

Croatian deputy prime minister's visit

Croatia continues developing friendly relations worldwide

Mira Martinec
AMBASSADOR OF CROATIA

Today, the Deputy Prime Minister for Home, Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia Neven Mimica will start his visit to Japan.



First on the agenda is participation at an international event of key importance, the Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan on July 8. As a dedicated member of the international community that is making efforts to find a durable solution for sustainable development of post-2014 Afghanistan, Croatia is determined to contribute, in cooperation with like-minded partners from around the globe, to bringing stability and prosperity to this vital region of the world.

ister Mimica will hold a press conference at the Japan National Press Club, where he will talk about Croatian accession to the European Union and global challenges.

With the Dec. 9 signing of the Treaty Concerning the Accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union, Croatia has successfully closed one important chapter of its history. The date set for Croatia's accession to the EU is July 1, 2013, after the parliament ratifications of the treaty by all the member states and Croatia. One of the tasks that lie before us now is doing our best to share the valuable experience gained in our accession process with our neighbors from southeastern Europe that are also aspiring to EU membership. As the soon-to-be newest member of the EU family, Croatia is keen on playing its part and contributing to this joint endeavor, as well as in all the future common challenges.

On July 9, Deputy Prime Min-



Nature: Located in the mountainous karst area, Plitvice Lakes National Park is one of Croatia's major tourist destinations and a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1979. CROATIAN NATIONAL TOURIST BOARD



Deputy Prime Minister of Croatia Neven Mimica

Brief profile of Neven Mimica, deputy prime minister of the Republic of Croatia

Neven Mimica is the deputy prime minister for home, foreign and European affairs of the Republic of Croatia.

Born in Split, Croatia, on Oct. 12, 1953, he is married, with two children.

After obtaining his bachelor's degree in 1976, Mimica earned his master's degree from the Faculty of Economics at the University of Zagreb in 1987.

After a brief career in business, he soon entered the public service sector, where he dealt primarily with foreign affairs and trade issues, working for the Committee for Foreign Relations of Croatia, which was then a republic of the former federal state of Yugoslavia. He also spent four years as an economic adviser at the Embassy of Yugoslavia in Egypt.

After the breakup of Yugoslavia in 1991, he remained in the civil service sector, continuing his career at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Croatia and holding top diplomatic positions at Croatian Embassies in Cairo and Ankara. During the 1990s, he was also an assistant minister of trade in charge of the foreign trade sector, as well as an assistant minister of economic affairs in charge of international economic relations.

In 2000 and 2001, he served as the chief negotiator of the Republic of Croatia on the Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union, and after this post he was appointed minister for European integration, a position he

held for the next two years. Beginning in 2004, he was first elected to the parliament of the Republic of Croatia, where he held the post of chairman of the European Integration Committee. He was re-elected to parliament in 2008 and appointed deputy speaker and chairman of the European Integration Committee.

During his professional career, Mimica also held the post of chief negotiator of the Croatian government on the admission of the Republic of Croatia to the World Trade Organization, as well as the Chief negotiator of the Croatian government on entering the free trade agreement with the CEFTA (Central European Free Trade Agreement) member states.

Croatia to become the newest European Union member in 2013

Takako Ueta
PROFESSOR, INTERNATIONAL
CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY, FORMER
AMBASSADOR, DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE
MISSION OF JAPAN TO THE EU

Croatia is expected to become a member of the European Union in July 2013, 10 years after the submission of its application. The EU is a supra-national institution that pools certain parts of the sovereignty of its member states



and is not just an association of nations. This is why it took about six years to complete accession negotiations.

Ambassador Mira Martinec kindly accepted to come to my university and give a lecture on the accession process last February. Students understood that it is an in-depth reform of the whole state structure.

European integration is not fragile enough to fall apart because of the current euro crisis. It will overcome the crisis. It is impossible for a country in Europe to cease being an EU member due to economic and political

reasons. When Croatia becomes a member, it will expect more investment and will enjoy being in the EU single market, both of which will be economically beneficial.

Politically, it may be more important to be part of the EU since the EU is the solution to overcoming ethnic conflicts. The EU has made internal borders in the EU irrelevant and transparent. Free movement of people surely eases ethnic tensions.

In the midst of NATO bombing against Serbia in 1999, I was asked to participate in a panel in Tokyo. I said then that

the EU should be the solution to conflicts in the region. The coordinator was surprised and said that would be a dream. The dream has come true. Slovenia has been an EU member since 2004. Serbia, Montenegro and other countries are on their way to joining the EU.

The membership of Croatia is a significant milestone. Formerly part of the Habsburg Empire, rich in history and natural beauty, Croatia has already attracted many tourists, and it will certainly develop its potential and economic growth thanks to its upcoming EU membership.

Heartiest Welcome
to His Excellency Neven Mimica,
Deputy Prime Minister of the
Republic of Croatia,
on the Occasion of His Official Visit to Japan

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