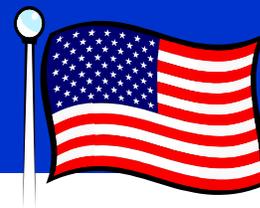


US Embassy Outreach



Ambassador Robert A. Bradtke

A Message from Ambassador Robert A. Bradtke

Mark your calendar for
**American Citizens
 Information Night**
 5 - 7 pm
 Thurs., Feb. 7
**At the U.S. Embassy,
 Zagreb.**

The event will include information on voting assistance, taxes, and immigration. Ambassador Bradtke will give welcoming remarks and many Embassy staff members will be available to answer questions.

See page 9

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I hope all of you have had joyous holidays with your family and friends. At the U.S. Embassy, we also took time to celebrate the season. Now that the holidays are over, we're back in full swing, working with our colleagues in Croatia.

During the past year, relations between Croatia and the United States continued to flourish. We strengthened our dialogue on the challenges facing Southeastern Europe, particularly in Kosovo and Bosnia. We also saw our economic relations strengthened, and two new major American investments are providing a significant number of jobs for Croatians. We developed Fulbright for the Future, a fellowship program, to send Croatian students to the U.S. Looking ahead, I

can see that 2008 will be an even more important year.

Croatia has made significant progress toward the goal of NATO membership. A delegation from the U.S., headed by U.S. Ambassador to NATO Victoria Nuland, met recently with Croatia's senior officials, including President Mesić, Prime Minister Sanader, Foreign Minister Grabar-Kitarović, Defense Minister Rončević and representatives of opposition parties. During her visit, Ambassador Nuland confirmed that Croatia is on the right track, and we are optimistic that Croatia will receive an invitation to join NATO at the Bucharest Summit in April.

Already, we're impressed with Croatia's

continuing contributions to peace and security in Afghanistan and elsewhere. Croatia is participating in over a dozen UN peacekeeping missions around the globe and plans to increase its current contribution to NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan from the current level of 200 soldiers to 300 by the end of 2008.

One of Croatia's major successes of 2007, winning a place for the next two years on the United Nations Security Council, will also mean greatly expanded opportunities for the U.S. and Croatia to deepen our cooperation on a whole range of issues in 2008. Croatia, as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, will be called on every week to make decisions

US Embassy Outreach

Ambassador's Message (*cont'd from page 1*)

about how we as an international community can best respond to existing threats to international security and help prevent new ones from developing. If we want to have the ability to travel in and trade with the rest of the world, to share the benefits of our rich culture and industry and to enjoy the riches and products of other countries and markets, then we must contribute to keeping the world secure. The U.S. Embassy staff will work together with Croatia to address these important issues.

We look forward to working with the new Croatian government coming into office after last November's elections. We are confident that our relations with the new government will build upon the excellent relationship we had with the outgoing govern-

ment, and that we can achieve major progress on our common goals.

I know you are all watching this process and other developments as closely as we are. Just as it is vital to keep up with political developments here, it is also important to follow the election process in the United States. We have a long list of strong candidates in this election with many issues before us and just as many points of view. Citizens living overseas are eligible to participate in the presidential state primaries, run-off and special elections which will occur throughout the year, as well as the general elections in November.

I strongly encourage you to register to vote in the United

States or to request absentee ballots. You can do that by contacting our Voting Assistance Officer, Alma Johnson, as you'll read in this issue of our newsletter.

I also want to personally invite you to the U.S. Embassy on Thursday, February 7, for American Citizens Information Night. You will be able to meet many of our staff members, as well as take care of important business such as registering to vote and registering with your embassy in Croatia.

As always, we welcome your comments and suggestions and are open to hearing about any issues that affect your lives in Croatia.

Important notice regarding work visas in Croatia

Croatia has recently enacted changes to its visa law such that, in certain circumstances, family members of non-EU nationals in Croatia on temporary work visas may not be able to obtain residence status until the principal applicant has been resident in Croatia for two years. This law was scheduled to go into effect Jan. 1, 2008.

Individuals already approved for resident status should not be affected by the revised law.

The U.S. Embassy is seeking further clarification of the implications of the revised law and how Croatia intends to implement it.

This information will be updated on our website (www.usembassy.hr) as it becomes available.

Croatia's membership in NATO is a US priority in 2008

By Conrad Turner, Public Affairs Officer

Included among the U.S. Government's priorities for Croatia in its post-war years have been support for democratic and defense reform and promotion of Croatia's integration into the transatlantic community. These objectives intersected naturally as the U.S. supported Croatia on its path to membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a goal that is on the verge of being achieved.

In April 2008, leaders of the NATO Alliance will meet in Bucharest where they will decide, among other things, which new members to invite. All 26 member countries must approve an invitation, and President Bush has already made clear that the U.S. will support Croatia, based on Croatia's progress in preparing itself for membership and on the government's promise to continue the challenging work of preparing to join the Alliance.

Our position also reflects our strong belief that bringing new countries into NATO – countries which share the Alliance's commitment to peace and prosperity – will contribute to the security of all the members. As a country that knows the dangers of war, yet understands the importance of decisive action by the international community, Croatia is uniquely positioned to contribute to the Alliance. And as NATO increases its focus on the dangers of transnational terrorism, potential new members such as Croatia bring a whole new perspective to solving a problem that concerns us all.

For a country to join NATO it must demonstrate that it shares the same values as all its members: commitment to democracy, individual liberty, rule of law and the peaceful resolution of disputes. Croatia has repeatedly shown



President Bush and Prime Minister Sanader in the Oval Office at the White House, Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2006.

that it shares these values and is prepared to promote them within and outside the Euro-Atlantic area. NATO membership will be a significant step for a country so recently devastated by war, and it is a sign of the hard work that has gone into its recovery.

While support among the Croatian public for NATO membership has been unstable, there has been a steady increase over the past year, thanks largely to efforts by the Croatian government to educate the public. We expect those efforts to continue this year, and are prepared to help as necessary.

NATO brings benefits to member countries, but it also brings obligations. Members are expected to participate in the discussions that take place every day and at all levels, and to share their viewpoints and expertise. Decision-making in the alliance requires consensus and involves negotiation and compromise. Each member participates, and each has its own unique contribution in this effort. Once a decision has been made to undertake an operation, members are expected to contribute to its success.

In today's NATO, a strengthened Europe is now more assertive and more aware of its responsibility for its

own security. Its members are also aware that security at home increasingly means ensuring the security of others afield. This is why NATO member countries and aspirants have played such an important role in protecting the innocent in Sudan, keeping the peace in Kosovo, and preventing the resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan. Each of its members has made its own special contribution, and Croatia's highly trained, highly motivated volunteers have already played an enormously positive role.

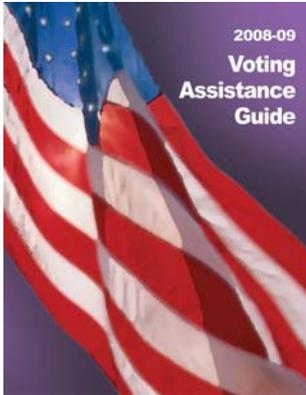
In an important way, our support for Croatia's NATO candidacy is a logical continuation of our policy over the past 13 years, which began as Croatia emerged from the brutality of the war. Determined to ensure there is never again a return to the past, the U.S. embarked on a broad policy of assistance in the entire region to support critical steps such as demining, rebuilding and strengthening of democratic institutions. In the same way, we also view Croatia's membership in NATO as a firm break from the conflicts of the past century, as Croatia asserts its historical place in the heart of Europe - a Europe that is whole, free and forever at peace.



NATO Flag

Voting News

Primary elections, general elections — it's important to participate in both



www.fvap.gov



By Alma Johnson, Voting Assistance Officer

The 2008 elections have officially begun with several Presidential Preference Primaries in January.

Primary elections play an important role in the electoral process. Why? Because the names that appear on the general election ballot on November 4th, 2008 are the candidates who were chosen during the primary election process.

The following is important information that pertains to the electoral process:

A primary election is an election that selects a candidate(s) who will represent the party in a general election. The winning candidate is the one who amasses the largest percentage of the votes during the primary election. This should not be confused with a majority. A majority is a number greater than half of the total votes cast in an election. The winner of a primary election does not necessarily receive a majority of the votes. What this means is that the higher the voter turnout, the greater the possibility that the winner is indeed a true representative of the population at large. Voters who participate in these primaries can have a great impact on their outcome.

Voters in state primaries select their

party's candidates for state and federal offices such as President and Vice-President, Governor, U.S. Senator, and member of the U.S. House of Representatives. Voter participation is crucial in any election and primaries are no different.

Primary elections started earlier than ever. Iowa and New Hampshire already held their primaries in January and four more are to follow this month. Twenty-nine states will hold their primaries in February. The rest will be held through October.

Because dates for Presidential Preference primaries and state primaries are spread throughout the year, be sure to consult the 2008 Election Calendar for election dates in your state or contact your Voting Assistance Officers at votezagreb@state.gov.

***Be Smart.
Do your part.
Vote!***

For the calendar of 2008 state primary and caucus dates, see page 5



NASS Calendar of 2008 State Primary & Caucus Dates

Last updated: November 29, 2007

NOTE: Some contests are non-binding and separate caucuses or conventions are scheduled to determine delegates to the national conventions. Please check with state party offices for those details.

2008 Presidential Nominating Calendar

JANUARY 2008

- **January 3:** Iowa
- **January 8:** New Hampshire
- **January 5:** Wyoming (R)
- **January 15:** Michigan
- **January 19:** Nevada, South Carolina (R)
- **January 26:** South Carolina (D)
- **January 29:** Florida

FEBRUARY 2008

- **February 1:** Maine (R)
- **February 5:** Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Idaho (D), Illinois, Kansas (D), Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, New Mexico (D), New York, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Utah
- **February 9:** Louisiana, Kansas (R)
- **February 10:** Maine (D)
- **February 12:** District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia
- **February 19:** Hawaii (D)¹, Washington, Wisconsin

MARCH 2008

- **March 4:** Ohio, Rhode Island, Texas, Vermont
- **March 8:** Wyoming (D)
- **March 11:** Mississippi

APRIL 2008

- **April 22:** Pennsylvania

MAY 2008

- **May 6:** Indiana, North Carolina
- **May 13:** Nebraska, West Virginia
- **May 20:** Kentucky, Oregon
- **May 27:** Idaho (R)

JUNE 2008

- **June 3:** Montana, New Mexico (R), South Dakota

AUGUST 2008

- **August 25-28:** Democratic National Convention in Denver, Colorado

SEPTEMBER 2008

- **September 1-4:** Republican National Convention in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota

NOTE: The Kansas State Legislature opted not to fund a presidential primary election in 2008; parties will hold caucuses instead.

¹ According to staff with Hawaii's Republican Party, the GOP is not technically holding a presidential primary or caucus. Delegates will be selected during a week-long period tentatively ending on February 7.

Consular News

Selective Service registration is mandatory for men 18 to 25

By Verica Haramincic, American Citizens Services Assistant



U.S. law requires all male U.S. citizens (regardless of where they live), and male immigrants residing in the U.S. (permanent legal residents) to register with the Selective Service within 30 days of their 18th birthday. That means all men turning 18 are required to register from 30 days before until 30 days after their 18th birthday. If you don't register you could be in violation of this law. Late registrations are accepted until age 26.

The same law also requires all male U.S. citizens age 18-25 who are already registered for the draft to report any change of address within 10 days.

Early Submission: It's now possible to submit registration information early — three months after your 17th birthday. Selective Service will keep the information on file and process it automatically when you are within 30 days of your 18th birthday. An acknowledgment card will be mailed to you when registration is processed.

If you are submitting early registration information or you are between 18 and 25, follow the same registration procedure.

After registering for Selective Service, you won't automatically be inducted into the U.S. military. In a crisis requiring a draft, men would be called in sequence, determined by random lottery numbers and year of birth.

Where to register:

On the Internet: www.sss.gov

At U.S. Post Offices: Selective Service "mail-back" registration forms are available at any U.S. Post Office. Fill it out, sign it, affix postage, and mail it to Selective Service. If you live overseas, you can register at any U.S. Embassy consular office.

By mail: You can also fill out a Reminder Mail Back Card. Selective Service sends this card to men around the time they turn 18. Mail back cards are also available at some U.S. Post Offices.

Fill out the card and mail it to: **Selective Service System, Registration Information Office, P.O. Box 94638, Palatine, IL 60094-4638.**

For complete information about the U.S. Selective Service System, please visit www.sss.gov.

Dual U.S./Croatian citizens: Croatian law requires men between 18 and 30 to be registered with the Croatian Military Office. This applies to any male whom the Croatian authorities consider to be Croatian, regardless of whether you consider yourself Croatian, have foreign citizenship and passport, or were born or live outside of Croatia. All dual citizens in the U.S. should contact the Croatian Embassy or consulates to register with the Croatian Military Center. In Croatia, visit the Military Center (Regrutni Centar) in your district.

According to recent changes to Croatia's Defense Law (Articles 39.a and 39.b), and the Croatian Constitution (Article No. 88), military service is now voluntary for both men and women. Croatia's Ministry of Defense can change the draft obligation (currently frozen) as needed with government approval.

Additional information is available from the Croatian Ministry of Defense at www.morh.hr.

Consular News

Visa application fees increase

Non-immigrant Visas

Effective Jan. 1, the application fee for a U.S. nonimmigrant visa increased from \$100 to \$131. This increase allows the U.S. Department of State to recover the costs of security and other enhancements to the non-immigrant visa application process. This increase applies both to non-immigrant visas issued on machine-readable foils in passports and to border crossing cards issued to certain applicants in Mexico.

Applicants who paid the prior \$100 application fee before Jan. 1, will be processed only if they are scheduled and appear for a visa interview before Jan. 31. Applicants who paid the prior \$100 application fee and appear for visa interviews after Jan. 31 must pay the difference (\$31) before they will be interviewed.

The Department is required by law to recover the cost of processing non-immigrant visas through the collection of the Machine-Readable Visa application fee. Because of new security-related costs, new information technology systems and inflation, the \$100 Machine-Readable Visa fee is lower than the actual cost of processing non-immigrant visas. In fact, the \$100 fee was already lower than the cost of processing non-immigrant visas when the fee was reviewed as a part of the cost-of-service study in 2004. The Department has been absorbing the additional cost. We are now collecting 10 fingerprints from each applicant and the cost charged by the FBI to review those fingerprints no longer allows us to do this. The application fee has increased twice since 9/11, the last time in 2002.

Immigrant Visas

Effective Jan. 1, the application fee for a U.S. immigrant visa increased from \$335 to \$355. The fee accurately reflects the cost of enhanced biometric security features which have been added to the immigrant visa system.

Applicants who paid the prior \$335 application fee before Jan. 1, will be processed without further payment even if they appear for an immigrant visa interview after Jan. 1.

Most IV applicants pay their fees through the Department of State's National Visa Center (NVC) in the United States. Bills for fees sent by NVC reflect this change effective Jan. 1. Applicants who pay after Jan. 1 will be required to pay the increase even if their original bill sent prior to Jan. 1 displays the fee of \$335.

This fee increase also affects Diversity Visa applicants, who pay the fee at the time of the interview at the U.S. Embassy.

US Embassy Outreach

U.S. Embassy

Ulica Thomasa Jeffersona 2
10010 Zagreb
Phone: 385-1-661-2200



We're on the Web!

www.usembassy.hr

Upcoming US Embassy-sponsored events

January

Jan. 17: Deputy Chief of Mission Vivian Walker will join English and economics students to launch Open Yale Courses, free on-line Yale University courses offered at the American Corner in Rijeka.

February

Feb. 5: The Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra will perform at the Vatroslav Lisinski Concert Hall in Zagreb at 19:30.

U.S. Tax Information

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) office serves all U.S. taxpayers living or working overseas. The IRS home page, www.irs.gov, should be the first stop for tax forms and answers to common questions.

The U.S. taxes its citizens on their worldwide income. Even if you are eligible to exclude a portion or all of your earned income in a given year, you must file a U.S. tax return in order to claim that exclusion. Also the foreign income exclusion doesn't apply to self employment tax.

The IRS website has information for overseas filers, including overseas filing publications, forms and frequently asked questions.

Taxpayers can also contact the IRS international office or the IRS overseas filing center. Contact informa-

tion is available at <http://www.irs.gov/localcontacts/article/0,,id=101292,00.html>.

IRS Publication 54, Tax Guide for U.S. Citizens and Resident Aliens Abroad is a valuable resource for anyone living abroad or with income from a foreign source. This can be found on the IRS website as well.

The Consular section of the U.S. Embassy in Zagreb can provide you with a tax form needed (from: www.irs.gov -e.g., 1040 for overseas filers, extension forms) but if you have Internet access, you can access the IRS website directly

Contact information

For Europe:
U.S. Embassy/IRS
2 Avenue Gabriel
Paris, France 75382
Walk in assistance 9 a.m. to noon
Phone service M-F 1:30 –3:30 p.m.
Tel. 33 01 4312-2555
Fax: 33 01 4312-2303

Customer Service Fax:
215-516-3256 or 215-516-2555
Fax for transcripts of returns:
215-516-2931; 215-516-1311;
215-516-1322

Mail:
IRS Philadelphia Service Center
Philadelphia, PA 19255-0215

If you are calling about an e-file issue and it is not account related, contact the e-help desk at 512-416-7750 from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. (central time), Monday through Friday.

**American Citizens Information Night 2008****Thursday, February 7, 2008****17:00 – 19:00 (Doors open at 16:30)****American Embassy, Zagreb****Dear American Citizen,**

The U.S. Embassy in Zagreb cordially invites you to attend our first American Citizens Information Night, to be held Thursday, Feb. 7, 2008, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the Embassy.

For this event, we are gathering experts on a variety of topics important to you, an American Citizen residing in Croatia, such as overseas voting assistance, immigration to the U.S., Social Security issues, commercial and investment opportunities, information about educational opportunities and English-speaking community groups in Croatia, as well as the latest information on requirements for Croatian visa and residence permits. These experts will be available to answer your questions at booths set up in the Atrium of the Embassy – a one-stop information shop.

U.S. Ambassador to Croatia Robert A. Bradtke will give welcoming remarks. U.S. Embassy employees representing a number of Embassy offices will also be available to answer your questions. In addition, consular staff will offer routine consular services, such as notarial services and passport renewals (the normal fee schedule will apply).

Participants will include:

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service, Department of Homeland Security (Vienna, Austria)
Visa and Aliens Department, Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration (Zagreb)

American Chamber of Commerce (Zagreb)

American International School of Zagreb

International Women's Club (Zagreb)

Croatian-American Society (Zagreb)

U.S. Foreign Commercial Service (Zagreb)

United States Agency for International Development (Zagreb)

Federal Benefits Unit (Zagreb)

American snacks and drinks will be provided.

This event is open to all U.S. citizens residing in Croatia as well as accompanying foreign-born spouses and/or immediate family members. All visitors will need to bring a U.S. passport or foreign government-issued photo ID.

The American Embassy is located near the airport at Ul. Thomasa Jeffersona 2, Zagreb. Directions to the Embassy are available at http://www.usembassy.hr/embassy/general_info.htm

The doors will open at 4:30 p.m. Please allow extra time for security screening on arrival. Cell phones and any electronic equipment will need to be checked in the entryway. Parking will be available in the Embassy visitors' parking lot and on the street in front of the Embassy.

To expedite your check in at the Embassy, please confirm your attendance by e-mail at ConsularZagreb@state.gov or by phone at (01) 661-2276 or 661-2233.

We hope to see you there!

Sincerely,

Ruta D. Elvikis

Consul