

Embassy of India
Zagreb

India - Croatia Relations

Political Relations

Relations between India and Croatia have been friendly since the days of the former Yugoslavia (SFRY). Marshal Tito, a Croat, who ruled Yugoslavia for more than three decades, maintained close relations with the then Indian leadership. Nehru and Tito were also pioneers of NAM. Croatia dominated bilateral trade relations accounting for more than two-thirds of trade between India and the former Yugoslavia. This included large scale purchases of Croatian ships by India in the 1970s and 1980s. India recognized Croatia in



May 1992 and established diplomatic relations on 9 July 1992. Croatia opened its resident mission at New Delhi in February 1995. The Indian Mission in Zagreb was opened on 28 April 1996, and upgraded to Ambassadorial level in January 1998. Bilateral relations have remained friendly at the political level but the economic ties have lagged since the Tito era, and the effort is to provide resurgence to this aspect of the relationship. There is good cooperation between the two countries at the multilateral level.

**MOS (IC) / C&I, N.Sitharaman in Croatia
(14-15 Feb 2017)**

VVIP Visits:

- (a) **From Croatia:** Former Croatian President Stjepan Mesić paid a State Visit to India, 12-16 November 2002. In the Joint Statement, Croatia expressed support for India's claim for permanent membership of the UNSC.
- (b) **From India:** Vice-President M. Hamid Ansari visited Croatia, 9-11 June 2010 at the invitation of Croatian President Ivo Josipovic.

Ministerial Level Visits:

- (a) **From Croatia:** 1. Dr. Zvonimir Separović, Foreign Minister (April 1992). 2. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Dr. Mate Granić (April 1995). 3. Nenad Porges, Minister of Economy (November 1998). 4. Bozo Biškupić, Minister of Culture (March 1999). 5. Dr. Goran Granić, Deputy Prime Minister (November 2000). 6. Foreign Minister Tonino Picula (May 2001). 7. Ms. Pave Zupan Rusković, Minister of Tourism (September 2003).
- (b) **From India:** 1. Shri Pranab Mukherjee, Commerce Minister (September 1994). 2. Dr. B.B. Ramaiah, MOS (Commerce) (September 1997). 3. Shri Shatrughan Sinha, Minister of Shipping (August 2003). 4. Shri Digvijay Singh, Minister of State for External Affairs (September 2003). 5. Smt. Bhavnaben Chikhaliya, Minister of State for Tourism & Culture and Parliamentary Affairs (October 2003). 6. Shri Kapil Sibal, Minister of Science & Technology and Earth Sciences

(February 2007). 7. Shri Anand Sharma, Minister of State for External Affairs (September 2007) 8. Smt Preneet Kaur, Minister of State for External Affairs (February 2014) 9. General (retired) V.K. Singh, Minister of State for External Affairs (April, 2016) 10. Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, Minister of Commerce and Industry [Independent Charge] (February 2017).

Parliamentary Delegations:

(a) **From Croatia:** 1. Mr. Vladimir Šeks, then Acting Speaker of Croatian Parliament (Sabor) (March 1999). 2. Zdravko Tomac, Deputy Speaker of Croatian Parliament (January 2003). 3. Ms. Marija Lugaric, a Member of Parliament (January 2007). 4. Dr. Furio Radin, Member of Parliament and Chairman, Committee on Human and National Minority Rights (February 2008). 5. Mr. Luka Bebic, Speaker of Croatian Parliament (March 2010).

(b) **From India:** 1. Shri P.A. Sangma, Speaker, Lok Sabha (July 1997). 2. Shri Manohar Joshi, Speaker, Lok Sabha (July 2002).

The lack of high level visits from our side (no HOS/ HOM/ EAM visit) has tended to constrain the broadening of bilateral relationship. Realistically, Croatia is unlikely to take on a major onus of mounting political and economic initiatives of its own to intensify relations; however, any attention from India would flatter it and it would be receptive to our efforts.

Foreign Office Consultations: The Protocol on Foreign Office Consultations (FOCs) was signed in April 1995. So far, nine FOCs have taken place alternatively in Zagreb and New Delhi. The last round was held in New Delhi on 6 May 2011. The next round is being scheduled in Zagreb for 2017.

Main Bilateral Agreements/ MoUs:

(a) **Agreements:** 1. Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement (2017). 2. Maritime Transport Agreement (1997). 3. Agreement on Cooperation in Culture, Science & Technology, Education and Sports (1999). 4. Agreement on Cooperation between the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Croatia and the Foreign Service Institute (FSI), Ministry of External Affairs (2000). 5. Air Services Agreement (2000) [Croatian Airlines and AI had entered into a Code share Agreement in Nov 2016 on the use of flight with shared codes of both carriers. The Agreement came into effect on 01 Apr 2017] 6. Agreement on Cooperation in the Fight against International Illicit Trafficking of Narcotic Drugs, Terrorism etc. (2001). 7. Agreement on Agricultural Cooperation (2002). 8. Agreement on Exemption of Visa Requirement for Holders of Diplomatic and Official/Service Passports (2007). 9. Agreement on Cooperation in Health and Medicine (2010). 10. Agreement on Double Taxation Avoidance (2014).

(b) **MoUs:** 1. Cooperation between Croatian Bank for Reconstruction and Development (HBOR) and EXIM Bank of India (2000). 2. Cooperation between Export Credit & Guarantee Corporation of India Ltd. (ECGC) and Croatian Bank for Reconstruction and Development [HBOR (2002)]. 3. Exchange Programme in Culture for 2005-07 (2005). 4. Programme of Cooperation in Science and Technology for 2005-08 (2005). 5. Educational Exchange Programme (2006) 6. Establishment of ICCR Chair of Hindi between ICCR and University of Zagreb (2012).

Economic and Commercial Relations

Croatia is a middle-sized economy with GDP valued at estimated US\$ 53.58 billion (2016) and Per Capita Income of US\$ 12,776 (2016). Its foreign trade is valued at US\$ 21.82 billion with imports and exports at US\$13.64 billion (2016). Its main trading partners are EU and the Balkans.

India's trade with Croatia is modest. During the period Jan-May 2017, Indian exports were valued at Euro 55.83 million (+11.97%) and imports at Euro 6.98 million (+35.53%). There is potential for increasing India's exports in segments such as textiles, leather, pharmaceuticals, basic chemical products, coffee, tea, industrial and electrical machinery. Opportunities also exist for India to use Croatia as a gateway to the South-East European markets using its major ports such as Rijeka and Ploce.

Figures of India's trade with Croatia are given below:

Croatia-India Bilateral Trade

(In million)

Year	2014	2015	2016	Jan-May 2017
Croatia's Exports	€ 13.50	€ 17.53	€ 11.05	€ 6.98
Croatia's Imports	€ 88.19	104.5	€ 100.60	€ 55.83
Total Trade	€ 101.69	€ 122.03	€ 111.65	€ 62.81

(Source: Croatian Central Bureau of Statistics)

As Croatia moved out of recession (2016), our bilateral trade is expected to grow in a phased manner. A strong market expansion drive has been planned by way of participation in trade fairs, organising buyer-seller meets, sector specific trade show, seminars, etc in potential areas of growth.

With respect to investment promotion, efforts are being made to encourage Croatia to be our partner in GOI's socio-economic schemes like 'Make in India', 'Smart Cities', 'Digital India', etc. through their cutting-edge technologies and investments, which can open up significant markets for them not only in India but also for export to South-East Asia, Central Asia and Africa. Although Croatian economy is relatively small with limited prospects for FDI, there is potential for collaboration in complementary sectors like infrastructure, defence industry, tourism, ship-building, renewable energy, agro processing, IT and pharmaceuticals. Croatia is also reported to have oil and gas reserves in the Adriatic coast, which will be in our interest.



ACG-Lukaps facility, Ludbreg

Simultaneously, the Mission has been encouraging Indian companies to position themselves in Croatia as it can serve as a gateway not only for Western Europe but for entry into the little known Balkan market which is estimated at more than 20 million people. There have been some important Indian investments in Croatia. ACG World

Wide acquired Lukaps (Ludbreg) in 2007 and has since become third largest supplier of gelatine capsules to EU, with plans to expand to Euro 30 million in near future. Orient Green Power (Europe) owned by Orient Green Power (Chennai) invested Euro 17.4 million in construction of wind power plants near Sibenik in 2011. CIPLA acquired Celeris (Zagreb) in 2013. Infosys R&D Development Centre was officially opened (Karlovac) in 2017 after taking over GE engineering operations, with 100 qualified engineers. In 2017, JGL, Croatian pharmaceutical company signed two five-year license agreements with Dr. Reddy's. Furthermore, ACG Worldwide acquired a Croatian IT company – IN2 Trace (Bjelovar). Preliminary market studies have been undertaken by the Mission in sectors of textiles, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, leather & footwear, energy, vehicles, shipbuilding, hospitality, ICT & start-ups, wood processing and defence industry and shared with Apex chambers as well as business industry in India.

The 'Bilateral Economic Cooperation Agreement' signed between Nirmala Sitharaman, MOS(IC) for Commerce and Industry, and Croatian Minister of Economy, Martina Dalic (14 Feb 2017), is expected to boost trade and investment ties. Resulting from that, the first India-Croatia Joint Business Council was set up, comprising of leading corporate leaders and academics to highlight the linkage between business and research. The first meeting of the Joint Economic Commission is planned for Q-4, 2017.

Cultural Relations

The Programme for Cooperation in the field of Culture (2010-12), is currently being renegotiated. A number of Croatian students have learnt various forms of Indian classical dance in reputed Indian schools under ICCR scholarships as well as on self-financing basis. The ICCR set up a Hindi Chair in 2009 at the Indology Department of the University of Zagreb which has been functional for more than 50 years and has been a key vehicle for the promotion of Sanskrit and Hindi. The Department organised a regional seminar 'Sanskrit, Hindi



IDY-2017 in Tomislav Square, Zagreb

and Croatian: Language, Literature and Culture' on 24 March 2017 as part of World Hindi Day celebration, with participation of scholars from Zagreb, Rijeka, Berlin. Another major event, 8th Dubrovnik International Conference on Sanskrit Epics and Puranas was organised, 11-17 September 2017, with international participation.

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas functions are organised annually at the Embassy, with the screening of snippets of PM Modi's speech as well as encouragement to Indian diaspora to participate in eco-development schemes. So are Hindi Day events, with holding of Hindi essay completions, poetry reading, dance and music.

'India Day' events have been organised in various counties as part of cultural outreach programme, to showcase multi-dimensional spirit of India, including Yoga workshops, screening of films, cuisine degustation, holding of exhibitions on various themes, planting of peace trees, etc. (Rijeka in October 2016; Karlovac in February 2017; Vukovar in March 2017; Korcula in August, 2017). The tradition of taking out of a

'Ratha Yatra' in downtown Zagreb to replicate the 3,000 thousand year old tradition of Orissa, has also been commenced since 2016 and is being done on an annual basis.

International Women Day was organized at the Embassy on 10 Mar 2017 with participation of local Indian women, Croatian women as well as select male attendees, in the belief that it is men who need to be sensitized about women issues. The XPD sponsored documentary "The Indian Women – An Indomitable Spirit" was screened.

Programmes to promote Indian tourism have been intensified. Embassy participates in the annual International Place2Go Fair every March. A Know India Seminar was organised in October 2016 in collaboration with the GOITO Frankfurt Office, for local tourism sector stakeholders.

India@70 celebrations have been planned for 2017-18. On the occasion of Independence Day 2017, the events included lighting of the Chancery building in the national tricolour, 3D projection of Indian flags on the main façade of iconic Museum of Contemporary Art, release of two doves for peace in India and Croatia, turning of the main public fountain into colours of the Indian flag and alignment of guests at the formal function into formation of the Indian flag, for aerial view. M/Culture will be sponsoring Sangeeta Sharma modern dance troupe in September 2017 and Anupriya Deotale music troupe in November 2017.

The annual IDY events, projected within the larger framework of holistic health, global peace and security, witness the participation of a large number of local populace. IDY-2017 was organised, 18-25 June 2017 in 25 cities across Croatia viz. Zagreb, Split, Pula, Zadar, Osijek, Rijeka, Varazdin, Dubrovnik, Sibenik, Cakovec, Karlovac, Vukovar, Iz, Novigrad, Bjelovar, Makarska, Baska, Zapresic, Korcula, Lepoglava, Hvar, Virovitica, Koprivnica, Pozega, Umag. The events were staged in partnership with the City Administrations, Tourist Boards, and Yoga Associations. Some significant side events were 1st Croatian Yoga Congress; Remetinec Prison Yoga Programme; Online Yoga Quiz and Essay contests; Yoga Challenge; Yoga with Police; Yoga is Music; and Yoga Exhibition "Waves of Yoga".

Indian Community

The Indian community in Croatia is very small. There are about 66 in Croatia, of which 25 are PIO and 41 are Indian nationals. Only a few are engaged in small businesses, some in educational and IT institutions, and the rest being housewives married to Croatian nationals, cooks etc.

Useful Resources:

Embassy of India, Zagreb-Website: <http://www.indianembassy.hr>

Embassy of India Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/Indiaincroatia/>

Embassy of India, Zagreb-Twitter: https://twitter.com/India_Croatia
