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# Croatia

**Croatia** (/kroʊˈeɪʃə/ (listen), *kroh-AY-shə*; Croatian: *Hrvatska*, pronounced [xřva:tska:]), officially the **Republic of Croatia** (Croatian: *Republika Hrvatska*, (listen)), [e] is a country at the crossroads of Central and Southeast Europe on the Adriatic Sea. Croatia borders Slovenia to the northwest, Hungary to the northeast, Serbia to the east, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro to the southeast, and shares a maritime border with Italy to the west and southwest. Its capital and largest city, Zagreb, forms one of the country's primary subdivisions, with twenty counties. Croatia has an area of 56,594 square kilometres (21,851 square miles) and a population of nearly 3.9 million.

The Croats arrived in the 6th century and organised the territory into two duchies by the 9th century. Croatia was first internationally recognised as independent on 7 June 879 during the reign of Duke Branimir. Tomislav became the first king by 925, elevating Croatia to the status of a kingdom. During the succession crisis after the Trpimirović dynasty ended, Croatia entered a personal union with Hungary in 1102. In 1527, faced with Ottoman conquest, the Croatian Parliament elected Ferdinand I of Austria to the Croatian throne. In October 1918, the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, independent from Austria-Hungary, was proclaimed in Zagreb, and in December 1918, merged into the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Following the Axis invasion of Yugoslavia in April 1941, most of Croatia was incorporated into a Nazi installed puppet state, the Independent State of Croatia. A resistance movement led to the creation of the Socialist Republic of Croatia, which after the war became a founding member and constituent of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. On 25 June 1991, Croatia declared independence, and the War of Independence was fought for four years following the declaration.

A sovereign state, Croatia is a republic governed under a parliamentary system. It is a member of the European Union, the United Nations, the Council of Europe, NATO, the World Trade Organization, and a founding member of the Union for the Mediterranean. An active participant in United Nations peacekeeping, Croatia has contributed troops to the International Security Assistance Force and took a nonpermanent seat on the United Nations Security Council for the 2008–2009 term. Since 2000, the

## Republic of Croatia

*Republika  
Hrvatska* (Croatian)<sup>[a]</sup>



Flag

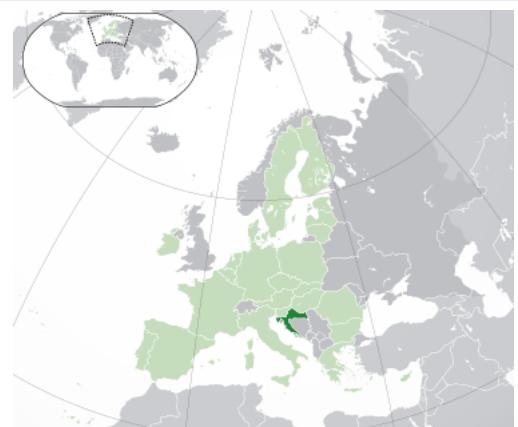


Coat of arms

**Anthem:** "Lijepa naša domovino"  
("Our Beautiful Homeland")

0:00

MENU



- Show globe
- Show map of Europe
- Show all

Location of Croatia (dark green)  
– in Europe (green & dark grey)  
– in the European Union (green)

**Capital** Zagreb<sup>[b]</sup>  
and largest city 45°48'N 16°0'E

**Official languages** Croatian<sup>[c]</sup>

**Writing system** Latin<sup>[d]</sup>

**Ethnic groups** 90.42% Croats  
(2011<sup>[4]</sup>) 4.36% Serbs  
5.22% Others

**Religion** (2011) 91.06% Christianity  
—86.28% Catholicism

Croatian government has invested in infrastructure, especially transport routes and facilities along the Pan-European corridors.

Croatia is classified by the World Bank as a high-income economy and ranks very high on the Human Development Index. Service, industrial sectors, and agriculture dominate the economy, respectively. Tourism is a significant source of revenue, with Croatia ranked among the 20 most popular tourist destinations. The state controls a part of the economy, with substantial government expenditure. The European Union is Croatia's most important trading partner. Croatia provides social security, universal health care, and tuition-free primary and secondary education while supporting culture through public institutions and corporate investments in media and publishing.

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—4.44%	<u>Orthodoxy</u>
—0.34%	<u>Protestantism</u>
4.57% No religion	<u>religion</u>
4.37% Others	<u>Others</u>
<b>Demony(s)</b>	<u>Croatian</u>
<b>Government</b>	<u>Unitary parliamentary republic</u>
• President	<u>Zoran Milanović</u>
• Prime Minister	<u>Andrej Plenković</u>
• Speaker of Parliament	<u>Gordan Jandroković</u>
<b>Legislature</b>	<u>Croatian Parliament</u>
<b>Establishment</b>	
• Duchy	9th century
• Kingdom	925
• Croatia in personal union with Hungary	1102
• Joined Habsburg Monarchy	1 January 1527
• Secession from Austria-Hungary	29 October 1918
• Creation of Yugoslavia	4 December 1918
• Declaration of independence	25 June 1991 <sup>[5]</sup>
• Erdut Agreement	12 November 1995
• Joined the European Union	1 July 2013
<b>Area</b>	
• Total	56,594 km <sup>2</sup> (21,851 sq mi) (124th)
• Water (%)	1.09
<b>Population</b>	
• 2021 estimate	▼ 3,888,529 <sup>[6]</sup> (128th)
• 2011 census	4,284,889 <sup>[7]</sup>
• Density	73/km <sup>2</sup> (189.1/sq mi) (109th)
<b>GDP (PPP)</b>	2022 estimate
• Total	▲ \$135 billion [1] ( <a href="https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/weo-data-base/2021/October">https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/weo-data-base/2021/October</a> )

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## Etymology

The name of Croatia derives from Medieval Latin *Croātia*. Itself a derivation of North-West Slavic \**Xrovat-*, by liquid metathesis from Common Slavic period \**Xorvat*, from proposed Proto-Slavic \**X̥rvátъ* which possibly comes from Old Persian \**xaraxwat-*,<sup>[11]</sup> the root word being a 3rd-century Scytho-Sarmatian form attested in the Tanaïs Tablets as Χορόθος (*Khoroáthos*, alternate forms comprise *Khoróatos* and *Khorouáthos*).<sup>[11]</sup> The origin of the name is uncertain but is thought to be a Gothic or Indo-Aryan term assigned to a Slavic tribe.<sup>[12]</sup> The oldest preserved record of the Croatian ethnonym \**x̥rvatъ* is of the variable stem, attested in the Baška tablet in style звънъмъръ кралъ хъватъскъ ("Zvonimir, Croatian king").<sup>[13]</sup> Although it was archaeologically confirmed that the ethnonym *Croatorum* is mentioned in a church inscription found in Bijaći near Trogir dated to the end of the 8th or early 9th century,<sup>[14]</sup> the presumably oldest preserved stone inscription is the 9th-century Branimir inscription found near Benkovac, where Duke Branimir is styled *Dux Cruatorum*, likely dated between 879 and 892, during his rule.<sup>[15]</sup> The Latin term *Chroatorum* is attributed to a charter of Duke Trpimir I of Croatia, dated to 852 in a 1568 copy of a lost original, but it's not certain if the original was indeed older than the Branimir inscription.<sup>[16][17]</sup>

## History

### Prehistory

The area known as Croatia today was inhabited throughout the prehistoric period. Fossils of Neanderthals dating to the middle Palaeolithic period have been unearthed in northern Croatia, with the most famous and the best presented site in Krapina.<sup>[18]</sup> Remnants of several Neolithic and Chalcolithic cultures were found in all regions of the country.<sup>[19]</sup> The largest proportion of the sites is in the river valleys of northern Croatia, and the most significant cultures whose presence

er/weo-report?c=960,&s=NGDPD, PPPGDP,NGDP DPC,PPPPC,&sy=2019&ey=2026 &ssm=0&scsm=1&scc=0&ssd=1&sc=0&sic=0&sort=country&ds=.&br=1) (80th)
• Per capita  \$34,093 (49th)
<b>GDP</b> (nominal) 2022 estimate
• Total  \$68 billion (81st)
• Per capita  \$17,222 [2] ( <a href="#">https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/weo-database/2021/October/weo-report?c=960,&amp;s=NGDPD,PPPGDP,NGDPDP,C,PPPPC,&amp;sy=2019&amp;ey=2026&amp;ssm=0&amp;scsm=1&amp;scc=0&amp;ssd=1&amp;ssc=0&amp;sic=0&amp;sort=country&amp;ds=.&amp;br=1) (66th)</a> )
<b>Gini</b> (2020)  28.3 <sup>[8]</sup> low
<b>HDI</b> (2019)  0.851 <sup>[9]</sup> very high · 43rd
<b>Currency</b> Croatian kuna (HRK)
<b>Time zone</b> UTC+1 (CET)
• Summer (DST) UTC+2 (CEST)
<b>Date format</b> dd. mm. yyyy. (CE)
<b>Driving side</b> right
<b>Calling code</b> +385
<b>ISO 3166 code</b> HR
<b>Internet TLD</b> .hr and .eu



Left: Vučedol culture, Vučedol dove made between 2800 and 2500 BCE  
Right: Croatian Apoxyomenos, Ancient Greek statue, 2nd or 1st century BC.

Greek colonies were established on the islands of Hvar,<sup>[23]</sup> Korčula, and Vis.<sup>[24]</sup> In 9 AD, the territory of today's Croatia became part of the Roman Empire. Emperor Diocletian was native to the region, and he had a large palace built in Split, to which he retired after his abdication in AD 305.<sup>[25]</sup>

During the 5th century, the last de jure Western Roman Emperor Julius Nepos ruled his small realm from the palace after fleeing Italy in 475.<sup>[26]</sup> The period ends with Avar and Croat invasions in the first half of the 7th century and the destruction of almost all Roman towns. Roman survivors retreated to more favourable sites on the coast, islands, and mountains. The city of Dubrovnik was founded by such survivors from Epidaurum.<sup>[27]</sup>

## Middle Ages



Kingdom of Croatia c. 925, during the reign of King Tomislav

Borna, as attested by chronicles of Einhard starting in 818. The record represents the first document of Croatian realms, vassal states of Francia at the time.<sup>[33]</sup>

was discovered include Baden, Starčevo, and Vučedol cultures.<sup>[20][21]</sup> The Iron Age left traces of the early Illyrian Hallstatt culture and the Celtic La Tène culture.<sup>[22]</sup>

## Antiquity

Much later, the region was settled by Illyrians and Liburnians, while the first



The 1st century-built Pula Arena was the sixth largest amphitheatre in the Roman Empire

The ethnogenesis of Croats is uncertain, and there are several competing theories, Slavic and Iranian being the most frequently put forward. The most widely accepted of these, the Slavic theory, proposes migration of White Croats from White Croatia during the Migration Period. Conversely, the Iranian theory proposes Iranian origin, based on Tanais Tablets containing Ancient Greek inscriptions of given names *Xopoúathos*, *Xopoáthos*, and *Xopóathos* (Khoroúathos, Khoroáthos, and Khoróathos) and their interpretation as anthroponyms of Croatian people.<sup>[28]</sup>

According to the work *De Administrando Imperio* written by the 10th-century Byzantine Emperor Constantine VII, Croats had arrived in the Roman province of Dalmatia in the first half of the 7th century after they defeated the Avars.<sup>[29][30][31]</sup> However, that claim is disputed, and competing hypotheses date the event between the 6th and the 9th centuries.<sup>[32]</sup> Eventually, a dukedom was formed, Duchy of Croatia, ruled by

The Frankish overlordship ended during the reign of Mislav two decades later.<sup>[34]</sup> According to Constantine VII Christianization of Croats began in the 7th century, but the claim is disputed, and generally, Christianization is associated with the 9th century.<sup>[35]</sup> The first native Croatian ruler recognised by the Pope was Duke Branimir, who received papal recognition from Pope John VIII on 7 June 879.<sup>[15]</sup>

Tomislav was the first king of Croatia, styled as such in a letter of Pope John X in 925. Tomislav defeated Hungarian and Bulgarian invasions, spreading the influence of Croatian kings.<sup>[36]</sup> The medieval Croatian kingdom reached its peak in the 11th century during the reigns of Petar Krešimir IV (1058–1074) and Dmitar Zvonimir (1075–1089).<sup>[37]</sup> When Stjepan II died in 1091, ending the Trpimirović dynasty, Dmitar Zvonimir's brother-in-law Ladislaus I of Hungary claimed the Croatian crown. This led to a war and personal union of Croatia and Hungary in 1102 under Coloman.<sup>[38]</sup>



Coronation of King Tomislav by Oton Iveković

For the next four centuries, the Kingdom of Croatia was ruled by the Sabor (parliament) and a ban (viceroy) appointed by the king.<sup>[39]</sup> This period saw the rise of influential nobility such as the Frankopan and Šubić families to prominence, and ultimately numerous Bans from the two families.<sup>[40]</sup> There was an increasing threat of Ottoman conquest and a struggle against the Republic of Venice for control of coastal areas. The Venetians controlled most of Dalmatia by 1428, except the city-state of Dubrovnik, which became independent. Ottoman conquests led to the 1493 Battle of Krbava field and the 1526 Battle of Mohács, both ending in decisive Ottoman victories. King Louis II died at Mohács, and in 1527, the Croatian Parliament met in Cetin and chose Ferdinand I of the House of Habsburg as the new ruler of Croatia, under the condition that he protects Croatia against the Ottoman Empire while respecting its political rights.<sup>[39][41]</sup>

## Personal union with Hungary (1102) and Habsburg Monarchy (1527)

Following the decisive Ottoman victories, Croatia was split into civilian and military territories, with the partition formed in 1538. The military territories would become known as the Croatian Military Frontier and were under direct Habsburg control. Ottoman advances in Croatia continued until the 1593 Battle of Sisak, the first decisive Ottoman defeat, and stabilisation of borders.<sup>[41]</sup> During the Great Turkish War (1683–1699), Slavonia was regained, but western Bosnia, which had been part of Croatia before the Ottoman conquest, remained outside Croatian control.<sup>[41]</sup> The present-day border between the two countries is a remnant of this outcome. Dalmatia, the southern part of the border, was similarly defined by the Fifth and the Seventh Ottoman–Venetian Wars.<sup>[42]</sup>



Croatian Ban Nikola Šubić Zrinski is honoured as a national hero for his defence of Szigetvár against the Ottoman Empire

The Ottoman wars instigated large demographic changes. During the 16th century, Croats from western and northern Bosnia, Lika, Krbava, the area between the rivers of Una and Kupa, and especially from western Slavonia, migrated towards Austria and the present-day Burgenland. Croats are direct descendants of these settlers.<sup>[43][44]</sup> To replace the fleeing population, the Habsburgs encouraged the people of Bosnia to provide military service in the Military Frontier.

The Croatian Parliament supported King Charles III's Pragmatic Sanction and signed their own Pragmatic Sanction in 1712.<sup>[45]</sup> Subsequently, the emperor pledged to respect all privileges and political rights of the Kingdom of Croatia, and Queen Maria Theresa made significant contributions to Croatian matters, such as introducing compulsory education.

Between 1797 and 1809, the First French Empire gradually occupied the entire eastern Adriatic coastline and a substantial part of its hinterland, ending the Venetian and the Ragusan republics, establishing the Illyrian Provinces.<sup>[41]</sup> In response, the Royal Navy blockaded the Adriatic Sea, leading to the Battle of Vis in 1811.<sup>[46]</sup> The Illyrian Provinces were captured by the Austrians in 1813 and absorbed by the Austrian Empire following the Congress of Vienna in 1815. This led to the formation of the Kingdom of Dalmatia and the restoration of the Croatian Littoral to the Kingdom of Croatia, now both under the same crown.<sup>[47]</sup> The 1830s and 1840s saw romantic nationalism inspire the Croatian National Revival, a political and cultural campaign advocating the unity of all South Slavs in the empire. Its primary focus was establishing a standard language as a counterweight to Hungarian while promoting Croatian literature and culture.<sup>[48]</sup> During the Hungarian Revolution of 1848, Croatia sided with the Austrians, Ban Josip Jelačić helping defeat the Hungarian forces in 1849 and ushering a Germanization policy.<sup>[49]</sup>

By the 1860s, failure of the policy became apparent, leading to the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867. The creation of a personal union between the Austrian Empire and the Kingdom of Hungary followed. The treaty left Croatia's status to Hungary, and it was resolved by the Croatian–Hungarian Settlement of 1868 when kingdoms of Croatia and Slavonia were united.<sup>[50]</sup> The Kingdom of Dalmatia remained under de facto Austrian control, while Rijeka retained the status of Corpus separatum introduced in 1779.<sup>[38]</sup>

After Austria-Hungary occupied Bosnia and Herzegovina following the 1878 Treaty of Berlin, the Military Frontier was abolished. The Croatian and Slavonian sectors of the Frontier returned to Croatia in 1881,<sup>[41]</sup> under provisions of the Croatian–Hungarian Settlement.<sup>[51][52]</sup> Renewed efforts to reform Austria-Hungary, entailing federalisation with Croatia as a federal unit, were stopped by the advent of World War I.<sup>[53]</sup>



The Kingdom of Croatia-Slavonia was an autonomous kingdom within Austria-Hungary created in 1868 following the Croatian–Hungarian Settlement.

## First Yugoslavia (1918–1941)



Stjepan Radić, leader of the Croatian Peasant Party who advocated federal organisation of the Yugoslavia, at the assembly in Dubrovnik, 1928

On 29 October 1918 the Croatian Parliament (*Sabor*) declared independence and decided to join the newly formed State of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs,<sup>[39]</sup> which in turn entered into union with the Kingdom of Serbia on 4 December 1918 to form the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes.<sup>[54]</sup> The Croatian Parliament never ratified a decision to unite with Serbia and Montenegro.<sup>[39]</sup> The 1921 constitution defining the country as a unitary state and abolition of Croatian Parliament and historical administrative divisions effectively ended Croatian autonomy.

The new constitution was opposed by the most widely supported national political party—the Croatian Peasant Party (HSS) led by Stjepan Radić.<sup>[55]</sup>

The political situation deteriorated further as Radić was assassinated in the National Assembly in 1928, leading to the dictatorship of King Alexander in January 1929.<sup>[56]</sup> The dictatorship formally ended in 1931 when the king imposed a more unitarian constitution and changed the name to Yugoslavia.<sup>[57]</sup> The HSS, now led by Vladko Maček, continued to advocate federalisation of Yugoslavia, resulting in the Cvetković–Maček Agreement of August 1939 and the autonomous Banovina of Croatia. The Yugoslav government retained control of the defence, internal security, foreign affairs, trade, and transport while other matters were left to the Croatian Sabor and a crown-appointed Ban.<sup>[58]</sup>

## World War II

In April 1941, Yugoslavia was occupied by Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. Following the invasion, most of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the region of Syrmia were incorporated into the Independent State of Croatia (NDH), a Nazi-backed puppet state. Parts of Dalmatia were annexed by Italy and the northern Croatian regions of Baranja and Međimurje by Hungary.<sup>[59]</sup> The NDH regime was led by Ante Pavelić and ultranationalist Ustaše, a fringe movement in pre-war Croatia.<sup>[60]</sup> With German and Italian military and political support,<sup>[61]</sup> the regime introduced racial laws and enacted a genocide campaign against Serbs, Jews, and Roma.<sup>[62]</sup> Many were imprisoned in concentration camps, the largest of which was the Jasenovac complex.<sup>[63]</sup> Anti-fascist Croats were targeted by the regime as well.<sup>[64]</sup> Several concentration camps (most notably the Rab, Gonars and Molat camps) were also established in Italian-occupied territories, mostly for Slovenes and Croats.<sup>[63]</sup> At the same time, the Yugoslav Royalist and Serbian nationalist Chetniks pursued a genocidal campaign against Croats and Muslims,<sup>[62][65]</sup> aided by fascist Italy.<sup>[66]</sup>



German dictator Adolf Hitler with Quisling and dictator of the Independent State of Croatia Ante Pavelić at the Berghof outside Berchtesgaden, Germany

A resistance movement soon emerged. On 22 June 1941,<sup>[67]</sup> the 1st Sisak Partisan Detachment was formed near Sisak, the first military unit formed by a resistance movement in occupied Europe.<sup>[68]</sup> That sparked the beginning of the Yugoslav Partisan movement, a communist multi-ethnic anti-fascist resistance group led by Josip Broz Tito.<sup>[69]</sup> In ethnic terms, Croats were the second-largest contributors to the Partisan movement after the Serbs.<sup>[70]</sup> In per capita terms, Croats contributed proportionately to their population within Yugoslavia as a whole.<sup>[71]</sup> By May 1944 (according to Tito), Croats made up 30% of the Partisan's ethnic composition, despite making up 22% of the population.<sup>[70]</sup> The movement grew fast, and at the Tehran Conference in December 1943, the Partisans gained recognition from the Allies.<sup>[72]</sup>

With Allied support in logistics, equipment, training and airpower, and with the assistance of Soviet troops taking part in the 1944 Belgrade Offensive, the Partisans gained control of Yugoslavia and the border regions of Italy and Austria by May 1945. Members of the NDH armed forces and other Axis troops, as well as civilians, were in retreat towards Austria. Following their surrender, many were killed in the Yugoslav death march of Nazi collaborators.<sup>[73]</sup> In the following years, ethnic Germans faced persecution in Yugoslavia, and many were interned in camps.<sup>[74]</sup>

The political aspirations of the Partisan movement were reflected in the State Anti-fascist Council for the National Liberation of Croatia, which developed in 1943 as the bearer of Croatian statehood and later transformed into the Parliament of Croatia in 1945, and AVNOJ—its counterpart at the Yugoslav level.<sup>[75][76]</sup>



Celebration of the International Workers' Day in Zagreb in 1946. Cardinal Aloysius Stepinac and People's Premier of Croatia Dr. Vladimir Bakaric with other guests.

Based on the studies on wartime and post-war casualties by demographer Vladimir Žerjavić and statistician Bogoljub Kočović, a total of 295,000 people from the territory of Croatia (not including territories ceded from Italy after the war) lost their lives, which amounted to 7.3% of the population,<sup>[77]</sup> among whom were 125–137,000 Serbs, 118–124,000 Croats, 16–17,000 Jews, and 15,000 Roma.<sup>[78][79]</sup> In addition, from areas joined to Croatia after the war, a total of 32,000 people died, among whom 16,000 were Italians and 15,000 were Croats.<sup>[80]</sup> Approximately 200,000 Croats from the entirety of Yugoslavia (including Croatia) and abroad were killed in total throughout the war and its immediate aftermath, a per capita loss of 5.4% of the population.<sup>[81][82]</sup>

## (1945–1991)

After World War II, Croatia became a single-party socialist federal unit of the SFR Yugoslavia, ruled by the Communists, but having a degree of autonomy within the federation. In 1967, Croatian authors and linguists published a Declaration on the Status and Name of the Croatian Standard Language demanding equal treatment for Croatian.<sup>[83]</sup> The declaration contributed to a national movement seeking greater civil rights and redistribution of the Yugoslav economy, culminating in the Croatian Spring of 1971, suppressed by Yugoslav leadership.<sup>[84]</sup> Still, the 1974 Yugoslav Constitution gave increased autonomy to federal units, basically fulfilling a goal of the Croatian Spring and providing a legal basis for independence of the federative constituents.<sup>[85]</sup>



Josip Broz Tito led SFR Yugoslavia from 1944 to 1980; Pictured: Tito with the US president Richard Nixon in the White House, 1971

Following the death of Yugoslav President Josip Broz Tito in 1980, the political situation in Yugoslavia deteriorated, with national tension fanned by the 1986 SANU Memorandum and the 1989 coups in Vojvodina, Kosovo, and Montenegro.<sup>[86][87]</sup> In January 1990, the Communist Party fragmented along national lines, with the Croatian faction demanding a looser federation.<sup>[88]</sup> In the same year, the first multi-party elections were held in Croatia, with Franjo Tuđman's win raising nationalist tensions further.<sup>[89]</sup> Some of the Serbs in Croatia left Sabor and declared the autonomy of what would soon become the unrecognised Republic of Serbian Krajina, intent on achieving independence from Croatia.<sup>[90][91]</sup>

## Croatian War of Independence

As tensions rose, Croatia declared independence on 25 June 1991. However, the full implementation of the declaration only came into effect on 8 October 1991.<sup>[92][93]</sup> In the meantime, tensions escalated into overt war when the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) and various Serb paramilitary groups attacked Croatia.<sup>[94]</sup> By the end of 1991, a high-intensity conflict fought along a wide front reduced Croatia's control of only about two-thirds of its territory.<sup>[95][96]</sup> The various Serb paramilitary groups then began pursuing a campaign of killing, terror, and expulsion of the Croats in the rebel territories, killing thousands<sup>[97]</sup> of Croat civilians and expelling or displacing as many as 400,000 Croats and other non-Serbs from their homes.<sup>[98]</sup> Meanwhile, Serbs living in Croatian towns, especially those near the front lines, were subjected to various forms of discrimination.<sup>[99]</sup> Croatian Serbs in Eastern and Western Slavonia and parts of the



The Eternal Flame and 938 marble crosses on the National Memorial Cemetery of Homeland War in Vukovar, commemorates the victims of the Vukovar massacre as one of the symbolic and crucial events in Croatian War of Independence

occupied areas were restored to Croatia following the Erdut Agreement of November 1995, with the UNTAES mission concluded in January 1998.<sup>[109]</sup> Most sources place the total number of deaths from the war at around 20,000.<sup>[110][111][112]</sup>

## Independent Croatia (1991–present)

After the end of the war, Croatia faced the challenges of post-war reconstruction, the return of refugees, advancing democratic principles, protection of human rights, and general social and economic development. The post-2000 period is characterised by democratisation, economic growth, structural and social reforms, as well as problems such as unemployment, corruption, and the inefficiency of the public administration.<sup>[113]</sup>

Croatia joined the Partnership for Peace on 25 May 2000<sup>[114]</sup> and became a member of the World Trade Organization on 30 November 2000.<sup>[115]</sup> On 29 October 2001, Croatia signed a Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union,<sup>[116]</sup> submitted a formal application for the EU membership in 2003,<sup>[117]</sup> was given the status of candidate country in 2004,<sup>[118]</sup> and began accession negotiations in 2005.<sup>[119]</sup> In November 2000 and March 2001, the Parliament amended the Constitution, changing its bicameral structure back into historic unicameral and reducing the presidential powers.<sup>[120]</sup>



Croatia became the 28th EU member country on 1 July 2013

affected by the 2015 European migrant crisis in 2015 when Hungary's closure of its borders with Serbia forced over 700,000 refugees and migrants to pass through Croatia on their way to Western Europe.<sup>[126]</sup>

Krajina, were also forced to flee or were expelled by Croatian forces, though on a restricted scale and in lesser numbers.<sup>[100]</sup> The Croatian Government sought to stop such occurrences and were not a part of the Government's policy.<sup>[101]</sup>

On 15 January 1992, Croatia gained diplomatic recognition by the European Economic Community members, and subsequently the United Nations.<sup>[102][103]</sup> The war effectively ended in August 1995 with a decisive victory by Croatia;<sup>[104]</sup> the event is commemorated each year on 5 August as Victory and Homeland Thanksgiving Day and the Day of Croatian Defenders.<sup>[105]</sup> Following the Croatian victory, about 200,000 Serbs from the self-proclaimed Republic of Serbian Krajina fled from the region<sup>[106]</sup> and hundreds of mainly elderly Serb civilians were killed in the aftermath of the military operation.<sup>[107]</sup> Their lands were subsequently settled by Croat refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>[108]</sup> The remaining occupied areas were restored to Croatia following the Erdut Agreement of November 1995, with the UNTAES mission concluded in January 1998.<sup>[109]</sup> Most sources place the total number of deaths from the war at around 20,000.<sup>[110][111][112]</sup>

occupied areas were restored to Croatia following the Erdut Agreement of November 1995, with the UNTAES mission concluded in January 1998.<sup>[109]</sup> Most sources place the total number of deaths from the war at around 20,000.<sup>[110][111][112]</sup>

Although the Croatian economy had enjoyed a significant boom in the early 2000s, the financial crisis in 2008 forced the government to cut public spending, thus provoking a public outcry.<sup>[121]</sup> On 1 April 2009, Croatia joined NATO.<sup>[122]</sup> A wave of anti-government protests in early 2011 reflected a general dissatisfaction with the political and economic state.<sup>[123]</sup>

Croatia completed EU accession negotiations in 2011. A majority of Croatian voters opted in favour of country's EU membership at the 2012 referendum,<sup>[124]</sup> and Croatia joined the European Union effective 1 July 2013.<sup>[125]</sup> Croatia was

On 22 March 2020, a [5.5 earthquake](#)<sup>[127]</sup> struck Croatia, with the [epicentre](#) located 7 kilometres (4.3 mi) north of [Zagreb](#) city centre, inflicting heavy structural damage in the historic city centre and causing 27 injuries with one fatality. Over 1,900 buildings were reported to have become uninhabitable by the earthquake damage.<sup>[128]</sup> On 29 December 2020, a [6.4 magnitude earthquake](#) struck central Croatia, with an [epicentre](#) located roughly 3 km (1.9 mi) west-southwest of [Petrinja](#).<sup>[129]</sup> The maximum felt intensity was estimated at VIII (*Heavily damaging*) to IX (*Destructive*) on the [European macroseismic scale](#).<sup>[130]</sup> Seven people were confirmed dead, while 26 others were injured, with six having serious injuries.<sup>[131]</sup> Both [Petrinja](#) and the [Sisak-Moslavina county](#) were severely damaged.<sup>[132]</sup>

## Geography

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Croatia is in [Central](#) and [Southeast Europe](#), on the coast of the [Adriatic Sea](#). It borders Hungary to the northeast, [Serbia](#) to the east, [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) and [Montenegro](#) to the southeast and [Slovenia](#) to the northwest. It lies mostly between latitudes  $42^{\circ}$  and  $47^{\circ}$  N and longitudes  $13^{\circ}$  and  $20^{\circ}$  E. Part of the territory in the extreme south surrounding [Dubrovnik](#) is a practical exclave connected to the rest of the mainland by territorial waters, but separated on land by a short coastline strip belonging to Bosnia and Herzegovina around [Neum](#).<sup>[133]</sup> The [Pelješac Bridge](#), scheduled to open in 2022, will connect the exclave with the mainland Croatia.

The territory covers 56,594 square kilometres (21,851 square miles), consisting of 56,414 square kilometres (21,782 square miles) of land and 128 square kilometres (49 square miles) of water. It is the 127th largest country in the world.<sup>[134]</sup> Elevation ranges from the mountains of the [Dinaric Alps](#) with the highest point of the [Dinara](#) peak at 1,831 metres (6,007 feet) near the border with Bosnia and Herzegovina in the south<sup>[134]</sup> to the shore of the Adriatic Sea which makes up its entire southwest border. Insular Croatia consists of over a thousand islands and islets varying in size, 48 of which permanently inhabited. The largest islands are [Cres](#) and [Krk](#),<sup>[134]</sup> each of them having an area of around 405 square kilometres (156 square miles).

The hilly northern parts of [Hrvatsko Zagorje](#) and the flat plains of [Slavonia](#) in the east which is part of the [Pannonian Basin](#) are traversed by major rivers such as [Danube](#), [Drava](#), [Kupa](#), and the [Sava](#). The Danube, Europe's second longest river, runs through the city of [Vukovar](#) in the extreme east and forms part of the border with [Vojvodina](#). The central and southern regions near the Adriatic coastline and islands consist of low mountains and forested highlands. Natural resources found in the country in quantities significant enough for production include oil, coal, bauxite, low-grade iron ore, calcium, gypsum, natural asphalt, silica, mica, clays, salt, and hydropower.<sup>[134]</sup> Karst topography makes up about half of Croatia and is especially prominent in the Dinaric Alps.<sup>[135]</sup> There are several deep caves in Croatia, 49 of which deeper than 250 m (820.21 ft), 14 of them deeper than 500 m (1,640.42 ft) and three deeper than 1,000 m (3,280.84 ft). Croatia's most famous lakes are the [Plitvice lakes](#), a system of 16 lakes with waterfalls connecting them over [dolomite](#) and [limestone](#) cascades. The lakes are renowned for their distinctive colours, ranging from turquoise to mint green, grey or blue.<sup>[136]</sup>



Satellite image of Croatia

## Climate

Most of Croatia has a moderately warm and rainy continental climate as defined by the [Köppen climate classification](#). Mean monthly temperature ranges between  $-3^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $27^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) in January and  $18^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $64^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) in July. The coldest parts of the country are [Lika](#) and [Gorski Kotar](#) where the snowy forested climate is found at elevations above 1,200 metres (3,900 feet). The warmest areas of Croatia are at the Adriatic coast and especially in its immediate hinterland characterised by the [Mediterranean climate](#), as the temperature highs are moderated by the sea. Consequently, temperature peaks are more pronounced in the continental areas. The lowest temperature of  $-35.5^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $-31.9^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) was recorded on 3 February 1919 in [Čakovec](#), and the highest temperature of  $42.8^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $109.0^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) was recorded on 4 August 1981 in [Ploče](#).<sup>[137][138]</sup>



[Bora](#) is a dry, cold wind which blows from the mainland out to sea, whose gusts can reach hurricane strength, particularly in the channel below [Velebit](#), e.g. in the town of [Senj](#)

Mean annual precipitation ranges between 600 millimetres (24 inches) and 3,500 millimetres (140 inches) depending on geographic region and prevailing climate type. The least precipitation is recorded in the outer islands ([Biševo](#), [Lastovo](#), [Svetac](#), [Vis](#)) and the eastern parts of Slavonia. However, in the latter case, it occurs mostly during the [growing season](#). The maximum precipitation levels are observed on the [Dinara](#) mountain range and in [Gorski Kotar](#).<sup>[137]</sup>



Bottlenose dolphins are protected under Croatian law with Adriatic Dolphin project as the longest ongoing study of a single resident bottlenose dolphin community in the Mediterranean Sea

Prevailing winds in the interior are light to moderate northeast or southwest, and in the coastal area, prevailing winds are determined by local area features. Higher wind velocities are more often recorded in cooler months along the coast, generally as the cool northeasterly [bura](#) or less frequently as the warm southerly [jugo](#). The sunniest parts of the country are the outer islands, Hvar and Korčula, where more than 2700 hours of sunshine are recorded per year, followed by the middle and southern Adriatic Sea area in general, and northern Adriatic coast, all with more than 2000 hours of sunshine per year.<sup>[139]</sup>

## Biodiversity

Croatia can be subdivided between several [ecoregions](#) because of its climate and geomorphology. The country is consequently one of the richest in Europe in terms of biodiversity.<sup>[140][141]</sup> There are four types of biogeographical regions in Croatia—the [Mediterranean](#) along the coast and in its immediate hinterland, [Alpine](#) in most of Lika and Gorski Kotar, [Pannonic](#) along Drava and Danube, and [Continental](#) in the remaining areas. The most significant are [karst](#) habitats which include submerged karst, such as [Zrmanja](#) and [Krka](#) canyons and tufa barriers, as well as underground habitats. The country contains three ecoregions: [Dinaric Mountains mixed forests](#), [Pannonic mixed forests](#), and [Illyrian deciduous forests](#).<sup>[142]</sup>

The karst geology harbours approximately 7,000 caves and pits, some of which are the habitat of the only known aquatic cave [vertebrate](#)—the [olm](#). Forests are also significantly present in the country, as they cover 2,490,000 hectares (6,200,000 acres) representing 44% of Croatian land area. Other habitat types include wetlands, grasslands, bogs, fens, scrub habitats, coastal and marine habitats.<sup>[143]</sup>

In terms of [phytogeography](#), Croatia is a part of the [Boreal Kingdom](#) and is a part of Illyrian and Central European provinces of the [Circumboreal Region](#) and the Adriatic province of the [Mediterranean Region](#). The World Wide Fund for Nature divides Croatia between three ecoregions

## —Pannonian mixed forests, Dinaric Mountains mixed forests and Illyrian deciduous forests.<sup>[144]</sup>

There are 37,000 known species in Croatia, but their actual number is estimated to be between 50,000 and 100,000.<sup>[143]</sup> The claim is supported by nearly 400 new taxa of invertebrates discovered in Croatia in the first half of the 2000s alone.<sup>[143]</sup> There are more than a thousand endemic species, especially in Velebit and Biokovo mountains, Adriatic islands and karst rivers. Legislation protects 1,131 species.<sup>[143]</sup> The most serious threat to species is the loss and degradation of habitats. A further problem is presented by invasive alien species, especially *Caulerpa taxifolia* algae. Croatia had a 2018 Forest Landscape Integrity Index mean score of 4.92/10, ranking it 113th globally out of 172 countries.<sup>[145]</sup>

The invasive algae are regularly monitored and removed to protect the benthic habitat. Indigenous sorts of cultivated plants and breeds of domesticated animals are also numerous. Those include five breeds of horses, five breeds of cattle, eight breeds of sheep, two breeds of pigs, and a poultry breed. The indigenous breeds include nine endangered or critically endangered ones.<sup>[143]</sup> There are 444 protected areas of Croatia, encompassing 9% of the country. Those include eight national parks, two strict reserves, and ten nature parks. The most famous protected area and the oldest national park in Croatia is the Plitvice Lakes National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Velebit Nature Park is a part of the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme. The strict and special reserves, as well as the national and nature parks, are managed and protected by the central government, while other protected areas are managed by counties. In 2005, the National Ecological Network was set up, as the first step in the preparation of the EU accession and joining of the Natura 2000 network.<sup>[143]</sup>



Wooden trail through nature park  
Kopački Rit in Osijek-Baranja  
County



Telašćica Nature Park is one of 444  
protected areas of Croatia

## Politics



St. Mark's Square, Zagreb – Left-to-right: Banski dvori complex, official residence of the Croatian Government, St. Mark's Church and Croatian Parliament

The Republic of Croatia is a unitary state using a parliamentary system of governance. With the collapse of the ruling communist party in SFR Yugoslavia, Croatia organised its first multi-party elections and adopted its present Constitution in 1990.<sup>[146]</sup> It declared independence on 8 October 1991 which led to the break-up of Yugoslavia and countries international recognition by the United Nations in 1992.<sup>[93][103]</sup> Under its 1990 Constitution, Croatia operated a semi-presidential system until 2000 when it switched to a parliamentary system.<sup>[147]</sup> Government powers in Croatia are legislative, executive, and judiciary powers.<sup>[148]</sup>

The President of the Republic (Croatian: *Predsjednik Republike*) is the head of state, directly elected to a five-year term and is limited by the Constitution to two terms. In addition to being the commander in chief of the armed forces, the president has the procedural duty of appointing the prime minister with the parliament and has some influence on foreign policy.<sup>[148]</sup> The most recent presidential elections were held on 5 January 2020, when Zoran Milanović became the new president. He took the oath of office on 18 February 2020.<sup>[149]</sup> The Government is headed by the Prime Minister, who has four deputy prime ministers and 16 ministers in charge of particular sectors.<sup>[150]</sup> As the executive branch, it is responsible for proposing legislation and a budget, executing the laws, and guiding the foreign and internal policies. The Government is seated at Banski dvori in Zagreb.<sup>[148]</sup> Since 19 October 2016, Croatian Prime Minister has been Andrej Plenković.<sup>[151]</sup>



Croatian Sabor, parliament's Hall

A unicameral parliament (*Sabor*) holds legislative power. A second chamber, the *House of Counties*, set up in 1993 according to the 1990 Constitution, was abolished in 2001. The number of Sabor members can vary from 100 to 160. They are all elected by popular vote to serve four-year terms. The sessions of the Sabor take place from 15 January to 15 July, and from 15 September to 15 December.<sup>[152]</sup> The two largest political parties in Croatia are the Croatian Democratic Union and the Social Democratic Party of Croatia.<sup>[153]</sup>

## Law and judicial system

Croatia has a civil law legal system in which law arises primarily from written statutes, with judges serving merely as implementers and not creators of law. Its development was largely influenced by German and Austrian legal systems. Croatian law is divided into two principal areas—private and public law. By the time EU accession negotiations were completed on 30 June 2010, Croatian legislation was fully harmonised with the Community acquis.<sup>[154]</sup> The main law in the country is the Constitution adopted on 22 December 1990.



Supreme Court of Croatia, Zagreb



Constitutional Court on the St. Mark's Square, Zagreb

trials.<sup>[156]</sup> State's Attorney Office is the judicial body constituted of public prosecutors empowered to instigate prosecution of perpetrators of offences.<sup>[157]</sup>

Law enforcement agencies are organised under the authority of the Ministry of the Interior which consist primarily of the national police force. Croatia's security service is the Security and Intelligence Agency (SOA).<sup>[158][159]</sup>

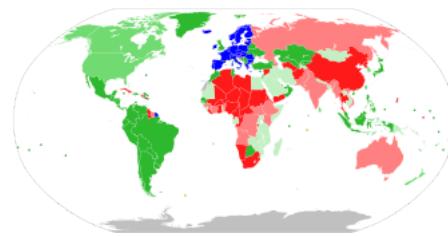
## Foreign relations

Croatia has established diplomatic relations with 194 countries.<sup>[160]</sup> As of 2020, Croatia maintains a network of 57 embassies, 30 consulates and eight permanent diplomatic missions abroad. Furthermore, there are 56 foreign embassies and 67 consulates in the Republic of Croatia in addition to offices of international organisations such as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), World Bank, World Health Organization (WHO), International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and UNICEF.<sup>[161]</sup>

In 2019, the Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration employed 1,381 personnel and expended 765.295 million kunas (€101.17 million).<sup>[162]</sup> Stated aims of Croatian foreign policy include enhancing relations with neighbouring countries, developing international co-operation and promotion of the Croatian economy and Croatia itself.<sup>[163]</sup>

Since 2003, Croatian foreign policy has focused on achieving the strategic goal of becoming a member state of the European Union (EU).<sup>[164][165]</sup> In December 2011, Croatia completed the EU accession negotiations and signed an EU accession treaty on 9 December 2011.<sup>[166][167]</sup> Croatia joined the European Union on 1 July 2013 marking the end of a process started in 2001 by signing of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement and Croatian application for the EU membership in 2003.<sup>[168]</sup> A recurring obstacle to the negotiations was Croatia's ICTY co-operation record and Slovenian blocking of the negotiations because of Croatia–Slovenia border disputes.<sup>[169][170]</sup> The latter should be resolved through an Arbitration Agreement of 4 November 2009, approved by national parliaments and a referendum in Slovenia,<sup>[171]</sup> but due to the events during arbitration, Croatia does not accept results. As of 2021, Croatia has unsolved border issues with all neighbouring former Yugoslav countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia).<sup>[172]</sup>

Another strategic Croatian foreign policy goal for the 2000s was NATO membership.<sup>[164][165]</sup> Croatia was included in the Partnership for Peace in 2000, invited to NATO membership in 2008 and formally joined the alliance on 1 April 2009.<sup>[173][174]</sup> Croatia became a member of the United Nations Security Council for the 2008–2009 term, assuming the presidency in December 2008.<sup>[175]</sup> The country is preparing to join the Schengen Area.<sup>[176]</sup>



Visa-free entry countries for Croatian citizens in green, EU in blue (see [Visa requirements for Croatian citizens](#))



Flag hoisting ceremony at [Ministry of Defence](#) marking Croatian accession to [NATO](#) in 2009

## Military

The Croatian Armed Forces (CAF) consist of the Air Force, Army, and Navy branches in addition to the Education and Training Command and Support Command. The CAF is headed by the General Staff, which reports to the Defence Minister, who in turn reports to the President. According to the constitution, the President is the commander-in-chief of the armed forces. In case of immediate threat during wartime, he issues orders directly to the General Staff.<sup>[177]</sup>

Following the 1991–95 war, defence spending and CAF size have been in constant decline. As of 2019, military spending was an estimated 1.68% of the country's GDP, which placed Croatia 67th.<sup>[178]</sup> Since 2005 the budget has been kept below 2% of GDP, down from the record high of 11.1% in 1994.<sup>[179]</sup> Traditionally relying on many conscripts, the CAF also went through a period of reforms focused on downsizing, restructuring and professionalisation in the years before accession to NATO in April 2009. According to a presidential decree issued in 2006, the CAF employs around 18,100 active duty military personnel, 3,000 civilians and 2,000 voluntary conscripts between 18 and 30 years old in peacetime.<sup>[177]</sup>

Compulsory conscription was abolished in January 2008.<sup>[134]</sup> Until 2008 military service was obligatory for men at age 18 and conscripts served six-month tours of duty, reduced in 2001 from the earlier scheme of nine-month conscription tours. Conscientious objectors could instead opt for an eight-month civilian service.<sup>[180]</sup>

As of May 2019, the Croatian military had 72 members stationed in foreign countries as part of United Nations-led international peacekeeping forces.<sup>[181]</sup> As of 2019, 323 troops serve the NATO-led ISAF force in Afghanistan. Another 156 with the KFOR in Kosovo.<sup>[182][183]</sup>

Croatia also has a military industry sector which exported around 493 million kunas (€65,176 million) worth of military equipment and armament in 2020.<sup>[184]</sup> Croatian-made weapons and vehicles used by CAF include the standard sidearm HS2000 manufactured by HS Produkt and the M-84D battle tank designed by the Đuro Đaković factory. Uniforms and helmets worn by CAF soldiers are also locally produced and successfully marketed to other countries.<sup>[185]</sup>



Croatian Army soldiers with their NATO allies from United States, Albania, Montenegro, Slovenia and North Macedonia during "Immediate Response 15", Military Training Area "Eugen Kvaternik", Slunj, Croatia, 2015.



Croatian Air Force and US Navy aircraft participate in multinational training, 2002

## Administrative divisions

Croatia was first subdivided into counties in the Middle Ages.<sup>[186]</sup> The divisions changed over time to reflect losses of territory to Ottoman conquest and subsequent liberation of the same territory, changes of the political status of Dalmatia, Dubrovnik, and Istria. The traditional division of the country into counties was abolished in the 1920s when the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and the subsequent Kingdom of Yugoslavia introduced oblasts and banovinas respectively.<sup>[187]</sup>

Communist-ruled Croatia, as a constituent part of post-World War II Yugoslavia, abolished earlier divisions and introduced municipalities, subdividing Croatia into approximately one hundred municipalities. Counties were reintroduced in 1992 legislation, significantly altered in terms of territory relative to the pre-1920s subdivisions. In 1918, the Transleithanian part of Croatia was divided into eight counties with their seats in Bjelovar, Gospic, Ogulin, Osijek, Požega, Varaždin,

Vukovar, and Zagreb, and the 1992 legislation established 14 counties in the same territory.<sup>[188][189]</sup>

Since the counties were re-established in 1992, Croatia is divided into 20 counties and the capital city of Zagreb, the latter having the authority and legal status of a county and a city at the same time. Borders of the counties changed in some instances since, with the latest revision taking place in 2006. The counties subdivide into 127 cities and 429 municipalities.<sup>[190]</sup> Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) division of Croatia is performed in several tiers. NUTS 1 level places the entire country in a single unit, while there are three NUTS 2 regions. Those are Northwest Croatia, Central and Eastern (Pannonian) Croatia, and Adriatic Croatia. The latter encompasses all the counties along the Adriatic coast. Northwest Croatia includes Koprivnica-Križevci, Krapina-Zagorje, Međimurje, Varaždin, the city of Zagreb, and Zagreb counties and the Central and Eastern (Pannonian) Croatia includes the remaining areas—Bjelovar-Bilogora, Brod-Posavina, Karlovac, Osijek-Baranja, Požega-Slavonia, Sisak-Moslavina, Virovitica-Podravina, and Vukovar-Syrmia counties. Individual counties and the city of Zagreb also represent NUTS 3 level subdivision units in Croatia. The NUTS Local administrative unit divisions are two-tiered. LAU 1 divisions match the counties and the city of Zagreb in effect making those the same as NUTS 3 units, while LAU 2 subdivisions correspond to the cities and municipalities of Croatia.<sup>[191]</sup>



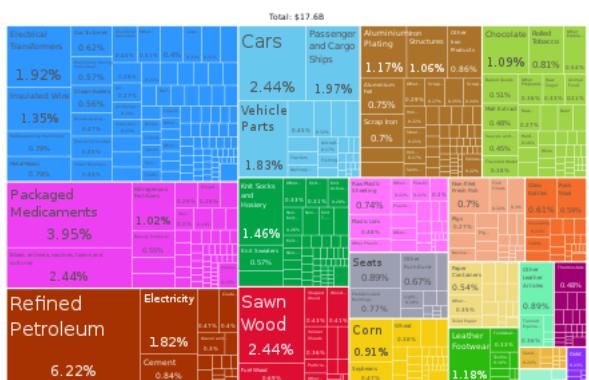
Varaždin, capital of Croatia between 1767 and 1776, is the seat of Varaždin county; Pictured: Old Town fortress, one of 15 Croatia's sites inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage tentative list



Counties of Croatia

<b>County</b>	<b>Seat</b>	<b>Area (km<sup>2</sup>)</b>	<b>Population</b>
Bjelovar-Bilogora	Bjelovar	2,652	102,295
Brod-Posavina	Slavonski Brod	2,043	130,782
Dubrovnik-Neretva	Dubrovnik	1,783	115,862
Istria	Pazin	2,820	195,794
Karlovac	Karlovac	3,622	112,596
Koprivnica-Križevci	Koprivnica	1,746	101,661
Krapina-Zagorje	Krapina	1,224	120,942
Lika-Senj	Gospić	5,350	42,893
Međimurje	Čakovec	730	105,863
Osijek-Baranja	Osijek	4,152	259,481
Požega-Slavonia	Požega	1,845	64,420
Primorje-Gorski Kotar	Rijeka	3,582	266,503
Šibenik-Knin	Šibenik	2,939	96,624
Sisak-Moslavina	Sisak	4,463	140,549
Split-Dalmatia	Split	4,534	425,412
Varaždin	Varaždin	1,261	160,264
Virovitica-Podravina	Virovitica	2,068	70,660
Vukovar-Syrmia	Vukovar	2,448	144,438
Zadar	Zadar	3,642	160,340
Zagreb County	Zagreb	3,078	301,206
City of Zagreb	Zagreb	641	769,944

## Economy



## A proportional representation of Croatia exports, 2019

Croatia has a high-income economy.<sup>[192]</sup> International Monetary Fund data projects that Croatian nominal GDP stands at \$60,688 billion, or \$14,816 per capita for 2018 while purchasing power parity GDP stands at \$107.406 billion, or \$26,221 per capita.<sup>[193]</sup> According to Eurostat, Croatian GDP per capita in PPS stood at 65% of the EU average in 2019.<sup>[194]</sup> Real GDP growth in 2018 was 2,6 per cent.<sup>[195]</sup> The average net salary of a Croatian worker in October 2019 was 6,496 HRK per month (roughly 873 EUR), and the average gross salary was 8,813 HRK per month (roughly 1,185 EUR).<sup>[196]</sup> As of July 2019, the unemployment rate dropped to 7.2% from 9.6% in December 2018. The number of

unemployed persons was 106.703. Unemployment Rate in Croatia between 1996 and 2018 averaged 17.38%, reaching an all-time high of 23.60% in January 2002 and a record low of 8.40% in September 2018.<sup>[197]</sup> In 2017, economic output was dominated by the service sector accounting for 70.1% of GDP, followed by the industrial sector with 26.2% and agriculture accounting for 3.7% of GDP.<sup>[198]</sup>

According to 2017 data, 1.9% of the workforce were employed in agriculture, 27.3% by industry and 70.8% in services.<sup>[198]</sup> Shipbuilding, food processing, pharmaceuticals, information technology, biochemical, and timber industry dominate the industrial sector. In 2018, Croatian exports were valued at 108 billion kunas (€14.61 billion) with 176 billion kunas (€23.82 billion) worth of imports. Croatia's largest trading partner was the rest of the European Union, with the top three countries being Germany, Italy, and Slovenia.<sup>[199]</sup>

Privatization and the drive towards a market economy had barely begun under the new Croatian Government when war broke out in 1991. As a result of the war, the economic infrastructure sustained massive damage, particularly the revenue-rich tourism industry. From 1989 to 1993, the GDP fell 40.5%. The Croatian state still controls a significant part of the economy, with government expenditures accounting for 40% of GDP.<sup>[200]</sup> A particular concern is a backlogged judiciary system, with inefficient public administration, especially land ownership and corruption. In the 2018 Corruption Perceptions Index, published by Transparency International, the country is ranked 60th scoring 48, where zero denotes "highly corrupt" and 100 "very clean".<sup>[201]</sup> At the end of June 2020, the national debt stood at 85.3% of the GDP.<sup>[202]</sup>

## Tourism

Tourism dominates the Croatian service sector and accounts for up to 20% of Croatian GDP. Tourist industry income for 2019 was estimated to be €10.5 billion.<sup>[203]</sup> Its positive effects are felt through the Croatian economy in terms of increased business volume observed in a retail business, processing industry orders and summer seasonal employment. The industry is an export business because it significantly reduces the country's external trade imbalance.<sup>[204]</sup> Since the end of the Croatian War of Independence, the tourist industry has rapidly grown, recording a fourfold rise in tourist numbers, with more than 11 million tourists each year.<sup>[205]</sup> The most numerous are tourists from Germany, Slovenia, Austria, Italy, and Poland as well as Croatia itself.<sup>[206]</sup> Length of a tourist stay in Croatia averaged 4.7 days in 2019.<sup>[207]</sup>



Dubrovnik is one of Croatia's most popular tourist destinations.



Zlatni Rat beach on the Island of Brač is one of the foremost spots of tourism in Croatia

Much of the tourist industry is concentrated along the Adriatic Sea coast. Opatija was the first holiday resort. It first became popular in the middle of the 19th century. By the 1890s, it had become one of the most significant European health resorts.<sup>[208]</sup> Later many resorts sprang up along the coast and islands, offering services catering to mass tourism and various niche markets. The most significant are nautical tourism, as there are marinas with more than 16 thousand berths, cultural tourism relying on the appeal of medieval coastal cities and cultural events taking place during the summer. Inland areas offer agrotourism, mountain resorts, and spas. Zagreb is also a significant tourist destination, rivalling major coastal cities and resorts.<sup>[209]</sup>

Croatia has unpolluted marine areas with nature reserves and 116 Blue Flag beaches.<sup>[210]</sup> Croatia ranks as the 23rd most popular tourist destination in the world.<sup>[211]</sup> About 15% of these visitors, or over one million per year, are involved with naturism, for which Croatia is famous. It was the first European country to develop commercial naturist resorts.<sup>[212]</sup>

## Infrastructure

The highlight of Croatia's recent infrastructure developments is its rapidly developed motorway network, largely built in the late 1990s and especially in the 2000s (decade). As of December 2020, Croatia had completed 1,313.8 kilometres (816.4 miles) of motorways, connecting Zagreb to most other regions and following various European routes and four Pan-European corridors.<sup>[213][214][215]</sup> The busiest motorways are the A1, connecting Zagreb to Split and the A3, passing east to west through northwest Croatia and Slavonia.<sup>[216]</sup>

A widespread network of state roads in Croatia acts as motorway feeder roads while connecting all major settlements. The high quality and safety levels of the Croatian motorway network were tested and confirmed by several EuroTAP and EuroTest programmes.<sup>[217][218]</sup>

Croatia has an extensive rail network spanning 2,722 kilometres (1,691 miles), including 984 kilometres (611 miles) of electrified railways and 254 kilometres (158 miles) of double track railways.<sup>[219]</sup> The most significant railways in Croatia are within the Pan-European transport corridors Vb and X connecting Rijeka to Budapest and Ljubljana to Belgrade, both via Zagreb.<sup>[213]</sup> Croatian Railways operates all rail services.<sup>[220]</sup>



Highway network in Croatia

The construction of 2.4-kilometer-long Peljesac Bridge, the biggest infrastructure project in Croatia will connect the two halves of Dubrovnik-Neretva County and shorten the route from the West of Croatia to the Pelješac peninsula and the islands of Korčula and Lastovo by more than 32 km. The construction of the Peljesac bridge started in July 2018 after Croatian road operator Hrvatske ceste (HC) signed a 2.08 billion kuna deal for the works with a Chinese consortium led by China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC). The project is co-financed by the European Union with 357 million euro.

There are international airports in Dubrovnik, Osijek, Pula, Rijeka, Split, Zadar, and Zagreb.<sup>[221]</sup> The largest and busiest is Franjo Tuđman Airport in Zagreb.<sup>[222]</sup> As of January 2011, Croatia complies with International Civil Aviation Organization aviation safety standards and the Federal Aviation Administration upgraded it to Category 1 rating.<sup>[223]</sup>

The busiest cargo seaport in Croatia is the Port of Rijeka. The busiest passenger ports are Split and Zadar.<sup>[224][225]</sup> Many minor ports serve ferries connecting numerous islands and coastal cities with ferry lines to several cities in Italy.<sup>[226]</sup> The largest river port is Vukovar, located on the Danube, representing the nation's outlet to the Pan-European transport corridor VII.<sup>[213][227]</sup>



Pelješac Bridge (under construction), which will connect the peninsula of Pelješac, and through it the southernmost part of Croatia including Dubrovnik, with the Croatian mainland

There are 610 kilometres (380 miles) of crude oil pipelines in Croatia, connecting the Port of Rijeka oil terminal with refineries in Rijeka and Sisak, and several transhipment terminals. The system has a capacity of 20 million tonnes per year.<sup>[228]</sup> The natural gas transportation system comprises 2,113 kilometres (1,313 miles) of the trunk and regional natural gas pipelines, and more than 300 associated structures, connecting production rigs, the Okoli natural gas storage facility, 27 end-users and 37 distribution systems.<sup>[229]</sup>

Croatian production of energy sources covers 85% of nationwide natural gas and 19% of oil demand. In 2008, 47.6% of Croatia's primary energy production structure comprised use of natural gas (47.7%), hydropower (25.4%), crude oil (18.0%), fuelwood (8.4%), and other renewable energy sources (0.5%). In 2009, net total electrical power production reached 12,725 GWh. Croatia imported 28.5% of its electric power energy needs.<sup>[133]</sup> Krško Nuclear Power Plant supplies a large part of Croatian imports, 50% is owned by Hrvatska elektroprivreda, providing 15% of Croatia's electricity.<sup>[230]</sup>

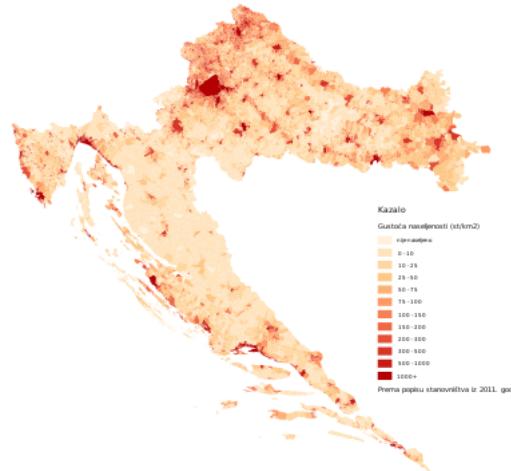
## Demographics

With an estimated population of 4.13 million in 2019, Croatia ranks 127th by population in the world.<sup>[231]</sup> Its population density stood in 2018 at 72.9 inhabitants per square kilometre, making Croatia one of the more sparsely populated European countries.<sup>[232]</sup> The overall life expectancy in Croatia at birth was 76.3 years in 2018.<sup>[198]</sup>

The total fertility rate of 1.41 children per mother, is one of the lowest in the world, below the replacement rate of 2.1, it remains considerably below the high of 6.18 children born per woman in 1885.<sup>[198][233]</sup> Since 1991, Croatia's death rate has continuously exceeded its birth rate.<sup>[133]</sup> Croatia subsequently has one of the oldest populations in the world, with the average age of 43.3 years.<sup>[234]</sup> Since the late 1990s, there has been a positive net migration into Croatia, reaching a level of more than 26,000 net immigrants in 2018.<sup>[235][236]</sup> The Croatian Bureau of Statistics forecast that the population may shrink to 3.85 million by 2061, depending on actual birth rate and the level of net migration.<sup>[237]</sup> The population of Croatia rose steadily from 2.1 million in 1857 until 1991, when it peaked at 4.7 million, with exception of censuses taken in 1921 and 1948, i.e. following two world wars.<sup>[133]</sup> The natural growth rate of the population is currently negative<sup>[134]</sup> with the demographic transition completed in the 1970s.<sup>[238]</sup> In recent years, the Croatian government has been pressured each year to increase permit quotas for foreign workers, reaching an all-time high of 68,100 in 2019.<sup>[239]</sup> In accordance with its immigration policy, Croatia is trying to entice emigrants to return.<sup>[240]</sup>

The population decrease was also a result of the Croatian War of Independence. During the war, large sections of the population were displaced and emigration increased. In 1991, in predominantly occupied areas, more than 400,000 Croats were either removed from their homes by the rebel Serb forces or fled the violence.<sup>[241]</sup> During the final days of the war in 1995, about 150–200,000 Serbs fled before the arrival of Croatian forces during the Operation Storm.<sup>[106][242]</sup> After the war, the number of displaced persons fell to about 250,000. The Croatian government has taken care of displaced persons by the social security system, and since December 1991 through the Office of Displaced Persons and Refugees.<sup>[243]</sup> Most of the territories which were abandoned during the Croatian War of Independence were settled by Croat refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina, mostly from north-western Bosnia, while some of the displaced people returned to their homes.<sup>[244][245]</sup>

According to the 2013 United Nations report, 17.6% of Croatia's population were foreign-born immigrants.<sup>[246]</sup> Majority of the inhabitants of Croatia are Croats (90.4%), followed by Serbs (4.4%), Bosniaks (0.73%), Italians (0.42%), Albanians (0.41%), Roma (0.40%), Hungarians



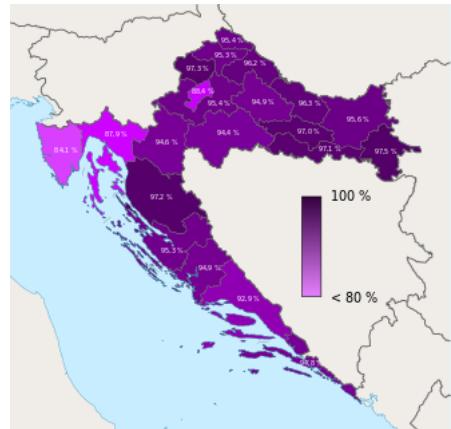
2011 Croatian population density by county in persons per km<sup>2</sup>.

(0.33%), Slovenes (0.25%), Czechs (0.22%), Montenegrins (0.11%), Slovaks (0.11%), Macedonians (0.10%), and others (2.12%).<sup>[4]</sup> Approximately 4 million Croats live abroad.<sup>[247]</sup>

Largest cities or towns in Croatia			
(2011 Census by Croatian Bureau of Statistics) <sup>[248]</sup>			
Rank	Name	Counties	Pop.
1	Zagreb	Zagreb	790,017
2	Split	Split-Dalmatia	178,102
3	Rijeka	Primorje-Gorski Kotar	128,624
4	Osijek	Osijek-Baranja	108,048
5	Zadar	Zadar	75,062
6	Pula	Istria	57,460
7	Slavonski Brod	Brod-Posavina	59,141
8	Karlovac	Karlovac	55,705
9	Varaždin	Varaždin	46,946
10	Šibenik	Šibenik-Knin	46,332

## Religion

Croatia has no official religion. Freedom of religion is a right defined by the Constitution which also defines all religious communities as equal before the law and separated from the state.<sup>[249]</sup> According to the 2011 census, 91.36% of Croatians identify as Christian; of these, Catholics make up the largest group, accounting for 86.28% of the population, after which follows Eastern Orthodoxy (4.44%), Protestantism (0.34%), and other Christians (0.30%). The largest religion after Christianity is Islam (1.47%). 4.57% of the population describe themselves as non-religious.<sup>[250]</sup> In the Eurostat Eurobarometer Poll of 2010, 69% of the population of Croatia responded that "they believe there is a God".<sup>[251]</sup> In a 2009 Gallup poll, 70% answered yes to the question "Is religion an important part of your daily life?"<sup>[252]</sup> However, only 24% of the population attends religious services regularly.<sup>[253]</sup>



Religious believers according to the 2011 census

## Languages

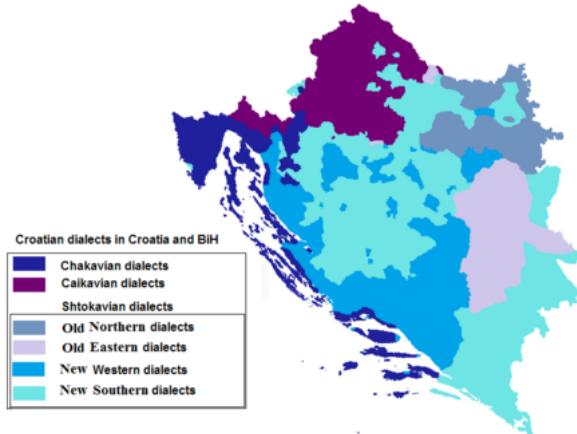
Croatian is the official language of Croatia and became the 24th official language of the European Union upon its accession in 2013.<sup>[254][255]</sup> Minority languages are in official use in local government units where more than a third of the population consists of national minorities or where local legislation defines so. Those languages are Czech, Hungarian, Italian, Serbian, and Slovak.<sup>[256][257]</sup> Besides these, the following languages are also recognised: Albanian, Bosnian, Bulgarian, German, Hebrew, Macedonian, Montenegrin, Polish, Romanian, Istro-Romanian, Romani, Russian, Rusyn, Slovene, Turkish, and Ukrainian.<sup>[257]</sup>

According to the 2011 Census, 95.6% of citizens of Croatia declared Croatian as their native language, 1.2% declared Serbian as their native language, while no other language is represented in Croatia by more than 0.5% of native speakers among the population of Croatia.<sup>[2]</sup> Croatian is a member of the South Slavic languages of Slavic languages group and is written using the Latin

alphabet. There are three major dialects spoken on the territory of Croatia, with standard Croatian based on the Shtokavian dialect. The Chakavian and Kajkavian dialects are distinguished by their lexicon, phonology and syntax.<sup>[258]</sup>

Croatian replaced Latin as the official language of the Croatian government in the 19th century.<sup>[259]</sup> In Yugoslavia, from 1972 to 1989, the language was constitutionally designated as the "Croatian literary language" and the "Croatian or Serbian language". It was the result of the resistance to "Serbo-Croatian" in the form of a Declaration on the Status and Name of the Croatian Literary Language and Croatian Spring.<sup>[260]</sup> Croats are protective of their language from foreign influences and are known for Croatian linguistic purism, as the language was under constant change and threats imposed by previous rulers, i.e. loanwords are replaced with native Croatian counterparts.<sup>[261]</sup>

A 2011 survey revealed that 78% of Croats claim knowledge of at least one foreign language.<sup>[262]</sup> According to a survey ordered by the European Commission in 2005, 49% of Croats speak English as the second language, 34% speak German, 14% speak Italian, and 10% speak French. Russian is spoken by 4%, and 2% of Croats speak Spanish. However there are large municipalities that have minority languages that include substantial populations that speak these languages. A majority of Slovenes (59%) have a certain level of knowledge of Croatian.<sup>[263]</sup> The country is a part of various language-based international associations most notably the European Union Language Association.<sup>[264]</sup>



Map of the Croatian dialects of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina

## Education



University of Zagreb is the largest Croatian university and the oldest university in the area covering Central Europe south of Vienna and all of Southeastern Europe (1669)

Literacy in Croatia stands at 99.2 per cent.<sup>[265]</sup> A worldwide study about the quality of living in different countries published by Newsweek in August 2010 ranked the Croatian education system at 22nd, to share the position with Austria.<sup>[266]</sup> Primary education in Croatia starts at the age of six or seven and consists of eight grades. In 2007 a law was passed to increase free, noncompulsory education until 18 years of age. Compulsory education consists of eight grades of elementary school.

Secondary education is provided by gymnasiums and vocational schools. As of 2019, there are 2,103 elementary schools and 738 schools providing various forms of secondary education.<sup>[267]</sup> Primary and secondary education are also available in languages of recognised minorities in Croatia, where classes are held in Czech, German, Hungarian, Italian, and Serbian languages.<sup>[268]</sup>

There are 137 elementary and secondary level music and art schools, as well as 120 schools for disabled children and youth and 74 schools for adults.<sup>[269]</sup> Nationwide leaving exams (Croatian: državna matura) were introduced for secondary education students in the school year 2009–2010. It comprises three compulsory subjects (Croatian language, mathematics, and a foreign language) and optional subjects and is a prerequisite for university education.<sup>[270]</sup>

Croatia has eight public universities, the University of Dubrovnik, University of Osijek, University of Pula, University of Rijeka, University of Split, University of Zadar and University of Zagreb, and two private universities, Catholic University of Croatia and Dubrovnik International University.<sup>[271]</sup> The University of Zadar, the first university in Croatia, was founded in 1396 and remained active until 1807, when other institutions of higher education took over until the foundation of the renewed University of Zadar in 2002.<sup>[272]</sup> The University of Zagreb, founded in 1669, is the oldest continuously operating university in Southeast Europe.<sup>[273]</sup> There are also 15 polytechnics, of which two are private, and 30 higher education institutions, of which 27 are private.<sup>[271]</sup> In total, there are 55 institutions of higher education in Croatia, attended by more than 157 thousand students.<sup>[269]</sup>



National and University Library

There are 205 companies, government or education system institutions and non-profit organisations in Croatia pursuing scientific research and development of technology. Combined, they spent more than 3 billion kuna (€400 million) and employed 10,191 full-time research staff in 2008.<sup>[133]</sup> Among the scientific institutes operating in Croatia, the largest is the Ruder Bošković Institute in Zagreb.<sup>[274]</sup> The Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Zagreb is a learned society promoting language, culture, arts and science from its inception in 1866.<sup>[275]</sup>

Croatia has been the home of many famous inventors, including Faust Vrančić, Giovanni Luppis, Slavoljub Eduard Penkala, Franjo Hanaman, Josip Belušić, and Nikola Tesla,<sup>[276][277][278]</sup> as well as scientists, such as Franciscus Patricius, Nikola Nalješković, Nikola Vitov Gučetić, Josip Franjo Domin, Marin Getaldić, Roger Joseph Boscovich, Andrija Mohorovičić, Ivan Supek, Ivan Đikić, Miroslav Radman, and Marin Soljačić.<sup>[279]</sup> The Nobel Prize in Chemistry has been awarded to two Croatian laureates, Lavoslav Ružička (1939) and Vladimir Prelog (1975).

The European Investment Bank provided digital infrastructure and equipment to around 150 primary and secondary schools in Croatia. Twenty of these schools got specialised assistance in the form of gear, software, and services to help them integrate the teaching and administrative operations.<sup>[280][281]</sup>

## Healthcare

Croatia has a universal health care system, whose roots can be traced back to the Hungarian-Croatian Parliament Act of 1891, providing a form of mandatory insurance of all factory workers and craftsmen.<sup>[282]</sup> The population is covered by a basic health insurance plan provided by statute and optional insurance. In 2017, annual healthcare related expenditures reached 22.0 billion kuna (€3.0 billion).<sup>[283]</sup> Healthcare expenditures comprise only 0.6% of private health insurance and public spending.<sup>[284]</sup> In 2017, Croatia spent around 6.6% of its GDP on healthcare.<sup>[285]</sup> In 2020, Croatia ranked 41st in the world in life expectancy with 76.0 years for men and 82.0 years for women, and it had a low infant mortality rate of 3.4 per 1,000 live births.<sup>[286]</sup>



University Hospital Centre Zagreb

There are hundreds of healthcare institutions in Croatia, including 75 hospitals, and 13 clinics with 23,049 beds. The hospitals and clinics care for more than 700 thousand patients per year and employ 6,642 medical doctors, including 4,773 specialists. There is a total of 69,841 health workers in the country. There are 119 emergency units in health centres, responding to more than a million

calls. The principal cause of death in 2016 was cardiovascular disease at 39.7% for men and 50.1% for women, followed by tumours, at 32.5% for men and 23.4% for women.<sup>[287]</sup> In 2020, 69 Croatians had been infected with HIV/AIDS and 11 had died from the disease.<sup>[288]</sup> In 2016 it was estimated that 37.0% of Croatians are smokers.<sup>[289]</sup> According to 2016 data, 24.40% of the Croatian adult population is obese.<sup>[290]</sup>

## Culture

Because of its geographical position, Croatia represents a blend of four different cultural spheres. It has been a crossroads of influences from western culture and the east since the schism between the Western Roman Empire and the Byzantine Empire, and also from Mitteleuropa and Mediterranean culture.<sup>[292]</sup> The Illyrian movement was the most significant period of national cultural history, as the 19th century proved crucial to the emancipation of Croatian and saw unprecedented developments in all fields of art and culture, giving rise to many historical figures.<sup>[48]</sup>

The Ministry of Culture is tasked with preserving the nation's cultural and natural heritage and overseeing its development. Further activities supporting the development of culture are undertaken at the local government level.<sup>[293]</sup> The UNESCO's World Heritage List includes ten sites in Croatia. The country is also rich with intangible culture and holds 15 of UNESCO's World's intangible culture masterpieces, ranking fourth in the world.<sup>[294]</sup> A global cultural contribution from Croatia is the necktie, derived from the cravat originally worn by the 17th-century Croatian mercenaries in France.<sup>[295][296]</sup>



Historic centre of Trogir has been included in the UNESCO list of World Heritage Site since 1997<sup>[291]</sup>



Trakošćan Castle is one of the best preserved historic buildings in the country<sup>[297]</sup>

In 2019, Croatia had 95 professional theatres, 30 professional children's theatres, and 51 amateur theatres visited by more than 2.27 million viewers per year. Professional theatres employ 1,195 artists. There are 42 professional orchestras, ensembles, and choirs in the country, attracting an annual attendance of 297 thousand. There are 75 cinemas with 166 screens and attendance of 5.026 million.<sup>[298]</sup> Croatia has 222 museums, visited by more than 2.71 million people in 2016. Furthermore, there are 1,768 libraries in the country, containing 26.8 million volumes, and 19 state archives.<sup>[299]</sup>

In 2010, 7,348 books and brochures were published, along with 2,676 magazines and 267 newspapers. In 2019, there were 134 radio stations and 26 TV stations operating. Film

production made 75 films, 12 were feature-length films and 63 short films. As of 2009, there are 784 amateur cultural and artistic associations and more than 10 thousand cultural, educational, and artistic events held annually.<sup>[133]</sup> The book publishing market is dominated by several major publishers and the industry's centrepiece event—Interliber exhibition held annually at Zagreb Fair.<sup>[300]</sup>

Croatia is categorised as having established a very high level of human development in the Human Development Index, with a high degree of equality in HDI achievements between women and men.<sup>[301]</sup> It promotes disability rights.<sup>[302]</sup> Recognition of same-sex unions in Croatia has gradually improved over the past decade, culminating in registered civil unions in July 2014, granting same-sex couples equal inheritance rights, tax deductions, and limited adoption

rights.<sup>[303]</sup> However, in December 2013 Croatians voted in a constitutional referendum and approved changes to the constitution to define marriage as a union between a man and a woman.<sup>[304]</sup>

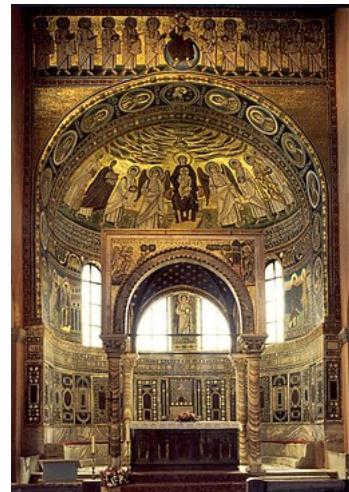
## Arts, literature, and music

Architecture in Croatia reflects influences of bordering nations. Austrian and Hungarian influence is visible in public spaces and buildings in the north and the central regions, architecture found along coasts of Dalmatia and Istria exhibits Venetian influence.<sup>[305]</sup> Squares named after culture heroes, parks, and pedestrian-only zones, are features of Croatian towns and cities, especially where large scale Baroque urban planning took place, for instance in Osijek (Tvrđa), Varaždin, and Karlovac.<sup>[306][307]</sup> The subsequent influence of the Art Nouveau was reflected in contemporary architecture.<sup>[308]</sup> The architecture is the Mediterranean with a Venetian and Renaissance influence in major coastal urban areas exemplified in works of Juraj Dalmatinac and Nicolas of Florence such as the Cathedral of St. James in Šibenik. The oldest preserved examples of Croatian architecture are the 9th-century churches, with the largest and the most representative among them being Church of St. Donatus in Zadar.<sup>[309][310]</sup>

Besides the architecture encompassing the oldest artworks, there is a history of artists in Croatia reaching the Middle Ages. In that period the stone portal of the Trogir Cathedral was made by Radovan, representing the most important monument of Romanesque sculpture from Medieval Croatia. The Renaissance had the greatest impact on the Adriatic Sea coast since the remainder of Croatia was embroiled in the Hundred Years' Croatian–Ottoman War. With the waning of the Ottoman Empire, art flourished during the Baroque and Rococo. The 19th and the 20th centuries brought about affirmation of numerous Croatian artisans, helped by several patrons of the arts such as bishop Josip Juraj Strossmayer.<sup>[311]</sup> Croatian artists of the period achieving renown were Vlaho Bukovac, Ivan Meštrović, and Ivan Generalić.<sup>[309][312]</sup>

Croatian music varies from classical operas to modern day rock. Vatroslav Lisinski created the country's first Opera, *Love and Malice*, in 1846. Ivan Zajc composed more than a thousand pieces of music, including masses and oratorios. Pianist Ivo Pogorelić has performed across the world.<sup>[312]</sup>

The Baška tablet, a stone inscribed with the glagolitic alphabet found on the Krk island and dated to circa 1100, is considered to be the oldest surviving prose in Croatian.<sup>[313]</sup> The beginning of more vigorous development of Croatian literature is marked by the Renaissance and Marko Marulić. Besides Marulić, Renaissance playwright Marin Držić, Baroque poet Ivan Gundulić, Croatian national revival poet Ivan Mažuranić, novelist, playwright, and poet August Šenoa, children's writer Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić, writer and journalist Marija Jurić Zagorka, poet and writer Antun Gustav Matoš, poet Antun Branko Šimić, expressionist and realist writer Miroslav Krleža, poet Tin Ujević and novelist, and short story writer Ivo Andrić are often cited as the greatest figures in Croatian literature.<sup>[314][315]</sup>



Euphrasian Basilica in Poreč, example of early Byzantine architecture, on the UNESCO World Heritage List since 1997.



Historical nucleus of Split with the 4th-century Diocletian's Palace was inscribed on the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites in 1979

## Media

In Croatia, the Constitution guarantees the freedom of the press and the freedom of speech.<sup>[316]</sup> Croatia ranked 64th in the 2019 Press Freedom Index report compiled by Reporters Without Borders which noted that journalists who investigate corruption, organised crime or war crimes face challenges and that the Government was trying to influence the public broadcaster HRT's editorial policies.<sup>[317]</sup> In its 2019 Freedom in the World report, the Freedom House classified freedoms of press and speech in Croatia as generally free from political interference and manipulation, noting that journalists still face threats and occasional attacks.<sup>[318]</sup> The state-owned news agency HINA runs a wire service in Croatian and English on politics, economics, society, and culture.<sup>[319]</sup>

As of January 2021, there are thirteen nationwide free-to-air DVB-T television channels, with Croatian Radiotelevision (HRT) operating four, RTL Televizija three, and Nova TV operating two channels, and the Croatian Olympic Committee, Kapital Net d.o.o., and Author d.o.o. companies operate the remaining three.<sup>[320]</sup> Also, there are 21 regional or local DVB-T television channels.<sup>[321]</sup> The HRT is also broadcasting a satellite TV channel.<sup>[322]</sup> In 2020, there were 155 radio stations and 27 TV stations in Croatia.<sup>[323][324]</sup> Cable television and IPTV networks are gaining ground in the country. Cable television already serves 450 thousand people, around 10% of the total population of the country.<sup>[325][326]</sup>

In 2010, 314 newspapers and 2,678 magazines were published in Croatia.<sup>[133]</sup> The print media market is dominated by the Croatian-owned Hanza Media and Austrian-owned Styria Media Group who publish their flagship dailies *Jutarnji list*, *Večernji list* and *24sata*. Other influential newspapers are *Novi list* and *Slobodna Dalmacija*.<sup>[328][329]</sup> In 2020, *24sata* was the most widely circulated daily newspaper, followed by *Večernji list* and *Jutarnji list*.<sup>[330][331]</sup>

Croatia's film industry is small and heavily subsidised by the government, mainly through grants approved by the Ministry of Culture with films often being co-produced by HRT.<sup>[332][333]</sup> Croatian cinema produces between five and ten feature films per year.<sup>[334]</sup> Pula Film Festival, the national film awards event held annually in Pula, is the most prestigious film event featuring national and international productions.<sup>[335]</sup> Animafest Zagreb, founded in 1972, is the prestigious annual film festival dedicated to the animated film. The first greatest accomplishment by Croatian filmmakers was achieved by Dušan Vukotić when he won the 1961 Academy Award for Best Animated Short Film for *Ersatz* (Croatian: *Surogat*).<sup>[336]</sup> Croatian film producer Branko Lustig won the Academy Awards for Best Picture for *Schindler's List* and *Gladiator*.<sup>[337]</sup>



Radio Zagreb, now a part of Croatian Radiotelevision, was the first public radio station in Southeast Europe.<sup>[327]</sup>

## Cuisine

Croatian traditional cuisine varies from one region to another. Dalmatia and Istria have culinary influences of Italian and other Mediterranean cuisines which prominently feature various seafood, cooked vegetables and pasta, and condiments such as olive oil and garlic. Austrian, Hungarian, and Turkish culinary styles influenced continental cuisine. In that area, meats, freshwater fish, and vegetable dishes are predominant.<sup>[338]</sup>

There are two distinct wine-producing regions in Croatia. The continental in the northeast of the country, especially Slavonia, produces premium wines, particularly whites. Along the north coast, Istrian and Krk wines are similar to those in neighbouring Italy, while further south in Dalmatia, Mediterranean-style red wines are the norm.<sup>[338]</sup> Annual production of wine exceeds 140 million

litres.<sup>[133]</sup> Croatia was almost exclusively a wine-consuming country up until the late 18th century when a more massive beer production and consumption started.<sup>[339]</sup> The annual consumption of beer in 2020 was 78.7 litres per capita which placed Croatia in 15th place among the world's countries.<sup>[340]</sup>



Teran wine from Istria region

## Sports

There are more than 400,000 active sportspeople in Croatia.<sup>[341]</sup> Out of that number, 277,000 are members of sports associations and nearly 4,000 are chess members and contract bridge associations.<sup>[133]</sup> Association football is the most popular sport. The Croatian Football Federation (Croatian: *Hrvatski nogometni savez*), with more than 118,000 registered players, is the largest sporting association in the country.<sup>[342]</sup> The Prva HNL football league attracts the highest average attendance of any professional sports league in the country. In season 2010–11, it attracted 458,746 spectators.<sup>[343]</sup>

Croatian athletes competing at international events since Croatian independence in 1991 won 44 Olympic medals, including 15 gold medals—at the 1996 and 2004 Summer Olympics in handball, 2000 Summer Olympics in weightlifting, 2002 and 2006 Winter Olympics in alpine skiing, 2012 Summer Olympics in the discus throw, trap shooting, and water polo, and in 2016 Summer Olympics in shooting, rowing, discus throw, sailing and javelin throw.<sup>[344]</sup> Also, Croatian athletes won 16 gold medals at world championships, including four in athletics at the World Championships in Athletics, held in 2007, 2009, 2013 and 2017, one in handball at the 2003 World Men's Handball Championship, two in water polo at the 2007 World Aquatics Championships and 2017 World Aquatics Championships, one in rowing at the 2010 World Rowing Championships, six in alpine skiing at the FIS Alpine World Ski Championships held in 2003 and 2005 and two at the World Taekwondo Championships in 2011 and 2007. In tennis, Croatia won Davis Cup in 2005 and 2018. Croatia's most successful male players Goran Ivanišević and Marin Čilić have both won Grand Slam titles and have got into the top 3 of the ATP Rankings. Iva Majoli became the first Croatian female player to win the French Open when she won it in 1997. The Croatian national football team came in third in 1998 and second in the 2018 FIFA World Cup. Croatia hosted several major sports competitions, including the 2009 World Men's Handball Championship, the 2007 World Table Tennis Championships, the 2000 World Rowing Championships, the 1987 Summer Universiade, the 1979 Mediterranean Games, and several European Championships.



Croatia national football team came in second at the 2018 World Cup

The governing sports authority in the country is the Croatian Olympic Committee (Croatian: *Hrvatski olimpijski odbor*), founded on 10 September 1991 and recognised by the International Olympic Committee since 17 January 1992, in time to permit the Croatian athletes to appear at the 1992 Winter Olympics in Albertville, France representing the newly independent nation for the first time at the Olympic Games.<sup>[345]</sup>

## See also

- [Outline of Croatia](#)
- [Index of Croatia-related articles](#)

## Notes

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- a. In the recognised [minority languages of Croatia](#) and the most spoken second languages:
- [Czech](#): *Chorvatská republika*
  - [German](#): *Republik Kroatien*
  - [French](#): *République de Croatie*
  - [Hungarian](#): *Horvát Köztársaság*
  - [Italian](#): *Repubblica di Croazia*
  - [Rusyn](#): Републіка Хорватія
  - [Serbian](#): Република Хрватска
  - [Slovak](#): *Chorvátska republika*
  - [Slovene](#): *Republika Hrvaška*
  - [Ukrainian](#): Республіка Хорватія
- b. /'za:greb/ (▶ listen), [ZAG-reb](#), [ZAH-greb](#), [zah-GREB](#); Croatian pronunciation: [zǎ:greb] (▶ listen)
- c. Apart from Croatian, [state counties](#) have [official regional languages](#) that are used for official government business and commercially. In [Istria County](#) minority is [Italian-speaking](#)<sup>[1]</sup><sup>[2]</sup> while select counties bordering Serbia [speak standard Serbian](#).<sup>[3]</sup> Other notable—albeit significantly less-present minority languages in Croatia include: [Czech](#), [Hungarian](#), and [Slovak](#).
- d. The writing system of Croatia is legally [protected by federal law](#). Efforts to recognise minority scripts, pursuant to international law, on a local level, has been met with [protests](#).
- e. IPA transcription of "Republika Hrvatska": (Croatian pronunciation: ['repǔblika 'xřua:tska:]).

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