

## **Croatia**

Vanderbilt

After its independence in 1992, Croatia is not considered a democratic country until 1999, based on our coding rules. However, Cheibub et al. consider it a mixed regime starting at independence.

Croatia was part of Yugoslavia until 1991, when Slovenia and Croatia followed the path of independence. Before its independence, there were elections in 1990, in which the Croatian Democratic Community's (HDZ) candidate, Franjo Tudjman won the presidency. In May 1991, there was a referendum to decide the question of independence, and with the results in favor of the independency option. In June 1991 Croatia declared its independence, but it was not accepted directly by Yugoslavia. The international community, for the most part, did not accept the declaration of independence either, until January 1992, when Germany recognized Croatian and Slovenian independence, and was followed soon by the rest of the EU countries. As such, Tudjman became the first president of the new Croatian state.

However, in 1999 Tudjman was struck with cancer, and the Croatian Parliament proclaimed the temporarily incapacity of the president. As a result, in November 1999 Vlatko Pavletic assumed office as acting president (Malovic and Selnow 2001, 98; Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations: Europe 2001, 106) until new elections could be held, scheduled for January 2000. The change from Tudjman to Pavletic is not a SOLS because the latter was a provisional ruler.

In said election, a coalition involving the Social Democratic Party (SDP), the Croatian Social-Liberal Party (CSLP) and some regional groups gained the largest share in the Parliament. SDP leader Ivica Racan was appointed as Prime Minister, and Zlatko Tomcic of the Croatian Peasants' Party assumed the role of acting head of state (A Political Chronology of Europe 2001, p. 75 and Norris 2006, p. 1600). In the second presidential round, Stjepan Mesic, running as an independent, won 56% of the votes and became president on February 2000. Mesic stayed in office until 2008. The change from Pavletic to Tomcic is not a SOLS change because both were provisional rulers. The change from Tomcic to Mesic, however, is a SOLS change because Mesic belonged to a different party than Tudjman. Mesic continued as president of Croatia throughout the remainder of our time frame.

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