



## Croatia



Last update:	23 January 2012
Author:	
Population:	4,486,881 (July 2010 est.)
Prime minister:	Zoran Milanović (SDP)
President:	Ivo Josipović (SDP)
Governemental type:	Presidential/Parliamentary democracy
Ruling coalition:	Kukuriku Coalition: SDP, Croatian People's Party (HNS), the Istrian Democratic Assembly (IDS) and the Croatian Party of Pensioners (HSU)
Last election:	Referendum on EU accession in 2012
Next election:	Local elections 2013
Sister parties:	Social Democratic Party, SDP

On 9 December Croatia has signed the accession treaty with the EU in Brussels and will become the 28th EU member on July 1 2013. "Welcome to the European family", President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy stated, adding that despite the economic problems the EU is open for accession of Balkan countries. The outgoing Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor and President Ivo Josipovic signed the accession treaty. Kosor: "I would like to thank all who contributed to this solemn and historical day for Croatia. I am proud to be part of this historical moment." Josipovic added that "after 20 years modern Croatia is becoming a part of the political and cultural area to which it has belonged for centuries. Croatia is not giving its sovereignty to the EU, it is investing in the EU." On Sunday 22 January Croatsians have voted for EU entrance in a referendum. 66.27% voted 'ZA' ('for') EU entrance and 33.13% against. Considering the polls over the recent years, the percentage of 'for' votes is rather high. The turnout was low with 43.5%, compared to 54% at the general elections in December 2011.

### ELECTIONS AND POLITICAL SITUATION

#### Electoral system

Croatia is a parliamentary democratic republic, headed by president Ivo Josipović who was elected in 2010. The Sabor, the Croatian parliament, consists of 151 members who are elected through proportional representation conducted in 10 geographical constituencies. In each constituency 14 parliamentarians are elected. Croatia's national minorities have the right to elect 8 members through majoritarian elections for candidates from their groups. Of those 8 seats, 3 are reserved for representatives of the Serb minority, and the remainder for the 5 clusters comprising the other 21 constitutionally recognized minorities. Additional seats in the Sabor are created by voters permanently reside outside Croatia. Depending on voters' turnout of those living abroad, a maximum of 12 seats are divided amongst the parties that receive their votes. All members are elected to four-year terms. The president of the republic, who serves as head of state, is elected by popular vote for up to two five-year terms.

#### Referendum on EU accession

On Sunday 22 January 2012 Croatsians have voted for EU entrance. Croatsians Election Commission (DIC) announced that 66.27% voted 'ZA' ('for') EU entrance at the second referendum in Croatian history – the first being on the decision to succeed from Yugoslavia – while 33.13 % voted 'against'. Considering the polls over the recent years, the percentage of 'for' votes is rather high. The turnout was low with 43.5%, compared to 54% at the general elections in December 2011.



In a first reaction President Ivo Josipović congratulated the ‘victory of European Croatia at the referendum.’ The head of the newly elected Social Democratic led government, Prime Minister Zoran Milanović, stated that it was a historic decision. Reflecting on the low turnout, he added that ‘people were obviously fatigued.’ In a joint statement President of the European Commission José Manuel and the President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, welcomed the result. “The positive vote is good news for Croatia, good news for the region, and good news for Europe,” the statements reads. Croatia is set to join the EU in July 2013, after the Croatian Parliament and EU members states parliaments ratify the accession treaty. Some member states will do that as soon as possible, while others will wait for the reports on monitoring which is being carried out in Croatia in the domains of human rights and market competitiveness.

The result of the referendum confirms the support for the left-wing government and its responsibility to continue with the reforms and deliver on the promises of the benefits of EU membership: a European peaceful and stable country with better life for all its citizens.

#### Parliamentary elections 2011

On 4 December elections were held for the Croatian Parliament (Sabor). The ‘Kukuriku’ coalition led by the Social Democratic Party of Croatia (SDP) won convincingly. According to the official results of the Croatian central election commission (DIP) the coalition won 80 out of 151 seats in the Sabor. Besides the SDP, the coalition includes the Croatian People’s Party (HNS), the Istrian Democratic Assembly (IDS) and the Croatian Party of Pensioners (HSU). The coalition around the conservative Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) — of the outgoing Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor — gained 47 seats. The turnout at the elections was 62%.

As the results came in and it became clear Kukuriku coalition would win, Prime Minister to be and leader of the SDP Zoran Milanović addressed the audience at an election gathering in the museum of contemporary arts in Zagreb: “Four parties and one vision – the Croatians citizens gave us their trust, a chance [...] we will not disappoint them. Our responsibility is tremendous. The results are good, we are satisfied and we feel we have a big task to accomplish. The campaign is over, but our work is just about to start ...” Furthermore, Milanović stressed that the politics of the new government will be “politics of justice and fair payment for fair work.” Milanović reached out to the political opponents by saying that his wish is to work with them as well in the parliament for the benefit of Croatia.

At the HDZ election gathering, outgoing PM Kosor addressed the audience: “We will serve honestly in opposition [...] from this moment on we will start to work for the election victory in the next election [...] we are not totally satisfied, but in these circumstances, our election result is good.” Kosor said that HDZ entered the election race from an unfair position as media had declared the winner from the start. Furthermore, Kosor said that nobody can deny that HDZ started the fight against corruption and stated that “HDZ will be constructive in the opposition, strongly defending Croatian national interests.” However, quite unusually, she did not congratulate the election victors.

#### Results of the Croatian parliamentary elections, December 4<sup>th</sup> 2011

Sabor elections 4 December 2011	Seats	in the parliament	% of the vo
Kukuriku coalition	80		53,33
Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ)	47		31,12
Croatian Labour – Work Party	6		3,97
Croatian Democratic Union of Slavonija and Baranja (HDSSB)	6		3,97
List Grubišić	2		1,32
Croatian Peasant Party (HSS)	1		0,66
Croatian Party of Rights (HSP) – Croatian Clean Party of Rights (HČPS)	1		0,66
Independent Democratic Serb party (SDSS)	3		1,98
Seats reserved for minorities	5		3,30
Total	151		100



## Presidential elections 2009/2010

### Run-up to the elections

In the run-up to the elections, the government campaign had already resulted in the arrest of more than a dozen officials and high-level investigations into a number of state owned companies. During the pre-election campaign, Milan Bandic, the populist mayor of Zagreb and the main contender of the Social Democrat (SDP) candidate Ivo Josipovic, was exposed to particularly harsh media criticism over his alleged nepotism and corruption. After Bandic announced in late November 2009 to run for the Presidency and hereby ignored SDP's choice of candidate, he was expelled from the SDP and decided to run as an independent candidate.

### Results first round

On 27 December 2009, Presidential elections were held in Croatia. SDP candidate, Ivo Josipovic, received 32.4% of the votes in the first round of voting. With this he received more votes than any of the other 12 candidates in the running. No candidate, however, won more than 50% of the votes, and a second round run-off was held in January 2010.

### Results second round

On 10 January 2010, the second round run-off was held. Josipovic competed against Milan Bandic. Josipovic obtained a landslide victory, winning 60.3% of the votes, while Bandic received 39.7%. Observers stated that Josipovic's win was expected, yet the margin of his victory was even larger than polls had predicted.

As a well-known law professor and composer, Josipovic had placed justice in the focus of his election campaign. Since his convincing victory on the primaries within the SDP (internal party elections for the presidential candidate, held in July 2009), Josipovic has been promoting a concept of a fair and just society, emphasizing the importance of reforms leading the country towards the membership of the European Union.

### Official results

Candidate	Party	% Votes (first round)	% Votes (second round)
Ivo Josipovic	Social Democratic Party (SDP)	32.42	60.26
Milan Bandic	Independent	14.83	39.74
Andrija Hebrang	Croatian Democratic Union	12.04	
Nadan Vidošević	Independent	11.33	
Vesna Pusić	Croatian People's Party - Liberal Democrats	7.25	
Dragan Primorac	Independent	5.93	
Miroslav Tuđman	Independent	5.09	
Damir Kajin	Istrian Democratic Assembly	3.87	



Josip Jurčević	Independent	2.74	
Boris Mikšić	Independent	2.1	
Vesna	Independent	1.89	
Slavko Vukšić	Democratic Party of Slavonia Plain	0.42	

#### Aftermath

The social democrat vowed to lead an "uncompromising fight against corruption". He also promised to help the government complete its talks on EU membership in 2010, which the country aspires to achieve in 2012. During his victory speech in Zagreb Josipovic addressed his supporters by saying "this victory is not only mine... all citizens of this country have won because we all want a better Croatia with more justice." Zoran Milanovic, President of the SDP, said that Josipovic's victory was not only a victory for the SDP, but also for the social and democratic values the party believes in. Bandic said he would "return to work" as Zagreb mayor.

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## IMPORTANT POLITICAL ISSUES

### Croatia's European Union membership

On 9 December Croatia has signed the accession treaty with the EU in Brussels and will become the 28th EU member on July 1 2013, after the ratification procedure in all member states and Croatia has been finalised.

On 10 June 2011 the European Commission recommended the closing of the negotiations with Croatia and set 1 July 2013 as target entry date. On 24 June 2011 President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy said that the European Union summit has given the green light to Croatia's accession. "I have the honour to convey to you the good news on behalf of the twenty-seven heads of state and governments that Croatia will become the 28th Member State of the European Union," Mr Van Rompuy said, to Croatian Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor. He added that the treaty will be signed before the end of this year.

However, this is much later than Croatia first expected. In 2005 talks for Croatia's accession to the EU started and the review procedure, aimed at assessing candidate countries' progress toward membership, began. The Commission issued regular reports on Croatia and stated that full co-operation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) must continue. It was also stated that the last remaining inductee, retired Croat General Ante Gotovina, "must be located, arrested and transferred to The Hague." Furthermore, to join the EU, Croatia must meet requirements on reform of the judiciary and the transition to a market economy.



#### Case "General Ante Gotovina"

The case of General Ante Gotovina has played an important role in the process of Croatia's aim to join the European Union.

On 7 December 2005 the Spanish Police arrested Ante Gotovina and handed him over to The Hague to be tried for war crimes. At that time, EU Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn has welcomed the news of the arrest of Gotovina. However, had it not been for EU pressure linked to accession, Gotovina would probably never have been arrested. Gotovina has been accused by the ICTY of planning the killing of some 150 Serbs and the expulsion of thousands of others during the 1991–1995 war between Croatia and Yugoslavia and he was the Hague court's third most wanted suspect. Nevertheless, Gotovina pleaded not guilty to all counts of his indictment at the International Criminal Tribunal. In 2006, one year later than expected, negotiations over the case of Gotovina started and governmental representatives expressed hope to finish the negotiations within 3 years, so that EU entry in 2010 would be possible. However, the government was criticized by the ICTY prosecutor for failing to hand over documents related to the case and the trial took more than 3 years. Finally, on 15 April 2011 a ruling of the UN Court convicted Croatian ex-generals Ante Gotovina and Mladen Markac of war crimes. The Court found Gotovina guilty of persecution, murder and other war crimes against Serbs in Yugoslavia in the 1990s and for his role in Operation Storm in 1995. "The Croatian military committed acts of murder, cruel treatment, inhumane acts, plunder, persecution and deportation," judge Alphons Orié said. Gotovina was sentenced to 24 years in jail and Markac was also found guilty of all counts except one and sentenced to 18 years in jail. A third defendant, Ivan Cermak, was cleared of all charges.

Although the Gotovina and Markac verdicts were a step forward in the process of EU accession, public support for EU accession decreased significantly in Croatia. A poll carried out in September 2003 showed that 78 percent was in favour of Croatia's accession to the EU. In March 2006 only 53.2 percent of those polled supported the accession, and in April 2011 findings of a Gallup Balkan Monitor opinion poll showed that only 38 percent was in favour of EU accession. Of all polled, many people said they were afraid of economic dependency and losing their national identity. On 16 April 2011 thousands of people marched through the streets of Zagreb to protest against the conviction. Because Gotovina is considered a popular hero by most of the Croats for his role during the war, the verdict caused a lot of anger and outrage under the Croatian population. During the massive protests in April 2011 EU flags were burnt. Before Croatia can officially join the EU, it has to hold a legally binding referendum on EU accession within 30 days of the treaty being signed. However, it is expected that despite the decrease in public support for EU accession, most people will vote in favour of EU accession.

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#### NATO

In April 2009 Croatia joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). In 2002 Croatia, Albania and Macedonia already became part of the Membership Action Plan (MAP) of NATO and therefore became officially candidate countries. Croatia signed the NATO membership accords in 2008. In April 2010 Croatian Defence Ministry State Secretary Pjer Simunovic said in a press conference: "We can conclude that in the first year of its NATO membership, Croatia has proven to be a reliable NATO member, actively contributing to all levels of NATO activity."

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#### Minorities

According to the 2010 Croatia progress report from the European Commission and reports from Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, minorities in Croatia are, despite some slight developments, still being discriminated. The Roma population continues to face discrimination and significant social and economic obstacles, and measures undertaken by the authorities remain insufficient. The Croatian authorities also continue to fail to guarantee the rights of Croatian Serbs, many of whom were displaced during the 1991–1995 war. Croatian Serbs constitute the largest national minority in Croatia. In 2003 all Serbian refugees who fled the country between 1992 and 1995 were invited to return to Croatia. A law on the property of refugees from Croatia obliged the Croatian



government to provide housing care for those who return to Croatia. Options are to rent a house, to get a donation of materials to repair the houses that have been destroyed during war or to request materials and a place to build a house. However, many returnees were not able to benefit from the reconstruction programmes and they also faced problems in accessing employment. Nevertheless, there have been some slight developments. Improvements have been made in pre-school education for the Roma minority and the level of funding available for minority organisations has only been marginally reduced, despite the austerity measures. With regard to the Serb minority, there have been fewer reports of ethnically motivated attacks.

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#### Undefined borders with Slovenia

The border problem between Croatia and Slovenia goes back to Yugoslav time. A number of sea border areas have not been demarcated and some land border areas are in the land registers of both countries or neither. The row centres on access to international waters, which Slovenia treasures because its coastline is just 46 kilometres long. By contrast, Croatia's huge Adriatic coast stretches for 1,700 kilometres. However, Croatia claims that the border should be drawn down the middle of the bay of Piran, which Slovenia fears would deny its ships direct passage to the high seas. Towards the end of September 2004, the Croatian police force arrested 12 Slovenes in a disputed border area between the two countries, the Bay of Piran. The twelve arrested persons refused to identify themselves saying they were on Slovene grounds. There were 2 members of parliament among them. After this incident, Slovenia claimed it would withdraw its support for Croatia's accession to the European Union. The Croatian government condemned the incident and stated that the Slovenes provoked it. Slovenia is smaller than Croatia, but it holds a powerful position. Like any EU member state, it can veto Croatia's bid. In June 2009 the EU cancelled accession talks with Croatia after Slovenia blocked the closing of several chapters of Croatia's accession negotiations. However, the two sides came to a mutual agreement in September 2009 to allow for international mediation in the dispute, unlocking Croatia's EU accession path, but the undefined borders remain a challenging issue.

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#### Corruption

Corruption has been seen by many analysts as one of the main obstacles for Croatia to enter the European Union. In 2001, Croatia scored 3.9 (on a scale of 1-10, with 1 as highly corrupt and 10 as not at all corrupt) on the Corruption Perception Index of Transparency International. By 2006 the score had worsened to 3.4 and in 2010 Croatia was ranked 62 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index. In 2006 the government has established an anti-corruption council, that represents members of parliament, NGO's, media, employers, trade unions and the academic community. In 2009, the Office for the Fight Against Corruption and Organized Crime issued indictments against two former vice presidents of Croatia's Privatization Fund and a former government minister. However, Croatia takes measures to ban corruption from the country. In May 2011 it has arrested 23 customs officers and policemen on charges of committing more than 100 corruption-related crimes. Croatian Interior Minister Tomislav Karamarko said that this operation jointly launched by the anti-corruption agency USKOK, the Customs Office and the police is proof that Croatia is fighting corruption at all levels of society and by all means. On 10 December 2010 former Croatian Prime Minister Ivo Sanader was arrested near Salzburg on an international arrest warrant after leaving Croatia a day earlier. The Croatian Police issued an international arrest warrant hours after prosecutors asked the parliament to strip him of his immunity from prosecution amid suspicion of corruption. The former leader of the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) was in power from 2003 until he surprisingly stepped down in July 2009. He was expelled from the HDZ in January of this year but returned in October as an independent MP, enjoying immunity from prosecution. The involvement of high-ranked officials of the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) contributed to the historical; low election result of the party in 2011 parliamentary elections.



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## SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTIES

Social Democratic Party of Croatia  
(Socijaldemokratska partija Hrvatska, SDP)

The Social Democratic Party of Croatia is the strongest center-leftist opposition party in Croatia. It came about as a result of an amalgamation of the Social Democratic Party of Croatia (SDSH), chaired by Antun Vujic, and the Social Democratic Party of Croatia – Party of Democratic Reforms (SPH-SDP), a post-communist party chaired by Ivica Racan until early 2007, when Racan retired due to health issues. Deputy leader Zeljka Antunovic replaced him ever since. On 29 April 2007, Racan died of cancer. On 4 June 2007, Zoran Milanovic was elected as the new leader of the SDP.

The SDP advocates a policy of non-interference in internal affairs of neighbouring countries and the establishment of relations with neighbouring countries on the principle of mutual recognition of territorial integrity, sovereignty and respect for internationally recognized borders. The SDP has always been a multi-ethnic party with both Serb and Muslim members and it claims to believe in a multi-ethnic Croatia. It strives for integration in the West through the EU and NATO.

The SDP had been growing steadily since the elections in 1992 (5.4%) and 1995 (8.9%). In May 2004, SDP changed its statute and leadership, resulting in a higher percentage of young people and women actively involved in the party. The party claims to have approximately 35,000 members.

The SDP is a full member of the Socialist International and the Party of European Socialists (PES).

Party leader: Zoran Milanovic

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Social Democratic Action of Croatia (Akcija Socijaldemokrata Hrvatske, ASH)

The Social Democratic Action of Croatia is a left wing political party. It was established under the chairpersonship of Silvije Degen, in 1994, as a coalition of the Socialist Party of Croatia; the Social Democratic Party of Croatia chaired by Ivan Siber; the Social Democratic Union under Dragutin Palasek, and the Croatian People's Party chaired by Miko Tripalo. The party was unable to pass the 5% barrier in the 1995 elections, but won one seat in the elections of January 2000. The overriding goal of the party is the idea of a multi-ethnic society and the integration of Croatia in the EU. In fact the party is a very marginal player in Croatian politics.

Party leader: Zlatko Klaric

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## OTHER POLITICAL PARTIES

Croatian Democratic Union  
(Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica, HDZ)



The Croatian Democratic Union was founded in 1989 as a movement rather than a party – not unlike similar movements that were formed in other former communist countries after 1989. Subsequently, the party was transformed into a nationalist movement by Franjo Tudjman, the founder of the party. The HDZ won the 1992 general elections and was able to more or less consolidate its dominant position in parliament in the 1995 elections, and again in 1997. The HDZ's tight grip over the media proved effective in that respect. The party is made of, on the one hand, nationalist hard-liners focusing on Croatia's external – i.e. Bosnian–Herzegovinian – interests, and on the other hand slightly more moderate, market reform politicians who want to focus on Croatia's internal (economic) development. This results in a strange mixture of former communist nomenclature, ardent Catholics, convinced nationalists, Ustasha veterans seeking political shelter and market reform liberals.

Tudjman died on 10 December 1999, leaving the HDZ in shambles. Power struggles erupted not only between the moderate faction of the HDZ and the right wing hardliners, but also within the right wing faction. Several prominent members left the party, including the popular former Minister of Foreign Affairs Mate Granic. The victor of this party struggle was Ivo Sanader, who was re-elected party leader in 2002. His re-election could be seen as a victory for the more moderate faction within the party. His rival Ivic Pasalic was excluded from HDZ for saying that the party leadership was illegally elected, after he failed to win this election. The ultra-nationalist wing, however, is still very strong. HDZ has an observer status with the European People's Party. In July 2009, Jadranka Kosor took over as the head of the Croatian Democratic Union and Prime Minister of Croatia.

Party leader: Jadranka Kosor

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#### Croatian People's Party (Hrvatska Narodna Stranka – HNS)

The Croatian People's Party–Liberal Democrats, is a centrist party with a liberal orientation and the fourth biggest political party in Croatia. The party is a member of Liberal International and currently led by Radimir Čačić. In the November 2007 elections the party ran on its own and got around 7% of the vote and 7 seats in the Croatian Sabor. It remained in the opposition.

Party leader: Radimir Čačić

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#### Democratic Center (Demokratski Centar – DC)

After the January 2000 elections moderate HDZ politicians broke away and founded the DC. The party belongs to the political centre, and is led by the former Minister of Justice, Vesna Skare-Ožbolt. In the most recent 2007 general elections DC ran in coalition with the Green Party but failed to win any seats in the 153-seat parliament. Vesna Škare-Ožbolt also ran for President in the 2009–10 election as a formally independent candidate, but only managed to win 37,373 or 1.89% of votes in the first round, finishing 11th out of 12 candidates

Party leader: Vesna Skare-Ožbolt

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#### Croatian Social Liberal Party (Hrvatsa Socialno–Liberalna Stranka – HSLs)

The Croatian Social Liberal Party is a moderate centre-right party, advocating a mix of social and liberal policies with regard to the economy, the rights of the individual citizen and the state's role in society. The HSLs was founded in 1989. At that time it mixed liberal, democratic and nationalistic elements in its political programme, but over the years the nationalistic elements were dropped.

Between 1992 and 1995 HSLs was the strongest opposition party. From 2000 to 2002 it was SDP's main coalition



partner. Over the years the party has faced a number of internal struggles. In 1997 the HSLŠ split, giving rise to the more left-leaning Liberal Party (LS). In 2001 party leader Dražen Budisa stepped down to protest the government's decision to extradite two Croatian generals to the war tribunal in The Hague. He retook his position in 2002 after winning support of the HSLŠ convention. In July 2002 the party left the governing coalition over a conflict about the Krško nuclear power plant. Budisa and the party declined to support ratification of an agreement with Slovenia on the use and funding of the power plant, after which a number of HSLŠ ministers were forced to resign. HSLŠ ministers and legislators who supported the government, split off and formed LIBRA. The HSLŠ is a member party of the Liberal International and its current president, elected in November 2009, is Darinko Kosor.

Party leader: Darinko Kosor

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#### Croatian Peasant Party (Hrvatska Seljačka Stranka – HSS)

The Croatian Peasant Party is successor to Croatia's largest pre-war party, which was founded in 1904. The HSS can best be described as a moderate conservative party, in the sense that it advocates traditionalist values – family life being the cornerstone of society – and social and economic stability as prime objectives. On the administrative level the party proposes democratisation and acts against the tendency to centralise state interference in society. The HSS is fervently anti-Communist. Most of the electoral support for the HSS comes from the most traditional sectors of the Croatian body politic, the peasantry and active Catholics, which pushes the party closer to the right-wing HDZ. The party claims to have around 50.000 members.

Party leader: Josip Frišić

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#### Istrian Democratic Assembly (Istarski Demokratski Sabor – IDS)

The Istrian Democratic Assembly is a regionally organised party for the defence of Istrian interests, Istria always having been one of the richer regions of Croatia. The party advocates the federalisation of Croatia and holds liberal views. It has an overwhelming majority of seats in Istria's regional parliament.

Party leader: Ivan Jakovčić

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#### Croatian Party of Rights (Hrvatska Stranka Prava – HSP)

The Croatian Right's Party was founded in 1990. It has been seen as an extreme right wing, and nationalist party led by Daniel Srčić. Presently, they are seen as a conservative party of the centre right. The party has a tendency to fragment. Although its role is marginal at the national level, it is regarded as an active parliamentary actor and debater and does hold some key council positions in the war-affected areas.

Party leader: Daniel Srčić

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#### Independent Democratic Serbian Party (Samostalna Demokratska Srpska Stranka – SDSS)

The Independent Serbian Party (SSS) was founded in Zagreb on 6 October 1995. The Independent Democratic Serbian Party (SDSS) was formed as a result of the association of all progressive Serbian forces and political options which were active in the region of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja, and Western Sirmium from 1991 to 1997 and their joining with the Zagreb-based Independent Serbian Party (SSS). It shapes and



integrates the political will and activity of the largest part of the Serb community of the Republic of Croatia. The SDSS is not only a Serbian national party, but also a democratic party with a liberal and social democratic platform.

Party's leader: Vojislav Stanimirovic

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#### Party of Democratic Action of Croatia (Stranka Demokratske Akcije Hrvatske – SDA HR)

The Party of Democratic Action of Croatia (SDAH) was established on June 20, 1990, under the name of Party of Democratic Action – Croatian Branch, its most important goal being the affirmation and preservation of the identity of the Bosniac people and the preservation of Bosnia and Herzegovina within the framework of the state existing at that time. Since February, 1992, the party has been active under its present name. The SDA HR is a political organization which supports the achievement of political, social, economic, cultural, and national rights of the Bosniac people in Croatia.

Party's leader: Semso Tankovic

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#### Croatian Party of Pensioners (Hrvatska Stranka Umirovljenika– HSU)

The Croatian Pensioners' Party (HSU) was established on April 29, 1996. The basic programme principle and goal of the political activities of the party are directed toward the betterment of the social and economic position of the retired as one of the most numerous and the most impoverished groups of citizens, within the framework of creating a wealthier Croatian state. In 2009, the economic crisis caused the government of Jadranka Kosor to start talks about extra crisis taxation and after a row with the finance minister Ivan Šuker, the HSU withdrew their support for the government.

Party's leader: Silvano Hrelja

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#### Croatian Democratic Peasant Party (Hrvatska demokratska Seljacka stranka – HDSS)

The founding assembly of the Croatian Democratic Peasant Party (HDSS) was held in Zagreb on September 18, 1994, and the party was officially registered on July 24, 1996.

The HDSS programme reflects its right-centre orientation based on the nation-building ideas, adapted to the current situation in Croatia, as well as the party's openness and commitment to all Croatian citizens. HDSS supports the concept of an integral, independent and democratic Croatian state. It is primarily concerned with the issues of economy.

Party's leader: Ivan Martan

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## BIOGRAPHIES

Ivo Josipovič  
President of Croatia

Ivo Josipovič was born on 28 August, 1957, in Zagreb. In 1980, he graduated from the Faculty of Law from the University of Zagreb. In 1985, he obtained his Master of Arts degree in criminal law and in 1994 his PH.D. in criminal sciences. In 1984, he started working as lecturer at the University of Zagreb. Josipovič became Professor in



criminal procedure law, international crime law and misdemeanour law. He has also published more than 85 professional and academic papers in both domestic and international papers. He helped, furthermore, to save 180 Croatian prisoners of war from Serbian concentration camps and has represented Croatia before the UN War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague. Next to being a law Professor, Josipović also completed a music education in the Composition Department of the Zagreb Music Academy. He graduated from the academy in 1983 and from 1987 to 2004 he was a lecturer here.

From 1980, Josipović was member of the Communists' Union of Croatia. He played an important role in the democratic transformation of the union, being one of the creators of the first statute of the Social Democratic Party of Croatia (SDP). In 1994, he left politics as well as the party to completely devote himself to law and music. Due to his political ambitions, however, Josipović returned to politics in 2003 following an invitation of the acting Prime Minister, Ivica Račan. He then became Member of Croatia's Parliament (MP) with the SDP, as well as Vice-President of the SDP Representatives' Club in Parliament. In 2005, during his mandate, Josipović was also a representative in the Assembly of the City of Zagreb. In 2007, he was re-elected MP.

On 12 July, 2009, Josipović was nominated one of SDP candidates in the Presidential election. After he won a primary against his party colleague, Ljubo Jurčić, he became the official candidate for his party in the Presidential race. On 18 February, 2010, Josipović was sworn in as Croatia's new President, to replace outgoing President Stjepan Mešić. He pledged to fight corruption and organised crime and to work for economic reforms.

Ivo Josipović is married and has one daughter.

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Jadranka Kosor  
Prime Minister of Croatia (outgoing)

Jadranka Kosor was born on 1 July, 1953, in Pakrac. She graduated from the Faculty of Law in Zagreb. From 1972, she worked as a journalist and correspondent for the Croatian newspaper Večernji list and for Radio Zagreb. During the Croatian War of Independence from 1991 to 1995, Kosor covered war related subject in her radio show, such as refugee issues. During this time Kosor also briefly worked as a correspondent for the BBC. She has also published several books on the Croatian War of Independence.

From 1995 to 2000, Kosor was elected Member of Parliament (MP) for the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ). Simultaneously, she was the Vice-President of the House of Representatives. Between 1995 and 1997, she was the vice-president of the HDZ. She was president of the HDZ Women Association "Katarina Zrinski" from 1998 to 2002. In 2002, Kosor was elected Deputy President of the HDZ. She held this position again between 2002 and 2009. In 2003, she was appointed Vice Prime Minister and Minister of the Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity.

Kosor was nominated Presidential candidate for the HDZ in the elections in 2005. In the first round she gained a few more votes than Boris Mikšić and went to the run-off, in which, however, she lost against Stjepan Mešić. On 1 July, 2009, Ivo Sanader resigned as Prime Minister and suggested to appoint Kosor as his follower. On 6 July, she was named the country's first female PM by the Parliament.

Jadranka Kosor speaks fluently English. She has one son.

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Zoran Milanović  
Leader of the Social Democratic Party of Croatia (prime minister to be)

Zoran Milanović was born on 30 October, 1966, in Zagreb. He went to the University of Zagreb in 1986. In 1993, he started working at the Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A year later, as part of a United Nations peace mission Milanović he went to Nagorno-Karabakh. In 1996, he started working as an advisor at the Croatian mission to NATO and the European Union in Brussels. In 1999, Milanović became member of the Social Democratic Party of Croatia



(SDP). In 2000, he became involved in liaison with NATO following the electoral victory of the SDP that year. He was appointed assistant to Foreign Minister, Tonino Picula, in 2003. In the same year elections took place after which Milanović left this post.

On 2 June, 2007, Milanović was elected by the party Congress president of the SDP, despite the fact that in the beginning he was considered an outsider. This was due to the fact that of all the candidates within the party, Milanović's period was the shortest. In the election he ran against Željka Antunović (acting Party President since former leader Ivica Račan's resignation), Milan Bandić and Tonino Picula. In both rounds he won by a large margin, and became the new leader of the SDP.

After the Parliamentary elections in 2007, Milanović made himself a candidate for the premiership, without consulting the party's main Committee. Although the party gained the best results ever, winning 56 Parliamentary seats, Milanović did not succeed in bringing his party to victory. The ruling HDZ party managed to form the government quicker and thus the SDP remained in the opposition. On 10 May, 2008, he was re-elected SDP leader for a four-year mandate with a large majority of the votes.

Zoran Milanović is married and has two children. He speaks English, French, and Russian.

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#### Stjepan Mesić Former President of Croatia

Stjepan Mesić was born on 24 December, 1934, in Orahovica in eastern Croatia. At the end of his school career he became member of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. He graduated from the Faculty of Law from the University of Zagreb in 1961, and afterwards completed an internship at the municipal court in Orahovica and the public attorney's office at Našice. In 1964, Mesić moved to Zagreb and started working as manager for the company "Univerzal". Two years later, he ran as an independent candidate in the election for his municipal council and defeated two other candidates.

In the 1970s, Mesić supported the nationalist Croatian Spring movement. He was charged for being member of a Croatian terrorist organisation and sentenced to 20 years in jail. Following his appeal the trial was prolonged. In 1975, Mesić was nevertheless imprisoned for one year. In 1989 he again became active in opposition politics, after he joined Franjo Tuđman and other dissidents. Mesić became the Secretary of the new pro-independence and nationalist Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ). In 1990, in the first multi-party elections in Croatia after World War II Mesić was elected candidate for the HDZ. He then became the General Secretary of the party and later the Prime Minister of the country, which position he held from May to August 1990. Two years later, he left the HDZ and in 1997 joined the small liberal Croatian People's Party (HNS). In this party he became the executive Vice-President. By this time, Mesić has been a main figure in right-wing, left-wing and liberal political parties.

The HNS joined several other opposition parties in 1999 to run in the general elections, which the HDZ eventually lost. After HDZ party leader and then President of Croatia Franjo Tuđman died, Mesić's led a populist campaign in the following year and won in the run-off. He was officially inaugurated as President on 18 February, 2000. In his six-party coalition government Mesić promised to implement democratic reforms, re-establish relations with its neighboring countries and integrate Croatia into the EU and NATO. In 2003, he visited Serbia and Montenegro, which was the first meeting between the former conflicting countries. He was re-elected in 2005. Due to corruption in the government Croatia's way toward EU accession was slowed. But in 2009, Mesić managed to pull Croatia into the NATO. His second term ended in February, 2010, after he was succeeded by the Social Democrat, Ivo Josipović.

Stjepan Mesić is married and has two daughters.