

CROATIA

Polity5 regime codes:

fac	scode	polity	pers	bmon	bday	byear	emon	eday	eyear	exec	exconst	polcomp
1X	CRO	-3	4	6	25	1991	11	11	1995	3	3	6
1O	CRO	-5	4	11	12	1995	11	25	1999	3	3	3
1Oa	CRO	-88	1	11	26	1999	11	8	2000	-88	-88	-88
1Ob	CRO	8	4	11	9	2000	1	1	2005	7	7	9
1Oc	CRO	9	14	1	2	2005	99	99	9999	8	7	9

PITF Problem Events:

- 1) 06/91-12/95 (ETH 06/91-12/95)

1X) Date of Change to Factional-Autocratic: June 25, 1991 (independence)

Brief Explanation of Change To:

Croatia and Slovenia seceded from the republic on June 25, 1991, after the Communist leaders failed to reach a solution to preserve Yugoslavia. Concurrently with its declaration of independence from the Yugoslav federation, Croatia faced a forceful attempt by Serb-dominated Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) to prevent its secession. On December 23, 1991, Germany became the first state to accord recognition to independent Croatia; this was followed on January 15, 1992, with general recognition by the European Union.

Identify Main Factions:

- *Croatian nationalists* — Disarray within the long dominant communist party enabled the rise of Croatian nationalism in opposition to the political hegemony of the communist party. Nationalism was promoted mainly by the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), which dominated Croatian politics from the first free elections in 1990 to the elections in January 2000 under the leadership of ultra-nationalist Franjo Tudjman. President Tudjman's support for Croatian irredentism in Bosnia ignited factionalism within the HDZ and led to a split in April 1994 whereby a faction led by moderate Prime Minister Stipe Mesic left the party and formed a new party.
- *Opposition* — Although the communist party had originally endorsed the opening of party politics at their party congress in December 1989, they were unprepared for the speed with which Croatian nationalism took hold in Croatia. In the republic's first multiparty elections, held on April 22 and May 6-7, 1990, the HDZ won nearly 60% of the legislative seats (205 of 356) with the Communists winning only 75 seats; by 1992, the communists were no longer a political factor. Opposition to the HDZ remained fragmented through Tudjman's reign.
- *Ethnic-Serbs* — In reaction to the swift rise of Croatian nationalism, ethnic-Serbs began to assert themselves and call for greater autonomy in regions where they were a majority of the local population, principally in Krajina and Slavonia. Ethnic-Serbs boycotted 1992 elections en masse. Croatian military offensives launched against Western Slavonia in early May 1995 and against Krajina on August 4, 1995, quickly succeeded in driving the majority of the Serb population across the border into Serb-controlled areas of Bosnia and Serbia proper.

Ethnic War: June 1991 – December 1995

Ethnic Serbs in eastern Croatia and Krajina began to assert themselves in 1991 following Croatian independence, fighting the Croat government for autonomy. UN peacekeeping forces checked much of the fighting in 1992, and in August 1995 the Croatian military launched military offensives that successfully drove the majority of the Serbian population across the border into Bosnia and Serbia. Fighting was effectively ended by December 1995.

10) Date of Change from Factional-Autocratic: November 12, 1995 (agreement to end military campaign and reintegrate former Serb-controlled areas)

Brief Explanation of Change From:

President Tudjman and the HDZ consolidated their control over the Croatian government with the successful completion of the military offensive to reassert central authority over the Serb-controlled regions of Krajina and Slavonia. By the time of the November 12, 1995, agreement with Serbs remaining in Eastern Slavonia, the majority of the ethnic-Serb population of Croatia had fled the country and the HDZ had, in large part, succeeded in intimidating, and silencing, the Croatian opposition.

Changes within Stabilization/Democratic-Consolidation Period:

10a) November 26, 1999 (leadership change) – After a long period of ill health President Franjo Tudjman fell gravely ill and executive power was transferred temporarily on November 26, 1999, to Speaker of the Parliament Vlatko Pavletic of Tudjman's ruling HDZ. Tudjman died on December 10, 1999, leaving Pavletic in power and initiating a transitional regime moving away from a strong presidential system to a mixed presidential-parliamentary system. New legislative elections were held on January 4, 2000, which were subsequently won by the opposition Croatian Social Liberal Party (HSCS). Pavletic was replaced as acting president by Zlatko Tomcic, Speaker of the Parliament after the January 4 elections. On February 18, 2000, Stjepan Mesic, who had resigned earlier from the ruling HDZ and formed his own party, defeated the HSCS candidate Drazen Budisa in a runoff ballot.

10b) November 9, 2000 (constitutional amendments) – On November 9, 2000, the Croatian National Assembly approved amendments to the Constitution that effectively transformed the government into a mixed presidential-parliamentary democracy as had been agreed among the parties upon Tudjman's death. Specifically, the new constitution dramatically reduced the powers of the presidency, increased the powers and independence of the prime minister and the Constitutional Court, and returned the legislature to a unicameral body. These amendments completed the democratic transition that began in late 1999.

10c) January 2, 2005 (presidential election) – On January 2, 2005, the country held the first round of voting for its second presidential election in the post-Tudjman period. Incumbent President Mesic won the first round with 49% of the vote, and handily won the second round with 66% of the vote. This election was held to be free, fair and openly competitive by outside observers. Some coercion by nationalists who rejected the international community's prosecution of Croatian militants for war crimes continued to plague conventional politics.