

Croatia and the european union

[History](#)



Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, all protocol observed. Good Evening, I stand before you to challenge the necessity and importance of Croatia's incorporation into the European Union. This is because after the recent referendum in which sixty-six percent of Croatians acquiesced to the move, and hence the country is set to join the EU in 2013 (Birnbaum, 2012). My position is motivated by a variety of factors, all which direct me to assume that Croatia has more to lose in joining the union than it has to gain in the end. I aspire to demonstrate, alluding to current and retrospective social economic affairs, the ineffectuality of Croatia becoming the 28th state of the European Union. Thirty years ago, joining the European Union would have appeared to any non-member country as a quick ticket to financial stability. This was unjustified since by then, the EU countries had embodied a financial powerhouse with bustling trade and solid economies. However, the harsh reality today is that the member states of the EU have been and still are in financial quagmire with 17 of them being unable to extract themselves from the debt crisis leading to economies almost collapsing (Castle, 2012). Bearing these prevailing circumstances in mind, one has to ask him/herself: Does the EU have anything to offer new member states? If you allow for the fact that current member states such as Greece are dealing with failed economies, it is unequivocal that joining the EU for Croatia is akin to abandoning a boat to board a sinking ship. Then there are the impacts on the economy of Croatia practically on production of goods for export, with the inevitable lifting of the trade restrictions between it and the member states. Croatia's local products are likely to take a blow. It will most likely be forced to cut subsidies on industries such as shipbuilding, and due to the nature of the new market, it will be subjected to new regulations which

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formation it was not party to (Birnbbaum, 2012). According to the EU's 'myth busting page on Croatia's accession', the country will not be flooded with foreign goods due to the strictness of EU policies (Croatia and EU – Prejudices and Realities, n. d.). While this is true, it does not cover the fact that the regulations, which force all countries to produce the same quality goods, operate under the premises that every country can afford the required cost of production. Hence, while Croatia will be allowed a stall in the international market, it will have to compete with countries with higher production capacity. Croatia may not be able to export many of its products without attaining the required standards as such firms, which cannot afford this, will be muzzled out of the market by foreign ones. One cannot ignore the high poverty levels in Croatia either, as compared to many of the other EU nations due to poor education and unemployment among a considerable number of the citizens (Bejaković, n. d., p. 91). Opening Croatia for business may, hence, result in business opportunities seized by foreigners who have better knowledge, and the resources exploited by them, leaving the locals in poverty. The European Union has shown a propensity to interfere with Croatia's domestic affairs and this was evidenced in the EU's demands that war crime suspects be turned in to the Hague for prosecution before any negotiations about joining the union could commence (Wood, 2005). The then foreign minister described these terms as impossible since they had serious consequences based on the delicate internal politics surrounding the issues. If the initial negotiations were fraught with what one can only describe as bullying and strong arming tactics, Croatia should realize that that might portend the treatment it receives once it becomes a member state. Some of the citizens have been less than enthusiastic about the union which benefits

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some people believe are overstated. For instance, fishermen are worried that the accession will open the water to large Italian firms and small business owners with regulations from Brussels. Their fears while being played down by the EU are unjustified because recent entrants in the EU, such as Romania, Hungary and Bulgaria, have experienced similar problems (MacDowall, 2012). Ultimately, the main reason for a country to join the EU is the fact that it expects to reap positive benefits in not only the financial sector but also social and public ones, and the living standard of people (Bagic, n. d., p. 170). While admitting there are benefits to be reaped from the move, it is important that the people of Croatia take time to consider all the factors involved before the accession is finally carried out. What might appear to be a chance for economic reconstruction in the short run may end up leading to financial nightmares not unlike those being currently experienced by a majority of the EU member states. Furthermore, the effects on the local industries such as fishing and meat production may be more serious than advertised. As such, I find it a move carried out on shaky grounds, possibly because when Croatia began to try to get into the EU, it was very different from what it is now, and accession may bring in the long term more harm than good. Thank you.

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