TOPONYMIC FACTFILE

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The Permanent Committee on Geographical Names

Croatia

Country name	Croatia
State title	Republic of Croatia
Name of citizen	Croatian[1]
National official language	Croatian (*hrv*[2])
Country name in official language	Hrvatska
State title in official language	Republika Hrvatska
Writing system	Roman script
Romanization System	Not needed, see *Languages* section below
ISO-3166 code (alpha-2/alpha-3)	HR/HRV
Capital city	Zagreb
Population/Area	4.2million[3] / 56,600km^2

Introduction

Croatia became independent in 1991 having been a constituent member of Yugoslavia for the previous seven decades. Though the 1990s saw continued war and instability, Croatia has now integrated into both NATO and the European Union, joining in 2009 and 2013, respectively.

Located in the Balkans, Croatia has land borders with Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, Serbia, and Montenegro. Its coastline is on the Adriatic Sea and it shares a maritime border with Italy to the west.

Geographical names policy and recommended sources

PCGN policy for geographical names in Croatia is to use official sources from the country. These will be written in Roman script[4] so should be taken as represented locally, retaining any special letters and diacritical marks.

Minority language names may be shown as variants in the municipalities in which they have official status, if they have been shown in this style in an official source. If further detail is required, please contact PCGN.

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[1] The designation *Croat* is used for the ethnic group, rather than the nation's citizens (i.e. Croatian is of Croatian nationality, but not necessarily ethnically Croat).
[2] ISO 639 codes are used for languages mentioned in this factfile.
[3] CIA World Factbook, 2023 data.
[4] With the exception of Serbian and Rusyn names; see more below.

Geographical names in Croatia are the responsibility of the Commission for the Standardization of Geographical Names of Croatia. This Commission maintains a register of geographical names: https://rgi.dgu.hr/ and this can be considered the best available source for names. The map interface includes Croatian and minority names, and the search facility allows a search by language (although not Rusyn or Slovak).

The Croatian National Geodetic Administration also maintains a geoportal at: http://geoportal.dgu.hr.

The US Board on Geographic Names (BGN) Geographic Names Server (GNS) database is also a good source for geographical names.

Languages

The sole official language across Croatia is Croatian, and according to the 2021 census, over 90% of the population is Croat.

Croatian, along with Bosnian and Serbian, were formerly considered a single language (Serbo-Croatian, having different, mutually intelligible, dialects; this is sometimes termed a pluricentric macro-language[5] and there is a high degree of mutual intelligibility between the languages). The recognition of these as separate languages is linked to national and ethnic identity. Some sources consider the languages as one: with an over-arching language code *hbs*, other sources use the separate languages/codes: Bosnian (*bos*), Croatian (*hrv*) and Serbian (*srp*).

Additionally, there are many minority languages used in Croatia, and of these six have official status at the local government level: official status is conferred where more than one-third of the population consists of the minority, or if allowed under local legislation[6]. These six minority languages are Czech (*cze*), Hungarian (*hun*), Italian (*ita*), Rusyn (or Ruthenian), of which the Pannonian variant is used in Croatia (*rsk*), Serbian (*srp*), and Slovak (*slk*). If minority geographical names within these municipalities are encountered, these may be used alongside the Croatian name.

There are some 58 municipalities that have agreed bilingual practices for local minority languages; of these 15 have a 'minority' population of over 50% - these are all Serbian. If Serbian-language sources are encountered in Cyrillic script, these may be converted to Roman script using the Table of Correspondences between the two alphabets. If Rusyn Cyrillic is encountered this may be romanized using the BGN/PCGN 2016 system.

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[5] In some work on a Declaration of the Common language by a Balkan-wide group of linguists, academics and NGOs, this was described as a standard language of the polycentric type.
[6] This is true of Italian names in Istria; the population does not meet the one-third threshold, but bilingual place names are frequently encountered.

Inventory of characters (and their Unicode encodings[7]):

The Roman-script alphabet used for **Croatian** contains the following letter-diacritic combinations in addition to the unmodified letters of the basic Roman script. These may also be seen in the table of correspondences between Serbian Cyrillic and Roman. The romanization system for Rusyn uses three of these letter-diacritic combinations: ž, č and š.

Upper-case character	Unicode encoding	Lower-case character	Unicode encoding
Đ	0110	đ	0111
Ž	017D	ž	017E
Lj *	01C8	lj *	01C9
Nj *	01CB	nj	01CB
Ć	0106	ć	0107
Č	010C	č	010D
Dž *	01C5	dž *	01C6
Š	0160	š	0161

*Note that these characters can also be reproduced with individual letters (e.g. l+j).

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[7] See www.unicode.org

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Map of Croatia

Map produced by PCGN for illustrative purposes only, and is not to be taken necessarily as representing the views of the UK government on boundaries or political status.

Administrative structure

Croatia is composed of 21 first-order administrative divisions (ADM1s). One of the ADM1s is the capital city, Zagreb (*Grad Zagreb*) and the remainder are counties (*županija[8]*). The second-order level comprises 555 cities (*grad*, of which there are 127, not including Zagreb) and municipalities (*općina*, of which there are 428).

ADM1[9]	ISO 3166-2 code	Administrative centre	Location
Bjelovarsko-Bilogorska županija	HR-07	Bjelovar	45°53'55"N 16°50'56"E
Brodsko-Posavska županija	HR-12	Slavonski Brod	45°09'37"N 18°00'56"E
Dubrovačko-Neretvanska županija	HR-19	Dubrovnik	42°39'02"N 18°05'29"E
Grad Zagreb	HR-21	Zagreb	45°48'00"N 15°58'12"E
Istarska županija	HR-18	Pazin[10]	45°14'25"N 13°56'12"E
Karlovačka županija	HR-04	Karlovac	45°29'14"N 15°32'52"E
Koprivničko-Križevačka županija	HR-06	Koprivnica	46°09'46 "N 16°49'39"E
Krapinsko-Zagorska županija	HR-02	Krapina	46°09'39"N 15°52'44"E
Ličko-Senjska županija	HR-09	Gospić	44°32'46"N 15°22'29"E
Međimurska županija	HR-20	Čakovec	46°23'04"N 16°26'02"E
Osječko-Baranjska županija	HR-14	Osijek	45°33'04"N 18°41'38"E
Požeško-Slavonska županija	HR-11	Požega	45°20'25"N 17°41'07"E
Primorsko-Goranska županija	HR-08	Rijeka (Fiume)[11]	45°20'35 "N 14°24'33"E
Šibensko-Kninska županija	HR-15	Šibenik	43°43'38"N 15°54'21"E

[8] PCGN usually recommends following the presentation on official sources, in this case reflecting a lowercase initial on the generic term.

[9] Note that Croatia often uses short/anglicised forms of the ADM1 names in English contexts, as seen here: https://podaci.dzs.hr/2023/en/58064. Though these could be shown as a reference, or in text after the first use of the Croatian name, HMG products should use the Croatian forms, retaining any diacritical marks, as the primary form.

[10] Note that the county website: https://www.istra-istria.hr/en/region-of-istria/general-information/organization/ indicates that the County Assembly is in Pazin, while the County Government is in Pula (a co-official Croatian/Italian municipality: Pola in Italian), and the Istrian parliament is in Poreč (Parenzo in Italian).

[11] Rijeka (Fiume) is one of only two county seats that is a municipality with an official minority (see *Policy*, above): the Italian name can therefore be included in brackets, if desired.

ADM1[9]	ISO 3166-2 code	Administrative centre	Location
Sisačko-Moslavačka županija	HR-03	Sisak	45°27′58″N 16°22′42″E
Splitsko-Dalmatinska županija	HR-17	Split	43°30′50″N 16°27′21″E
Varaždinska županija	HR-05	Varaždin	46°18′16″N 16°20′16″E
Virovitičko-Podravska županija	HR-10	Virovitica	45°49′55″N 17°23′02″E
Vukovarsko-Srijemska županija	HR-16	Vukovar[12]	45°20′36″N 18°59′59″E
Zadarska županija	HR-13	Zadar	44°07′11″N 15°14′32″E
Zagrebačka županija	HR-01	Zagreb	45°48′00″N 15°58′12″E

Other Significant Locations

PCGN Recommended Name[13]	Other names	Location	Feature Type
Adriatic Sea	Deti Adriatik (*sqi*); Jadransko More (*hbs*); Mare Adriatico (*ita*); Jadransko morje (*slv*); sometimes Jadran (*hbs* & slv)	43°N 16°E	Sea
Danube	Donau (*deu*); Duna (*hun*); Dunaj (*slk*); Dunav (*bul*), (*hbs*); Dunai (*ukr*); Dunărea (*rom*)	45° 20' 00"N 29° 40' 00"E	River (*Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova, Ukraine*)
Dinara		44° 03' 48"N 16° 23' 05"E	Mountain (Croatia's high point, 1831m)
Dinaric Alps	Alpi Dinariche (*ita*); Dinarsko gorstvo (*slo*); Динариди / Dinaridi (*srp*); Alpet Dinarike (*sqi*)	45° 00' 00"N 17° 00' 00"E	Mountain range (*Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Albania*)

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[12] Vukovar is one of only two county seats that is a municipality with an official minority (see *Policy*, above): the name is, however, the same in Serbian so does not need to be written twice.

[13] PCGN usually recommends use of conventional names for international features where they exist. If there is no conventional name, or if a product requires local forms, then the relevant name can be shown on the appropriate side of the international boundary on cartographic products.

PCGN Recommended Name[13]	Other names	Location	Feature Type
Drava	Drava (*slo*, *hrv*, *ita*); Dráva (*hun*); Drau (*deu*)	45° 33' 00"N 18° 55' 00"E	River (*Austria, Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Slovenia*)
Neretva		43° 41' 31"N 17° 43' 56"E	River (*Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia*)
Pannonian Basin	Carpathian Basin	47° 00' 00"N 19° 00' 00"E	Depression (*Austria, Croatia, Czechia, Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine*)
Sava	Сава / Sava (srp)	44° 49' 27"N 20° 26' 38"E	River (*Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia*)

Useful references

- BBC Country Profile: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-17212572
- CIA World Factbook: https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/croatia/
- Croatia's geoportal: http://geoportal.dgu.hr
- Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) Travel Advice: https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice
- International Organization for Standardization (ISO): www.iso.org
- ISO Online Browsing Platform (OBP): https://www.iso.org/obp/ui
- Languages: https://www.ethnologue.com/, www.omniglot.com
- Register of geographical names: https://rgi.dgu.hr/
- Unicode Consortium: www.unicode.org
- US Board on Geographic Names Server: Geographic Names Server
- US BGN Geographic Names Standardization Policy for Croatia: Croatia_Country_Policy_webversion_Latest.pdf (nga.mil)

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