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An introductory word from the Minister

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the fifth Yearbook of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration that has now become a tradition. We believe that this year’s edition will give you a complete insight into the achievements of Croatian foreign policy and the overall activities of the foreign affairs service during 2009.

First and foremost, I would like to point out that the foreign policy activities of the Republic of Croatia witnessed many significant events and achieved considerable success in 2009. I would primarily underline the fulfilment of one of the most important foreign policy objectives – membership of NATO. The membership accession process encompasses all segments of society and requires the implementation of a wide spectrum of reforms. Therefore, our membership of NATO is not only confirmation of the success of the defence sector of the Republic of Croatia, but also an affirmation of Croatian society as a whole. Today, within the framework of the military-political club of NATO countries, we participate on an equal footing with other countries of the alliance and with partners in all the activities of NATO, giving our contribution to the preservation of peace and global security.

We have also recorded important achievements within the scope of the European integration process. After reaching an arbitration agreement between the Croatian and Slovenian Prime Ministers Jadranka Kosor and Borut Pahor, based on the principles of international law, good neighbourly relations and dialogue, after a blockade lasting almost one year negotiations for the accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union continued. A new impetus to the negotiation process was given and thus by the end of 2009 we had opened 28 negotiating chapters, of which 17 have been provisionally closed.

On its part, with the decision to form a working group for drafting the text of the Accession Treaty for Croatia and with the adoption of a Financial Package of EUR 3.5 billion for the first two years of membership, the European Union has provided additional stimulus for our efforts in the accession process.

Fully dedicated to this process, we work intensively and carry out reforms that are not only part of the European Union accession process but also represent the necessary prerequisites for the further successful development of Croatia and are of benefit to our citizens and society as a whole.

On the international scene in 2009, the Republic of Croatia asserted itself as a country whose activities positively contribute to peace and security in many parts of the world. At the end of 2009, our two-year term as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council came to a close. During that period we participated in all important processes within the framework of the United Nations.

Our sense of responsibility in relation to security issues at a global level has also been evident, given that for a decade now, we have been part of international peacekeeping operations. Within this context, our participation in the ISAF mission in Afghanistan is by far our most notable contribution. By financing the Health Centre in Layoba, opened in 2009, we have also set foundations for greater engagement in the process of providing international developmental assistance.

Croatia was also actively involved in all other international organisations where, as the future 28th member of the EU, we generally aligned our positions with those of the European Union. At the same time, the countries of South East Europe remained in the focus of our foreign policy.
An introductory word from the Minister

Persistently pointing out the needs of the region and of our neighbouring countries that also wish to be an integral part of European and Euro-Atlantic integration processes, we emphasized that their imminent integration into European structures would be an additional impetus for the stability and security not only of this part of Europe, but also for the European Union itself. We encouraged mutual co-operation and assisted countries in the region in carrying out reforms, highly aware that their membership of the EU and NATO was also in our strategic interest.

Croatia maintained intensive bilateral contacts with key actors at the global international scene, from the USA and Canada to Russia and China. Among a large number of bilateral meetings with representatives of countries from nearly all parts of the world that took place during 2009, I would like to point out the meeting with US State Secretary Hillary Clinton. There were almost 130 meetings at the highest levels, which were often also followed by economic forums in which we presented Croatia as a safe destination with excellent prospects for foreign investment.

Along with activities in the area of economic diplomacy, within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration we have continued to improve our operational processes and IT connectivity and have also rationalised our work. It is particularly important to point out that the new building of the Ministry has enabled us to take a qualitative step forward in our work, given that nearly all the services and other organisational units of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration are now in one location. This has, of course, reduced costs and expedited organisational and work processes. Activities focused on strengthening the functionality, rationality and efficiency of the overall foreign affairs service will also continue in the upcoming period.

Finally, bearing in mind all that we have achieved in 2009, I am convinced that 2010 will also be an exceptionally productive and dynamic year for the work of the Croatian foreign affairs service. We will further strengthen the international position of the Republic of Croatia, provide full support for all our citizens outside Croatia, and actively contribute to the overall development and prosperity of our country.
The first year of membership in NATO

Croatia in the alliance of the most influential states

Upon successful completion of the ratification of the Protocol on the Enlargement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation to Croatia in all national parliaments of NATO member states, on 1 April 2009, the Croatian Ambassador to the United States Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović deposited the Croatian instrument of ratification of the North Atlantic Treaty with the United States State Department. This provided the legal framework for Croatian accession to full membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

Croatia participated in the NATO Summit held in Strasbourg and Kehl on 3 - 4 April, for the first time as a full-fledged member. The Croatian delegation was led by the President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić and Prime Minister Ivo Sanader. US President Barrack Obama presented them with copies of the North Atlantic Treaty on behalf of the Alliance. Membership in NATO has strengthened Croatia’s position in international politics in two ways. Croatia has become an equal partner to other states in the Alliance, and has established itself as part of the political, security and economic club of NATO countries. The views and interests of Croatia as a member of the Alliance carry more weight, both in the region and at the broader international level as well. Since NATO is a political–military forum that joins together the United States, the largest European countries, and Croatia’s neighbouring countries, membership in the Alliance has opened up new room for the strengthening of the political reputation and influence of the Republic of Croatia.

Membership in the Alliance enabled Croatia to join in all the military, political and other activities of NATO. Croatian delegates now actively participate in the work of all NATO bodies and committees, which enables further shaping and strengthening of Croatian politics in relation to a series of issues discussed by NATO. For example, in issues related to the countries of South East Europe, Croatia has imposed itself as one of the leading allies, whose views considerably influence the entire NATO policy towards the region.

Croatia’s accession to NATO coincided with the start of developing NATO’s new Strategic Concept, a core document that defines the role of the Alliance, its main security challenges and responses to these challenges. Croatia thus took part in the discussion about harmonising the role of NATO as a traditional political–military defence alliance with that of an organisation facing global security challenges and undertaking operations outside the Euro-Atlantic area. Other important issues also discussed within the same framework include continued enlargement of the Alliance, co-operation with Russia and other partner countries, and the future role of nuclear weapons.

Croatia continued to participate in NATO peacekeeping operations: the ISAF operation in Afghanistan (contributing military staff, as well as police personnel and diplomatic staff), a significant contribution of the Republic of Croatia to international security and stability, and the KFOR operation in Kosovo (Croatia’s military contribution began in early 2009), which carries great political significance for regional stability.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Gordan Jandroković participated in informal meetings of the NATO Council in March and December, and at the meeting of the NATO–Russia Council on Corfu in June. NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer made
a farewell visit to Croatia in May, and was awarded a high Croatian decoration by Prime Minis-
ter Ivo Sanader.

New door opened for Croatian economy

At a national level, on 19 June the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration organ-
ised an economic seminar titled “How to do business with NATO”, with the purpose of informing
business people about business opportunities created by Croatia’s accession to NATO. Over 120
Croatian business people participated in the seminar. In order to provide support to Croatian busi-
ness people in their business activities with NATO, the Committee for the Coordination and Sup-
port of Export Opportunities and Infrastructure Projects in the NATO Program was established
in September. Transparency and access to informa-
tion have been enhanced by designing a specialised
website (http://www.natonatjecaji.hr) containing all
relevant information about NATO tenders, details
about the terms and conditions of participation and
the bidding procedure.

The first meeting of Croatian business people with
the management of NATO Maintenance and Sup-
ply Agency (NAMSA is NATO’s principal logis-
tics agency) was held at NAMSA’s headquarters in
Luxembourg on 28 October. The Ministry of Econ-
omy, Labour and Entrepreneurship, the Croatian
Chamber of Economy and the Croatian Mission to
NATO organised the Croatian Industry Day, where
27 Croatian companies presented their achieve-
ments, products and services - in the military, tex-
tile, and food industries, construction, services and information technology - and were informed
about how NAMSA operates. This marked the first step towards participation in future tenders
within the Alliance and recognition of Croatian export brands.

Croatia’s accession to NATO demanded a new level of quality in the coordination of specific el-
ments of the national foreign and security policies. On 22 September 2009, the Government of
the Republic of Croatia decided to establish the Interdepartmental Committee for NATO. The
main tasks of the Committee include analysing, proposing and coordinating activities related to
Croatia’s membership in NATO and strengthening of NATO related activities in the entire state
administration. In order to further improve the effectiveness of the Commission, the Council of
the Interdepartmental Committee was established as a political and operational body within the
Committee. Members of the Council are representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and
European Integration, the Ministry of Defence, the General Staff of the Armed Forces, the Office
of the President of the Republic of Croatia and the Office of the Prime Minister of the Republic
of Croatia. The Council discusses current NATO topics and makes conclusions about these topics,
taking into account their compliance with other components of Croatian foreign policy, primari-
ly those related to EU and bilateral relations with other countries. The Council meets at least once
a month, and its work is coordinated by the State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and
European Integration.

Information exchange with NATO

During 2009 the necessary organisational and technical conditions were created for setting up
communication systems for exchange of data with NATO. Upon fulfilment of the required condi-
tions NATO’s “Secret” information system (CRO NS WAN) was set into operation.
The Division for Registries was first established in February as a separate organisational unit of the Ministry responsible for the reception and distribution of classified and unclassified NATO and EU documents. The new offices of the Division for Registries were then technically equipped at a new location of the Ministry, in order to meet the required standards. In November representatives of the NATO Office of Security conducted an official inspection visit and assessed that NATO’s classified and unclassified documents are handled well by the Ministry and that all necessary conditions for accreditation of the Ministry’s Division for Registries for the classification Cosmic Top Secret (CTS) have been fulfilled.
EU – Accession negotiations

Integration process accelerated

Negotiations about the accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union continued in 2009. By the end of the year, the formation of a working group for drafting the Accession Treaty at EU level and the adoption of the Financial Package for Croatia’s Accession in the amount of EUR 3.5 billion for the first two years of Croatia’s membership, assuming that Croatia will accede on 1 January 2012, gave the negotiation process impetus and additional optimism.

The results achieved on the path towards membership in the European Union only obtain their full significance when regarded within the context of the substantially changed political circumstances in which accession negotiations are being conducted. Negotiations are particularly complex in view of additional dimensions to the overall process in respect to contents, technical and methodological elements and time frames, primarily reflected in the application of the benchmark mechanisms, due to EU experience obtained in accession negotiations with the countries in the fifth round of enlargement. The completions of the accession negotiations and the Accession Treaty before the end of 2010 as well as full membership in the European Union at the earliest possible date remain the most important strategic goals of the Republic of Croatia.

In 2009, preconditions were achieved for the opening and closing of a number of chapters particularly significant for the economy and its competitiveness, including financial services, energy, agriculture, taxes and customs union, and for chapters crucial for the internal market, pertaining primarily to the four fundamental freedoms – free movement of services, workers, goods and capital. With a view of making full use of the potential of future EU investments, Croatia has also put great emphasis on the creation of an adequate administrative structure for efficient management of pre-accession funds.

A total of 28 chapters open and 17 provisionally closed

After the Republic of Slovenia had blocked negotiation talks for a year, the Intergovernmental Conference held in October was marked by a significant breakthrough – a total of 11 negotiating chapters were opened and provisionally closed. Despite the blockade, Croatia continued to work on other tasks within the negotiation process and to meet benchmarks of individual chapters throughout the year, so that at the end of the year a total of 28 chapters were open and 17 were provisionally closed. Negotiation positions for 31 chapters were also submitted.

In 2009, three Intergovernmental Conferences were held, two at the level of Heads of Delegations (foreign affairs ministers) and one at the level of Deputy Heads of Delegations (chief negotiators). Also, in the same period, four Intergovernmental Conferences were postponed, three of them during the Czech and one during the Swedish Presidency. During the Czech EU presidency, not one chapter was formally opened or provisionally closed due to Slovenia’s blockade of the negotiations.

Six negotiation chapters were opened at the Intergovernmental Conference in Brussels on 2 October: 4 - Free Movement of Capital (3 benchmarks set for closing), 11 - Agriculture and Rural Development (3 benchmarks), 12 - Food Safety, Veterinary and Phytosanitary Policy (3 benchmarks), 16 – Taxation (3 benchmarks), 22 - Regional Politics and Co-ordination of Structural Instruments.
At the same conference five chapters were provisionally closed: 2 - Freedom of Movement for Workers, 6 - Company Law, 18 - Statistics, 21 - Trans-European Networks, and 29 - Customs Union.

At the session of the Intergovernmental Conference on 27 November, also held in Brussels, negotiating chapters 9 - Financial Services, 15 - Energy, 28 - Consumer and Health Protection were provisionally closed.

The ninth session of the Intergovernmental Conference was held in Brussels on 21 December, at which time negotiations were closed for Chapters 3 - Right of Establishment and Freedom to Provide Services, and 19 - Social Policy and Employment.

Croatia continued to fulfil political criteria

Since the beginning of the negotiation process, a total of 23 benchmarks have been set for opening eleven negotiating chapters. The Republic of Croatia submitted all relevant documents on the fulfilment of agreed benchmarks for the opening of negotiations to the EU bodies. By the end of 2009, the fulfilment of 16 benchmarks for opening nine chapters was confirmed. The Republic of Croatia received an invitation to submit negotiating positions for these chapters. Benchmarks for opening Chapters 23 - Judiciary and Fundamental Rights, and 8 - Competition Policy are still being processed. In this context, the EU Council discussed whether benchmarks for the opening of Chapter 23 - Judiciary and fundamental rights have been met. Although the European Commission expressed a positive view of the fulfilment of benchmarks for the opening of this chapter and suggested that negotiations start, a lack of consensus between the Member States on the quality of Croatia’s co-operation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia prevented this chapter from being opened. With regard to Chapter 8 - Competition Policy, consultations with the European Union on the remaining benchmark for opening the chapter regarding the shipbuilding sector were successfully closed. At the end of 2009, additional consultations were still held with the European Commission regarding the second privatisation cycle of the Croatian shipbuilding industry.

The Republic of Croatia received a total of 82 closing benchmarks for 26 chapters. In 2009, benchmarks were set for the closing of six chapters: 4 - Free Movement of Capital, 11 - Agriculture and Rural Development, 12 - Food Safety, Veterinary and Phytosanitary Policy, 16 - Social Policy and Employment, 22 - Regional Policy and Coordination of Structural Instruments, and 24 - Justice, Freedom and Security. Relevant documents on the fulfilment of a total of 45 benchmarks for closing 16 chapters have been submitted to EU bodies; in 2009, 29 closing benchmarks for eight chapters were submitted: 2 - Freedom of Movement for Workers, 3 - Right of Establishment and Freedom to Provide Services, 9 - Financial Services, 15 - Energy, 18 - Statistics, 19 - Social Policy and Employment, 28 - Consumer and Health Protection, and 32 - Financial Control.

Seventh National Programme for the Integration of the Republic of Croatia into the European Union

Drafted in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration and in cooperation with all state administration bodies, the seventh National Programme for the Integration of the Republic of Croatia into the European Union (NPIEU - 2009) was adopted by the Croatian Government on 29 December 2008. It stipulates all the obligations of state administration bodies and other institutions involved in the preparation process for accession to the European Union.

The NPIEU - 2009 is structured around criteria for EU membership: fulfilment of political criteria, economic adjustments and the ability to assume the obligations of EU membership. Along with a significant number of legal acts, the NPIEU also contains an overview of implementing measures to effectively meet undertaken obligations and achieve readiness for membership. The Overview of Legislative Activities for 2009 is also a part of the NPIEU. It was forwarded to the Croatian Par-
Fulfilment of political criteria - continuation of reforms

In 2009, the Republic of Croatia continued implementing the Stabilisation and Association Agreement within the framework of the foreseen mechanisms. At the meetings of bodies founded by the Agreement (Councils, Committees and their subcommittees), positions were exchanged regarding the achievements of the Republic of Croatia in meeting all the obligations assumed under accession talks and the Stabilisation and Association Agreement. European partners were acquainted with all the activities that Croatia was undertaking with a view to meeting political and economic criteria, and criteria pertaining to alignment with the acquis.

Croatia has truly invested significant effort in the implementation of the set political criteria and important social reforms. The 89 per cent accomplishment of the Action Plan of the Judicial Reform Strategy demonstrates the progress made: an objective and transparent system of employment, traineeship, appointment and promotion of judges was established; the backlog of cases was reduced by a total of 51 percent; changes to all of the most important Procedure Acts were prepared and implemented to accelerate court proceedings. A rationalisation in the number of courts and state attorney’s offices also increased the efficiency of the judiciary.

A strong legislative and organisational mechanism was established for combating corruption. Supervision of the implementation of anti-corruption measures has been organised at the highest political level. Many high-level corruption cases were prosecuted, and the implemented measures helped increase the number of verdicts by 138 per cent in 2009. Special attention was paid to fighting corruption in public companies. Good regional cooperation was established aimed at combating organised crime and Croatia will insist on its further strengthening.

In 2009, the Republic of Croatia continued to fully co-operate with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. A special Working Group was formed that conducted numerous additional actions, about whose activities Croatia regularly reported to the Hague Tribunal. Competent state authorities continued with investigations, indictments and criminal proceedings against perpetrators of war crimes, in compliance with European standards.
In the reform of the state administration special emphasis was placed on the strengthening of necessary capacities for its implementation. Systematic efforts were invested in human resources development and training of civil servants at all levels.

The protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms was also in the focus of attention. The Anti-discrimination Act and Free Legal Aid Act have been fully implemented. Special attention was given to the protection of children’s and women’s rights. Attention has also been focused on increasing employment of and representation of minorities at national, local and regional levels. The Republic of Croatia has also continued to encourage the voluntary return of refugees and displaced persons. Measures and activities under the Action Plan for the Accelerated Implementation of the Housing Care Programme for Former Tenancy Right Holders were implemented on a regular basis.

Final tasks: technical adaptation of the acquis communautaire

Technical adaptation of the acquis communautaire began in October. This refers to a technical procedure whereby Croatian terminology and competent institutions for specific areas, technical and professional terms and definitions in Croatian, and sometimes in English, are entered into EU legislation. Work on the technical adaptation of the EU acquis communautaire follows the methodology applied during the accession of Bulgaria and Romania. The performed technical adaptations will therefore not be a part of the Accession Treaty, as was the case with the ten states that joined the EU in 2004, but will be adopted following the usual legislative procedure and published in the Official Journal of the European Union just before Croatia’s accession.

Translating Croatian legislation and the acquis communautaire: emphasis on technical and legal editing

Upon the accession of Croatia into the European Union, Croatian will become one of the official languages, while the Croatian version of the acquis, in accordance with the principles of multilingualism, will become an authentic and official text of EU legal regulations. Therefore the Croatian versions of treaties, regulations, directives, decisions and recommendations which represent EU legal regulations, require not only linguistic, but also technical and legal editing. However, it should be emphasised that Croatia is only preparing draft versions while EU agencies create official documents to be published in the Official Journal of the European Union on the date of Croatia’s accession to the European Union.

The Official Journal comprises over 100,000 pages that need to be translated, and completely or partially edited. A total of approximately 15,000 pages were translated throughout the course of 2009. Since most of the acquis from the EU priority list has already been translated, throughout the year special attention was given to editing and alignment of terminology. Translations of the primary legislation of the acquis, that are to be annexed to the Accession Treaty of the Republic of Croatia, are in their final stages.

For the needs of the negotiating process, approximately 14,000 pages of Croatian legislation, negotiating positions, benchmarks, action plans, and strategies were translated into English throughout the course of 2009, while 2,000 pages were proof-read by native speakers.

Draft versions of Croatian legislation in English are published on the the Ministry’s web pages (http://www.mvpei.hr/zakoni). The page currently contains about 500 translated acts and subordinate acts.

At its last session in 2009, the Croatian Government decided to make available the Croatian translation of the acquis to the interested states of South East Europe.
Institutional relations between Croatia and the EU

Croatia’s constant and active participation in European policies

A high level of coordination of Croatian foreign policy with the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy was also clearly visible in 2009, during which Croatia regularly associated with statements, positions and declarations of the EU in Brussels and in other international organisations as well. Croatia participated in informal meetings of foreign ministers of the EU Member States and candidate countries, meetings of Directors General for EU Affairs organised during the Czech and Swedish Presidencies, the meeting of the EU Troika and Political Directors of countries of the Western Balkans (at the margins of the UN General Assembly session), while consultations with the EU Troika about topics on the UN agenda and about the protection of human rights were also held.

Chapter “31 - Foreign, Security and Defence Policy” remained blocked in 2009 despite the very high level of preparedness of the Croatian side for negotiations in this chapter. Croatia, however, continued enhancing the legal and institutional framework necessary for successful participation in the mechanisms of EU Common Foreign and Security Policy and Common Security and Defence Policy. After the September adoption of the National Strategy for Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons and the related Action Plan, preparations began for the necessary institutional alignment with the requirements ensuing from full EU membership. Changes in the area of these policies, resulting from the new Lisbon Treaty which entered into force at the end of the year, were followed closely, as were the first steps towards the development of the new European External Action Service.

Although Croatia is not yet a full-fledged member of the EU, participation in the mechanisms of the EU Common Security and Defence Policy greatly exceeds its current status. Aside from the most demanding segment – participation in peacekeeping missions – Croatia regularly participates in informal meetings of the Defence Ministers of the EU Member States, meetings of the EU Troika with the Defence Ministers of EU candidate countries and NATO member countries that are not in the Union. Croatia also takes part in meetings of the extended EU Military Committee and in meetings of the Political and Security Committee that discuss missions in which Croatia is included.

As in previous years, in 2009 Croatia participated in the following EU operations: EUPOL- Police mission to Afghanistan (2 police officers), EULEX Kosovo (4 police officers and 1 member of justice staff) and EUNAVFOR Atalanta, fighting against piracy off the coast of Somalia. Within the framework of this mission, one Croatian officer was assigned to a French ship, one was on a Belgian ship and one was in the Operational Headquarters in Northwood, Great Britain.

Along with the participation in missions, Croatia is also preparing for engagement in the so called EU Battlegroups. Croatian representatives will be included in a battle group consisting of representatives of three EU Member States beside Croatia: Germany, Austria and the Czech Republic. The group will be ready for deployment in 2012.
Important support of the European Parliament

Two sessions of the Joint Parliamentary Committee were held in 2009. The Committee, comprised of members of the Croatian Parliament and the European Parliament, met in Zagreb in late February and in Strasbourg in late November. The parliamentarians praised the lifting of the blockade and the progress made by Croatia in the accession negotiations, expressing hope that the negotiation process will have been completed by the end of 2010. Croatia was also praised for progress in the implementation of reforms in the fields of justice, state administration and strengthening of the administrative capacities for managing EU funds. Croatia was additionally encouraged to continue the implementation of reforms and its efforts to meet the political criteria for membership.

On 12 March 2009, the European Parliament adopted the Resolution on the Progress Report of the Republic of Croatia in 2008, expressing satisfaction with the progress made by Croatia in almost all fields, as well as the strengthened capacity of Croatia to assume obligations ensuing from membership. The Resolution supported the initiative of the European Commission to establish a working group responsible for drafting of the Accession Treaty for Croatia.

Cooperation with the Committee of the Regions and the Economic and Social Committee

The working group for the Republic of Croatia within the Committee of the Regions held a meeting in Brussels in September 2009. The main topics of the meeting were the application of the principle of subsidiarity in Croatia and the role of tourism in local and regional development. The meeting was chaired by Isidoro Gottardo, the President of the Working group for Croatia and the President of the European People’s Party Group in the Committee of the Regions. The Croatian delegation included Vojko Obersnel, Mayor of Rijeka and the President of the Croatian Association of Towns, Božo Galić, County Prefect of the Vukovar- Srijem County and the President of the Croatian County Association and the Mayor of Dubrovnik Andro Vlahušić.

The initiative of the Croatian County Association and the Croatian Association of Towns to establish a higher form of institutional co-operation between local and regional representatives and the Committee of the Regions was supported by Luc Van den Brande, President of the EU Committee of the Regions. The Government of the Republic of Croatia accepted this proposal in December. Subsequently, the Bureau of the Committee of the Regions adopted a decision on promoting the Working Group to a Joint Advisory Committee consisting of an equal number of Croatian and EU representatives. Such a composition will further strengthen partnership relations between the representatives of local and regional authorities of the EU and Croatia.

The Joint Advisory Committee Croatia-EU met in Prague in May, within the framework of the cooperation with the European Economic and Social Committee. The main topics were “flexicurity” and communication strategy in the enlargement process. In October, the same body met in Zagreb, where it discussed transport policy and sustainable development.

Use of pre-accession assistance programmes

The Republic of Croatia is a beneficiary of the pre-accession assistance programmes CARDS, PHARE, ISPA and SAPARD, as well as IPA, a new unique pre-accession assistance instrument which has replaced the existing programmes in financial plans for the period from 2007 to 2013. The IPA programme is comprised of five components: Component I – Assistance in transition and institution building, Component II – Cross-border cooperation, Component III – Regional development, Component IV – Human resources development and Component V – Rural development.

By 31 December 2009, a total of EUR 347.12 million were requested for programmes funded by the European Commission and EUR 296.61 million were transferred. The difference in the amount of requested and transferred funds arose due to internal EC procedures which take three
to four months for the transfer of funds to the National Fund. Contracting for the first generation of pre-accession programmes CARDS, PHARE and SAPARD has been completed and contracting for the ISPA programme is in its final phase. The contracting rate for individual programs exceeds 90 percent, indicating that the allocated funds were successfully used.

A very demanding management and control system was established for the implementation of IPA, serving as preparation for future management of the Cohesion Fund and Structural Funds. Croatian institutions received accreditation for management of EU funds within IPA. The signing of the Financing Agreement on allocation of funds from IPA 2009 between the Republic of Croatia and the European Commission is expected throughout the course of 2010. According to the Project Fiches approved so far, IPA 2009 covers 18 projects and a total of 39 components through which equipment, services, twinning, work and grants will be financed.

**Participation in several new Community Programmes**

 Croatian institutions are involved in the utilisation of Community programmes. Membership fees are financed within the framework of the IPA programme (previously through the PHARE programme) and partly from national funds. The benefits for the Republic of Croatia are manifold because Community programmes enable direct connections between Croatian institutions and those of Member States on specific projects, access is provided to additional funds set aside for the implementation of each programme, and non-refundable resources and financial incentives are available for individual programmes.

Membership fees are co-financed from the IPA component I, where the total of the co-financed amount for Community programmes cannot exceed 10% of the annual allocation (whereby research and development programmes are not included in the 10%), and cannot exceed 90% of the contribution value for a specific programme. A total of EUR 4.60 million was foreseen in the IPA 2007 programme for the payment of membership fees in 2008 and 2009, of which EUR 4.27 million were paid out by 31 December 2009. The amount of EUR 5.42 million was foreseen in the IPA 2008 programme for payment of membership fees for Community Programmes in 2009, of which a total of EUR 5.03 million were paid out by 31 December 2009.

Memoranda of Understanding were signed for participation in the following Community Programmes, for which membership fees are financed from IPA I 2007 and IPA I 2008:

1. The Seventh Framework Programme of the European Union for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration Activities
2. Customs 2013,
3. Fiscalis 2013,
4. Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity (PROGRESS)
5. Culture 2007 - 2013,
6. Europe for Citizens
7. Entrepreneurship and Innovation Specific Programme (EIP)
8. Intelligent Energy Europe (IEE)
9. Information and Communication Technologies Policy Support Programme (ICT PSP)
10. The Programme of Community Action in the Field of Health
11. Marco Polo II
12. Civil Protection Financial Instrument and Community Mechanism for Civil Protection
13. Media 2007,
14. IDABC
Preparation for the use of EU funds

The European Commission has proposed a financial package for Croatia in the amount of EUR 1.5 billion for 2012 and EUR 2 billion for 2013. The institutional framework for the implementation of the Cohesion Fund and Structural Funds has been set and it encompasses institutions accredited for the implementation of IPA.

The Croatian Government is working on the fulfilment of conditions for the use of allocated funds by preparing the necessary strategic documents and projects. The National Strategic Reference Framework, a document that serves as a strategic framework for the use of Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund, is being drafted in accordance with EU regulations. The Central State Office for Development Strategy and Coordination of EU Funds is in charge of the overall preparation, while relevant ministries are responsible for the preparation of this strategy's implementing documents - sectoral operational programmes. Through these documents the Croatian Government will define the scope of investment in the field of transport, environmental protection, competitiveness, regional development, education, employment and strengthening of the capacities of public administration and the judiciary.

Furthermore, individual state bodies (Central State Office for Development Strategy and Coordination of EU funds, Ministry of Finance, Central Financing and Contracting Agency) are also continuously organising and carrying out training of civil servants working on EU programmes. The intention is to further develop and carry out training modules in order to ensure that people within the system of EU funds possess the necessary knowledge and skills.

Union for the Mediterranean

In 2009, the Republic of Croatia as a partner country actively participated in setting up new institutional structures of the Union for the Mediterranean. Despite a blockade of the process at a political level from January to July which was caused by a group of Arab member countries due to conflicts in the Gaza Strip, co-operation continued at the technical level. A working group for the development of the Statute of the Secretariat worked throughout the year on defining the mandate of the future Secretariat based in Barcelona. In the future, the Secretariat of the Union will have a crucial role in promoting projects and mobilising funds and partners for the implementation of projects within that framework. Having unblocked the process at the political level, in the second half of the year, the member states worked on the establishment of the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly – ARLEM (Assemblée Régionale et Locale Euro-Méditerranéenne). This is in accordance with the initiative of the EU Committee of the Regions, which received support from the foreign ministers of the Union for the Mediterranean at the meeting in Marseille.

In 2009, representatives of the Republic of Croatia participated in four ministerial conferences (on sustainable development in Paris, on finance in Luxembourg, on the role of women in the society in Morocco and on trade in Brussels). In March the Croatian Parliament expressed its intention to join EMPA, the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly.

The civil society in Croatia has shown great interest for co-operation in the Mediterranean through activities of the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for Dialogue Between Cultures. Since its establishment in January 2009, the Croatian Anna Lindh Network, coordinated by the National Foundation for Civil Society Development, has involved fifty civil society organisations and is considered the fastest growing national network. In accordance with the Ministry’s efforts to fully integrate non-governmental organisations in the activities within the Union for the Mediterranean, a Euro-Mediterranean forum of independent multidisciplinary scientists and intellectuals dedicated to monitoring, developing and proposing various forms of cooperation in the Mediterranean has been established. The Croatian scientific community has co-operated in the preparation of the strategy Mediterranean 2030, as part of the project of the French Institute for Economic Forecasting in the Mediterranean.
Informing and educating about the EU and the integration process in Croatia

A total of 148,000 copies of free publications distributed

In 2009, activities related to the Communication Strategy Aimed at Informing the Croatian Public about the European Union and Preparations for EU Membership continued.

The project Europe in Croatia – The Euro Info Point Network was extended to 18 new info points (in Zadar, Split, Grubišno Polje, Opatija, two info points in Zagreb, Čazma, Garešnica, Pitomača, Karlovac, Prelog, Osijek, Novi Vinodolski, Gospić, Vukovar, Trnovo, Bednja and Turčin). The network has grown to a total of 128 info points throughout Croatia. Another important project is the info phone line “Hello, EU” which enables citizens to obtain information about the European Union and the integration process in Croatia by dialling a toll-free phone number (0800 622 622). In 2009, 24,500 calls were recorded. Co-operation continued with electronic and print media at national and local levels, regarding the presentation of topics related to the European Union and the process of Croatia’s accession to the EU. Regular co-operation with radio networks was ensured through the radio show “EU news” and with the daily paper Vjesnik in the preparation of the weekly supplement “Croatia and the EU”. As part of the co-operation with non-governmental organisations, the Ministry financed 15 projects aimed at informing and educating citizens about the EU and the integration process, and participated in NGO projects like seminars and lectures.

The central celebration of Europe Week which on the 9 May marked Europe Day, was held on the Cvjetni Trg in Zagreb and at the Bundek Lake in Zagreb. As in previous years, the Ministry participated in the EU Bus project of the Delegation of the European Commission, which visited ten Croatian towns (Supetar, Knin, Karlovac, Čakovec, Koprivnica, Virovitica, Vinkovci and Zagreb). In co-operation with county councils for European integration and civil society organisations, Europe Week was marked by special programmes, distribution of publications and special shows broadcast on local radio programmes. In 2009, the Ministry participated in the organisation of the conference “EU Days” at the Faculty of Economics in Zagreb titled “Five years after enlargement – experience of new EU Member States”. During Europe Week, 3,500 free copies of promotional material and 37,000 publications were distributed to citizens. In total, 148,000 copies of free publications were distributed. In addition, the Ministry’s web pages regularly publish news and other content related to the EU and the integration process in Croatia.

Educational programmes encompassing 2,700 civil servants

Efficient state administration, trained to tackle all the challenges of future membership and to act effectively in the area of European public administration, is one of the key criteria for accession to the European Union, which gains its full meaning through membership and active participation in all structures and activities of the European Union. In light of these facts, in 2009, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration continued with the implementation of a number of diverse training activities targeted primarily at state officials, as well as the regional and local self-government, pupils, students, teachers and the non-governmental sector. The abovementioned...
activities encompassed over 2,700 participants, the backbone being three different but compatible training projects: a cycle of seminars entitled “The ABC of the EU”, projects within the framework of bilateral cooperation with partners from EU Member States and the Kingdom of Norway as a member of the European Economic Area, and the Croatian Government programme for scholarships in post-graduate European studies abroad. In 2009, 43 seminars were organised at the state level and 2 at the regional and local levels in 8 modules of the cycle of seminars entitled “The ABC of the EU”.

Given that at the beginning of 2009, the first call for expression of interest for employment of Croatian citizens in EU institutions as contract agents was published, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration additionally intensified training activities related to the preparation for the testing and the selection process for these posts. About 100 citizens were able to participate in a three day preparatory seminar conducted by French experts. Basic information about the selection tests were published on the Ministry’s website. A special conference was dedicated to the topic of employment of Croatian citizens in the institutions of the European Union. The aim of the conference was to draw attention of Croatian officials and higher management structures to the benefits and needs for appropriate staff planning, faced with the prospect of a number of civil servants leaving for posts in EU institutions.

In line with several years of practice, youth training continued through the “European Integration Summer School”, attended by some forty Croatian high school students and their teachers. In co-operation with the Hanns Seidel Foundation, the “European Integration Winter School” was organised for about 50 students studying at Croatian Universities. Some faculties announced the possibility of awarding participants of the “Winter School” with ECTS points. Twelve informative lectures on the basic goals of the European integration process and on the development of relations between the Republic of Croatia and the European Union were organised as part of the celebration of Europe Week. The lectures were attended by 500 pupils and students.

As part of bilateral cooperation with France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Norway, three seminars were held in Croatia and Croatian civil servants were also given the opportunity to participate in 19 seminars and courses abroad on specific topics related to European integration issues. In co-operation with the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe, 3 seminars and 1 workshop were organised in Trieste and Zagreb respectively, as part of the UniDem seminar project. Co-operation with the International Organisation of La Francophonie have resulted in the organisation of French language courses for civil servants, attended by 180 civil servants each year.

The seventh international conference “Learning Europe” entitled “Challenges of Learning and Communicating in the European Context” was held at the Plitvice Lakes on 26 and 27 October. It was supported financially by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the Regional School of Public Administration. The conference gathered experts from Croatian public administration and the administrations of other countries in the region. Together with their counterparts from EU Member States they discussed the position of the state within the European context, national coordination of European affairs, the need for lifelong learning and the training and preparation of citizens for work in EU institutions.

In 2009, five scholarships for the academic year 2009/2010 were granted to civil servants through the scholarship programme for post-graduate European studies in the field of EU economy and multidisciplinary European studies. Approximately HRK 700,000 were allocated. At the same time, 22 scholarship recipients, all of whom had successfully graduated in their study programmes, continued their work or started working in state administration bodies of the Republic of Croatia.
Bilateral relations with EU Member States and EFTA Member States

Croatia receives important political and material support to achieve European standards

Croatia’s bilateral relations with EU Member States and EFTA Member States were characterised by their unwavering support, both general and active, for Croatia’s efforts to become a member of the European Union. Some states emphasised the need to continue with unremitting implementation of the reform process and achievement of European standards. The number and dynamics of meetings held at all levels testifies to good and comprehensive bilateral relations.

Croatia’s very good mutual relations with Austria, in all fields of co-operation, continued their rising trend in 2009. Austria invested great effort to unblock Croatia’s EU accession negotiations. The two countries regularly exchanged views on the situation in South East Europe and co-operated as non-permanent members of the UN Security Council. Croatia also expressed its support for the Austrian–Romanian initiative for drafting the Danube Strategy.

In April, the Croatian President awarded the Grand Order of Queen Jelena with Sash and Morning Star to former Federal Chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel for his significant contribution to establishing and advancing relations between the two countries. Prime Minister Ivo Sanader paid a working visit to Austria, and the Austrian Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger paid an official visit to Croatia. Bilateral relations and interdepartmental co-operation (in the fields of education, science, home affairs, judiciary, etc.) were strengthened through numerous meetings of respective ministers. Cultural co-operation was especially dynamic. In December, Croatia and Austria signed the new Programme on Co-operation in the Fields of Culture and Education for the period 2010–2012. Vienna and Zagreb hosted the exhibition Ars Croatica, the largest collection of Croatian contemporary art outside Croatia acquired by the Austrian art collector Dr. Alfred Brogyany. Regional and local co-operation also intensified. In October, the Mayor of Zagreb Milan Bandić and the Mayor of Vienna Michael Häupl signed the continuation of the Zagreb–Vienna Co-operation Agreement. Erwin Pröll, Governor of Lower Austria, and Josef Pühringer, Governor of Upper Austria, paid a working visit to Zagreb, in January and March respectively.

The numerous visits of Croatian delegations to Germany emphasise the well developed bilateral relations between Croatia and Germany. Prime Minister Ivo Sanader visited Munich in May, while in November President Stjepan Mesić met with his German counterpart Horst Köhler in Berlin. In September, Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor met with German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Stuttgart. Many expert consultations were also held. Highly active co-operation between individual German regions and the Republic of Croatia has continued. The 30th session of the Standing Croatian-Bavarian Commission was held in Munich. Croatia and Germany also co-operate closely within NATO, with the International Peace Mission ISAF to Afghanistan being the best example of this co-operation.

The frequent exchange of visits between high-level officials confirmed the traditionally good bilateral relations with Hungary. In November, presidents Stjepan Mesić and Laszlo Sólyom attended the Croatian Day celebration in Barcs. In early November, President Mesić also participated in the fourth World Science Forum on Knowledge and Future. At the beginning of December, the Speaker of the Croatian Parliament Luka Bebić and the Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Hungary Béla Katona met in the border town Letenye. They also met in Budapest in September on the margins of the Conference of Presidents of Parliament of South East Europe. In late June, the Speaker of the Croatian Parliament attended the celebration marking the 20th anniversary of the collapse of the Iron Curtain in Budapest and met with the then Speaker of the Na-
Bilateral relations with EU Member States and EFTA Member States

Katalin Szili. Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor met with her Hungarian counterpart Gordon Bajnai in July on the margins of the Croatia Summit. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs Gordan Jandroković and Péter Balász met in Bjelovar in September, and former Hungarian Foreign Minister Kinga Gönz paid an official visit to Croatia in March.

The third joint session of the Croatian and Hungarian Government was held in Barcs in September. The following topics were discussed: Euro-Atlantic integration, cross border co-operation, issues pertaining to development, education, culture, science and technology, minority issues, as well as the main guidelines for future co-operation between Croatia and Hungary. Twelve documents, three of which bilateral agreements, were signed at the session. In 2009 there was a significant decrease in commodity exchange. Exports to Hungary amounted to EUR 132.4 million (which is approximately 43% less than in 2008), while imports from Hungary amounted to EUR 492.7 million (25.6% less than in 2008). Revenues from Hungarian tourists helped narrow the trade gap to some extent. Croatia was visited by 323,360 tourists from Hungary (13% less than in 2008).

Following direct talks between Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor and Slovene Prime Minister Borut Pahor, Slovenia’s blockade of Croatia’s accession negotiations, which had blocked Croatia’s path to EU membership since autumn 2008, was successfully resolved. On 11 September in Ljubljana, the Prime Ministers reached an agreement regarding the border dispute and Slovenia lifted the blockade on Croatia’s accession talks. The Arbitration Agreement between the Croatian and Slovene Governments was signed by the Prime Ministers of both countries in Stockholm on 4 November in the presence of their Swedish counterpart as the holder of the EU Presidency. The Croatian Parliament ratified the arbitration agreement on 20 November, whereby Croatia fulfilled its part of the commitment under the agreement. Croatia is making efforts to resolve the remaining open issues with Slovenia in a manner acceptable to both sides, in the European spirit, according to the principle of good-neighbourly relations while abiding by international law.

Traditionally good economic relations were confirmed by results in tourism. Despite the crisis, 1.01 million Slovene tourists visited Croatia (a 3% decrease in comparison with the year before), with a total of 5.6 million overnight stays. Total commodity exchange amounted to EUR 1.43 billion (25% less than in 2008). Coverage of import with export amounted to 64%. Slovenia is Croatia’s fourth foreign trade partner participating in the total commodity exchange with 6.3%. Slovenian direct investments into Croatia in 2009 amounted to EUR 108 million, while Croatian investments in Slovenia were worth only EUR 3.1 million in the same period.

Political co-operation with Poland was satisfactory in terms of dynamics and the level of visits. A delegation led by Prime Minister Ivo Sanader paid a working visit to Warsaw, the Speaker of the Parliament Luka Bebić attended the celebration marking the 20th anniversary of the first free post-war elections in the Republic of Poland in Warsaw, Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor attended the ceremony commemorating the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of World War 2 in Gdansk, Andrzej Halicki, Polish Parliament’s Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman, paid a visit to Croatia. With a view to improving bilateral relations, especially in the field of economic co-operation, Croatia launched the initiative to open honorary consulates in Poznan, Krakow and Gdansk.

As Czech officials were occupied with commitments pertaining to the Czech EU presidency in the first half of 2009, bilateral contacts with Croatia were less intense and had to be realised within this framework. On the other hand, Czech Senate Speaker Premysl Sobotka officially visited Croatia on two occasions, in addition to his unofficial visit during the celebration of the 135th anniversary of the Bohemian society “Česka beseda” in Zagreb, thus confirming traditionally good re-
Bilateral relations with EU Member States and EFTA Member States

In February, Croatia was the partner country at the 18th Holiday World, a tourism fair held in Prague.

The high intensity and variety of Croatian–Slovakian meetings (ranging from meetings between high-ranking state officials and ministers or other representatives of government departments, to numerous diplomatic consultations) were additionally confirmed by the visits of Prime Minister Robert Fico and the Speaker of the National Council Pavol Paška to Croatia. Former Slovakian Prime Minister Mikuláš Dzurinda was awarded the Grand Order of Queen Jelena with Sash and Morning Star in Zagreb for his for exceptional contributions to the independence and integrity of the Republic of Croatia. The then Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Families, Veteran's Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity Jadranka Kosor visited Slovakia, while President Stjepan Mesić paid a farewell visit. On 3 June Zagreb hosted the first Croatian–Slovakian Energy Consultations, while on 24 August, the Slovakian Minister of Economy Lubomir Jahnatek visited Croatia. At the beginning of November, another round of energy consultations was held in Bratislava.

Croatia and France launched talks about a strategic partnership. The draft agreement was handed over to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration in September. The fact that France offered Croatia its new bilateral instrument for improving and strengthening relations with Central and East European EU Member States is of great political significance to Croatia. Namely, Croatia is the first non-EU country which is about to sign an agreement on strategic partnership and thereby institutionalise its relations with this important European country. The central event in 2009 was the second visit of Croatian Prime Minister Ivo Sanader to Paris in mid February. Talks with Prime Minister François Fillon and President Nicolas Sarkozy confirmed that bilateral relations are on a high level. In October, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs Bernard Kouchner visited Dubrovnik to join the celebration of the 18th anniversary of lifting the siege of the city and for his contributions at that time, he was awarded a high Croatian order by the President of the Republic of Croatia.

President Stjepan Mesić gave a lecture entitled “Croatia on the threshold of the European Union” at the prestigious Europe Institute. He met with the President of the Government Council of the Canton of Zurich, thereby confirming good bilateral relations with Switzerland.

Given that Sweden held the EU presidency in the second half of 2009, bilateral activities were also connected with this fact. By encouraging constructive dialogue between Croatia and Slovenia, Sweden contributed to the unblocking and resumption of Croatia’s accession talks. Croatia and Sweden co-organised the Croatia Summit 2009 in Dubrovnik on 9 - 10 July. Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs Carl Bildt addressed the Conference on behalf of the EU. Olof Ehrenkrona, Senior Advisor to the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, visited Croatia twice.

In 2009, the Netherlands was again among the biggest foreign investors in Croatia, and one of the most significant donors of financial assistance through bilateral programmes and pre-accession programmes. In September, during a visit by the Dutch Minister of Justice, the two Ministries of Justice signed a Letter of Intent on further strengthening of capacities in the Croatian Ministry of Justice. The Dutch-Croatian project for re-establishing a ferryboat connection between Vukovar and Bač (launched in 2005) is nearing completion. The Memorandum of Understanding between the Dutch Minister for Development Co-operation, the Croatian City of Vukovar and the Serbian municipality of Bač was signed in October. Within the framework of the bilateral pre-accession assistance programme (MATRA and G2G.nl) in 2009 Croatia received a donation worth EUR 2 million from the Dutch Government.
Belgium’s preparations for the EU presidency in the second half of 2010 were a good motive to intensify bilateral contacts and co-operation in 2009. In 2009, the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs carried out training for Croatian diplomats and civil servants (experts and co-ordinators of European affairs in the relevant ministries) whereby the training programme, organised within the framework of Belgian pre-accession assistance, was based on Croatia’s specific requirements. As part of the pre-accession assistance programme for harmonisation with the acquis, the Government of Flanders financed eight Croatian projects amounting to EUR 650,000. Representatives of Croatian harbours received scholarships from the Flemish Government and participated in the harbour management training programme in Antwerp. As part of the promotion of the Croatian economy and tourism in Brussels, a Croatian Evening was organised at the beginning of February. Within the scope of international scientific co-operation, the University of Osijek and the University of Zagreb established co-operation with the Université Libre de Bruxelles. On 2 April, the Belgian Parliament ratified the Agreement between the Republic of Croatia and the Kingdom of Belgium on the Gainful Occupation of Certain Dependents of Diplomatic and Consular Staff that entered into force on 1 June 2009.

Bilateral relations with Luxembourg were most dominantly characterised by Luxembourg’s support for Croatia’s accession to the EU. Within the framework of its pre-accession assistance, Luxembourg’s Government organised seminars in the field of legal adjustment and institution building for representatives of the Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration and the Ministry of Finance. Additionally, the Luxembourg Financial Technology Transfer Agency organised 11 seminars, three of which were held in Zagreb, for Croatian civil servants.

Relations with Finland noted excellent progress which was confirmed by the visit of Finland’s President Tarja Halonen to Croatia in September. Croatia was also visited by Finland’s Minister for Migration and European Affairs in January, and members of the Finnish–Croatian Inter-Parliament Friendship Group at the end of September. A delegation of the Institute Rudjer Bošković visited Finland, and the two Ministries of Foreign Affairs held political consultations in November at the level of Heads of Departments. The two countries established an excellent co-operation in thirteen twinning projects concerning navigational safety and air quality, the Finnish Ministries and public institutions expressing their readiness to continue in the same direction. Finland’s systematic support to Croatia resulted in the expansion of bilateral economic relations which included activities for an affirmation of Croatian forestry on an international level. Efforts made by the Croatian diplomatic mission to Finland helped Croatia in becoming the seat of the Regional Office of the European Forest Institute. The scientific community established contacts which resulted in specific co-operation projects between research and educational circles. Croatia intensified the promotion of tourism with direct flights being introduced for the first time connecting Helsinki with Split and Dubrovnik.

The official visit of Estonian President Toomas Hendrik Ilves to Croatia in March and the Estonian Defence Minister Jaak Aaviksoo in April strengthened good bilateral relations with Estonia. Zagreb also hosted political consultations between representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the two countries.

In addition to its political support for Croatia’s accession to the EU as soon as possible, Latvia also continued to provide expert support in the process of accession negotiations. Within this context, Latvia hosted consultations on Chapter 33 – Financial and Budgetary Provisions in March. Friendly relations between the two countries were additionally confirmed during the official visit of Croatian Minister Gordan Jandroković to Riga in March.
In 2009, Croatia and Lithuania continued their defence co-operation. Particularly worth mentioning is the visit of a joint Lithuanian-Croatian delegation to Afghanistan, where Croatian soldiers are a part of the Lithuanian Provincial Reconstruction Team. The Lithuanian Parliament formed a Group for Inter-Parliamentarian Relations with Western Balkans with the aim of intensifying parliamentary co-operation. (there are no groups for individual countries, apart from a few exceptions that are of strategic interest).

The mid-year visit of Norway’s Defence Minister Anne-Grete Strohm-Erichsen to Croatia reaffirmed very good bilateral defence co-operation with Norway. The Norwegian Government continues to support mine clearing activities in Croatia. A number of seminars and presentations on the possibilities of economic co-operation and investments in the markets of both countries confirmed a mutual interest for the development of economic relations.

Bilateral relations with Denmark were marked by the official return visit of the Speaker of the Croatian Parliament Luka Bebić to Copenhagen in April. Extensive co-operation evolved in the defence sector, with special emphasis on co-operation between the two countries’ air forces and navies.

Bilateral relations with Iceland were characterised by mutual contacts at the level of national parliaments. At the end of the year, the Speaker of the Icelandic Parliament Asta R. Johannesdottir paid an official visit to Croatia. It was the first visit of a high-ranking Icelandic official to Croatia. A delegation of the Croatian Parliamentary Committee for European Integration visited Reykjavik. Iceland expressed strong support for Croatia’s full-fledged membership in NATO. Following Iceland’s accession bid to the EU, Croatia reiterated its readiness to assist Iceland in its accession process.

The most important bilateral event with Monaco was the state visit of Prince Albert II to the Republic of Croatia in April. Prince Albert II visited the Centre for Psychosocial Rehabilitation of Mine Victims in Rovinj, the building of which was supported by the Principality of Monaco with EUR 300,000 for the period 2010 - 2012. Monaco is also an important donor for the demining of nature parks in Croatia.

Political relations with Italy intensified in 2009, as confirmed by numerous meetings at the highest level. During an official visit of the Foreign Affairs Minister Franco Frattini in January, a Memorandum of Co-operation between the Croatian and Italian Government was signed, representing the basis for regular political dialogue and wider interdepartmental co-operation. The first meeting of the Coordination Committee of Ministers, headed by Ministers of Foreign Affairs of both states, was held in Rome on 1 July. The meeting resulted in the signing of the Joint Declaration on Co-operation. Extensive interdepartmental co-operation has been established in areas of common interest, especially between the ministries of foreign affairs, the economy, industry, energy, environmental protection, infrastructure, transport, agriculture, university and research and technical co-operation, as well as between harbours in the northern Adriatic. Prime Minister Ivo Sanader and the President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić visited Italy in March and November respectively. The visit of the Speaker of the Croatian Parliament Luka Bebić to Italy in October contributed to the strengthening of inter-parliamentary co-operation and the process of setting up an Inter-parliamentary Croatian-Italian Friendship Group. The first Croatian-Italian Economic Forum held in Zagreb in October was the result of the first session of the Coordination Committee of Ministers. Italy is Croatia’s leading foreign trade partner (overall commodity exchange amounted to EUR 3.77 billion, which is 30% less than in 2008). Italy is Croatia’s largest export market (20% of total ex-
ports), while at the same time it is also one of the most important tourist markets and eighth biggest foreign investor.

Minister Gordan Jandroković, the Speaker of the Croatian Parliament Luka Bebić and President Stjepan Mesić met with Grand Master of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta Fra Matthew Festing and other high ranking officials of the Order, including the Grand Chancellor and the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

In the course of 2009, Croatian officials visited the Holy See on several occasions - Minister Gordan Jandroković visited the Vatican in June, the Speaker of the Croatian Parliament Luka Bebić in October, and President Stjepan Mesić in November. The high Croatian officials once again invited the Holy Father Benedict XVI to visit Croatia.

The official visit of Minister Gordan Jandroković to Portugal in March gave new impetus to bilateral relations with this country. A Memorandum of Co-operation between the two Ministries of Foreign Affairs was signed on this occasion. Zagreb hosted the first political consultations at the level of State Secretaries dealing with bilateral, regional and international issues. Economic co-operation focused on areas of traffic and harbour management, as well as on the promotion of Croatian tourism. The bilateral Agreement on Industrial, Technical and Scientific Co-operation, signed ten years earlier, entered into force in August.

Co-operation with Spain was intensified in view of Spain's preparation for the EU presidency in the first half of 2010. Minister Gordan Jandroković met regularly with Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs Miguel Moratinos on the sidelines of international conferences and meetings. Throughout the course of the year, Spain organised very successful technical consultations in Madrid about individual negotiation chapters. Second Vice-President of the Senate of Spain officially visited the Croatian Parliament in July. As part of intensified co-operation in the field of the judiciary, a delegation of the Croatian Ministry of Justice visited Spain in October. Within the Group of Friends of Alliance of Civilizations, Croatia and Spain jointly organised a broader regional conference on Youth, Education and Media which took place in Sarajevo in December. Among the most important economic projects was the establishment of direct seasonal flights and the promotion of Croatian products in the shops of the department store chain El Corte Ingles.

As part of its support for Croatia's integration into the EU, Great Britain initiated the organisation of the Wilton Park Conference in Croatia. The conference titled “Completing Croatian Accession Negotiations and EU Membership Prospects for the Western Balkans” was held in Zagreb on 17 - 20 November. Many bilateral meetings were held at the level of Ministers. Minister Gordan Jandroković met with his British counterpart David Miliband in May during the UN Security Council session and on the sidelines of the session of the UN General Assembly in September. In October, the Croatian Minister of Justice Ivan Simonović met in London with British Europe Minister Chris Bryant and the Minister of Justice Jack Straw. The Croatian Ministers of Finance and Tourism visited Great Britain within the framework of international conferences, while in March, the Governor of the Croatian National Bank received an award from the magazine “Banker” in London naming him the best governor in the world. Inter-Parliamentary co-operation was marked by the June visit of the chairman and members of the European Scrutiny Committee of the House of Commons to Zagreb. Finally, Princess Anne, Princess Royal, visited Croatia in February as a guest of President Stjepan Mesić. In May, the Croatian Embassy in Great Britain, in co-operation with the Department of Slavic Languages of the British Library, organised a conference on “The Renaissance of Marko Marulić (Split, 1450 - 1524)” in London.

Bilateral relations with Ireland were characterised by a number of inter-parliamentary meetings. Croatia hosted the Speaker of the Lower House of the Irish Parliament John O'Donoghue in July and the delegation of the Irish Parliament's Joint Committee on European Affairs, led by its Chairman Bernard Durkan in March. In July, Irish Minister of State at the Department of the Taoiseach and Minister of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs with special responsibility for European Affairs Dick Roche attended the Croatia Summit in Dubrovnik, where he met with Minister Gordan Jandroković. Croatia's Chief Negotiator Vladimir Drobnjak visited Ireland in February, and Ireland continued to carry out training of Croatian civil servants as part of its support to Croatia on its path to the European Union.
Good bilateral relations with **Greece** were confirmed during a working visit of President **Stjepan Mesić** to Athens and political consultations held at the level of State Secretaries of Ministries of Foreign Affairs. The commodity exchange between the two countries decreased by 54.6% compared to the year before, and amounted to EUR 102.7 million.

Intense political dialogue and co-operation in political, economic and cultural fields were continued with **Bulgaria**. The commodity exchange decreased by 50%, mostly as a result of the economic crisis, and amounted to USD 121.2 million (Croatian imports amounting to USD 78.9 million and exports to 42.3 million). In April, the Croatian delegation, led by President **Stjepan Mesić**, participated at the Regional Energy Summit in Sofia. On this occasion, the Croatian Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship and the Bulgarian Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism signed a Memorandum on Co-operation, thus meeting the requirements for the re-establishment and work of the Joint Intergovernmental Committee for Economic Co-operation between the two countries.

Despite good mutual relations between Croatia and **Romania**, economic co-operation has still not reached the desired level and does not reflect true economic potential. In 2009, the commodity exchange amounted to USD 251.7 million, decreasing by 0.2%.

**Malta** continued to provide full support for the completion of Croatian accession negotiations and successful implementation of reform processes, with co-operation of the two countries within international organisations still developing in a positive manner. The commodity exchange volume is constantly on the rise but there is still room for improvement. In 2009, the overall commodity exchange amounted to EUR 180.5 million.

Although 2009 was not marked by any important bilateral meetings, relations between Croatia and **Cyprus** continued to develop in a positive manner.
Relations with neighbouring states and countries in the region

Numerous meetings testify to the co-operation achieved

Further promotion and strengthening of co-operation, based on the protocols on co-operation in the field of European integration with countries in the region, took the form of technical assistance for the alignment of legislation and implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement, as well as the exchange of information and experience connected with the preparation and organisation of answers to the questionnaire of the European Commission and co-ordination of European affairs. Technical assistance includes attendance at seminars, workshops, conferences and bilateral consultations, and study visits by colleagues from countries in the region.

In November, as part of the “Parliament for Europe” project, a lecture was held about the harmonisation of legislation and implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement, at an invitation of the Special EU Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Furthermore, at the Ministry of Integration and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania, consultations were carried out in relation to the drafting of answers to the questionnaire of the European Commission. In December, upon the invitation of the Office for Legislation of the Republic of Macedonia, Croatia presented its experiences in the process of harmonisation of legislation with the acquis communautaire.

Development of bilateral relations with all neighbouring states and countries in the region targeted several key areas, such as the common strategic interest and support for equal participation in Euro-Atlantic integration; maintaining stability in the region and developing good neighbourly relations; improving economic co-operation; strengthening regional co-operation and constructive resolution of open issues. Good co-operation at the political level, achieved through regular political dialogue and bilateral meetings, is a precondition for the achievement of the afore stated objectives.

Croatia’s and Albania’s simultaneous admission to NATO in April 2009 served as a symbolic confirmation of the achievements and contribution of the two countries to regional stability. Political dialogue was intensive in the first half of the year, before the Albanian election, when several top-level visits were realised. President Bamir Topi, the Speaker of the Parliament Jozefina Topalli and Prime Minister Sali Berisha visited Croatia. Croatia’s commodity exchange with Albania traditionally generates a surplus, and the total commodity exchange with Albania in 2009 amounted to EUR 28.8 million. Croatian exports to Albania reached EUR 26.6 million, whereas imports amounted to EUR 2.1 million.

The official visit of Prime Minister Jadranka Korač to Bosnia and Herzegovina in November was a confirmation of the importance of Croatia’s relations with neighbouring Bosnia and Herzegovina. During the year a large number of working meetings were held between the highest ranking Croatian and Bosnia-Herzegovina officials. Foreign Minister Sven Alkalaj visited Croatia officially at the beginning of the year. In October, the two ministries of foreign affairs carried out regular political consultations in Sarajevo to review all
open issues and new initiatives in bilateral relations. In the context of the process of Euro-Atlantic integration, in December the Croatian Government decided to make available the translations of the acquis communautaire to the countries involved in the Stabilisation and Association Process and to candidate countries, including Bosnia and Herzegovina. Croatia also advocated the granting of the Action Plan for Membership in NATO to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Along with assistance in the Euro-Atlantic integration process, Croatia provided expert assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina in the process of lobbying and preparing for non-permanent membership in the Security Council. Co-operation on donor assistance programmes of the Government of the Republic of Croatia to Croats living in that country continued. The Republic of Croatia is Bosnia and Herzegovina’s most significant import and export trade partner. In the midst of the economic crisis in 2009 commodity exchange between the two countries dropped by 32% but Croatia generated a commodity exchange surplus of EUR 560 million. Direct investments of the Republic of Croatia into Bosnia and Herzegovina amounted to EUR 45 million. Croatia was the partner country at the 12th International Economic Fair in Mostar, held from 31 March to 4 April.

Relations with Montenegro developed well and were marked by the readiness of both countries to resolve outstanding issues, such as the final demarcation of the interstate border and protection of minority rights. The Agreement on the Protection of Minorities was ratified by the Croatian Parliament in October, and is expected to be ratified soon by the Parliament of Montenegro. An interstate Croatia-Montenegro commission co-chaired by the foreign ministers of the two countries met in January to hold negotiations concerning the sea border. The Commission is in charge of drafting a special agreement on the submission of the dispute before the International Tribunal in The Hague. Visits by high-ranking officials of the two countries continued, and so did consultations at lower and expert levels. The President of the Parliament of Montenegro, Ranko Krivokapić, and the President of Montenegro, Filip Vujanović visited Croatia in October and December respectively. Several bilateral agreements were also signed. Commodity exchange between the two countries rose by 17% compared to 2008.

As part of the development of relations with Kosovo, in 2009 Croatia was very active in providing support and offering advanced training for Kosovo state administration officers in various fields, especially regarding institution building and the transfer of experience from the EU accession process. Croatia made an effort to find a way of involving Kosovo in regional initiatives, considering that paramount for the further development, stability and security of the entire region. With a view to expanding economic co-operation, Croatia and Kosovo signed three interstate agreements. The total commodity exchange was EUR 55.8 million. Numerous Croatian companies traded with Kosovo, and the best results were achieved in the field of information technology.

The year 2009 saw the highest number of mutual visits by the highest-ranking officials of the Republic of Croatia and Macedonia since the independence of both countries. President Stjepan Mesić visited Macedonia on two occasions, and President Gjorge Ivanov chose Croatia for his first foreign visit after his inauguration. The President of the Assembly Trajko Veljanoski also visited Croatia, and Croatian Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor visited Skopje. Co-operation of the committees for European integration of the two parliaments was particularly intensive, and visits to Skopje and Zagreb at the level of ministers were numerous. As the Croatian minority in Macedonia has not been recognised in the Macedonian Constitution, the minority issue is a priority in bilateral co-operation. In 2009, the Joint Committee for the Implementation of the Agreement on the Protection of Minority Rights began working. Total commodity exchange amounted to EUR 215 million, dropping by 25% in relation to 2008 as a result of the global economic crisis.

Throughout 2009, political relations between Croatia and Serbia were again clouded by the Republic of Croatia’s recognition of the Republic of Kosovo. The quality of relations was also adversely affected by Serbia’s interpretation of the Republic of Croatia’s standpoint before the International Court of Justice on 7 December on the conformity of the declaration of independence of Kosovo with international law and by the announcement of Serbia’s counter-claim against the Republic of Croatia for genocide before the International Tribunal in The Hague. In the spirit of supporting constructive relations, Croatia continued to support Serbia’s European perspective. During the March visit of Prime Minister Ivo Sanader to Serbia, the Protocol on Co-operation in the European Integration Process was signed. In late 2009, the Government of the Republic of Croatia de-
cided to permanently suspend the visa regime with the Republic of Serbia. In 2009, there was a notable increase in co-operation between state institutions, especially in the field of internal relations, the judiciary, culture, as well as continually good co-operation in the field of the economy. Seven interstate agreements were signed concerning police co-operation, re-admission and economic co-operation. As for economic co-operation, commodity exchange amounted to EUR 602 million (which is 27% less as the result of the economic crisis), where EUR 400 million accounted for Croatian exports to Serbia. Direct Croatian investments into Serbia, as opposed to previous years, were significantly reduced and amounted to EUR 25.6 million. In 2009, 88794 tourists from Serbia visited Croatia with 440,738 overnight stays in Croatia which is an increase by 14% in relation to 2008.

The mixed commission in charge of returning cultural heritage taken from the Republic of Croatia during the Homeland War worked on resolving several open issues. Co-operation of the commissions in charge of missing and detained persons also continued. A meeting of the Intergovernmental Mixed Committee for Monitoring the Rights of Minorities was held after more than three years. In late 2009, the first preparatory meeting for the regional ministerial conference on refugees was held, and new meetings were announced with a view to making the best possible preparations for the conference.

Bilateral relations with the Republic of Turkey are very good in all areas - political, parliamentary, defence, security and parliamentary, with good prospects for their further promotion in the economic sector. During the February visit of Prime Minister Ivo Sanader to Ankara, six bilateral agreements were signed. The Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmet Davutoğlu visited Zagreb in December. Political consultations were also held at the level of state secretaries and directors, as well as consultations with the Minister for European affairs and the Chief negotiator of the Republic of Turkey Egemen Bagis in Zagreb. In 2009, the total bilateral commodity exchange between Croatia and Turkey dropped by more than 20% as expected but Croatian exports rose by almost 60%. As part of the official visit of the Croatian Prime Minister to Istanbul, a business forum was held and attended by more than 40 Croatian and 60 Turkish companies. The Memorandum of Co-operation by the sea ports of Antalya and Zadar was signed. In June, the sixth session of the Mixed Commission for Road Transport was held in Istanbul. In November, Zagreb was the host of the second session of the Joint Croatian-Turkish Free Trade Committee, during which the Croatian side proposed further liberalisation of trade with agricultural products.

While the political relations between the Republic of Croatia and Moldova are friendly, economic relations are currently modest.
Regional multilateral co-operation

Specific development projects

By participating in various regional organisations, initiatives and forums the Republic of Croatia has confirmed its commitment and contribution to regional co-operation as a crucial instrument of stability, trust and progress for all countries in the region. Aware of the fact that strengthening democratic processes, improving the economy and accepting Euro-Atlantic standards in countries in the region represent a common benefit, the Republic of Croatia continued even more intensively to offer its experiences and capacities through various co-operation modalities.

Implementation of the integration process and finally membership in the European Union is a priority of the Croatian foreign policy and the backbone of regional co-operation of the Republic of Croatia in South East Europe. As a leading political and economic factor in the region, Croatia is aware of its role in the preservation of peace and stability in the region. A comprehensive approach to regional co-operation through the application of the principle of regional ownership, with a view to developing full potential of project-oriented co-operation, is the priority of cross border and transnational activity of the Republic of Croatia.

The South East European Co-operation Process (SEECP) – In 2009, within the framework of SEECP, Croatia continued to advocate the development of dialogue and the strengthening of good-neighbourly relations in the region. During Moldova’s Chairmanship-in-Office until June, and during Turkey’s subsequent Chairmanship-in-Office, Croatia demonstrated the proper way of acting through the implementation of national reforms, strengthening of tolerance and political dialogue. At the same time, it provided substantial support to countries in the region on their path towards the fulfilment of conditions for European and Euro-Atlantic integration. Croatia’s Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Gordan Jandroković attended the meeting of SEECP Ministers of Foreign Affairs, and the Croatian Deputy Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor attended the SEECP summit in Chisinau in June which concluded Moldova’s Chairmanship-in-Office. The summit in Chisinau adopted a Joint Statement of the Heads of State and Government, defining three key influences on the region in the preceding period: the EU accession process, the world economic crisis and the establishment of the rule of law.

Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) – The Republic of Croatia’s key interest in co-operation with the RCC as a co-ordinating instrument arises primarily from the fact that the two basic guidelines for RCC operations – co-operation in the region and full integration into Euro-Atlantic associations – are at the same time Croatia’s strategic interests. The Council’s task is to generate and co-ordinate development projects aimed at strengthening the capacities of countries in South East Europe and promoting their continuous alignment with the processes and standards of Euro-Atlantic associations. It is also very encouraging that interested states, donors and EU institutions, whose sponsorship facilitates the implementation of individual projects, are active participants in RCC bodies. Together with other partner countries, the Republic of Croatia asserted an interest in the projects of the Regional Fire-fighting Centre, with headquarters in Divulje near Split. Another project in which Croatia has comparative advantages as an implementing country is the Regional Centre for Public-Private Partnership. In line with its standpoint that countries in South East Europe can provide a more successful response to the energy crisis and ensure stable energy sourc-
es through investments in the diversification of energy routes and sources, Croatia has also showed an interest in co-operation in the area of energy.

Central European Initiative (CEI) – As part of this Initiative in the foregoing period, the Republic of Croatia actively supported the strengthening of co-operation through the implementation of joint projects in the fields of cultural exchange, science and technology, and the exchange of knowledge and experience in the field of management and human resources. On the basis of the experience gained in the course of pre-accession negotiations with the EU, Croatia advocated the progress of Euro-Atlantic integration processes in neighbouring countries. As in the previous years, in 2009 Croatia also placed special emphasis on environmental protection and human resources development. The annual CEI Diplomatic Forum was organised in May by the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration and the Center for Advanced Academic Studies in Dubrovnik, under the auspices of the CEI.

Adriatic-Ionian Initiative (AII) – Italy’s Chairmanship-in-Office focused on the strengthening of co-operation at local and regional level, more intensive co-operation in the field of protection of the Adriatic against pollution and the exchange of experience in relation to natural disasters. Croatia was active in all of the said areas. Economic co-operation primarily encouraged rural development of the member states, in particular through tourism and small and medium-sized enterprises.

The EU Strategy for the Danube Region – On 19 June, the European Council entrusted the European Commission with the task of drafting the EU Strategy for the Danube Region by the end of 2010, to be adopted during Hungary’s Presidency or in the first half of 2011. At the “Danube Forum” in Linz, held on 29 June, Croatia’s Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Gordan Jandroković voiced Croatia’s full support for the EU Danube Region Strategy. In line with the standpoint that equal partnership in the drafting of the Danube Strategy is the basic precondition for its successful realisation, Croatia appointed a representative at the operative level who will take part in the preparatory phase of drafting the Strategy. The interest in the Danube Strategy arises primarily from the fact that it will include much of the Croatian territory and will primarily relate to economic co-operation and the financing of transnational projects of interest for the EU and the development of the Danube macro-region as a whole, thus providing opportunities for new forms of co-operation with countries in the region.

Alps-Adriatic Working Community – It is one of the oldest international organisations of regional character of which Croatia is a member. In 2009, Croatia was a member of the Presidium of the Alps-Adriatic Working Community, a body comprised of the current, former and upcoming chairing region/state (Croatia will preside in 2011 and 2012). The Alps-Adriatic Working Community is currently considering the restructuring of this initiative.

Migration, Asylum and Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI) – Following the transfer of MARRI to regional ownership which took place during Croatia’s presidency in 2008, the regional initiative re-confirmed its efficiency. The topics addressed by the participating states primarily concern the issue of illegal migration, trafficking and refugees, and are becoming more and more topical, as participation in the MARRI serves to strengthen co-operation of the states in South East Europe and EU Member States. Montenegro that took over the presidency in May, emphasised the need to further strengthen the analytical approach in all of the said areas, so that the results of MARRI’s activity might be used not only by countries participating in the initiative, but also by other states and institutions.

Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI) – At a meeting of SECI in Bucharest in December 2009, Croatia was one of the signatories of the new convention of the SELEC (South East European Law Enforcement Center), which has fulfilled the requirements for entering into force of the new legal framework for co-operation of the states in South East Europe in the field of combating trans-border organised crime. Along with the states of South East Europe, the representatives of Europol, Interpol and the corresponding US agency provided their full support to the future work of the SECI’s Centre for Combating Trans-border Crime, which will have its seat in Bucharest. The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding along with the related regional initiatives such as MARRI and RCC was also welcome.
Second year on the Security Council

Successful participation in the World Government

On 31 December, the Republic of Croatia completed its term as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council for the period 2008 - 2009. Having successfully performed its duties on the Security Council, which represents the pinnacle of achievement in every country’s foreign policy endeavours and highlights nearly 18 years of Croatia’s membership in this global organisation, Croatia has reaffirmed its position as a responsible and competent member of the international community. As a Security Council member Croatia demonstrated its readiness and ability to assume full responsibility for maintaining international peace and security.

Croatia began its two year term in the Security Council on 1 January 2008, and by the end of the same year held the Council’s Presidency for the month of December. Throughout its two year membership, Croatia chaired the Security Council’s Counter-Terrorism Committee and concurrently co-chaired the Committee on Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction and the Sanctions Committees on the Sudan and Somalia respectively.

The focus of Croatia’s work in the Security Council was based on specific national interests and guided by foreign policy priorities of a country aspiring to membership in Euro-Atlantic integrations. In line with this, Croatia primarily participated in discussions about the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, as well as crisis-related issues pertaining to South East Europe (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo). For the same reason Croatia was also a member of the Contact and Drafting Group for Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General for Georgia.

Special attention was also given to the most frequent topics on the agenda of the Security Council - crises on the African continent, as well as to the issues of the protection of civilians, women and children in armed conflicts. Throughout its work on the Council, Croatia particularly underscored the importance of the rule of law and consequently strongly advocated strengthening and full adherence to international law, notably human rights, international humanitarian and refugee law.

Throughout its mandate, while holding regular consultations with other Council members, including some of the largest world powers and permanent Council members, Croatia directly participated in finding enduring solutions for extremely complex situations, amongst others, numerous conflicts and other threats throughout Africa and Asia, the Middle East issue, the situation in Afghanistan, the Georgia – Russian conflict, as well as tensions emerging from the development of nuclear programmes in Iran and North Korea.

Croatia’s unremitting commitment to the maintenance and restoration of peace is also confirmed by the fact that Croatia is engaged in 9 UN peacekeeping missions, involving the Croatian armed forces, police personnel and diplomatic staff.
Active participation of high-level officials

The active participation of Croatian high-level officials in Security Council meetings during its two year term only reaffirmed Croatia’s strong support for the Council’s work and significance. The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić participated in the Council’s historical session on Maintenance of International Peace and Security: Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Nuclear Disarmament held on 24 September 2009 and chaired by the President of the United States which resulted in the adoption of a relevant resolution.

On several occasions other Croatian high-level officials also participated in the work of the Council: on 24 June Prime Minister Ivo Sanader addressed the Council during its regular semi-annual debate on the implementation of the ICTY exit strategy, underscoring Croatia’s support for the work of the Tribunal and its commitment to full co-operation with the ICTY. On 11 November, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Gordan Jandroković participated in the Council’s debate on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict.

Croatian membership in the Security Council presented additional value to Croatia’s accession process to Euro-Atlantic integration, as well as an additional impetus for making that process more dynamic. Simultaneously, as a member of the Security Council, Croatia gained useful experience and knowledge that can now be applied to Croatia’s activities within NATO, and once Croatia becomes a full-fledged member of the EU, it will also be used in all of its efforts aimed at reaching consensus in the field of the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy.

Active participation in other UN bodies

Drawing from first-hand experience gained during its membership in the Security Council, primarily in the field of post-conflict recovery and peacebuilding, alongside the development of democratic institutions and the rule of law, on 1 October Croatia once again presented its candidature for membership in the UN Peacebuilding Commission for the term 2012 - 2013.

Given that Security Council Reform and an overall improvement of the functioning of the UN system are also in the interest of the Republic of Croatia, Minister Gordan Jandroković participated in the Rome Ministerial Conference on Security Council Reform in February. Through participation and membership in various UN bodies, Croatian diplomacy demonstrated its interest in the more effective functioning of this world organisation. In this context, it is important to highlight the election of Croatian diplomat Jasminka Dinić to the UN’s Advisory Committee for Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) for the term 2010 - 2012.

In 2009 Croatia also actively participated in the work of other UN bodies and international organisations of which it is a member, thus contributing to the resolution of current global challenges faced by the international community (sustaining global peace and security, counter-terrorism,
fulfilment of Millennium Development Goals, sustainable development, climate change, UN reform, to name a few). The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić participated in the Non-Aligned Movement Summit on “International Solidarity for Peace and Development” held in Sharm El Sheikh in July. He delivered a speech at the High-level Panel of the 64th UN General Assembly Session. In December the President also led the Croatian delegation in the UN Climate Change Conference held in Copenhagen.

International security

A decade of active participation in peace missions

In 2009, Croatia marked the 10th anniversary of active participation in international peacekeeping missions. Indeed in truly a short period of time, the Republic of Croatia has transformed from a country in which peacekeeping forces of the international community were active, to a country that actively participates in peacekeeping efforts around the world, including international peacekeeping missions of the key actors on the global scene - the UN, NATO and the EU. In this period Croatia has managed to increase not only the quantity, but also the quality of its contribution to peacekeeping missions. The experience gained during the ten years of participation in peacekeeping missions have considerably contributed to Croatia’s preparations and to its readiness to join Euro-Atlantic integration, especially in the accomplishment of one of Croatia’s strategic foreign policy goals - membership in NATO.

In early October, the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration organised a conference at the Croatian Military College in Zagreb to mark the 10th anniversary of Croatia’s participation in international peacekeeping missions. The Conference was attended by the President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić, the Speaker of Parliament Luka Bebić and Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor.

Although previous peacekeeping missions involved mainly Croatian armed forces, they were gradually joined by members of the civil police, diplomatic staff from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration and the representatives of other relevant ministries. The circle of Croatian “peacekeepers” thus expanded, enabling them to gain valuable experience and knowledge around the world, and to perform an honourable service aimed at establishing and maintaining world peace. In the course of 2009, members of the Croatian Army, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration participated in UN, NATO and EU peacekeeping operations (in nine, two and three missions respectively).

Croatia’s most significant and greatest contribution to peacebuilding and stability in the world has been its participation in the NATO led ISAF peacekeeping operation in Afghanistan. In line with a decision by the Croatian Parliament, Croatia is participating in this operation with a contingent of 300 soldiers performing various tasks – from training and mentoring the Afghan Army, the protection of security forces, providing medical services, to military police tasks and others – and are deployed in three regions: the capital Kabul, the north and the west of Afghanistan. As part of the international community’s integral approach to the stabilisation and reconstruction of Afghanistan, in addition to military personnel, Croatian police officers and diplomats have also been engaged. Croatia also participates in three Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) lead by Lithuania, Hungary and Germany. In the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Feyzabad, a Croatian diplomat is acting as the Deputy Head of Civil Affairs and is engaged in the development of assistance projects, which constitute a new form of Croatia’s participation in the international community’s activities in this country.

In 2009, Croatia also continued to implement education and training programmes for the members of the peacekeeping forces. The UN certified Croatian Army Peace Support Operations Centre (CAPSOC) in Rakitje, near Zagreb, conducts training of Croatian and foreign officers pri-
or to their deployment to peacekeeping missions, and participates in the international exchange of instructors. Similar international education and training is carried out for members of the police force, through courses that also obtained the UN certificate in 2008.

**Long-term and implementing documents for better arms control**

Recognising global security threats, among which the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their availability to terrorist organisations pose one of the greatest security challenges, the Government of the Republic of Croatia set up the Inter-ministerial Working Group with the aim of developing a National Strategy to Combat the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction and an Implementation Action Plan. As part of the work on the Strategy, a workshop entitled *Advanced Training Course - Croatia NATO ATC* was held in Split from 4 to 8 May, under the auspices of NATO, for the members of the Inter-ministerial working group, as well as Government officials. The main topics of the workshop were guidelines and the background for the preparation of the national strategy to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration launched the project Second Line of Defence, and in negotiations with the US Department of Energy, a donation of the American Government to the Croatian Border Police and Customs Administration was ensured. The donated technical equipment and financial resources will be used to raise the quality and effectiveness of border control and the control of border crossings, especially with Bosnia and Herzegovina. Packages containing nuclear material will be supervised more strictly.

Representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration also participated in outreach projects organised by the USA to help the Republic of Kosovo. Export Control and Border Security is one such project designed to help Kosovo improve its export control system of military material and dual-use goods.

Croatia is active in the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) based in the Hague, which monitors the destruction of existing chemical weapons, equipment and technology and prevents proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In 2009, Croatia participated in various projects, such as seminars and conferences on chemical, biological and radiological terrorism and on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and popularisation of its objectives in industrial and academic circles.

The National Commission of the Republic of Croatia for the implementation of the CWC, presided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Croatia, and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) organised an International Workshop for the industrial and academic communities about CWC/BTWC/UNSC Resolution 1540 which was held in Cavtat. The workshop took place on 4 and 5 April with 47 participants from 23 countries and representatives of the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and the UN Security Council Committee for the Implementation of Resolution 1540, as well as representatives of non-governmental organisations. Having participated in the organisation of the Workshop for the second time, Croatia was recognised by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons for its involvement in non-proliferation and prevention of proliferation of chemical weapons at an international and multilateral level.

As part of its efforts to establish and implement systems of control of illegal accumulation and smuggling of small arms and light weapons and ammunition, on 10 September, the Croatian Government adopted the National Strategy and Action Plan for Small Arms and Light Weapons Control. The National Strategy is a strategic document that defines the key goals and priorities of the national small arms and light weapons control policy. The Action Plan contains clearly defined measures for improvement of existing activities in this field, with the aim of creating a highly secure environment for Croatian citizens and enabling the country’s unhindered economic and social development.
Steps taken to further promote a systematic development assistance policy

In May 2009, Croatia established the Inter-ministerial Working Group for Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance Abroad, thus reaching a new stage in the implementation of a systematic policy of development and humanitarian assistance, and in its alignment with EU development policy principles, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the UN Millennium Development Goals. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration is in charge of co-ordination of the Croatian policy of international development co-operation.

The National Strategy for Development Co-operation of the Republic of Croatia (for the period from 2009 to 2014), adopted in February, specifies territorial and thematic priorities for providing development assistance: development assistance will first of all be allocated to countries of the South East European region where the knowledge and experience acquired, especially during the political and economic transition, can be of great use to the countries receiving assistance.

Assistance to Afghanistan is one of the priorities of the Croatian development assistance policy. In 2009, USD 50,000 were transferred to the UNDP fund for financing pre-election activities in Afghanistan; the health centre Zhar Shakh (which was financed by the Republic of Croatia with USD 237,000) was officially handed over to the Afghan Ministry of Public Health in December 2009; a contribution (USD 50,000) was made to the Food for Education Programme of the World Food Programme; as part of the implementation of small development projects, school equipment was purchased and alternative sources of income were ensured (bee hives purchased for women's bee-keeper cooperatives).

In 2009, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration gave financial support to the HIV/AIDS monitoring project carried out by the Andrija Štampar School of Public Health and to the UNICEF Schools for Africa programme.

Official external development assistance provided by the Republic of Croatia amounted to a total of HRK 127,393,932 in 2009.
Regional international organisations

New developments in the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe - the Corfu Process

Despite the fact that the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) lost the role it had in early 1990s, when it used to be the key instrument for initiating democratic changes and the pillar around which a new European security structure was built, it is still an important factor of European security and the only one that includes both component parts - the Euro-Atlantic and the Euro-Asian one. A long-term process of reforms has, to a certain extent, paralysed the work of the organisation. Since decisions are reached by consensus, the regular annual ministerial meetings were not able to adopt a joint declaration for several years in a row.

During its chairmanship in 2009, Greece tried to give new impetus to the Organisation - at the end of June, Corfu hosted the first OSCE Informal Ministerial Meeting and concurrently the ministerial meeting of the NATO - Russia Council, whereby contacts with the Russian Federation were re-established after the Georgian crisis had led to a six month suspension of dialogue. The Corfu Meeting launched a new mechanism for the exchange of views on a broad spectrum of issues regarding European security within the framework of the so called Platform for Co-operative Security, allowing for all existing European security institutions to contribute. On 1-2 December in Athens, the OSCE Ministerial Council expressed its support by adopting a Ministerial Decision on the Corfu Process and the Decision on Furthering the Corfu Process. By virtue of participating in preparations and discussions in all mentioned meetings, the Republic of Croatia was actively involved in the Corfu Process from the very beginning.

By applying OSCE standards, Croatia continued its long-term engagement in the OSCE within the three main OSCE dimensions – the human dimension (human and minority rights protection, freedom of the media, tolerance and non-discrimination), the economic and environmental dimension (sustainable development) and the military and political dimension (weapons control and confidence building). Croatian representatives participated in a number of OSCE working groups, particularly those concerned with combating terrorism, border security and other means of co-operation security.

By secondment of state and civil sector personnel to OSCE Missions, Croatia has continued actively contributing to OSCE field activities. After years of continued active participation in the work of the missions of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), Croatia took part in election monitoring by sending election observers on several occasions. Croatian non-governmental organisations also participated in monitoring missions and professional seminars, thereby additionally confirming good co-operation with the ODIHR.

In 2009 the OSCE Office in Zagreb continued to monitor war crimes trials and report to OSCE headquarters on the implementation of the Government’s Housing Programme. The Croatian Government and the OSCE Office in Zagreb continued to hold regular monthly meetings, as part of the agreed consultative mechanism under the OSCE Office mandate in Croatia. On two occasions (in March and November), the OSCE Office in Zagreb presented the “Progress Report relating to the development of events and activities encompassed by the mandate” to the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna, in which it noted the overall progress of the Republic of Croatia in the implementation of commitments under the mandate of the OSCE Office in Zagreb. The Reports emphasise the positive, sustainable and irreversible progress made by the Republic of Croatia regarding issues under the mandate of the Office.

The decision of the Permanent Council extending the mandate of the OSCE Office in Zagreb until 31 December 2010, confirmed that the Croatian Government has made considerable progress in fulfilling commitments pertaining to issues under both mandates of the OSCE Office. The OSCE
Office in Zagreb was given the task of submitting the Progress Report by the end of 2010 as the basis for the evaluation of the fulfilment of the mandate and mandate-related tasks by the Permanent Council.

**Council of Europe - 60 years of activity**

The year 2009 marked the 60th anniversary of the Council of Europe as the oldest European organisation and the 50th anniversary of the European Court of Human Rights. Along with a series of accompanying events that were organised in Strasbourg and other member states, including Croatia, the celebration focused on two central events: the 119th Session of the Committee of Ministers held in Madrid in May and a Declaration adopted on that occasion, and the celebration held on 1 October in Strasbourg in the week of the autumn session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. The latter event hosted many high ranking officials from the European political scene. On the same occasion national winners of an essay writing competition were awarded diplomas for exploring the theme of the Council of Europe, among them Lea Araminčić from Rijeka. The commemorative celebration was also joined by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, whose Declaration was, on this occasion, presented by the Congress Vice-President and leader of the Croatian delegation Dubravka Šuica.

In this context, the Republic of Croatia in 2009 continued to strengthen its position as an active member of the Council of Europe by promoting its principles on an international level and honouring obligations arising from membership. Owing primarily to the constructive participation in the Council of Europe’s programmes and activities, especially in promoting specific thematic interests which contribute to the country’s recognisability as a member of the Organisation, Croatia has managed to build a partner relationship with the Council of Europe. Croatia has distinguished itself in the field of family law by being a leading promoter of initiatives aimed at combating violence against women (for instance, Croatia has handed over to the Council of Europe its national television clip on combating violence against women that was presented at the Venice Film Festival) and introducing a ban on corporal punishment of children, as well as by participating in the protection of national minority rights, combating human trafficking and terrorism, and supporting the reform of the European Court for Human Rights and a systematic execution of its verdicts. In this way it has contributed to the work of the Organisation and to the achievement of its basic objectives pertaining to the strengthening of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

Pursuant to obligations under different conventions and agreements of the Council of Europe, Croatian experts have regularly participated in the work of some seventy standing and ad hoc bodies (committees) of the Council of Europe, as well as in various conferences organised by the Council of Europe in Strasbourg and in the Member States. In 2009 Croatia gained further recognition through active contribution of its experts in the bodies of the Council of Europe. Particularly notable were the activities of Ambassador Ranko Vilović as chairman of the Committee of Experts on Terrorism (CODEXTER), Ambassador Dubravka Šimonović (MFAEI) as co-chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (CAHVIO), in charge of drafting a new Council of Europe Convention on this issue, and Ksenija Turković of the Zagreb Law School who had a leading role in the preparation of European Guidelines on Child-friendly Justice. Also notable was the election of Damir Bolta (Ministry of Finance) to the Bureau of the Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures (MONEYVAL) and the election of Tihomir Kralj (Ministry of the Interior) to the Bureau of the Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC).
Continuing the dynamics of adoption of European legal instruments, by the end of 2009 the Republic of Croatia was a party to 88 European conventions, agreements and protocols (out of a total of 209 Council of Europe legal instruments). Throughout the course of the year, Croatia ratified the Convention on Contact concerning Children and signed the revised version of the European Social Charter. On 1 February the Convention on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons and the Council of Europe Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime and on the Financing of Terrorism entered into force. Moreover, Croatia is a party to 11 out of 13 Partial Agreements of the Council of Europe.

The Republic of Croatia actively participated in the reform process of the European Court of Human Rights with a view to ensuring its long-term efficiency. By consistently observing the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms at the national level, Croatia has also contributed to the unburdening of the Court’s caseload. The cases tried before the Court against the Republic of Croatia are becoming more diverse and demanding, but the overall number of verdicts for human rights violation is stable and still relatively low.

Throughout 2009, Croatia was devoted to preparing and submitting State Reports on the implementation of the two most important Council of Europe legal instruments in the field of protection of national minorities: in October Croatia submitted its third Report on the Implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (five-year monitoring cycle) and at the end of the year it submitted the fourth Report on the Implementation of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages (three-year monitoring cycle).

Important high level meetings include the participation of the President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić at the Council of Europe’s Summer School for Democracy on 7 and 8 July. On the margins of the meeting, the President met with the Secretary General of the Council of Europe Terry Davis, the President of the European Court for Human Rights Jean-Paul Costa, and the Commissioner for Human Rights Thomas Hammarberg. The Minister of Justice Ivan Šimonović participated at the Conference commemorating the 10th anniversary of the Partial Agreement and of the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO); the State Secretary for Political Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Davor Božinović headed the Croatian delegation at the 119th Session of the Committee of Ministers in Madrid.
Human Rights

The focus of activities - Protection of women and children

The protection and promotion of human rights, tolerance and non-discrimination were implemented in 2009 as an important part of the Croatian foreign policy through the enforcement of existing instruments and participation in activities within the framework of the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the OSCE and other international organisations promoting human rights. Within these organisations, the Republic of Croatia particularly advocated the abolition of the death penalty, the ban on torture, the protection of children’s rights including a ban on corporal punishment of children, gender equality, the prevention of violence against women, the fight against all forms of discrimination including discrimination based on sexual orientation, the protection of national and ethnic minority rights, and the promotion of interreligious dialogue and tolerance.

On a global level, Croatia devoted special attention to the UN Human Rights Council, as the most prominent world forum in the field of protection and promotion of human rights. The Republic of Croatia took an active part in the Council’s activities, especially in the part pertaining to the procedure of the Universal Periodic Review (review of human rights in each of the UN Member States), entering into active dialogue with the countries presenting their respective human rights situation at the Council sessions.

As a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (2008-2009), Croatia also joined Security Council activities in the field of human rights. Croatia was particularly active in addressing the protection of children’s rights in armed conflicts and protection of women’s rights, including the implementation of earlier resolutions, as well as the adoption of new ones (1888/2009 and 1889/2009) on women, peace and security, and fight against sexual violence during and after conflicts.

In 2009, Croatia successfully concluded the final year of its mandate as a member of the UNICEF Executive Board (in the period 2007 - 2009). Through active involvement in its work, Croatia contributed to the protection of children in the world, especially in the areas struck by armed conflicts and natural disasters. Additionally, in line with the Programme for 2007 - 2011, it has continued active cooperation with the UNICEF Office in Zagreb.

As a member of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (2006 - 2009), Croatia has actively participated in passing resolutions on the improvement of the status of women and the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. A part of the Commission’s work was addressed towards the prevention of violence against women, in particular through its support to the UN Secretary General’s Campaign to launch a database on violence against women.

Along with the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and its Optional Protocol on a national basis, through professional engagement by Ambassador Dubravka Šimonović at the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Croatia contributed to the reform of the Committee and application of these instruments world-wide.

Following its recognisable dedication in the area of the fight against discrimination, the Republic of Croatia has, as one of the Vice-chairs at the Bureau for the preparation of the Review Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, contributed to finding ways to hold the conference despite enormous problems. Despite almost insurmountable problems, the Conference took place in Geneva at the end of April 2009 and ended with the adoption of a final document.

By joining the Group of Friends of the Alliance of Civilizations Group of Friends, a new international initiative under the auspices of the UN whose task it is to improve understanding and cooperation among nations across cultures and religions, Croatia has accepted an active role in the
promotion of interreligious dialogue and tolerance on an international level based on its experience and examples of good practice. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration coordinated the Working group for the National Programme for the Alliance of Civilizations (2010-2012).

Regional and national levels – a permanent solution for refugees

On a regional level, within the framework of its efforts in the fight against all forms of discrimination, including discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, the Republic of Croatia has actively contributed to the work of the Council of Europe Committee on Discrimination on Grounds of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, as one of the countries to promote protection of these rights by the adoption of the Anti Discrimination Act which came into force in early 2009. (The overall activities of the Republic of Croatia in the area of protection and promotion of human rights within the framework of the Council of Europe are described in the chapter Council of Europe).

Seeking to find “permanent solutions” to the issue of refugees on the territory of former Yugoslavia, in 2009 Croatia took an active part in the preparation of the International Conference on Refugees in Belgrade, which was postponed to early 2010. The Croatian party advocated a depoliticised, individual and humanitarian approach to this process. The Republic of Croatia pleaded for specific and practical steps towards a permanent solution of this question in the region. In that sense it has been asked to establish the exact number of refugees (in line with the criteria of international legislation and international standards) and to define the existing needs for protection, especially with regard to the most needy. Croatia has also advocated the international community’s solidarity contribution to this process, through financial assistance for the projects aimed at a final resolution of this issue in the region.

In late 2009, a draft of the Common Core Document was drafted in accordance with the Harmonized guidelines on reporting under international human rights treaties. The purpose of the document is to facilitate the reporting system, because the document will always be added to Periodic reports in accordance with UN human rights treaties. Systematic transposition of contemporary standards adopted in international human rights instruments into Croatian documents has also continued. These documents are drafted by inter-governmental bodies like the Government Commission for Monitoring Implementation of the National Programme for Roma, the Council for Children, the National Committee for the Suppression of Human Trafficking, the National Bioethics Commission for Medicine, as well as the working groups in charge of reporting in accordance with international treaties.
Bilateral achievements

Co-operation of Croatia and the world in specific programmes

New US administration – equally high level of bilateral relations

Croatia’s membership in NATO provided a new partnership dimension which enriched the generally excellent bilateral relations with the United States of America and with Canada. A series of bilateral meetings, and achievements in the field of facilitating the visa regime for Croatian nationals, are a good indicator of the high level of mutual trust and friendship.

Friendly and allied relations between Croatia and the United States of America continued with the administration of the new US President in January 2009. The first top-level meeting took place upon Croatia’s admission to NATO at the summit in Strasbourg and Kehl on 3 and 4 April, when US President Barack Obama handed over a copy of the Washington Treaty to the President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić. On this occasion, Prime Minister Ivo Sanader met separately with the US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton. High level political dialogue and consultations continued, particularly concerning co-operation in South East Europe and Afghanistan. In July, the Deputy State Secretary James Steinberg and the Assistant Deputy Secretary Philip Gordon took part in the Croatia Summit in Dubrovnik. In December, Croatia’s Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Gordan Jandroković visited Washington, where he met with US State Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton, the senior director for European affairs and special assistant to the US President Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy in Pentagon Michele Flournoy, chairwoman of the Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs Jeanne Shaheen, chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs Howard Berman, and a number of US senators and congressmen. In October, political consultations were held at the level of state secretaries. Along with a meeting with Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg, State Secretary Davor Božinović also met with Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall, as well as with Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Joseph McMillan, and assistant secretary at the Department of Homeland Security David Heyman. Improvements to the visa regime also contributed to the improvement of bilateral relations. As of May, the United States of America issue multiple tourist and business visas to Croatian nationals valid for a period of 10 years. Cooperation on the fulfillment of conditions and criteria for Croatia’s admission to the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) has continued. Several agreements on security co-operation were concluded with that aim in mind, and in mid 2009 Croatia began to issue biometric e-passports.

The meagre extent of economic co-operation was further afflicted by the financial and economic crisis in both countries. The total commodity exchange was only USD 775.3 million, which is 21% less than in 2008. Croatian exports dropped by one third, and US imports by 13%. Croatia recorded visits by 123,935 American tourists (22.4% less than in 2008), who realised 335,967 overnight stays (17.3% less than in 2008).

Early 2009 was very important for further development of good relations with Canada. Despite the crisis being experienced by its government at the time, Canada ratified the Protocol on NATO
Enlargement to the Republic of Croatia. In January, the Visiting Forces Act entered into force. The Act approves non-visa entry and the corresponding immunity to Croatian soldiers on entry and stay in Canada. On 29 March, the Canadian Government issued the Decision lifting the visa requirements for Croatian nationals, making Canada the first North American state to enable Croatian nationals to stay in its territory without visas.

A large number of visits by high-ranking officials were realised in 2009. The Governor General of Canada Michaelle Jean and the Minister of National Defence Peter MacKay visited Croatia, while the Speaker of the Croatian Parliament Luka Bebić and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Gordan Jandroković visited Canada. The latter met with the Speaker of the Senate Noel A. Kinsella, the Speaker of the House of Commons Peter Milliken, Foreign Minister Lawrence Cannon, and the ministers of defence, international trade, and the Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lynne Yelich.

The Canadian side proposed the conclusion of two agreements on specific co-operation in the field of science and education. The Ministry of Education of the Province of British Columbia and the Province Ontario introduced the Croatian language as part of the regular curriculum from grade 5 through 12. Thus, pupils have been provided with an opportunity to learn the Croatian language as an optional subject, as a result of persistent efforts by the Canadian Croatian Congress and support provided by the Embassy of the Republic of Croatia in Ottawa.

As economic relations considerably improved in 2009, Croatia has become Canada’s largest trade partner in the region. Although the commodity exchange of USD 120.2 million has dropped by 3.1% in relation to 2008 due to the crisis, it has tripled over the past three years.

The relations between Croatia and the United Mexican States have considerable potential for growth. In February, the Croatian Ambassador Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović presented her credentials to Mexican President Felipe de Jesús Calderón Hinojosa, in the presence of Foreign Minister Patricia Espinosa Cantellano. In 2009, active efforts were made to lift visa requirements for Croatian tourists and businessmen travelling to Mexico. Agreement on Exemption of Visa Requirements for Holders of Diplomatic and Service/Official Passports entered into force on 12 October 2009.

Eastern Europe – focus on energy and co-operation in tourism

In 2009, the Croatian Government’s policy towards the Russian Federation became more active, both at the political and economic level, especially in terms of joint energy projects. An impetus to the new quality in bilateral relations was provided by the meeting of Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor and Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin at the Commemoration of World War II Outbreak in Gdansk. The Chairman of the International Affairs Committee of the State Duma Konstantin Kosachov took part at the Croatian Summit in Dubrovnik, Deputy Speaker of the Duma Ljubov Petrovna Sliska and Minister Sergey Shoygu visited Zagreb in October. Deputy Prime Minister Damir Polančec visited the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum in June. The Minister of Culture Božo Biškupiće also visited St. Petersburg in November. The farewell visit of President Stjepan Mesić to Moscow on 14 December is considered an important step for further co-operation. The President met with Russian President Dmitri Medvedev and Prime Minister Vladimir Putin.
With a view to promoting tourism, the Croatian Government adopted a decision on temporary exemption of visas for Russian tourists in the period from 1 May to 31 October.

In 2009, the Ukraine opened an honorary consulate in Zadar, and the Republic of Croatia launched an initiative for the opening of a honorary consulate in Donetsk. In May, the Memorandum on Cooperation in the Process of European Integration was signed by the two foreign ministries. A delegation of the Croatian Parliament, headed by the Speaker of the Croatian Parliament Luka Bebić, visited the Ukraine in November. The main topics covered were Croatia’s experience in the EU accession process, permanent lifting of visa requirements between the two states, opening of an office of the Croatian National Tourist Board in Kiev, establishing direct flights between the two capitals and the possibility of economic and energy co-operation. With the aim of promoting tourism, Croatia issued a decision on temporary exemption of visas for Ukrainian tourists in the period from 1 May to 31 October.

In terms of relations with the Republic of Belarus, Croatia acts in accordance with the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU. The year 2009 was marked by more intensive economic contacts and both sides expressed their willingness to supplement the current contractual framework. In terms of commodity exchange with the Republic of Belarus, Croatia recorded a surplus.

The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić visited the Republic of Armenia in May. On this occasion, two interstate agreements were signed. Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan came to Croatia on a return visit in September. The Croatian-Armenian Economic Forum was also held at this time.

The Deputy Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration of Georgia, Helen Khososh-taria, visited Zagreb in May in order to consult with the head of the Directorate for Multilateral Affairs of the Ministry concerning Euro-Atlantic integration.

Asia and Australia – important economic, as well as cultural ties

In its relations with this very diverse and globally ever more important region, Croatia focused its foreign policy on developing and strengthening its political and economic dialogue with the most important countries, especially members of the G-20 – China, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea and Australia. As there is room for better economic co-operation with the leading Asian countries, Croatia’s efforts are aimed at attracting new investments and increasing Croatian exports. The largest commodity exchange was that with China, Japan, Korea, India and Indonesia, but in the relations with all of these countries Croatia registers a high deficit. Despite the magnitude of the Asian market and opportunities that it provides, Croatian exports are still extremely low (only around 5% of total exports are intended for Asia).

Bilateral relations with the People’s Republic of China in 2009 were abundant and substantial, and were marked by very dynamic dialogue at all levels. The central event was definitely the official visit of President Hu Jintao to Croatia on 19 and 20 June (the first visit of a Chinese President to Croatia and the region). At this and other Croatian-Chinese meetings, special attention was paid to the possibilities of economic co-operation, reducing the Croatian deficit, attracting investments into Croatia and developing co-operation in tourism. During the presidential visit, an economic forum took place, which was attended by more than 200 Chinese businessmen. The Speaker of the Croatian Parliament Luka Bebić and a delegation of the Croatian Parliament visited the People’s Republic of China in August. They met with the highest-ranking Chinese officials and visited the cities of Xi’an and Shanghai. Political consultations at the level of directors from the two foreign
Bilateral achievements

ministries were held in Zagreb. The Mayor of Shanghai visited Zagreb in June, and was received by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Gordan Jandroković. The fourth session of the Croatian-Chinese Commission for Scientific and Technological Co-operation was held in Beijing in November. A protocol setting out twelve new projects for scientific and technological co-operation was signed. A delegation of the Legislative Council of Hong Kong visited the Republic of Croatia in September at the invitation of the Croatian Parliament.

Political dialogue with Japan also continued. In October, the fifth regular political consultation of the representatives of the two foreign ministries was held in Zagreb. On the basis of the Memorandum of Co-operation between the Republic of Croatia and Japan in the field of education, sports, science and technology, the first joint Croatian-Japanese research was arranged on a project entitled Identification of Risks and Planning the Use of Land for Crisis Management after Landslides and Flooding in Croatia. This five year project is worth EUR 4 million.

In March, the 9th session of the Croatian-Indian Joint Committee on Trade and Economic Co-operation was held in Zagreb. Good co-operation was also achieved in the field of culture. Croatia took part in international film festivals in Bangalore, Thrissur, Calcutta, New Delhi, Goa and Chennai. The Hindu translation of the book “Croatian Literature” was presented at the India International Centre. In early November, a Co-operation Agreement was signed by the University of Zagreb and the New Delhi University. An Agreement on Co-operation between the Croatian Radio Television and Doordarshan Television (the Indian national TV network) was signed by the Indian side, while the Croatian side will sign after the election of a director of the Croatian Radio Television.

The visit by Foreign Minister of the Philippines Alberto G. Romulo in May was the first visit by a high-ranking official from the Philippines to Croatia. He met with his Croatian colleague Gordan Jandroković and Minister of Culture Božo Biskupić. He was also received by President Stjepan Mesić. Two interstate agreements in the field of culture and sports were signed.

The first session of the Joint Croatian-Indonesian Committee on Economic and Technical Co-operation was held in Zagreb on 27 March. The Indonesian delegation headed by the Foreign Ministry’s director general for American and European Affairs Retno L. P. Marsudi was also received by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Gordan Jandroković. The Indonesian side announced a decision to open the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in the Republic of Croatia.

In February, Croatia was visited by the Minister of Health of Malaysia Datuk Haji Abdul Latiff who discussed the possibilities for co-operation in the field of pharmaceuticals and medicine. Croatia and Malaysia continued their good co-operation in the field of culture. The first Festival of Malaysian Food and Culture was held in Zagreb from 9 to 15 November.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Gordan Jandroković and the Foreign Minister of Australia Stephen Smith met on the margins of the session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York in September. In August, Australia repealed the disputable Declaration and Statement Regarding Character from visa applications, which constitutes an important milestone in bilateral relations with Croatia.

Bilateral relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran were somewhat less intensive than the year before. In the field of culture, the traditional week of Iranian culture was held in Zagreb in February. In October, Mahdi Mustafavi, the head of the Organisation for Islamic Culture and Relations, visited Croatia and signed the Cultural Co-operation Programme between Croatia and Iran for 2009, 2010 and 2011. He was also received by Croatian President Stjepan Mesić.
In June, the Minister of Defence Branko Vukelić visited Afghanistan. He met with Croatian soldiers in the ISAF, the Vice President of Afghanistan and the UN High Representative. The Republic of Croatia provided USD 50,000 for the implementation of the presidential election in Afghanistan in August. Celebrating International Children’s Day, the head of the Croatian team in the German Provincial Reconstruction Team Feyzabad Mirko Capijak presented a donation of winter clothes for 110 poor pupils of Feyzabad. The donation was organised in co-operation with the Directorate for Relations with Women of the Province of Badakshan.

The September opening of the Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Zagreb, headed by the chargé d’affaires ad interim, stands out among the bilateral relations of the Republic of Croatia with the countries of Central Asia. In early December, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Gordan Jandroković met with his Kazakhstan counterpart Kanat Saudabayev. The meeting singled out the areas of greatest potential for economic co-operation. The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić made an official visit to Tajikistan in late May at which time two bilateral agreements were signed. The President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon came for a return visit to Croatia in September to conclude yet another protocol and a Joint Declaration on the Improvement of Friendly Relations. The President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov visited Croatia in June. The two presidents signed a joint declaration on priorities in bilateral co-operation and the Agreement on Co-operation between the Diplomatic Academy and the Institute for International Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan. In July, a Croatian economic delegation visited Turkmenistan, followed in November by the delegation of the County of Istria, headed by County Prefect Ivan Jakovčić.

Central and South America – co-operation supported by realistic interests

The states of Latin America successfully addressed the challenges of the global financial and economic crisis by ensuring further growth for their economies and contributing to the stability of the world’s financial and economic system, making the development of multi-faceted relations with these countries interesting for Croatia as well. In the commodity exchange between Croatia and Latin America, negative trends were recorded. Croatian exports to Latin America amounted to USD 29 million, 63% less compared to the previous year, while imports from the area amounted to USD 306 million which is 31% less than the year before. As a full-fledged member of NATO and soon to be full-fledged member of the EU, and an active participant at the multilateral level, Croatia is indisputably an interesting partner for Latin American countries. The Croatian emigrant community serves as a bridge for better understanding and strengthening of bilateral co-operation.

In 2009, relations with Chile were intensive, as confirmed by the September visit of the high level delegation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile headed by the Deputy Minister. The seventh political consultation was held during the visit. Croatia’s participation at the celebration of the 200th anniversary of Chile’s Independence was arranged. The possibility of initiating the study of the Croatian language and literature in Chile was confirmed. An interest by both sides in more intensive co-operation characterises the relations of Croatia and Brazil. With a total value of commodity exchange of USD 204 million, Brazil is still Croatia’s main foreign trade partner in the area. Brazil has witnessed a growing interest in Croatia as a tourist destination. In 2009, more than 10,000 Brazilian tourists visited Croatia, which is 25% more than the year before. Bilateral relations with Argentina focused on achieving specific co-operation in all fields of common interest. Croatia’s efforts were directed at the opening of a resident Argentinean embassy in Croatia and the strengthening of bilateral co-operation in the field of trade, science, and the use of Croatian ports, in particular. For years, Croatia’s participation in the International Fair of Tourism in Buenos Aires...
Bilateral achievements

has been well noted. Relations with Columbia improved in November following the presentation of credentials by the non-resident Ambassador of the Republic of Croatia Rade Marelić. Regular visits of the ambassador and the consular staff of the Croatian Embassy in Brasilia will facilitate co-operation with the Columbian authorities, business circles and the Croatian emigrant community. During the official visit of President Stjepan Mesić to Cuba in September, five bilateral agreements were signed. Other events held during the visit included the Croatian-Cuban Economic Forum, a meeting of the Croatia-Cuba Intergovernmental Joint Commission and the Week of Croatian Film.

The interests of the Republic of Croatia in Central America are still directed at co-operation within multilateral forums and the real possibility that countries in the region will sign an agreement on association with the EU which will serve as a framework for bilateral co-operation with these countries following Croatia’s accession. In March 2009, Croatian Ambassador Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović presented her credentials in Panama.

Near and Middle East, Africa – intensifying contacts

Relations with countries in North Africa and Middle East were marked by intensive exchange of high level visits emphasising economic co-operation. Good results were achieved in oil and gas exploration, while civil engineering, construction and infrastructural materials remain the cornerstones of Croatian exports to the countries in the Persian Gulf. Some of these countries still have a current demand for humanitarian demining services. Countries in this region are emerging as an increasingly important tourist market for Croatia.

In October, the President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić paid an official visit to Israel, while Israeli Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Avigdor Liberman arrived for his first visit to Croatia in September. A political consultation was held in Zagreb at the level of state secretaries of the ministries of foreign affairs. Intensive and comprehensive co-operation with Israel was also strengthened through visits by the Speaker of the Croatian Parliament and the Minister of the Interior.

The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić visited Oman and Egypt, where he participated at the summit of the Non-Aligned Movement. In Jordan, the President met with King Abdullah II, accepting his invitation to participate in the World Economic Forum. The President of Egypt Hosni Mubarak, accompanied by the foreign minister and the ministers of trade, industry and investments, the President of Syria Bashir al-Assad and the Emir of Qatar Mohamed bin Hamad al-Thani came for an official visit to Croatia for the first time. Numerous bilateral meetings at the foreign ministers’ level carried an important economic component. Accompanied by an economic delegation, Croatian Minister Gordan Jandroković visited Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. The foreign ministers of Morocco and the United Arab Emirates came for their first official visit to Croatia. Further to the policy of improving overall bilateral relations with the states of the Persian Gulf, the Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted a regulation in December on the exemption of visa requirements for holders of diplomatic and service/official passports in Qatar, Oman and the United Arab Emirates. Five interstate agreements were signed with Qatar; two agreements in the economic sphere and two memoranda of co-operation were signed with Oman.

Several decisions initiating or raising the level of diplomatic representation testify to the mutual recognition of the potential for bilateral co-operation between the Republic of Croatia and the countries of North Africa, the Near and Middle East. As part of Croatia’s plan to open a diplo-
matic mission in one of the countries of the Persian Gulf, the Ministry launched a procedure for opening the Consulate of the Republic of Croatia in Oman at the end of the year, to be headed by a honorary consul. In September, the United Arab Emirates requested the issuing of approval for the country’s ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary state in Berlin as non-resident ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to the Republic of Croatia. After four years of Lebanon’s inability to accredit its ambassador in the Republic of Croatia (due to war and internal Lebanese unrest), the Ambassador of Lebanon presented his credentials to the Croatian President in August. Morocco’s decision to open a resident embassy in Zagreb in 2010 was a strong political boost to the intensification of the overall relations between Croatia and Morocco.

In 2009, the Croatian Government adopted a decision on non-resident coverage of Botswana from the Embassy of the Republic of Croatia in the South African Republic. Ambassador Ivan Picukarić presented his credentials in late 2009 and became the first Croatian Ambassador to Botswana.

**Taking care of Croatian citizens abroad**

**Over 331,000 new consular requests**

Consular affairs encompass duties related to the protection of the rights and interests of the Republic of Croatia and its nationals residing or travelling abroad. These also include duties related to the visa system and visa policy, entry and residence of foreign nationals in Croatia, the use of national airspace and waters, issuing of passports, international legal assistance, registers, document legalisation, etc. Additionally, in 2009, the Ministry coordinated the presidential elections in diplomatic and consular missions in 55 countries with a total of 250 polling stations. The State Election Commission and the monitors assessed the presidential election abroad as successful.

In 2009, the Ministry received a total of 72,438 consular requests, of which 55,783 were related to international legal assistance, 5,722 to the residence of foreign nationals, 5,535 were applications for citizenship and passports, and 5,398 referred to visas.

The diplomatic and consular missions received a total of 259,386 requests. Most of these were applications for passports and visas, or were related to notary duties, registers and international legal assistance. A total of 93,851 visa applications and 50,879 passport applications were submitted at the 73 diplomatic and consular missions.

**E-passport system connects 30 diplomatic and consular missions in network**

Applications for diplomatic and official e-passports, and second generation regular electronic passports, whose issuing began on 1 July, are submitted at Croatian diplomatic and consular missions abroad. So far, 30 missions have been connected to the e-passport network. Although there are 73 Croatian diplomatic and consular missions engaged in consular affairs, the networked missions receive about 80 per cent of all passport applications.

Harmonisation of Croatian legislation concerning foreign nationals with the acquis communautaire and other EU standards has continued in 2009. Croatia introduced new visas, whose security was enhanced to increase the level of protection against forgery.
The Croatian Visa Database, a unique state level information system connecting all relevant bodies in Croatia with Croatian diplomatic missions, consular offices, and border crossings, was further developed. By the end of 2009, the new system was successfully introduced in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, the Ministry of the Interior and the first 25 diplomatic and consular missions. The setting up of such a system is a requirement for future inclusion in the EU Visa Information System.

In 2009, new international visa agreements were signed: Agreement between the Republic of Croatia and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on Exemption of Visa Requirements for Holders of Diplomatic and Service/Official Passports (signed in Hanoi on 29 October) and Agreement between the Republic of Croatia and the Republic of Hungary on the Cooperation in the field of Handling Visa Applications at the Embassy of the Republic of Hungary in Moldova (signed in Barcs on 17 September).

**HRK 1.5 million for Croatian minorities**

The Ministry bases its care for the position and status of Croatian autochthonous minorities in European countries, and the exercise of their minority rights, on the implementation and respect of European standards in protecting minorities in their residing countries. At the same time, it supports ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic awareness and the right to the particularities of one’s own cultural life and national traditions. It monitors changes in the migration policies and legislation of recipient countries, and the legal and political position of Croatian minorities living in these countries. It continuously maintains and develops co-operation with representatives of Croatian minority organisations and co-operates with and co-ordinates the relevant institutions at home and abroad, in terms of exercising minority rights. The Ministry also initiates and participates in the drafting and implementation of bilateral agreements on the protection of minorities.

The Ministry has also co-financed certain minority activities abroad, through projects for which financial resources were approved in the 2009 State Budget. A total of HRK 1.5 million (EUR 202,000) were allocated to Croatian national minorities abroad. The following table gives an overview of the funding for minority projects according to country:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Amount in EUR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>25,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>1,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>15,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Czech Republic</td>
<td>5,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>20,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>5,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>21,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>15,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>11,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>8,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>20,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>55,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>202,000.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Croatian-Macedonian Intergovernmental Mixed Committee for Monitoring the Rights of Minorities, established on the basis of the agreement between the two respective governments on the protection of minority rights, held its first session in Skopje on 27 January. The Croatian-Serbian Mixed Committee for the protection of minority rights, which has met three times so far, held its last session in Belgrade on 14 and 15 October after a three-year break. The Joint Committee on

Emigrants awarded 393 scholarships

Croatian expatriates who are at school or studying in Croatia were awarded 393 scholarships in 2009. Additionally, 75 Croats living abroad were granted scholarships to attend the autumn and spring semesters of Croaticum, the Croatian language course held at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Zagreb, and Croatica, held at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Split.

Special attention was given to maintaining contacts with Croatian emigrants and providing them with timely information, through the web page Information for Croats Abroad. The basic objective of this web page is to provide an all-in-one source of information for Croats wishing to travel or permanently return to Croatia, and for facilitating their integration into the economic, educational, cultural and other aspects of life in Croatia.

In 2009, resources were also provided for financing programmes and projects pertaining to the interests of Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A total of 418 programmes and projects were selected in a public tender, for which funds were allocated from the Croatian State Budget.

In 2009, financial support was also allocated to a total of 21 programmes run by various associations that foster co-operation and friendship between states.

The exhibition of Croatian emigrants’ publishing activities “Croatian Books Abroad” was organised in co-operation with the Croatian Heritage Foundation at INTERLIBER, an international book fair held at the Zagreb Trade Fair from 11 to 15 November.
Public diplomacy

Diplomacy on the Internet

In addition to regular diplomatic activities, Croatia’s positive image in the world has been reinforced in many other ways – from presence in the public and media through cultural events, to conferences, lectures and similar public diplomacy activities.

In the course of the year, the Ministry prepared and published 505 press releases. The number of releases increased by about one hundred compared to previous year, testifying to increased activities of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Gordan Jandroković, state secretaries and other Ministry officials, and of Croatian ambassadors and other diplomatic representatives abroad.

The total of 38 websites of the Ministry and the diplomatic and consular missions today serve as a timely and high-quality source of information. The Ministry’s website (http://www.mvpei.hr, http://www.mfa.hr) introduced a new video section called “EU News”. New websites have been set up for the embassies in Sweden, Macedonia and Bulgaria. In 2009, the official Ministry’s website recorded about 33 million hits by almost 586,000 individual visitors. The web page Croatian Economic Diplomacy (http://hgd.mvpei.hr/) recorded over 4 million hits by over 140,000 individual visitors.

In co-operation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, the Government of the Republic of Croatia organised the fourth Croatia Summit entitled Energy, Investment and Development. This international conference for heads of state or government, high-ranking officials from European and North American countries, and representatives of international organisations took place in Dubrovnik on 9-10 July. In addition to providing other logistics services, the Ministry was responsible for about one hundred domestic and foreign journalists, photographers, cameramen and other members of accredited reporting teams who covered the event.

Publications

The Ministry’s 2008 Yearbook was published in 2009, only in electronic format. The proceedings of the conference “Cultural Promotion and Diplomacy”, organised by the Diplomatic Academy in Dubrovnik in 2005, were published in English and edited by Mladen Andrlić and Valerija Šegota.


Conferences and lectures

In co-operation with different foreign partners, the Diplomatic Academy organised several conferences and seminars, and a series of guest lectures in 2009. The 12th CEI Dubrovnik Diplomatic Forum on “Modern European Diplomacy and Diplomatic Education” took place in Dubrovnik on 7-9 May. In early October, the same town was the venue of the 11th Joint Seminar of European Integration for Young Diplomats from Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, organised in co-operation with the Hanns Seidel Foundation. Three conferences were organised in co-operation with the International Organisation of La Francophonie: “Challenges and Perspectives of the European Space of Freedom, Security and Justice” (Dubrovnik, 20 - 23 October), “EU Institutions and Decision Making Process” (Zagreb, 17-18 November) in co-operation with the College of Eu-
Public diplomacy

rope in Bruges, and the “Simulation of a Non-Governmental Organisations Conference” (Zagreb, 10-11 December) in co-operation with the Alliance Francaise Zagreb.

The lectures took place at the Diplomatic Academy or at the Faculty of Political Science of the University of Zagreb. They are listed below in chronological order:

- 9 January: “Croatia and the European Union: Our Common Challenges” - Joseph Daul, chairman of the EPP group in the European Parliament (lecture held at the Faculty of Political Science)
- 12 January: “Future of the EU: Financial Crisis, Lisbon Treaty and EU Enlargement” - Franco Frattini, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Italian Republic (lecture held at the Faculty of Political Science)
- 14 January: Milan Ročen, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Montenegro, spoke about the current situation in Montenegro and about European and Euro-Atlantic perspectives of the region (lecture held at the Faculty of Political Science)
- 5 February: “The Czech Presidency and Croatia’s Accession to the EU” - Karel Kühnl, Ambassador of the Czech Republic (lecture held at the Diplomatic Academy)
- 24 March: “Nationalism in the Era of Globalisation” - Guy Laforest, Professor at the Université Laval in Quebec (lecture held at the Diplomatic Academy)
- 7 April: Indonesian Ambassador Mangasi Sihombing spoke about some aspects of Indonesian foreign policy and how Indonesia is coping with the current global economic crisis (lecture held at the Diplomatic Academy)
- 14 April: On “La Francophonie - history, development, diplomatic activity and co-operation” - Stéphane Lopez, project manager on the project The French Language in Europe (lecture held at the Diplomatic Academy)
- 28 April: Carolyn J. Lukensmeyer, founder and president of the association AmericaSpeaks lectured on involving citizens and NGOs in the decision making process.
- 17 July: “Russia’s Contemporary Foreign Policy” - Aleksandar Nikolajević Panov, Director of the Diplomatic Academy of the Russian Federation
- 2 September: “Important Issues related to Europe and the International Community” - Tarja Halonen, the President of Finland (lecture held at the Illyrian Hall of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts).

Promotion through culture

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration is co-operating closely with the Ministry of Culture in the implementation of the overall external cultural policy by promoting Croatia in the broadest possible sense, but also as a desirable tourist destination, with an emphasis on cultural tourism.

In 2009, a total of 34 visual art projects, 15 music projects, 5 film projects and 13 other projects were developed and carried out (theatrical performances, promotion of books by Croatian authors, literary evenings, lectures). Some of the exhibitions include: “The Croatian Underwater World”, “Croatian Lighthouses”, “Unseen Croatia”, “Colours of Croatia” “Zagreb”, “Split in Marulić’s Time” “The Tie Challenge”, “Croatian Caricature”, “Vucedol Thread”. Several events took place under the title Croatian Film Days, concerts were given by the Zagreb Saxophone Quartet, the Zagreb Guitar Quartet and solists Mario Perestegi, Tamara Jurkić-Sviben, Željka Caparin, and Srdan Bulat. Croatia co-financed the material for the sculpture of Josip Juraj Strossmayer in Bulgaria, and an exhibition of the works of Vlaho Bukovac in The Hague. Three completely new exhibitions were prepared: “Amazing Croatia” by Marko Vrdoljak, an exhibition of graphic design by Boris Ljubičić and the exhibition “Croats in America” by Vladimir Novak. Croatian cultural activities took place in 33 countries.
Several exhibitions were staged during the Days of Croatian Culture in Bosnia and Herzegovina, three theatrical groups performed (City Puppet Theatre of Rijeka, Zagreb Puppet Theatre, Theatrical Company of the Blind and Visually Impaired “New Life”) and three classical concerts were held. Tonči Staničić, Croatian Ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina, displayed his photographs in the Sarajevo gallery Mali Hram. The gallery Collegium artisticum in Sarajevo hosted two exhibitions: Damir Fabijanić’s “Architecture in Rijeka 1845 - 1945” by the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, and “Split in Marulić’s Time” from the holdings of the Split City Museum. Croatian theatres performed in Sarajevo, Žepče, Citluk, Usora, Busovača and Bihać. The Sarajevo Bosnian Institute hosted opera concerts and a performance by the young violinist Dana Kahrman from Dubrovnik.
Development and investment

Moving into the new building

The new building of the Ministry was a great gain in 2009, bringing almost all its services and organisational units under the same roof. By moving into the new building, the Ministry abandoned its offices in Savska (the Zagrebcanka tower), Petrinjeva, Meduliceva and Mesnicka streets. This has naturally led to a reduction in costs and to more efficient organisational and working processes.

The four-year reconstruction and building of annexes to the building located in Dordiceva 4 and Petrinjska 18, which leans up against the existing building of the Ministry on Nikola Subic Zrinski Square 7-8, was carried out in co-operation with the Zagreb City Institute for the Conservation of Cultural and Natural Heritage. It was one of the most complex reconstruction projects in town. Given that the building is a protected architectural monument of cultural heritage, some parts of it dating back to the 17th century, architects had a very difficult task, having to observe characteristic features of the existing building while at the same time meeting the standards of modern office space and specific requirements of the Ministry. During excavations for a parking lot in the basement area it was discovered that the old building had no foundations, thus additional excavation was conducted to lay down new foundations in order to stabilise the whole building. A part of the building in Petrinjska 18 that had been originally intended for offices, was redesigned into a multimedia hall, in order to preserve the authentic vaulting of the room.

A total of 8,020 square meters have been reconstructed. Office space takes up 3,780 square meters and is equipped with 300 desks. The remaining space is intended for supporting facilities, such as archives, multimedia teleconference hall, multifunctional area, protocol space, entry area and parking spaces in the garage.

In co-operation with the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing, the multimedia hall and multifunctional area have been equipped with state-of-the-art audio-video and conference systems, as well as an interpreting system and computer-communication equipment. The multimedia hall is also equipped with special cabins for simultaneous interpretation.

On the front wall of the building in Petrinjska, under layers of plaster, a cast iron plate was discovered dating back to 1830, which is so far the oldest inscription in the Croatian language on the front of an official building in Zagreb. The plate was restored to be donated to the Zagreb City Museum, and a copy of it has been placed on the renewed front of the building in Petrinjska.

Excavations under the new multimedia hall revealed that 150-180 years ago Petrinjska street lay more than two meters below today’s level.
32 new Diplomatic Academy graduates

The 12th generation of students who attended the Diplomatic Academy from November 2008 to May 2009 comprised 36 participants, of whom 32 were from the Ministry and four from other state administration bodies. The One-Year Professional Diplomatic Study Programme, covering about 250 teaching hours, continues to offer the following courses: Croatian Studies, International Relations and International Politics, European Integration and NATO, Diplomacy and Diplomatic Skills, International Law, Diplomatic and Consular Law. The Programme also included special lectures, workshops and study visits to Croatian institutions. The participants are mostly members of lower and middle-ranking diplomatic and consular staff, and those expecting to receive their first posting.

In 2009, ten Ministry employees successfully completed their diplomatic advisor examination, having met all the requirements set out in the Ordinance on the Diplomatic Academy and the Diplomatic Advisor Examination.

A total of 26 members of Ministry staff were sent for professional diplomatic training through scholarship programmes to diplomatic academies in Vienna, Berlin, Moscow and Madrid, to the International Institute of Public Administration in Paris, to the Foreign Service Institute in India, to the Marshall Centre in Garmisch, to the Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael and elsewhere.

The Ministry continued to organise foreign language courses. On the basis of the European Language Portfolio, a series of courses in English, French, German, Spanish and Italian, and specialised courses aimed at teaching standard diplomatic terminology were organised. Individual language courses adapted to the specific work requirements of officials and civil servants were also held.

In co-operation with state bodies, public institutions and businesses in the Republic of Croatia, the Ministry carried out preparation of newly appointed chiefs of diplomatic and consular missions before they assumed their duties in the receiving countries. Members of diplomatic and administrative staff sent to work abroad also received professional training. The training was adapted to the officials’ future duties, as well as their previous knowledge and experience, and the specifics of the receiving country.
Overview of important events in 2009

January

9 JANUARY – ZAGREB
Prime Minister Ivo Sanader met with Joseph Daul, Vice President of the European Parliament

12 JANUARY – ZAGREB
Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini paid an official visit to Croatia; in addition to meeting with Minister Gordan Jandroković, he met with the President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić and Prime Minister Ivo Sanader

14 JANUARY – ZAGREB
The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić received Canadian Minister of Defence Peter MacKay

14 JANUARY – ZAGREB
Montenegrin Minister of Foreign Affairs Milan Roćen on an official visit to Croatia; following a meeting with Minister Gordan Jandroković, Minister Roćen met with Croatian President Stjepan Mesić and Prime Minister Ivo Sanader

19 JANUARY – ZAGREB
Minister Gordan Jandroković met with the Minister of Migration and European Affairs of the Republic of Finland Astrid Thors

20 JANUARY – ZAGREB
Prime Minister Ivo Sanader met with Fabrizio Barbaso, Deputy Director General – Directorate General for Energy and Transport, and Personal Envoy of the European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso who conveyed President Barroso’s message about the necessity of coordinating the energy policies of Croatia and the EU

22 JANUARY – ZAGREB
Prime Minister Ivo Sanader met with Haris Silajdžić, member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina

22 JANUARY – ZAGREB
Prime Minister Ivo Sanader and the President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić held talks with the European Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn

26 JANUARY – ZAGREB
Erwin Pröll, Governor of Lower Austria, was received by Prime Minister Ivo Sanader

30 JANUARY – ZAGREB
Minister Gordan Jandroković, Prime Minister Ivo Sanader and the President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić met with the European Parliament Rapporteur on Croatia Hannes Swoboda
February

2 FEBRUARY – ZAGREB, SPLIT

British Princess Anne, Princess Royal, visited Croatia as a special guest of the President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić

3 FEBRUARY – STRASBOURG

Prime Minister Ivo Sanader participated in the meeting of the European People’s Party at the European Parliament and on the sidelines held a separate meeting with European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso

4 FEBRUARY – ZAGREB

Dragan Ćović, President of the Croatian Democratic Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina party, was received by the President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić and Prime Minister Ivo Sanader

5 FEBRUARY – ROME

Minister Gordan Jandroković attended the Ministerial Meeting on the UN Security Council reform; on the sidelines he held meetings with his Italian host, Minister Franco Frattini, Foreign Minister of Spain Miguel Angel Moratinos and Foreign Minister of Malta Tonio Borg

6 FEBRUARY – MUNICH

Minister Gordan Jandroković attended the 45th Conference on Security Policy

10 FEBRUARY – ZAGREB

Albanian Prime Minister Sali Berisha on an official visit to Croatia; in addition to meeting with Prime Minister Ivo Sanader, the Albanian Prime Minister held meetings with the President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić

13 FEBRUARY – ZAGREB

The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić received the EBRD President Thomas Mirow

13 FEBRUARY – VIENNA

Prime Minister Ivo Sanader met with Austrian Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann

16 FEBRUARY – ZAGREB

Foreign Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina Sven Alkalaj paid an official visit to Croatia; in addition to meeting with Minister Gordan Jandroković, he met with Prime Minister Ivo Sanader, and was received by the President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić

18 FEBRUARY – ANKARA

Prime Minister Ivo Sanader paid an official visit to Turkey at the invitation of his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. He was received by the Turkish President Abdullah Gül, and he also met the former President Süleyman Demirel
Overview of important events in 2009

18 – 19 FEBRUARY – PARIS

Prime Minister Ivo Sanader met with French Prime Minister François Fillon, and delivered a speech at the joint session of the Foreign Relations Committee and the European Affairs Committee of the French National Assembly.

23 FEBRUARY – ZAGREB

European Parliament delegation headed by Pal Schmidt visited the Croatian Parliament, and was received by the President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić and Prime Minister Ivo Sanader.

23 FEBRUARY – PARIS

Prime Minister Ivo Sanader was received by French President Nicolas Sarkozy.

24 FEBRUARY – MOKRICE

Prime Minister Ivo Sanader met with his Slovenian counterpart Borut Pahor.

26 FEBRUARY – BIHAĆ

The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić met with a Member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina Željko Komšić.

March

2 MARCH – ZAGREB

The delegation of the Swedish Parliament’s Committee on EU Affairs headed by Anna Maria Kinberg Batra paid a visit to Croatia; in addition to others, the Delegation was received by the President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić and Prime Minister Ivo Sanader.

2 MARCH – ZAGREB

Albanian Parliament Speaker Josephina Topalli visiting the Croatian Parliament was received by the President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić and Prime Minister Ivo Sanader in separate meetings; Minister Gordan Jandroković also received the delegation of the Parliament of the Republic of Albania.

2 MARCH – ZAGREB

Prime Minister Ivo Sanader received the delegation of the Irish Parliament’s Joint Committee on European Affairs, headed by its Chairman Bernard Durkan.

5 MARCH – ROME

Prime Minister Ivo Sanader paid a working visit to Italy and met with Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi; on the sidelines, Minister Gordan Jandroković held a separate meeting with his Italian counterpart Franco Frattini.

6 MARCH – BRUSSELS

Minister Gordan Jandroković attended a meeting of the North Atlantic Council.

9 MARCH – LISBON

Minister Gordan Jandroković paid an official visit to Portugal and met with Foreign Minister Luis Amado, and was also received by Portuguese Parliament Speaker Jaime Gama.
9 MARCH – ZAGREB
Prime Minister Ivo Sanader received the regional World Bank Vice-President Shigeo Katsu.

10 MARCH – BRUSSELS
Minister Gordan Jandroković met with his Slovenian counterpart Samuel Žbogar and European Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn with a view to finding a solution to unblock Croatia’s accession negotiations.

10 MARCH – ZAGREB
Moldovan President Vladimir Voronin paid an official visit to Croatia, and in addition to meeting with the President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić, met with Prime Minister Ivo Sanader.

11 MARCH – ZAGREB
Minister Gordan Jandroković received the Chairman of the Serbian Assembly’s Foreign Affairs Committee Dragoljub Mićunović.

13 MARCH – ZAGREB
Hungarian Foreign Minister Kinga Gönz paid a visit to Croatia, and, in addition to meeting with her host Minister Gordan Jandroković, met with Prime Minister Ivo Sanader and the President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić.

16 MARCH – ZAGREB
Estonian President Toomas Hendrik Ilves paid an official return visit to the President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić; the Estonian President also met with Ivo Sanader.

16 MARCH – ZAGREB
The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić received the delegation of the Autonomous Iraqi Kurdistan Region headed by the President of the Autonomous Region Abdullah Resool Ali Kosret.

19 MARCH – BRUSSELS
Prime Minister Ivo Sanader met with Slovenian Prime Minister Borut Pahor.

20 MARCH – BELGRADE
Prime Minister Ivo Sanader paid an official visit to the Republic of Serbia where he met with his Serbian counterpart Mirko Cvetković, and was also received by Serbian President Boris Tadić.

24 MARCH – RIGA
Minister Gordan Jandroković participated in the joint meeting of foreign and defence ministers within the framework of the Adriatic-Baltic-Atlantic initiative.

24 MARCH – ZAGREB
Prime Minister Ivo Sanader received Polish Parliament Speaker Bronislaw Komorowski who was visiting the Croatian Parliament.

25 MARCH – RIGA
Minister Gordan Jandroković paid an official visit to Latvia and met with Foreign Affairs Minister Māris Riekstins.
Overview of important events in 2009

25 MARCH – BRUSSELS

Meeting on the unblocking of Croatia’s accession process; attended by Minister Gordan Jandroković, Slovenian Foreign Minister Samuel Žbogar and European Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn

25 – 26 MARCH – ZAGREB

The delegation of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, headed by its Vice-Chairman Assen Agov, attended the formal vote of the Croatian Parliament on the accession to the Alliance; following the event, they met with Prime Minister Ivo Sanader, and were received by the President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić; President Mesić received the Chairman of the NATO Military Committee Admiral Giampaolo di Paola

27 MARCH – ZAGREB

Minister Gordan Jandroković received the Director General for American and European Affairs at the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Retno L. P. Marsudi

27 MARCH – ZAGREB

President Stjepan Mesić held talks with the President of the European Court of Human Rights Jean-Paul Costa

28 MARCH – HLUBOKA NAD VLTAVOU

At the invitation of Czech Foreign Minister Karel Schwarzenberg, Minister Gordan Jandroković participated in an informal meeting of the foreign ministers of the EU members and candidates

31 MARCH – MOSTAR

Prime Minister Ivo Sanader met with the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina Valentin Intzko

31 MARCH – THE HAGUE

Minister Gordan Jandroković participated in the International Conference on Afghanistan where he met with NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer

April

3 – 4 APRIL – STRASBOURG/KEHL

The Croatian delegation consisting of Stjepan Mesić, Ivo Sanader, Jadranka Kosor, Gordan Jandroković and Branko Vukelić attended the NATO Summit at which Croatia was welcomed as a new, full-fledged member of the Alliance

17 APRIL – ZAGREB

Prime Minister Ivo Sanader received Bavarian Minister of the Interior Joachim Herrmann

20 APRIL – ZAGREB

Austrian Minister of European and International Affairs Michael Spindelegger paid a visit to Croatia, and together with his host, Minister Gordan Jandroković, opened the exhibition Ars Croatiae at the Modern Gallery in Zagreb
21 APRIL – ZAGREB

On his official visit to Croatia, Prince Albert II of Monaco met with the President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić and Prime Minister Ivo Sanader

22 APRIL – ZAGREB

Emir of Qatar Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani paid an official visit to Croatia and held talks with the President of the Republic Stjepan Mesić and Prime Minister Ivo Sanader

22 APRIL – BRUSSELS

A meeting of foreign ministers of Croatia and Slovenia, Gordan Jandroković and Samuel Zbogar, mediated by the European Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn

27 APRIL – SOFIA

The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić participated in the South-East European Energy Summit; on the sidelines he met with Bulgarian President Georgi Parvanov, Turkish President Abdullah Gül, Montenegrin President Filip Vujanović and Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina Nebojša Radmanović

27 APRIL – LUXEMBOURG

Minister Gordan Jandroković headed the Croatian delegation to the 5th session of the EU-Croatia Stabilisation and Accession Council

27 APRIL – LUXEMBOURG

Minister Gordan Jandroković met with his Hungarian counterpart Péter Balázs

29 APRIL – WARSAW

Minister Gordan Jandroković attended the thematic conference on the economic and political opportunity of energy, organised by the Centre for European Studies

29 APRIL – ZAGREB

The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić received the President of the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo Jakup Krasniqi

30 APRIL – WARSAW

Prime Minister Ivo Sanader attended a meeting of the European People’s Party on the forthcoming election for the European Parliament

May

2 MAY – MUNICH

Prime Minister Ivo Sanader met with Bavarian Prime Minister Horst Seehofer; in addition, he participated in the 35th Pan European Days in Passau where he talked about the Croatian European integration process

4 MAY – SARAJEVO

The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić met with Valentin Intzko, the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina
6 MAY – ISTANBUL

The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić participated in the Euro-Asian Economic Forum; on the sidelines he met with Kosovo President Fatmir Sejdiu.

7 MAY – ZAGREB

NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer paid a farewell visit to Croatia and was presented with the Grand Order of King Petar Kresimir IV with a Sash and a Morning Star by Prime Minister Ivo Sanader.

8 MAY – ZAGREB

Valentin Inzko, the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, met with Prime Minister Ivo Sanader.

11 MAY – ZAGREB

Minister Gordan Jandroković met with Philippine Foreign Minister Alberto Gutmaitan Romulo.

12 MAY – SKOPJE

The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić attended the inauguration of the new Macedonian President Gjorge Ivanov.

15 – 16 MAY – DEAD SEA

The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić participated in the World Economic Forum in Jordan at the invitation of King Abdullah II; he also participated in the panel on the Mediterranean Union and in the G-11 Summit.

20 – 22 MAY – ZAGREB

Albanian President Bamir Topi, on an official visit to Croatia, in addition to meeting with his host the President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić, met with Prime Minister Ivo Sanader.

21 MAY – ZAGREB

The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić received Czech Senate President Přemysl Sobotka; Prime Minister Ivo Sanader and Minister Gordan Jandroković also met the Czech Parliament official.

21 – 23 MAY – EREVAN

The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić paid an official visit to Armenia at the invitation of President Serzh Sargsyan.

23 – 25 MAY – DUSHANBE

The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić paid an official visit to Tajikistan where his host was President Emomali Rahmon.

June

1 – 5 JUNE – NEW YORK

Prime Minister Ivo Sanader visited the USA because of the Security Council discussion on the report of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia where he de-
livered a speech on 4 June. Prior to the session, he met with UN Secretary Ban Ki-moon, European Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn and US Ambassador to the UN Susan Rice. He also met with the President of the Tribunal Patrick Robinson and Chief Prosecutor Serge Brammertz. He also held separate meetings with foreign ministers of Turkey and of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ahmet Davutoğlu and Sven Alkalaj.

4 JUNE – CETINJE

The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić attended the regional conference of the Heads of State of South Eastern Europe at the invitation of Montenegrin President Filip Vujanović; on the sidelines he met with Slovenian President Danilo Türk.

4 – 5 JUNE – KIŠNJEV

Minister Gordan Jandroković participated in a meeting of the SEECP foreign ministers; on the occasion, Minister Jandroković held a separate meeting with Macedonian Foreign Minister Antonij Milošoski.

8 JUNE – ZAGREB

Minister Gordan Jandroković received the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Morocco Taib Fassi Fihri; in addition, Prime Minister Ivo Sanader met with the Moroccan guest who was also received by the President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić.

12 JUNE – ZAGREB

Prime Minister Ivo Sanader received the European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development Mariann Fischer Boel.

12 JUNE – ZAGREB

Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico, together with a government delegation, paid an official visit to Croatia and talked with their host Ivo Sanader, and were also received by the President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić; foreign ministers of Croatia and Slovakia, Gordan Jandroković and Miroslav Lajčak, held a separate meeting.

15 JUNE – ZAGREB

The delegation of the Committee on European Affairs of the House of Commons of the UK Parliament, headed by President Michael Connatry, paid a visit to the Croatian Parliament; they were received by the President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić.

15 JUNE – LUXEMBOURG

Meeting of the Croatian and Slovenian foreign ministers, Gordan Jandroković and Samuel Žbogar, mediated by the European Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn.

16 JUNE – ZAGREB

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed al-Nahyan paid an official visit to Croatia; due to Minister Jandroković’s absence his host was State Secretary for Political Affairs Bianca Matković; the United Arab Emirates Minister was received by the President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić.

16 JUNE – VATICAN

Minister Gordan Jandroković paid a visit to the Holy See and met with State Secretary Tarcisio Bertone and with the Secretary of the Holy See for Relations with States, Archbishop Dominique Mamberti; he also had an audience with Pope Benedict XVI.
Overview of important events in 2009

18 JUNE – BRUSSELS

New meeting of Croatian and Slovenian foreign ministers, Gordan Jandroković and Samuel Žbogar, mediated by the European Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn.

18 JUNE – BRUSSELS

Prime Minister Ivo Sanader attended the meeting of leaders of the European People’s Party.

18 JUNE – NOVI SAD

The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić attended the 16th Summit of Central and East European Heads of State; on the sidelines he met with Serbian President Boris Tadić and Italian President Giorgio Napolitano.

19 – 20 JUNE – ZAGREB

President of the People’s Republic of China Hu Jintao paid an official visit to Croatia at the invitation of the President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić; in addition to meeting with his host, the Chinese President met with Prime Minister Ivo Sanader and Croatian Parliament Speaker Luka Bebić, and participated in the opening of the Croatian – Chinese Economic Forum.

20 JUNE – ATHENS

Prime Minister Ivo Sanader attended the opening of the new Acropolis Museum; on the sidelines he held separate meetings with Greek and Finnish prime ministers, Kostas Karamanlis and Matti Vanhanen; he discussed the continuation of negotiations between Croatia and the EU with the President of the European Commission Jose Manuel Barroso; He discussed regional issues with Prime Minister of Serbia Mirko Cvetković and Prime Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina Nikola Špirić.

22 JUNE – PODGORICA

Prime Minister Ivo Sanader paid a visit to Montenegro where he talked with the Montenegrin Prime Minister Milo Đukanović and Parliament Speaker Ranko Krivokapić, and was also received by President Filip Vujanović.

26 JUNE – ZAGREB

The President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov paid a visit to Croatia at the invitation of the President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić; he held a separate meeting with Prime Minister Ivo Sanader.

27 JUNE – CORFU

Minister Gordan Jandroković participated in the ministerial meeting of the NATO-Russian Council and in the informal meeting of OSCE foreign ministers; on the sidelines he met with Foreign Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina Sven Alkalaj.

29 JUNE – LINZ

Minister Gordan Jandroković participated in the 19th Conference of the Working Community of Danube Regions and the Danube Forum 2009, the topic of which was “Sustainably Shaping the Future of the Danube Region”, where he presented the Inland Waterways Transport Development Strategy of the Republic of Croatia.
July

1 JULY – ROME

Minister Gordan Jandroković headed the Croatian delegation at the first meeting of the Coordinating Committee of the Ministers of the Republic of Croatia and the Republic of Italy; the Italian delegation was led by Foreign Minister Franco Frattini

7 JULY – STRASBOURG

The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić paid a visit to the Council of Europe and held a lecture at the Summer University for Democracy; he met with Secretary General of the Council of Europe Terry Davis, President of the European Court of Human Rights Jean-Paul Costa and Human Rights Commissioner Thomas Hammarberg

8 JULY – HERCEG-NOVI

Minister Gordan Jandroković, along with his counterparts from Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Milan Roćen and Sven Alkalaj, participated in the concluding meeting of the so-called Neum Initiative within the framework of support to cross-border co-operation of the local communities on the tri-border area: the Republic of Croatia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina

9 – 10 JULY – DUBROVNIK

The conference “Croatia Summit 2009” was hosted by Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor who, on the margins, met with Hungarian Prime Minister Gordon Bajnai; Minister Gordan Jandroković held a separate meeting with the Foreign Minister of Kosovo Skender Hyseni

13 JULY – ZAGREB

Macedonian President Gjorge Ivanov visited Croatia at the invitation of the President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić

15 JULY – SHARM EL-SHEIK

The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić attended the Non-Aligned Movement Summit

22 JULY – MUNICH

The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić held a lecture on Croatia’s path to the EU

27 JULY – ZAGREB

Eritrean Foreign Minister Osman Saleh Mohammed discussed with the State Secretary for Political Affairs Davor Božinović both bilateral relations and Eritrea’s position on the situation in Somalia

31 JULY – TRAKOŠĆAN

Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor met with her Slovenian counterpart Borut Pahor and agreed on a plan to resolve bilateral issues
Overview of important events in 2009

August

24 AUGUST – ZAGREB

The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić received the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres

30 AUGUST – BLED

Minister Gordan Jandroković participated in the International Strategic Forum; the opportunity was used for a sideline meeting with Slovenian counterpart Samuel Žbogar on the continued resolution of bilateral issues

September

1 SEPTEMBER – GDANJSK

Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor participated in marking the 70th anniversary of the beginning of World War II in Poland; on the sidelines she held separate meetings with Slovenian Prime Minister Borut Pahor, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and her Swedish counterpart Fredrik Reinfeldt

1 SEPTEMBER – ZAGREB

Minister Gordan Jandroković met with the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State of the United States of America Stuart Jones

2 – 5 SEPTEMBER – ZAGREB

Finnish President Tarja Halonen paid an official visit to Croatia at the invitation of the President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić; she also met with Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor and Croatian Parliament Speaker Luka Bebić

4 – 5 SEPTEMBER – ZAGREB

Emomali Rahmon, the President of Tajikistan, on an official return visit to Croatia

5 SEPTEMBER – STOCKHOLM

Minister Gordan Jandroković participated in an informal meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers of EU Member States and candidate countries

6 SEPTEMBER – ZAGREB

The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić received Slovakian Parliament Speaker Pavol Paško who was paying a visit to the Croatian Parliament

7 – 8 SEPTEMBER – ZAGREB, BRIJUNI

Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan on an official return visit to the President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić

9 SEPTEMBER – ZAGREB

Minister Gordan Jandroković received the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Hungary Péter Balázs within the framework of preparations for the joint session of the governments of the two states
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11 SEPTEMBER – LJUBLJANA</td>
<td></td>
<td>Prime Minister <strong>Jadranka Kosor</strong> reached an agreement with Slovenian counterpart <strong>Borut Pahor</strong> on the unblocking of Croatia’s accession negotiations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 SEPTEMBER – STUTTGART</td>
<td></td>
<td>Prime Minister <strong>Jadranka Kosor</strong> attended the session of the German CDU party and on this occasion met with Chancellor of Germany <strong>Angela Merkel</strong> and Bavarian President <strong>Günther Oettinger</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 SEPTEMBER – ZAGREB</td>
<td></td>
<td>The President of the Republic of Croatia <strong>Stjepan Mesić</strong> received <strong>William Ernest Rummel</strong>, State Secretary of the Ministry of Defence of the United Kingdom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 SEPTEMBER – ZAGREB</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Avigdor Lieberman</strong>, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Israel paid a visit to Croatia; he met with Minister <strong>Gordan Jandroković</strong>, and was also received by the President of the Republic of Croatia <strong>Stjepan Mesić</strong> and Prime Minister <strong>Jadranka Kosor</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 SEPTEMBER – SARAJEVO</td>
<td></td>
<td>Minister <strong>Gordan Jandroković</strong> met with <strong>Valentin Intzko</strong>, the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 SEPTEMBER – HAVANA</td>
<td></td>
<td>The President of the Republic of Croatia <strong>Stjepan Mesić</strong> paid an official visit to Cuba at the invitation of the Cuban President <strong>Raul Castro</strong>; he also met with the President of the National Assembly <strong>Rocardo De Quesada</strong> and participated in the Croatian – Cuban Economic Forum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 SEPTEMBER – BARCS</td>
<td></td>
<td>3rd Joint Session of the governments of Croatia and Hungary was held chaired by Prime Minister <strong>Jadranka Kosor</strong> and Hungarian Prime Minister <strong>Gordon Bajnai</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 – 26 SEPTEMBER – NEW YORK</td>
<td></td>
<td>The 64th Session of the UN General Assembly; the Croatian delegation was headed by the President of the Republic of Croatia <strong>Stjepan Mesić</strong> who, on the occasion, met the Secretary-General <strong>Ban Ki-moon</strong>; he also held talks with Albanian President <strong>Sali Berisha</strong> and President of Cyprus <strong>Demetris Christofias</strong>. In addition, President Mesić participated in the UN Summit on Climate Change. Minister <strong>Gordan Jandroković</strong> held a series of important bilateral meetings, and he participated in the meeting of ministers of the US – Adriatic Charter and in the Ministerial Meeting of the Alliance of Civilization Group of Friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 SEPTEMBER – ZAGREB</td>
<td></td>
<td>Prime Minister <strong>Jadranka Kosor</strong> met with the Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia <strong>Serge Brammertz</strong>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
October

2 OCTOBER – BRUSSELS

Minister Gordan Jandroković headed the Croatian delegation at the Intergovernmental Conference on Croatia’s EU Accession; the EU delegation was headed by Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt in the capacity of the Swedish EU Presidency.

2 OCTOBER – ZAGREB, RIJEKA

Qatar Minister for Religious Affairs Ahmed Abdulla al-Maria paid a visit to Croatia and together with the President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić attended the commencement of construction of the mosque in Rijeka.

5 OCTOBER – ZAGREB

Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor received Georgy Poltavchenko, Plenipotentiary Envoy of the Russian Federation President in Central Federal District; the Russian guest was also received by the President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić.

5 OCTOBER – ZAGREB

The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić received the delegation of the German Committee on Economic Relations with Eastern Europe headed by Chairman Klaus Mangold.

6 OCTOBER – BUDAPEST

Minister Gordan Jandroković participated in the informal meeting of foreign ministers of the Visegrad Group and countries of South Eastern Europe; on the sidelines he met with Serbian Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremić.

6 OCTOBER – ZAGREB

The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić received Montenegrin Parliament Speaker Ranko Krivokapić; in addition, he held separate meetings with Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor and Minister Gordan Jandroković.

9 OCTOBER – ZAGREB

The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić received Austrian Minister of Defence and Sports Norbert Darabos.

9 OCTOBER – ZAGREB

The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić received Macedonian Parliament Speaker Trajko Veljanoski; Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor also met with the Macedonian guest.

12 OCTOBER – ZAGREB

Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor held talks with the Italian Economic Development Deputy Minister Adolfo Urso.

12 OCTOBER – ZAGREB

The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić received French Senate President Gerard Larcher; the French guest held separate meetings with Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor and Minister Gordan Jandroković.
13 OCTOBER – ZAGREB

The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić received the first Deputy Speaker of the Russian Duma Lyubov Konstantinovna Sliska who was on a visit to the Croatian Parliament; she also met with Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor

15 OCTOBER – ZAGREB

The Head of Croatia Unit of European Commission Enlargement Directorate General Dirk Lange paid a visit to Croatia and met with Minister Gordan Jandroković

15 OCTOBER – PODGORICA

Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor paid a visit to Montenegro and met with Prime Minister Milo Đukanović; together with Serbian Prime Minister Mirko Cvetković they attended the ceremony marking the commencement of construction of the future Montenegrin highway

16 OCTOBER – ZAGREB

Minister Gordan Jandroković received the Polish Parliament’s Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Andrzej Halicki

16 – 17 OCTOBER – ZAGREB

At the invitation of the President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak paid an official visit to Croatia; the Foreign Ministers of the two states, Gordan Jandroković and Ahmed Abdul Gheit, held a separate meeting

19 – 22 OCTOBER – MUSCAT

Minister Gordan Jandroković paid an official visit to the Sultanate of Oman where he held a meeting with Foreign Minister Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah

23 – 27 OCTOBER – ZAGREB, SPLIT, DUBROVNIK, VUKOVAR

The Governor General of Canada Michaëlle Jean on an official visit to Croatia; she held separate meetings with the President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić and Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor

25 – 26 OCTOBER – DOHA

On his visit to Qatar, Minister Gordan Jandroković met with Prime Minister and foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr al-Thani

26 OCTOBER – ZAGREB

Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor met with Slovenian Prime Minister Borut Pahor

27 OCTOBER – ABU DHABI

Minister Gordan Jandroković paid a visit to the United Arab Emirates and met with Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed al-Nahyan

28 OCTOBER – ZAGREB

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad on an official visit to Croatia; in addition to the President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić, the Syrian President met with Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor and Croatian Parliament Speaker Luka Bebić
29 OCTOBER – BRUSSELS

Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor participated in the European People’s Party Summit held on the eve of the European Council session.

November

2 NOVEMBER – ZAGREB

The European Parliament’s Rapporteur on Croatia Hannes Swoboda met with Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor, and was also received by the President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić.

2 NOVEMBER – ZAGREB

The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić received Icelandic Parliament Speaker Asta Johannesdottir, who was on a visit to the Croatian Parliament; Minister Gordan Jandroković also met with the Icelandic guest.

3 NOVEMBER – SARAJEVO

Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor on a working visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina; she held talks with the Chairman of the Council of Ministers Nikola Spirić, and also met with Valentín Intzko, the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

3 NOVEMBER – ATHENS

The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić paid a visit to Greece at the invitation of President Karolos Papoulias; in addition to the host, he met with Parliament Speaker Phillipos Petsalnikos and Prime Minister George Papandreou.

4 NOVEMBER – STOCKHOLM

Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor and Slovenian Prime Minister Borut Pahor signed the agreement resolving the border issue before the Court of Arbitration; Swedish Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt attended the signing ceremony in the capacity of the Swedish EU Presidency.

5 NOVEMBER – BUDAPEST

The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić attended the World Scientific Forum; on the sidelines he met with Hungarian President László Sólyom.

5 NOVEMBER – VIENNA

Minister Gordan Jandroković participated in the session of the OSCE Permanent Council.

10 NOVEMBER – ZAGREB

The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić received Bulgarian Parliament Speaker Cecka Cačeva who was on a visit to the Croatian Parliament.

10 NOVEMBER – SKOPJE

Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor paid an official visit to Macedonia where she met with Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski and Parliament Speaker Trajko Veljanoski, and was also received by President Gjorge Ivanov.
11 NOVEMBER – NEW YORK

Minister Gordan Jandroković participated in the UN Security Council thematic session Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict

12 NOVEMBER – VATICAN

President of the Republic Stjepan Mesić paid an official visit to the Holy See and held talks with the State Secretary Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone; he also had a private audience with Pope Benedict XVI

16 NOVEMBER – ZAGREB

The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić received Miodrag Vuković, Chairman of the Montenegrin Assembly’s International Relations and European Integration Commission; the Montenegrin parliament member also met with Minister Gordan Jandroković

18 NOVEMBER – ZAGREB

Minister Gordan Jandroković met with the Minister of Integration of the Republic of Albania Majlinda Bregu

19 NOVEMBER – SARAJEVO

The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić attended the Sixth Regional Economic Forum of South Eastern Europe; on the sidelines he met with members of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Željko Komšić and Haris Silajdžić, as well as with Valentin Intzko, the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina

20 NOVEMBER – ZAGREB

Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor held talks with EBRD President Thomas Mirow

21 NOVEMBER – BARCS

The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić, together with his Hungarian counterpart László Sólyom, participated in the Croatian Day in Hungary

24 NOVEMBER – BERLIN

The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić visited Germany at the invitation of President Horst Köhler

December

1 DECEMBER – BRATISLAVA

The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić visited Slovakia at the invitation of President Ivan Gašparović; he also met with Parliament Speaker Pavol Paško

1 DECEMBER – ATHENS

Minister Gordan Jandroković participated in a meeting of the Ministerial Council of the OSCE member states; on the margins he held bilateral meetings with his counterparts from Georgia and Kazakhstan, Grigol Vashadze and Kanat Saudabayev
3 December – Skopje

The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić paid a visit to Macedonia at the invitation of President Gjorge Ivanov.

3 – 4 December – Brussels

Minister Gordan Jandroković participated in a meeting of NATO members’ foreign ministers.

7 – 8 December – Ottawa

Minister Gordan Jandroković paid an official visit to Canada at the invitation of the Canadian Foreign Minister Lawrence Cannon.

8 December – Zagreb

Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor received the President of the Federal Council of Austria Erwin Preiner.

9 – 10 December – Zagreb

The President of Montenegro Filip Vujanović paid an official visit to Croatia.

9 – 10 December – Washington

Minister Gordan Jandroković paid an official visit to the USA and held talks with the Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

13 – 14 December – Moscow

The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić visited Russia at the invitation of the Russian President Dmitry Medvedev; he also met with Prime Minister Vladimir Putin.

14 – 15 December – Sarajevo

Minister Gordan Jandroković participated in the Alliance of Civilizations conference; the following day he participated in a meeting of foreign ministers of the US-Adriatic Charter.

16 December – Zagreb

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu paid a visit to Croatia and, in addition to his host, Minister Gordan Jandroković, met with Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor and the President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić.

17 – 18 December – Copenhagen

The President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić headed the Croatian delegation to the plenary session of the UN Conference on Climate Change.

20 – 22 December – Muscat

The President of the Republic Stjepan Mesić paid a visit to the Sultanate of Oman at the invitation of Sultan Qaboos bin Said al-Said.

21 December – Brussels

Minister Gordan Jandroković headed the Croatian delegation at the Intergovernmental Conference on Croatia’s EU Accession; the EU delegation was headed by Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt.
## International bilateral agreements and documents concluded in 2009

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<th>TITLE OF AGREEMENT/DOCUMENT</th>
<th>DATE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania on the Gainful Occupation of the Members of the Family forming part of the Household of Member of a Diplomatic Mission or Consular Post</td>
<td>10/2/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenia</td>
<td>Agreement between the Republic of Croatia and the Republic of Armenia for the avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income</td>
<td>22/5/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Protocol of the 4th Joint Commission for Scientific and Technical Cooperation on the implementation of the Agreement on Scientific and Technical Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the Federal Government of the Republic of Austria</td>
<td>20/10/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Program of Cooperation in the Fields of Culture and Education for the period 2010-2012 in accordance with Para/ 13, Section 1 of the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the Government of the Republic of Austria on Co-operation in the Fields of Culture and Education</td>
<td>17/12/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation between the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Croatia, General Police Directorate and the Federal Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Austria, General Directorate for Public Security</td>
<td>14/5/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>Protocol of the 1/ Session of the Subcommittee for Infrastructure Projects, Transport, Energy and Environmental Protection between the Republic of Croatia and Montenegro</td>
<td>8/6/09</td>
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<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the Government of Montenegro on Air Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the Government of Montenegro on Scientific and Technological Cooperation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the Government of Montenegro on the Protection of Rights of the Croatian Minority in Montenegro and Montenegrin Minority in Croatia</td>
<td>14/1/09</td>
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<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>Protocol on the Cooperation in the Field of Medicines and Medical Products</td>
<td>30/4/09</td>
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<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>Statement of Agreement between the State Directorate for Geodesy of the Republic of Croatia and the Realty Department of Montenegro on Cooperation on the Exchange of Data from GNSS (Global Navigation Satellite System) Stations</td>
<td>6/7/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Geodesy between the State Directorate for Geodesy of the Republic of Croatia and the Realty Department of Montenegro</td>
<td>6/7/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>Program of Cooperation between the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport and the Ministry of Education and Science of Montenegro in the Field of Science, Technology and Education in the Period 09-2012</td>
<td>9/7/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation between the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Croatia, Police Directorate and the Ministry of Interior of the Czech Republic Represented by the Police Presidency of the Czech Republic</td>
<td>14/5/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Joint Declaration on Cooperation during the Tourist Season between the Minister of Interior of the Republic of Croatia and the French Minister of Interior, Overseas Territories and Territorial Communities</td>
<td>14/5/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>Protocol of the 9th Session of the Croatian-Indo Joint Committee on Trade and Economic Cooperation</td>
<td>5/3/09</td>
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<td>STATE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Technical Agreement between the Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship of the Republic of Croatia (Directorate for Mining) and the Ministry of Economic Development of the Italian Republic (Directorate General for Energy and Mineral Resources) on the Joint Exploitation of the Annamaria Gas Field in the Adriatic Sea</td>
<td>1/7/09</td>
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<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Joint Declaration of Intent</td>
<td>14/11/09</td>
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<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Joint Declaration</td>
<td>1/7/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Memorandum on Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the Government of the Italian Republic</td>
<td>12/1/09</td>
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<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the Government of the State of Israel on Cooperation in the Fight Against Crime</td>
<td>16/9/09</td>
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<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding on the Scientific Cooperation Programme between the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports of the Republic of Croatia and Japan Science and Technology Agency</td>
<td>27/3/09</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Declaration of Intent on the Conclusion of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the Government of Canada concerning Youth Mobility</td>
<td>7/12/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qatar</td>
<td>Protocol on Cooperation between the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Croatia and the Office of Training and Development of the Human Resources at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar</td>
<td>26/10/09</td>
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<tr>
<td>Qatar</td>
<td>Protocol on Cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Croatia and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Qatar</td>
<td>Agreement on Economic Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the Government of the State of Qatar</td>
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<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>Protocol of the 4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Session of the Croatian-Chinese Scientific and Technological Cooperation Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>Air Services Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the Government of the People's Republic of China</td>
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<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>Plan of Action between the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of the Republic of Croatia and Ministry of Health of the People's Republic of China in the Field of Health and Medical Science for the years 09-2012</td>
<td>20/6/09</td>
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