

CROATIA: ECOLOGICAL AND FISHERIES PROTECTION ZONE. EU SAYS NO



From the 1st January 2008 Croatia proclaimed “Ecological and Fisheries Protection Zone” in the Adriatic sea.

Croatian Authority prohibited the access to the fishing boats which are not showing a Croatian flag.

Croatia aims at joining the EU by 2010, and the “Ecological and Fisheries Protection Zone” might be an obstacle. EU Commissioner Olli Rehn states that to find a solution is of primary importance .

On 18th February 2008 the European Union asked Croatia not to apply to any of the member states the prohibition imposed by the Ecological and Fisheries Protection Zone which Zagreb has established off its coasts. According to the conclusions of the Council of Foreign Ministers, Croatia "has to respect completely the agreement of June 4, 2004", or the one which allows to the states which are on the Adriatic Sea to continue fishing in the waters protected by the ecological zone.

The candidate state, despite the numerous appeals of the European Commission and the threats of veto of Slovenia and Italy to block the next chapters of the accession talks, did not give up its intention to apply all the regulations of the ecological protection zone, therefore including the ban on fishing.

With that decision, the question which so far has concerned only Croatia, Slovenia and Italy, falls into the EU domain which asked officially Zagreb "to respect its obligations".

The EU gave a mandate to the Commission to seek a definitive solution to the problem together with the Croatian authorities.