



PRESS RELEASE

Learning from Croatian experiences in EU accession

Skopje, 22 November, 2011 – The seventh in a series of seminars on accession negotiations to the European Union will be held in Zagreb on 23 and 24 November as part of a joint programme between the UNDP and the Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration. The programme aims at sharing the experience of Croatia's negotiating teams with the EU with officials from other candidate or prospective candidate countries in the region.

Eleven participants from our country have so far attended the seminar series with the support of the UNDP office in Skopje. Representatives from the Secretariat for European Integration and the Ministry of Justice will attend this coming seminar

This week's training is devoted to two complex and interrelated chapters of the EU negotiations - *Chapter 23 on the Judiciary and Fundamental Rights and Chapter 24 on Justice, Freedom and Security*. These chapters were among the most challenging for Croatia to negotiate and involved some of the most extensive reforms that the country implemented in the process of alignment with the EU standards.

The specific issues to be covered during this seminar include: organisational and legal challenges in negotiations for Chapters 23 and 24; building administrative capacity to implement the norms and actions given by the chapters; and fulfilment of the benchmarks arising from negotiations. Members of the Croatian accession negotiating team with responsibility for these crucial areas will share their insights, lessons learned and advices.

The seminar will be held at the premises of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration and will be opened by Andrej Plenković, the State Secretary for European Integration in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration. Representatives from several countries in the region are expected to attend the seminar.

The seminar series is conducted in the framework of Croatia's International Development Cooperation Strategy, which aims to transfer the experiences and know-how of the EU accession process; provide assistance in reforms necessary to introduce EU standards; and assist in enhancing absorption capacities of institutions in pre-accession countries.

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