



**REPUBLIC OF CROATIA**

**WORKING SESSION 17  
DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS**

**RIGHT OF REPLY**

**Response of the Croatian Delegation to the statement by GONG representative**

**Warsaw, 8 October 2009**

Croatia has joined the EU statement and I would like to reconfirm the importance Croatian government attaches to full respect of the fundamental principle of free and fair elections. Respect of this principle at national level has been confirmed also by positive assessment by the OSCE/ODIHR observers following the last parliamentary election in Croatia in 2007.

In respect of the remarks made on Croatian 2009 local elections, I would like to recall Ambassador Lenarčić introductory statement that there is no such thing as perfect elections. It is indeed a work in progress, but in this process we should distinguish major structural problems from sporadic implementation difficulties. It is crucial that the appropriate safeguards are set that allow for the shortcomings to be identified and addressed. Good electoral legislation is prerequisite in this process and I would like to underline that Croatian laws on local elections have been drafted in line with international advice, including Council of Europe Venice Commission.

Close scrutiny of the elections by the civil society is another safeguard of democratic and transparent elections. In this respect, today's statement by GONG representative clearly manifests a close look civil society has in Croatian electoral process, that we believe will result in constructive cooperation in further advancement of the process.