

U.S. Embassy Citizen Outreach



Zagreb, Croatia

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A MESSAGE FROM AMBASSADOR JAMES B. FOLEY



Ambassador James B. Foley presented his credentials to President Mesic on September 15, 2009. Ambassador Foley is a career member of the U.S. Foreign Service, and has served in a variety of positions for the Department of State, including as Ambassador to Haiti, and most recently as Coordinator for Iraqi Refugee Issues.

I am honored to have this opportunity to reach out to the American citizen community in Croatia, and to open what I hope will be a productive dialogue with you during my term as Ambassador. I have had a chance to meet personally with many of you since arriving in September, and I look forward to cultivating a strong relationship with Americans in the country as we continue to develop and expand the already deep and important relationship between the United States and Croatia.

"I look forward to cultivating a strong relationship with Americans in the country as we continue to develop and expand the already deep and important relationship between the United States and Croatia." Ambassador Foley

My first few months as Ambassador have been busy and rewarding. One of my top priorities is for the U.S. to assist Croatia in completing its accession to the European Union. This is a key goal for us because we are convinced that the country's entrance into the E.U. will mean better economic and security prospects for Croatia and increased stability in the region. In this regard, I am pleased to report that the Croatian government has made significant progress both in reaching agreement with Slovenia on the long-standing border dispute and improving cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. I believe these steps, together with the government stepped up anti-corruption drive, will enable Croatia to realize its goal of joining the E.U. by 2012.

I have also been fortunate to witness the early stages of Croatia's integration into and contributions to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Securing membership in N.A.T.O. was a major achievement for Croatia, one the United States supported throughout the process. As befits a N.A.T.O. ally, Croatia continues to support the battle against extremists in Afghanistan with its contribution to N.A.T.O.'s International Security Assistance Force, and our two countries are strengthening our security ties through military cooperation. This exchange of ideas and training for our respective personnel contributes directly to our combined capacity to better handle the security challenges we face now and will face in the future.

Another key goal during my tenure is to leverage America's entrepreneurial know-how to help Croatia modernize its economy. In particular, I believe that we can work productively with both public and private actors in Croatia to develop best-practices and legal structures that will create a business climate that welcomes and rewards innovation, investment and long-term, sustained growth.

The economy and how the U.S. may be able to cooperate with Croatia to our mutual benefit was one of several important topics of discussion when I met with Prime Minister Kosor just a few weeks ago. The meeting underscored the broad range of common interests between our two governments. Indeed, this was particularly highlighted during Foreign Minister Jandrovic's visit with Secretary of State Clinton in December. I have every confidence we will be able to enjoy the same kind of positive relationship with President Josipovic. We congratulate him on his election and look forward to working with him to further improve relations between the United States and Croatia for the benefit not only of our two countries but the entire region.

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Thank you for the opportunity to tell you about my initial activities and priorities during my first months as Ambassador to Croatia. I look forward to getting to know you and welcome your comments and suggestions about any issues that affect the welfare of American citizens in Croatia.

REACHING OUT – PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN ACTION

Helping Journalists Make the Digital transition and Expand Information



Participants in the Embassy-sponsored media conference gather for a photo at a reception hosted by Deputy Chief of Mission Vivian Walker.

As part of the effort to encourage journalists to act regionally and to support independent media, the Embassy's Public Affairs Office in November organized a two-day media conference in Zagreb to look at how emerging and converging technologies are changing the media landscape in South-eastern Europe. Participants from Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia, and three U.S. speakers (Chair of Radio-Television Journalism at the University of Missouri Journalism School Kent Collins, media expert and author of "Be the Media" David Mathison, and digital media consultant J. Eric Braun) explored trends in media transition, conver-

gence of media platforms, social media and citizen journalism. Helping journalists, editors, bloggers and others better understand new opportunities in digital media helps to pluralize the sources of information and break the hold of special interests.

American Corner – A Nice Little Niche

The Public Affairs Office of the Embassy reaches out to Croatians who want to learn more about the U.S. through four American Corners - quite literally a corner in a library dedicated to educating interested persons in all things American - placed strategically in four university cities throughout the country. Launched in 2005, each American Corner provides a multi-disciplinary opportunity to learn about the United States, and is composed of a core collection of books, videos, and DVDs about many facets of American life, history, and society. American literature, biographies, and key reference materials are included. Supporting equipment includes a television, DVD player, VCR, and DVC equipment along with a computer with Internet connection for research on U.S. subjects. The vast collection of English-language books – each Corner contains more than 1,000 – and other materials may be of interest to American Citizens. Next time you're in one of the following areas, check it out!

American Corner Locations

American Corner Zagreb

Public Library "Bogdan Ogrizovic"
American Corner coordinator
Preradoviceva 5
10000 Zagreb
Phone: 4810 704

American Corner Osijek

Public and University Library
Europska avenija 24
31000 Osijek
Phone: 098 170 6383

American Corner Zadar

Public Library Zadar
Stjepana Radica 11b
23000 Zadar
Phone: 091 193 4069

American Corner Rijeka

University Library
Dolac 1
51000 Rijeka
Phone: 098 794 633

HIGH PROFILE MEETINGS – BUILDING ON A STRONG RELATIONSHIP

Ambassador Foley and Prime Minister Kosor Discuss Opportunities for Cooperation

U.S. Ambassador James Foley and Croatian Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor met in Zagreb on January 11, to discuss areas of potential cooperation between their countries. Kosor said strengthening the economy, completing E.U. accession negotiations, establishing Croatia as a model N.A.T.O. member, and tackling corruption will be the country’s top priorities this year. Ambassador Foley reaffirmed support for Kosor’s objectives and Croatia’s E.U. accession. He characterized the meeting as productive and pointed to multiple issues on which the nations stand in agreement.



Secretary Clinton and Foreign Minister Jandrokovic Meet in Washington



Secretary Clinton and Foreign Minister Jandrokovic discussed ways in which their two countries can work together on a range of issues that will enhance peace and prosperity for both nations.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Croatian Foreign Minister Gordan Jandrokovic met in Washington, D.C. in January to discuss issues of significance to both countries and to affirm their resolve to continue working together in a close partnership. Speaking after their meeting on December 10, Secretary Clinton acknowledged Croatia’s accession into N.A.T.O. last April, calling it “an achievement that was the result of years of hard work and tough-minded reforms,” and stated that “as Croatia has strengthened its democracy, our countries have worked together in close partnership based on mutual respect and mutual interests.”

The Secretary also thanked Foreign Minister Jandrokovic for Croatia’s contribution to the N.A.T.O. mission in Afghanistan and for its peacekeeping operations around the world.

“By working together, as well as through NATO and other multilateral institutions, the United States and Croatia can ensure an even brighter future for our people, a more stable and peaceful Europe, and indeed a better and safer world.” Secretary Clinton

She noted that “Croatia’s efforts to help train Afghan forces are crucial to [the N.A.T.O.] mission” in Afghanistan, and also recognized Croatia’s regional leadership, stating that “through the Adriatic Charter, Croatia is helping to support the N.A.T.O. aspirations of its Balkan neighbors.”

Foreign Minister Jandrokovic reported that he “reiterated to Secretary Clinton the Croatian Government’s strong support for President Obama’s new Afghanistan strategy,” and stated that “Croatia is committed to strengthening its presence in Afghanistan and is seeking ways to further contribute to N.A.T.O.’s key efforts.” He also stressed reforms Croatia is undertaking as it aspires to E.U. membership, including in the areas of the judiciary and public administration, and stressed that the country is ramping up its fight against corruption.

Secretary Clinton made clear the U.S.’s intention for Croatia and its neighbors regarding N.A.T.O. and the E.U.: “We are committed to the full integration of all of the Western Balkan nations into European and Trans-Atlantic institutions.” The Secretary closed her post-meeting remarks by affirming that with close cooperation, “the United States and Croatia can ensure an even brighter future for our people, a more stable and peaceful Europe, and indeed a better and safer world.”

KEEPING YOU IN THE KNOW – TIPS FOR THE SAVVY AMCIT ABROAD

Articles of Interest for American Citizens On the Go

The American community in Croatia is a mobile group. Here are a few articles that may be of interest to you before traveling out of the country:

How to Survive a Passport Nightmare

<http://tinyurl.com/yfm6ql3>

This article from CNN.com contains good advice on what to do in the event of a lost or stolen passport, and how you can prepare ahead of time to help ensure this unfortunate situation does not become a reality for you.

Top Ten Tips for Preparing for a Business Trip Abroad

<http://tinyurl.com/ajwpqz>

Traveling abroad for business can be exciting, but you should leave yourself plenty of time to prepare before your departure. NYDailyNews.com has compiled a list of things to do before you leave.

Planning for the Worst When Traveling

<http://tinyurl.com/yb4mvn2>

DallasNews.com gives some advice for pre-trip planning – note the admonishment to register with the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in the countries to which you will be traveling!



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Getting Around Croatia – The Right G.P.S. Map Makes all the Difference

Navigating Croatia's roads can be a breeze with the right G.P.S. map. Here are a few options from two of the biggest sellers:

Garmin

The City Navigator Europe NT map from Garmin promises full coverage of virtually the whole of Europe. The map is designed by NAVTEQ, which states that its Croatia coverage includes 85,400 kilometers worth of roads, with the mainland and 159 key islands covered. The map currently costs \$149.99 U.S.D.:

<http://tinyurl.com/yelmv4y>



TomTom

The Western & Central Europe map from TomTom boasts 42% coverage of Croatia, including major cities and coastal areas, and costs \$69.99 U.S.D.: <http://tinyurl.com/yd3r9er>

Its Eastern Europe map offers the same coverage of Croatia, but at a lower price of \$49.95 U.S.D. (it covers fewer countries than the Western & Central Europe map):

<http://tinyurl.com/ycyruh6>

Note: Before purchasing a map, be sure that it is compatible with your GPS and that your GPS has enough room to store the desired map.

Tax Season Approaches!

American citizens living overseas might find *I.R.S. Publication 4732, "Federal Tax Information for U.S. Taxpayers Living Abroad,"* useful in trying to navigate the confusing web of U.S. tax requirements. The I.R.S. developed this brochure as a resource to assist taxpayers in locating useful tax information to help in the preparation of their tax returns and/or in resolving tax problems. To view the Publication, use the following link:

<http://tinyurl.com/y9p9yyg>



Non-Immigrant Visa Unit Takes Show on the Road

The Non-Immigrant Visa (N.I.V.) staff at the Embassy recently kicked off a series of public outreach events aimed at encouraging Croatian university students to consider work/travel and study abroad programs in the U.S. Together with a representative from the Embassy's Public Affairs Office, three local N.I.V. staff and one American Consular Officer provide an overview of the visa process and answer questions related to J and F visas – the types necessary, respectively, for work/travel and study programs. The events are held at universities and other heavily student-populated areas, and generally draw large crowds of students seeking to learn more about opportunities to travel to the U.S.



Embassy personnel are joined at the events by private Croatian companies that facilitate the work/travel and study programs, as well as a Croatian nonprofit that provides information on higher education opportunities in the U.S. The first outreach was held in September in Zagreb, and similar programs are scheduled through March in Varazdin, Zadar, Rijeka and Osijek.

Help us Help You in Case of an Emergency

Get Registered!

U.S. citizens visiting and residing in Croatia are encouraged to register with the Embassy through the U.S. Department of State's automated online registration system: <http://tinyurl.com/24fw75>

Registration helps us: locate you in case family members elsewhere need to contact you in an emergency; locate you in case the Embassy needs to contact you because of an emergency here in Croatia; and to facilitate the issuance of a new passport in case yours is lost or stolen. By U.S. law, the registration information you give to us is confidential. We can release it ONLY if you provide us written authorization, and then only to the persons to whom you have authorized such release.

You can register on-line, using the link above, or fill out the form when you visit the Embassy.

The Warden System

Recent events in Haiti highlight the need for Amcits to register with the U.S. Embassy in the country in which they are living or traveling. The Warden System is the means by which the Embassy contacts American Citizens in the event of an emergency, disaster or threat. It also allows the Embassy to distribute other information of interest to the private U.S. community. In addition to posting the information on our website at <http://zagreb.usembassy.gov>, these important messages are distributed by a "Warden" via telephone calls, e-mails and text messages to U.S. citizens who are registered for such alerts. To receive Warden messages, please send your cell phone number and e-mail address to us at: ConsularZagreb@state.gov. Please include "Warden System Registration" in the subject line of your e-mail.

Wardens are U.S. citizens living in Croatia who volunteer to contact all Americans registered in the Warden System. If you are interested in volunteering to be a Warden for your district, please call: 01-661-2245. In consideration of privacy concerns, Wardens must sign an agreement to safeguard any information about U.S. citizens in their Warden district.

New Law Makes Absentee Voting Easier for Overseas Americans

On October 28, 2009, Congress enacted the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment (MOVE) Act. This legislation amends existing law regarding overseas voting in federal elections, and should make voting easier for overseas Americans.

New Procedures for 2010 Elections

Beginning with the November 2010 general election, and for all subsequent general, special, and primary elections, states will be required to mail out ballots at least 45 days prior to an election for a federal office. This requirement may cause some states to select earlier primary dates in order to comply with the 45 day mailing deadline, or to request waivers due to special circumstances. In addition to mailing ballots to overseas voters, the states will be required, at the voter's request, to provide registration forms, absentee ballot request forms, and blank ballots via fax or email. However, each state's laws determine whether ballot requests or voted ballots can be returned via fax or email. The new law prohibits states from rejecting marked ballots based on notarization, paper size, or paper weight requirements. The witnessing requirements of individual states remain in place.

Overseas Absentee Ballot Requests

Effective immediately, states will no longer be required by federal law to continue to mail election materials to overseas addresses (even when they are determined to be invalid) for two complete general election cycles on the basis of a single ballot request. It will now be up to each state to determine how long to continue to send out election materials before requiring overseas voters to submit new ballot requests. This change, sought by local election officials, should greatly decrease the volume of voting materials sent abroad to addresses where Americans no longer reside.

State Department Recommendations

In light of these changes, the Department of State recommends that all U.S. voters residing abroad request absentee ballots from their local election officials at the start of each calendar year, and whenever there is a change of address, change of e-mail address, or change of name, by completing and sending in a Federal Post Card Application (FPCA). To locate information on your specific state's requirements, and to obtain an on-line version of the FPCA, please visit www.fvap.org. Voters may also pick up a hard copy of the FPCA from any U.S. embassy or consulate. FPCAs may be mailed to your local voting officials in the United States via international mail or from any U.S. embassy or consulate. Many states allow U.S. citizens overseas to submit the FPCA by e-mail or fax. The Department of State strongly encourages all U.S. overseas voters to provide email addresses or fax numbers on their FPCAs to enable local election officials to transmit election materials in the fastest manner available, which should then allow sufficient time for the return of voted ballots. For information regarding your specific state, please visit www.fvap.org.

Emergency Ballots

The Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) serves as an emergency ballot for the November general elections for federal offices, although some states also permit its use for elections for state and local offices. Beginning in January 2011, the new law allows use of the FWAB for primary, special, and runoff elections for federal offices. Voters who request an absentee ballot in advance of their state's ballot request deadline, but who fail to receive an official ballot from local election officials in time to vote, should complete the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot and send it back to local election officials in time for it to be counted. An on-line version of the FWAB, together with instructions for its use, is available at www.fvap.gov.

Questions?

The Voting Assistance Officer at the US Embassy Zagreb is also always available to answer questions about absentee voting. To contact the Voting Assistance Officer, call +385-1-661-2276 or send an e-mail to ZagrebACS@state.gov.

How to Get in Touch for American Citizen Services

American Citizen Services

Embassy of the United States of America

Ulica Thomasa Jeffersona 2

10010 Zagreb, Croatia

Telephone: (+385-1) 661-2345

FAX: (+385-1) 665-8933

Email: ZagrebACS@state.gov

Office Hours

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday: 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Wednesday : 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., and 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Please remember, an appointment is now required for non-emergency ACS matters. You can schedule an appointment using this link: <http://tinyurl.com/yc8n7xb>

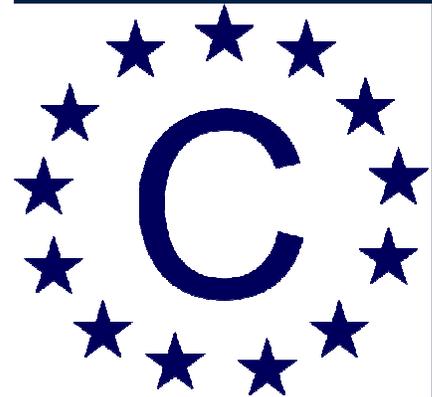
For American Citizen Services in the event of an **EMERGENCY**, call: (+385-1) 661-2400

Federal Benefits Unit

The Embassy's ***Federal Benefits Unit*** is open for telephone inquiries Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to noon.

As with all other services for American Citizens, appointments are required for Federal Benefits matters. To schedule, please call: +385-1-661-2272.

Registration information



Contact us

If you have a question for the U.S. Embassy staff or an idea for an article in a future edition, write to us at:

ZagrebACS@state.gov



US Embassy

Ulica Thomasa Jeffersona 2

10010 Zagreb

Phone: 385-1-661-2345

We're on the Web!

zagreb.usembassy.gov