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NFCA: "Croatian Sabor" Members Visited Washington to Attend the National Prayer Breakfast

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Written by NFCA

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National Federation of Croatian Americans (NFCA) Provides Liaison for Visits to Washington by Croatian Members of Parliament Attending the President's National Prayer Breakfast

Washington, DC - During the first week of February, an

important and diverse group of Croatian Sabor members visited Washington to attend the National Prayer Breakfast. The group was lead by Sabor Deputy Speaker Zeljko Reiner (HDZ). Others attending the breakfast with President Barack Obama and meetings with the US Congress included MP Domagoj Hajdukovic (SDP), Croatian MEP to the EU Marijana Petir (EPP), and MP Ante Babic (HDZ).

NFCA's Executive Vice President Zvonko Labas and Dr. Reiner co-led the visiting dignitaries in meetings with the Majority Whip of the US House of Representatives Steve Scalise (R-LA) and Rep. Janice Hahn (D-CA), current Co-chair of the Congressional Croatian Caucus. Substantive meetings were also held with top staff members to Rep. David Joyce (R-OH), as well as a Co-Chair of the Croatian Caucus, and other members of Congress.



Prior to these events, the visiting MPs joined many diplomatic dignitaries, including EU MEP Tonino Picula (S&D), at an elegant Embassy party



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Sarma is a typical traditional





hosted by Ambassador Josko Paro - Croatia's top diplomat posted to the United States. Ambassador Jadranka Negodic from Bosnia and Herzegovina

(BiH), Slovenia's former PM and current EU MEP Alojz Peterle, and many local Croatian Americans were in attendance at this important occasion honoring the Washington visit by the Members of Parliament.

NFCA President Paul Tonsetic-Kunder said in regard to these significant visits by Croatian Parliamentarians: "We believe this cross-cultural political and diplomatic exchange of information remains an important ingredient on matters of importance for Croatia's continued advance within the Western multilateral organizations that she has recently joined. We welcome these exchanges at regular intervals, and the NFCA is pleased to be of assistance to the Croatian government in these regards."

Croatian continental dish, usually prepared for all occasions such as...



Mr. Labas and NFCA Public Affairs Director Joe Foley coordinated the visits on Capitol Hill. During the meeting with Rep. Scalise, the NFCA also learned of the Congressman's very high regard and the city-wide appreciation for Mr. Tommy Cvitanovich, proprietor of Drago's Restaurant in New

Orleans, who provided 80,000 meals to those in the city displaced by the wrath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Current issues discussed included:

(1) The expansion of the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) to include Croatia and other interested countries remains an important matter before the new 114th Congress. The complexities of the VWP in the wake of copy cat jihad-like attacks by established criminals against the satirical publication Charlie Hebdo and the Jewish deli in Paris on January 15 were reviewed. The NFCA will again be working closely during this Congress with all stake holders on this long standing issue of interest to Croatian citizens.

(2) A Double Tax Treaty, which would help expand economic activities between our two countries, was also advanced. Rep. David Joyce has provided invaluable assistance to NFCA by presenting this matter again to the US government. The Congressman's adept Foreign Policy Aide Chris Cooper, the NFCA, and others are reviewing additional approaches to further ramp up the importance of the matter with the US Treasury Department.

(3) The re-introduction of the 'Hahn Resolution' (H. Res. 705 in the prior Congress) on the economic and political difficulties continuing to face Croat Bosnians was strongly supported by the visiting MPs in the meetings with Rep. Janice Hahn and her skilled Legislative Director Justin Vogt. Dr. Reiner helped highlight in detail the inherent difficulties affecting everyday life for Croatians in BiH. This discrimination continues in an environment where most all Bosnian people - regardless of ethnicity - continue to desire political normalcy, expanding competitive markets, renewed job growth, equal economic treatment for all, and further integration into the Euro-Atlantic community for their country.

(4) The historic inauguration of the first woman President of Croatia, Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic, on February 15 provided a prideful opportunity for the MPs to

highlight the progress the Republic of Croatia has achieved since the SFRY's violent dissolution in the mid-90s. Many in Washington are now learning of Ms. Grabar-Kitarovic's impressive background and her electoral success as Croatia's fourth democratically elected president, including the excellent promise she embodies for her maturing new nation-state.

The NFCA is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to promoting the interest of the Croatian people; embodying heritage of culture and language; integrity of human rights and equality in self-determination; advancing economic development; and, freedom from persecution. If you wish for more information regarding this news release, please contact NFCA Public Affairs Director Joe Foley via info@foleycoinc.com

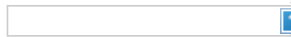
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