
**CROATIAN
PRESIDENCY
OF THE COUNCIL
OF THE
EUROPEAN
UNION**

**EU
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HR**





GENERAL INFORMATION

Today's Croatia declared its independence from Yugoslavia in 1991 in the course of a popular referendum. Despite the referendum, Croatia had to fight a four-year lasting war of independence against the Yugoslav army, which ended with a peace agreement in 1995. In 2013, Croatia became the 28th Member State of the European Union.

Croatia is a parliamentary democracy. The head of state is the President of the Republic, who is directly elected every five years. The head of government is the Prime Minister, whose government is formed in the course of the elections which take place every four years. Zoran Milanović (SDP) was elected as Croatian President just days after Croatia took over the European Union's helm. His presidential term is due to begin on 19 February 2020. Since

2016, the Prime Minister is Andrej Plenković of the centre-right HDZ party, which is a member of the European Peoples Party (EPP). The capital of Croatia is Zagreb, the currency is the Croatian Kuna. Croatia is also a member of NATO, its accession took place in 2009.

Croatian EU commissioner Dubravka Suica is a Vice-President of the Commission responsible for Democracy and Demography. Since 01.01.2020 Croatia has taken over the Presidency of the European Council for the first time. ■

ECONOMY

Croatia has a GDP of €51.5 billion (2018) with a growth of 2.6% compared to 2017 and is one of the biggest economies in South East Europe. With approximately 4.09 million inhabitants this equals a GDP per capita of around €12,590.

After the independence from Yugoslavia, Croatia started to transform its economy towards an open market economy. Despite slow economic growth after 2008 due to the global recession, the GDP has been rising consistently since 2015. Thereby, tourism is the strongest sector, contributing an overall amount of around 20% to the GDP. The unemployment rate was at a record low of 6.7% in May 2019.

Croatia is a net-importer with a trade deficit of €10.73 billion in 2018. 68% of Croatia's exports go to European countries, 78% of the imports come from European countries.

Currently, Croatia is working hard to conduct structural reforms which are needed to qualify for joining the eurozone as well as the Schengen Area. ■



PRIORITIES

The slogan of the Croatian Presidency highlights its aim:

**A strong
Europe in a
world of
challenges.**

The Croatian Presidency will work towards achieving a comprehensive agreement on the basis of a balanced and sustainable EU Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021–2027 in order to enable the timely implementation of all the Union's policies and programs.

A EUROPE THAT DEVELOPS

The Croatian Presidency aims at deepening the single market as well as encouraging the digitalisation of business, investments in innovation and research, greater accessibility of high-quality and lifelong learning and developing new skills adjusted to jobs of the future. Therefore, the Croatian Presidency will support a balanced, sustainable and inclusive development of the Union. Additionally, it wants to further strengthen the European monetary union and an efficient implementation of the Paris Agreement. ■

A EUROPE THAT CONNECTS

The Croatian Presidency will encourage policies which strengthen an infrastructural connectivity of the Union and bring together its citizens, primarily through education, culture and sports. To this end, it aims at ensuring appropriate funding for the construction of infrastructural networks and the digitalisation in all branches of the transport sector. In its priorities the Presidency also names the creation of an integrated energy market by further establishment and implementation of the energy union. As connecting Europe also means connecting people, the Croatian Presidency wants to strengthen the mobility of pupils and students. ■

A EUROPE THAT PROTECTS

The Croatian Presidency will strengthen internal security, provide a more effective control of external borders, ensure the full interoperability of IT systems and strengthen resilience to external threats and malicious cyber activities. The common goal remains to find a comprehensive solution for a sustainable and effective migration and asylum policy. The Croatian Presidency will focus on further establishing the Union as an area of freedom, security and justice, founded on common values, such as democracy and the rule of law. ■

AN INFLUENTIAL EUROPE

The further development of capacities and instruments for common action is the only way to strengthen the Union's leading role on a global scale and a priority of the Croatian Presidency. Strengthening multilateralism, fulfilling the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and promoting European values and interests remain the main points of reference for the Union's external action. The Croatian Presidency will strive for a continued credible and effective enlargement policy, as a pledge towards stability, security and further economic development and mutual connection on the European continent. ■



POLICY FIELDS

GENERAL AFFAIRS

Croatia is determined to bring the Union and its benefits closer to its citizens. The Presidency aims to enhance dialogue and intends to prepare an agenda in line with the guidelines set by the Council's New Strategic Agenda 2019-2024. In addition, the Presidency is committed to strengthen the competitiveness of the European industry with a long-term industrial policy aligned with the EU energy and environmental policies and the single market strategy as well as using the potential of macro-regional cooperation. The Presidency supports a credible enlargement policy and aims at strengthening EU values. What is more, the European Semester shall be smoothly implemented and relations with Switzerland and the UK maintained. ■

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Croatia is committed to a multilateral trade system and wants to strengthen the EU as a leading international actor. Intensifying relations with Asia, Africa and Latin America as well as strengthening transatlantic relations is intended. The Presidency also wants to ensure strategic support in the EU's surroundings, in particular in South East Europe and will continue discussions on the EU's development in the area of security and defense. Furthermore, the Presidency aims at promoting international development policies for sustainable development and eradicating poverty. Fair and open global trade is also on the agenda. ■

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

The Presidency prioritizes the strengthening of the European Economic and Monetary Union and the Euro's international role. In addition, the Presidency aims at strengthening the competitiveness of the European industry and SMEs. The Capital Markets Union shall be developed, and current international tax rules adapted to globalisation and digitalisation. To ensure the application of fair taxation rules, Croatia will work towards ensuring tax transparency and security, while at the same time preventing unfair tax practices, tax fraud and tax evasion. Finally, Croatia attempts to enforce the capacities of customs administration on EU's external borders. ■

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

The Presidency is determined to strengthen internal security, provide a more effective control of external borders, ensure the full interoperability of IT systems and strengthen resilience to external threats and malicious cyber-activities. Croatia also aims to find a solution for an effective migration policy and plans to finalize dialogue negotiations on the e-evidence package. The Presidency will focus on the reinforcement of the EU-NATO cooperation and of the European Union Security and Defense Policy. In addition, the Presidency will prioritize the strengthening of capacity and resilience of partners in facing hybrid threats, strategic communication and utilisation of the available EU-NATO mechanisms. ■

EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL POLICY, HEALTH AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

The Presidency is committed to promoting high-quality and lifelong learning and developing skills for jobs of the future. Croatia also intends to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights to promote equality between women and men and lifelong care for one's health. Moreover, the Presidency will initiate discussions on flexibility of work, work-life balance and wellbeing at work. Ensuring the equal quality of products on the markets of all Member States is also on the agenda. ■

COMPETITIVENESS

The Croatian Presidency will support a balanced, sustainable and inclusive development of the Union and guarantee its competitiveness by encouraging activities related to the automation and digitalisation of businesses and business entities. The Presidency aims to develop full social, economic and territorial cohesion, transport, energy and digital infrastructure and interconnection in order to achieve global competitiveness. Furthermore, the Presidency proposes to bolster consumer protection and to enhance negotiations on the Horizon Europe programme as well as on other issues related to research, innovation and space. Responsible and sustainable tourism development policies are also on the agenda. ■



> POLICY FIELDS

TRANSPORT, TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND ENERGY

The Presidency is committed to the development of a Single European Transport Area and to the further establishment and implementation of the Energy Union. The transition to a low-carbon economy with view to achieving climate neutrality and transition to clean energy is one of the key points for the Croatian Presidency. Croatia also finds the Trans-European Transport Network and CEF Financial issues to be of strategic importance and intends to work on the deployment of 5G networks. Security of networks and information systems, digitalisation and cybersecurity also belong to the thematic priorities. ■

AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES

One of the main Croatian priorities in the field of agriculture will be to continue negotiations regarding the Common Agricultural Policy reform and reach an agreement package of draft regulations

for the 2021-2027 period. The Presidency also intends to continue talks on the European Maritime and Fisheries European Fund as well as on the European Fisheries Control System. In addition, Croatia aims to emphasize the problem of further development of rural communities in the context of their depopulation. This will encompass a variety of different topics, including family farm potentials, bio-based agricultural production, smart villages and investments in a more modern agriculture. Besides, food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary issues are also on the agenda. ■

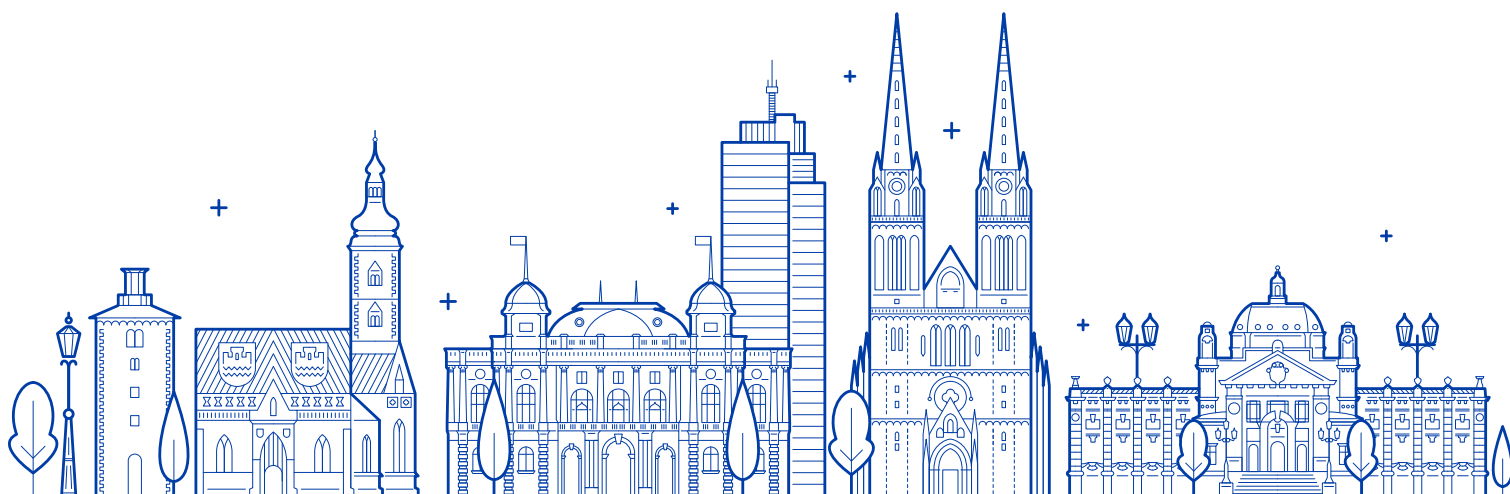
ENVIRONMENT

The Presidency is committed to the European Green Deal and aims to contribute to the protection of the environment and the fight against climate change. For this reason, Croatia intends to engage in discussions about a green Europe, including sustainable economic growth and development and the implementation of the Paris Agreement, with a financially just transition to a low-carbon and circular economy. The conservation of biodiversity

and the protection of the marine environment and coastal areas are also on the agenda. Furthermore, the Presidency aims to promote sustainable forms of tourism and sustainability of coastal and insular communities. ■

EDUCATION, YOUTH, CULTURE AND SPORT

During the Presidency, Croatia is devoted to implement a resolution on the educational reforms and to adapt learning and teaching approaches to challenges of modern society. The Member State intends to empower young people and to protect cultural heritage. Croatia plans to create better opportunities for the youth, especially in rural areas. The social dimension of sport is also included in the programme. ■



WHO IS WHO

For more information,
click on the portraits.

SDP

Social Democratic Party

HNS

Croatian People's Party

HDZ

Croatian Democratic Union

SDP

HDZ

ZORAN
MILANOVIĆ
President-elect

ANDREJ
PLENKOVIĆ
Prime Minister

HDZ

HDZ

HNS

DAMIR
KRSTIČEVIĆ
*Deputy Prime Minister,
Minister of Defence*

DAVOR
BOŽINOVIĆ
*Deputy Prime Minister,
Minister of the Interior*

ZDRAVKO
MARIĆ
*Deputy Prime Minister,
Minister of Finance*

PREDRAG
ŠTROMAR
*Deputy Prime Minister,
Minister of Construction
and Spatial Planning*

HDZ

HDZ

HDZ

HDZ

GORDAN GRLIĆ
RADMAN
*Minister of Foreign and
European Affairs*

TOMISLAV
CORIC
*Minister of Environmental
Protection and Energy*

MARIJA
VUČKOVIĆ
Minister of Agriculture

DRAŽEN
BOŠNJAKOVIĆ
Minister of Justice



> WHO IS WHO

HDZ

HDZ

HDZ

HDZ

VESNA
BEDEKOVIĆ
*Minister of Demographics,
Family, Youth and Social
Policy*

MARKO
PAVIĆ
*Minister of Regional
Development and EU funds*

JOSIP
ALADROVIĆ
*Minister of Labour and
Pension System*

MILAN
KUJUNDŽIĆ
Minister of Health

HDZ

HDZ

HDZ

HDZ

MARIO
BANOŽIĆ
Minister of State Property

TOMO
MEDVED
*Minister of Croatian
Veterans*

IVAN
MALENICA
*Minister of Public
Administration*

OLEG
BUTKOVIC
*Minister of Maritime
Affairs, Transport and
Infrastructure*

HDZ

HDZ

HDZ

GARY
CAPPELLI
Minister of Tourism

BLAZENKA
DIVJAK
*Minister of Science and
Education*

NINA OBUJEN
KORŽINEK
Minister of Culture

DARKO
HORVAT
*Minister of Economy,
Entrepreneurship and Crafts*





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