

# Croatia National Day

## Geographically distant, but close partners

**DRAZEN HRASTIC**  
AMBASSADOR OF CROATIA



On June 25 Croatia celebrates its Statehood Day. There had been a long history of the struggle of the Croatian people for freedom and independence. History shows that Croatian princedoms and kingdoms began in the seventh century and lasted until the 12th. This period was followed by hundreds of years under Hungarian, Austrian and Venetian rule. After being a constituent part of two Yugoslav states, Croatia finally regained independence in 1991. However, the restoration of Croatian sovereignty was followed by the Homeland War in which Croatia managed to defend its freedom and territorial integrity. This year we celebrate the 25th Anniversary of International Recognition of Croatia and today our country is a proud member of the international community, a member of NATO and the EU. Croatia actively supports peace and security, as well

as development efforts around the world.

Croatia is a Mediterranean and Central European country, blessed with beautiful and well-preserved nature, as well as a rich and diverse historical and cultural heritage. It is also home to a number of UNESCO World Heritage sites. We are enriched by a long maritime tradition and Croatia is a tourist hot spot with more than 1,000 islands surrounded by a crystal clear sea. We are a country of sportsmen and Croatia is the homeland of the necktie. A lesser-known fact is that Croatia is home to the producer of one of the world's fastest electric supercars: the Rimac Concept\_One.

Croatia today sees accelerating economic growth and this year we expect gross domestic product growth to reach around 3 percent. To a huge extent, this is the result of steady growth in industrial production and exports.

Being located at the crossroads of various empires, cultures and influences, Croatia has very diverse gastronomy. In our land, there is more than a 2,000-year tradition of wine and various spirit making. Our people are very friendly and welcoming to foreign guests. Croatia is an all-year destination to visit with a number of world-class concerts, festivals and other events ranging from classic to

electronic music and from movies to theater plays in our unique historical environment. We are investing heavily in modernizing our transport facilities and our capital Zagreb has the newest and most modern airport terminal in the world. Zagreb was chosen as the most beautiful Christmas destination in Europe for the past two years and just recently Lonely Planet named it the top destination to visit in Europe in 2017.

Croatia's beauty and uniqueness has also been recognized by the movie industry and people can see Croatian natural beauty and ancient cities in blockbuster movies and TV series such as "Star Wars: The Last Jedi," "Robin Hood — the Origin," "Game of Thrones," "The Borgias" and many others. On top of everything, it is important to point out that Croatia is a very safe country with high-quality services, including health care.

Croatia and Japan are two friendly and like-minded countries with strong political and cultural ties. Recently we have seen growing interest of businesses from both countries in cooperation that is expected to result in growth of trade volumes in both directions. We are especially focused on attracting Japanese investment to Croatia.



The Croatian government is putting a lot of effort into making Croatia a more attractive investment destination. These efforts have resulted in almost \$2 billion in foreign investment last year alone.

We will be most pleased to see further increases of Japanese tourists visiting our beautiful country. Croatian tourists are also growing in numbers as they discover the unique beauty of Japan. Our sportsmen are looking very much forward to participating in training and exchange activities through the "Host Town" projects on the road to the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games.

In conclusion, I would like to invite our Japanese friends to provide us with advice and assistance how to further strengthen the ties between our two countries.

**Rovinj, a popular tourist resort and fishing port located on the north Adriatic Sea** BORIS KACAN,  
CROATIAN NATIONAL TOURIST BOARD

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



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