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## Croatia

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### **Elections Slated for November 8 and Agro-Food Sector Promises**

**Report Categories:**

Agriculture in the News

Agricultural Situation

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**Report Highlights:**

On October 22, Croatia officially started its parliamentary elections campaign which will finish on November 8, Election Day. However, the pre-campaign process has already been in full swing for a few months now. This report gives a readout of statements by the various political parties on their plans for the agricultural sector.

## **General Information:**

On October 22, Croatia officially started its parliamentary elections campaign which will finish on November 8, Election Day. However, the pre-campaign process has already been in full swing for a few months now. This report gives a readout of statements by the various political parties on their plans for the agricultural sector.

The Croatian Democratic Alliance of Slavonia and Baranja (Hrvatski Demokratski Savez Slavonije i Baranje, HDSSB) was one of the first to announce the name of its candidate for Agriculture Minister (Zeljko Kraljicko). HDSSB's prospective agro-food policy includes: legalizing current illegal agricultural structures for only HRK 1 (\$0.15) and effectively free paying only a nominal fee per structure to enable 550,000 farms to apply for EU funding; prioritizing small family farms in tender procedures for state owned land; reducing lease prices for state owned land; and, reducing the current 25% VAT on food to a yet to be determined level. This provoked the ruling coalition, led by the Social Democratic Party (Socijalno Demokratska Partija, SDP), to announce its desire to decrease the VAT from 25% to 13% on the food products in which Croatia is more or less self-sufficient (i.e. fresh fish, some fruits and vegetables, eggs, and honey). Less than two years ago the SDP claimed that decreasing the VAT on food would be too costly for the State Budget.

The Croatian Democratic Union (Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica – HDZ), the strongest opponent to the ruling coalition, declared it will: improve rural living conditions; support development of new family farms and cooperatives; reprogram current agricultural loans; support rural tourism by creating favorable business conditions (less stringent minimum technical requirements for restaurants, etc); deepen/develop the ties between the scientific community and farms; steer agricultural development through better management of agricultural subsidies, etc.