

Croatia

Rice

After the dissolution of Yugoslavia in 1990, Croatia gained its independence. The new Croatian government was a mixed system with both a President and a Prime Minister. In this case, the President is the head of state, and he/she appoints the Prime Minister. Therefore, SOLS changes will be coded in relation to the changes in the presidency.

The war between the Croats and the Serbs lasted until 1995, punctuated by several ceasefire agreements. However, the first presidential elections in Croatia were held upon independence in 1990. Franjo Tudjman, a Croatian nationalist and founder of the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), won the elections and remained in office until his death in 1999.

Tudjman, who was suffering from cancer, fell into a coma on November 22, 1999. His advisers, stating that he was suffering from a minor illness, authorized the parliament to turn over executive power to Vlatko Pavletic, the speaker of Parliament. Pavletic was also a member of HDZ, and remained as Acting President after Tudjman's death on December 10th. On February 2, 2000, new parliamentary elections were held and HDZ lost the majority. Instead, a new coalition government was formed, comprised of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), the Croatian Social Liberal Party (HNLS), with some smaller parties. At that point, the role of Acting President fell to the new Speaker of Parliament, Zlatko Tomcic, who served in this role until February 18, 2000. Due to both the short duration of his time in office, and the fact that Tomcic was serving only until elections could be held to select a new President, we have chosen not to code his time in office as a SOLS change.

When elections were held, Stjepan "Stipe" Mesic, a former member of the HDZ who no longer affiliated himself with any party, was elected President. Even though Mesic was a protégée of Tudjman, we have chosen to code his election as a SOLS change for two reasons. Firstly, Mesic ran against an HDZ candidate in the presidential elections (therefore he was not the chosen candidate of his predecessor's party). Second, Mesic was seen to be as "different from his old mentor as could be imagined" (Tanner, 309). Mesic enjoyed the support of the West, while Tudjman did not, and Mesic also worked to reduce the power of the presidency (Tudjman had become increasingly authoritarian as his time in office progressed) (Tanner, 308-310). Mesic was in office until February 2010, having won reelection in 2005.

References

Tanner, Marcus. *Croatia: A Nation Forged in War*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001.

United States Department of State. "Country Background Note: Croatia". Last edited 22 September 2009. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3166.htm>

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