15th Anniversary of Croatia’s Independence

Of Special Interest

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The Republic of Croatia Celebrates 15th Anniversary of Its Independence

ZAGREB, Croatia, June 23 - Croatian Prime Minister Ivo Sanader issued a message offering his best wishes to all Croats on the occasion of Statehood Day, which is celebrated on June 25.

On June 25, 1991 the Croatian Parliament passed the Constitutional Decision on the Sovereignty and Independence of the Republic of Croatia and its disassociation from other republics making up the former Yugoslav federation, and a declaration on sovereignty and independence.

Prime Minister Sanader said in his message that the 15 years of independence imposed an obligation of lasting gratitude to the promoters of the idea of Croatia's independence, soldiers, volunteers and all who had stood up in Croatia's defense, as well as to all in Europe and the world who supported it.

“Croatia is now entering a period of maturity. We have shown that it is a successful state and we will continue doing so through the accomplishment of the most important goals. Those are the further strengthening of the society respecting the highest standards in the enforcement of the rule of law, protecting of human and minority rights, and equality, dialogue and tolerance as the highest values. Those are also a fast process of Croatia's admission to the EU, the strengthening of the economy and social security and the overall strengthening of the country in facing globalization challenges,” Prime Minister Sanader said in the message, among other things.

WASHINGTON, D.C., June 27 - The Embassy of Croatia organized a celebration of the 15th Anniversary of Croatia's Independence at a reception in Washington, D.C. on June 27, 2006. His Excellency Croatian Ambassador Neven Jurica hosted members of the diplomatic corps and military representatives, as well as friends from the government, business, cultural and diaspora communities.

Ambassador Jurica underlined the significance of this day: “The 25th day of June 1991 is one of the most important days in Croatia’s long and myriad history. On that day, the Croatian Parliament confirmed the historic aspirations of the Croatian people through adopting a Declaration of Independence and thus reaffirming the Constitutional Decision on Croatia’s Sovereignty and Independence.”

The Croatian Ambassador expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the members of Croatia’s Armed Forces who offered their selfless sacrifice for freedom and independence. He also thanked all those in Europe and elsewhere who supported Croatia’s desire for statehood.

As Croatia looks to join Euro-Atlantic institutions, its friendship and partnership with the United States plays a vital role. Croatia has on many occasions stressed that it values and appreciates the positive role taken by the United States in supporting its efforts at Euro-Atlantic integration. Croatia will continue to work closely with its U.S. partners on these and many other issues, to the benefit of all.

Several hundred guests that the Embassy hosted on this 15th Anniversary of Croatian independence were able to enjoy the usual Croatian hospitality so well-known in Washington, D.C. by the work of the Embassy’s own in-house chef Ivo Svirčić, as well as to see the newly opened exhibition of the “Croatian Underwater World” that featured photographs of famous underwater photographer Miro Andrić.
Croatia and Montenegro Establish Diplomatic Relations

ZAGREB, Croatia, July 7 – Croatia and Montenegro established diplomatic relations with an exchange of diplomatic notes between Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration and the Montenegrin Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The establishment of diplomatic relations will continue to the further development and promotion of bilateral cooperation and mutual relations based on the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

Note: Croatia recognized Montenegro as an independent state on June 12, 2006 following an independence referendum in Montenegro.

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Serbian President Boris Tadić Visits Croatia

The Serbian President Boris Tadić visited Zagreb on Tuesday, June 27, 2006. One of the main issues discussed between Tadić and the Croatian President, Stipe Mesić, was the return of exiled Serbian refugees and making it possible for them to continue living in Croatia as loyal citizens. While Mesić was satisfied with the progress, Tadić believed Croatia’s efforts to this date have not been enough.

However, the two presidents appeared satisfied with the economic relations between the two countries. Croatia is farther along in approaching NATO and EU membership than Serbia, but Mesić hoped that Tadić’s visit would boost the presence of Serbian companies in Croatia. All in all, both countries’ main concern is to keep relations between the two nations strong and continue forward progress toward NATO and EU membership. According to Tadić, “That goal is not of a formal character, the point is for our two societies to change for the better and become more similar to the societies in the EU.” Both countries hope for EU and NATO enlargement in the near future.

Monument to Nikola Tesla Unveiled in Zagreb

ZAGREB, Croatia, July 7 - A monument honoring Nikola Tesla was unveiled in downtown Zagreb as part of a celebration marking the 150th anniversary of the birth of the great scientist and inventor.

The unveiling ceremony was attended by President Stjepan Mesić, Prime Minister Ivo Sanader, Parliament Speaker Vladimir Šeks, Mayor Milan Bandić, members of parliament, government and political parties, and dignitaries from the Serbian Orthodox Church. The monument was made by the famous Croatian sculptor Ivan Meštrović. “I am sure the world would have been much poorer if Tesla had not existed and that without him there would not be many of the benefits of modern technologies we enjoy today,” Prime Minister Sanader said in his address. Parliament Speaker Šeks said that many of Tesla’s inventions “ushered in a new era for humanity which he, as a visionary of genius, designed for the benefits of humankind.” He also recalled the often-quoted statement by Tesla that “he was proud of his Serb ethnic background and the Croatian homeland.”

On July 10, 2006, Croatia’s top officials, headed by President Stjepan Mesić and Prime Minister Ivo Sanader, are coming to Smiljan, near Gospić, to mark the anniversary and open Tesla’s restored museum.
Wiz Kids from Vojnić Visit Washington, D.C.

WASHINGTON, D.C. July 3 - This year’s winning team of the National Geographic Junior Magazine’s annual national quiz in Croatia visited Washington, D.C. this week as guests of the National Geographic Society. The winning trio, Stefan Lončar, Danijel Rod and Ivan Tušek, led by their teacher Ms. Anica Globan, come from Vojnić, a small town in central Croatia, and are students at Vojnić Primary School. Their success in beating all other Croatian primary schools in the annual nationwide competition organized by the National Geographic Magazine Croatian edition, earned them a trip to Washington, D.C. as well as their first airplane trip ever. Following an intensive program that the National Geographic Society put on for them in and around Washington D.C., the Embassy was delighted to host the winning team for a tour of the Embassy and to meet with the Croatian Ambassador Neven Jurica. Needless to say, Stefan, Daniel and Ivan easily demonstrated their expertise by recognizing all the national flags along Embassy Row on their way to the Croatian Chancery. The Croatian Embassy are very proud of the significant achievement of these “young ambassadors for Croatia” and would like to extend its congratulations to all the acclaim this year’s winning team have received to date in Croatia – Well done and keep up the good work!

9-day Tour of the Dalmatian Coast

CHICAGO, Illinois, June 25 - Forty travelers from Canada, Australia, and the United States embarked on a on a 9-day tour of the Dalmatian Coast, starting in southern and continuing to northern Croatia. The group visited Split and saw works of the great Croatian sculpture Ivan Mestrović. They then moved to medieval Trogir and next to the mountains for a two-night stay at Plitvice Lakes National Park. Their second to last stop was Opatija, a seaside resort. One of the travelers Ann Kennedy said she thought that this was “the most beautiful city we have seen so far”. To end the trip, they spent their last day in Croatia’s capital Zagreb. The big city had wide plazas, parks, and classic architecture.

Croatia Opens Its Door Wide

HYANNIS, Massachusetts, June 25 - The word is out in the travel world that Croatia is the “place to go”. Peggy Eastman took this advice and traveled to Croatia for a 12 day trip of the country. Her 24-member tour included two overnight stays in Zagreb, the capital city of Croatia, and three nights each in Dubrovnik, Opatija and Split. A memory she does not expect to lose involves the boardwalk trail in Plitvice Lakes National Park, as waterfalls from 16 lakes rushed beside and beneath them. Of all the cities visited, her favorite was Opatija. A 19th-century resort town was many gorgeous, old fashion hotels. Here exists the “promenade,” a stone walkway about a mile long that runs along the end of the sea. The last place the trip visited was Zagreb which has a lot to offer, including intriguing architecture, public parks, and beautifully maintained flower gardens. At the conclusion of her trip, Eastman noted that Croatia is at peace and seems bent on building a stable and free society.

For the full article, go to: [http://www.capecodonline.com/ctimes/eastman25.htm](http://www.capecodonline.com/ctimes/eastman25.htm)
Croatia’s Dalmatian Coast is Back and Open for Business

SAN ANTONIO, Texas, June 25 - “Croatia is back, and it’s booming again,” says Andrew Villone of Roads Less Traveled. “What you can take in on the Adriatic Coast as far as natural beauty is amazing, and it’s new in the fact that it hasn’t been overrun by tourists.” In Croatia, people are generally friendlier than other parts of Europe. “If you are treated badly in Italy, why would they care? There will be a million more the next day. But in the city made of stone and light, Dalmatian Coast, people think more of your experience there; you aren’t seen as a dollar sign.”

Croatia is the homeland of cravats. [Carly Calhoum / New York Times]

Croatian National Team Exits 2006 World Cup in Germany

STUTTGART, Germany, June 22 - After a brilliant performance in its Cup opener against Brazil, the Croatian National Team approached its group match against Japan with great optimism and confidence. Even though the match ended in a scoreless draw, the final group game against Australia would ultimately decide who moves on to the second round of the World Cup.

Team captain Niko Kovač shows his disappointment at not advancing to the second round of the 2006 World Cup in Germany [Photo: Sanjin Strukić/24 sata]

A win against Australia would ensure Croatia second place in Group F and a birth in the second round. The game unfolded as planned with Croatia scoring early on a goal from a free kick by Darijo Srna. However, Australia was able to even the score on a penalty kick. Knowing that a draw would not be enough to propel them to the next round, Croatia continually pressed towards Australia’s goal and captain Niko Kovač slit a low hard shot into the back of the net early in the second half. Croatia had the result it needed.

But plenty of time remained in the match and Australia’s patience eventually paid off. Striker Harry Kewell scored Australia’s second goal in the 79th minute and the game ended in a 2:2 draw. Australia finished second in the group and moved on to the next round match against Italy, while the Croatian team went home to contemplate its performance in Germany.

Croata Cravat

NEW YORK, N.Y., June 18 - Croata products sold in Split, Croatia specialize in providing neckwear to dress those who want to appear "top" in their attire. According to the company’s owner, Mr. Busić, Croata “is trying to give the same impression that our products gave in the 17th century: to lead the world in and listen to our own instincts.” As legend has it, the popular necktie of our time caught on when Croatian soldiers traveled to Paris to fight in the Thirty Years’ War, 1618 to 1648. The French soldiers were so impressed by the Croats’ scarves that adorned their uniforms, and it soon became fashionable to dress “a la Croate.” Now, wearing a necktie is a respectful male uniform for certain jobs.

To read article about Croata in New York Times, go to: http://travel2.nytimes.com/2006/06/18/travel/18foraging.html
Another Croat in NBA

June 28, 2006 - The Milwaukee Bucks have acquired the draft rights for Damir Markota from the San Antonio Spurs in exchange for the better of Milwaukee’s two second round draft picks in the 2007 NBA Draft. The Bucks previously owned two second round picks for next year’s draft – their own pick and a pick obtained from the Houston Rockets (they received Houston’s 2007 second round pick on February 24, 2005 along with a 2006 second round pick and Reece Gaines from the Rockets in exchange for Mike James and Zendon Hamilton).

Markota, selected 59th overall by the Spurs in tonight’s 2006 NBA Draft, averaged 8.3 points and 4.4 rebounds last season for Cibona Zagreb of the Adriatic League. The 20-year-old Markota is a native of Croatia and made his professional debut with Cibona during the 2001-02 season at the age of 16. The 6-10 forward has been a member of the Croatian Junior National Team and the Croatian Under-20 National Team. He averaged 5.8 points and 4.2 rebounds during the 2003 World Junior Championships and averaged team highs of 18.3 points, 10.8 rebounds and 2.9 assists in the 2005 U20 European Championships held in Moscow, Russia.

For the full story, please visit: http://www.jsonline.com/story/index.aspx?id=446828

Brief News...

- A total of 14,230 people moved to and 6,012 people moved out of Croatia last year, which resulted in a positive migration balance that started in 1996.

- Croatian Finance Minister Ivan Šuker and the director of the World Bank’s regional office, Anand K. Seth, signed a donation agreement worth about 920,000 euros, which the Swedish International Development Agency [SIDA] earmarked for the Croatian public administration reform.

- The U.S. Navy’s Sixth Fleet Band gave a concert in Zagreb’s Ban Jelačić square on June 30, 2006 as a U.S. Embassy gift to the City of Zagreb on the occasion of the American Independence Day, observed on July 4. The sixth Fleet Band is the U.S. Navy’s official orchestra. It is stationed in Naples and plays at military ceremonies along the Mediterranean, the Black Sea, Great Britain and other European cities.

- The southern Croatian town of Šibenik and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) signed a memorandum of understanding on June 29, 2006. The document is the foundation for the implementation of the Project of Reforming Local Self-Government (PRLS)

- Croatian innovators and entrepreneurs fared well at the Pittsburgh Invention Trade Show, held from June 7-10, which featured 20 countries. In international competition, the Croatian delegation won four gold, seven silver, three bronze medals and a special award.

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