



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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Accession treaty with Croatia signed today

Today, the Treaty of Accession with Croatia was signed at a special ceremony held in Brussels, in the margins of the European Council. The signing of the Treaty of Accession paves the way for the ratification procedures that will allow Croatia to become the 28th member of the European Union on 1 July 2013.

Croatia's accession will complete the sixth wave of enlargement in the Union's history. This represents an important further step on the path towards a wider Europe of peace, democracy, stability and prosperity.

Today's ceremony marks the completion of a long process of negotiations and preparations for accession which was launched by the European Council in Brussels in June 2004. Considerable efforts have been made by Croatia to bring its laws, regulatory frameworks and administrative practices into line with the *acquis* of the Union. The considerable task of drafting the Treaty of Accession in each of the 24 Treaty languages was finalised in November 2011.

At today's signing ceremony, speeches were delivered by Mr Herman VAN ROMPUY, President of the European Council, Mr Donald TUSK, Prime Minister - for the Polish Presidency, Mr Jerzy BUZEK, President of the European Parliament, Mr José Manuel BARROSO, President of the European Commission, and Mr Ivo JOSIPOVIC, President of the Republic of Croatia and Ms Jadranka KOSOR, Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia.

P R E S S

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The Treaty was signed by the Heads of State or Government of the 27 Member States and by the President of Croatia, Ivo JOSIPOVIC, and the Croatian Prime Minister Jadranka KOSOR.

With the signature of the Treaty, Croatia must now focus on its final preparations for membership and strengthen its efforts in order to be in a position to fully implement the *acquis* by 1 July 2013. The Union will follow this process closely. The respect by Croatia of its commitments undertaken in course of the negotiations is essential for the country to benefit fully from EU membership.

As of today, Croatia will participate as an active observer in the work of the Council and its preparatory bodies.
