

*(The original article is in Croatian language. This English translation was made by the Embassy of Japan in Croatia.)*

## **Title: Lost in translation, the State will not allow foreign citizens outside Europe to become tourist guides.**

### **The State ignores wealthy tourists from Japan**

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Author: Ana Blašković

**Average Japanese guest does not know English well, and in our country there are few guides who speak Japanese, and the Japanese cannot take the exam for the guide.**

Despite complaints that we do not have enough tourists with deeper pockets (rich tourists) like the Japanese, guests from the Far East in Croatia remain - lost in translation. The average Japanese tourist who comes to Croatia in group tours does not know English well. There are almost no tourist guides who speak Japanese and the state does not allow the Japanese to do this job.

#### **Open the door**

The problem is recognized by the Japanese Ambassador to Croatia **Keiji Ide** and he offered a solution. "Croatia has a lot of potential to attract tourists. Several segments of Japanese tourists and one of them is group tours. It is about pensioners who have money and time, but do not speak English well and they need a guide. In Croatia there are not many Croatian guides, who speak Japanese. I know a few, but they are not enough. There are interested Japanese who live in Zagreb, have families here and are willing to take the exam for a tourist guide. However, the rules do not allow them" said Ambassador **Ide** for a Poslovni dnevnik.

Therefore, he suggested that "it would be good that the door be open to the Japanese citizens". He adds that it is clear to him that the State wants to protect local tourist guides, but he considers that such a move would *not* endanger them because it is about a market that would grow in that case.

According to the current rules, only a Croatian citizen can take the exam for tourist guide. The exception is Europe: The European Union, European Economic Area (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway) and Switzerland. Although a new draft Law on the

Services in Tourism was written for the Ministry of Tourism, an initiative of the Japanese Ambassador, it seems, has met with deaf ears.

### **Public discussion is going on**

"According to the draft proposal of the new Law, which is in the public hearing, the possibility to offer tourist guide services to citizens of the third countries, is not planned for now.

The provision of these services is currently, except citizens of the Republic of Croatia, allowed for EEA citizens and Swiss Confederation, and the occasional, temporary and permanent basis ", the Ministry has confirmed to us, adding that public debate lasts until April 15, in which all suggestions are welcome. Although the Japanese tourists arrivals numbering up to 160,000, realistically between 40,000 and 50,000 visits Croatia every year. While for the wealthiest layer there is no adequate offer at all, it is hard that the number of wealthy guests will not grow in more significant way until their destination removes a key barrier - language.

**=End=**