THE HEAD OF GOVERNMENTS COUNCIL

TOPIC: EU enlargement with the Balkans countries
President: Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic
Prime minister: Andrej Plenkovic

Keeping in mind

1. According to the European Commission, it is important to integrate the non-members states countries for a few reasons.
   a. First, it is important for the stability of the region in order to prevent conflict, to prevent the return of dictatorship and strengthen democratic reforms.
   b. Second, economically speaking as each countries that joined the European Union have experienced a bigger growth rate of the GDP compared to before to join it or compared to what they could expect without joining the EU. Integrating them will allow them to experience a better GDP and at the end it will have positive repercussions on all the continent in medium-long term.
   c. Third, if we do not accept them, Russia or China might take advantage of it and we might lose strategic partners.

2. Europe gave his word to North Macedonia that it will accept the country as the 28th member state (after Brexit). As a short reminder, this country made a lot of effort to improve their institutions, the democracy and they even changed their name in order to stop the Greek’s veto.

3. Taking into account the European Council Conclusions of October 2019, where European leaders reverted the discussion on the opening of the accession negotiations with Albania and the Republic of North Macedonia to the EU-Western Balkans Summit in Zagreb (May 2020).

4. Reiterating the recommendation of the European Commission to open accession negotiations with Albania and the Republic of North Macedonia after their implementation of the Copenhagen Criteria and the conditions established in the Stabilization and Association Process (SAP).

5. Reminding all member states of their affirmed determination to fully support the European perspective of the Western Balkan countries at the European Council Meeting in Thessaloniki in 2003 as well as of their confirmation in 2006 that the future of the Western Balkans lies in the European Union.

6. Emphasizing the strategic importance of the Western Balkans for the European Union in terms of internal and external security (Frontex) as well as credibility in its Neighborhood.
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7. Considering the “Non-Paper for reforming the European Union accession process’ and the accompanying suggestions of the Republic of France as well as the subsequent Non-Paper of Austria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland and Slovenia.

The Croatian’s Presidency, the European Commission and other member states considers that the European Union will not be complete until the Western Balkan countries will be part of it. Therefore, the head of government of Croatia suggest the following proposals towards the enlargement of the European Union:

1. Starting the process of integration of the Republic of North Macedonia:
   a. Opening immediately the phase of “accession negotiation”.
   b. Helping the new “pre-member” towards the implementation strategies of reforming the country.

2. Starting the process of integration of the Republic of Albania:
   a. Opening immediately the phase of “accession negotiation”.
   b. Helping the new “pre-member” towards the implementation strategies of reforming the country.

3. Pursuing the process of negotiation with Serbia and Montenegro:
   a. The European Commission proposed on his report of the 6th February 2018 to integrate them around 2025. We propose to strengthen the relationships between these two countries and the European Union and to help them as much as needed to reform their nations in order to respect this deadline for their integration or for the latest 2030.

4. Strengthening the relation between the EU and Bosnia and Herzegovina:
   a. Since 2003, this country is officially recognized as a potential future member state. Consequently, we recommend to strengthen the relationship with Bosnia and Herzegovina towards obtaining this objective.

5. Strengthening the relation between the EU and Kosovo.
a. Since 2008, this country is officially recognized as a potential future member state. Consequently, we recommend to strengthen the relationship with Kosovo towards obtaining this objective (keeping in mind the difficulties with Serbia). The head of government of Croatia also proposes to review and potentially reform the existing accession process without obstructing the current accession negotiation with Western Balkan countries.

1. To modify the current existing process governed by the article 49 of the European Union Treaty consisting of 35 chapters, laid out in 7 phases (justice, security, education, agriculture, employment, external affairs, etc - to define).

2. To add the possibility of stopping the procedure right away if the candidate does not take the necessary steps towards reforming the country in accordance with the criteria of the European Union.
THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COUNCIL (FAC)

TOPIC: Enhancing Defence and Security Policy

Gordan Grlić-Radman, Foreign Affairs Minister, Croatia

Keeping in mind that:

1. We shall no forget that EU was created as war preventing organization (European Coal and Steel Community 1951). Nowadays a lot has been changed and European countries come mostly towards economic closeness. However, some steps were made towards Defence closeness as well.

2. Since the EU Global Strategy was launched in 2016, the military aspect of the EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) enabled the Union to take a leading role in peace-keeping operations, conflict prevention and in the strengthening of the international security. It is an integral part of the EU’s comprehensive approach towards crisis management, drawing on civilian and military assets. Although, it is not so fruitful as it was expected. As CSDP mission has to be made by unanimity, many Member States have been reluctant to participate in the civilian CSDP missions due to the lack of a shared strategic vision (and political will) for the deployment of CSDP missions. In practice, this means that an operation can hardly be launched and run if it is not supported by at least a few member states that are ready to put their political weight behind it – and provide the human and financial resources to make the operation happen.

3. Under CSDP several new initiatives were enhanced such as European Defence Fund (EDF), Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) and the most distinguished Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO). Launched in December 2017 and originally outlined within the Lisbon Treaty, in Articles 42 (6) and “structured cooperation” of Art 46, “Sleeping Beauty of the Lisbon Treaty” (June 2017, Juncker) has been established as a tool to increase European defence cooperation. Being under constant monitor, PESCO has reached 47 projects contributing to CSDP. However, there are some pitfalls that could provide the programme to yield no tangible results such as the absence of a shared strategic vision (when and why to launch new missions) results in slower decision-making and etc.

4. Nowadays, NATO plays important role in military decisions taken by EU they are linked to NATO’s position. Moreover, Donald Trump is insisting on increasing contributions by EU Member States and the policy of US is more distant from the EU. In the result, uncertainty in the transatlantic security partnership has convinced the Europeans that they need to be more responsible for their own security.

5. The UK has mainly been creating barriers regarding defence cooperation inside the Union. However, now when Brexit means that a key veto player on CSDP matters is leaving the EU stage. It has given the opportunity to deeper and further defence integration in the EU.

6. World security and peace is not so stable with Syrian conflict situation which lasts more than 8 years, creating tensions in the region and posing refugees crisis, giving rise for terrorist organization, it is a wakeup call for Europe to reinforce its Defence
and Security Policy and implement its and create its independent Army that can provide the presence of the EU as a political block.

7. According to the survey 70% of European citizens do not feel secure anymore ¹. Since 1999 more than 70% of EU citizens support the idea for a common defence and security policy²

These all aspects showed that the Union should take more responsibility of its own security and defence and should take an opportunity to enhance the EU role as political player and in order to do so Europe should go towards reinforcement of its Defence strategy and Army creation in a future.

The FAC Council Presidency Team of Croatia brings forward the following proposals in regard to enhancing Defence and Security Policy by:

1. Strengthen common decision-making capacity within CSDP
   a. To use qualified majority in CSDP voting procedure in order to boost decision-making process (crisis management, stabilization, counter-terrorism, etc). The decision-making framework needs to be solid and legitimate
   b. To make a priority to strengthening the links between external and internal security. These parts are increasingly important in the EU’s crisis management architecture and the challenges of hybrid threats, terrorism and irregular migration.

2. Bolster PESCO initiatives
   a. Increase defence expenditures under PESCO reinforcement up to 4% of GDP
   b. To indicate the deadlines for project. Examining the timelines of each PESCO project potentially reveals a great deal about PESCO’s implementation. Consolidated timelines indicate commitment to delivering the project.
   c. To decrease capability gaps between participants. Some participating Member States admitted, their projects do not meet the high impact capability goals set by the EU. Participating member states and EU institutions should first agree to clearly prioritize and develop those projects that focus on capability gaps
   d. To strengthen European industrial defence autonomy.

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3. To open new niche security markets for Participating MS. It accelerates the production on military equipment within EU

4. Create a roadmap for capacity building. The Europeans must carry out their defence research together or, at the very least, in coordination with each other. The European states would also have to develop and acquire their military equipment jointly.

5. Reinforce EDF
   a. Increasing the levels of cross-border collaboration by creating networking research agencies and organisations or a dedicated agency with the resources to ensure the coherence and effectiveness of efforts expended on technological research and development. This agency would be responsible for establishing a strategic research agenda for the EU

6. Common EU army creation
   a. Expenditures are covered by PESCO funds as well as EDF
   b. Military troops creation on permanent base including air, naval and ground combat forces
   c. Training military bases creation across Europe
   d. Creation of a common command centre with the decisions taking by qualified majority and chaired by the Member state Defence Minister rotating every 6 months
TOPIC: Reforming the Member States participation to EU budget – for a fair budgetary reform.

Keeping in mind:

1. That the EU 2021-2027 budget has to be voted these coming days, and agreed by all EU Member states;

2. That the European Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen has pushed governments to consent to a bigger 2021-2027 budget despite her concerns about severe cuts from the Commission’s budget proposal suggested by the Finnish presidency of the Council of the EU (reducing the overall budget size by €47 billion compared to the Commission’s proposal);

3. That the increase in the 2021-2027 EU budget is needed to implement new programs such as the planned European Green Deal;

4. That these last weeks, Germany and other EU Member states have shown their dissatisfaction regarding the new plan of participation of Member states to the EU budget (growing participation for Germany or Netherlands, who will have to make up for the UK’s participation after Brexit);

5. That the increase of EU Member states participation would reach 1.06% of their GNI instead of 1% today;

6. That some countries are strongly against this reform (Germany would have to double the amount of its participation, while the Netherlands will have to face an increase of nearly 75% of their current participation – from €7.5 billion in 2020 to €13 billions in 2027);

7. That the dissatisfaction comes mostly from the “frugal five” countries (Austria, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden) which benefit from prized rebates and are asking for a pot no larger than 1% of their GNI, even if they are part of the wealthiest Member states;

Obviously the plan for Member states participation to EU budget is facing some opponents. The Croatian government agrees on the fact that a reform is needed to face budgetary effects of the Brexit, but also to face future EU challenges – such as the European Green Deal, the improvement of the EU’s border agency, research for the defence of the digital. However, the increase of the EU budget has to be fair for each and every Member state. The increase in participation can definitely not be the same for Germany and for Malta.
Therefore, the Croatian economic and finance minister proposes;

1. The implementation of a “step by step” EU 2021-2027 budget reform: the increasing participation of Member states in the EU budget must not be too high;

   a. Member states must be able to bear the growing participation in EU budget, this is why Croatia proposes the creation of a European Supervision and Advisory Board (ESAB). This institution would allow to follow and check the respect of each Member state participation, but also budgetary capacities of EU Member states to fund the EU budget.

2. The implementation of a fair participation to EU budget:

   a. The participation of Member states to the EU budget has to be adapted to Member states budget. Based on their GNI, Member states participation has to take into account budgetary and economic situation of participating countries;

   b. Croatia proposes to “abolish” the 1% limit and ask the European Supervision and Advisory Board to establish a fair percentage of participation (country specific participation);

3. To grant prize rebates to countries which really need it such as Member states facing financial or budgetary issues:

   a. The European Supervision and Advisory Board would determine which countries would need prize rebates (based on their economic and budgetary situation (GNI))
HEADS OF GOVERNMENT/COUNCIL OF THE EU

MAJOR AGENDA ITEMS

COREPER II

TOPIC: Handling the single-use plastics issue and promoting the concept of circular economy

Keeping in mind:

1. That the European Union is already a key player in taking environmental measures and implementing laws to promote the prolongation of certain products’ life cycle by recycling them.
2. That the recent political campaigns for the European Parliament has generated and revealed a very strong interest on the part of the European population for the importance of environmental measures and sustainable development.
3. That some areas have developed a very performant waste recycling system. Taiwan for instance, has 13 different waste sorting categories (glass, paper, general batteries, iron containers, aluminum containers, pesticides, lead batteries, tires, lights, appliances and motor vehicles) and managed to persuade the population to make waste sorting and recycling a daily civil duty. They apply what is called a “never letting the garbage stay on the ground”.
4. That in January 2018, China has decided to ban most imports of plastic waste, the latter being, until 2018, the world’s largest waste importer. Before China’s ban, only 9 percent of discarded plastic was being recycled, while 12 percent was burned. The rest was buried in landfills or left to wash into rivers and oceans.
5. That in 2018, the European Union adopted a directive to ban some single-use plastic products (such as straws) : (EU) 2018/851 and intend to make more of an effort to limit the impact of plastic on natural habitats. This directive will enter into force in 2021.
6. That the EU has recently voted on the EU 2020 budget (November 2019) and engaged itself to have at least 20% spent on environmental measures. Moreover, additional funds will be granted to the LIFE programme, which will receive €590 millions.

The Croatian COREPER brings forward the following proposals in regards to promoting circular economy in the European Union as well as upgrading products life cycle in order for the EU to become the world “green leader”:

1. Accordingly to the directive (EU) 2018/851, which adopted measures to ban certain single use plastic products and reduce the impact of single-use plastic on the environment and natural habitats;
   a. Raise awareness among the European population on the repercussion of plastic products on natural habitats and the environment :
      i. Set up a communication campaign to propose sustainable good practices to households for their everyday life
      ii. Imitate successful recycling models such as the Taiwanese system so that recycling and waste sorting become automatic and a willful act from the population side
iii. Create a cohesive, common recycling EU framework by 2025

b. Encourage research and development in this area to treat plastics that have already been produced:

i. Develop a common research program financed by the EU that involves every member state in order to take a step further in the development of biodegradable bioplastics and the transformation of plastic into compost

ii. Enforcing the “Climate action, environment, resource efficiency and raw materials” Horizon 2020 strategy, the recycling process of plastic products must be analyzed in order to point out the most costly products in terms of CO2 rejection in the atmosphere during the recycling process

c. Implementing international standards:

i. Once the mechanical properties of plastic products are understood, the plastic products for which recycling is pointless should be banned from the intra EU trade and from exports of the European Union to other continents

ii. Introduce a tax on landfill of waste for European countries (on domestic waste only)

iii. Ban the import of waste intended for landfill on the EU soil