

**United in diversity:****ANTHEMS AND FLAGS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,**

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# Croatia

## 1. Flag

- Created and adopted in 1990

The current flag of the Republic of Croatia was adopted on 21 December 1990, at the same time as the adoption of the new Croatian Constitution. Article 11 of the Constitution provides that the tricolour flag consists of the traditional Croatian colours of red, white and blue, placed horizontally, with the red and white checked coat of arms.



This tricolour unifies the flags of the country's former kingdoms: red and white flag of the Kingdom of Croatia, blue and white flag of the Kingdom of Slavonia, and white and yellow flag of the Kingdom of Dalmatia. During the national renewal movement of 1848, the red-white-blue tricolour, then official, symbolised the independence and unity of the country. From 1868 to 1918, it was the official flag of the Triune Kingdom of Croatia-Slavonia-Dalmatia, with the unique difference being that it was decorated in the centre by a coat of arms made up of the crests of the three kingdoms and topped with Saint Etienne's crown.

The historical Croatian coat of arms, checked with gules and argent (red and white), appeared for the first time on the stamp affixed to the act relating to the election of Ferdinand I of Hapsburg as king of Croatia, by the Croatian Diet (*Sabor*) meeting in Cetin in 1527. Subsequently, it featured in the form of a red and white checked pattern in the Hapsburg crests, recalling the fact that the Kingdom of Croatia was then part of the Austrian Empire.

But, even though the number of red and white squares and the order of the colours varied over the centuries, from the 19<sup>th</sup> century the coat of arms of the Kingdom of Croatia only appeared in its 5 x 5 size. Its appearance was codified by the *Sabor* in 1883. Later, as an emblem of the Banovina of Croatia (1939-1941), established within the Yugoslav monarchy, the coat of arms (red squares in the corners or cantons) was integrated into the Croatian tricolour. Then, between 1941 and 1945, the collaborationist Ustashi regime took up this same flag by adding its own emblem and reversing the order of the colours (white cantons). From 1945 onwards, once again the Croatian coat of arms (red cantons again) was integrated into the crests of the Socialist Republic of Croatia, member of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. It was then surrounded by a crown of ears of wheat and topped with a red star. When the new constitution was being drafted in 1990, it was naturally taken up again, but somewhat rid of these elements that are typical of Communist iconography, while at the same time conserving the sequence of red and white squares (red cantons). The crest was thus integrated into the national flag, instead of the red star.

Since then, the crest has been topped with a 'crown' consisting of five shields representing the historical Croatian provinces, with from left to right: the morning star and the crescent of Former Croatia (Illyria), the red and white bands of the former Dubrovnik Republic, the three crowned leopard heads of Dalmatia, the goat of Istria and the marten and the six-pointed star of Slavonia.

In addition, the national coat of arms is regularly used alone, as a national crest, especially on the headed paper of administrative and official documents.

The red and white checked motif is a particularly recognizable sign. Each one of us may have become familiar with this emblem which appears in particular on the sports jerseys of Croatian athletes. Since 1 July 2013, it has been flying with its 27 counterparts before the building of the European Parliament as well as at the Council of the European Union.

## 2. Anthem

- *Lijepa naša domovino* (Our beautiful homeland)
- Written by Antun Mihanović
- Composed by Josip Runjanin
- Created in 1835 – Unofficial anthem since 1891,
- officially adopted in 1972 and in 1990

The Croatian national anthem is *Lijepa naša domovino* (Our beautiful homeland). It is composed of the first two and last two verses of the 14-stanza poem *Horvatska domovina* (Croatian homeland). It was published for the first time in 1835 and its author was the Croatian poet Antun Mihanović (1796-1861). Josip Runjanin (1821-1878) set it to music in 1848 and this song, which quickly became popular from 1864 onwards, became known under the name *Lijepa naša domovino*. It was sung as unofficial Croatian national anthem for the first time in 1891. The text, with a pacific tone, expresses the idyllic aspects of the homeland, and evokes the love borne towards it, its symbolic places, the beauty of its landscapes and refers to its glorious past.

### **Lijepa naša domovino**

*Lijepa naša Domovino,  
Oj junačka zemljo mila,  
Stare slave djedovino,  
Da bi vazda sretna bila!  
Mila, kano si nam slavna,  
Mila si nam ti jedina,  
Mila kuda si nam ravna,  
Mila kuda si planina!  
Teci Savo, Dravo teci,  
Nit ti, Dunav, silu gubi!  
Sinje more, svijetu reci,  
Da svoj narod Hrvat ljubi!  
Dok mu njive sunce grije,  
Dok mu hrašće bura vije,  
Dok mu mrtve grobak krije,  
Dok mu živo srce bije.*

### **Our Beautiful Homeland**

Our beautiful homeland,  
Oh so fearless and gracious,  
Our fathers' ancient glory,  
May you be blessed forever.  
Dear, you are our only glory,  
Dear, you are our only one,  
Dear, we love your plains,  
Dear, we love your mountains.  
Sava, Drava, keep on flowing,  
Danube, do not lose your vigour,  
Deep blue sea, tell the world,  
That a Croat loves his homeland.  
Whilst his fields are kissed by  
sunshine,  
Whilst his oaks are whipped by  
wild winds,  
Whilst his dear ones go to heaven,  
Whilst his live heart beats.

During World War II, it was both the Croatian anthem of the collaborationist Ustashi regime and that of Tito's Croatian partisans. The highest levels of Croatian Resistance granted it actual status of national anthem when the first session of the State Antifascist Council of the National Liberation of Croatia (ZAVNOH), on 13 and 14 June 1943 in Plitvice, ended with the solemn interpretation of this anthem. However, it was not officially recognised as national anthem until 29 February 1972, on the occasion of the amendment of the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Croatia within the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Through the Constitution of 22 December 1990, this song became the official national anthem of independent Croatia. At the same time, the text written by the poet Antun Mihanović was slightly modified in order to mention the deep blue, symbolising the Adriatic Sea, which was absent from the original version.

After the Napoleonic period, which saw the Croatian territories south of the Sava become part of the Illyrian Provinces (*Ilirske pokrajine*, 1809-1813), Croatia once again became an integral part of the Hapsburg Empire. However, following the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, Dalmatia and Istria remained under Austrian administration, whereas the continental part, encompassing Slavonia, remained under Hungarian influence. Thus, in the second third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (1830-1874) a romantic movement of national awakening developed (*Hrvatski narodni preporod*) aimed at the reunification of all Croatian lands and part of a general movement of national awakening by all European nations in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. In parallel, (1830-1843) the Illyrian movement (*Ilirizam*) developed, which sought the cultural and political unity of the Southern Slavic peoples, whose population settlement area coincided more or less with the territory of the former Roman Province of Illyria. In the second part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Croatian bishop Josip J. Strossmayer, leader of the People's Party and deputy in the Croatian Parliament (*Sabor*), advocated for the political integration of the Southern Slavs of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, an idea that would be the origin of the term "Yugoslav". At the same time, Ante Starčević, head of the Party of Rights and nicknamed "Father of the Homeland" was the most ardent partisan of the reunification of Croatian lands and of national independence from Austria and Hungary.

The Croatian Parliament (*Hrvatski sabor*), resulting from the first free multi-party elections of April-May 1990 adopted a new Constitution in December of the same year. Croatia, like Slovenia, proclaimed its independence on 25 June 1991. Following bloody armed conflict during which Croatia had to defend its independence, the international community recognised it as Sovereign State on 15 January 1992. Croatia entered the European Union on 1 July 2013.

