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European Union - CARDS programme for Croatia

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Croatia as a candidate country benefits from all three pre-accession financial instruments: **Phare** for institution building and economic and social cohesion, **ISPA** for environment and transport infrastructures, and **SAPARD** for agricultural and rural development. Croatia also remains eligible for **CARDS Regional Programme** in 2005 and 2006. Pre-accession financing will amount to €105 million in 2005 (Phare 80, ISPA 25 million) and €140 million in 2006 (Phare 80, ISPA 35, SAPARD 25 million), which represents a substantial increase in overall EC assistance compared to the amounts foreseen under CARDS for 2005 (€60 million) and 2006 (€62 million).

The **European Partnership**, adopted by the Council on 13 September 2004 and based on the findings of the EC Opinion on Croatia's application for membership identifies short and medium term priorities that the Croatian authorities agreed to recognise as key areas for EU pre-accession financial assistance for 2005.

An overall amount of €257 million was allocated to Croatia in the CARDS programme between 2001 and 2004. The main priorities covered were:

- Return of refugees, sustainable development in return areas, reconstruction and civil society development (€74.70 million/29.3% of the total);
- Trade, investment climate, social cohesion including TEMPUS (€68.85 mil/27%);
- Reform of the judiciary and police, migration and asylum, integrated border management, fight against organised crime (€57.95 mil/22.6%);
- Public administration reform, regional and local development, public finance (€41 mil/16.3%);
- Environment approximation, institution strengthening, monitoring and planning, investment preparation (€12.50 mil/4.8%).

A total of **28 twinning** tenders and contracts worth €23 million are at the moment being implemented in Croatia.



CARDS 2002

Strengthening sanitary inspection



A project implemented by the
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland

Strengthening Sanitary Inspection

Support to a more efficient functioning of the Croatian sanitary control system

Twinning concept

The “Twinning” concept has been developed by the European Commission in the enlargement context for Candidate Countries to assist them in developing structures, human resources and management skills needed to implement the *acquis communautaire*.

A Twinning project is not a one-way delivery of technical assistance from an EU Member State to a Partner Country. It is a joint project covering a process in which each partner takes on responsibilities.

In the present, now closing Twinning project Croatia has committed itself to undertaking and funding reforms, and Finland to providing assistance in the process. Being the co-author of the Twinning Work Plan, Croatia has made a formal commitment to carrying out tasks that will enable the Croatian Ministry of Health and Social Welfare to improve its system of sanitary control.

Objectives of the project

The overall purpose of this operation has been to enhance the efficiency of the Croatian sanitary control system and support its development in line with EU legislation and best practices.

The overall objective of this operation has been to assist Croatia in strengthening the capacity of sanitary inspection (SI) through four main areas of activities:

- Increasing the capacity, and thus the efficiency, of the SI in order to increase the safety of consumers in relation to public health risks and hazards;
- Harmonising Croatian legislation with relevant EU legislation dealing with objects in close contact with food and objects of common use;
- Enhancing the efficiency of information channels (RASFF, CID) related to food, objects in close contact with food and objects of common use, as well as the methods of collecting and distributing information related to the same areas;

- Enhancing the efficiency of the laboratory network and introducing relevant laboratory methods.

Key partners

- Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of the Republic of Croatia
- Croatian State Administration Offices
- Croatian Institute of Public Health

Project duration and implementation

This project, with a total value of € 525,000, financed under the CARDS 2002 Programme, has lasted a total of 18 months, from 28 February 2005 to 31 August 2006.

The project has been implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland.

The expert team has consisted of one long term international expert (Resident Twinning Adviser), one long term local expert and a pool of short-term international and local experts.

Main results

The *Strategy for Strengthening Sanitary Inspection in Croatia* has been drafted and was adopted by the MHSW on 10 March 2006, comprising four sub-strategies which cover all four project areas:

- **Substrategy I** for the reorganisation of sanitary inspection, where the SI shall be strengthened within the State Administration Offices, as shall be its connections with the MHSW, for the purpose of creating a well-resourced SI system in line with the EU legislation, relating to foodstuffs of non-animal origin, materials and articles in contact with food and objects of common use;

- **Substrategy II**

- a) for the harmonisation of legislation regarding materials and articles in close contact with food and objects of common use, where a high level of consumer protection shall be achieved and free movement of the above mentioned items in the internal market facilitated,

- b) for legislative amendments proposed under other components of the project, where the work and results of other components of the Strategy shall be implemented by amending the Croatian national legislation accordingly;

- **Substrategy III** for establishing effective RASFF, CID and IT network for the purposes of the SI, where an efficient exchange of information among all the relevant services included in the sanitary control, as well as between the SI authorities and the public shall be facilitated;

- **Substrategy IV** for upgrading the laboratory network for the purposes of the SI, where this network of laboratories that carry out the analyses for the official control of the safety of food, water and objects of common use shall be optimised in support to the SI.

Training:

- A study visit to Finland has been carried out where the Croatian representatives visited the relevant Finnish institutions for the purpose of acquainting themselves with the Finnish model of sanitary control;
- A two-day training seminar for sanitary inspectors and laboratory experts has been carried out with Finnish lecturers, on topics previously chosen by the Croatian sanitary inspectors according to their needs;
- A future annual training plan has been drafted for the MHSW to provide the necessary education to all the relevant services included in the sanitary control