Croatia and the European Union

SUMMARY

Fieldwork: November 2011
Publication: February 2012

This survey has been requested by the Directorate-General Enlargement and co-ordinated by Directorate-General for Communication (DG COMM "Research and Speechwriting" Unit).
http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm

This document does not represent the point of view of the European Commission. The interpretations and opinions contained in it are solely those of the authors.
Flash Eurobarometer 337

CROATIA AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

Conducted by TNS Political & Social at the request of the European Commission’s Directorate-General Enlargement

Survey co-ordinated by the Directorate-General for Communication
**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**INTRODUCTION** ................................................................. 3

1. ATTITUDES OF CROATIANS TO THEIR OWN COUNTRY ............ 4

2. CROATIAN ATTITUDES TO THE EU ...................................... 4

3. CROATIA’S RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES.................... 8

4. CHANNELS USED TO STAY INFORMED ABOUT CURRENT AFFAIRS AND THE EU ......................................................... 9

**CONCLUSIONS** .................................................................. 10

**ANNEXES**

**TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS**
INTRODUCTION

In February 2003, Croatia submitted its application for membership of the European Union. In June 2004 Croatia was awarded candidate country status and in October 2005 the European Union and Croatia started accession negotiations. These negotiations were concluded in June 2011. On 1 December 2011 the European Parliament approved Croatia's accession as the 28th member of the EU. Croatia and the EU signed the accession treaty on 9 December 2011. Following the ratification procedure in all Member States and Croatia, Croatia’s accession is foreseen for 1 July 2013.

The objective of this Flash Eurobarometer 337 is to measure Croatians' perceptions, views and attitudes on their country’s relationship with the EU. The results of this survey should help to guide and streamline communication efforts during the final stage of the accession process before Croatia’s entry into the EU in July 2013.

The survey was conducted before both the vote of the European Parliament on Croatia’s accession on 1 December 2011 and the Parliamentary Elections held in Croatia on 4 December 2011. The survey was also conducted before the Croatian referendum on accession held on 22 January 20121; however the survey has no direct link with the referendum, neither does it test voting intentions in the referendum.

The fieldwork of this survey was conducted from 28 to 30 November 2011. The survey is based on 1019 randomly conducted telephone interviews (land lines and mobile phones) among a representative sample of the Croatian population above the age of 15 years.

This Flash Eurobarometer was carried out by TNS Political & Social. It was carried out for the European Commission (at the request of the Directorate-General for Enlargement (DG ELARG) and coordinated by the Directorate-General for Communication (“Research and Speechwriting” Unit)).

1 66,25% of the voters said "yes" to Croatia's EU accession (http://www.euractiv.com/enlargement/croats-resounding-eu-membership-news-510307)
1. ATTITUDES OF CROATIANS TO THEIR OWN COUNTRY

A large majority of Croatians enjoy living in Croatia (89%) and are confident about the country’s future (78%).

The prospect of EU membership seems to influence Croatians’ attitudes to the future of their country. 82% of respondents who believe that Croatia should be in the EU also see Croatia’s future in a positive light, compared to only 70% of those opposed to EU membership.

2. CROATIAN ATTITUDES TO THE EU

Croats feel familiar with the EU; two-thirds of Croatian respondents agreed with the statement “I feel familiar with the EU” (63%). Familiarity is closely linked to expectations about personal benefits from EU membership. The older the respondents, the more familiar they feel with the EU. The better their education, the more familiar respondents feel with the EU.

Croats acknowledge the EU as a factor for peace and stability in Europe. Nearly 6 out of 10 Croatian respondents agreed that the EU contributes to peace and stability in Europe (59%).
Croatians share the values of EU citizens. Almost 7 out of 10 Croatian respondents (68%) agreed with the statement “Croatians and EU citizens share the same values, such as democracy and human rights”.

Croatians are on average well-informed about the EU in general (54%), but lack information about matters such as financial assistance before and after EU accession. Croatian women tend to be less well-informed than men about the EU in general, the accession process and financial assistance before and after EU accession.

Almost 6 out of 10 Croatians believe that Croatia’s future should lie in the EU. 32% of respondents totally agree and 27% tend to agree that Croatia’s future should be in the EU, while only 22% of respondents strongly disagreed.

Support for the EU rises with age. In Croatia, members of the oldest age group (55 years or older) are the strongest supporters of both EU membership and the euro. Overall, younger people in Croatia tend to be more sceptical about a number of aspects of EU membership than the older generations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Total 'Agree'</th>
<th>Total 'Disagree'</th>
<th>DKINA (DO NOT READ OUT)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-24</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-39</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-54</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55+</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
More than 4 respondents out of 10 in Croatia (41%) expect personal benefits from EU membership while only 18% think that EU membership would be personally detrimental. A large proportion of respondents said that it would be neither beneficial nor detrimental to them personally (39%).

Overall, familiarity and the expectation of personal benefits from EU membership have the strongest influence on positive attitudes to membership. Respondents who combine familiarity with the EU with the expectation of personal gain from EU membership are most likely to be enthusiastic about EU membership generally.

While two-thirds of respondents agreed that EU membership would improve the Croatian economy, slightly less than half agreed that the euro would be beneficial (49%).

Croatians mainly expect positive consequences from EU membership in the area of economic benefits. More than three-quarters said that it will bring more business investment and boost tourism in Croatia (both 78%) and nearly three-quarters that it will help to improve the economy (66%). More than half of respondents (52%) think that jobs will not be lost because of EU membership.
However, slightly more than 8 out of 10 Croatians (81%) agreed that EU membership will cause prices to increase and nearly 7 out of 10 agreed that the EU would have too much control over national policies (69%). A majority of 53% also believe that membership will have a negative effect on Croatia’s agriculture and the independence of its farmers.

85% of respondents agreed that “Croatia’s participation in the Schengen Agreement, which means opening borders and freedom of movement, would be a positive development.”

Croatian support for opening Croatia’s borders and for free movement within the Schengen area is very high, whether or not respondents want to join the EU. Two-thirds of the respondents who do not support Croatia’s membership would nevertheless welcome participation in the Schengen Agreement.
3. CROATIA’S RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES

Almost two-thirds of respondents (65%) reported that they had travelled outside Croatia several times in the past five years. Croatians who travel abroad predominantly visit their neighbouring countries. Financial reasons were cited as the main factor preventing Croatians from travelling outside their country.

Travelling outside Croatia correlates with expectations of personal benefits from EU membership. 43% of those who have travelled abroad expect membership to benefit them, while only 17% expect membership to be detrimental for them.

The EU country that the largest proportion of Croatian respondents felt closest to is Germany (35%), followed by Slovenia (27%) and Austria (26%).

Croatia’s support for EU membership for other countries in the region is low. Slightly more than half of the respondents supported the accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina (51%), while all other candidate countries or potential candidates received less than 50% support.
4. CHANNELS USED TO STAY INFORMED ABOUT CURRENT AFFAIRS AND THE EU

Croatians trust information on current affairs from international media more than local and national sources.

Overall, television is the most important channel of public information in Croatia, both for current affairs in general and information about the EU. The Internet is an effective way of reaching young respondents, students, all of whom rely on the Internet more than on television for information about both current affairs and the EU.
CONCLUSIONS

The main objective of this survey was to measure Croatians’ perceptions and views of, and attitudes to, their country’s relationship with the EU. Overall, based on the answers in this survey, Croatians’ perceptions of their country’s relationship with the EU can be described to be mostly positive and optimistic.

Croatians enjoy living in their country and are positive about their future. The prospect of joining the EU in 2013 seems to contribute to their optimistic attitude to their country’s future. The survey indicates that a solid majority of nearly 60% of Croatians believe that their country’s future should lie in the EU. EU membership itself is perceived favourably: according to a majority of respondents, the positive aspects of EU membership clearly outweigh potential negative aspects such as increasing prices or excessive EU control over national policies.

The more familiar Croatians are with the EU, the more they believe that the future of their country should be in the EU.

Overall, younger Croatians are less optimistic than the older generations regarding a number of aspects of EU membership as well as about their country’s future. Support for the EU is significantly stronger among older respondents than among the young. Similarly, young Croatians are also less familiar with the EU than the older generations. Younger Croatians are less in favour of the introduction of the euro and less enthusiastic about joining the Schengen Agreement than older age groups.

The country whose accession to the EU Croatian respondents are most likely to support is Bosnia and Herzegovina, followed by the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro.

Finally, Croatian support for their country’s participation in the Schengen Agreement is stronger than for EU membership or the introduction of the euro. Support for opening Croatia’s borders and for free movement within the Schengen area remains high, whether or not respondents want to join the EU. Two-thirds of the respondents who do not support Croatian EU membership would still welcome the opportunity to participate in the Schengen Agreement (66%).
ANNEXES
FLASH EUROBAROMETER 337
“Croatia and the European Union”
TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Between the 28 of November and the 30 of November 2011, TNS Political & Social, a consortium created between TNS political & social, TNS UK and TNS opinion, carried out the survey FLASH EUROBAROMETER 337 about “Croatia and the European Union”.

This survey has been requested by the EUROPEAN COMMISSION, Directorate-General for Enlargement. It is a general public survey co-ordinated by the Directorate-General for Communication (“Research and Speechwriting” Unit). The FLASH EUROBAROMETER 337 covers the population aged 15 years and over. The survey covers the national population of citizens (in Croatia) as well as the population of citizens of all the European Union Member States that are residents in Croatia and have a sufficient command of the national language to answer the questionnaire. All interviews were carried using the TNS e-Call center (our centralized CATI system). Respondents were called both on fixed lines and mobile phones. The basic sample design applied in is multi-stage random (probability). In each household, the respondent was drawn at random following the “last birthday rule”.

TNS have developed their own RDD sample generation capabilities based on using contact telephone numbers from responders to random probability or random location face to face surveys, such as Eurobarometer, as seed numbers. The approach works because the seed number identifies a working block of telephone numbers and reduces the volume of numbers generated that will be ineffective. The seed numbers are stratified by NUTS2 region and urbanisation to approximate a geographically representative sample. From each seed number the required sample of numbers are generated by randomly replacing the last two digits. The sample is then screened against business databases in order to exclude as many of these numbers as possible before going into field.

A comparison between the sample and the universe was carried out. The Universe description was derived from Eurostat population data or from national statistics offices. A national weighting procedure, using marginal and intercellular weighting, was carried out based on this Universe description. Gender, age, region and size of locality were introduced in the iteration procedure. For international weighting (i.e. EU averages), TNS Political & Social applies the official population figures as provided by EUROSTAT or national statistic offices. The total population figures for input in this post-weighting procedure are listed above.

Readers are reminded that survey results are estimations, the accuracy of which, everything being equal, rests upon the sample size and upon the observed percentage. With samples of about 1,000 interviews, the real percentages vary within the following confidence limits:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observed percentages</th>
<th>10% or 90%</th>
<th>20% or 80%</th>
<th>30% or 70%</th>
<th>40% or 60%</th>
<th>50%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confidence limits</td>
<td>± 1.9 points</td>
<td>± 2.5 points</td>
<td>± 2.7 points</td>
<td>± 3.0 points</td>
<td>± 3.1 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>