



FARAWAY, YET CLOSE FRIENDS

**DEVELOPING RELATIONS BETWEEN
JAPAN AND REPUBLIC OF CROATIA**



ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

Relations between the two Governments

After the declaration of independence by the Croatian Parliament in 1991, the Government of Japan recognized the Republic of Croatia as an independent state on March 17, 1992, on the occasion of the Croatian Minister of Foreign Affairs Zvonimir Šeparović's visit to Japan. The two countries established diplomatic relations on March 5, 1993. Croatia opened its embassy in Tokyo on September 5, 1993, and Japan opened its embassy in Zagreb on February 8, 1998.



H.E. MR. ZORAN MILANOVIĆ AND H.E. MR. SHINZO ABE, 2015
(photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office, the Government of Japan)



T.I.H. CROWN PRINCE AKIHITO AND PRINCESS MICHIKO IN DUBROVNIK IN 1976
(photo: Kyodo News)

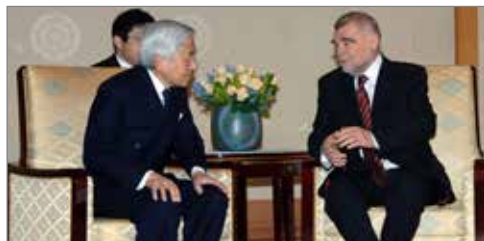
Mutual state visits between the two countries

Croatia and Japan have exchanged numerous visits by dignitaries and high-ranking officials soon after the establishment of diplomatic relations. But even before Croatia's independence, their Majesties the Emperor and Empress of Japan visited Dubrovnik in 1976, back then as Their Imperial Highnesses Crown Prince Akihito and Princess Michiko. In 2002 their daughter, Her Imperial Highness Princess Sayako, visited Zagreb and Dubrovnik.

H.E. Mr. Stjepan Mesić, President of the Republic of Croatia, visited Japan in 2008. On that occasion, a Memorandum on Cooperation on Education, Science, Technology and Sports was signed between the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport, Science and Technology of Japan and Ministry of Science, Education and Sports of the Republic of Croatia, to commemorate the 15th anniversary of diplomatic relations between two countries.

On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of diplomatic relations Their Imperial Highnesses Prince and Princess Akishino visited Croatia. During their visit a commemoration ceremony was held in the presence of Their Imperial Highnesses, H.E. Mr. Ivo Josipović, President of the Republic of Croatia, and H.E. Mr. Josip Leko, Speaker of the Croatian Parliament.

In June 2015 H.E. Mr. Zoran Milanović, Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia, visited Japan and the first summit meeting between two countries was held.

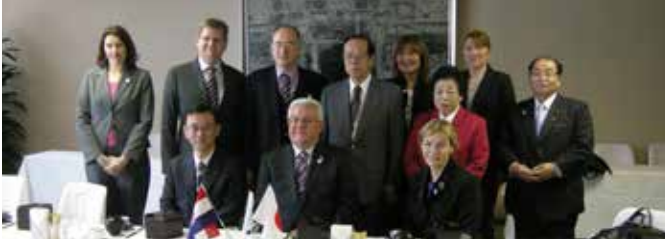


VISIT OF H.E. MR. MESIĆ TO JAPAN, 2008 (WITH HIS MAJESTY THE EMPEROR)
(Photo: Office of the President of the Republic of Croatia upon completion of duty)



VISIT OF T.I.H. PRINCE AND PRINCESS AKISHINO, COMMEMORATING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, 2013 (photo: Office of the President of the Republic of Croatia)

VISITS TO JAPAN BY HIGHER RANKING CROATIAN OFFICIALS



PARLIAMENT SPEAKER H.E. MR. BEBIĆ, MS. VESNA PUSIĆ, AND MR. MIRANDO MRŠIĆ WITH JAPANESE PARLIAMENT REPRESENTATIVES, 2010

- **1992**, H.E. Mr Zvonimir Šeparović, Minister of Foreign Affairs
- **1993**, H.E. Mr. Zlatko Mateša, Minister in the Government
H.E. Dr. Katica Ivanišević, Speaker of the Chamber of Counties
- **1996**, H.E. Mr. Zvonimir Šeparović, Minister of Foreign Affairs
- **1997**, H.E. Mr. Vlatko Pavletić, Speaker of the Croatian Parliament
- **1999**, H.E. Mr. Borislav Škegro, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance
- **2000**, H.E. Mr. Slavko Linić, Deputy Prime Minister H.E. Mr. Mato Crkvenac, Minister of Finance
Dr. Vesna Cvjetković Kurelec, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
- **2001**, H.E. Mr. Goranko Fižulić, Minister

- of the Economy
H.E. Ms. Pave Župan Rusković, Minister of Tourism
- **2002**, H.E. Mr. Mato Crkvenac, Minister of Finance
H.E. Mr. Tonino Picula, Minister of Foreign Affairs
- **2003**, H.E. Mr. Radimir Čačić, Minister of Public Works, Construction and Reconstruction
H.E. Mr. Božo Kovačević, Minister of Environmental Protection and Physical Planning
H.E. Mr. Mato Crkvenac, Minister of Finance
- **2004**, H.E. Mr. Branko Vukelić, Minister of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship, Mr. Ante Babić, State Secretary for Development Strategy

- **2005**, H.E. Ms. Jadranka Kosor, Deputy Prime Minister,
H.E. Ms. Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration,
H.E. Mr. Ivan Šuker, Minister of Finance,
H.E. Mr. Božo Biškupić, Minister of Culture (members of Croatia-Japan Parliamentary Friendship Group)
- **2006**, H.E. Mr. Dragan Primorac, Minister of Science, Education and Sports
- **2008**, H.E. Mr. Stjepan Mesić, President of the Republic of Croatia
- **2010**, H.E. Mr. Luka Bebić, Parliament Speaker
Ms. Vesna Pusić and Mr Mirando Mršić, members of the Committee for Inter-parliamentary Cooperation
H.E. Mr. Gordan Jandroković, Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration
- **2012**, H.E. Mr. Neven Mimica, Deputy Prime Minister,
H.E. Mr. Slavko Linić, Minister of Finance
- **2013**, Mr. Joško Klisović, Deputy Minister of Foreign and European Affairs
- **2014**, H.E. Mr. Ivan Vrdoljak, Minister of Economy
H.E. Mr. Darko Lorencin, Minister of Tourism
H.E. Mr. Gordan Maras, Minister of Entrepreneurship and Crafts
- **2015**, H.E. Mr. Zoran Milanović, Prime Minister

VISITS TO CROATIA BY HIGHER RANKING JAPANESE OFFICIALS



H.E. MR. SADAKAZU TANIGAKI, MINISTER OF JUSTICE, AND PARLIAMENT SPEAKER H.E. MR. JOSIP LEKO, 2014
(photo: Parliament of the Republic of Croatia)

- **1995**, H.E. Mr. Yohei Kono, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan
- **1999**, Mr. Sadakazu Tanigaki, State Secretary for Finance
- **2000**, Mr. Tatsuo Arima, Representative of the Government
- **2002**, H.I.H. Princess Sayako
- **2003**, Ms. Yasuko Ikenobo, Vice Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology
- **2004**, Japan-Croatia Friendship Parliamentary League (President Ms. Chieko Noono)
- **2005**, H.E. Mr. Yasufumi Tanahashi, Minister without portfolio (Science and Technology)
Mr. Keishiro Fukushima, Parliamentary Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs
- **2007**, Mr. Hayao Kawai, Commissioner for Cultural Affairs

- Ms. Midori Matsushima, Parliamentary Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs
- **2008**, Ms. Akiko Santo, Vice President of the House of Councilors
- **2010**, Mr. Shinichiro Furumoto, Parliamentary Vice Minister of Finance
- **2013**, Mr. Minoru Kiuchi, Parliamentary Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs
T.I.H.Prince and Princess Akishino
Mr. Nobuo Kishi, State Minister for Foreign Affairs
- **2014**, Members of the House of Representatives, Delegation for Research on Parliamentary System and Political and Economic Situation in European Countries
Mr. Takao Makino, Parliamentary Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs
H.E. Mr. Sadakazu Tanigaki, Minister of Justice
- **2015**, Mr. Kentaro Sonoura, Parliamentary Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs



TUNA&SUSHI FESTIVAL IN ZADAR

(source: Croatian National Tourist Board (2014), Croatian Bureau of Statistics (2003)). On the other hand, number of visitors from Croatia to Japan remains under 2 000 (Source: Japan National Tourist Organization). Japanese companies in the fields of automobiles, motorcycles, electric appliances, tobacco, medical equipment, have set up their representative offices in Croatia. Yazaki Europe established their R&D center in Zagreb. During the summer months, Japan Airlines has been operating charter flights to Zagreb and Dubrovnik since 2007.

EXAMPLE OF SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS CORPORATION

Yazaki Zagreb development centre

YAZAKI started their engineering activities in Zagreb in June 1999 as a branch office. Their initial focus was design and development, prototype building, testing and validation of various automotive



H.E. DR. VEDRAN MORNAR VISITING YAZAKI ZAGREB PROTOTYPE AND TOOLING CENTRE

components including connectors, terminals and headers for low voltage applications. At that time, YAZAKI Zagreb was situated on two different locations.

In cooperation with the University of Zagreb, the YAZAKI Branch Office increased their technological knowledge and headcount. Currently, YAZAKI Zagreb has around 90 employees with room for further growth. In 2013, YAZAKI moved to a new location in Zagreb, where it built a modern and well-equipped engineering center.

JAPAN:

Rich diversity of tradition and “cool”



The number of Croatian tourists in Japan has been gradually increasing. In 2003, there were 1,143 Croatian visitors to Japan, and in 2013 the number rose to 1,593. We hope the number will keep on growing. Here are some reasons to visit Japan:

Shrines, temples, gardens, gourmet...

There are thousands of fascinatingly old and architecturally delightful religious structures throughout Japan. Japanese food is not only sushi. There is a vast variety of healthy foods that are made from the freshest ingredients.

Museums, nature, high-tech...

Japan abounds in museums and art galleries of great variety. They offer various exhibitions, from traditional ones to the most modern and contemporary. Nature and beauty of scenic view season by season fostered an esthetic sense peculiar only to Japanese throughout the history. Electronics, IT, energy-saving technologies, bio-sciences; Japan is a leading country in the world when it comes to such core technology field!

Affordable!

Contrary to the widespread belief, economical, safe and clean hotels, and good and inexpensive meals are widely available!



CULTURAL RELATIONS - SISTER CITIES AND CULTURAL TIES

Sister cities

In 1972 Kyoto and Zagreb signed an initial cooperation agreement, and in 1981 a Letter on the Establishment of Friendly Cooperation between Kyoto and Zagreb was signed. Good relations between the two cities were reaffirmed in August 2011, when the mayor of Kyoto Mr. Daisaku Kadokawa, accompanied by a city delegation, visited Zagreb to celebrate 30th anniversary of Kyoto-Zagreb relations. A very lively relationship also exists between the cities of Rijeka and Kawasaki since 1977. In 2006 the cities Pula and Hekinan established their cordial relationship. Their friendship began during the 2005 World Exhibition in Aichi Prefecture, as Hekinan was Croatia's host city.

Ties in the field of Music, Sports and Art

Croatian musicians are highly regarded in Japan. Maestro Lovro von Matačić was named Honorary Life-Time Conductor of NHK Symphony Orchestra in 1967. Zagreb Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Kazushi Ono held a well observed concert tour in Japan in 1992. In 2005 (during the Japan EXPO), 2006 and 2014 the National Folk Dance Ensemble Lado held very successful tours in Japan. Pianist Maksim Mrvica and cello duo "2Cellos" also enjoy high regard among Japanese audiences.

In 2013, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries, Zagreb Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Pavle Dešpalj, held a concert in Zagreb.

Japan and Croatia have enjoyed their moments in sports, too. The Japanese national football team played against Croatia at the 1998 and 2006 World Cups. The Croatian team was stationed in Tokamachi, Niigata prefecture, for the training camp before the World Cup in Japan and Korea in 2002. Since then Tokamachi and Croatia have kept good relations, and so in 2012 a club

house designed by Croatian architects Vinko Penezić and Krešimir Rogina called "Croatian House" was constructed in Tokamachi.

Ivica Osim was the head coach of the Japanese national football team in 2006, and Ivica Rimanić was the head coach of the Japanese national handball team in 2006. Željko Pavličević coached the Japanese national basketball team in 2003, and everyone in both Croatia and Japan knows the K-1 fighter Mirko Filipović – Cro Cop.

JAPANESE CULTURE IN CROATIA

Conferral of decorations for the promotion of friendly relations

Japanese culture such as martial arts, tea ceremony and flower arrangement is very well accepted among the Croatian audience. Haiku is especially popular. Croatian mathematician and japanologist Dr. Vladimir Devidić played a great role in familiarizing the Croatian populace with haiku. For his contributions in spreading Japanese culture the Government of Japan conferred to him the Order of the Sacred Treasure in 1983. Besides Dr. Devidić, Mr. Davorin Mlakar was conferred the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star in 2013 for his contribution to promoting friendly relations and mutual understanding between the two countries. In 2014, Dr. Tonči Tadić was conferred the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon, for his contribution to promoting friendly relations and facilitating academic exchange.



MR. DAVORIN MLAKAR



MR. TONČI TADIĆ, PH.D.



JAPANESE GARDEN IN RIJEKA



LADO ENSEMBLE PERFORMANCE IN JAPAN



LANTERN - HOUSE OF CROATIA-JAPAN FRIENDSHIP IN TOKAMACHI CITY

ASSISTANCE IN THE RECONSTRUCTION OF WAR AFFECTED AREAS

With the recognition of the importance of the support for the reconciliation of nations, re-settlement of returnees and restoration of local communities in Croatia, the Government of Japan has continuously conducted Grant Assistance of Grassroots Human Security Projects Programme (GGHSP) since 1996.

By the request of UNHCR, the Government of Japan provided 7 million USD in 1995 for the refugee centre at Mala Gorica. However, the first GGHSP project in Croatia was the construction of Youth Centre in Knin in 1999. Since then the Embassy of Japan in Zagreb supported 96 projects and the total amount of donations provided by GGHSP reached 5.08 million EUR in March 2012.

The purpose of GGHSP assistance in Croatia was to support the post-war recovery and reconstruction, reconciliation and reintegration process, demining activities and activities related to rehabilitation and assistance to mine victims.

ASSISTANCE FOR THE REGENERATION OF COMMUNITIES IN CROATIA

Assistance for demining

The Government of Japan supported demining in Croatia with 1.8 million EUR through the GGHSP program. As Croatia has developed advanced demining technologies in the world, Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) and Croatian Mine Action Centre (CROMAC) have, unrelated to GGHPs projects, developed a joint project named ALIS to develop new mine detection systems in Croatia.



AMBULANCE VEHICLE DONATED THROUGH GGHSP PROGRAMME

Assistance for communities and people

Projects for acquisition of educational equipment were aimed at helping children in everyday learning and making teaching processes easier and more interesting. Projects included 5 kindergartens, 23 primary schools and 2 youth centres. Grants were given to seven projects for vocational training activities, too.



PLAYGROUND IN BRESTOVAC WAS BUILT THROUGH GGHSP PROGRAMMES

Assistance for local communities

Grants were given for nine projects on water supply structures such as provision of water tank trucks in Benkovac and Civljane, well drilling in Podrinje, and six assisted constructions of water supply systems. Two firefighting activities were supported in Hrvatska Kostanjica and Grubišno Polje with the purpose of community reintegration. For provision of communal machines five grants were given for projects on reconstruction of settlements. There were infrastructural projects such as street illumination in Popovac, the pavement reconstruction in Bogdanovci and Tompojevci, and a bridge reconstruction in Pakrac.

According to the 2012 OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) list, Croatia is no longer defined as a developing country which brought the GGHSP programme in Croatia to an end. This means, on the other hand, that in the future the two countries should work together on peace and stability in other areas using their experiences of cooperation in Croatia.

ASSETS FOR THE FUTURE

Cooperation in culture, capacity building and research, exchange of knowledge: Assets for the future

The Government of Japan provided a Cultural Grant Assistance to contribute to the promotion of cultural and higher education activities and to the preservation of cultural heritage in Croatia. From 1997 to 2005 the Government of Japan has supported 11 projects in Croatia through Cultural Grant Assistance, and Grant Assistance for Cultural Grassroots Projects from 2004 to 2005 to recover artistic institutions and facilities in Croatia.

- **Musical instruments** (*Zagreb Philharmonic Orchestra*)
- **Musical instruments** (*Dubrovnik Symphony Orchestra*)
- **Musical instruments, sound equipment and lightning system** (*Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb, Rijeka and Osijek, Vatroslav Lisinski Concert Hall, Croatian Theatre House Zadar*)
- **Audio-visual aids** (*National and University Library in Zagreb, Faculty of Philosophy, Zagreb University*)
- **Equipment for TV programme** (*HRT*)
- **Piano** (*Matica hrvatska*)

Japan International Cooperation Agency, JICA, a Japanese government agency, has provided numerous training programmes titled Japan International Cooperation Agency's Training Programme for Croatian citizens. Since the training programmes offered by JICA were implemented in Japan, the participants recommended by the Croatian Government were all invited to Japan where they were able to acquire specialized knowledge and develop their skills through training. As of today a total of over 131 officials have been invited to Japan to participate in the JICA programmes. The government of Japan, namely the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science, Sports and Technology (MEXT), offers several kinds of scholarships for Croatian citizens. Scholarships offered to Croatian students include scholarships for postgraduate research studies, undergraduate studies, Japanese studies and teacher training studies for elementary and high school teachers and professors. So far the Government of Japan has awarded 56 scholarships to Croatian students.

In 2004 a Japanology course was established at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb. Every year up to 30 students enrol the course and the number of interested candidates is ever growing.

On March 27, 2009, the Joint Research on Risk Identification and Land-Use Planning for Disaster Mitigation in Croatia was enacted between JICA and the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports of the Republic of Croatia. Many experts and research engineers from universities

and institutes from both countries participated in this project. The project was successfully completed in 2014. This represents a new type of cooperation between Japan and Croatia, and its results are expected to be put into practical use in the neighbouring countries as well.



JAPANESE LANGUAGE SPEECH CONTEST



LANDSLIDES MONITORING STATION AT KOSTANJEK, DONATION THROUGH JICA PROGRAMME

PEOPLE NEVER FORGET HELPING HANDS

Hvala, Hrvatska!

The bond between the two nations was proved after the Great East Japan Earthquake, when many Croatian citizens spontaneously came to the Embassy with candles and flowers to express their solidarity with the people of Japan. Expressions of support included everything: financial contributions, public gatherings, cultural and sports events, notes of encouragement and love sent by children, and many more.

Also, the Government of Croatia invited children from the earthquake stricken areas to spend their summer holidays in Croatia. Thus a group of 30 children from Sendai City arrived to Croatia in August 2011, having spent two weeks in Osijek City's Red Cross summer home in Split.

The Government of Japan and the people of Japan will never forget this action of sincere sympathy. Japan believes our ties can and will be much stronger in the future. With this in mind, Japan hopes that our cooperation can be expanded in various fields and international arenas during the following years of our diplomatic relations.



CHILDREN FROM SENDAI CITY, INVITED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF CROATIA, ENJOYED THEIR STAY IN SPLIT, 2011

FOR THE CONTINUED GOOD RELATIONS

Together with governmental and civil organizations, representatives of Japanese companies, artists, scholars and citizens, Embassy organizes various events related to relations between Japan and Croatia. To name some of them:

- in June 2013 Official Ceremony of 20th Anniversary of the Diplomatic Relations and Concert was held in cooperation of Zagreb Philharmonic Orchestra and Lisinski Concert Hall in the presence of T.I.H. Prince and Princess Akishino
- in September 2013 JDS Kashima, training ship of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force, called at a port of Split
- in 2012 Japanese company JTI planted cherry trees in Bundeck Park in Zagreb in cooperation with City of Zagreb and Croatia Japan Cultural and Economic Society; this tradition was continued in 2013 and 2014 with the support of JTI and Toyota
- Japanska jesen (Japanese autumn), a series of Japan related cultural events, including "Japan Day" in Zagreb, is becoming an attraction for citizens in autumn months
- in January 2015, together with Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Croatia and Zadar City Tourist Board, the Embassy launched Tuna & Sushi Festival, a promotional event for Adriatic tuna and Japanese cuisine in Zadar

The Embassy appreciates your continuous support and ideas for these activities!



JAPAN DAY



VISIT OF JAPAN MARITIME SELF-DEFENCE FORCES TRAINING SHIP KASHIMA, 2013



POSTAL CARD ISSUED BY CROATIAN POST TO COMMEMORATE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN JAPAN AND CROATIA

If you would like to know more...
Please visit our website and feel free to contact us for more information!



MEMBERS OF THE EMBASSY OF JAPAN

Address:

Embassy of Japan,
Boškovićevo 2, 10000 Zagreb

E-mail:

information-culture@zr.mofa.go.jp (culture)
politics@zr.mofa.go.jp (politics)
economy@zr.mofa.go.jp (economy)
consul@zr.mofa.go.jp (consulate)

Telephone:

01 4870 650

Web-site:

www.hr.emb-japan.go.jp

Facebook:

[www.facebook.com/pages/
Embassy-of-Japan-in-Croatia/197868853698292](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Embassy-of-Japan-in-Croatia/197868853698292)