



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL
THE PRESIDENT**



Brussels, 22 January 2012
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PRESSE 19
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**Joint statement by European Council President Van Rompuy and
European Commission President Barroso
on the EU accession referendum in Croatia**

We welcome the positive outcome of the referendum on Croatia's accession to the European Union. With this vote, Croatia's citizens have given their endorsement to European integration. We congratulate Croatia and its people on their choice: EU membership will open up new opportunities for them and help secure the stability and prosperity of their nation.

With this popular mandate, the Croatian government can now complete the remaining preparations for membership. We are looking forward to a smooth ratification process by the Croatian Parliament as well as by the Parliaments of all EU Member States, so that Croatia can become the Union's 28th member on 1 July 2013.

The upcoming accession of Croatia sends a clear signal to the whole region of South Eastern Europe. It shows that through political courage and determined reforms, EU membership is within reach. Today's positive vote is therefore good news for Croatia, good news for the region, and good news for Europe."

P R E S S

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