be in place a good time before accession to enable implementation and enforcement of the *acquis* in all sectors of this chapter.

The EU and Croatia also considered proposals for transitional measures concerning air quality, waste management, water quality, industrial pollution and risk management and other requests regarding nature protection.

Furthermore the European Union 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, its capacity to complete legal alignment in all the areas under this chapter, as well as further progress in implementation. The Union will closely monitor Croatia's progress in this chapter throughout the negotiations. The Union will, if necessary, return to this chapter at an appropriate moment.

***

Since the start of the negotiations 3 October 2005, thirty chapters have been opened, of which seventeen have been provisionally closed. Further Accession Conferences will be planned, as appropriate, in order to take the process forward.