



A NEW SECURITY STRATEGY

Croatia adapts to a changing world

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Croatia's new National Security Strategy outlines major national security interests and how to deal with them. The previous strategy was adopted in 2002, when Croatia joined NATO's Partnership for Peace as a first step on the path to joining NATO and the European Union. Despite new security challenges, major changes to security and defense systems, the strengthening of Croatia's international position, and new obligations that followed the country's accession to NATO (2009) and the EU (2013), the National Security Strategy had not changed for 15 years. This can be attributed to a lack of political consensus on the main issues to be addressed and that the updating of such an important document wasn't given the attention it deserved, though there were failed attempts to make changes in 2010 and 2012.

The emergence of transnational threats such as terrorism, irregular migration, hybrid warfare, along with more frequent natural accidents and disasters (especially floods and major fires), demanded that Croatia's national security system be redefined, its national interests and strategic goals more clearly

determined, and the very concept of security adapted to match the new security challenges. For those reasons, in November 2016 the Croatian government initiated the process of making a new National Security Strategy that would analyze the national and international security environment, redefine Croatia's long-term vision, establish national interests, strategic goals and the mechanisms for their achievement, and build the foundation for a more efficient homeland security system. This process was followed by a request to develop a Homeland Security Act that would bring together all the national forces necessary for the efficient and coordinated management of security challenges and crises.

With that request, the National Security Strategy gained additional importance as a document that would set the foundation for Croatia to achieve its national security goals, but also to keep it prepared at all times — as a responsible member of NATO and the EU — to take part in joint activities and operations with partner states when responding to common security challenges.

Development

Developing the new National Security Strategy began with a steering committee in November 2016 and a process divided into two phases. The first phase started with an analysis by ministries and state authorities within the national security system to identify security trends and challenges on different levels, from global and regional to internal. For that purpose, an interagency analysis was conducted to identify gaps and weaknesses in the current national security system and to propose the best ways to cope with challenges, threats, risks and opportunities.

Additionally, an exploratory interagency discussion was held, in which more than 150 experts from other ministries and state authorities, the private sector, civil society and academia exchanged views. They expressed ideas on how to solve security issues in their fields of expertise. Many stayed involved throughout the process, and their recommendations were considered at all stages of the strategy development. Based on the analyses by the ministries and other state authorities and the recommendations from the nongovernmental sector and academia, long-term national interests and midterm strategic goals were defined, and the mechanisms for achieving those goals were identified.

A task force formed in February 2017 began the second stage, which was focused on designing the main concept, the methodology and the structure of the National Security Strategy. Ten people — representing the Office of the National Security Council; the Security and Intelligence Agency; and the ministries of defense, interior, and foreign and European affairs — created the first draft of the new National Security Strategy, which would be revised four times before adoption.

It should be emphasised that each draft of the National Security Strategy was submitted to all the relevant ministries and state authorities for comment. Special roundtable sessions were organized for the expert groups; members of the task force presented the proposed text, provided explanations, received comments and exchanged professional opinions related to the amendments. Presentations were given to members of the Parliament Committee for Domestic Policy and National Security and other interested members of Parliament, as well as to military attachés and diplomatic representatives of NATO members and other partner states, editors-in-chief and journalists from the most influential Croatian media, representatives of the Association of the Croatian Security Managers and the Croatian Private Security Chamber, civil society and nongovernmental organization representatives, academia and veterans' associations. The purpose of the presentations was to include as many experts and practitioners

as possible. The professional opinions, comments and recommendations made a great contribution to improving the new strategy and to achieving other important goals, such as attaining the support of future security partners and reaching a national consensus for adopting the National Security Strategy.

By conducting such a collaborative process, the Croatian government succeeded in winning broad support from the public, the media, civil society, opposition forces, the private sector and future security partners. The Croatian government understands that it takes a joint effort by all of society to provide an efficient response to today's security threats and challenges. The model used in developing and adopting this security strategy showed that such collaboration can be achieved.

The analyses showed that Croatia's existing national security system required significant reform and that it



Croatia's Parliament unanimously supported efforts to write a new National Security Strategy. Members are shown meeting in Zagreb, in May 2017.

was necessary to establish and develop a new concept of homeland security to ensure a joint and coordinated security effort by government and the public and private sectors. It was concluded that the Homeland Security System required the involvement of state agencies, internal and foreign affairs, civil protection, finance, health care and justice, as well as security and intelligence bodies, public and private companies, citizens and associations. The system will be regulated by the new Homeland Security Act, which marks the beginning of the construction of a new national security system based on partnerships and the concept of homeland security.

The development of the new National Security Strategy took less than seven months and was passed by the Croatian Parliament in July 2017 without a single



A migrant waits to cross the border into Slovenia near Trnovec, Croatia. Migration is among the transnational threats addressed in Croatia's new National Security Strategy.

opposing vote. It set the foundation for a new homeland security system and introduced new standards for creating national strategies for responding to security challenges, threats and risks.

Content

This National Security Strategy sets a new security paradigm based on human security and national interests. It describes Croatia's security environment and identifies strategic goals and the instruments and mechanisms for their implementation. National interests are viewed as long term, whereas the strategic goals, instruments and mechanisms will be the subject of a midterm evaluation and adaptation.

The security environment is divided into four levels:

1. Global — geopolitical competition, technology development, climate change, rapid change of the security environment, and less predictable, more complex and rapidly transforming security threats.
2. Europe and the European neighborhood — the zone of instability around Europe and EU internal challenges.
3. Croatia's southeastern neighborhood — the main

challenges and opportunities for Croatia.

4. Security threats, risks and challenges for Croatia.

The modern concept of security — which focuses on the security of individuals and threats to the rule of law and democracy that reduce the quality of life and create the sense of insecurity among the citizens — guided the efforts to define security threats, risks and challenges.

The likelihood of traditional threats, such as the danger of a direct conventional military threat, was assessed as very low. The assessment was the same regarding the probability of terrorist attacks although, clearly, no country is entirely safe when it comes to terrorist threats. However, it was underlined that Croatia is facing political challenges, intelligence threats and hybrid activities that are unconventional and include cyber elements. For instance, the activities of extremist groups and individuals and the violent behavior among some sports fans can damage Croatia's reputation internationally, among other consequences. Also highlighted as a significant challenge was public-sector corruption at

the state and local levels, which has numerous adverse economic and other effects and causes a loss of confidence in public institutions. It also fosters organized crime, which may endanger the rule of law, economic and financial stability and public security. Special emphasis was placed on negative trends, such as young people leaving the country, high foreign debt, insufficient investment in new technologies and knowledge, exposure to the negative impacts of climate change, environmental degradation, and exposure to natural and man-made accidents and disasters.

It is the nontraditional threats that present the greatest security challenges. Based on analysis of the security environment and the defined challenges, threats and risks, the main structure of the National Security Strategy has been developed with four national interest categories:

1. The security of the population and the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Croatia are the basic preconditions for the existence of the state in all its functions.
2. The well-being and prosperity of citizens are the most important indicators of a successful state, a democratic political system and a stable society.
3. National identity, international reputation and influence enable Croatia to participate in international processes and in shaping a favorable international environment.
4. Croatian people outside the country's borders enjoy the special attention and protection of the Croatian government.

It also incorporated nine goals:

1. Achieving the highest level of security and protection of the population and critical infrastructure.
2. Establishing and developing the homeland security system.
3. Developing and sustaining a strong defense.
4. Developing an ecological Croatia and a strong and sustainable economy.
5. The demographic renewal and revitalization of Croatian society.
6. Developing a citizen-friendly public administration and strategic communication system.
7. Protecting, strengthening and promoting the highest constitutional and national identity values.
8. Increasing the international reputation and influence of Croatia.
9. Protecting the existence, identity and political subjectivity of Croats as a constitutive people in Bosnia and Herzegovina; protecting and supporting Croats in other countries.

The security strategy is considered a continual process that internalizes fundamental values, national interests and strategic goals, and provides a simultaneous response to threats, challenges and risks.

Conclusion

The adoption of the new National Security Strategy is very important for Croatia and its national security. Because of the changed security paradigm and security environment, the national security system must be adaptable, and it requires constant upgrading to respond to modern threats and challenges. The analyses have shown that Croatia needs a more efficient system that will be proactive, more responsive, and able to implement the defined national interests and strategic goals, which will be achieved by introducing the new Homeland Security System.

Croatia's main aim is to direct all its instruments toward the promotion and protection of its national interests and the achievement of strategic goals through an all-encompassing approach. It should include a coordinated effort of all state authorities, private and public sectors, and an active citizen involvement in creating and implementing security policies that are properly coordinated, cost-effective, sustainable and efficient.

The new security strategy also contains mechanisms that should ensure the implementation of its goals and the regular updating of its main determinants. This will be achieved through the Croatian government's submission of annual reports to the Croatian Parliament on the strategy's implementation. In addition, each newly elected government is required to conduct at the beginning of its term the necessary analyses and sustainability studies set out in the strategy document, and propose the necessary changes in accordance with the new security circumstances and objectives.

The benefits of the new Homeland Security System are:

- Ensuring clearer strategic guidelines, the consideration of all relevant security threats and risks at the national level, and making joint decisions on coordinated responses to security threats and risks.
- Avoiding a duplication of efforts or a failure to react to a threat because the responsibilities of state agencies are not clearly defined.
- Ensuring decision-makers in ministries and other state bodies have timely and relevant information, analyses and assessments of security risks.
- Ensuring proactive roles by the state, citizens, nongovernmental organizations, public companies, private companies and other interested parties.

This new security system — based on the paradigm of human security — gives confidence to citizens and allies that Croatia is capable of reacting and responding firmly, strongly and clearly to any threat or danger at any time. □

Retired Maj. Gen. Damir Krstičević, deputy prime minister and defense minister of Croatia, chaired the Steering Committee for the development of the new National Security Strategy. Dr. Anita Perešin, senior advisor at the Office of the National Security Council, was a member of the National Security Strategy Task Group. Col. Anto Zelić, Croatian defense attaché in the United Kingdom and Ireland, chaired the National Security Strategy Task Group.