

Re-thinking of Japan-Croatia relations

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Japan and Croatia – relative size



In 2023 - 30 yrs. of JAP-CRO bilateral relations.

- Could we have done more? Why in Croatia is in average one 1/10 of Japanese companies & investments than in eastern part of EU?
- Why Japanese companies are so reluctant to enter Croatian market?
- Why after so many official visits are almost no follow-ups?
Why Japanese administration is so reluctant (say JST)?

Possible reasons:

- **Cultural misunderstandings due to different mentality and different political tradition.**



Japan:

- Prone to very careful preparations and (over)planning;
- Slow adaptation to unforeseen circumstances;
- Rare ad-hoc measures;
- Continuous approach to every aspect, based on well defined long-term strategy;
- Continued work of administration, regardless of Govt. change;
- Step by step approach to every collaboration – prove yourself on small scale first;
- Success building by stable gradual growth.



Croatia:

- Prone to improvisation, w/o long term projections;
- Ad-hoc & temporary approach; Fast adaptation to unforeseen circumstances;
- Strategies exist just for decorum, not for decision making;
- Preparations on case-level; Almost nobody wants to make a system or to create a framework;
- Complete reset by Government change (“new era”);
- Looking for “grand moves” – no gradual approach;
- Looking for immediate success.



Two basic questions (without answers so far):

- ❑ What Croatia means to Japan ?
How to become an attractive partner and achieve widening of Japan-Croatia collaboration ?

- ❑ What Japan means to Croatia ?
Why do we need widening of collaboration with Japan?

My possible answers are on next slides:



What Croatia means to Japan ?

- **HR is EU member, involved in decision-making:**
 - Relations w. EU are of high importance for Japan;
 - Approach through frameworks of bilateral EU-JA agreements – requires studying of agreements!
- **HR is NATO member, HR is safe country:**
 - Safety on strategic level (Jap. investments) and on individual level (Jap. Tourists, over 150.000/y)
- **Attractive partner in Europe:**
 - 2006. Taro Aso: “Arch of freedom and friendship”
 - Alliance for safety in SEE and Mediteran basin.



What Croatia means to Japan ? (continued)

- **HR develops world-class science and high-tech:**
 - Example: RBI-Chioda & MEXT-MSE MoU 2008.
 - Available for high-tech SME investments;
- **HR is a Mediterranean EU country, clean country with abundance of water:**
 - HR is present on EU and Mediterranean markets
 - Well preserved environment at land and sea – food production
- **HR is not full developed**
 - HR needs investment in energy, IT and transportation sectors



What Japan means to Croatia ?

- **Japan is G-8 country, partner of EU and USA:**
 - Same international orientation as HR;
 - De facto “associated member” of EU in many fields;
 - Influence on international econ. & politic. Trends;
- **One of key economy power-houses in Asia-Pacific:**
 - Pacific = Worlds’ economic hub in 21st century;
- **Prone to invest in production and research in EU:**
 - Contrary to China;
 - Key role in Asia-Pacific economic cooperation;
 - Kone of key Asian financial markets.



Some (obvious) advices for Croatian side:

- **Japanese investors / partners would have more success if they would have here in Croatia a Permanent Office of Japanese Chamber of Commerce / Employers' Asociation**
 - Japanese SMEs are still large for HR terms, but often without resources for an office in HR
- **Positive examples of Japanese investments and HR-JA partnerships worth much more than talking about “Potentials” and “Resources”**
 - Each failed business initiative or investment means bad record and bad image for overall image of HR in Japan; This “cools down“ all potential new investors;



THANK YOU

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