



CANADIAN CROATIAN BUSINESS NETWORK  
KANADSKO HRVATSKA POSLOVNA MREŽA



Canadian-Croatian Chamber of Commerce  
Kanadsko-Hrvatska Gospodarska Komora

## CROATIAN TRADE MISSION TO CANADA AND “CROATIA: YOUR GATEWAY TO EUROPE” CONFERENCE – A RESOUNDING SUCCESS



From left to right: Ambassador Veselko Grubišić, State Secretary for Investment Domagoj Juričić, CCBN President Joe Bašić, Minister of State Lynne Yelich, CCCC Board Member Ivan Grbešić, Ambassador Edwin L. Loughlin, CCBN Vice-President Dennis Rukavina, Mayor of Hamilton Bob Bratina and Consul General Ljubinko Matešić (Photo by Frank Jankač)

ZAGREB, CROATIA / TORONTO, CANADA (October 6, 2011) - The Canadian Croatian Business Network (CCBN) based in Croatia and the Canadian-Croatian Chamber of Commerce (CCCC) based in Canada successfully concluded their co-organized trade mission and conference entitled “Croatia: Your Gateway to Europe”, which took place from September 26 to October 1, 2011 in Toronto, Canada.

The visit to Canada by representatives of 30 companies from Croatia included participation at an investment forum, the conference, one-on-one meetings and site visits with Canadian companies and a number of networking receptions and events. The delegation from Croatia was led by Croatian State Secretary for Investment Mr. Domagoj Juričić, Canadian Ambassador to Croatia Mr. Edwin L. Loughlin, and members of the CCBN Executive Board.

Over 100 people were in attendance at the Welcome Reception hosted by Stikeman Elliott LLP, including members of the delegation from Croatia, local Canadian and Croatian business people and community leaders, and Canadian dignitaries. Those in attendance had an opportunity to network and enjoy some tastes of Croatia, including a variety of Croatian cuisine and wine.

Prior to the Welcome Reception, a select group of 30 investors attended a special presentation to the investment community, which gave more in depth information regarding investment opportunities in Croatia and provided potential investors with insight in respect of various projects.

At the conference itself, Croatian State Secretary Juričić delivered an opening address and a special introductory presentation. The conference showcased case studies

of successful business projects and previous Canadian-Croatian business co-operations and provided over 140 attendees with new insight into doing business in Croatia, as well as an opportunity to partake in a live panel discussion.

Those in attendance at the conference had an opportunity to listen to an address by keynote speaker, Mr. Robert Herjavec, CEO of The Herjavec Group and star of CBC’s Dragon’s Den and ABC’s Shark Tank and a highly regarded member of the business community in Canada.

Before ending the day with another networking opportunity at a cocktail reception hosted by the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC), one-on-one meetings between representatives of the companies from Croatia and participating companies from Canada were held.

During the course of the visit to Canada, each company from Croatia was matched with an average of between three to eight Canadian companies for meetings and site visits.

Other Canadian and Croatian dignitaries who attended the various events included, among others, Canada's Minister of Labour, The Honourable Lisa Raitt, Minister of State, The Honourable Lynne Yelich, and the Mayor of Hamilton, Mr. Bob Bratina, as well as representatives of the Republic of Croatia, including the Croatian Ambassador to Canada, Mr. Veselko Grubišić and the Consul General of the Republic of Croatia in Mississauga, Mr. Ljubinko Matešić. Representatives of the Province of Ontario and the City of Toronto were also in attendance.

"I would like to congratulate and thank the CCCC and the CCBN for organizing the Croatian trade mission to Canada, and urge those who participated and attended to build on the relationships developed at this first forum, which to my knowledge is the first of its kind. We expect that the progress Croatia has made over the past few years, including the reforms it has undertaken, will contribute to the strengthening of trade between Canada and Croatia and the development of further business and investment opportunities. By continuing to work towards becoming a place where doing business is easy, transparent, and to a certain extent, predictable, Croatia will become more

competitive, prosperous and attractive in this competitive global marketplace," said Canadian Minister of State Yelich.

Croatian State Secretary Juričić added that "this was indeed a very well organized event and will be a model for any future trade missions that we may organize in the near future. The potential of mutual cooperation between Canada and Croatia is immense and we need to push it harder and faster so our companies can benefit from it sooner than later. Our message was clear: Croatia is open for business! In less than two years, Croatia will become a new entry point for investors in the EU – one of the world's largest markets with more than 500 million consumers. I hope Canadian businesses will take advantage of this opportunity and that Croatia will do all that is necessary to attract Canadians, among others, as investors. At the same time, I hope that Croatian business people will be brave enough to explore the possibilities for exports and partnerships with Canada," said Croatian State Secretary Juričić.

"The contacts and information we received during our visit to Toronto with numerous successful Croatian-Canadian entrepreneurs and potential Canadian partners and clients accelerated our company's entry into the market by at least eight to twelve months," stated Mr. Predrag Balentović, CEO of Telegra, an innovative Croatian IT company that

travelled to Toronto with the delegation.

"Organizing such a trade mission and conference involves a tremendous amount of work. On behalf of the CCBN and CCCC, we greatly appreciate the support of the generous sponsors, including SNC-Lavalin, the Province of Ontario (Ministry of Economic Development and Trade), CIBC and Stikeman Elliott LLP, and sincerely thank all those who provided help and support in making this event a resounding success," stated Mr. Josip Bašić, CCBN President and Mr. John Marion, CCCC President in a joint statement.

Both the CCBN and CCCC are certain that this inaugural trade mission is only the starting point of establishing new business opportunities between Canada and Croatia, with both organizations set to facilitate strengthening relationships with further events in the future.



Photo by Frank Jankač

### **About the CCCC**

Founded in 1995, the Canadian-Croatian Chamber of Commerce is a not-for-profit network of Croatian-Canadian businesses and professionals that has emerged as the voice of Croatian-Canadian business in Canada. Canada has one of the largest and most successful Croatian communities outside of Croatia and the Canadian-Croatian Chamber of Commerce brings together businesses and professionals with strategic relationships (economic, commercial, political, and cultural) in both Canada and Croatia. For more information, please visit [www.croat.ca](http://www.croat.ca).

### **About the CCBN**

Founded in 2010, the Canadian Croatian Business Network is an apolitical initiative of Canadian and Croatian professionals residing in Croatia who are committed to promoting and maximizing economic ties between Canada and Croatia. For more information, please visit [www.ccbn.hr](http://www.ccbn.hr).

### **For additional information, please contact:**

Anita Vuković Madzarević  
Canadian-Croatian Chamber of Commerce  
(416) 641-2829  
[amadzarevic@croat.ca](mailto:amadzarevic@croat.ca)

Lucijana Jerković  
Grayling (Canadian Croatian Business Network)  
+385 98 478 365  
[lucijana.jerkovic@grayling.com](mailto:lucijana.jerkovic@grayling.com) ili [lucijana.jerkovic@ccbn.hr](mailto:lucijana.jerkovic@ccbn.hr)