

U.S. Embassy Outreach



Provided as a service to American citizens in Croatia



Ambassador Robert A. Bradtke

A Message from Ambassador Robert A. Bradtke

“It was a remarkable moment, and I could not help thinking about how much has changed since my first assignment to Zagreb in 1976.”

-Amb. Bradtke on President Bush’s speech on St. Mark’s Square

Inside this issue:

President Bush in Croatia	2,3,4
US tax informa-	4
Voting Information	6,7
Consular News	8,9
Foreign Workers Visa Law	10
Invitation: American Citizens Info Night	11

This has been an extraordinary period for the U.S. Embassy and all Americans in Croatia. Whether you followed President Bush’s visit via television from the far corners of Croatia or right here with me in Zagreb, I know we all watched with excitement as the visit unfolded to further our common goals and strengthen our already excellent bilateral relations.

President Bush came to congratulate Croatia on receiving an invitation to join the NATO alliance and recognize Croatia’s accomplishments. The highlight of the visit for me was the President’s speech at St. Mark’s Square. As the President said in his speech on St. Mark’s Square, “Henceforth, should any danger threaten your people, America and the NATO Alliance will stand with you, and no one will be able to take your freedom away.” It was a remarkable moment, and I could not help thinking about how much has changed since my first assignment to Zagreb in 1976.

As you might recall, President Bush expressed a desire to know more about Croatia during his meeting

with Prime Minister Sanader in October 2006 in Washington. This time the president was able to see firsthand some of Croatia’s accomplishments and how proud Croatians are of what they have achieved. At the social dinner at Pantovčak (Friday, April 4), President Bush was introduced to leaders in government as well as Croatian businessmen, such as Đuro Gavrilović, CEO of the oldest and biggest Croatian meat company, and Goran Radman, chairman of Microsoft Southeast Europe; celebrities in the visual and performing arts, including singer Gibonni and sculptor Dušan Džamonja; and top contenders in sports, such as retired basketball player Dino Rađa, and high jumper Blanka Vlašić, who holds the world record and will represent Croatia in the 2008 Summer Olympics.

President Bush’s visit also signifies U.S. interest in furthering the development of South Eastern Europe and recognition of Croatia as a leader in the region. On Saturday, April 5, at Villa Prekrižje on the Presidential compound, he met with Croatian President Stjepan Mesić and Prime Minister

Ivo Sanader, Macedonian President Boris Crvenkovski and Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski, and Albanian President Bamir Topi and Prime Minister Sali Berisha. Together they discussed NATO in the region and other pertinent issues, noting that there is still much work to be done in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo and elsewhere.

Afterwards President Mesić repeated that President Bush’s visit was a privilege for Croatia, serving to further deepen the relationship between our two countries. President Mesić also expressed the hope that this visit will open the door to further American investment in Croatia.

For his part, President Bush told me how much he enjoyed his visit, and that he hopes to return as a tourist after he leaves office.

In the wake of this successful series of events, the US Embassy staff will continue to build on our bilateral relationship to create an even more solid bond between our countries. As you will read in this edition, we are celebrating the success of the US Agency for International Development

Continued on page 2

U.S. Embassy Outreach

President Bush toasts Croatians at Presidential Palace dinner

“You said you're from a small country. I'm impressed by the big hearts.”

— President Bush, in his toast at the social dinner at Pantovcak.



President Bush and President Mesic toast before the social dinner at Pantovcak — April 4, 2008

President Bush:

Mr. President, and Madam, thank you very much. Mr. Prime Minister, thank you very much. Also good to meet your wife. Laura and I are thrilled to be in your beautiful country, Mr. President.

We appreciate your gracious hospitality. And we celebrate your invitation to become one of America's closest allies. You said you're from a small country. I'm impressed by the big hearts -- and the big basket-

ball team.

We are so proud of our relationship, Mr. President. We share common values. We believe in human rights and human dignity. We believe there's a Creator that has given every man, woman and child on the face of the Earth the great gift of freedom. We believe markets are capable of unleashing the entrepreneurial spirit of our peoples. We understand that freedom requires sacrifice.

I salute the people of your

country for your courage and willingness to help a young democracy in Afghanistan not only thrive but succeed. I appreciate the friends who have stared evil in the face and understand there's a better tomorrow.

And so, Mr. President, I bring the greetings of my country to your beautiful land. With the honor due to a trusted ally, I offer a toast to you and to the valiant people of Croatia.

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



Ambassador Bradtke welcomes President Bush and Secretary Rice to the Meet & Greet — Hotel Westin, April 5, 2008

(USAID) over the past 15 years. With its imminent entrance into NATO and subsequently the European Union, we recognize that Croatia has gone beyond the need for further assistance.

In the upcoming months we'll continue to work on a joint civil aviation agreement, law enforcement cooperation, the visit of a U.S. trade delegation, and the Visa Waiver Program qualifications to further open our doors to our Croatian friends.

And as always in this important election year, we continue to encourage and assist U.S. citizens living in Croatia to vote.

President Bush shakes hands with staff and family members from the US Embassy, Zagreb.



President Bush speaks to thousands at St. Mark's Square, Zagreb



President Bush and Prime Minister Sanader at St. Mark's Square, April 5, 2008

PRESIDENT BUSH: Dobro jutro. Mr. Prime Minister, thank you very much. I'm honored to be here with the leaders from Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia. The United States appreciates the leadership you have shown in the cause of freedom. We're pleased Albania and Croatia have been invited to join NATO. And we look forward to Macedonia taking its place very soon in this great alliance for freedom.

Laura, who has joined me today, and I are proud to stand on the soil of an independent Croatia. Our countries are separated by thousands of miles, but we're united by a deep belief in God and the blessings of liberty He gave us. And today, on the edge of the great Adriatic, we stand together as one free people.

Croatia is a very different place than it was just a decade ago. The Croatian people have overcome war and hardship to build peaceful relations with your neighbors, and to build a maturing democracy in one of the most beautiful countries on the face of the Earth. Americans admire your courage and admire your persistence. And we look forward to welcoming you as a partner in NATO.

The invitation to join NATO that Croatia and Albania received this week is a vote of confidence that you

will continue to make necessary reforms and become strong contributors to our great Alliance. Henceforth, should any danger threaten your people, America and the NATO Alliance will stand with you, and no one will be able to take your freedom away.

I regret that NATO did not extend an invitation to Macedonia at this week's summit. Macedonia has made difficult reforms at home, and is making major contributions to NATO missions abroad. Unfortunately, Macedonia's invitation was delayed because of a dispute over its name. In Bucharest, NATO allies declared that as soon as this issue is resolved, Macedonia will be extended an invitation to join the Alliance. America's position is clear: Macedonia should take its place in NATO as soon as possible.

The NATO Alliance is open to all countries in the region. We welcome the decisions of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro to take the next steps toward membership called Intensive Dialogue. And we hope that soon a free and prosperous Serbia will find its rightful place in the family of Europe, and live at peace with its neighbors.

With the changes underway in this region, Europe stands on the threshold of a new and hopeful history.

The ancient and costly rivalries that led to two world wars have fallen away. We've seen the burning desire for freedom melt even the Iron Curtain. We've witnessed the rise of strong and vibrant democracies and free and open markets. And today the people of Europe are closer than ever before to a dream shared by millions: A Europe that is whole, a Europe that is at peace, and a Europe that is free.

The people of this region know what the gift of liberty means. You know the death and destruction that can be caused by the followers of radical ideologies. You know that, in a long run, the only way to defeat a hateful ideology is to promote the hopeful alternative of human freedom. And that is what our nations are doing today in the Middle East. The lack of freedom and opportunity in that region has given aid and comfort to the lies and ambitions of violent extremists. Resentments that began on the streets of the Middle East have resulted in the killing innocent people across the world. A great danger clouds the future of all free men and women, and this danger sits at the doorstep of Europe.

Together the people of this region are helping to confront this danger. Today soldiers from Croatia, Albania, and Macedonia are serving bravely in Afghanistan -- helping the Afghan



President Bush and Prime Minister Sanader in front of performers at St. Mark's Square, Zagreb.

Cont'd on page 4

U.S. Embassy Outreach

President Bush's speech (*cont'd from page 3*)

people defeat the terrorists and secure their future of liberty. Forces from Albania and Macedonia are serving in Iraq -- where they're helping the Iraqi people build a society that rejects terror and lives in freedom. It's only a matter of time before freedom takes root across that troubled region. And when it does, millions will remember the people of your nation stood with them in their hour of need.

At this great moment in history, you have a vital role. There are many people who don't appear to understand why it takes so long to build a democracy. You can tell them how hard it is to put in place a new and complex system of government for the first time. There are those who actually wonder if people were better off under their old tyranny. You can tell them that freedom is the only real path to pros-

perity and security and peace. And there are those who ask whether the pain and sacrifices for freedom are worth the costs. And they should come to Croatia. And you can show them that freedom is worth fighting for.

The great church in this square has stood since the Middle Ages. Over the centuries, it has seen long, dark winters of occupation and tyranny and war. But the spring is here at last. This is an era in history that generations of Croatians have prayed for. It is an era that Pope John Paul the Second envisioned when he came to this land, and prayed with the Croatian people, and asked for "a culture of peace." Today in this square, before this great church, we can now proudly say: Those prayers have been answered.

May you always remember the



President Bush and Prime Minister Sanader at St. Mark's Square, April 5, 2008

joy of this moment in your history. And may the hopeful story of a peaceful Croatia find its way to those in the world who live as slaves, and still await a joyful spring.

May God bless Croatia. And thank you for coming.

U.S. Tax Information — Contact information for Europe

Starting in May, the U.S. Treasury will begin sending economic stimulus payments to more than 130 million households. To receive a payment, taxpayers must have a valid Social Security number, \$3,000 of income and file a 2007 federal tax return. IRS will take care of the rest.

Those deemed eligible will receive up to \$600 (\$1,200 for married couples), and parents will receive an additional \$300 for each eligible child younger than 17. Millions of retirees, disabled veterans and low-wage workers who usually are exempt from filing a tax return must do so this year in order to receive a stimulus payment.

All necessary forms and instructions are on the IRS website at www.irs.gov. Or contact the regional office located in the U.S. Embassy in Paris.

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 | 4312-2555
Fax: 33 | 4312-2303



Customer Service Fax:

1-215-516-3256 or
1-215-516-2555
Fax for transcripts of returns:
1-215-516-2931
1-215-516-1311
1-215-516-1322

Mail:

IRS Philadelphia Service Center
Philadelphia, PA 19255-0215

If you are calling about an e-file issue that is not account related, contact the e-help desk at 1-512-416-7750 from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. (central time), Monday through Friday.

USAID leaves Croatia better prepared for the 21st century

By Jennifer Croft
USAID Development, Outreach and
Communications Specialist

The US Agency for International Development is closing its mission in Croatia this year after 15 years of working with its local partners to build democratic institutions, rebuild infrastructure and develop a thriving market economy.

Croatia's successful transition has been integral in achieving the U.S. core policy goal of establishing stability, peace and prosperity in Southeast Europe, and has served other important American interests such as fighting terrorism and trafficking in persons.

Agency Administrator Henrietta Fore, U.S. Ambassador to Croatia Robert Bradtke and high-level Croatian officials will speak at a May ceremony commemorating the completion of this transition.

USAID began its work in Croatia in 1992 when the country was newly independent from the former Yugoslavia but still in the midst of war. Since then, USAID has delivered more than \$320 million in assistance to Croatia. The early USAID program focused on humanitarian assistance and support for refugee return and reintegra-



Gorice School Before

tion. In addition to war relief, USAID activities included support for strengthening civil society and development of an independent media. These continued to be core elements of the USAID program in the initial post-war period, when efforts also focused on the heavily war-affected region of Eastern Slavonia.

USAID also turned its attention to revitalizing Croatia's economy with projects aimed at increasing the competitiveness of the private financial sector. Assistance ranged from microcredit for small businesses to helping government ministries with budget planning, decentralization, and privatization processes.

In its final years, USAID/Croatia implemented a comprehensive transition program that included economic and fiscal reform, social sector reform, strengthening democratic institutions, and training activities. The final generation of projects shared the goal of solidifying and sustaining previous gains as Croatia continued on a path toward full integration into global economic and political communities, including the European Union and NATO.

Assistance from the American people to the Croatian people through USAID achieved results such as: reconstruction and community improvement projects benefiting more than 100,000 peo-



Gorice School After

ple in more than 70 towns and villages, creation of 20,000 jobs in small and medium-sized enterprises, and exposure of more than 4,000 Croatians to new knowledge and expertise through training programs.

USAID completes its assistance program in Croatia in 2008, having worked with more than 500 local partners. During its operation, USAID/Croatia had three Mission Directors and a total of 28 American employees and 45 Croatian employees. At its peak, the mission employed 35 people.

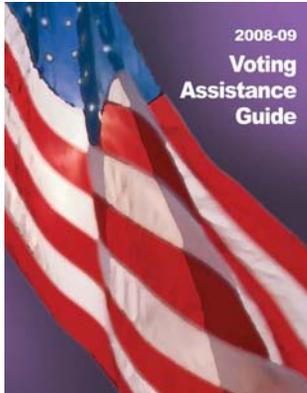
Since the establishment USAID in 1961, the agency has been the principal U.S. agency to extend assistance to countries recovering from disaster, trying to escape poverty, and engaging in democratic reforms. USAID works in more than 100 countries around the world.





Voting News

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS - OVERSEAS CITIZENS



From www.FVAP.gov

What is UOCAVA?

UOCAVA stands for the *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act*, enacted in 1986. The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) has been charged with administering the UOCAVA and works on behalf of all UOCAVA citizens to ensure their right to vote in their respective states and territories and to assist them in that process, no matter where in the world they may be residing.

Am I a UOCAVA Voter?

You are UOCAVA voter if you are a U.S. citizen 18 years or older AND one or more of the following:

- a civilian residing outside the United States
- a member of the Uniformed Services
- a Uniformed Services family member
- a member of the Merchant Marine
- a Merchant Marine family member

UOCAVA voters are given special assistance when voting absentee because they have been recognized as a group that traditionally has had a difficult time obtaining, voting, and returning their ballots by the close of polls on Election Day.

Do I have to be registered to vote absentee?

Registration requirements vary from state to state. Most states and territories do require registration to vote absentee, but

for UOCAVA voters, registration and request for absentee ballots can be done at the same time by submitting a single FPCA. If you are already permanently registered and only wish to request a ballot, you should submit an FPCA early in the election year.

If I do not maintain a legal residence in the U.S., what is my "legal state of residence?"

Your "legal state of residence" for voting purposes is the state or territory where you last resided immediately prior to your departure from the United States. This applies to overseas citizens even though you may not have property or other ties in your last state or territory of residence and your intent to return to that state or territory may be uncertain.

When completing the FPCA's (Federal Post Card Application) Voting Residence section, be sure to enter the entire mailing address of your last residence, including street or rural route and number. The address determines your proper district, ward, precinct or parish for voting purposes. Some states allow children of U.S. citizens overseas who are U.S. citizens but who have never resided in the U.S., to claim one of their parent's legal state or territory of residence as their own. Check out our State by State Instructions to see if your state or territory allows this.

Continued on page 7

www.fvap.gov

Contact your Voting
Assistance Officer at
VoteZagreb@state.gov



When is the best time to apply for an absentee ballot?

At least 45 days before Election Day to allow ample time to process the request and mail the ballot. There is no date that is too early to send in your FPCA, and FVAP recommends submitting an FPCA in January of each year. If applying for both registration and request of an absentee ballot, the FPCA may have to be mailed earlier than 45 days. Most states and territories have specific registration and ballot request deadlines for UOCAVA voters. These can be found in our State by State Instructions. (www.fvap.gov).

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

Can I register or vote in person at the embassy or consulate?

At the present time, there are no provisions for in-person voting or on-site registration to be conducted at U.S. embassies or consulates. U.S. embassy and consular officials can assist U.S. citizens in completing the FPCA or other election materials for their state, witness or notarize FPCA forms and ballots (if required), and provide other absentee voting information.

U.S. embassy and consulate locations serve also as a mailing point. FPCA forms and other election materials may be mailed back, postage-paid, from these locations to your local voting jurisdiction in the U.S. where absentee registration and ballot requests are processed. Remember to make sure that all election material is post-marked.

Remaining primaries:

April 22: Pennsylvania.

May 6: Indiana, North Carolina

May 13: Nebraska, West Virginia

May 20: Kentucky, Oregon

May 27: Idaho (R)

June 3: Montana, New Mexico (R)

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

September 1-4: Republican National Convention, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minn.



Contact us at VoteZagreb@state.gov

Consular News

Registering with the U.S. Embassy

By Verica Haraminčić, American Citizens Services Assistant

U.S. citizens visiting and residing in Croatia should register through the U.S. Department of State's automated online registration system,

<https://travelregistration.state.gov>.

We also recommend that you leave a copy of your itinerary with someone in the United States in case of an emergency. Once you are registered, a consular officer can contact you in an emergency or let you know if someone in the US is trying to reach you.

Note: In accordance with the Privacy Act, information on your welfare or whereabouts may not be released without your written authorization.

Registered visitors and residents can also receive important information in Croatia.

For general information on traveling overseas, please see the Department of State's [Tips for Traveling Abroad](#).

You can also find country specific information at <http://www.travel.state.gov>

Warden system

The Warden System provides a way for the US Embassy to reach American citizens in the event of an emergency, disaster or threat and to distribute other informa-

tion of interest to the private US community.

Wardens are U.S. citizens who volunteer their assistance to pass on information from the Embassy. In consideration of privacy concerns, they sign an agreement to safeguard any information about US citizens in their warden district.

If you would like to serve as a warden in Croatia or have any other questions about our warden system, please contact the Consular Section at the U.S. Embassy in Zagreb, Tel. 01-661-2276 or 661-2233.

Emails and Text Messages

We're modernizing our warden system to use email addresses and cell phone numbers (for text messages) to reach U.S. citizens in an emergency. In case of an emergency, a consular officer will send a short text message and/or email to let you know what's going on and where you can find more information. Complete warden messages will still be posted on our website <http://zagreb.usembassy.gov>.

To be part of our network, please send us your cell phone number and email address if you haven't already.

Travel Warnings

Travel Warnings are issued by the Department of State any time there is a perceived threat to American tourists, visitors or U.S. residents in a country. In the past, public announcements have included short-term political instability, bomb threats to airlines, violence by terrorists and anniversary dates of specific terrorist events.

The U.S. State Department www.travel.state.gov maintains a current list of worldwide travel warnings. These public announcements are used to disseminate information about terrorist threats and other short-term local and/or transnational conditions posing significant risks to the security of American travelers.

Travelers can find up-to-date information on security conditions by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the U.S. and Canada, or outside the U.S. and Canada on a toll line at 1-202-501-4444.

If you are traveling this season, *sretan put!*

Contact the American Citizens Services Unit of the US Embassy at **ZagrebACS@state.gov**

Consular News



Marriage by U.S. Citizens in Croatia

As we enter the traditional marriage season, here are a few things you need to know if you are planning to wed in Croatia.

Marriages are performed before a local official (*matičar*) in each municipality. This is the only ceremony performed in Croatia that is recognized by Croatian and U.S. authorities.

The following is a brief, unofficial summary of marriage requirements in Croatia. For complete information, contact the Records Registry (*Matični Ured*) in the municipality where the marriage will take place. If you're a U.S. citizen getting married in Croatia, you will need the following:

- Valid U.S. passport.
- U.S. birth certificate translated into Croatian by a sworn court interpreter; the U.S. birth certificate must be issued within the last 90 days and bear the apostille of the issuing U.S. state. Obtaining the apostille and/or new birth certificate may require several days or weeks, depending on the state.
- A sworn statement before a U.S. Consular Officer, stating that the person to be married is an American citizen, free to marry, and that the marriage contracted in Croatia will be valid in the U.S. This document is available at the U.S. Embassy in Zagreb. The fee, \$30 (or kuna equivalent) is payable in cash or by major credit card. This document must be authenticated by the Consular Section of the Croatian Foreign Ministry, located at Medulićeva 34, 10000 Zagreb; Tel. (385) (1) 4598-038. The fee is 60 kunas (approximately \$12) payable only in kunas.
- If an American does not speak Croatian, he/she will have to hire a court appointed translator for the marriage ceremony. A list of court interpreters is available at http://zagreb.usembassy.gov/root/pdfs/acs/court_interpreters.pdf
- If the bride or groom is divorced or widowed, proof of the dissolution of the previous marriage (i.e., divorce decree or death certificate) is required. An apostille is required on those documents. For more information go to <http://travel.state.gov/law>.
- Those having both U.S. and Croatian citizenship should follow the regulations for Croatian citizens.

Note: U.S. citizens entering Croatia to get married who do not intend to stay more than 90 days do not require a visa. However, U.S. citizens who intend to reside in Croatia longer than 90 days in a six-month period must abide by Croatian entry and residence requirements for foreigners.



U.S. Embassy Outreach

Phone: 385-1-661-2200



We're on the Web!

zagreb.usembassy.gov

Upcoming Events

April

4/12-5/11 Media Training Program in Zagreb: Dr. Lois Bianchi, retired associate professor of Journalism at the City University of NY-Queens College.

May

5-17 Media training programs in Dubrovnik, Split and Zagreb: Dr. Sherry Ricchiardi of Indiana University and Frank Folwell of USA Today

Important notice regarding work visas in Croatia

Many American citizens have inquired about the changes to Croatia's visa law (effective January 1, 2008) which prohibits family members of foreigners in Croatia on temporary work visas from obtaining residence status until the principal applicant has been resident in Croatia for two years. The law also states that foreign workers cannot leave Croatia for more than 30 days without jeopardizing their residence and work status. In addition, NGO, religious workers, retirees and some teachers have reported that their visas are now being limited to six months per calendar year.

The U.S. Embassy has been in contact with officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior asking for clarification of the law. Both ministries advise individuals seeking visas for business or religious work in Croatia and residence permits for their family members to contact the Ministry of the Interior directly and the ministry for now will decide applications on a case-by-case basis.

Meanwhile, the American Chamber of Commerce has established a working group to discuss the law with the ministries in an effort to effect changes that will allow U.S. citizens to continue to work and live with their families in Croatia.

For more information, contact the **American Chamber of Commerce at Tel: 48 36 777; Fax: 48 36 776; e-mail: info@amcham.hr and on the internet: www.amcham.hr**. Please note that the Amcham has moved to **Radnička 47**. Religious workers should contact the **Commission for Relations with Religious Communities, Savska cesta 41; Tel 6177-038**. Also you can contact the **American Citizens Services Unit at the U.S. Embassy** with your concerns about this new law or if you know of anyone affected. **Please send an email to ZagrebACS@state.gov**.



An Invitation for American Citizens

Dear American Citizen:

We were happy to see so many of you at the American Citizen Information Night on Feb. 7 at the U.S. Embassy in Zagreb.

Because many of you live far from the capital, we'll be taking our show on the road in May and June, visiting the American Corners at the Zadar Public Library, Rijeka University Library and Osijek Public and University Library. We hope to see you there.

Our Voting Assistance staff will be prepared to advise you on voting overseas and help you with the registration process in your home state.

The Federal Benefits Unit representative will be on hand to answer questions about the economic incentive bonus, Social Security and other benefits.

And one of our Vice Consuls will answer questions of concern to American Citizens and speak about the upcoming elections.

So save the dates:

May 27: Zadar Public Library, Stjepana Radica 11b

May 28: Rijeka University Library, Dolac 1

June 5: Osijek Public and University Library, Europska Avenija 24