

## PREFACE

In 1992 the Republic of Croatia became an internationally recognized state and a member of the United Nations Organization. Centuries long aspiration of the Croatian people became a reality on the political map of both Europe and the World.

As a new full member of the international community, Croatia was faced with a number of duties and tasks. Among Croatia's primary course of action was to enter the international exchange of information, cartographic information being no doubt an important part of it. It was with this in mind that the *Miroslav Krleža Lexicographical Institute* compiled and published *A Concise Atlas of the Republic of Croatia (and of the Republic of Bosnia and Hercegovina)*.

The Atlas is intended for readers abroad, no matter whether their interest in Croatia is purely professional, or of a private nature. It has been also aimed at the numerous Croats in diaspora who, until recently, have never had an atlas of their motherland published in a language spoken all over the world. The Atlas outlines geographical, demographic and economic features of Croatia. It includes information on the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia and also sheds light on the history of the Croatian people and their cultural heritage.

The Atlas focuses on topographic and thematic maps. The topographic maps are drawn in the scale of 1:500 000 and consist of 11 double-page plates. The largest towns and their environs are to be found on separate maps drawn in the scale of 1:200 000. In order to make things easier for the reader, an index of geographical names has been supplied. Due to geographical, historical and geopolitical interrelation and owing to spatial distribution of Croatian people as well as the joint war reality, the territory of Croatia's neighboring, and newly-independent state, the Republic of Bosnia and Hercegovina has been covered by the maps too. Furthermore, the inclusion of these maps seemed appropriate in view of the media's interest in the war in both Croatia and Bosnia and Hercegovina. This has been also indicated by the title of the Atlas.

The thematic or special subject maps deal almost exclusively with the territory of the Republic of Croatia. Only in cases when specific themes are dealt with (Croatian diaspora, dialects of the Croatian language, historical maps and transport), the contents of thematic maps include the territory of the Republic of Bosnia and Hercegovina. Each thematic map is coupled with a short text lending additional information.

The *History* chapter carries a concise summary of the main events which occurred before, and especially after, the Croats had settled down in the new homeland. The historical maps feature the territorial changes the Croatian state passed through and historically forced disjunction of the Croatian lands.

The contents also include basic information concerning state symbols and the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia. Fundamental statistics about the Republic of Croatia, and, partially, the Republic of Bosnia and Hercegovina, are shown in tables.

In compiling and completing the book, the *Miroslav Krleža Lexicographical Institute* relied, to a certain degree, on the *Zemljopisni atlas Republike Hrvatske* (Geographical Atlas of the Republic of Croatia) published in 1992 as a joint effort with the *Školska knjiga* publishing house from Zagreb. A number of topographic and thematic maps from that edition have been adapted for this Atlas, whereas other maps as well as chapters on state symbols, history, Constitution, index and statistical tables have been compiled and written anew. In compiling the maps, official data, stemming primarily from the 1991 census, were used. Certain thematic maps have been drawn up on the basis of results and data obtained through scientific research carried out by their authors.

For the most part, the Atlas was compiled at the *Miroslav Krleža Lexicographical Institute*, but the final result would be incomplete were it not for contribution from other eminent experts in the field. The *Miroslav Krleža Lexicographical Institute* would like to thank all those who contributed to the Atlas and whose efforts have made this project possible. The publisher sincerely hopes that this Atlas will serve its readers as a concise and contemporary handbook able to lend new insights and an abundance of novel facts about the young European state and country called the Republic of Croatia.

Editor

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