

IRMO's online seminar
“Towards a resilient society – Croatia & Japan cooperation”
Ambassador Kaji's speech (March 1st 2022)

Dobro jutro, svima!

Dr. Tišma, Director of IRMO,

Distinguished panelists,

Excellences,

Distinguished participants, present and online,

It gives me great pleasure to address you all at this Conference; “Towards a resilient society – Croatia & Japan cooperation”.

This leading think-tank of Croatia, IRMO, held in November 2019, here in this Hall, a Conference entitled “Japan-EU cooperation: new opportunities for Croatian EU Presidency”.

In spite of the pandemic, totally unexpected then, Croatia successfully fulfilled its role as EU Presidency in the first half of 2020, followed by the next generation fund adopted by the EU to overcome the economic and social effects of the pandemic. Croatia is now at the doorstep of green and digital transformation making use of this EU mechanism. This should come in tandem with the recovery and reconstruction process after the two large-scale earthquakes in March and December 2020.

Japan is a country forged by natural disasters. Our experiences and experts have been shared with Croatia in the past year to support her undertakings to build back better and reduce disaster risk. Late February and early March 2021, my Embassy together with the Croatian Ministry of Physical Planning, Construction and State Assets held an online seminar. In October 2021 earthquake-detecting devices were

placed by a Japanese company in the Cathedral, Remete church and hospitals. It is obvious to many eyes, however, that more needs to be done for reconstruction.

Moreover, today, facing the common challenges from global warming to infectious diseases, the whole of international community is increasingly in pursuit of resilient societies.

Dr. HAYASHI, to be on line from Japan at Panel I, is heading the National Research Institute for Earth Science and Disaster Resilience, one among many but prominent institute established to undertake all sorts of devises aiming to reduce disaster risks.

Dr. ISHII, to be on line from Japan at Panel III, has led for nearly a decade, the Global Environment Facility, a major international organization to fund projects by states, developing, and in transition, for sustainable development.

President Tsuchiya of Toyota Adria, is with us today here to participate in Panel II, will share with us how Toyota collaborated, and will collaborate, with Croatia to enhance resilience, through green and digital technologies.

Exactly this month 30 years ago, Japan, together with many states, recognized the Republic of Croatia. In March 5th 1993, the following year, Japan and Croatia established the diplomatic relations. Since then our cooperation has steadily been enhanced, the two nations reached out to help each other especially in times of hardship. Japan provided support for the post-war reconstruction and the revitalization of local communities, whereas Croatia provided assistance in the event of the Japanese Earthquake and Tsunami in 2011 and ever since then, a mass is held every March at the Zagreb Cathedral for victims of the earthquake. Last

year at the 10th anniversary, Father Kuhtić of the Cathedral received Japanese Foreign Minister's commendation in recognition of his decade contribution. The prayers were also said at the occasion for the victims of the Zagreb earthquake in 2020, at the sad occasion of its one year anniversary.

My particular appreciation goes to Director Tišma and members of IRMO, for their usual inspiration and dedication in organizing this Conference. I sincerely hope that today's discussion would serve to support both countries, and the international community, in meeting the current challenges, bringing new ideas and opportunities for concrete cooperation, to transform themselves towards enhanced resilience. I also hope that it should further strengthen the ties between Japan and this beautiful country.

Hvala lijepa!