

EUROPEAN UNION CUSTOMS AUTHORITY




ZAGREB, CROATIA

READY FROM DAY ONE

*Where Europe's Customs
Future Begins*

A secure, stable and fully prepared headquarters
combining geopolitical balance, operational excellence
and European unity

A portrait of Prime Minister Andrej Plenković, a middle-aged man with grey hair and glasses, wearing a dark suit and tie. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a blurred crowd of people.

Introductory Words by Prime Minister Andrej Plenković

Croatia, still the youngest EU member, has achieved a great deal in just 12 years of membership. Always striving for better, and believing in the European project, we have continued our success story by acceding to the Eurozone and Schengen Area in times of global political and economic upheaval. We are now on the brink of joining the OECD. We have fully taken on board European values and responsibilities. All of that has been accompanied by strong and steady economic growth, significantly outperforming the EU and euro-area average.

A resolutely pro-European country, Croatia has proven to be an able, credible and constructive Member State. Now we feel ready to take a step further by hosting an EU body on our territory. Currently, Croatia does not host any European Union agency or body. Establishing the EUCA in Zagreb would be an important contribution to the EU's geographical balance. It would also demonstrate a strong commitment to inclusiveness, fairness and unity, while representing a forward-looking step that reinforces the European Union's core values.

Croatia has a long and distinguished tradition in customs and trade regulation, spanning over eight centuries. One of the oldest original customs records in Europe, the Dubrovnik Customs Statute (*Liber statutorum doane Ragusii*) from the 13th century, stands as clear evidence of this rich heritage. Today, Croatia is fully committed to the modernisation and effective functioning of the EU Customs Union, as outlined in the Commission's May 2023 reform package. This makes Croatia an ideal candidate for hosting the European Union Customs Authority (EUCA) in Zagreb.

Another important aspect of our candidacy is the safety and security that Croatia offers to its residents and guests. With low crime rates and a very low incidence of terrorist attacks, it has consistently been ranked as one of the safest countries in the world for many consecutive years.

We are also effectively managing one of the longest and most frequently crossed EU land borders, supported by capable and efficient customs offices along its entire length.

Safety is not the only asset Croatia boasts. Natural beauty, rich culture, moderate weather, a pleasant lifestyle as well as excellent accessibility and connectivity make Croatia and Zagreb an excellent place to live and work. The hospitality and exceptionally high English-language proficiency of Croatian citizens – ranking among the very highest in the EU – will make it easier for agency employees and their families to settle in and explore the historical and cultural sites Croatia has to offer. From Zagreb, you can easily visit the beautiful Adriatic coast, mountains and nature parks. Situated at a natural crossroads between Central Europe and the Mediterranean, Zagreb offers excellent connectivity and accessibility. It can be quickly reached from all EU capitals.

The EUCA seat in Zagreb would be hosted in a brand-new, ultra-modern yet fully functional building in an excellent location within the Novi Zagreb business district. From there, the city centre, the airport, international schools and other facilities can be easily reached. Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, is therefore the perfect location for the EUCA to fully execute its tasks and mission, and for its highly qualified and specialised staff to thrive. Croatia offers a strategic location, modern infrastructure and robust national customs expertise, which are essential for the EUCA's operational needs and for running the critical EU Customs Data Hub. We are confident in our ability to attract qualified and multilingual staff and provide a welcoming environment with excellent living conditions, training opportunities and logistical support for the Authority and its personnel.

Welcome to Croatia!
Dobro došli!

Croatian Candidacy

The European Union Customs Authority is a long-awaited EU customs coordination agency. It will finally take on the role of keeper and protection authority for the coordination and enhancement of customs controls. With its mission to support the customs services in protecting European businesses, people, and society, the goal of EU customs administrations *acting as one* will be reached.

Enhanced customs cooperation of the EU Member States' customs services with the goal of acting as one customs authority has always been a strategic priority of the Customs Administration of the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Croatia. Our vocal support for such initiatives, asking for more, rather than less of the customs union, has finally been set in the proposal for reform of the customs legislation, whereby the EU Customs Authority would provide more EU coordinated customs services to all Member States.

In today's world, with the growing need for crisis management, explosion of e-commerce, and increased volumes of cargo on all types of borders, the EU Customs Authority will have to ensure appropriate response to these challenges. An important part of its work will be devoted to gradually taking over the various IT systems, creating the EU Customs Data Hub under one central authority with the aim to improve risk management, and modernise general data control and management.

Foto: galerija.croatia.hr/hr/htz-galerija.aspx





Looking at the map of the European Union, as a city located in a country with all modes of cross-border cargo transport, Zagreb is ideally positioned in Europe for careful oversight of the external borders, with any position on the border reachable within a couple of hours. Its position is on the crossroads of pan-European road and rail corridors, with only a 90-minute ride to the port of Rijeka on the Adriatic coast, the northernmost Mediterranean port in the EU, as well as to a large part of the external land border of the EU. The Croatian Customs Administration dates its tradition back to one of the oldest recorded and documented European customs services, that of the Dubrovnik Republic customs service. Dubrovnik's customs statute, "*Liber statutorum doane*", recorded in 1277, is one of the oldest original customs books in Europe, and it is still available for viewing in Dubrovnik.

Zagreb can provide both secure working and living conditions for the EUCA, as the safest city among the larger cities of the European Union, according to several relevant statistical records.

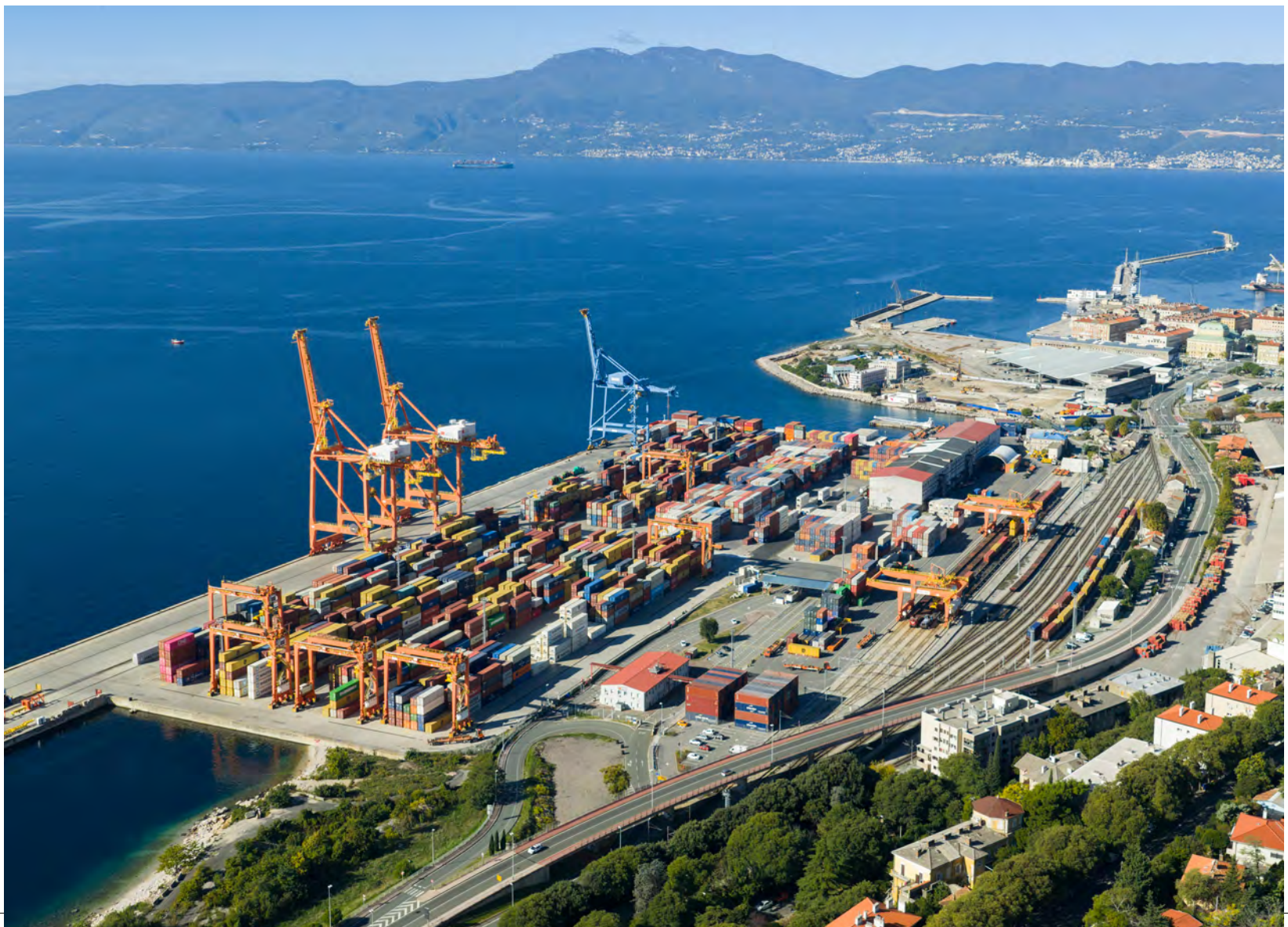
Developed near the beautiful Medvednica Nature Park with its hiking routes and forests, blending green recreational areas with a vibrant culture scene and socialising opportunities, it would provide excellent quality of life for employees and their families.

Croatian Customs Authority

The Croatian Customs Authority protects the longest external land border in the European Union, stretching 1397 km bordering south-east third countries, running 41 commercial customs land border crossing points, tasked with checking over 3 mil. trucks, 20 mil. cars, 50 mil. passengers, and 200 000 buses annually. In addition, controls encompass 9 international airports, 2 major international seaports for container transport, and 11 international maritime ports for passenger transport.

Controls of illegal traffic annually include seizure of over 1 tonne of drugs, 7 mil. pieces of cigarettes, 30 tonnes of tobacco, 25 hl of alcohol, 50 tonnes of illegal food, 3 mil. pieces of medicinal products, and over 1 mil. of counterfeited products, showing the challenge of maintaining the financial, security and safety controls, while facilitating legal business operators and securing a level playing field on the internal market of the EU.

Croatian Customs Authority has been continuously investing in its service capacities. The newly built Advanced Training Centre in Bregana, 15 km from Zagreb, is intended to serve as a centre of excellence for training purposes, planned as part of the EUCA mandate.



Zagreb – Connecting Central, Mediterranean and Southeastern Europe



Zagreb has daily connections to most European Union Member State capitals, and to all the major metropolitan cities via its Franjo Tuđman Airport. Zagreb is becoming a regional air hub, with each EU Member State capital reachable by air in under 3 hours. It has also created conditions for a significant increase in the number of international flight routes and passengers, with more and more low-cost carriers flying to and from Zagreb. With 64 international and 6 domestic destinations, where 20 international air companies operating, there are several flights each day between Zagreb and Brussels, as well as Frankfurt, Munich and Vienna, and daily flights between Zagreb and Paris, Amsterdam, Berlin, Lisbon, Rome, Stockholm, Zurich, Copenhagen, Bucharest, Athens, etc.


Zagreb is host to almost all the major air carriers: Lufthansa, KLM, Air France, Austrian Airlines, British Airways, Emirates, Turkish Airlines, Swiss, Eurowings, among others. Their wide network of routes ensures excellent reliable connections between Zagreb and destinations within the European Union, as well as international ones. Connections during the summer season are even more frequent in view of higher tourist demand, which is an indicator of this market's potential for further development and progress. An international railway station is in the heart of the city, and offers routes to Budapest, Prague, Vienna, Ljubljana, Munich, Zurich and Milan to the west, and Belgrade, Sofia, Thessaloniki and Istanbul to the south.

Proposed EUCA Seat Building – Energy Efficient and Environmentally Friendly

The remarkable building proposed as the seat of the EUCA, incorporating premises for 275 employees and staff, was built in 2019 and in function from 2021. It comprises 17,369.78 m² of gross floor area on 6 levels/floors, with a ground-floor level area of 4,630 m², surrounding parking and park areas of 8,424 m², combining 13,054 m² in total of a demarcated land plot. It is compounded of architectural build in 2 cubus vertical divisions which divides building in 2 main areas. There are also external terrace facilities on the 3rd floor, an underground car park for 105 vehicles and technical and energy units in the basement, 9 different size conference/training/meeting rooms on the ground floor, with kitchen, restaurant and cafeteria facilities on the same level. The largest conference room can accommodate 678 persons (can be

partitioned in half) with 16 interpretation units, and several other meeting rooms, smallest ones measuring 48.91 m² for 20 people (also can be partitioned in half), all equipped with video-conference facilities. There are offices on the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th floors, totalling 1,012.80 m², and additional 1,349.57 m² of open space. There are also 45 rooms with en-suite bathrooms on the 5th floor, originally planned as accommodation units for the officials. The fifth floor also features lounge areas and light kitchen facilities. In total, as currently fitted, there are 49 offices, and 16 open space areas. The offices are generally of a modular design, and in addition to the open space areas, can be adapted to fit the required purposes. Outside, there are an additional 52 parking places, and a designated area for 128 bicycles.

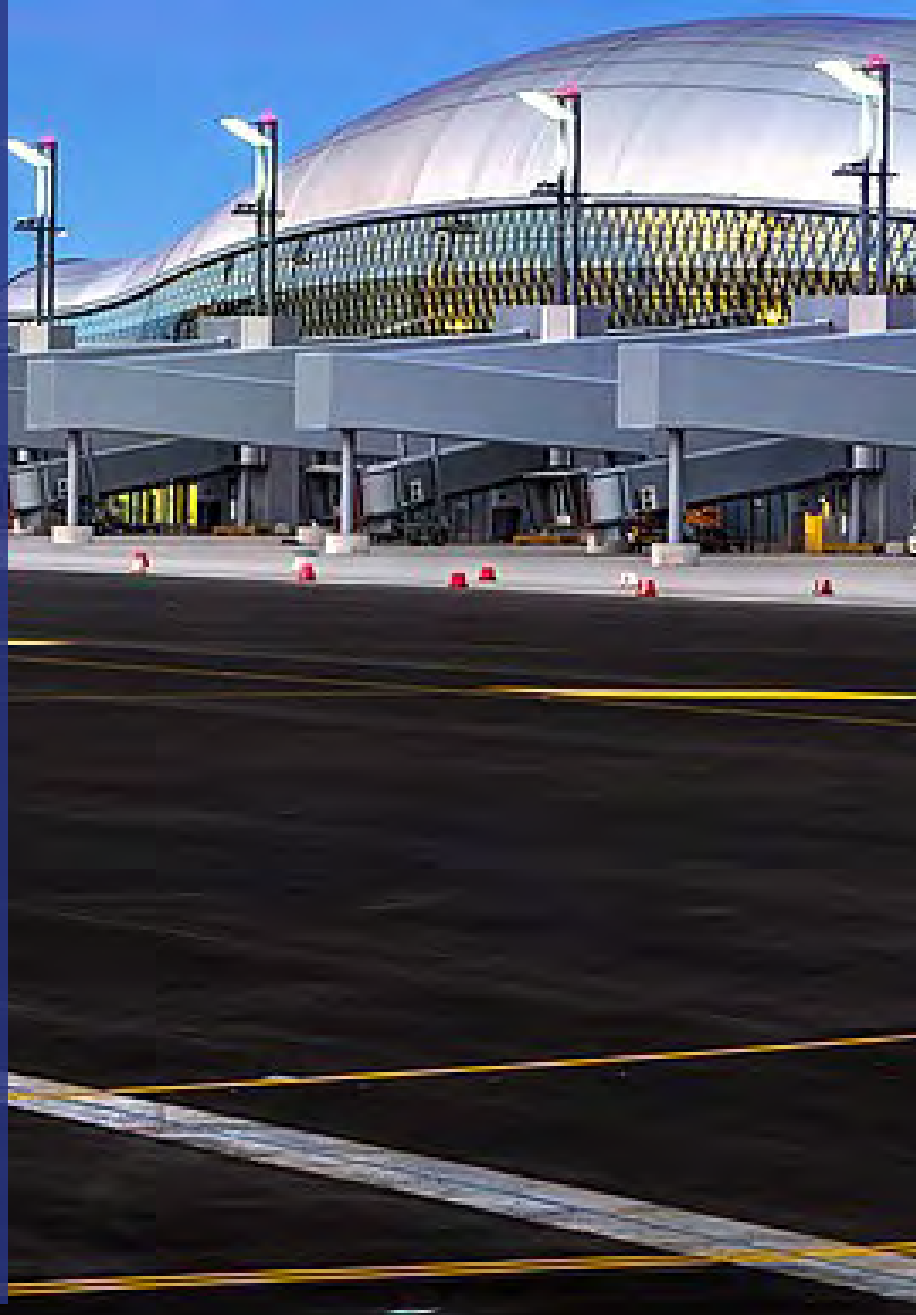


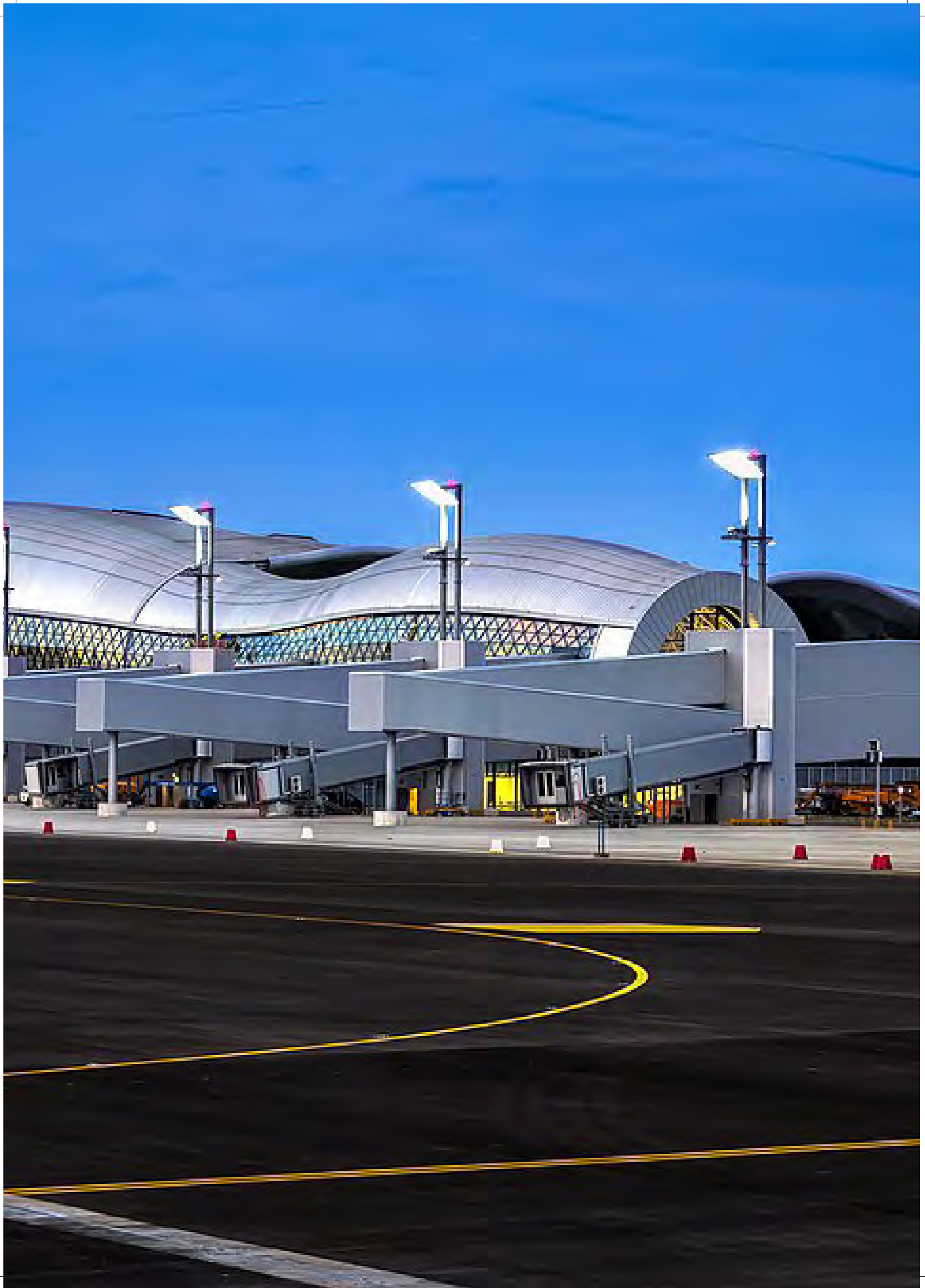
The image shows a multi-story building with a complex, modular facade made of glass and metal panels. The interior is visible through the glass, showing multiple levels with balconies and a central staircase. A red carpeted area is visible on one of the lower levels. The ceiling is made of a grid of metal panels with recessed lighting. The overall design is modern and industrial.

The building is already equipped with enhanced security features, with lasers, and restricted access areas, which can be further adapted. There is a centralised surveillance and management unit, with automatic adjustment of light and heat in each part of the building. Energy is provided by heat-pumps, running on electrical power linked to an independent power supply system. which regulates the heating. Ground water, linked to a well, is used for the cooling. Additional support is provided by the building's own solar and wind autonomous power plants, which makes the building Nearly Zero Energy Building in energy efficiency, environment and self-sustainability policy.

Connectivity to the Airport

The proposed seat building has an efficient transport link to Franjo Tuđman Airport. The airport is well connected with Zagreb, being only a twenty-minute drive to the city centre. Also available is a commercial shuttle-bus service to the airport with only 3 stops, running between the city's main bus station and the airport. A shuttle bus stop is situated in front of the proposed EUCA seat building. The regular city bus line between Zagreb and the airport is another mode of transport between the airport and the city. Time needed to reach the airport from the proposed EUCA seat building is 15 minutes. The schedule is fixed in line with the arrival times of regular airlines, and operates every 30 minutes between 5 a.m. and 11:30 p.m. The City of Zagreb plans to establish an even faster connection via fast light rail/tram.





City of Culture and History

Long standing cultural activities bring additional flavour to a social climate welcoming international tourists and visitors, with numerous bars, cafés, theatre and concert venues. Vibrant cultural experiences, and Zagreb's night life take place amid a safe and secure atmosphere which is felt by both the locals and guests alike. A wide variety of cultural and social events is featured through small cinema theatres, in addition to numerous multiplex cinemas, over dozen existing theatres, numerous concerts ranging from classical to urban, ethnic, jazz and world music in larger venues, to indie, rock, punk, trap, and metal gigs in smaller venues. The medieval upper old town, built between the 11th and 18th centuries, brings history to life with stories of witches and of defence against medieval enemies. The lower old town area, built in the 19th century in the Secession style of Vienna and Austrian-Hungarian Empire, reflects the origins of contemporary Zagreb.





Foto: galerija.croatia.hr/hr/htz-galerija.aspx

Affordable Accommodation Options

Amongst EU Member States, Croatia's capital is still among those with lower costs of living, while Croatia overall, ranks eighth among the Member States as the most affordable place to live. In comparison to the reference value for Brussels, according to Eurostat, the cost of living in Zagreb is at the level of 73.5 (in comparison to Brussels, where the cost of living is at the level of 100). The staff of the European Union Customs Authority would bear lower costs of living in Zagreb than in most other capitals. In terms

of the price of property purchase, Croatia ranks among the cheapest capitals of the Member States of the European Union, with an average price of EUR 2500 per m², and also ranks first in terms of the lowest price of property rental, with an average of around EUR 750 monthly for 100m². Further, 50 % of the total population believe that it is easy to find a good apartment at an affordable price in their city, which places Croatia second among all the Member States of the European Union.





Zagreb offers a competitive, attractive environment for business travel in terms of both the availability and the affordability of quality accommodation. The city has a wide selection of 4-star and 5-star hotels with ample business amenities, averaging €80–€100 per night. Croatia's strong tourism infrastructure ensures year-round availability of hotel accommodation, even during peak season, and many venues are situated within 25 minutes from the airport, or 10 minutes from the location of the proposed seat building, in, or close to, the city centre, providing ease of mobility for visiting experts, board members, or officials.

There are 1118 hotel beds available in the 5 star or higher category hotels, and an additional 1371 beds in 4-star category hotels in a 5 km radius from the building, a 15-minute car ride, or a 20-minute ride by public transport.



Foto: galerija.croatia.hr/hr/htz-galerija.aspx

Innovation Climate

he business climate for innovation is supportive, with a taxation system as a booster.

Element	Description	Rate
Corporate Income Tax (CIT)	2-tier system (depending on the income level)	10%, up to EUR 1 million income 18%, above EUR 1 million income
Withholding tax	Abolished for market research and business consulting services. Exemptions extended to companies in the European Economic Area (EEA) for dividends, interest, and royalties.	n / a
VAT	VAT exemptions for donor funds / international institutions are to be evaluated on the specific cases of services, other counterparty, beneficiary, etc.	Standard Rate: 25%. Reduced Rates: 13% and 5% for specific goods and services.
Incentives	Profit Tax Reductions: Under the Investment Promotion Act	50% - 100% reduction depending on investment size
	Employment Incentives	
	Additional Grants	Up to €1 million for capital costs and €0.5 million for development and innovation activities

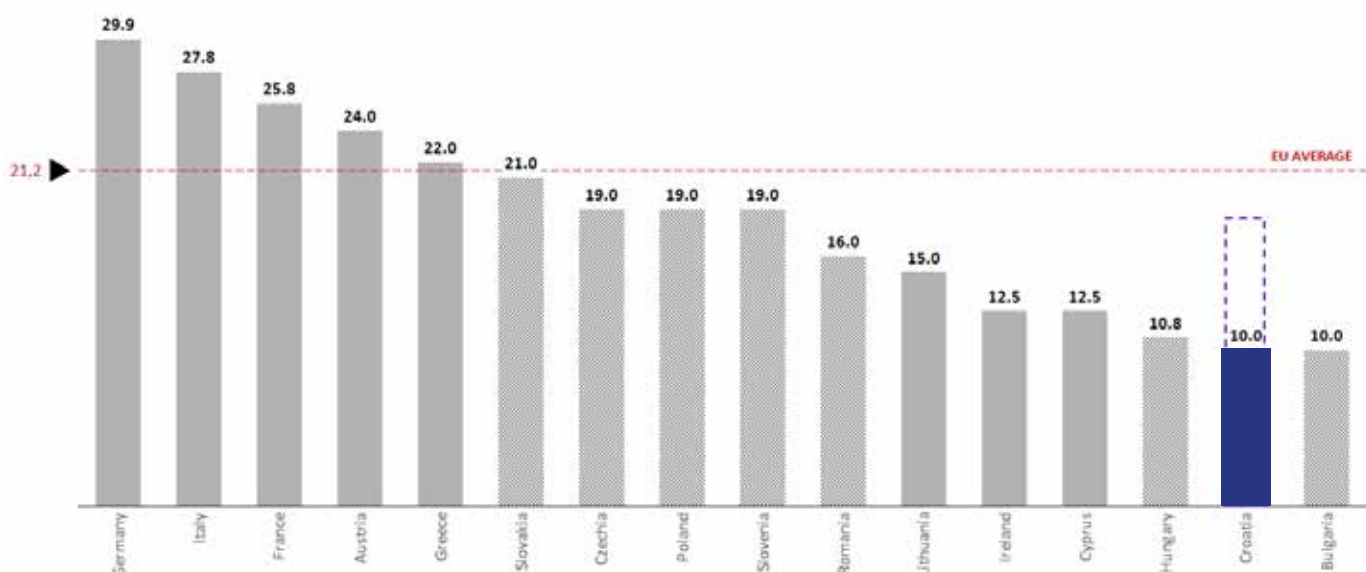
10% CIT

for income up to EUR 1mn

VAT & WHT

exemptions for specific institutions and activities

Croatian CIT-Corporate Income Tax is among the lowest in the EU (18 % above 1 million and 10 % below 1 million € income)



Government efficiency and regulatory quality measured are at 75.5 and 72.2 percentile points respectively, which is a little below the high-income OECD members (85.2 and 87.4 points). Since 2016 Croatia's credit rating has been upgraded 5 times and, as of 2024, stands at A- (A3). Croatia has been politically stable for over 10 years, with the same political option chosen in the last 3 elections.



- ✓ EU member
- ✓ Eurzone member
- ✓ Schengen zone member
- ✓ NATO member
- ✓ WTO member
- ✓ UN member
- ✓ WB and IMF member
- ✓ OSCE member
- ✓ Council of Europe (CoE) member
- OECD candidate

EBRD & EIB

*regional offices seat and
directors in Zagreb*

EC office

*representative
headquartered in Zagreb*



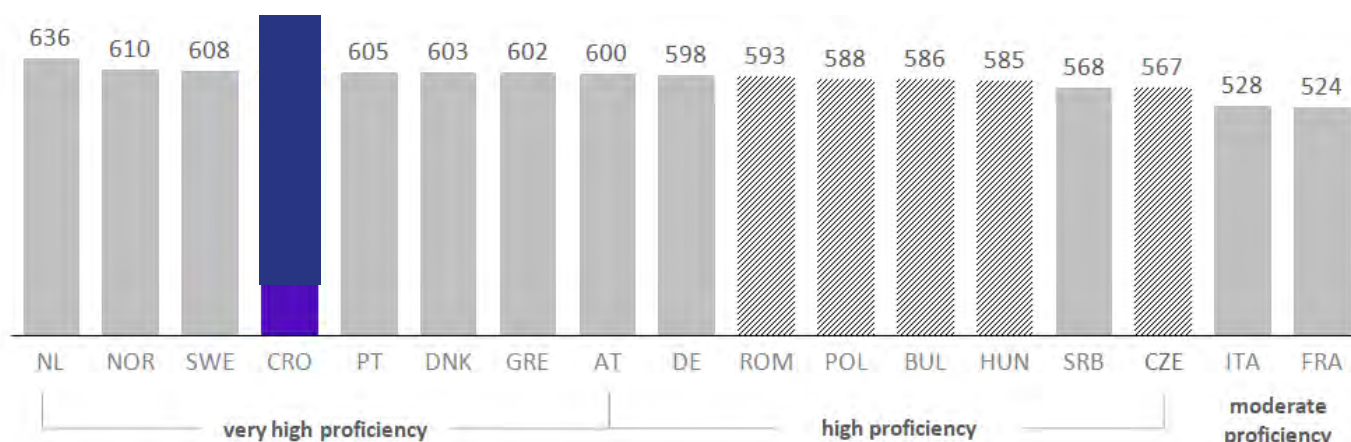
Električni hiperautomobil – **Rimac Nevera**

Proizvodi hrvatska tvrtka "Rimac Automobili"

Foto: Rimac automobili

Career Opportunities

Talent attraction — skilled workforce with strong English language proficiency.



Source: EF EPI, EF English Proficiency Index

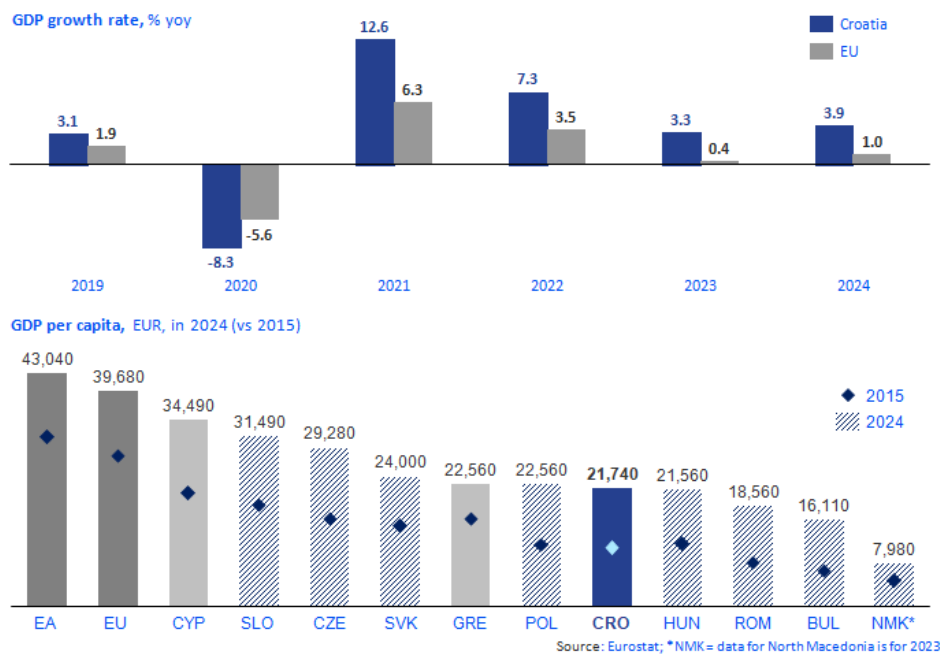


ENABLE	
Political stability	32 / 134
ATTRACT PEOPLE	
Migrant stock	30 / 134
GROW	
Youth inclusion	41 / 134
RETAIN	
Personal safety	20 / 134
VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL SKILLS	
Skills matching	6 / 134
GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE SKILLS	
Digital skills	36 / 134

The fact that 32.4 % of all registered companies in Croatia are located in Zagreb clearly shows that there is no shortage of employment opportunities, considering that the registered unemployment rate in Croatia is just above 3 %. Of the European companies, INA, Lidl, Petrol, Unicredit Group, Spar, Pliva, Kaufland have regional headquarters in Zagreb, which immediately shows that the

manufacturing, trade and financial sectors are most represented by foreign employers. Among the hundred largest foreign companies, there are 37 traders and distributors, 23 companies from the manufacturing industry, and 14 financiers (including six banks and five insurance companies). Among the top 1000 are also 15 international IT companies.

Croatia is among the top 5 European countries with very high English language proficiency, which shows a positive correlation to innovation, human resources development and productivity.



~ 3.7%

Average GDP growth rate during 2019 -2024 vs EU's 1.3% average

~ 55%

GDP per capita as average of EU level, and almost doubled in 10 years





Foto: galerija.croatia.hr/hr/htz-galerija.aspx

Leisure Time and Activities

As for leisure, there are not many cities with below 1-million population mark offering more. Parks, like Maksimir (for hiking), or lakes Jarun and Budek (for sports) are dotted around the city, providing green areas, with natural forest and Medvednica Nature Park, standing at 1031 meters above sea level, overlooks the city while being only a 15-minute ride from the city centre, making it easily accessible by foot, bike, bus, car, or cable-car. Sljeme offers skiing opportunities during the winter, where Alpine World Cup runs have been regularly taking place at the beginning of January. During December, Zagreb hosts its famous Advent market, featuring various cultural activities. If you wish to get away from the city to a warmer climate, the Adriatic coast is 90 minutes away, ideally reachable for a weekend-, or even a day-break.



Foto: galerija.croatia.hr/hr/htz-galerija.aspx

Educational Opportunities and Facilities

Of the 65 nurseries, there are 4 foreign early language learning programmes: in the English, German, French and Italian languages. There are also 9 primary and secondary schools (including advanced secondary school programmes) implementing international programmes, established as French, German, British, and American schools, with learning programmes in English, German, and French. In addition, the process of establishing an accredited European School in Zagreb is underway. General Interest File has been prepared and the process is underway for finding a suitable facility to house the school. The accredited school will offer at least two language sections (English and Croatian) with a view to establishing a French, or a German section in the future, or any other EU language if there should be sufficient interest for those language sections.





Foto: galerija.croatia.hr/hr/htz-galerija.aspx

Interestingly enough, just around the corner, some 200 metres away from the building proposed as the seat of the EUCA is the new, large French-German Primary School. As regards University programmes, there are 117 university or university polytechnic institution programmes, with options of studying in the German, English, Italian, or Slovenian languages, and of studying French, Czech, German, Hungarian, Dutch, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovakian, Spanish, Swedish, or Italian at the University of Zagreb, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. This provides a variety of options regarding higher education opportunities for family members of EUCA employees in Zagreb.

Medical and Healthcare Services

Medical services and institutions, like hospitals, medical health centres, therapy centres, ophthalmology and dental services are widely available. Public medical health centres, the primary type of public healthcare, are available in more than 700 locations across the city, and offer a wide range of medical services. There are also 17 public clinical health centres – hospitals, with internationally recognised expertise in clinical treatment and surgery. In addition, there are over 1000 private medical service providers, with several private clinical centres. Diagnostics and treatments among some of the public or private centres are internationally competitive and recognised.





Foto: galerija.croatia.hr/hr/htz-galerija.aspx

Safety and Security of Croatia and Zagreb

In the European context, the Republic of Croatia is established as a safe, stable, and technologically advanced country, with efficient institutions and a high level of public safety.

The border control system, police efficiency and international cooperation, especially with FRONTEX, show that Croatia contributes to the security and stability of the entire European Union in the long term.

Thanks to its low crime rate, absence of terrorist threats, and high level of digital readiness, Croatia represents a reliable basis for operations, and also the location of European institutions and agencies.

Croatia is one of the EU Member States with no record of any terrorist incidents in the past ten years. According to the TE-SAT 2025 report (Europol), Croatia remains in the category of countries with “minimal security risk”.

The PNR (Passenger Name Record) and the EES (Entry/Exit System) systems allow for digital processing and exchange of passenger data at external borders. In addition, as of 2021, Croatia is the only EU member with access to the bases of the US Terrorist Screening Centre, which further increases the level of protection. In the field of cyber security, Croatia has established the National Cyber Security Centre, and actively cooperates with ENISA, within the framework of the implementation of the EU Cybersecurity Act. In the last five years, a systematic digital modernisation of the security sector has been carried out.

The Ministry of the Interior has developed interoperable systems linked to the judiciary, customs and European security databases.



KEY INNOVATIONS INCLUDE:

- introduction of the E-Crime system (digital processing of criminal offenses in real time),
- development of AI solutions for predictive analytics and anomaly detection,
- modernisation of the Police Operational Communication Centre,
- Qlik Sense and ArcGIS systems for visualisation of risks and criminal patterns.

This technological capacity places Croatia among the most advanced member states in the field of digital security and analytical predictability.

Croatia consistently records very high ratings for security and social stability, according to international indices.

Indicator	2023.	2024.	2025.	EU average / context
Global Peace Index (out of 163 countries)	14.	15.	19.	average EU: 30.–35. place
Numbeo Safety Index (RH)	74,8	75,0	74,6	average EU: 63
Numbeo Safety Index (Zagreb)	78,3	78,4	78,6	Amongst highest in the EU
Homicide rate (na 100.000 st.)	0,7	0,6	0,6–0,8	average EU: 1,13
Rule of Law Index (among 142 states)	47.	45.	—	Stabile Rule of Law

These indicators confirm that Croatia has a low level of violence, high institutional reliability and citizens’ trust in security institutions.

Over the past two years, the security situation in Croatia has maintained a very favourable trend. In the first six months of 2025 no cases of terrorism, extremism, or violent radicalism were recorded. The number of criminal offences has decreased by approximately 1 %, and the overall resolution rate has remained at a high level of around 70 %.

General Security/Safety Indicators (2024)

Indicator	Croatia	average EU	Note
Decline of total number of criminal acts	–1%	+2,3%	Decline trend contrary to the EU trend of rise
Percentage of solving of criminal acts	71,7%	57,4%	Above EU average efficiency
Registered cases of violent acts in 100.000 persons	189	354	Among lowest in the EU
Number of terrorist incidents	0	14 (EU in total)	No registered threats

Proximity of the Adriatic Coast and the Mountains

Mild continental climate is only 100 km away from the Mediterranean coast, and reachable in just 90 minutes. The Mediterranean coast, stretching over more than 1000 km, and with over 1000 islands, is the heart, and the birthplace of the medieval Croatian kingdom, built on the remnants of the Roman Empire. It offers not only beautiful leisure capacities, but also rich historical heritage and monuments. Between Zagreb and the coast, only 50 km away, there is a high plane area stretching approximately 50 km wide, with natural wild forest, mountain peaks, hiking routes, and rivers and hills in between, offering recreational skiing facilities during the winter season.



Foto: galerija.croatia.hr/hr/htz-galerija.aspx





Zagreb

CROATIA

THE CAPITAL OF THE EUROPEAN CUSTOMS

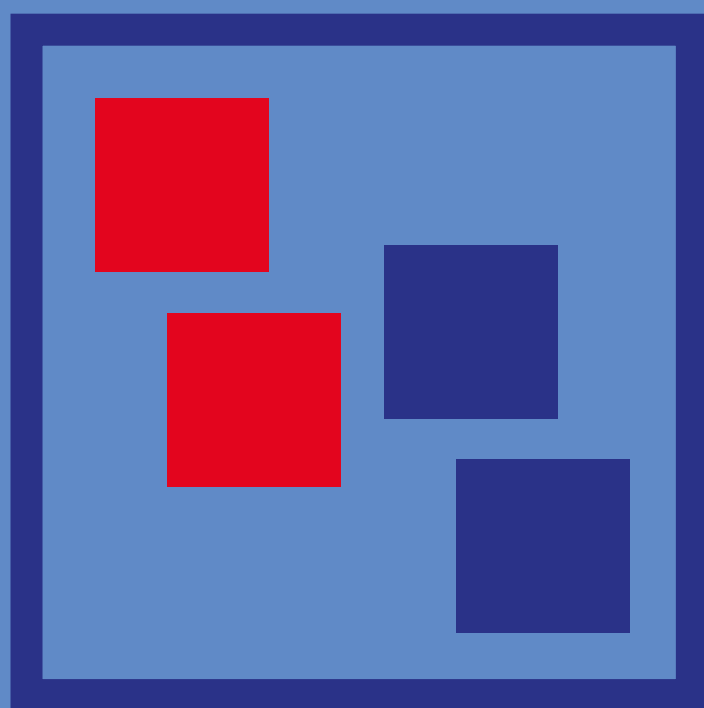


Zagreb

CROATIA

THE CAPITAL OF THE EUROPEAN CUSTOMS

E U C A



Z A G R E B

European Union Customs Authority
– in Zagreb, Croatia