

Integration maturity of Croatia (Summary)

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All the countries of the West-Balkan region are official candidate countries or potential candidate countries of the European Union. Among the region's states, Croatia excels in the implementation of the accession conditions. The aim of this study is to present Croatia's integration maturity beyond the accession procedure's status on the source of Tibor Palánkai's academic methodology. At the same time the concept of integration maturity includes the accession criteria and it points over it. The analysis of the maturity searches for the conditions of the effective and successful integration and the given state's ability to maximize the advantages and minimize the disadvantages and expenses coming from the accession. During its analysis we can distinguish between four dimensions: economic, social, political and institutional aspects.

In the course of the survey of the economic integration maturity we examine the following criteria: the functioning market economy; competitiveness; macro stability and stabilization; convergence; financeability and financing. After the examination of the criteria we can draw a conclusion that Croatia exceeds from the West-Balkan countries, converges to the level of development of the European Union, but the process of privatization goes slowly, Croatia has to ameliorate its competitiveness and business and investment environment, and its long-lasting deficit of external trade and its weak export performance give grounds for concern. About forty percent of the national property is in the hands of the state directly or indirectly. For being up to be a member of the European Union, the further reform of the administration and the court and the creation of a more flexible employment market are needed. We can find that the European Union's and Croatia's economic processes got into synch, and their trading connections are equally important for both sides.

In the political dimension of the analysis of integration maturity, the criteria of membership and the integration maturity are cannot be separated unambiguously. So we have to examine the fruition of the following conditions: the general predomination of democracy, the stability of democratic institutions, the functioning democratic institutions and the adequacy to the democratic principles. Because of this it is necessary to analyse the structure and working of the parliament and the executive power, the political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights. Last but not least the minority rights and minority protection cannot be set aside.

In the course of the survey of social dimension these main view-points can be emphasised: the situation of social conflicts, the social policy, the lift of the fragmenting social strata, the promotion of the representation of domestic minorities and support of the European Union accession. The institutional dimension basically means the implementation of the *acquis communautaire*. After the analysis of the political, institutional and social criteria it can be stated, that despite Croatia managed to achieve impressive improvement on these fields, it has to solve numerous problems in order to become a regular member of the European Union.

Achieving the membership, Croatia has to launch further reforms on the field of jurisdiction (the selecting process is not appropriate yet, the number of the remaining cases is high and the it takes too long time to close a case), struggle against corruption and organized crime and struggle for minority rights protection, and the case of the reception of the political refugees is not solved yet. Despite the human rights protection is widely guaranteed, several deficiencies can be identified in their execution and realization, the access to the jurisdiction is difficult yet, the staff of prisons is deficient. The creation of a professional, accountable and transparent civil service is needed to be done. There are problems with the freedom of media and the freedom of speech: for example more and more incidents happen to journalists who deal with rolling up corruption and organized crime cases. The judicial validation free of discrimination is not appropriate according to the European Union regulations. Besides it can give grounds for concern that the Croatian society supports the European membership less and less. However it can give confidence that on these fields continuous efforts are being taken and the Croatian economy policy constantly conduces to the improvement of the four dimensions of the integration maturity.

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