

Croatia National Day

Beautiful country, strong business partner

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AMBASSADOR OF CROATIA

On June 25 we celebrate Croatian Statehood Day. This year we also celebrate the 25th Anniversary since Croatia regained its Independence. Following centuries of turbulent history, Croatia has again emerged as a member of the international community. We achieved our independence



through the Homeland War followed by impressively expeditious and successful reconstruction and development. Today Croatia is a country with strong democratic institutions and a market economy. We are the newest member of NATO and the EU. After several years of recession, Croatia has witnessed economic growth for the last two years. The first quarter of this year saw GDP growth of 2.7 percent and it is expected that this positive trend will accelerate moving forward in parallel with further necessary structural reforms.

Croatia is known worldwide as a beautiful country with diverse, unique and unspoiled nature, as well as a rich cultural, historic and very well-preserved legacy evidenced by a number of UNESCO World Heritage sites. Croatia is not only beautiful, it is also a very safe country. Being located at a crossroads of cultures, various influences have given Croatia a very rich gastronomy and the region has a tradition of wine and spirit production dating back more than 2,000 years. Croatian people are very friendly and open to other cultures. Throughout the year the country hosts a number of world-class festivals and other events.

Croatia and Japan are two friendly countries with shared values and a commitment to contribute to peace and stability in the world through active engagement in international organizations. We have strong political ties, as well as cultural, educational and tourism cooperation. Additionally, both countries are seafaring nations and have long maritime traditions that provide a strong basis for cooperation in many areas.

Friendship between our two countries has been proven in difficult times. Japan has provided very significant humanitarian aid during our struggle for independence in the 1990s, as well

as reconstruction and development assistance. In the same way, Croatia and the Croatian people were among the first to offer assistance following the Great East Japan Earthquake.

Economic exchange between our two countries remains below its potential and I am very pleased to see that there is growing interest by companies and investors from both Japan and Croatia for further business cooperation. We are paying particular attention to the increase of trade volumes in both directions and to potential Japanese investment in Croatia. There are investment opportunities in the automotive industry, energy, information and communications technology, pharmaceuticals, food, metals, logistics, textiles and tourism. Why would it be a wise decision to invest in Croatia? We have competitive operational costs and good return on investment, attractive tax incentives and easy access to all of Europe by air, sea, rivers and a network of highways and railways. We are particularly proud of our talented, efficient, innovative, highly qualified and multilingual workforce. There is a pro-business environment with domestic and foreign companies doing business under equal conditions. There are a number of business zones available for green field investments. Croatia

has a long industrial tradition in many sectors complemented by the rapid development of new technologies. Japan has world-leading technologies in a number of areas and a well-deserved image of making superb quality products. Taking all of this into account we believe it would be beneficial for both sides to see

more Japanese investment in our country.

Currently our main exports to Japan are bluefin tuna, timber, wine, olive oil, as well as some chemical and pharmaceutical products. We have much more to offer to the sophisticated and demanding Japanese market.

We will also be very happy

to see an increasing number of Japanese tourists visiting Croatia and vice versa. Our guests are regularly coming back and are not seen only as costumers, but also as friends.

Besides its high-quality prod-

ucts Japan is well represented in Croatia by the widespread popularity of haiku, aikido, kendo and *kyudo* Japanese archery. Have we exhausted the possibilities in our relationship? Of course not!



The city of Dubrovnik DAMIR FABIJANIC/CROATIAN TOURIST BOARD



Bird's-eye view of Zagreb IVO PERVAN/CROATIAN TOURIST BOARD

Congratulations
on the
Occasion of
the Statehood Day of
the Republic of Croatia



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