

# ISTRIA & KVARNER

Sustainability is Responsibility



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# UNWTO, WHEN POLITICAL COMMITMENT IS TRANSLATED INTO EFFECTIVE TOURISM STRATEGIES

**A responsible, sustainable & universally accessible tourism is encouraged to maximize tourism's socio-economic contribution while minimizing its possible negative impacts.**



**Zurab Pololikashvili**  
Secretary-General  
United Nations World  
Tourism Organization  
(UNWTO)

**A year ago, the closing ceremony of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development took place in Geneva. What is the UNWTO balance on the initiatives that were launched during that year? What achievements can you highlight for us?**

The International Year was a unique opportunity to highlight tourism's contributions to sustainable development. Against the backdrop of tourism's impact on global GDP of 10% and representing one in ten jobs around the world, the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development identified key areas of impact, ranging from immediate socio-economic impact such as economic growth, employment and poverty

reduction, to the environmental sphere around resource efficiency, environmental protection and climate change, but also intangible assets, like cultural values, heritage, or mutual understanding, peace, and security.

**What are the best measures to manage urban tourism growth and 'overtourism'?**

Cities can only claim to be sustainable and

“Sustainable and inclusive cities must mean creating cities for all: citizens, investors and visitors.”

inclusive if they are conceived and managed as cities for all: from citizens to visitors.

Long before the emergence of buzzwords such as 'overtourism', UNWTO defined tourism's carrying capacity as "the maximum number of people that may visit a tourist destination at the same time, without causing destruction of the physical, economic and sociocultural environment and an unacceptable decrease in the quality of visitors' satisfaction". Thus, urban tourism is among UNWTO key areas of work in the context of advancing our contribution to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, in particular, Goal 11: "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable". Our work accompanying this area ranges from a series of international conferences on urban tourism, to dedicated publications offering best practices and conveying meetings at different stakeholder levels.

The recent growth of urban tourism requires the sector to ensure sustainable policies and practices that maximize tourism's socio-economic benefits. By the same token, potential adverse effects need to be tackled – on natural resources, infrastructure, mobility and congestion, and the sociocultural impact on residents. Urban tourism is multifaceted and requires a city-wide strategy with cooperation between all stakeholders and the inclusion of tourism not as an annex to the urban agenda, but from its very beginning.

Against this backdrop, UNWTO commends Dubrovnik's 'Respect the City' project initiated in 2017, geared towards managing tourism growth including all relevant stakeholders.

**How would you assess the steps taken by the Croatian government towards a sustainable tourism policy?**

Minister Cappelli has on several occasions made very clear the clear political commitment to ensuring that the tourism sector grows sustainably. Indeed, Croatia's commitment to sustainability has been emphasized in its Tourism Development Strategy 2020, and this commitment is particularly important in a fast-growing tourism destination like

Croatia, which has been traditionally known for its stunning coastlines.

And their political commitment has translated into effective strategies focused on developing selective forms of tourism based on full quality and destination management involving all stakeholders. In particular, we see great results in developing local gastronomic offers, which is key to promoting the destination's heritage, sports tourism – including the opening in 2020 of one of the longest cycling routes in the world, and health and nautical tourism, taking advantage of the natural heritage of the country.

Many measures are also being taken to address the challenges related to tourism growth and congestion, for example, changes to tourism laws which will give more power to

local governments, thereby enhancing their ability to address local challenges, expanding flights services and connectivity which will improve the spread of tourism over Croatia, a large focus on prolonging the tourist season, and capacity building and communication for locals, tourism stakeholders and visitors.

I would also add that UNWTO is very proud to count on the active involvement of a Croatian partner in its international network of sustainable tourism observatories. The Croatian Sustainable Tourism Observatory (CROSTO), hosted by the Institute for Tourism in Zagreb, is responsible for monitoring sustainable tourism in the Adriatic Croatia, and is a clear demonstration of Croatia's commitment to sharing the global strategic commitment to act responsibly and with care towards the spaces we live in.

## Why tourism matters?





## EBRD, €3.7 BILLION INVESTED IN MORE THAN 200 PROJECTS

The European Bank for Reconstruction & Development (EBRD) is leveraging the benefits of Croatia's EU accession to advance transition & restructuring & commercializing public sector enterprises.

**Victoria Zinchuk**  
*Director for Croatia*  
EBRD

The EBRD forecast for Croatia's real GDP growth in 2019 is 2.5%. What sectors are most likely to contribute to this growth?

Croatia's economic expansion in 2018 moderated from the post-recession high of 3.5 per cent to 2.6 per cent. We expect growth to stay at moderate levels in the near future at around 2.5 per cent. We believe that sectors such as tourism, trade and transport will continue to drive growth. However, long-term growth prospects depend on the implementation of structural reforms. Public and private corporate debt levels remain high and governance in the



state sector as well as the general business environment need improvement. Continued emigration and an aging population are leading to labour shortages in certain areas.

**The EBRD has developed 207 projects in Croatia to date. In your opinion, how is the country leveraging the benefits of EU accession?**

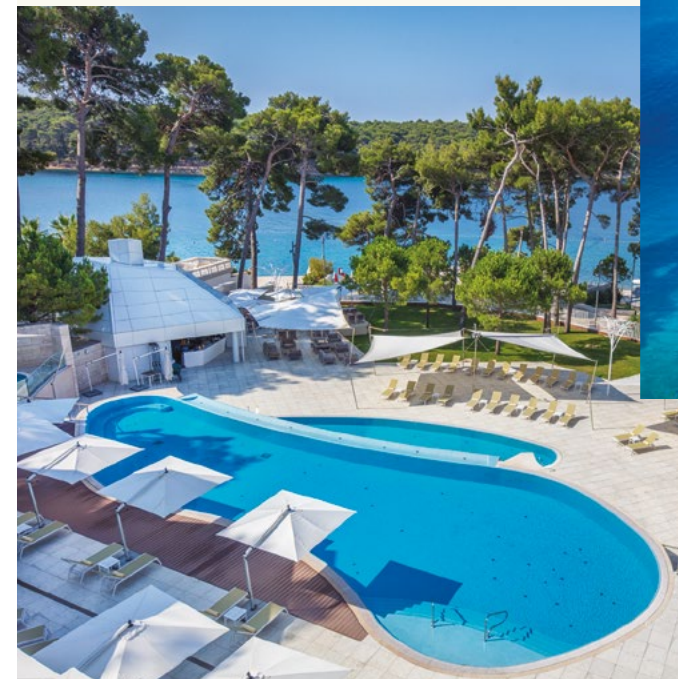
“In Croatia we focus on mitigating the impact of the crisis and restoring sustainable growth.”

Croatia became an EU member state in 2013, which was a strong signal to investors about the political and economic maturity of the country. Membership also meant access to EU funds and programs which constitute an important anchor for advancing reforms and closing investment gaps. Despite significant progress there remains space to further improve the absorption speed and capacity. This is also one of the areas where the EBRD can make an important contribution to unlock growth potential by strengthening the vital private sector.

### Portfolio composition

Current portfolio<sup>1</sup> €924 million

<sup>1</sup>Includes undisbursed commitments



## Unique nature, luxury, & you.

Numerous beauties of the island **Lošinj** are densely concentrated in its most amazing inlet - **Čikat bay**. Here, underneath the centennial pine trees and a few meters from the turquoise sea, you will find the most luxurious getaway in Croatia - **luxury hotel Bellevue**, **Boutique Hotel Alhambra** and **three Art Deco (Nouveau) villas** meticulously restored to offer contemporary comfort.



# ISTRIA: THE MOST VISITED REGION IN CROATIA

## INTERVIEW WITH



### What has been your priority for the past six years?

The main priority of my mandate was to achieve an even and balanced development in Istria meaning an equal development throughout the whole county because the region is not only the coastline, the midland, the Arena in Pula or the EufRASIANA Basilica in Poreč; it is all of these and more. And the development needed to be equal not only throughout the county, but also in all sectors of the county's economy.

Most people perceive Istria just as a tourist area, but it is much more than that. It is true that tourism represents a relevant part of our economy; it is important not only for the county but for the whole country since it contributes with more than 30% to the national revenue from tourism.

But tourism is not our first industry as far as the contribution to our county's GDP: manufacturing comes first, then services, tourism in third place which is followed by agriculture – our Istrian economy is quite diverse.

### What has been the achievement that you are most proud of?

That today Istria is the best county in Croatia, aside from the city of Zagreb. We have managed to have breakthroughs and investments in all sectors: agriculture, manufacturing and tourism. I am very glad that in the past six years

we have reached higher standards of living here in Istria and that the county is the most developed tourist region in Croatia.

### Can you cite some of the projects that have elevated the living standards in Istria?

The building of a general hospital in Pula, which is finally coming to an end. This is a project that will benefit not only our citizens, but also our tourism industry.

Another important project that is about to be completed is the revamp of our waste disposal and management system; we are a very environmentally-conscious county.

We have invested a lot in education too. Our university has opened new courses and we are building a new student campus and residence.

Our agricultural sector has also improved. We are soon starting an irrigation project to improve the efficiency of the sector; this project will be the biggest of its kind in the country.

And finally, Istria is one of few regions of Croatia without a real highway but this is about to change with the "Istrian Y" highway project that is being carried out now.

### Istria is certainly setting standards in regional development in Croatia and your tourism industry is at the forefront. What is your current tourism development strategy?

As I mentioned, tourism is the third contributor



Valter Flego, Croatian  
Member of EU Parliament &  
Former Istria County Prefect

to our GDP and a very important sector for us. Fifteen years ago, we presented our first tourism development masterplan which had as one of the priorities the improvement of all types of lodgings in the county. With better accommodations we would be able to attract tourists that were prepared to spend more money when travelling. We now have a new masterplan and there are

two main priorities: first, make sure that the sector's development is sustainable; second, that the average expenditure per tourist increases.

Six years ago, each visitor was spending, on average, €64; today the figure is €75, and our aim is to reach €100 in two years. But in order to reach this €100 we need to offer a more sophisticated product, so we are investing to improve our services to be able to please a more demanding tourist.

Again, our strategy is not about getting more tourists but being able to attract a tourist that is willing to spend more money. We want to compete with those countries that receive tourists with a high purchasing power.

### What other sectors have potential in Istria?

Manufacturing. We definitely would like to boost our industrial potential and our development agencies are working hard to encourage investment in this sector. We have a lot of small- and medium-size companies all over Istria producing everything from IT components to metal products, furniture to construction materials. Quite a wide range of businesses, and those that are IT related are doing well.

### What about startups? Any incentives given to them?

We are promoting the development of startups. There are business incubators all around Istria to assist future entrepreneurs to better develop their ideas and bring them to the market. We do provide some incentives such as subsidized interest rates that can be under 1%. But most important, we also provide good work and living conditions.

### What is being done to guarantee good work and living conditions?

We need to make sure, together with each town and municipality, that we provide our population the whole package: homes, schooling and employment which is what people need. And I think we are doing well since Istria is the only Croatian county where the population is increasing as well



as employment, which has been constantly growing for the last 7 years.

We are investing in education improving our universities and schools. At the University of Istria, new courses are being offered according to the market needs.

When it comes to housing, which is a national problem and not only in Istria, we

are in collaboration with several towns on numerous affordable housing projects.

### You are now a member of the European Parliament. What do you expect from this role?

It is extremely important to be part of the European Union. It's important to be connected to the source of all European laws, information and funds. At the same time, we want to teach everyone in Europe our values: multiculturalism, multiethnicity, gender and religious equality, and antifascism.

### What do you want people to know about Istria?

I would prefer to answer this with what people abroad like about us. I think it is important to know what others think of us. So we carried out a survey in seven different countries; we asked why they visited Istria and would they recommend it to others.

First, 90% said they would recommend to others to visit Istria and would come back.

Then, they liked Istria because of our sea, the great weather, it was a safe place, has a beautiful and preserved environment and our gastronomy - we do have the best olive oil in the world, great wine and tasting truffles.

I believe there is something special in Istria for each visitor.

## FACTS

30%

Istria's contribution to  
Croatia's tourism revenues

540 km

length of Istrian coastline

33

protected areas

500 km

of cycling trails







# ISTRIA & KVARNER: SUSTAINABLE PARADISE AT THE HEART OF EUROPE

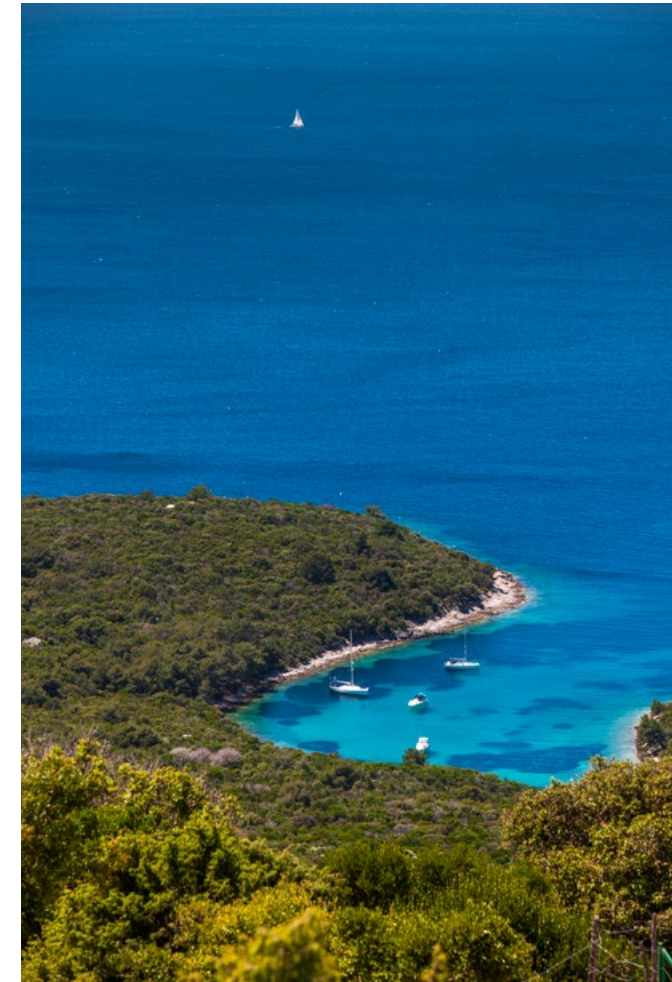
A focus on responsible & sustainable tourism is paying significant social & economic dividends for these regions.

Ever since the end of the 19th century, the pristine sea waters, fresh mountain air and enchanting history and diversity of northern Croatia have delighted tourists of all types and turned this most scenic of regions into one of the most beloved destinations in South-Eastern Europe.

With tourist numbers rising by the year, the local travel industry and political authorities are making it a priority to preserve the charms of Istria and the Kvarner Region for future generations, averting the threat of overtourism and making sure that tourism contributes to the sustainable long-term development of their communities. “There are two priorities in our tourism

development plan,” explains Valter Flego, a Member of the European Parliament for Croatia and the former Prefect of Istria County. “Firstly, we want to attract not higher numbers of tourists, but tourists with higher purchasing power who will spend more when they visit us. Secondly, we want to make sure that the development of the tourism sector is sustainable.”

By growing new segments such as rural and health tourism and by preserving the environment and building community relations, Istria and Kvarner are successfully positioning themselves as authentic, upscale destinations for the discerning traveler, far from the mass tourism that has



blighted other parts of the Mediterranean. “Our ecological diversity is the main reason that tourists visit us, so we have initiated a lot of projects to protect our nature and our wildlife, such as our bears, lynxes, wolves and vultures,” says Zlatko Komadina, the President of Primorje-Gorski Kotar County, which includes the Kvarner Region.

The sustainable tourism strategy has led to significant economic and social benefits. While other regions in Croatia are experiencing decreasing populations as inhabitants look for opportunities overseas, in these areas sustainable tourism is helping to grow the population and breathe new life into the economy.

“Before 1990, Istria had more than 390 villages without a soul living in them,” remembers Denis Ivošević, Director of the Istria Tourist Board. “We have rescued and

rehabilitated 200 of these villages, using agritourism to bring young people back to the countryside and revamp our rural areas with taverns, restaurants, wineries, olive oil mills and boutique hotels.”

To serve the needs of this young population and their families, authorities across northern Croatia are investing heavily in all levels of education and training, from kindergartens to hospitality schools to universities. With growing opportunities to find employment or set up businesses in the tourism sector, many Croatians are now returning from overseas to study, work and start families in their homeland.

Responsible corporate investment across northern Croatia has increased local employment, raised tax revenues and helped the regions of Istria and Kvarner





achieve some of the highest living standards in the country. Political authorities in the area are also working closely with the private sector to make sure that the benefits of tourism development are shared across society.

“Our sustainable tourism strategy is long-term and envisions not only economic success, but also improving our people’s way of life,” says Irena Peršić Živadinov, Director of the Kvarner Tourist Board. “For example, in our Kvarner Gourmet & Food gastro-tourism project, we encourage participating restaurants to offer local produce, so that not only the restaurant owner but other residents can also benefit.”

The development of niche segments such as sports tourism and gastronomic tourism is also helping to put the industry

on a more sustainable footing and share the rewards of growth more widely. “Croatia offers an increasingly diverse tourist offer,” Zurab Pololikashvili, the Secretary-General of the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) said at a recent event in Zagreb. “For example, gastronomic tourism can play a key role in protecting national and regional heritage and encourages tourists to visit places that are not major destinations, so that the economic benefits of tourism are more evenly distributed.”

At the same time, European funds and regional authorities are helping to involve local people in the sustainable development of the tourism industry and make sure that traditional communities prosper.

For example, in Istria the tourism department has implemented a successful Eco

Domus program which enables residents to market properties as environmentally friendly holiday accommodation for tourists. All houses certified for the Eco Domus label must comply with at least 50 environmental and social criteria in categories including energy efficiency, waste management, water saving, the use of ecological products for washing and cleaning and the promotion of local products and services.

Meanwhile, award-winning storytelling project Istria Inspirit uses actors and outdoor performers to bring the history and heritage of the region to life. Participants, who are often local students and craftsmen, dress up in traditional costumes and re-enact stories and rituals from the past to the delight of tourists. This sort of engagement with local

residents and communities represents exactly the sort of authentic experience that today’s tourists are seeking out. As contemporary travelers turn their backs on sun-and-sea packages in favor of cultural tourism and other socially responsible products, authorities are helping local communities and small companies with marketing, training and funding, enabling them to take advantage of this worldwide trend. As a result, the local people of Kvarner and Istria are now reaping tangible benefits from the regions’ unwavering commitment to sustainable tourism.

“Our sustainable tourism strategy is focused on the long term,” Peršić Živadinov says. “We are aiming not only to achieve economic success but also to improve the quality of life of everyone who lives here.”





# ISTRIA: TOP 10 DESTINATIONS IN EUROPE 2019

## INTERVIEW WITH



### Tourism plays a very important role in the Croatian economy nowadays. How much does Istria contribute to the sector?

Istria represents one third of the business generated by tourism in Croatia. We are now in a position that allows us to compete with major popular European and international tourist destinations. According to data released yearly by the UNWTO, if Istria were a country, today we would be in the 56th position as far as arrival numbers; Croatia, as a country, is the 31st most visited country. If you look at the statistical reports on tourist arrivals and overnights in Istria, you will see impressive numbers.

### Has this growth been sustainable?

A responsible and sustainable tourism growth has always been a priority for us.

Many people talk about sustainability because it is trendy and fashionable, but do they really know what sustainability really is and what needs to be delivered?

We started implementing the development of a sustainable and responsible tourism in 2001 with our first masterplan. First, we

concluded that we could not cater for mass tourism as we could not compete with much bigger destinations like Italy, Spain or France where prices can be more flexible. So, we decided to radically change our tourism strategy and focus on quality and ‘individual’ tourism. And to achieve that we had to create a unique and special tourism offer that would attract the high-end market.

### What has been done to offer visitors something truly unique?

Before 1990 Istria had more than 390 villages without a soul living in them. Today we still have 190 abandoned villages, but we have ‘rescued and rehabilitated’ 200; this was an important part of our development strategy. Many new projects were created and developed, with young people who came back to Istria to take over their inherited properties.

Today, for example, in a relatively small area from Poreč to the Slovenian border passing by Buzet and Motovun, there are more than 400 fascinating agritourism places to visit: taverns and restaurants, wineries,



Denis Ivošević  
Director  
Istria Tourist Board

olive oil mills, small boutique hotels, etc.

The development of our hinterland has been a success and as a matter of fact, more than 60% of the press articles we see about tourism in Istria today talks about the interior part of the peninsula and not about the coastal places. The revamp of our rural areas places us today as one of the top three destinations with the highest density of ‘touristic attractions’. As a comparison, in Tuscany you find a tourist attraction every 20 to 40 kilometers, but in Istria you will have one within 10 kilometers from another.

Today I define Istria as a micro-continent with a unique diversity in terms of ecosystem and tourist attractions.

### You have strategic partners for promoting the region. Who are they?

We have seven strategic partnerships and with each of them we have developed creative and innovative projects.

Our main strategic partner is one of the most important football clubs in Europe, Bayern Munich with whom we signed a contract last year. Germany is a very

important market for Croatia, especially for Istria. Around 33% of visitors coming to Istria arrive from Germany and almost 60% of them come from Bavaria which explains our focus on this region and the city of Munich where, by the way, a lot of Croats live.

We also have partnerships with two other important companies in Bavaria: BMW and Cube, a top-quality bicycle manufacturer. Our other partners are Bosch, Turkish Airlines, Mastercard and Hering Berlin, one of the best porcelain companies in the world.

### Can you give us a couple of examples of how these partnerships work?

Each partnership is different. Bayer Munich has 75 million fans and more than 300 million social media followers. We share our activities and promote ourselves through their social media; it is a new tool and an original promotional method for us.

BMW gives us top quality cars and we give them to the best hotels in Istria which are used by their guests as test drives. It is a unique promoting and sales experience.

### Can you brief us on the ‘Share Istria’ initiative?

This is special campaign by Istria Tourist Board who gathers the best online travel influencers and they share with their community gorgeous sceneries and spots in Istria. So top renowned influencers, each with about 1 million followers, get to know the Istrian Peninsula through many exciting experiences and share them with their public. There is no similar initiative in the region, and this was launched with the aim to promote Istria worldwide. So far, we have had good results. Last year we had about 9,000 posts by 29 influencers with a global reach of 389 million. Impressions were almost 4.5 billion!

### Istria has received a number of accolades recently. Can you give us some examples?

Lonely Planet listed Istria among their ‘Top 10 Destinations in Europe 2019’.

National Geographic Traveller has also included Istria on its list of 20 best destinations.



ADAC, one of the most prestigious German automobile clubs, has also nominated us 9 years in a row as best car destination for German travellers and we hope to win it this year again.

Flos Olei, the most important and relevant guide in the world for extra-virgin olive oils, has also given us prizes as the best extra-virgin olive oil region in the world 4 years in a row.

## FACTS

2001

sustainable tourism implemented:  
200 villages repopulated

2004

1st tourism master plan  
development: restructuring &  
repositioning

2010

strategic partnership project  
launched: digital marketing upgrade

2015

2nd tourism master plan  
development: Istria-lifestyle  
destination campaign

### What are your short- and medium-term goals for tourism in Istria?

The ultimate goal of our current master plan that was designed to last till 2025 is to grow in quality and focus on the more high-end tourists. Last year we had 4.5 million arrivals and we would like not to surpass 5 million within the next six years. Also, we want to have a steady number of visitors during at least 9 months of the year and not all of them during the summer months, from June to September.

### What message would you send to those interested in coming to Istria?

First of all, that the best time to come is April to mid-June; there are a lot of activities and events going on and it is not crowded. I suggest a stay that combines a few days at the seaside and then a few days in our hinterland. A visit to our extra virgin olive oil refineries is a must. And one cannot miss our truffles which compete with those in Alba in Italy and Périgord in France.

The media often compares us to Tuscany in Italy, and some say we are even more attractive. I would like to invite people to come and get to know Istria and see if that is true!





# ROVINJ REIGNS OVER ISTRIAN TOURISM

The multi-ethnic, bilingual town of Rovinj has a rich & enchanting history

One of the most charming and atmospheric of all the towns along the Istrian coast, Rovinj has long been celebrated for its architectural elegance, cultural heritage and natural wonders.

From the Bell Tower that looks down on the harbour from the town's highest point, bearing a striking resemblance to the tower of St. Mark's in Venice, to the piazzas and cobbled streets where locals gather in the evenings, the influence of Italy can be seen in all corners of this picturesque medieval fishing port. Part of the Kingdom of Italy until as recently as 1947, Italian is an official language of Rovinj and to this day is widely spoken across the town.

"We are a multiethnic and multicultural community of Croats, Serbs, Italians and Slovenians," says Marko Paliaga, the Mayor of Rovinj. "There is a lot of tolerance and respect among the people living here."

Originally an island, Rovinj was only connected to the mainland in 1763 when authorities decided to fill in the channel and create a small peninsula jutting into the Adriatic. Surviving untouched through all the political and social changes since then, in recent years the town has evolved into one of Istria's foremost tourist destinations.

Many visitors today make a beeline straight for the Bell Tower of St. Euphemia's Church, which was built in the late 17th



century and which commands stunning hilltop views of the harbor and surrounding countryside.

Back at ground level, the main charm of Rovinj consists in walking through the narrow streets and squares of the old town, untouched by modern development. There are ample opportunities here to explore the area's rich maritime heritage, including the Batana Eco-museum, which showcases the unique flat-bottomed boats used by the fishermen of Rovinj. Tourists can watch the boats being built or ride them on the waters around the old town, accompanied by the evocative sounds of bitinadas, the extraordinary folk songs of the local fisher folk, followed perhaps by a dinner of local specialties and wines.

With such a romantic atmosphere, it is no surprise that Rovinj has become a celebrated source of artistic inspiration. Painters, sculptors and other artists from around the world have transformed cobbled Grisija street, which leads up from the old town to the church on the hill, into a one-of-a-kind outdoors exhibition space.

Visitors staying in one of Rovinj's many comfortable hotels are also in easy reach of the environmental adventures, including nearly 2,300 hectares of protected green areas, an ornithological reserve, archaeological sites, 67 kilometers of beaches and a coastline that is cluttered with scenic cliffs, reefs and islets. As Odete Sapač, director of the Rovinj Tourist Board puts it: "We like to say that Rovinj is a place of endless possibilities."



# ROVINJ: A PICTURESQUE TOWN IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

## INTERVIEW WITH



### Can you share some facts about Rovinj's history?

The city was built on an island close to the coast which was connected to the mainland in 1763 by sand filling the channel. It has a long history and was one of the most important towns of Istria under the Republic of Venice. After the fall of Venice and the Napoleonic interlude, Rovinj was part of the Austrian Empire until World War I. Then it belonged to Italy from 1918 to 1947, when it was ceded to Croatia within Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

During the period of the Austro-Hungarian Empire the city experienced a major development with improvements in its infrastructure. At the same time, its industry began with the construction of a tobacco and fish factories as well as a hospital. And then, after World War II, tourism started to be developed here.

### How has the city's tourism flourished?

It really started 25 years ago with our first mayor, Lido Sočić, an architect specialized in urban planning. His vision was to preserve the historic center and not expand the city with new buildings. He wanted to maintain Rovinj as it was then and had been throughout

centuries, keeping its romantic atmosphere. Then Giovanni Sponza, a former mayor of the city, introduced a master plan with the main strategies for Rovinj's tourism development. The main point of this plan was quality, and not quantity.

Today our population is around 15,000 inhabitants and we expect to grow to about 20,000 people in the next few years. And we don't want to grow more than that; population wise or our capacity to receive tourists. An uncontrolled growth can bring problems with sustainability and lack of workforce which we are already experiencing.

### How do you face and solve the lack of workforce?

Croats have been leaving the country throughout its history, not just when we entered the European Union. Croats have always been looking at the west as they believed there was something better there. So, the way to face this lack of workforce is to stick to our strategy of quality before quantity. We don't need a lot of manpower; we need people that can provide a good service and work well. And since we are aiming at quality tourism, we don't need a lot of tourists and a lot of people to attend to them. Our strategy is to keep a manageable number



Marko Paliaga  
Mayor  
City of Rovinj-Rovigno

of tourists, high-end, that we can attend and manage with seasonal workforce.

### How do you avoid an uncontrolled growth?

Our county and the towns have a detailed spatial planning with some rules and

directives. For example, if want to build two apartments for tourism-related activities, you have to build three parking spaces because cars cannot park on the streets.

We reduced the area for touristic related purposes 15 years ago. Our growth needs to be sustainable. But unfortunately, there are a lot of illegal activities connected to tourism and urban planning. That's the main threat to Rovinj and our sustainability. This can be solved only if the central government starts to decentralize the administration and gives the mayors control over their own areas.

### How does the private sector respond to this?

The people accept it. But this does not mean we are not growing and developing our tourism industry. Part of our growth strategy involves private groups such as Maistra and Adris. They are helping us to re-brand Rovinj as a destination for high-end tourism.

Our strategy, together with the private sector, is to remain an exclusive, luxurious and romantic destination. It is important to have an open dialogue with the representatives of the private sector, big medium and small businesses. We need to make sure we are all on the same page regarding future strategies.

### How about the infrastructure in Rovinj, is it an issue?

We don't have infrastructure related problems. First, Istria managed to build a water reservoir that is like a lake. Then we started to improve our water and sewage systems years ago. The upgrading of the sewage system was an EU-funded project that started 10 years ago and should be finished this year. Next, we are going to build a water management plant to recycle water so it can be reused.

Since our tourism numbers are not growing too much, we don't have problems with electricity or water supply.

### How has your city benefitted from EU funds?

EU funds have helped us to improve our infrastructure, roads and harbor. Besides, we also used them for smaller projects related to sports and culture.



### What makes Rovinj special and desirable?

In the past years, we have been doing a lot of research on why and what makes people want to visit Rovinj. A lot of them said they come here because of the beauty of the peninsula where we are located and our architecture.

Another reason mentioned was the high-quality apartments, hotels and campsites that are available here. Others mentioned the nature and forests; we do have a unique forest in the town.

So definitely our architecture and scenery together with the quality of accommodation available are the main reasons people visit Rovinj.

I personally believe it is because we managed to preserve the town as it was before and we have an excellent gastronomy and enology. I also think that the quality of service you get here is good. Rovinj is a small town that is not industrial, so it is very clean! Not to mention that our sea is pristine.

### What makes the city unique?

We are a multiethnic and multicultural community with Croats, Italians, Serbs and Slovenians, etc. There is a lot of tolerance and respect among the people living here and during the war there were no conflicts based on nationalities. And we are bilingual, speaking both Croatian and Italian.

### What is your priority nowadays?

We want to give our people everything we can, we want them to be satisfied. We want the old town to be the place where they can find everything they need. And we also want to help small businesses as much as we can.



#### FACTS

15,000

current population

38 km

to closest airport (Pula)

67 km

coastline length

2,289 hectares

of protected area

525,000

arrivals between January  
& August, 2019



# ROVINJ: A BEAUTIFUL BLUE PEARL ON THE ADRIATIC

INTERVIEW WITH



## Can you tell us about the 'Rovinj All Year Around' initiative?

It is important to listen to what tourists want and to follow new tourism trends. Those coming to our town are no longer just looking for sun, sea and sand during the summer months. So to become a preferred destination throughout the year, we have started several projects to boost other tourism products. Outdoor activities such as trekking, kayaking, climbing, tennis and cycling have created new possibilities for tourists to come year-round as well as our gastronomy. We also realized that we could offer Rovinj as a congress or wellness and health destination throughout the year. Culture and heritage also presented new opportunities and themed events could also increase our tourism offer.

The development of preseason and postseason products have become a priority, and this is an ongoing process that requires the involvement of many local stakeholders directly and indirectly connected to our tourism industry.

## Please share with us the culture and heritage highlights of Rovinj.

Rovinj's culture and heritage are linked to the sea and fishing. One of our two museums, the Batana Eco-museum is listed in the UNESCO Register of Good Safeguarding Practices for the preservation of intangible

world cultural heritage. A batana is a type of traditional fishing boat from the region. The other, founded by local artists in 1954, is the Rovinj Heritage Museum and houses Istria's prime collection of Italian art from the 1400s onwards. There are plenty of galleries and art studios in the old town too.

The Baroque Church of St. Euphemia located in the heart of the historic part of Rovinj is another attraction and it is surrounded by other smaller interesting and beautiful churches.

The archaeological Park Monkodonja-Mušego, just five kilometers south-east of Rovinj, discovered in 1953, is another site to be explored by tourists as well as the ornithological reserve Palud-Palù, eight kilometers south of Rovinj.

## How will the recently opened ACI Marina Rovinj help boost tourism in the city?

This new top-notch and luxurious facility opened in April with almost 200 moorings or berths for boats will attract sailing enthusiasts to our city who can now stay several nights to visit us and from here they can explore the Adriatic Sea. It has all the technical and support services to sailing tourists, and it will be the most modern nautical one-stop shop destination in the region.



Odete Sapač  
Director  
Rovinj Tourist Board

## What is Rovinj's gastronomy like?

Rovinj's history, geographical position, climate and traditions are clearly reflected in the local cuisine which uses indigenous plants, aromatic herbs, seasonal vegetables, seafood and of course, olive oil. Once again, our fishing heritage is clearly seen in our dishes always made with local grown ingredients. Every spring and fall we celebrate 'On the Paths of Rovinj Delicacies', one of the best Istrian foodie events.

## What makes Rovinj unique?

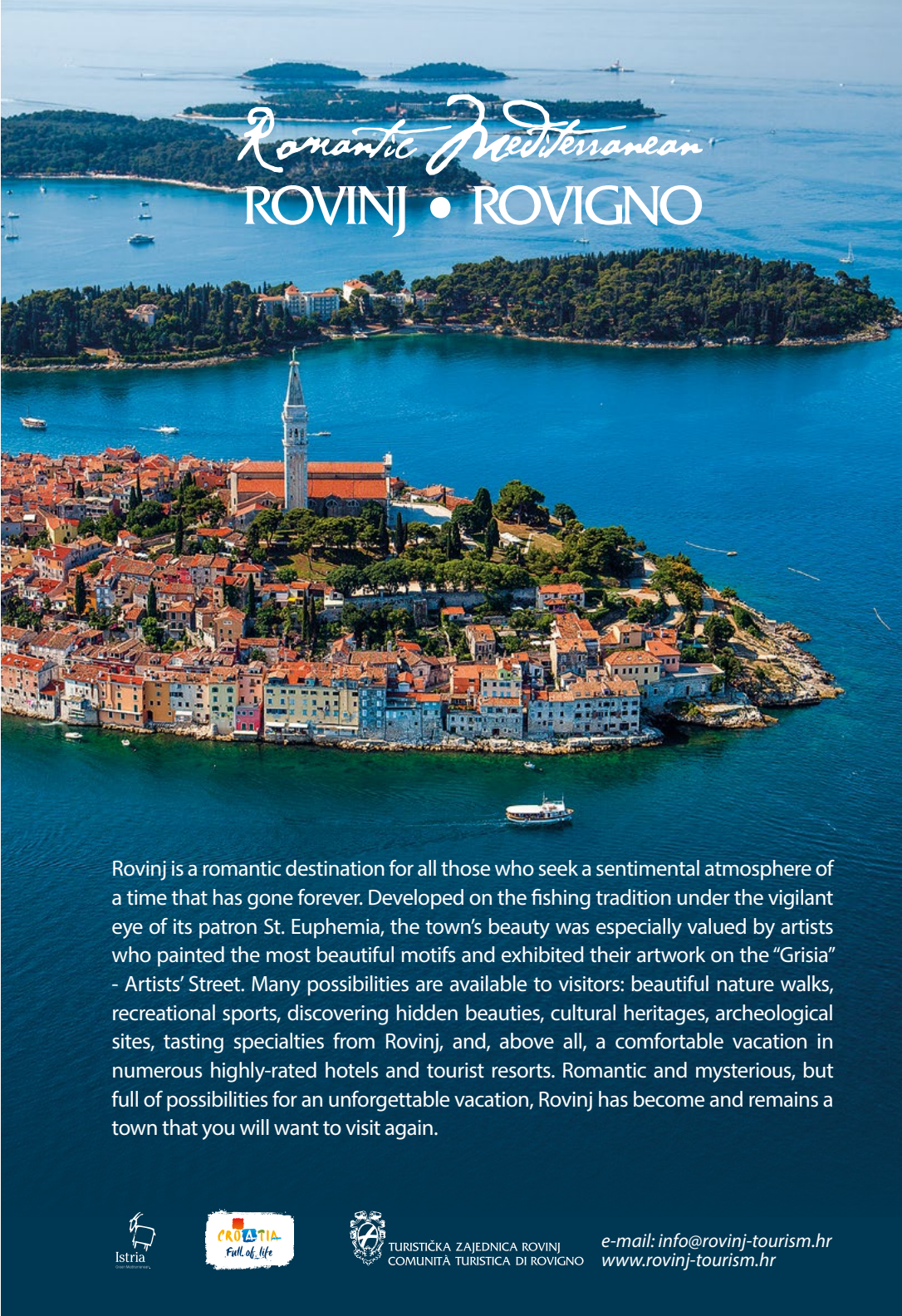
The town of Rovinj is a destination for those who crave a romantic atmosphere. The setting is unique with small colorful houses on narrow and cobbled streets and tiny squares untouched by modern urbanism even today facing a fishing port and a beautiful and clear sea. The view from St. Euphemia's tower is breathtaking! Additionally, the town is surrounded by green areas, a well-preserved forest, 22 islands, islets and reefs; that is what makes Rovinj unique!

## FACTS

20+  
islands & islets  
around the town

23°C  
average summer sea  
temperature

1725-1736  
St. Euphemia Church  
was restored



Rovinj is a romantic destination for all those who seek a sentimental atmosphere of a time that has gone forever. Developed on the fishing tradition under the vigilant eye of its patron St. Euphemia, the town's beauty was especially valued by artists who painted the most beautiful motifs and exhibited their artwork on the "Grisia" - Artists' Street. Many possibilities are available to visitors: beautiful nature walks, recreational sports, discovering hidden beauties, cultural heritages, archeological sites, tasting specialties from Rovinj, and, above all, a comfortable vacation in numerous highly-rated hotels and tourist resorts. Romantic and mysterious, but full of possibilities for an unforgettable vacation, Rovinj has become and remains a town that you will want to visit again.



TURISTIČKA ZAJEDNICA ROVINJ  
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# NOVIGRAD: AN INTIMATE & COMPELLING DESTINATION

## INTERVIEW WITH



### Can you give us a brief introduction to Novigrad?

Novigrad, just opposite Venice in Italy, is the smallest city in Istria with about 5,000 inhabitants in an area of 26 square kilometers. It is a renowned tourist destination with around 18,000 beds and 1.3 million overnights per year. It is one of the most developed towns in Croatia, among the 5 richest towns in the country with one of the highest per capita income.

Last year we received an award for having the best quality of life in Croatia. I believe we won this accolade because of, among other things, our sound economy which is based not only on tourism, but also on agriculture and fishery. We also have a small, but strong industrial output with the presence of foreign companies like Luxottica, a leader in premium, luxury and sports eyewear.

### What other factors contribute to Novigrad's great quality of life?

A sound and strong economy allows us to provide good public services which give people a good quality of life. When the economy is doing well, we are able to collect taxes from the businesses that enable us to provide good schools, infrastructure, sports facilities, etc.

Another important factor is that our young people can find a job when they finish their

studies because there are jobs available in the several industries that are present here.

Also, as a city, we try to offer our population activities not only in the summer, but throughout the whole year. We do that because we want our people to want to live here.

And most important, offering a good quality of life helps stopping the young people moving to bigger towns in Croatia or Europe. Economic migration is an issue for every small town, but fortunately we have been able to grow, about 5 to 8% for the past few years.

### That is an impressive growth. Who is moving to Novigrad nowadays?

There are two types of people moving here. First, those that are coming to work in our main economic sectors and the industrial zone; we are seeing the arrival of a lot of managers for the hotels and multinationals. Second, wealthy people from Zagreb, Vienna, and Germany.

As I mentioned, Novigrad is one of the fastest growing towns in Croatia and you can notice this growth by the number of new industrial production facilities as well as properties.

Right now, we have at least one hundred new apartments available so the real estate



Anteo Milos  
Mayor  
City of Novigrad

market is very attractive as an investment and property prices are growing. The average price in Istria is between €1,500 and 2,000 per square meter; in Novigrad it is around €2,000 and 4,000.

### What are your main challenges today?

The main issue for us is managing the

number of tourists that want to come to the center of town during the summer months. Novigrad is a small town, but in the high season the population can easily increase by 18,000 people, the number of beds we have available.

Even though our infrastructure is quite good we still have some challenges.

When I became mayor back in 2003, the first project we worked on was the improvement of the sewage system; today, each building in town is connected to it. Nowadays, we are upgrading the water system which is already available in all buildings too.

Our biggest problem is with waste management. The current system is fine during the winter months, but during the high reason, with the extra population, it becomes an issue, so we need to address this.

Another issue we have to solve is heavy traffic. Novigrad is a pedestrian town and it seems like there are too many cars in town, especially in the summer months so we do not allow them to enter the town center which is closed off during the high season months.

### The high season puts a lot of pressure on the city's environment. How important is sustainability to your administration?

No one has the magic formula for the perfect sustainable development which is hard to achieve. But we are doing our best and following what most developed countries have been doing for the last 20 to 30 years.

First, to be more sustainable, we improved our sewage system because we could not harm our sea and water; the sea still is one of the best assets Croatia has!

Then we started reducing our energy consumption and by the end of the year, Novigrad will be the first town in Croatia with 100% of its street and road lights being LED. This initiative started back in 2006 when we changed our light bulbs to be more efficient.

We have had successful smaller projects that involved our inhabitants. "I warm the house, not the street" and "I think green and warm myself smartly" are two of them.



The latter encouraged the use of sustainable heating systems such as solar.

Last year we started the 'Green Beach' project which is an environmental beach or a sustainable recreational beach, which implements aspects of sustainability in its management framework, enabling quality free time, as well as economic development

along with the simultaneous preservation of the natural and cultural heritage.

Finally, we have created a new recycling yard for all kinds of waste.

### Something unique about Novigrad?

We have an important ornithology area here near the Mirna, the longest river in Istria which is 53 kilometers long. This area is vital for the migration of birds and we care about it not only because we want to preserve our environment, but also because bird watching is becoming more and more popular throughout the world.

Also, we are the only Istrian town on the coast that is enclosed by walls!

### Why should people come to your town?

Novigrad is not as big as Rovinj or Poreč or other towns in Dalmatia, but the people that have come here love it because of its charm and romantic Mediterranean atmosphere.

Also, it has fantastic natural parks and lots of green areas around it.

Our gastronomy is one of the best in the country and we have three restaurants which were included in the Michelin Guide Global.

Even though the town's name means 'new town' we have more than 2,000 years of history. We are a small town, extremely well kept, with lots to offer the visitors.

### FACTS

5,000  
people

18,000  
people in summer

1.3 million  
overnight stays a year

53 km  
length of Mirna River

2,000  
years of history





# PAZIN: THE CAPITAL & HEART OF ISTRIA

**How long have you been at the helm of the city?**  
I have been the Mayor of Pazin for over 10 years now and my main objective has always been to assure our citizens a high standard of living and at the same time develop the local economy.

The city of Pazin, which is the capital of Istria County, was not long ago an industrial and business center in the region and many people from Istria worked here; today our goal is to maintain this status. The key difference now is that many small businesses have replaced the old traditional industries.

**What is the pillar of Pazin's economy?**  
It is not tourism like in many Croatian towns. About 700 small- and medium-size businesses make up around 80% of our economy today. The majority of entrepreneurs in the city work in the wholesale and retail sector or in manufacturing. Our biggest company is involved in quarries and the processing and installing of architectural-building stone. They have been working since the 1950s and are rather successful. Trade and agriculture are also important to our economy and so is the transport sector.

I am happy to say that unemployment in the city is below 2% and we have several business zones that have attracted entrepreneurs not

only from the Pazin area, but also from all of Croatia.

Recognizing the importance and encouraging effects of the establishment and operation of business zones, in the last five years the city has re-invested in different greenfield and brownfield investments. These have been sustainable developments, making sure that our environment was not harmed, our natural resources were preserved and waste management was properly done.

Since the beginning of our EU membership we have considered European funds as an integral part of our socio-economic development and most of our selected projects are co-financed by the EU.

**Providing a good quality of life to your people is your priority. How are you doing so?**  
First by helping all families regardless of their economic status.

Regarding education, we want to make sure all children can go to kindergarten, whether it is a public or private one. We are encouraging the opening of private kindergartens which will have the same costs as the public ones. Large families with three or more children have a 75% discount on kindergarten fees and the price of meals at elementary school.



## INTERVIEW WITH



Renato Krulčić  
Mayor  
City of Pazin

We will also help those working parents that need to leave their children in school longer than the regular school hours. And we grant several scholarships to our students throughout their academic life up to college.

As a municipality, we support numerous cultural and sport associations for our citizens. Interestingly, most of the people working at these associations are volunteers. We believe it is important that our citizens have the same services and opportunities of those in larger towns.

We also carry different ecological and sustainable projects that help the improvement of the quality of life in town. We are especially interested in creating creative hubs for young entrepreneurs and we are awaiting the opening of our business incubator, Pazin Up, in the city center. We believe such initiatives will eventually generate more jobs and wealth to the town. We are happy that most of our projects have been carried out as well with the help of the town's budget. By the way, Pazin is one of the nine towns in Croatia that experienced demographic growth in 2017.



**Why should investors consider Pazin to start a new business?**

First of all, because of its geographical location, right at the heart of Istria, just half an hour away from Rijeka, Trieste in Italy, Koper in Slovenia and other coastal towns.

We are close to three airports: Rijeka Airport on Krk Island, Pula and Trieste in Italy. We will soon be integrated to a main highway network.

Our economic zones offer great business opportunities with excellent infrastructure already in place and are totally backed by the municipality who will support investors right from the beginning of the project as a reliable business partner.

And most importantly, the city of Pazin's administration will help investors granting permits quickly and can help with the planning of their investments.

**Even though tourism is not the major economic sector, Pazin still attracts tourists. What does it offer to visitors?**

We are the heart of Istria, right in the middle of the county, so you can experience the authentic 'spirit' of Istria here in Pazin, a town with a long and rich tradition and cultural heritage where life is very harmonious

throughout the year. Pazin's Castle is the largest and best-preserved medieval fortress in Istria.

Also, we always like to say that the nature around us is spectacular and one really

appreciates it when hiking, walking or cycling on the many trails, tracks and footpaths we have. St. Simon's trail was one of the first cycle tracks in Istria and is very unique; each footpath or trail has its own story.

Zarečki Krov waterfall, about 10 meters high, is considered as one of the most beautiful waterfalls in Istria and also attracts many visitors.

And lately we have seen an increase in eno-gastro or culinary tourism. There are many excellent restaurants in Pazin and we were one of the first towns in Croatia to have our pastry, *pazinski cukerančić*, included on the national list of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

**Is tourism a sector with potential to grow?**

In 2008, midland Istria had around 20,000 overnights. Last year we had 300,000 overnights. Tourists are recognizing the quality of our tourist product. At the moment we offer predominantly private and luxury houses for holiday.

Although tourism is not our chief economic activity, our tourism strategy is one of "authentic and healthy tourism"; we want our guests to feel at home, throughout the year, as we do have activities all year round, to relax and find peace and mindfulness here in Pazin.

### FACTS

+8,500  
population

700  
small & medium  
size businesses

2%  
unemployment

983 AD  
Pazin's Castle  
first mentioned in  
documents



## SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL IN NOVIGRAD

This charming coastal town boasts the highest quality of life in Istria



It may be the smallest city in Istria, but when it comes to international tourism the historic town of Novigrad punches well above its weight.

Located directly across from Venice on the other side of the Adriatic Sea, Novigrad is the only coastal town in Istria to be enclosed by city walls. Despite its name, which means “new town” in Croatian, Novigrad retains an authentic medieval atmosphere, complete with historic battlements, bell towers, narrow streets and well-preserved churches, cloisters and palaces which date back to the Venetian era. The Lapidarium Museum of medieval

stone carvings in the city center, housed in an innovative modern structure, is an obligatory stop for all visitors to this amazing town.

In addition to the architectural sights and historical heritage, this prosperous and relaxed destination is one of the recognized capitals of Istrian cuisine, with tourists journeying from afar to sample its seafood specialties and indulge in local wines.

“Everyone who comes to Novigrad falls in love with our charm and with the romantic Mediterranean atmosphere,” says Anteo Milos, who has been the mayor of the city since 2003.

Standing near the mouth of the River Mirna, Novigrad is just a short drive away from some of Istria’s most biodiverse natural parks and has become a firm favorite for international bird watchers.

Protecting Novigrad’s natural environment and its historic charms is the top priority for the city’s long-serving mayor. Investments in waste recycling, new sewerage systems and low-consumption street lighting are helping to keep beaches pristine, reduce energy consumption and preserve Novigrad’s natural and cultural heritage for future generations of visitors from around the world.



**AUTHENTIC  
IN EVERY WAY**

NOVIGRAD  CITTANOVA

Once a quaint fishing village, Novigrad-Cittanova is also an architectural gem filled with historical sights, natural beauty, and rich in culture. It is one of the top Istrian gourmet destinations where one can taste many gastronomic extravagances of Mediterranean food.

[www.novigrad.hr](http://www.novigrad.hr)

## PAZIN: WHERE TAKING IT SLOW IS AN ART

Pazin is the ideal place to explore the landscape, history & culture of Istria



The prosperous and leisurely capital of Istria in northern Croatia, the town of Pazin is home to one of the best preserved and most imposing fortresses in the country.


Sitting some 130 meters above the River Pazinčica, the medieval Castle of Pazin is also the site of the legendary Pazin Abyss, a mysterious underground complex of caves, canals and canyons. Once an inspiration for Dante and Jules Verne, the Castle and the extraordinary limestone landscape that surrounds it are Pazin’s most popular attractions for tourists. The Castle itself

houses a range of museums and exhibition spaces, while more adventurous visitors can choose to fly into the Abyss on a zipline which reaches speeds of up to 50 kilometers an hour at a height of 100 meters.

Beyond the Castle, Pazin is the obvious starting point for hikes or cycling expeditions into the central Istrian countryside. Foremost among them is the St. Simeon’s Trail, an 8.9 kilometers route of moderate difficulty which offers stunning views of the local landscape as it passes through picturesque villages and alongside attractive waterfalls, churches and chapels.

The main charms of the town of Pazin itself are more intangible: here, in the middle of Istria, visitors can experience the authentic traditions, culture and friendliness of this relaxed and welcoming region. In particular, the restaurants and pastry shops of Pazin are attracting increasing numbers of culinary tourists who come here to indulge in local specialties in all the seasons of the year.


“We want our guests to relax and find peace in Pazin throughout the year,” Mayor Renato Krulčić says. “Here they can experience the real spirit of Istria.”



**PAZIN**

*The beating heart of Istria*

So impressive is Pazin, that writer Jules Verne used its centuries-old castle in his novel and even Dante mentioned the awe-inspiring Pazin abyss in his works. From literature to history, it is an incomparable stop on the Istrian Peninsula. A magical destination where culture merges with exquisite gastronomy to transport visitors to one of the most fascinating medieval towns in Croatia for business or pleasure.

 **CENTRAL ISTRIA**  
[www.central-istria.com](http://www.central-istria.com)



# MEDULIN: A MILLENNIA-LONG HISTORY

## Can you introduce us to Medulin?

Once a fishing village, today Medulin is a modern tourist resort with a wide variety of entertainment for families and nature lovers. For those seeking adventure, there are a few small islands in the Medulin archipelago - Ceja, Levan or Bodulaš, to be explored.

Medulin is the most touristic municipality in Croatia with over 2.8 million overnight stays a year and is also famous for its coastline and camping sites and we already have a beautiful sustainable glamping site with fantastic amenities.

And this is how we want the whole Medulin to be, a beautiful sustainable destination.

## Medulin also attracts a lot of athletes, even in the off-season months. Why so?

We would like to be Southern Europe's center for athletes, and we can because during the winter, the sports grounds in Medulin are ideal for training, especially football (soccer) players. As a municipality we have developed a few projects towards this goal, one of them being the Medulin Active Park which will also help us improve our standards of living. The goal is to make it the best sports destination in the entire country. On an area of nineteen hectares, we plan to construct a football stadium, a recreational center, a tennis court, an athletic/running track, swimming pools and a sports hotel.

Also, the climate is perfect and very suitable for winter preparations and training.



I believe it is the mayor's role to put forward sustainable and impactful projects like this that will help improve our main economic sector, tourism. But it is not only the municipality that is investing in greenfield investments; private local and foreign businessmen are also interested in the growth of our tourism sector and the Arena Hospitality Group is one of them.

## Why should investors choose Medulin for their investments?

Because we have a clear strategic plan. We know what kind of investments we want; we wouldn't accept a furniture factory for example as it does not fit in our plans.

We have developed and are preparing several projects that are ready to be started by investors such as a sports center - one that would be used not only by tourists, but also by our citizens at the same time. We already have the location permit and hope that by the end of this year, there will be an international public tender for its construction. Sports create opportunities, not only for tourists, but for locals who reside close to these new facilities.

A message for the investors is that Medulin is a municipality that really supports interesting and attractive projects which are ripe for investment. We know exactly what we want to have in our area and each of our projects is also approved by our citizens. And the best combination is when the investors' interests match to ours.

## INTERVIEW WITH



Goran Buić  
Mayor  
Medulin Municipality

## How do you work to ensure a high standard for the quality of life in Medulin?

Medulin is the second most developed municipality in Croatia according to several criteria. A lot of young people are moving here because they find our municipality attractive and unemployment is very low.

We have very good infrastructure and public services such as waste management. As a matter of fact, we are very proud of it compared to other places in the country. We have door-to-door separate waste collection and in just a few years, we managed to recycle 35% of our waste. We are now spending about €30 million to upgrade our sewage system, a project that will take place in the next 2 years. Our infrastructure has been built for a large town so we don't have any issues during the summer months with 50,000 people in town, when normally there are only 7,000 during the winter. But most important, we don't have any problems with our sea water quality.

Our citizens are also happy because we have a lot of theater shows and all kinds of cultural events here.



And to improve the quality of life of our citizens we are opening a new school this fall and by the end of the year we will start building a new kindergarten which is being financed with European funds. We are also processing the documentation and permits for another important project, a senior home.

## Why should people come visit Medulin?

The landscapes and sea around Medulin are just beautiful. The Kamenjak Peninsula or Cape Kamenjak, also known as the Peninsula of Premantura (Punta), is truly unique. Its coast is incredibly rugged and offers many places to swim with incredible beaches, and some places that are only available from the sea. It even has some nice locations for cliff diving.

And the lodging available to visitors is very good too, from hotels and private homes with beautiful swimming pools to campsites and sports centers – they are all top quality.

## Any future projects to bring more tourists?

We have a project for a big water park as well as one for an amusement park. The theme for this amusement park will be the Roman times.

Again, these projects are ready to be given to investors, all they need to do is to apply and bid as these contracts will be awarded through a competitive international tender.

Another project that we hope will attract tourists is the archeological park we developed with European funds for around €3 million. Visitors can walk through an area with remarkable ancient history, breathe in the Mediterranean atmosphere of imperial Rome, relax, and admire the live images of its millennia-old archaeological history. It was built here because it was the site where a Roman emperor lived 2,000 years ago.

## What is the local dish that one should not miss?

Rakovica, a seasonal dish available at the end of spring. It's a type of crab that is boiled and cooked with salt, wine and olive oil. It is served with salad and it not only looks, but also tastes delicious.

## What makes Medulin special for you?

Its remarkable natural environment and hardworking people.

## What would be your final message to our readers?

Come to Medulin! You will definitely enjoy the nature and the beautiful accommodations available for the visitors. There is a wide selection of things to do so it is up to you to choose.

## FACTS

32 sq km  
total area

50,000  
people during the summer

+2.8 million  
overnight stays a year

7  
villages in the municipality

€30 million  
spent to upgrade sewers



## MEDULIN: A FAMILY RESORT TOWN THAT REVELS IN ROMAN HERITAGE

Its historical sights & natural wonders make this the ideal place for a family holiday



Less than a half-hour's drive from the world-famous amphitheater of Pula, the popular resort town of Medulin is preparing to offer tourists a very different sort of introduction to the world of the Roman Empire.

Visitors to Medulin will soon be able to enjoy an amusement park designed to an entirely Roman theme, alongside a brand-new archaeological park that lets families experience Roman times by using Virtual Reality goggles to visualize the past as they explore ancient ruins and remains.

“Visitors can walk through an area with remarkable ancient history, breathe in the

Mediterranean atmosphere of imperial Rome, relax and admire live images of our millennia-old archaeological history,” says Goran Buić, the Mayor of Medulin.

The new facilities, plus a state-of-the-art water park, are set to cement Medulin's reputation as one of the most attractive places for a family holiday in the region. Once a sleepy fishing village, the town now offers all the amenities that a family might need for a memorable summer holiday, including unpretentious restaurants, plentiful concerts, cultural events, accommodation options ranging from glamping sites to 4-star hotels,

and perhaps most importantly of all a one kilometer-long sandy beach whose shallow and pristine waters are ideally suited for children.

The town is also the natural base for reaching the island beaches of Ceja, Levan or Bodulaš and for exploring the rugged scenery and wildlife of the Cape Kamenjak, home to coves, caves, colonies of dolphins, seals and even a collection of dinosaur footprints. With such a plethora of natural treasures, history and family entertainment, it is no wonder that the Medulin Riviera is one of the most cherished destinations in all of Istria.

## LABIN: HILLTOP BEAUTY BY THE SEA

The former mining town of Labin boasts stunning views, intriguing heritage & a vibrant art scene



First mentioned in Roman records way back in 285 A.D., and with Celtic ruins hundreds of years older even than that, in recent years the town of Labin has been transformed from a center of mining and industry into one of the most interesting destinations in eastern Istria.

Overlooking Kvarner Bay, the beach town of Rabac and the island of Cres, Labin today is rich in architectural heritage and cultural events, with the narrow streets and alleys of the old town lined by art galleries, cafés, boutiques and elegant pink-hued buildings in the

Venetian style. The terraces of this charming cobbled district afford unforgettable views out to sea, while looking inland tourists can see all eastern Istria laid out for their delight.

While the mines may have shut down and the factory workers moved out, Labin is far from being a ghost town. Artists from Istria and beyond have moved to Labin in high numbers and open their studios and ateliers to the public in the summer months, when the town's streets become home to a popular festival of theatre, concerts and outdoor performances – Labin Art Republic.

The town has also been careful to preserve the mining heritage that was so important in its past. Tourists can visit a museum which celebrates Labin's mining history and can even explore a long tunnel where miners used to carve coal out of the hillside.

In the future, Mayor Valter Glavičić reveals, it will be even easier for tourists to visit this most charming of hilltop towns, thanks to a planned cable car that will connect the two towns and create a unique destination combining Labin's unique heritage and culture with Rabac's authentic beachside charms.



**BESET IN**  
*Blue*

Everywhere one turns there is water;  
Medulin is three quarters sea!  
This beautiful Istrian village is the  
perfect base on the Adriatic coast to  
explore this region filled with sports,  
fine dining and family escapes.

[www.medulinriviera.info](http://www.medulinriviera.info)



Medulin Riviera  
The blue planet.



*Magical Villages on the Adriatic*

**LABIN**  **RABAC**

THE MEDIEVAL TOWN OF LABIN IS SITUATED ON A HILL ABOVE BEAUTIFUL RABAC, BOTH WERE ONCE SMALL FISHERMEN'S VILLAGES. WITH BEAUTIFUL BAYS & SPLENDID SURROUNDINGS, THESE TOWNS HAVE BEEN ATTRACTING VISITORS FOR CENTURIES. THEIR BEAUTY & CHARM CONTINUES TODAY.

[www.rabac-labin.com](http://www.rabac-labin.com)





# LABIN: AN IDEAL PLACE TO LIVE, WORK & PLAY

## INTERVIEW WITH



### You are a Labin native son, correct?

Yes, and I believe most of the people in town know me because I was born and raised here. I came back to Labin after finishing college in Rijeka. I was working as a director at HEP, the Croatian electricity company, before I became the mayor. In my previous job I learnt how to manage projects which was helpful since that is exactly what a mayor needs to know how to do. Being a mayor is a personal challenge for me; and my main challenge, is to make Labin a better place to live in. I am totally focused on it.

### Can you give us a brief introduction to Labin?

Labin, Albona in Italian, is a top-hill town on the east coast of Istria. It overlooks Rabac and the sea. The town has an interesting history as the largest coal-mining center in Croatia.

Labin had a very strong mining industry after World War II but that industry started to die out as the mining production declined and as an alternative, in the 70s, about 7 new big factories were built here and they generated a lot of qualified jobs. The town in those times was doing well producing a lot of things to the Yugoslav market. But our civil war started, and things changed. The factories lost their main market and

the town had to face a crisis which brought unemployment.

But today the situation is different; the big factories were substitute by small businesses and we have maybe only 200 unemployed people. We also have a business zone with about 800 workers. We believed that the business zone would help us increase the number jobs available to the local population so that is why we created it.

### Who are the present tenants at the Labin business zone?

Different types of factories and many of them are foreign owned - 90% from Italy. We managed to attract a lot of companies from northern Italy. We offered the plot of land and infrastructure and they built the factory. The first company to come was Benetton in 2006 and back then it immediately generated 200 jobs. They stayed here for 10 years before moving to Osijek.

Nowadays, the CAREL Group is present at our business zone producing LED lights, refrigeration parametric controls and many of their suppliers have also come here. They have recently bought their fourth plot at the business zone to construct a factory that is going to make components to car manufacturers such as Mercedes and Lamborghini.



Valter Glavičić  
Mayor  
City of Labin

Another good example is the MCZ Group, a company that manufactures pellet stoves for the local market. They also export, especially to Germany. They were named the best micro company in Croatia.

By the way, a few months ago, the Croatian national television reported Labin's business

zone among the top 3 business zones in Croatia and there are around 400 of them in the country.

### What are the advantages of the Labin business zone?

The plots of land are ready to be built on since the infrastructure and permits are all ready. The workforce in the area is trained and resourceful and the place itself is beautiful and safe. Labin offers excellent living conditions for those coming to work here.

### As the mayor, how do you see the current living conditions of your people, what needs to be improved?

I think that better than giving one financial compensation for each newborn like many towns in Croatia do, we need to create the conditions so that both parents are able to work to have a good life standard. That is the strategy we decided to implement in Labin; so one of our priorities has always been job creation.

If both parents are working, the children need kindergartens and schools with a longer period so the mother, in most cases, can work full time. This is another priority for us, create a good educational system where we provide free books too.

And people, to be happy, also need to have good sports and cultural facilities which we also try to provide. We want to make sure the town is an ideal one for living. We want the younger generations to stay here. We believe in long-term initiatives and not short-term measures.

### How important is tourism for the town of Labin?

Very important not only for the town of Labin, but for the Labin-Rabac municipality.

Valamar Riviera invested €80 million in Rabac and we, as a town, invested €12 million mostly on infrastructure development. It is now a true 5-star destination.

We have 1.5 million overnights a year currently, and we want to make sure our



tourism growth from now on is not about the quantity, but the quality. We have to have a sustainable tourism development and one way of achieving this is by attracting those

tourists with a high purchasing power and offer an exclusive place for their vacation.

### What sort of infrastructure development projects were put into place?

Treatment of waste management was one of them, and it was necessary because the number of people in the area goes from 25,000 to 50,000 in the high season. We have 600 kilometers of underground tunnels and they needed to be renovated.

We currently have 35 projects being financed by European funds and one that we would like to have in the future is a cable car connecting Labin and Rabac. We will apply to get funds for it.

### Can you describe what Project eLabin is?

It is a project that started a few years ago with the aim of better connecting the town's administration to its people as well as making our inhabitants' lives simpler. Two examples of what we have done so far; first, we do not want people to wait in long lines to pay their bills, so we are providing a digital platform for them to be paid through our website and application. Second, we provide Wi-Fi all over town.

## FACTS

1

of the top three business zones in Croatia

800

workers in Labin business zone

90%

Italian foreign companies in business zone

35

projects being financed by European funds





# CROATIA: A NATION OF SPORTS LOVERS

Croatia's passion for sport & world-class facilities make it an ideal destination for athletes



For a country of just over four million people, Croatia certainly punches above its weight when it comes to the international sports arena.

Runners-up in the 2018 World Cup, reigning champions of the Davis Cup for tennis and home to legends such as former Wimbledon champion Goran Ivanišević, basketball hall-of-famers Toni Kukoč and Krešimir Ćosić and the most successful female ski racer in the history of the Winter Olympic Games, Janica Kostelić, Croatia is an undisputed sporting powerhouse.

There has been much debate over the reasons for the success of Croatia's sportsmen and women, which range from the genetic advantages of this strikingly tall and athletic nation to the rigorous regime for developing and supporting sports that was implemented in the Yugoslav years.

Just as importantly, the country benefits from combines mountainous terrain with a stunning coastline, all with a climate that encourages outdoor pursuits, giving elite sports people an unbeatable environment for training.

While tourists who come to Croatia may not be targeting participation in the



next Olympic Games, many visitors to the country find themselves inspired by the Croatian passion for sports and for healthy living. For those looking for a break from cultural exploration or for something more challenging than the beach, Croatia provides the ideal landscape for hiking, mountain biking, horse riding, sea kayaking and even adventure sports such as paragliding.

Furthermore, in the region of Istria and especially in the towns of Medulin and Poreč, there are ample opportunities for visitors to benefit from world-class sports facilities including tennis courts, Olympic-sized swimming pools and stunning golf courses.

To raise the region's profile among sports fans, the Istria Tourist Board has reached a strategic partnership with Bayern Munich, Germany's most successful football team, under which it will provide the club with facilities for training and events. As the result of agreements such as these, increasing numbers of foreign athletes are now coming to Istria to test themselves and develop their skills in a country where sport truly is a passion.





# VALAMAR HOTELS: HELPING DEVELOP LOCAL ECONOMIES

## INTERVIEW WITH



### What is Valamar's role in the overall development of the Croatian tourism industry?

Valamar Riviera is the leading tourism company in Croatia by size, growth, investment volume, employees, share performance, geographic reach, CSR programs, and is consistently considered one of the most desirable employers in Croatia.

As a leader in Croatian tourism, Valamar is setting the development path of the Croatian hospitality industry. Valamar's investments in the hospitality industry in Croatia over the last fifteen years add up to around €800 million.

Today, our portfolio includes 34 hotels and resorts, and 15 camping resorts located along the Adriatic coast from Istria and Kvarner to Dubrovnik in which Valamar can accommodate up to 58,000 guests, meaning that approximately every 15th traveller visiting Croatia stays in one of Valamar's properties. In addition, we have recently acquired a property in Austria as a first step into our international expansion, one of our strategic goals for the forthcoming period.

In June we announced the start of the largest single development project in the company's history worth over €100 million to create a 5-star luxury resort, opening in 2021, in Pore where we are headquartered.

What also sets Valamar apart in the Croatian tourism industry is our business model. Valamar is an asset owner and asset developer; we provide hospitality management services

to all of our properties and, via partnerships in our destinations, we manage and develop destination services to offer a complete and authentic travel experience to our guests.

### How do you assess Croatia's endeavours to have a sustainable development of its tourism industry?

Developing sustainable business models is the most important long-term challenge for many industries, but for tourism it is a first-class priority as the quality of the environment is an integral part of leisure travel, Croatia's core product. We cannot imagine tourism in Croatia without the natural beauty of the coastline and the preserved cultural heritage of past generations, so it has to be our prerogative to ensure that development is not depleting or destroying these resources.

Croatia's coastline is relatively undeveloped compared to many other Mediterranean destinations in Western Europe, which is part of the appeal for our guests. However, development models also tend to be quite unsophisticated and lacking in strategic planning, which can also mean that long-term effects on the environment, inhabitants, agriculture, fishery or the local way of life are not properly evaluated.

However, in recent years Croatia has sped up investment in public infrastructure, waste management, destination services, high-quality hotel and resort projects, wind



Ivana Budin Arhanić  
*Business Development  
& Corporate Affairs VP*  
Valamar Riviera

farms and solar energy infrastructure, e-car networks, etc. So, I am convinced that Croatia is capable of creating a better kind of tourism for the future.

### What does sustainability mean to Valamar?

We believe that leading companies such as Valamar have a higher level of responsibility to the environment in which they operate because we have a significant influence on the development path of our industry and our peers. This belief is also informing our responsibility to ensure sustainable returns to shareholders over the long run. Sustainability for Valamar means that we are creating added value for all our key stakeholders – guests, employees, destinations and shareholders. Our strategy and business activities are aligned and evaluated on that basis.

In managing our impact on the environment, Valamar is focused on the protection of the sea and coastal ecosystems, energy efficiency and green energy, water savings, proper waste disposal and active communication with guests, employees and suppliers about ways to improve our collective

responsibility to the environment. One of our core values is taking care of our employees – employee satisfaction and development is a priority for Valamar as our business is not sustainable without highly satisfied and educated employees. We believe that Valamar's social responsibility is a source of competitiveness – it is an essential element in creating a positive service culture which is in return a key driver of success in our business.

### What can you tell us about your CSR programs?

Within the company, we have nine CSR umbrella programs which are aligned with our core business activities and our key stakeholder needs. Last year, we invested 4,9% of our revenues in our CSR programs totalling €13 million, including almost €3 million in activities within our CSR program “Green Valamar” which encompasses energy efficiency programs and other initiatives. All Valamar's properties have certified energy management systems, and 100% of the electricity comes from renewable energy sources. Within our CSR program aiming at destination development, we have initiated and developed numerous large destination events, and we also invest in destination infrastructure such as playgrounds, sports facilities and beaches.

We are especially proud of our “Big Heart of Valamar” program, through which we continuously support numerous organizations and initiatives in local communities. Valamar's best-known philanthropy project is “A Thousand Days on the Adriatic Sea”, providing free summer holidays to thousands of children in need, often enabling them to see the sea for the first time in their lives.

### How do you help the communities where your properties are?

We are committed to the development of local communities where our properties are located. We believe we should do this because it benefits our business as much as it does the communities themselves. We have developed a series of projects and long-term cooperation models with local governments, tourist boards, service and event providers, sport clubs and



non-profit organizations. Hence, we actively contribute to local initiatives and activities, and in turn our guests have a more intense and authentic travel experience while the local population enjoys a higher quality of life.

### What is your policy regarding workforce development?

We are aware that the investment in people

is absolutely paramount for sustainable growth and development, especially in tourism. Valamar is the leading Croatian hospitality employer when it comes to raising the minimum wage, offering higher compensation and progressive wage growth, education and training, career development programs, high-quality housing, awards programs, and many other benefits for our employees. In this year alone, we opened 400 new positions to reach a total of 7,000 employees. Yet, the challenge of retaining and attracting good employees into our industry will remain our key priority especially as we strive to increase the quality and the range of our services. Human resources, further capital investments in hotels and resorts and infrastructure development are going to be the key prerequisites for extending the season in Croatia over the long run.

### What makes the Croatian experience special and unique?

This question I can answer as an expert in the hospitality field or privately. I choose to answer as a local: All of you who have never been to Croatia – come – our coast, nature, culture, history and hospitality will make it worth your while. In Croatia the rhythm of life is measured, towns are intimate, food is homey, nature is stunning, and it is very easy not to feel like a tourist.

#### FACTS

34  
hotels & resorts

58,000  
total guest capacity at  
Valamar's properties

€13 million  
invested in CSR activities  
in 2018

100%  
of the electricity used at  
hotels from renewable  
energy sources





# ISTRIA: AN AUTHENTIC TASTE OF HEAVEN

Seasonal ingredients & long-standing traditions have won lasting fame for Istrian cuisine

Celebrated for its seafood, truffles, wines and olive oils, the cuisine of Istria is one of the undisputed cultural treasures of Croatia, delighting gourmets and connoisseurs from around the world.

Known as the Tuscany of Croatia, the region is famed for healthy and inventive Mediterranean dishes that can rival anything produced in Italy. No visitor comes away from Istria without raving about the quality of the cuisine, whether it be the seafood of coastal areas or the succulent meat-based dishes of the interior.

Although Istria has no one signature food, it is perhaps most famous for its truffles: the region's white truffles judged by many to be finer than even the truffles of Italy. Grown from September until January, white truffle shavings are often used in steak, fish and

pasta dishes, while ice cream and chocolate cake with truffles make for some uniquely Istrian desserts. Those people who may be deterred by the high price of the delicacy should remember that since Roman times the truffle has been prized as one of the world's most powerful aphrodisiacs.

Shortly after truffle season, another aphrodisiac takes over as the seasonal treat of choice - wild asparagus. This unusual tasting vegetable is used in many dishes in the springtime, especially in rustic omelets and as a garnish for traditional Istrian pasta varieties such as *fuži* and *pljukanci*.

Moving from the soil to the sea, Istria is renowned for the quality of its shellfish. Scallops, oysters and mussels have been cultivated in the waters of Istria since ancient times and today they feature in a wide range



of dishes, especially in the winter months. Gourmets say that a fortunate combination of salt and fresh water around the coastline of the Istrian peninsula gives the seafood harvested here a unique and unmistakable flavor.

The Adriatic squid is another much prized delicacy which is hunted only in winter when the sea is cold. Caught with special hooks, they can either be baked whole, stuffed, or pan-fried with herbs, lime or spices. Foodies should also be sure to try the legendary sea scallops of Novigrad and at least one fish or mussel dish cooked in the famous *buzara* style with garlic, parsley, olive oil and white wine.

When it comes to wine and olive oil, thanks to its climate and terrain, Istria is in a league of its own. The region's olive oils, often produced by small cooperatives or single farmers, are regularly ranked among the world's very finest and are characterized by their artisanal, individual quality. Meanwhile, white wines from the Malvasia grape make the perfect match for Istrian seafood, while no hearty meal in the interior is complete without dipping your bread into *supa*, a mulled red wine served in an earthen jug which has been putting the fire into the bellies of Istrian farmers and laborers since time immemorial.





# PRIMORJE-GORSKI KOTAR COUNTY: PRIVILEGED GEOSTRATEGIC POSITION

INTERVIEW WITH



**The Primorje-Gorski Kotar County has a privileged location. Can you introduce it to our readers?**

Our county, located in western Croatia, includes the Bay of Kvarner, the surrounding Northern Croatian Littoral, and the mountainous region of Gorski Kotar. Its main city is Rijeka and there are about 315,000 living in Primorje-Gorski Kotar County which is the fifth largest one in Croatia. It is unique because of its geostrategic position and natural diversity including islands, coastal and mountain areas. We also have a lot of natural water resources.

**The county had a very developed industry in the past. What are the main economic sectors today?**

It used to be one of the biggest industrial centers in former Yugoslavia along Vukovar and Maribor. The history of the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County and the City of Rijeka is rooted in a centuries-long tradition in industrial manufacturing, shipbuilding, the production of petroleum products and petrochemical, pharmaceutical, wood processing industry, etc. Though times have changed a few of these industries, we still have a big refinery here along with an LNG

terminal, petrochemical and power plants. This means we need to take care of and protect our county because of environmental issues. We have detailed documents and studies relating our development and the environmental impact of each industrial project we have in the county.

**How high are environment related issues in your agenda?**

The county has 12 departments that manage administrative procedures in different areas. One of them is spatial and urban planning and they are responsible for all matters concerning the environment.

We also founded an association with the aim of protecting our nature. We initiated a lot of projects connected to the protection of our animals and birds like the condors on Cres Island which is the biggest island in our county. In a small village on the island of Cres we built a reservation for these birds. We also started a European Union-funded project connected to the protection of bears, lynxes and wolves as this is the smallest area in Europe where these three species coexist.

There are many forests in Gorski Kotar, as a matter of fact, it is called the ‘Green Heart



**Zlatko Komadina**  
*President, Primorje-Gorski Kotar County*

of Croatia’ so we are very much concerned about any environment issue.

**Tourism has been pivotal for Croatia's development for the past few years. What role does tourism play in the county's economy today?**

Apart from being the president of the county, I am also the president of the county's tourism board so definitely tourism is an important sector for us. Today, it plays a big role in our economy and represents around 20 percent of it.

I hope that other sectors will soon play a stronger part in the economy too, so we don't depend too much on one sector.

**What are the investment opportunities outside tourism so other sectors can also prosper?**

Rijeka, our main city, has a big port and there are many economic activities connected to the port. So many business opportunities connected to the port could be developed.

We have industrial and business zones that also offer good opportunities, Omišalj on

the island of Krk and Kukuljanovo in Bakar are two examples. We are also developing a big economic zone in Matulji, a border town with Slovenia which could attract investments related to border activities.

Since we have a lot of forests, we also produce a lot of products made of wood so there is potential there. We should also be looking at businesses related to the energy industry and refineries since we have a long tradition in these sectors.

I'd like to point out that we have a lot of small and medium businesses which help the development of the economy.

**What is being done to extend the tourism season, so it is not only strong a couple of months every year?**

Our main season during the summer months is always busy and full of activities because that is when we get most tourists. So to attract visitors before and after the busy summer months we have developed several pre- and post-season cultural programs, events and activities. We have also a few events related to gastronomy and enology.

Then, we have developed sports events which are becoming popular as they promote a healthy lifestyle and wellness. Our county was one of the first ones to develop and establish a cluster for health tourism in Croatia. Our cycle tourism, for example, is well known by those interested in it.

Our county owns a few health centers that provide thalassotherapy and deal with cardiac and respiratory problems. A good example of that is our center in Crikvenica. So I believe that medical tourism has a huge potential that can be developed along with the private sector who could offer dental and aesthetic plastic surgery clinics. So, if we make progress in medical tourism, we can also extend our season to months not in the summer.

And because of our maritime heritage we have also opened two sea museums, in Mošćenička Draga and in Krk as well as reconstructed boats and a big sailing ship



in Lošinj to protect our history in shipping. Some of these projects were done in

cooperation with Slovenia with the aim to attract tourists all year round.

## FACTS

**315,000**

population in the county

**5th**

largest county in Croatia

**20%**

tourism contribution to the local economy

**1st**

county to develop health tourism in the country

**As president of the county's tourist board, what is the message you send to attract more visitors?**

Our slogan is “Diversity is beautiful”. This is what I like to tell people: we have a lot of diversity, different offers in a such a small area so we have something for everyone. Starting with the weather because we have a huge landscape with several climate zones – from Mediterranean to mountain climate.

And we have an excellent gastronomy and a rich cultural heritage.

Glagolitic script, the oldest known Slavic alphabet, can be seen here too and there are great places to visit such as Baška and Opatija not to mention the nature parks of Risnjak and Učka

**What is unique about your county?**

It's a multicultural region with 22 national minorities. Our people are very open-minded, and we welcome everyone!





# KVARNER: DIVERSITY IS BEAUTIFUL

## INTERVIEW WITH



### What areas does the Kvarner Region embrace?

The Kvarner Region is part of the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County and covers the coastal area of the Kvarner Bay, several islands and most of the small historic province of the mountainous Gorski Kotar. It includes the Adriatic shore of Opatija, Rijeka, Crikvenica, Novi Vinodolski and the whole Gorski Kota; the main Kvarner islands are Cres, Lošinj, Krk and Rab.

The name Kvarner is often used to market and promote the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County and our slogan “Diversity is beautiful” was chosen because it embraces a variety of small different places, including islands and mountains.

Because of our geographical location and different places, Kvarner is one of the most diverse parts of Croatia and tourism here is not seasonal. One can visit us throughout the year, during the winter most people visit the coast and during the summer they go to the islands.

### How would you define your tourism offer?

Kvarner was never a mass tourism destination, we have always aimed at having

a sustainable tourism development. We are a region you can visit any time of the year and not only during the summer months; this makes Kvarner a more attractive destination. For the last 8 years, the number of overnight stays during the preseason has risen 90% and 80% during the post season.

We have several projects to brand Kvarner and its numerous destinations and activities.

For example, Kvarner Gourmet & Food, promotes our gastronomy; local businesses and restaurants participate in this initiative. Kvarner Family is the project related the private accommodations for tourists and we try to match the accommodation according to what the visitors want and like, if they want a place that is bike or pet friendly, for example.

We have also been working intensively with local clinics to develop health tourism as we have an excellent climate for it.

### Have you been successful in developing the region's tourism sustainably?

The development of the sector needs to consider economic, environmental and social sustainability. Our sustainable tourism strategy is long term and envisions not only the economic success, but also



Irena Peršić Živadinov  
*Director*  
Kvarner Tourist Board

improving our people's way of life.

Sustainability is always part of every project. For example, in the Kvarner Gourmet & Food project, we encourage the restaurants to offer local produce, grown in



this area, so not only the restaurant owner, but other residents could benefit from the business.

Sustainability does not mean that the development has to stop, we cannot stop development. But we need to make sure we are developing in the right direction and never disturb the lives of our local people.

### Have you been able to access European funds to help the development of tourism in Kvarner?

We are currently working on 5 projects connected to sustainability with the support of European funds. One of them is called Mala Barka (Little boat), it connects the Slovenian and Croatian coastal area with a unique tourist offer based on the tradition and story of our maritime heritage. This project has involved a lot of local people and by restoring 13 old wooden boats we inspire the importance of conservation and valorization of maritime, fishing and shipbuilding heritage. Our people share old traditions with the visitors who are able to experience something authentic and

unique. These sorts of special experiences always make a visitor return to a destination.

### FACTS

6.3%  
of Croatia's area

305,000  
inhabitants

276  
protected cultural  
monuments

1889  
Emperor Franz Josef  
proclaimed Opatija a  
health resort

### How can tourism stop people, especially the young ones, leaving small towns?

A sustainable tourism development should solve part of this problem by providing employment for the people that need to leave because there are no jobs. Tourism needs to generate more jobs, so we employ the local workforce and by doing so we automatically help the local communities.

We are trying to develop hospitality and tourism schools and also connect students with our hotels and restaurants. This helps to provide work to the local population and at the same time give our businesses the workforce they need.

### Kvarner has been attracting Europeans for more than 170 years. What makes it so special?

Our guests emphasize our preserved nature and environment as the main reason for visiting Kvarner. So, we accentuate the preservation of our environmental and cultural heritage as a priority. Also, this part of Croatia has a number of autochthonous monuments of the Croatian culture and that makes it special.



# RIJEKA: A CITY IN TRANSFORMATION

## Please introduce us to Rijeka.

Rijeka, the main city and county seat of the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County, is the third largest city in Croatia in terms of population, but second according to budget and investments.

It is an important port city and this year we celebrated 300 years of Rijeka being proclaimed a Royal Free port by King Karl VI. The port has had a direct impact on the development of not only the city, but also the whole of Croatia. In the last 90 years it belonged to several different states and the city has been shaped by constant changes and created a cosmopolitan environment of open views and tolerance to the richness and diversity of race, nation, religion and culture.

Someone born in Rijeka in 1913 and alive in 1991 would have lived without moving through the following states: the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy; the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs; the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes; the Italian Regency of Kvarner; the Free State of Rijeka; the Kingdom of Italy; the Kingdom of Yugoslavia; the Independent State of Croatia; the Third Reich; the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia; and finally, the Republic of Croatia.

The changes of states brought something special to the city: a liberal way of thinking, openness, and acceptance of new and different cultures and nationalities. For

example: Rijeka was the first city in the former Yugoslavia to accept the punk movement; another example, Rijeka had the first disco in this part of Europe.

## Has the economy of the city also changed as much?

Before our War of Independence, Rijeka was an industrial city. However, there have been a lot of changes in the last 25 years and nowadays the economy is very different from what it used to be. We no longer have big factories, but mostly small and medium businesses engaged in designing, IT, manufacturing, construction, trade, and professional, scientific and technical activities. Tourism has also become important for the economy of the city.

## You mentioned that Rijeka receives a lot of investment. Can you expand on that?

Today, just the government itself has invested more than €200 million in different projects. A lot of them are very connected to the port in order to make it more competitive among other European ports.

We also have a lot of investments on projects that are financed with European Union (EU) funds. This year, Rijeka received more funds from the EU than any other city in the country. More than €250 million was received for various contracts and projects that were made available through tenders.



## INTERVIEW WITH



Vojko Obersnel  
Mayor  
City of Rijeka

As Rijeka will be the European Capital of Culture next year, we also got a lot of funds for renovating parts of the city and upgrading its infrastructure.

## You are currently serving your sixth term as mayor of Rijeka. What has been key in keeping this position?

I just started my 19th year as mayor of the city and I think continuity is paramount for a successful civil servant to finish big and important projects. I believe that two or three mandates are the minimum to really make a change and be able to conclude relevant projects.

Also, it is important to have a good team that supports and understands you and have a good working relation with those serving the community because the city is not only the administration, but also all the public utility companies that deal with transport, waste collection, gas and heating, water supply, etc. and the institutions responsible for education, social and sports activities, etc. All of them make up the city and it is necessary to be able to manage and understand all of them.



## 2020 is an important year for Rijeka. It is ready to be a European Capital of Culture?

We have less than a year, so we would have a problem if I said we were not ready!

We have been working hard to make sure that infrastructure-wise it is ready and preparing the program. I cannot speak about the program in details yet, but I can already say it will be a very interesting and diverse program with more than 1,000 different activities and events. We have hired professionals to support us with the program which will include theater and street performance not only in Rijeka but also in towns near us and even on the islands near us such as Krk.

Part of the Rijeka 2020 is the 27 Neighborhoods project. All areas of the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County will be evenly included in 27 Neighborhoods – islands, the coast, the hinterlands, the highlands and the city of Rijeka. The selected neighborhoods, cities, towns, villages and other areas will take part in international partnerships, participate in neighborhood festivals, and host European Capital of Culture programs. The aim of 27 Neighborhoods is to provide multiple opportunities for establishing exchange programs spanning the entire European Union, thus creating an informal cultural activity network between neighborhoods that will last beyond 2020. Some neighborhoods

in Rijeka and the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County lack local cultural centers and developed models for citizens. So the goal of 27 Neighborhoods is to strengthen local communities by strengthening human resources, developing interpersonal relationships, organizing cultural activities and increasing cultural contents. What

is most important, we want to give ordinary people the opportunity to participate and the idea behind the project is 'Rijeka, port of diversity'. Our diversity being the result of the historical facts I mentioned before.

## Did you expect to be selected to be one of the 2020 European Capitals of Culture?

A lot of people were surprised when we decided to launch our candidacy and doubted that Rijeka could win the competition over cities like Dubrovnik, Split, Zagreb or Pula. But, in the last 15 years, the EU has been given the opportunity to not so known cities like Rijeka to be European cultural capital; cities that have been transforming themselves from typical industrial cities to cities that are booming and opening up to tourism.

## What makes Rijeka different from the other Croatian cities you just mentioned?

Rijeka is an open city, not only for tourists but also for investors. We have a nice coast, history, industrial heritage and great investment opportunities. We have opportunities in different sectors and I can mention recent successful projects in the pharmaceutical industry, construction of new hotels, tourism and there are a lot more! We welcome all people wanting to come here, whether to visit or invest in Rijeka.

### FACTS

3rd  
largest city in Croatia

200,000  
population

€200  
million invested by the  
government in the city

1,000  
different activities &  
events planned for  
Rijeka 2020



## RIJEKA: AN ELEGANT CITY OF CULTURE

In 2020, the bustling port city of Rijeka will hold the title of European Capital of Culture



The third largest city in Croatia and its most important port, in 2020 the city of Rijeka will assume the role of the country's very first European Capital of Culture.

Maybe it doesn't have the same stunning architectural heritage of some other towns in Croatia, but in many ways, Rijeka is an obvious choice for the festival. In recent years the title of European Capital of Culture has often been held by port towns and industrial cities such as Liverpool, Glasgow and Rotterdam which have transformed themselves into busy hubs of services, tourism and commerce.

While seaports around the world are renowned for their diversity, tolerance and open-mindedness, even by these standards Rijeka is special: in the 20th century, at different times the city formed part of a dozen different states.

"This has created a cosmopolitan environment of tolerance to the richness and

diversity of race, nation, religion and culture," Rijeka's Mayor Vojko Obersnel says. "For example, Rijeka was the first city in the former Yugoslavia to accept the punk movement and we had the first disco in this part of Europe."

Today an integral part of the European Union, as Capital of Culture Rijeka will be showcasing and celebrating its inclusiveness and liberalism to the full. Under the theme of "Port of Diversity", the festival aims to create a meeting place for Europeans from all different backgrounds to express themselves, exchange ideas and share cultural values.

In the countdown to 2020, Rijeka is repurposing some of the city's most prominent industrial buildings into centers of art and culture. The town has already built an award-winning Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art and a dazzling space for coworking and cultural events, the RiHub.

In 2020, Rijeka will open to the public an extraordinary City of Rijeka Museum, which will be housed jointly by a giant former sugar refinery and by a decommissioned merchant ship, the Galeb (or Seagull), now permanently moored in the port. In the Benčić industrial complex, the town is constructing a brand-new city library and is converting what was once a tobacco factory into a specialist venue which will hold workshops and organize activities especially for children.

Rijeka also aims to spread the benefits of being European Capital of Culture not only across all parts of the town and the surrounding region, including islands in Kvarner Bay such as Krk. "With more than 1,000 different activities and events, we want to give all the people of Rijeka and beyond the chance to participate," Obersnel says.

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# OPATIJA: CRADLE OF CROATIA'S TOURISM INDUSTRY

INTERVIEW WITH



## Why is Opatija considered the cradle of Croatia's tourism industry?

The story of Opatija is closely related to the church of St. James in the center of the town, one of the town's most significant buildings; as a matter of fact, the town's name, Opatija, is the Croatian word for abbey. Four centuries after the construction of the church, Opatija emerged as a holiday resort for the elite.

The first holiday house in Opatija, the Villa Angiolina, was built by Iginio Scarpa back in 1844. This year is now officially considered as the start of the tourism industry for us. The Villa Angiolina hosted many famous historical figures, such as Emperor Franz Joseph I of Austria-Hungary, the Empress Maria Anna and the Croatian Ban Josip Jelačić.

So the Croatian tourism industry 'was born' in Opatija 175 years ago. And the first hotel on the Adriatic Coast, Kvarner, was also built here in Opatija.

## How would you describe the town?

It is located on the shores of the Kvarner Bay



and on the slopes of the Učka Mountains. Opatija is known by its beautiful architecture influenced by the Austro-Hungarian style. It has a great climate, topnotch hotels, not to mention its beautifully landscaped parks and promenades. We have plenty of historical walking trails and paths from the time of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In the past, it was the place for 'health tourism' because of the climate and environment.

## Has Opatija changed much since tourists start coming 175 years ago?

The most important question for us has always been how to keep all our heritage for the next generations. Our town's development plan has placed sustainability as the top priority. We don't want to overbuild in Opatija because we don't want to compete with other destinations to get more tourists. We surely want to avoid mass tourism. For example, we only welcome small cruise ships during the summer season, no more than 400 to 500 guests at a time.

This is a destination for high-end tourists with 4- and 5-star hotels. Apartments and



Ivo Dujmić  
Mayor  
City of Opatija

villas that are being built have to be upscale properties. All of our events have to be appropriate for high-end tourists. By the way, Opatija has one of the most beautiful summer stages for shows, the Open Air Theater, with the capacity for around 5,000 people.

At the same time, we never neglected our inhabitants. If the locals are satisfied, the guests will be too. So we provided a lot of services to our people in terms of health, education, living-in-the-city benefits and employment to make sure they are happy. For example, we built one of the biggest and most beautiful kindergartens in Croatia with some European funds we received to avoid any child not going to pre-school. Children come first for us.

## What is the current population of Opatija?

We have 11,500 inhabitants and the same number of tourists during the summer season. But a lot of people go through our town because if you are travelling to Istria from other parts of the country by car, you need to pass by Opatija.



So we are building a new road to alleviate the pressure of having a lot of people going through our town. We have also started building small public and private garages. All of the hotels and villas have to have their own parking spaces.

Infrastructure-wise, we are content with our water and sewage systems which guarantee our clean and pristine sea.

## Does the town development plan take into consideration what the locals want?

The town's development strategy and all the decisions we make have to go through the process of public discussion and consultations first. We have 10 local boards for that. We need to have the support of the majority of the community for any of our actions.

Once we do have the approval, we address whatever the town needs, for example, sports and cultural facilities. The administration provides free parking, free school, free transport to the residents and without raising taxes. We also have implemented the use of new technology all over the city. All of our

visitors have free internet access, whether they are on a beach or in a park.

## Why does Opatija have a very exclusive property market?

Some people say that property prices here are more expensive than in the French Riviera. Maybe this is true, but we are not as crowded, and the cost of other services and utilities are certainly cheaper here.

Our property market is not very big because of our sustainable development strategy; we do not want to overbuild and since tourism is the main economy activity for us, we want it to be perfect. The guests have to feel as if they were in paradise, with excellent services and gastronomy available.

## What sets Opatija apart from other cities on the Croatian coast?

Its tradition in tourism services, over 175 years, and its climate which is ideal and makes Opatija like a health center. It is not only a safe town, but a beautiful one with its several parks and the amazing nature around it. And any visitor will experience a unique and top-quality gastronomy.

I believe it is worth every single penny and I am sure all visitors will be very satisfied after spending time here. Opatija is special!

### FACTS

11,500  
population

10  
town council boards

175  
years of tourism tradition

5,000  
capacity of the town's  
Open Air Theater



# OPATIJA: QUEEN OF THE ADRIATIC

## INTERVIEW WITH



**Opatija has a long tradition in tourism. Since when has the sector been important to the city?**

Opatija, often called the Pearl of the Adriatic, is the cradle of Croatian tourism and one of the most well-known destinations in the country. It has been a tourism spot for over 175 years when members of the Austro-Hungarian aristocracy started visiting Opatija as a holiday destination because of its warm climate and sea breezes. This 175-year-old tradition has influenced and defines the city's current tourism product and offer. One can still feel today the legacy left by the aristocrats and intellectuals that spent time here. Some of past distinguished guests include Franz Joseph I of Austria; Wilhelm II, German Emperor; Elisabeth of Wied, the Romanian queen widely known by her literary name of Carmen Sylva; Empress Elisabeth of Austria, nicknamed Sisi; writers Anton Pavlovich Chekhov and James Joyce; dancer Isadora Duncan; composers Gustav Mahler and Giacomo Puccini, just to name a few. Back then, if you wanted to see or be seen, Opatija was the place to be.

**Has the city changed much since those days?**

The city architecture is still the same from those days and even the local gastronomy today still includes dishes from the imperial times. The city received a lot of investments at the end of the 19th century and what was constructed then still prevails. But it was in the beginning of the 20th century when most of what we see today was built. This is when both our Lungomare - a unique coastal walkway about 10 kilometers long which still is one of the major tourist attractions in Opatija, and the Carmen Sylva forest path were constructed.



The city is still dominated by beautiful Secession buildings and villas designed by Viennese architects; that is why Opatija is also often called "Little Vienna". We also have beautiful parks and gardens which are the landmarks of this city and the best-known is called Angiolina.

Villa Angiolina, built by Iginio Scarpa is what we consider the birthplace of our and Croatia's tourism and today it houses the Croatian Museum of Tourism.

Opatija still carries a strong footprint of the imperial times. However, it has also been able to adjust to modern times.

**How would you define Opatija's tourism strategy?**

Our priority is to offer to our visitors not only a great service, but also great experiences which is the new trend in terms of tourism. Tourism today is not only about going to a place, the place needs to 'awaken emotions' in the visitor. If the tourist doesn't feel or connect with the place, he won't go back there.

**How does Opatija manage to have tourists all year round?**

Opatija is one of the few tourist destinations in the region that is busy the whole year and the reason behind this is that we were able to develop different types of tourism and can offer different products to our visitors. We



Suzi Petričić  
Director  
Opatija Tourist Board

understood that we had to diversify our offer to be able to attract people throughout the year. Also, you need to adjust your offer to what the visitors want. Here we are able to cater to medical tourism, business/MICE, cultural, sports, gastronomic topped with the special events we organized.

I always like to point out that Opatija was first developed as a winter holiday destination, a place where people came because of this mild winter climate for medical reasons and only later it became popular as a summer resort too.

**How do you make sure your tourism product is being developed in a sustainable and responsible manner?**

When we are developing any tourist product or organizing an event, we make sure we esteem the socio-cultural authenticity, preserve the cultural heritage, maintain traditional values and respect the natural environment, always in close cooperation with experts in the field of sustainable development.

We are very aware that only sustainable management can ensure that we leave our cultural and natural wealth for future generations.

# OPATIJA: OPULENCE & IMPERIAL HERITAGE

Long a favorite destination for the nobles of Europe, Opatija epitomizes glamour & affluence

For the best part of two hundred years, the resort of Opatija on Kvarner Bay has been synonymous with elegance and luxury.

Frequented by the crowned heads of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, including on numerous occasions Emperor Franz Joseph I and his wife Sissi, as well as nobles, writers and artists from across Europe, today the town is celebrated for its belle époque architecture, luxurious hotels, dazzling restaurants and above all the Lungomare, a stunning 12 kilometer-long coastal path.

More than a hundred years after its imperial heyday, Opatija continues to captivate deep-pocketed visitors in all seasons of the year with its mild climate, peaceful parks, cultural festivals and fin-de-siècle atmosphere.

Most visitors today choose to stay in one of the opulent hotels that were originally built to cater for the aristocrats and celebrities of pre-war Europe. Hotel Kvarner, the very first hotel on the Adriatic built here in 1884, hosted Franz Joseph and celebrities such as dancer Isadora Duncan and still welcomes guests today. Other historic hotels



and villas have been transformed into luxury spas and wellness centers that are popular around the year.

This summer, actors brought the history of the town to life on a unique walking tour through the town, Opatija Time Travel, accompanying tourists in the guise of famous figures from the past.

To preserve Opatija's historic appeal for future generations, the town's authorities are investing strategically in new infrastructure

and are taking great pains to avoid the risk of over-tourism. "We certainly want to avoid mass tourism," Mayor Ivo Dujmić explains. "Opatija does not compete with other destinations in the number of tourists. Sustainability is our top priority."

Suzi Petričić, Director of the Opatija Tourist Board, agrees: "only with sustainable management can we ensure that we preserve Opatija's cultural and natural wealth for future generations to enjoy."

## MAJESTIC OPATIJA AWAITS

The Opatija Riviera offers diversity for its guests; culture, spas, luxury resorts and even dog friendly beaches! It is a fashionable Adriatic tourist resort that once even hosted Austro-Hungarian nobility due to its amazing, mild Mediterranean climate.

Today it boasts villas that have been turned into boutique hotels, wellness centers and even congress halls.

DISCOVER THE QUEEN OF THE ADRIATIC!

[www.visitopatija.com](http://www.visitopatija.com)



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# AMADRIA PARK HOTELS: TRADITION, HERITAGE & CONTEMPORARY LUXURY

INTERVIEW WITH



## Can you tell us about the award Amadria Park Hotels won last year?

We are the national winner of a European Business Award (EBA) for sustainability and the environment. We were the first hotel group that won an award in this category. The jury and other participants were impressed with the attention we pay to social responsibility and environment. These are important issues for us. Why? Because we are part of this town and live with the local community. We care about them; we organize a lot of different events and concerts for them and work with local schools as well as the university.

We also want to be in touch with nature and our practices have to be clear and simple. For example, since we have a lot of rain, we collect water and keep it in a big well and that way, also save water. Additionally, we buy food for our hotel from local producers.

## How would you describe Opatija?

Opatija has always had a long tradition in tourism of more than 180 years and is really a remarkable place. The town has 10 beautiful parks full of flowers and trees. It isn't the typical town as we don't have squares, only a traditional marketplace and a long main street called Marshall Tito. Most of the architecture

is from the last century and many of the very nice buildings, that were used as guesthouses, were already built before we came here.

## What kind of tourism does Opatija and your hotels attract?

We are not a resort and we do not cater for tourist groups and tours. We focus on individuals and MICE tourism – business meetings, congresses and events. Each segment represents around 50% of our business so they are equally important for us. We work 365 days a year, which is not the case in most of the hotels on the Croatian coastline. In order to be open year-round, we have a lot of efficient people in our sales department who reach out directly to potential customers and we also use digital platforms to attract guests. Most of our MICE guests come from Europe. Regarding our individual guests, 30% are Croatian, and the rest come mostly from Europe.

## How competitive is the MICE segment here in the Mediterranean?

It's very competitive. But, I can't compare Opatija to cities like Barcelona that can host 27,000 people, or even Šibenik that has a conference center for about 3,000 people. To be a leader in the MICE segment and host large



Ela Komlen  
Board Member  
Amadria Park Hotels

conferences, you need big facilities and hotels. In Opatija, the conference center's capacity is around 1,000 people and our Hotel Milenij has a ballroom for 220 people. We need to be very creative and flexible to attract the right customers. But we are being successful and

have different kinds of congresses all the time, from medical to IT related.

But, we do have some advantages. First, our geographical position and good connectivity with the main Central European cities; you can reach Opatija from most of them in just a couple of hours. Second, the fact that we are surrounded by a stunning environment with scenic views. Our incredible location encourages people to organize their congresses here so the attendees can enjoy the best from both worlds; work and play.

## You are open 365 days. What are the challenges to make sure that the young people come, work and stay in Opatija all year?

This is a problem that did not start today, it started at least 5 years ago. Our young people started moving to Austria or Germany. Why, we ask, when it is much nicer here in Croatia for them? It is because of salaries and this is one of our biggest challenges. It is very frustrating for them to see that they only receive around €400 when their salary is about €800. The taxes are very high. I believe we need to change this, and it is up to the government to improve this situation. Also, the millennials have a different way of thinking and are not prepared to work 10 hours a day. They want to have time for themselves and are not always prepared to wake up early!

What we are trying to do is to offer good salaries and work conditions, so young people can make decent money, have a place to live, build a family and lead a normal life. We also try to stimulate people in different ways by developing our human resources and make sure they are happy here. For our business, it is obviously important to be profitable, but we also need our workers to be happy with a genuine smile on their faces. We want our employees to be content and people won't be happy if they have to worry about where to live or how to pay their bills.

## Why is Opatija special?

Opatija is very unique. It's not only elegant but also mystical. I've been living here for 10 years and I still don't know why it's so



mystical but there is some kind of positive energy in the air. When you are walking through the Lungomare or through the parks you feel calmness and a special atmosphere and mood. I also believe the microclimate in Opatija brings a special energy to the town.

## What is it that attracts people to Opatija?

A tourist agency from Great Britain is marketing Opatija as lakes and mountains.

We were wondering why lakes and mountains and they told us that Kvarner Bay is like a big lake for them because of the islands, and Učka is a big mountain where one can hike.

Also, the winds from the mountains and from the sea meet at our Lungomare which is very soothing and supposed to be good for your health. Wellness is something that is very important in Opatija and a lot of people come here looking for this type of tourism. They come with the purpose of improving their health and well-being through physical, psychological, or spiritual activities.

## And what can they do here?

We have an interesting museum here where you can see records of 14 different emperors that not only visited Opatija but stayed here for long visits.

There are lovely parks near the sea which is something special and unusual. Angiolina Park, with a great variety of plant species, can be described as the green heart of the town. We also have a lot of sport activities on the mountain or at sea not to mention music festivals, events connected to cultural heritage and history, etc.

If you want a beautiful vacation for both the body and the mind, you just have to visit Opatija. You will certainly find peace here.



## FACTS

1836

year southern part of  
Hotel Milenij was built as a  
luxurious villa

1898

year it became a café named  
Caffé Principe Umberto

70%

of business are  
MICE related



# LOŠINJ: ISLAND OF VITALITY

## INTERVIEW WITH



### Can you give us a brief introduction on Mali Lošinj?

Mali Lošinj, situated on the island of Lošinj in the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County, is the biggest town situated on a Croatian island and currently has 8,100 inhabitants. 1,300 of them are very young, which is a very representative percentage in a small population, and what is quite unique is that the town funds them with scholarships all around Croatia and in Europe. This is a way to attract young people to come back after their studies and stay to form a family here. We want our people to have a good quality of life and some people that are not originally from here appreciate this benefit.

Administratively, a part of Mali Lošinj is also situated on the island of Cres. Mali Lošinj and Cres, along with smaller populated islands, Susak, Unije, Ilovik, Vele and Male Srakane, form the Lošinj Archipelago. Male Srakane has only 2 inhabitants throughout the year, but in the summertime this number goes up to 35-40 people.

### What is Mali Lošinj known for?

I'd have to say, first of all, for its beautiful climate and then for its gorgeous pine

trees and crystal-clear water (the sea). We have a lovely mild winter, spring and fall which are ideal for those with respiratory issues and other health problems. Back in 1892, Mali Lošinj and Veli Lošinj were declared health resorts by the Austro-Hungarian authorities. So even back then we were already known for our weather and its healing properties and people were coming here not in the summer, but during the other seasons. So, we can actually say that tourism started here in winter and that is when the hotels were first opened. But this changed in the sixties and that is when we started to have tourism in the summer.

### How do you assess the town's tourism development?

In 2006 the town's authorities formally declared that tourism in Mali Lošinj had to focus on sustainable development. It became a very important issue for us and the mayor then, Gari Capelli, who is currently our Minister of Tourism, started setting up several projects to make sure that this happened. I personally worked with him from 2009 to 2017 and became his successor once he became the minister.



Ana Kučić  
Mayor  
City of Mali Lošinj

What is important for sustainable tourism development is that there is collaboration and synergy with all the partners and stakeholders in each destination; from the city and tourist boards all the way to the big private companies



and even small businessmen including those working in agriculture as well as citizens.

So our sustainable tourism development is taking place because we have talked and brainstormed with all stakeholders and set our goals together. We all believe in them and share the same vision and are working together on the same path.

### Can you share with us what these goals are?

One of them is that we are working hard to preserve our beautiful nature. We have almost 2,000 plants on the island and about 200 of them can be used for medical purposes.

Another is to follow our spatial planning. We don't want to destroy our surroundings; we need to preserve it for our children. So we are very careful when deciding on new buildings. Actually, we prefer to refurbish an old building instead of building a new one. Same with hotels, better to update them, making sure that the new facility offers 4-or 5-star services.

And for a sustainable development we also need people, and in order to find people we need to offer them a roof over their heads as well as work. So these are also goals of our sustainable tourism development strategy, especially for an island community.

One project that we have at the moment, with two partners, consists in building 92 new flats so young people don't have to worry about housing; they will have a roof over their heads, when they come to work here. One young doctor came here with his wife and once he saw what our school system offered, that we also help young people, the cultural life, he decided to stay

As an island community, our development projects are definitely oriented towards our people. We need to try to avoid that our people have to go to the mainland as much as possible. They should be able to find everything here. We need to find ways to upgrade the quality of life of the islanders. And some of our efforts are paying off.

### What is the population like in the summer months?

In the high season we can reach 35,000 people on the island. And we have on offer



about 22,000 beds equally divided among hotels, private accommodation and camping.

So as you can see, private accommodation is very important for us too and we have been training the owners of these private houses

that are rented to tourists. We have workshops and give them tips on how to increase the value of their accommodation, so the visitors are more satisfied and return. We also value the private accommodations because it is a way to make the tourists feel what it is like to live here on our island.

### FACTS

8,100  
population

35,000  
population in summer

+ 2,000  
different plants on  
the island

200  
plants for medicinal use

### What does the city offer to its people and tourists?

We have 250 events throughout the whole year and not just in the high season. We have special events and parties during Christmas, we have our Carnival season, outdoor activities in spring such as the Downhill World Championship, a national classical music festival - Osorske glazbene večeri, etc.

The month of September is totally dedicated to the sea and all our cultural heritage oriented and related to the sea. Our sea captains are world-renowned which has also made us really famous throughout the years. We are now building the naval museum of Apoxyomenos and rebuilding the boat Loger.

Our events, organized by the town and the tourist office, are not just for the tourists but also for the locals with the aim of creating this great synergy between tourists and the local people themselves.





## LOŠINJ: AN OASIS OF WELLNESS

The verdant island of Lošinj is a standard bearer for health tourism & sustainability



For anyone interested in the history and future of tourism in Croatia, a visit to the island of Lošinj is a mandatory stop. During the late 19th century well-off subjects of the Austro-Hungarian Empire first discovered the charms of the northern Adriatic, transforming the island into a popular health resort in the winter months.

More recently, it was here that Croatia's current tourism minister, Gari Capelli, served as a mayor and first implemented the sustainable development strategy that is now steering the growth of the tourism sector all over the country.

The fruits of that strategy are easy to see across Lošinj. In stark contrast to the unsightly urban sprawl that has come to blight other countries of the Mediterranean, the island remains dominated by pine forests and lush vegetation, including hundreds of plants which can be used for medicinal purposes. Careful zoning has protected Lošinj's natural riches and helped preserve the micro-climate and fresh air that bring tourists here year after year.

"We don't want to destroy our surroundings," explains Ana Kučić, Capelli's successor as mayor of the island's largest town, Mali

Lošinj. "We need to preserve the island for our children and for the future."

A popular destination for Europeans in both summer and winter, Mali Lošinj today is home to a thriving local community with a strong belief in developing tourism for the benefit of future generations of the island's residents. After studying on the mainland or elsewhere in Europe, many of Lošinj's young people chose to come back to make a life for themselves.

For tourists, the island's main appeal lies in its unique micro-climate and relaxed way of life, as well as its coastal walks, dolphin watching tours, museums and an increasing series of cultural and sporting events that take place around the year.

Visitors can stay in a wide range of accommodation, ranging from campsites and cosy bed-and-breakfasts run by hospitable locals to some of the Adriatic's most exclusive five-star hotels.

In keeping with Lošinj's heritage as a health resort, there is a strong wellness and spa component to many of the luxury hotels. Lošinj's leading hotel operator, with six four- and five-star facilities across the island, Lošinj Hotels & Villas is all set on restoring the region's full glory as a winter resort. "Our core objective is to highlight the romantic winter season, which is the perfect time for guests to enjoy a tranquil and relaxing stay," says Rikardo Hesky, the CEO of Lošinj Hotels & Villas.

**LOŠINJ**  
ISLAND OF VITALITY

**1 VISIT  
IS WORTH  
1000  
PICTURES**

A mild climate, rich biodiversity & pristine environment make Lošinj Archipelago the perfect place to relax. With more than 125 years in health tourism & 200 sunny days, it guarantees guests a vibrant environmentally friendly escape. Lošinj also offers 250 cultural & entertainment events for visitors, as well as a clear seas, breathtaking views & incredible flora.

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# LOSINJ HOTELS & VILLAS: QUALITY & COMMITMENT COUNTS

**What is Jadranka Hotels and Lošinj Hotels & Villas?**  
Lošinj Hotels & Villas is the hotel brand of Jadranka Hotels, part of one of the oldest Croatian tourist companies, the Jadranka Group. We currently operate six four- and five-star hotels and restaurants as well as villas and apartments in some of the most attractive locations on the beautiful island of Lošinj. We created the Lošinj Hotels & Villas brand to reflect the high-quality of our offering as a market leader in the country: our two five-star hotels, which have both opened in the past five years, were the first of their kind on Croatian islands.

We also manage the organization of excursions, entertainment and sports activities to offer our customers exceptional leisure delivered to the highest of contemporary standards. Lošinj has its place on Mediterranean tourist maps for its extraordinary microclimate complemented by high-quality service, hospitality and authenticity and we are proud that many of our guests choose to return many times to our hotels and villas. Many of our employees come from several generations of employment in the hospitality industry and we are really very proud of the level of service that we have achieved.

Boutique Hotel Alhambra is one of only a few properties in Croatia that are members

of the prestigious Small Luxury Hotels of the World, which is a testament to the quality of our hospitality. Our five-star Hotel Bellevue offers a credible integrated wellness offering and the villas Hortensia, Mirasol and Augusta all boast a private chef and butler service.

**How closely do you work with the local administration to promote the island?**

Our objective as a company is to directly support the tourist industry of Lošinj and the Cres-Lošinj archipelago, so we work very closely with the Tourist Board to promote the destination. The cooperation and synergy between the local government, the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County, the central government and Lošinj Hotels & Villas is very important to help develop the transport infrastructure, cultural and sport-recreational facilities, gastronomic offer and trade services. We also actively participate and support the development projects of Mali Lošinj, as well as local NGO programs.

**What tools are you using in order to extend the season?**

Interestingly Lošinj started as a winter destination 130 years ago, when the Viennese and the Austro-Hungarian aristocracy

## INTERVIEW WITH



**Rikardo Hesky**  
*Chief Executive Officer*  
Lošinj Hotels & Villas

discovered this healing island and enjoyed its restorative climate in the colder months. Now our core objective is to highlight the romantic winter season, which is the perfect time to enjoy a more tranquil and relaxing stay. We are investigating partnerships with hospitals,



Boutique Hotel Alhambra

aiming to offer support during the first two stages of pulmonary diseases. Allergies and asthma are increasingly common in Europe, and winter is the best period of the year to enjoy the famed healing properties of the island's pure air. An extended stay of around three weeks is medically proven to have profound positive effects for sufferers of asthma, bronchitis and other respiratory conditions. Our hospital partnerships are a work in progress, but we hope to launch them by the end of the year. Our objective is to attract around 500 to 600 guests per day initially, with the ultimate objective of keeping all our properties open the whole year round.

proud to say Jadranka Hotels was awarded the prestigious ISO 50001 certification for Energy Management. The certificate is confirmation and recognition for our active efforts to improve the existing systems of sustainable operations while reducing energy consumption.

This natural oasis attracts more guests every year, and we want to establish Lošinj Hotels & Villas and Lošinj, as the island of vitality, as synonyms with the best five-star offer of wellness and spa on the domestic and international market, building on this unique

tradition of 'air health' tourism, which dates back to 1892.

We have several key infrastructure projects planned for the coming years, all of which will be completed with our trademark rigour and sensitivity: the reconstruction of one of our properties, Hotel Helios, and surrounding villas; the reconstruction of Mali Lošinj Airport; construction of a championship eco-golf resort designed by Ernie Els; and the realisation of a new marina project.

### Why Lošinj?

Lošinj is a relatively undiscovered jewel in the Croatian archipelago and therefore remains unspoilt. The island has been renowned for hundreds of years for its miraculous healing properties for those with lung and respiratory conditions thanks to Lošinj scientist Ambroz Haračić. The island is completely unique in its healing properties due to a combination of geographical, climatic, biological and botanical factors, including a unique micro-climate and an abundance of natural flora and fauna and healing herbs. The island also has a very rich history which is documented in great detail at a number of museums in the local towns including the Museum of Apoxyomenos.

Also, Lošinj Hotels & Villas is now running regular flights from Zagreb, Venice and Lugano to the island, meaning that Lošinj is actually rather well connected to key European routes.



Villa Hortensia

**When you mentioned high-end tourism in the 21st century, high-net-worth individuals and high-profile guests are going to start shying away from places that do not care about their environment. They're looking at places which are sustainably developed. What are you, as a group, doing in order to ensure your growth whilst maintaining what you're actually building on?**

Protecting the environment is at the core of our company as the hotel and wellness operation is intrinsically linked to the extraordinary natural patrimony of the island. Sustainable development and environmentally friendly operations have been at the forefront of our corporate culture for more than 70 years. We are

### FACTS

**+3,500**  
beds

**9.7**  
Alhambra Hotel's score  
on booking.com

**130**  
years as a touristic  
destination



# KRK: FORTIFIED BY 2,000 YEARS OF HISTORY

## INTERVIEW WITH



**You are the longest-running mayor in Croatia. When did your political career start?**

I have been the mayor of Krk for the past 26 years. I was first elected in 1993 when I was 26 years old.

**Was your political career planned?**

No. I graduated in Mathematics and Computer Science and started working as a teacher, a job I had for 3 years. But one day, a politically independent group asked me if I wanted to be their candidate in the first elections right after Croatia changed its administrative structure from 110 municipalities to 428 municipalities and 128 towns. It was a challenge I was ready to face and ended up winning the elections. When I first started, the town council was made up of mostly politically independent people. But this has changed. I joined a political party, the PGS, and became one of their representatives at Parliament from 2000 to 2003, but still serving as mayor of Krk.

**What is key to keep being reelected?**

When I started at a young age, I had a lot of ambitions and ideas. But then in each mandate I realized that there still was so much more to be done so I wanted to continue my work. I kept presenting myself as a candidate in each new election and won. The key is to

stay 'normal', communicate and talk to people and always be open-minded. The worst thing you can do is hide away behind five secretaries and become unreachable.

The way to succeed is to constantly be in touch with the people, and not only talk but really listen to them. Be approachable and do things differently.

**Can you tell us a bit about Krk and its two-thousand-year-old walls?**

The city of Krk has a lot of historical heritage. It is one of the few towns on the Croatian coast that is over 2,000 years old. Krk is a fortified Roman town whose walls along its entire length have been rebuilt and reconstructed. The most important heritage in the town is certainly the sacred complex of three churches with the cathedral which was built over the leftovers of Roman thermae from the 5th century; Franciscan and Benedictine monastery with churches (12th and 13th century) and the archaeological locality Volsonis under the main town square.

The town is definitely an archaeological site so whenever we plan on building something, we first have to make sure that we are not destroying anything with a historical value.

We also have a rich mediaeval history with the Frankopan Castle from the 13th century



Darijo Vasilic  
Mayor  
City of Krk

and the old City Hall from the 16th century.

The city developed a lot in the 17th and 18th centuries when a great library was built and in 1832 its orchestra was founded, and it still exists. In 1876 the first yachting club on the Adriatic Sea was founded here.

**What about the economic activities in Krk, which sectors dominate now?**

Fishing and agriculture were crucial activities in the 20th century.

Krk, the biggest Adriatic island, and the island of Cres have always had extensive areas dedicated to agriculture which is helped by the factor that we have natural water springs that are enough for the island's needs.

The island was called The Golden Island because of its sustainability. Fishing, sheep farming, olive plantations and viticulture have long been important to our economy and today we have some of these products with protected designation of origin: olive oil, prosciutto, sheep cheese, regional pasta, Vrbni ka zlahtina wine, to name a few.

And then our agriculture sector helped to develop tourism on the island, which really

started during the 60s when the first hotels, new houses and apartments were built. Krk became the tourist center of the north Adriatic coast and today it counts with about 60,000 beds.

**How do you assess Krk's tourism development?**

Today, Krk Island is responsible for around 35% of the tourists in the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County and 6% in the whole of Croatia.

The sector grew a lot with the building of the airport and the new Krk Bridge in 1980. When it was first built, 3,000 vehicles crossed it a day. Today, during the high season, about 35,000 vehicles pass by it so the traffic grew 10 times in 40 years.

Tourism is successful on the island because we all work towards the same goals despite the political parties of each municipality.

**The utility company Ponikve is one of your most successful projects. Why?**

We reorganized the whole utility system of the island. Water supply, communal cleanliness, waste management and recycling systems on Krk Island is all done through it. We believe in a sustainable development of the energy, water and environment systems.

I have to make a special mention of our ecological waste management project. First, we believe that individual responsibility is important, so every inhabitant has to have five containers to properly recycle and manage his or her waste.

Once we finish all our utility related projects, the island will be completely sustainable.

**Is Krk town growing, when a lot of small towns on the island are losing population?**

Only 11 towns out of the 128 in Croatia have a positive natality and Krk is one of them. Our population today is of 6,600 people. I believe the town is growing because the population is happy with the quality of life here, the town's environment and that there are jobs available. Our unemployment now is under 2%.

The administration has recently built a new kindergarten, schools and sports hall. The



town finances about 75 associations that offer all types of cultural and sports events.

And then, tourism has really helped too because everyone has an added income during the high season; people make extra money by selling ice-creams, driving taxis, etc.

**Jutarnji list, the Croatian newspaper, just published a report called Krk Smart Island and Krk Smart City. Please brief us on that.**

Through the implementation of the Smart Island project, Krk is aiming to increase the efficiency in the management of the islands' infrastructure, improve the quality of life for islanders and achieve substantial savings for taxpayers. Technology will make life easier for all and we will have better results.

Some of the actions taken were: fiber optic network in the town; video surveillance in order to lower the criminal activity and control the traffic; free Wi-Fi throughout the town - we were the first one in Croatia to offer this and it is functioning great; sensors under every parking lot; smart waste containers with compressing mechanism and sensors which send information to the utility company about the fullness of the container; charge stations for electric cars and bikes; the light bulbs are LED, etc.

**Your final message?**

My goal is that sustainability goes hand in hand with the development of the town and island. And I want our tourism to be sustainable too. I do not want us to adapt to tourists, I want them to come here to see and enjoy our way of life which is closely linked to agriculture.

### FACTS

6,600  
people

60,000  
beds available

1832  
town's orchestra  
was founded

1980  
Krk Bridge was built





# KRK: CROATIA'S TOP ECO DESTINATION

## INTERVIEW WITH



**How important is tourism for those living in Krk?**  
Tourism has been important for all of us on the island of Krk for generations. It is encrusted deeply in our lifestyle and the way we live and think.

Some people are good hosts naturally, it is in their personality, but it is also something that can be taught during one's upbringing, either at home or at school. I think this is vital for us because tourism plays a major role in our community, so it is important that the locals learn how to deal and interact with tourists from their families or teachers. We have learned that visitors appreciate a destination much more when they have a positive interaction with the local population.

Because our people recognize the importance of tourism, something to point out is that they always try to look after not only their own places, but also the public ones.

Another aspect that shows the relevance of the sector for us is that there are many associations that work hard organizing different activities for our visitors so they enjoy their stay here and come back.

### How is the tourism sector developing in Krk?

We recorded a big growth in arrivals in the first 6 months of this season and what is important for us is that Krk is becoming more and more attractive in the pre-season; the numbers are growing each year.

The don't need to increase the arrivals during the peak summer months, we are quite happy with the current figures. What we want

is to record a continuous growth throughout the year. And in order to do that, we are no longer focusing on sun and sea as the primary motive for a trip to Krk. We are now offering new products such as gastronomy, culture and heritage, outdoors activities such as biking and trekking, as a way to attract tourists when it is not summer. Our strategy is to stress on the 'new experiences' that a visitor can have on the island.

### Apart from the new experiences, what else can be done to attract visitors all year round?

Lower the price of accommodation when it is not summer and create a number of events to attract the people in pre- and post-season.

Several gastronomic events promoting the local cuisine and sports competitions are helping to bring people to Krk.

The goal is to build an image of Krk as a destination where there is always something going on, where visitors can have different experiences that will enable them to get to know the destination better, its tradition and lifestyle. These are exactly the kind of experiences that modern tourists are looking for during their vacation nowadays.

### Who comes to Krk?

Because it is easy to reach our island by car



Nataša Jurina  
Director  
Krk Tourist Board

due to its accessibility and proximity to the mainland, which enables guests to come for weekend breaks, our main markets are the surrounding countries: Germany (30%), Slovenia, Austria and Italy. However, the French market is becoming more important as they are very interested in our cultural offer. Guests from even further markets like Asia and America are also starting to discover Krk. We see great potential for growth in these markets off the peak season.

### Is the sector growing in a sustainable and responsible manner?

Sustainable development is the key goal of our tourism development strategy. A lot of efforts are made to include the local population in the economic activities related to the sector so that they benefit the most from it.

We encourage the development of small enterprises, agriculture and local authentic products. We are doing our best to preserve our natural environment and today Krk is the leader in environmental protection in Croatia through many projects such as the Eco Island Krk.

# KRK: SMART & SUSTAINABLE

The ancient Isle of Krk aims to become the first “smart island” in Croatia



The largest island in the Adriatic and one of the most popular holiday destinations in Kvarner Bay, Krk combines a varied landscape and rich medieval heritage with a growing economy with a very modern focus on digital technologies and environmental sustainability.

In the island's main town, Krk City, tourists can walk on walls that date back to the Roman era and explore the 13th-century Frankopan Castle, all at the same time as recharging their electric vehicles at any one of a growing network of charging points. The town is also home to the first free municipal Wi-Fi network in Croatia, as

well as a state-of-the-art fiber optic network, an LED public lighting system as well as a smart waste management system which alerts the waste disposal company when a container is full and needs to be emptied.

“Our aim is to increase the efficiency of our infrastructure, improve the quality of life for islanders and achieve substantial savings for taxpayers,” says Darijo Vasilić, who has been Mayor of Krk City since 1993. “I believe that sustainability goes hand-in-hand with the development of the town and island.”

As a core element of its smart strategy, Krk aims to become a completely zero-emission,

carbon-neutral island and to achieve total energy independence. New solar, biogas and wind power plants, combined with a surge in the numbers of photovoltaic cells on the island's rooftops, are decarbonizing the island's electricity networks, creating jobs for locals and positioning Krk as a regional green power leader.

“We are recognized as a leader in environmental protection in Croatia and the local population is already benefiting from this,” says Nataša Jurina, the director of the Krk Tourist Board. “Sustainable development is the key goal of our tourism strategy.”



**FACTS**

**1 mile**  
length of bridge  
connecting Krk Island to  
the mainland

**+3 million**  
overnight stays

**2,000**  
years old – the walls  
fortifying the city



A visionary city embedded  
with **HISTORY & CULTURE**

Krk, the largest island in Croatia, is packed with beautiful & varied landscapes, bike routes & thousand-year-old monuments such as its 5th century cathedral. Not only is it amazing to visit, Krk is looking to a sustainable & carbon-neutral future as the first energy-autonomous island in the Adriatic.



# OMIŠALJ NJIVICE: AN ENCHANTING & RELAXING DESTINATION

## How does your background in economics help you being a mayor and politician?

After finishing my master’s degree in Science at the Faculty of Economics, I wanted to be a university professor assistant and get my doctorate. However, my political career started in 2013 and I had to put my doctorate on hold, though I would like to finish it one day. What motivated me to become a politician was the social injustice taking place here.

I believe my background in economics helps me perform my duties and to manage the city budget; it is quite a responsibility to handle public money. Having a degree in economics also helps maintain a level of respect and ensures that I am comfortable with the terms and knowledge that handing public finances entails.

## Many mayors we talked to said that ‘brain drain’ is an issue they have to deal with. What incentives do you have for people not to go to other parts of Croatia or Europe and stay here and contribute to the town and island’s socio-economic development?

We are the first town when you cross the bridge from the mainland to the island of Krk; and are just 17 minutes away from Rijeka so our population has easy accessibility to jobs on the island as well as the mainland. One incentive we have is that we co-finance the expenses employers have when they hire our citizens anywhere in Croatia.

Another incentive provided to the local population to encourage them to stay here

is that each family of newborns receives a financial contribution of about €540 euros regardless of the number of children in the family. We don’t have any issues with natality, which we encourage. We’re one of the youngest municipalities in the region.

It is with special pride that I say we are considered the most educated municipality on the island of Krk and want it to stay this way. I am sure that this is the reason our municipality is one of the most developed in the region!

## What are the incentives provided to boost education in the municipality?

For me, education is the number one factor for any kind of development and I really believe our municipality is the best on the island of Krk in supporting younger people with their studies.

Starting with kindergarten we help them with around €365 while the cost for the parents is about €80 to 94. Then, when they enroll at elementary school, we provide free books, notebooks and all the material they might need, not to mention free trips and optional activities.

When a child finishes elementary school and decides whether he or she wants to go to high school in Rijeka or the City of Krk, we also help them. Transport is free on the island for all inhabitants, but not in Rijeka which is on the mainland so we pay for the amount the parents would have to pay if they choose to continue studying in Rijeka. And we continue co-financing their books and materials during high school.



## INTERVIEW WITH



Mirela Ahmetović  
Mayor  
City of Omišalj Njivice

We also provide scholarships to both part- and full-time university students; this is not the norm in Croatia. Moreover, we introduced postgraduate scholarships for every student on a monthly basis during the whole year. And if the PhD students want to participate in a conference or need funds to publish a paper or article, we help them if we can unconditionally.

## How important is sustainable development and tourism to you and your municipality?

Very important. This municipality’s strategic commitment is to tourism. Our season lasts only 2 of the summer months and we profit around €60 million yearly from it.

But we now have a major concern with the construction of the LNG terminal project which started last Easter, and I am personally involved in stopping this project because I am worried about the sustainable development of our tourism which is vital for our economy. Mind you, I am not against this project because of its sustainability, but because of its illegality since they decided to move its location. Njivice is a tourist area, and with the new

location, the terminal will be seen from the shore. The visual pollution will be dramatic and will certainly hurt our tourism.

We have a number of people working, some free of charge, to solve this issue and we are talking to the greens/EFA group who will also try to help us solve it. I hope that the European Union won’t support this project that the whole local community is against and is actually illegal.

## Why is it important to fight against this LNG project?

Njivice is a genuine unique fishing village and a tourist place with great potential when it comes to tourism related with sea activities. Not to mention that Njivice contributes enormously to the municipality’s budget.

And Omišalj is priceless. Omišalj is historically and culturally the richest place on the island of Krk with the Roman Christian city of Fulfinum, the cultural heritage of Krk, which is one of the top 10 archeological sites on the Adriatic Sea and one of the top 20 archeological sites in Croatia. It’s under the protection of UNESCO. Fulfinum was built in the 1st century AD, has a basilica from the 5th century AD and hosts a huge site from the age of the Romans.

The churches in Omišalj date from the 11th century. In front of the Omišalj church you can see the biggest number of Glagolitic inscriptions in Croatia. When you walk through the old town of Omišalj you can see that the streets maintain their original design.

When a heavy industry project like this gets to a tourist destination, it will definitely put the tourists off coming and subsequently it will become harder for us to attract visitors.

We need to keep both Omišalj and Njivice pristine and not ruin these amazing destinations. Also, a large number of locals depend on tourism so we need to preserve their jobs too and offset the economic impact of such a loss.

## How much do Njivice and Omišalj transform with the arrival of guests during the two busiest summer months?

During the summer season the number of people in Njivice and Omišalj increases 6 times per town which creates a huge pressure on the



city and its infrastructure, and we need to deal with issues of waste management and disposal, looking after our beaches and green areas, etc. We are really doing everything we can to be the eco-friendliest community in the region, even with this huge influx of tourists.

## Can you tell us some of the projects you are most proud of?

I would like to point out that we have now

electric bicycles and charge stations for electric cars which shows our commitment to sustainable and eco-friendly tourism.

But the project I am mostly proud of is definitely the Omišalj camp. This was an old camping site which was in a very bad state, but today it’s a 5-star camp. It re-opened in 2017 with an investment of around €14 million. The municipality receives a large income from this camp and it has certainly been the most important project during my two terms.

Another project is the complete reconstruction of the fishing coast in Njivice, which is a historical project. It is the biggest investment ever made in the town which made Njivice our little Monaco! I often say that we are not aware of the vast beauty we have here on our coast.

## What is your personal motto?

I believe people should share their talents with society in order to make it better. For example, I am an external associate at the Faculty of Economics and teach a course called Knowledge Economy without any financial compensation.

Why wouldn’t I share knowledge in something that mastered for free? Not everything in life is about money. And by doing so, I also benefit from being connected with the faculty and the students.

## Final word about Omišalj Njivice?

We are heterogenous, diverse and the 5th most developed municipality in Croatia.

### FACTS

€60 million  
profit from tourism  
yearly

5th  
most developed  
municipality in Croatia

€540  
for each newborn  
in town

17  
minutes away from  
Rijeka





## OMIŠALJ-NJIVICE: SETTING THE PACE IN SUSTAINABILITY

In this lovely municipality, the mayor is a standard-bearer for sustainable development



Located in the far north-west of Krk Island, situated on a cliff overlooking the Bay of Kvarner, Omišalj is one of the oldest and most picturesque small towns on the island.

The first place that tourists encounter when crossing the bridge from the mainland, today Omišalj is famed for its landscape and beaches, as well as its many festivals, restaurants and recreational facilities. Founded by the Romans, the town is probably the oldest settlement anywhere in Krk. In the old town, visitors can walk among the extensive ruins from the Roman settlement of Fulfinum and then explore some of the island's finest medieval churches.

Just to the north of Omišalj, Dubec Park is perhaps the best place on Krk to examine the island's native plants as well as a wide variety of imported specimens. To the south, the atmospheric fishing village of Njivice attracts growing numbers of tourists from all over Europe, many of whom come here every summer to relax on the town's many sheltered beaches.

Both Omišalj and Njivice are also well known for its mayor, Mirela Ahmetović, who has become a national figure because of her commitment to social inclusion and environmental sustainability. As one of the most developed municipalities in Croatia, and home to a young, diverse and

well-educated population, the region has made sustainable tourism an economic priority.

Ahmetović is currently leading the fight against the proposed construction of a terminal for Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) near Njivice, a project she says would have a damaging impact on local tourism. "I am personally involved in stopping this project," Ahmetović says. "We need to keep both Omišalj and Njivice pristine and not ruin these amazing destinations."

## BASKA: THE PERFECT BEACH & MORE

This traditional fishing village is the ideal place for a family vacation by the beach



At the southernmost tip of Krk, the small fishing village of Baška is home to what is by common consent the finest pebble beach on the island.

More than a mile long, and with shallow waters that are ideal for children to play in, every summer the beach of Vela Plaža attracts hundreds of thousands of lovers of fun and sun: in 2018, the town of Baška recorded more than one million overnight stays.

While Vela Plaža may be the most famous beach in the region, it is by no means Baška's only attraction. Around the town there are more than 30 other gorgeous beaches, including some in secluded bays which can

only be reached by foot or by water taxi. Additionally, the surrounding hills and valleys provide ideal terrain for hiking, with trails of varying difficulties through a unique landscape populated by vultures, falcons and other endangered birds. One of the most popular hikes and mountain bike trails is the so-called Walk to the Moon, which takes explorers into a lunar landscape with stunning views of the town and the sea below.

Baška itself, which is built around an attractive Venetian center of stone houses and narrow streets, boasts a wide range of high-quality accommodation, ranging from campsites to luxury hotels. The town is also

home to interesting cultural and historical monuments, foremost among them the 12th-century Baška Tablet, one of the very first documents to be written in the Croatian Glagolitic script.

While Baška's biggest draw is still its beach, the town's mayor Toni Juranić is now focused not on attracting higher numbers of tourists, but on appealing to higher spending visitors by developing the agro-tourism and gastronomic tourism sectors. Noting the Croatian saying that "a week in Baška extends your life a day," Juranić also sees high potential for health tourism: "we are famous for our people's longevity, so this saying is probably true!"

OMIŠALJ  
NJIVICE  
Omišalj Tourist Board

Spectacularly perched on a cliff is Omišalj, an ancient hilltop town with a historic center reminiscent of its culturally rich past. And south is Njivice, a small fishing village with beautiful beaches and a lovely marina, where relaxing is made easy.

[www.visit-omisalj-njivice.hr](http://www.visit-omisalj-njivice.hr)

WHERE RELAXING IS AN ART



### AN ENDLESS DISCOVERY

A crystal-clear sea, warm Mediterranean climate, unspoiled nature & perfect beaches make summer in Baška unforgettable. Baška, a small town hiding great traditions, entertainment, cultural & sporting events throughout the year.

Baška

[www.visitbaska.hr](http://www.visitbaska.hr)





# CRES: A JEWEL FROM THE 15TH & 16TH CENTURIES

## INTERVIEW WITH



### Can you introduce us to the town of Cres?

The town of Cres, on Cres Island, which is the largest one in the Adriatic, is located directly off the Istrian Peninsula and in the Kvarner Gulf. In ancient times, the islands of Cres and Lošinj were actually one big island. But as the small strip of land between the two islands was the fastest way to cross this region by ship, the channel of Osor was excavated during the Roman period in order to shorten the path to open sea. Today, a bridge connects the two islands.

Administratively, until 1993, the islands of Cres and Lošinj were one municipality but now we are independent from one another. Three quarters of Cres Island belongs to our municipality, while the remaining quarter, in the south, belongs to Mali Lošinj.

The town of Cres, once ruled by the Venetians, is right on the bay and reminds one of an Italian village. A lot of the town dates from the 15th and 16th centuries.

### A lot of smaller towns on the islands and losing their population. How do you face this challenge?

Unfortunately, young people are leaving but this is not new for us. Some of my relatives left Cres and went to Rijeka 40 years ago. Why? Because they lacked jobs. The only

way to keep people here is to create jobs and that is what we are trying to do. But, we are also seeing some people come back and we need to give them incentives to they stay. One of the facts that show us that the population is increasing is that the number of children in the elementary school is slowly rising each year.

### You have been the mayor for 10 years now. Which projects you started are you most proud of?

When I became the mayor in 2009 the world was in a huge economic crisis so we could not do a lot of things right away. First, we worked on the defining and planning which projects were priority and then we started implementing them.

One project that started during my first mandate was the renovation of the Moise Palace. This monumental residential palace is the largest patrician building in Cres. It was built in the 15th century by the owner of the estate. The architecture of the palace is in Renaissance style. The main façade has an elaborate architectural structure, richly decorated with sculptural elements.

This project was viable thanks to the Council of Europe's project: Revitalization of Cultural Heritage in South-East Europe.



Kristijan Jurjako  
Mayor  
City of Cres

We partnered with the University of Rijeka who is now going to look after and manage the building for the next 30 years. They will use it for congresses, academic programs, etc. It should be opened to the public this coming fall and it will certainly help to raise our touristic offer, not only in the summer but also in the winter when a lot of events will be hosted there.

### What about infrastructure projects, which ones are being carried out?

Fortunately, we don't have major problems with our infrastructure. We don't have issues with water supply or sewage; Cres has a freshwater lake - Vrana, which is a water resource for both islands.

We don't have traffic problems either although part of the national road that crosses the island, about 9 kilometers, still needs to be done. During my mandate 17 kilometers were completed.

### What is something unique about Cres?

The griffon vultures; because there is no mass tourism here, Cres is a refuge for



the spectacular griffon vulture. Cres is the most biodiverse of the Croatia's islands and environment protections is quite important for us.

The Association BIOM, which is non-profit, is involved in nature protection, species and habitats conservation and promotion and they are really becoming more and more important. They started with 5 people and today there are 25 working there. They do a lot to protect these birds.

There are more plants species on the island of Cres than in the whole of Great Britain. This is due to our continental climate in the north and sub Mediterranean climate in the south. For us, protecting and preserving our natural heritage is as important as looking after our historical heritage.

### What should one not miss when visiting Cres?

Beli, one of the oldest places on the island, and home to the griffon vulture colony. Valun, a small village that is famous for the Valun Tablet from the 11th century; originally a gravestone, the tablet is inscribed in both Latin and old Croatian

## FACTS

15th century  
Moise Palace was built

235 to 290cm  
wingspan of a griffon  
vulture

76  
meters deepest point of  
Vrana Lake

405.78 km<sup>2</sup>  
Cres Island area

and marks the presence of the descendants of Romans on the island alongside Croatian families. Lubenice, 380 meters above sea level, which was once a fort city and today a tiny village with some old stone houses. And Martinšćica, located on a bay and named after the Church of St Martin.

### What is the island most famous dish?

The island of Cres is well known for its lamb. There are a lot of places on the island that prepare lamb, and, in each place, they are prepared differently.

Konoba Bukaleta, a tavern in Loznati, is one of the most famous places for lamb and they have been opened for almost 40 years. I like to cite them because it is a family-owned business committed to the island. The children came back to Cres after finishing college to run the restaurant. And then they also saw an opportunity to open an agribusiness: they will produce cheese. This whole venture has been funded by European funds.

This is a typical example that there are many business opportunities here for those who want to work.







## CRES: WILD FRONTIER OF THE ADRIATIC

The entire island of Cres & its namesake, Cres Town, are full of raw natural beauty & ancient heritage



Directly connected to the neighbouring island of Lošinj until the Romans dug out a channel, Cres is one of the least developed and most enchanting of all the Adriatic islands.

A rugged wilderness that is a world away from the built-up destinations elsewhere, Cres today is perhaps best known as the home of one of Europe's largest population of griffon vultures. Birdwatchers come here from afar to watch these spectacular creatures soaring in the sky, far from

the tourist hordes and the reach of man. "For us, protecting and preserving our natural heritage is as important as our historical heritage," says Kristijan Jurjako, Mayor of the island's capital town of Cres.

One of the most biodiverse of Croatia's islands, the wild and barren landscape of Cres is populated mainly by scattered sheep pens and isolated villages. Nowadays it is traversed by a handful of mountain bike trails and hiking paths that are increasingly popular with adventurous travellers.

In Cres Town itself, there is a strong Venetian heritage to enjoy, with a round tower, city walls and a harbour front lined by fine palaces and public buildings. Visitors here delight in wandering the narrow streets that wind in and out of the old town, much of which was built in the 15th and 16th centuries, perhaps finishing the day by indulging in one of the island's legendary lamb dishes, in a town where the pace of life seems slower and the pleasures more intense.



### Where nature reigns supreme

On the island of Cres, unspoilt nature consists of extraordinary diversity. It hosts unique Griffon vultures, amazing Lake Vrana, hidden coves & incredible pristine beaches. Culture also abounds with hundreds of years of Venetian architecture. Home to the 11th century Valun Tablet inscribed in Latin & old Croatian; Cres island is the perfect mix of nature & culture. [www.tzg-cres.hr](http://www.tzg-cres.hr)



## KVARNER: HISTORIC CHARM & NATURAL BEAUTY

The birthplace of Croatian tourism, the Kvarner region today is diverse & authentic

Containing some of the Adriatic Sea's most unspoilt islands, as well as a mountainous mainland rich in history and culture, it is no surprise that the Kvarner region of northern Croatia welcomes discerning tourists from across Europe all year round.

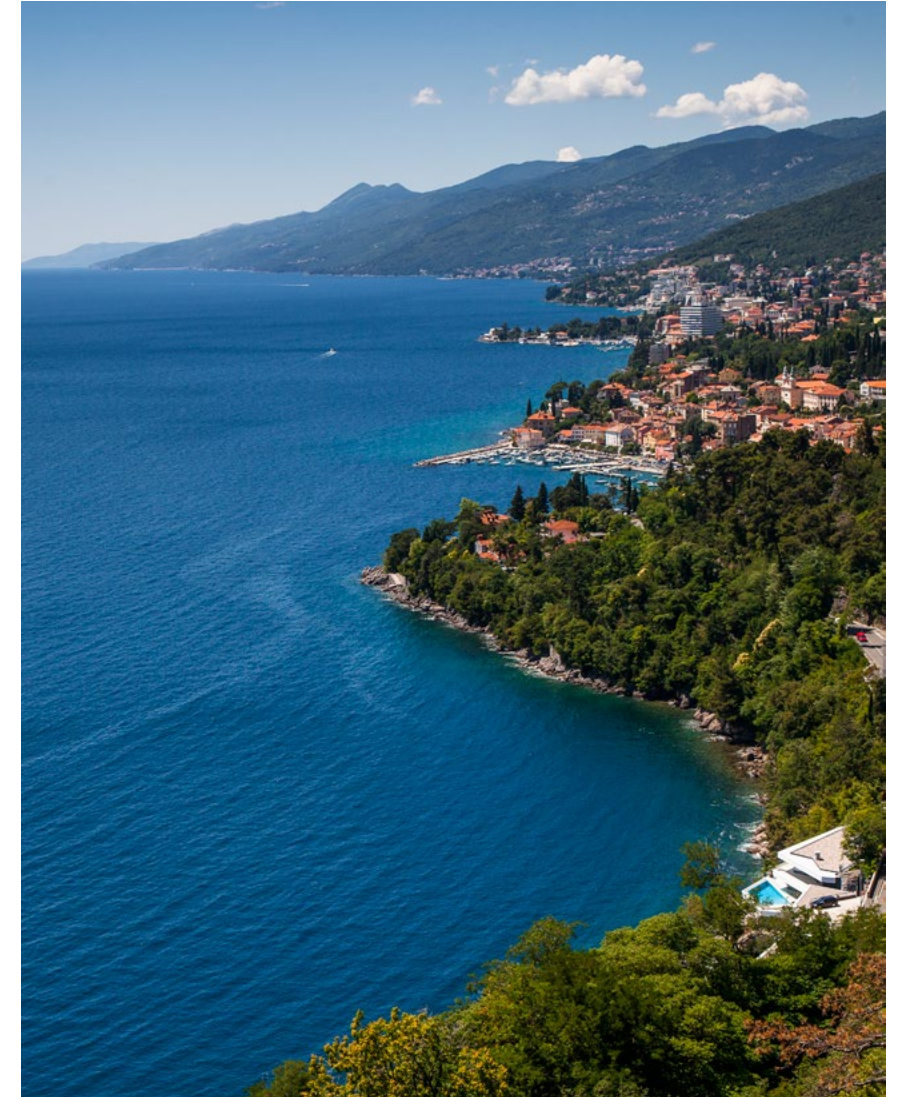
Even for a country of such natural and cultural variety as Croatia, the sheer diversity of Kvarner is breathtaking. On the same day, tourists can take an early morning dip in the pristine waters of an Adriatic cove, hike across a barren island of unsurpassed beauty, marvel at dolphins and rare vultures, and then as evening falls wander the narrow streets and walls of a medieval town center and feast on some of the finest cuisine in the country.

Tourism in the region dates back to the late 19th century. It was on the shores of Kvarner Bay that Croatia, then a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, first began developing sheltered seaside towns into exclusive resorts patronized by the likes of Emperor Franz Joseph and his glamorous wife Sissi. The legacy of that time is particularly visible in the belle époque architecture of the energetic port city of Rijeka and in upscale resorts such as Opatija.

"The Kvarner Riviera is the cradle of Croatian tourism," says Irena Peršić Živadinov, Director of the Kvarner Tourist Board. "Opatija was one of the first bathing resorts in central Europe."

Today, while Kvarner continues to attract visitors from across Europe, the region retains an exclusive and authentic appeal that is a world away from more crowded destinations elsewhere in the Adriatic.

Thanks to its cultural riches and the museums, castles and churches of its historic towns and villages, there is much more to enjoy across Kvarner than just the landscape



and beaches. As the tourism authorities in the region promote sectors such as health and gastronomic tourism, increasing numbers of visitors are now coming to Kvarner to experience for themselves the mainland's mild winter climate and explore its cultural treasures and culinary delights.

As a result, tourism in Kvarner outside of the peak summer months is growing rapidly: just in the last eight years, the number of overnight stays in the off-season has nearly doubled in this captivating of Croatia's regions.



# BAŠKA: PRIORITIZING YOUTH EDUCATION

## What was your biggest challenge when you first took office?

I have been the mayor of Baška for 10 years, this is my second mandate, and prior I was at the municipality's Department of Budget and Finance. For me, the biggest challenge has always been to raise the municipality's standard of living for both its citizens and tourists.

## What did you first do to improve the quality of life of those living in Baška?

Our priority was the education of our children and young people, so during my first mandate we built a state-of-the-art kindergarten that surpasses all European standards. And one of our latest measures, related to this, was to institutionalize free kindergarten to all children.

We also renovated our elementary school 2 years ago, maintaining its original façade, and built more classrooms and a new sports hall. All the school supplies to our students are free of charge as well as their transport to school. The municipality also provides several scholarships and finances further education like doctorates to those who want to continue studying.

We believe it is important to give incentives to our people to have children, so families receive a bonification for each child they have.



## How important is tourism for the municipality?

Everything in Baška revolves around tourism. We have been a touristic destination for 115 years now and up until recently we were the first destination in our county in terms of number of visitors, but today the town of Krk has taken the spot. But we still account for 21% of the tourists coming to the county.

Last year we reached 1 million overnights in a year which was an important accomplishment for such a small town like ours.

## How would you describe your tourism product?

Baška is the perfect place for a family vacation. The town is typically Mediterranean with stone houses and narrow streets and has its own beautiful beach, and there are 15 more close to it. It is also a unique place for its characteristic architecture, several cultural and historical monuments and its surrounding walking paths. There are also very high-quality accommodation facilities: hotels, campsites, private houses, etc. Valamar Riviera, one of the best hotel groups in the country, has properties in our town.

Also, the growing trend of healthy and active living – a life devoted to motion, recreation and challenges, is what encouraged the transformation of Baška into a destination that can offer much more than a conventional holiday.

## INTERVIEW WITH



Toni Juranić  
Mayor  
City of Baška

The climate of Baška Valley is ideal for an active vacation because you can enjoy outdoor activities throughout the year. Activities take place in the natural surroundings that fascinate visitors with its unusual features. Whether you are a fan of hiking, running, biking, climbing, diving or sailing or even if you just love to spend your time outdoors, Baška landscapes will enrich your experience providing a fantastic backdrop for your activities. Baška never stops to amaze and this was proven by experiences of thousands of participants in sporting events hosted in Baška.

The variety of the outdoor offer in Baška allows each visitor to engage in a wide range of activities making Baška outdoor experience so unique. There are 20 marked hiking routes, 3 marked biking routes and 4 different climbing locations. If you enjoy water sports, you can sail, dive, surf and kayak in Baška.

## And what other products would you like to offer to those coming here?

Agro- and gastronomic-tourism is on the cards. Baška already has several excellent



restaurants. Also, local produce and food could be main motivating factors to travel here so we are encouraging the development of our agriculture and ecologically grown produce.

Cultural tourism can also contribute to the development of the sector as well as health tourism. Most of the destinations in this part of the Adriatic started with health tourism.

## Any new projects to make the destination more attractive?

We are constantly working to upgrade the town's infrastructure and facilities for both residents and tourists. One of our new and exciting projects, supported by European Union cohesion funds, is the building a 50.55 meters extension of the port's Vela Riva breakwater structure; later the extension of the secondary Mala Riva breakwater by 105 meters will take place. Once the project is completed, the port will be able to accommodate passenger ships throughout the year, reducing the current congestion level and raising the quality of port services for all passengers including those with disabilities.

## What is the population of Baška?

1,700 people, but in the high season we can easily reach 20,000 with about 5,000 visitors each day. This issue is one of our

main concerns nowadays as the sudden population increase can be a big burden on our infrastructure and cost us a lot of money.

Tourism brought development to Baška and will continue to do so, but we now need to be careful with the quantity of people we bring to town. Better to have less people but who spend more money. So the strategy is,

like in other places, to attract the high-end tourist and in order to do that we need to offer quality tourism. The administration and the local population need to work harder on improving our tourism offer and not on bringing more people.

## What would improve the quality of your tourism offer?

To have more investments like the ones the Valamar Group did in Baška. If you have a consolidated hotel group in your town, you have a guarantee that the facilities they will be offering will be great and attract the type of tourists we want.

We are also upgrading and working on Vela Beach. This 1,800-meter-long beach always attracts a lot of tourists and represents the future of our town as a tourist destination. The development of Baška is linked to how well we take care of Vela.

## A final message for our readers?

There are a few sayings related to the city that I like. 'Whoever drinks a sip of Baška's water, always returns to Baška' is one and the other is 'A week in Baška extends your life for a day'. We are famous for our people's long-life expectancy, so this saying is probably true! I would like all to come and see for themselves what a special town Baška is.

## FACTS

115  
years as a touristic  
destination

1,700  
population

5,000  
visitors each day  
during summer

1.8 km  
length of Vela Beach



# VALAMAR: NATIONAL LEADER IN SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability lies at the heart of the continuing success of local tourism giant



The largest tourism company in Croatia, Valamar Riviera is currently completing the most significant investment in its history: the construction of a 5-star luxury resort on the coast of Istria.

Located in Valamar's hometown of Poreč, the company will spend a total of €105 million in developing a giant complex which will accommodate up to 1,700 guests and will feature a wide range of bars, restaurants and facilities such as swimming pools, a spa, a beach club and a congress center. Construction should be completed in 2021.

The new resort will be just a short walk away from the brand-new Valamar Collection Marea Suites, which opened earlier this year in time for the summer season. Thanks above all to Valamar's developments, the ancient Roman town of Poreč has now become Istria's destination of choice for leisure and luxury holidays on the Adriatic.

Having invested some €800 million in developing the Croatian tourism industry over the last 15 years, Valamar's ambitions extend well beyond its latest projects in Poreč. The company now owns and manages hotels and resorts all along the Adriatic coast, with properties in Rabac and Dubrovnik as well as in Poreč winning prestigious accolades at this year's World Travel Awards.

As the company pursues new developments across Croatia, it has also become increasingly recognized as a national leader in environmental and social responsibility.

"There would be hardly any tourism in Croatia were it not for the natural beauty of the coastline and the preserved cultural heritage of past generations," explains Ivana Budin Arhanić, Valamar's VP for Business Development and Corporate Affairs. "It has to be our prerogative to ensure that development is not depleting or destroying these resources. "The quality of the environment is an integral

part of the appeal of leisure travel, which is Croatia's core product."

Reflecting this commitment to the environment, 100% of the electricity used by Valamar Riviera properties comes from renewable sources. Meanwhile, the company is gradually switching to electric vehicles for transporting guests and goods around its resorts and is installing new charging points for the cars across Croatia.

Investments in community projects and in employee welfare are another priority. With more than 7,000 employees in peak season, the company's average salaries are 27% above the industry benchmark. This year Valamar Riviera was recognized as the country's favorite employer in the tourism sector and as the seventh most desirable employer among all Croatian companies. With the continued support of shareholders, communities and employees, Valamar is now leading the Croatian tourism industry into a prosperous, responsible and sustainable future.



Located in a dense pine forest next to a scenic cove only 10 minutes from the historic centre of Poreč, the new Valamar Collection Marea Suites offer luxurious family holidays. The superb services and facilities, including attractive pools, have been designed to meet the needs of all family members, from babies, children and teenagers to their parents. With its Family and V level services and facilities, Valamar guarantees an unforgettable family holiday on the Adriatic.

**NEW IN  
2019**



# JADROLINIJA: STEERING THE SECTOR INTO THE FUTURE

Croatia's largest shipping line, transports millions of passengers & vehicles every year

Nearly 150 years after the first Croatian shipping lines began operating, and more than 70 years since those companies joined forces and established one giant enterprise, Jadrolinija today plays a central role in the maritime transport of passengers and cargo all along the Croatian coastline.

Jadrolinija's fleet currently consists of 51 vessels, comprising 10 fast passenger ships, four classic passenger ferries and 37 RoRo (roll-on/roll-off) ships, including three large vessels which are used exclusively on international routes to and from the Italian ports of Ancona and Bari.

In total, Jadrolinija now transports more than 12 million passengers and three million vehicles per year. That represents more than 80% of all passengers and cargo to be transported by ship in Croatia. During the busy summer, the ships have over 600 scheduled departures and the most frequent routes operate around the clock. It is no exaggeration to say that without the company's



ferry operations, the rapid expansion of Croatian tourism in recent years would simply not have been possible.

As the continued success of Jadrolinija depends on the satisfaction of its customers, the company is working hard to understand what today's maritime passengers are looking for and to exceed their expectations. The firm has stepped up its investments in training and professional development, with all crew members and onshore personnel dedicated to improving their skills, solving any problems

that may arise, and putting the customer first. At the same, a renewed emphasis on quality management and data analysis is positioning the company for a new era of growth.

Located in the opulent Adriatic Palace in Rijeka, a building which symbolises the city's maritime heritage, Jadrolinija today is a company which is looking not back to an illustrious past but forward to a future of continued investment and expansion. In Jadrolinija, it is safe to say that there is a steady hand on the tiller of Croatian shipping.

**DOWNLOAD MY MOBILE APP!**  
Access the timetable and buy tickets :)



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The best way to reach  
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[www.jadrolinija.hr](http://www.jadrolinija.hr)

## RAB: THE HAPPY ISLAND

INTERVIEW WITH



**Can you please introduce and describe the island of Rab, located just off the northern Croatian coast in the Adriatic Sea?**

The town of Rab, situated on the island of Rab which is about 92 square kilometers, is over 2,000 years old and has had the municipality status since the Roman times.

It is unique and special because it's the most forested island apart from Mljet in Dalmatia. On the north side of the island it has bare and rocky area, with almost no vegetation. Then, there is a hill right in the middle that protects the south side from the northern winds that the people here refer to as the bura wind.

There are around 300 springs of clean drinking water on the island, numerous bays and beaches, as well as untouched nature that we are trying to preserve for the future generations.

We have a microclimate here in Rab, and therefore cold currents never reach our shores, which makes our sea the warmest in this part of Europe.

There are under 10,000 inhabitants on the whole island; with 8,000 living in the town of Rab. We have quite a privileged living environment compared to other islands because it takes only 12 minutes to reach the mainland and we are just an hour and a half drive to Rijeka and under 2 hours to Zagreb,

our capital. The ferry line that goes to the mainland runs year-round.

**What are the main economic sectors here on Rab Island?**

Tourism represents around 95 % of our economy and most of the residents work in tourism-related activities. We're a well-known destination with 130 years of history in tourism activities. However, I believe that tourism is a delicate economic sector that can be volatile. We need to work on further developing other sectors and industries, so our island and community become less dependable on it.

**What sets Rab apart from the other islands in Croatia?**

What makes us different and special from the other islands is the fact that we have a diverse set of experiences for tourists and are able to provide alternative tourism models apart from being just a family destination.

First, we have our nature attributes, starting with the sun and good weather, the incredible clean pristine sea, fantastic beaches and forests.

Then we have our historical and cultural heritage, especially the old town of Rab with its four bell towers which attracts a lot of tourists and is extremely beautiful. A lot of guests are especially impressed with the old town and the towers.



**Nikola Grgurić**  
Mayor  
City of Rab

I like to say that Rab is the perfect place to 'recharge the batteries' with its clean air and healthy lifestyle.

**What is your current tourism strategy?**

In the 80s there were quite a few developments on the island, with big constructions taking place which brought mass tourism to Rab, but we want to change this. We have to adapt and improve the quality of our tourism offer, to be able to attract a different and more upscale kind of tourist.

So in the past few years, with the help of Valamar Group, our biggest hotel company, and other smaller hotels and apartments which made important investments, we have been able to start a new era in our tourism development avoiding mass tourism.

**What is in the near future for Rab?**

The opening of an economic zone and we hope that by this coming autumn the first companies will have settled in. We do want our local businesses to flourish so we have provided them a special place and incentives to do so.

### FACTS

**8,000**  
inhabitants

**50,000**  
people in the summer

**95%**  
tourism contribution  
to the economy





# BAKAR INDUSTRIAL ZONE: GROWING HAND IN HAND WITH THE REGION

Could you give us a brief introduction on Bakar?

Bakar is one of the oldest towns on the northern Adriatic and it has a rich history. The town is built in the shape of an amphitheater on a hill. Its area stretches from the Bakar Bay to the peak of the Risnjak Mountain and encompasses seven small towns: Bakar, Hreljin, Krasica, Kukuljanovo, Praputnjak, Škrlevo and Zlobin. In 1968 the old city center was proclaimed a cultural monument and protected site.

As the city developed, its government was able to provide more and more services to its citizens. Today, we have free public transport all over town, preventive healthcare and excellent schooling for the young generation.

**What about the Bakar Industrial Zone (BIZ)?**

The project started in 2004 with the aim of further developing the town and even then, we already had our minds focused on the idea that this development had to be sustainable.

We designated 5 million square meters to the BIZ area and we divided it into three parts. In one of them, close to the main roads, we establish the commercial area with stores. Then, next to it, we had the warehouses and logistics facilities. The last part was reserved for the manufacturers.

The BIZ expanded a lot during the past 15 years and nowadays it also houses new



infrastructure. Around 200 businesses are settled there, employing more than 4,000 people. I would like to point out that most of the investment in traffic and communal infrastructure in the BIZ was financed by the town of Bakar and the industrial zone itself, and today, the BIZ generates income and contributes significantly to the town's budget.

Another important factor is that a lot of businesses in other towns and cities in the area, even though they are not located in the BIZ, also benefit from it as they are related or collaborate to businesses in our industrial zone.



In 2017 Bakar was placed as one of the top five locations in the region for economic development, just behind the cities of Rijeka and Opatija, but before Kastav and Matulji.

**What is the BIZ administration's priorities?**

Our main goal is to have more than 10,000 people permanently employed at the BIZ and have all of its 5 million square meters area being used. Once that happens, we will be able to expand the industrial zone. Also, we are currently building 2 smaller zones.

We're close to signing a contract to get European funds that, together with some funds provided by the town itself, will allow us to further build and improve our infrastructure and expand the industrial zone. We are talking about additional 20,000 square meters of land for future projects in the next few years.

**You mentioned that from day one, the BIZ had sustainability in mind. Is that still so?**

Yes! Right now we are negotiating with the representatives of HEP, the Croatian state-owned power utility, and the installer of wind parks in our area. Some of the companies in the industrial zone are already using solar power. Also, we have recently changed all the street lighting to make it more energy efficient.

We really encourage 'green' projects that use new and efficient technology.

## INTERVIEW WITH



How do you motivate people to come and invest in the BIZ?

One way to make people come to our industrial zone is by reducing the price of land. As a matter of fact, at the BIZ you can either rent or buy the land. We lease the land, for 30 years, as an incentive to some businesses so they can start their activities without a huge financial burden. Also, investors will find all the infrastructure they need. And most important of all, there is no bureaucracy or long waiting periods. As soon as they get their permits, they can start their project.

**How much does the industrial zone mean to the development of this region?**

A lot. As I mentioned, we hope to employ 10,000 people at the BIZ. Bakar has only 8,000 inhabitants so obviously we are counting on people from outside Bakar too. Also, the economic activity at the BIZ is not seasonal like tourism. We are working 365 days a year, so we are employing people on a more permanent basis.

Almost all the investment at the industrial zone is done by the city of Bakar which means we are not a burden to the county, on the contrary, they benefit from us.

**Hiring 10,000 people is a big task. How do you assess the workforce available in the region?**

We are aware that some of the investors here lack the proper workforce for their businesses, especially if they need very targeted and qualified workers, so there is the supply/demand problem. Workers go where they are paid better, and this is one of the issues we need to address. The employers here need to react and increase the salaries that they are offering to the workers. If you want quality, you have to pay for it; the companies need to invest in their workforce because a young qualified person is not afraid of going somewhere else and experience something new where they might find a better salary as well.

**How can the city make sure that qualified young people stay and work here?**

In recent year we have tried to improve



Tomislav Klarić  
Mayor  
City of Bakar



Linda Sciucca  
Director  
Bakar Industrial Zone

our citizens' quality of life. We have built kindergartens and have 12 cultural centers. We are financing preventive healthcare,

pediatricians, speech therapists, etc. We offer free transport. Gradually we are increasing the population's standards of living and expect the number of inhabitants to increase in the next few years.

Another factor is that businesses in Bakar and the BIZ are very organized and there are shopping centers that show that you can find everything here. Remember that one third of the BIZ is dedicated to commerce. And the other two one-thirds to services and production.

**What kind of businesses do you have at the BIZ at the moment?**

Project management, construction and engineering, steelworks, fish processing, transformers, toilet supplies, beer, pipes, glass, etc. We have a modular construction company that build kindergartens and hotels. We have a very broad spectra of activities in our industrial zone.

**How do you envision the BIZ?**

We want the Bakar Industrial Zone to be the development engine for the whole region!

### FACTS

8,000  
population of Bakar

2004  
Bakar Industrial  
Zone (BIZ) opens

5 million  
square meters  
BIZ area

+4,000  
people employed  
at BIZ



# RIJEKA PORT: GAME CHANGER IN THE NORTHERN ADRIATIC SEA

INTERVIEW WITH



## Can you give us a brief history of the Port of Rijeka?

In March 1719, exactly 300 years ago, the Habsburg Emperor Charles VI proclaimed Rijeka and Trieste free royal ports in order to end the Venetian dominance over navigating in the Adriatic Sea. In the Chart of Emperor Charles VI, all traders were allowed free entry, docking and departure from the Port of Rijeka, which determined the future of Rijeka as a port city. After that, Rijeka's maritime industry started developing and expanding which led to a strong trade growth and fast urbanization in the city.

## How important is Rijeka Port for Croatia and the region?

Rijeka was the biggest and busiest port in ex-Yugoslavia and has always played an important role throughout our history. During the War of Independence, as expected, the Port of Rijeka recorded a sharp drop in traffic and stagnated; it was only after 1995, when the war finished, that the government was able to revitalize it, with the aid of Korean funds, and update the port equipment.

Then, the government invested in the port and brought back the shipping lines and eventually the container business was also up and running. In 1996 the Port of Rijeka Authority was established for the

management, construction and use of the Port of Rijeka. Our port was opened to international public traffic and declared a port of special international economic interest for the Republic of Croatia due to its size and significance. Due to its strategic position, the port has always been regarded an important gateway to Central Europe and South East Europe.

Rijeka is investing all its efforts to compete with other Northern Adriatic ports and is the most convenient transit hub for Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Western Ukraine, Southern Poland and Southern Germany.

## The revitalization of the container terminal was quite important. Can you tell us about your current partner in this part of the business?

In 2010 an international tender was launched for a strategic partnership to operate the container terminal. In April 2011, International Container Terminal Services Inc. (ICTSI) from the Philippines joined the ownership structure as a strategic partner with a concession for 30 years. One of the aims of this alliance is to expand the terminal's capacity and facilities. This partnership certainly helped us increase



Denis Vukorepa  
Executive Director  
Port of Rijeka Authority

the port's activities and a lot of shipping companies have opened their representative offices here in Rijeka since then.

## What can you tell us about the Zagreb Deep Sea Container Terminal (DSCT), one of your latest projects?

The investment value in this new terminal,

completed on May 21 and financed by a World Bank loan and funds from the Croatian state budget, is estimated at €350 million including railway and road infrastructure.

The Zagreb DSCT was implemented within the Rijeka Gateway Project, which aims to improve Rijeka Port's transport and infrastructure network. The terminal, 400 meters in length, is expected to be expanded to 680 meters later on. It is 20 meters deep, which will allow the port to receive the latest generation of container ships. The first phase has been completed and we are now expecting to sign the concession agreement in January 2020.

Considerable interest has been expressed by well-known terminal operators and leaders in the container business in Europe, the Middle East and the Far East for the concession of the Zagreb DSCT, which is now the new and integral intermodal port system of Rijeka.

Once the project is completed, the Zagreb DSCT will be the only deep-sea terminal in the Northern Adriatic with surrounding 1.5 million square meters ideal for the development of intermodal activities.

## What impact will this new terminal have in the overall economy of the region?

We expect a very positive effect that will boost many economic activities since we will be able to receive bigger vessels. Also, the new partnership for the concession of the terminal which will be signed in January 2020, will also bring in more business. I personally believe that in a short time the port will become a powerful intermodal center in the Northern Adriatic region.

## How do you compare the Port of Rijeka to the others in the Adriatic Sea?

The ports in the Adriatic are very small if you compare them to ports in China for example, but with the new investments we have made in the container terminal we believe that we will be able to offer all the services of any big port and be in a much better position than any of the ports in the region.



As Croatia's leading port, our vision is to become the largest container port in the region, and one of the most important

ports for connecting the Far East and Central Europe, with special emphasis on environment care, security of ships and port areas, as well as responsible business and cooperation with local community.

Our aim is to be the south route for the Central European market; a new, powerful, competitive and safe Adriatic port, intended for traffic of goods as well as the traffic of passengers.

## How important is the cruise business for the port?

Cruise ships is a growing business, so it is included in our organizational chart. We received 11 cruise ships in 2018 and 24 in 2019. In 2020 we expect 32; one ship a week is enough for us.

We do offer passenger services with catamarans to places like Lošinj and Rab, but it is not our main business nor a priority. Split Port is better suited to service local passengers and tourists and they have many ferries that go to different islands.

I think our ports need to be niche ones: Dubrovnik for passengers; Split as an industrial port and ferries to the islands; Šibenik the main port for petrochemical industry; and Rijeka mainly a cargo port.

### FACTS

1996

establishment of the Port of Rijeka Authority

€350 million

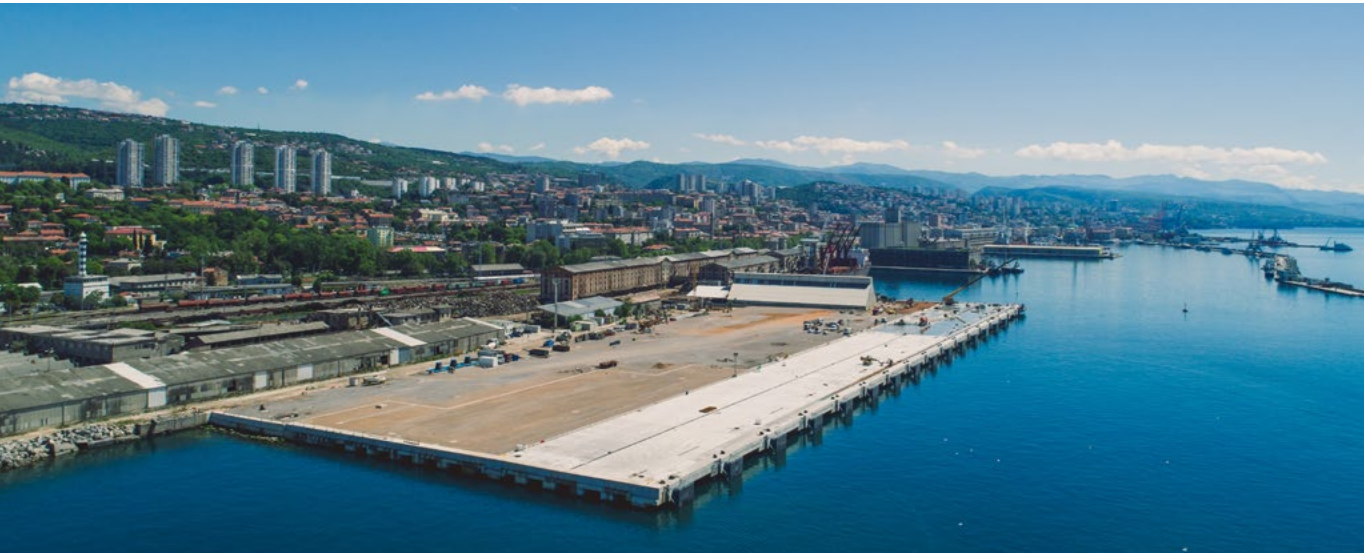
invested in the Zagreb Deep Sea Container Terminal

20 meters

depth of the new container terminal

32

cruise ships expected to dock in 2020





# RIJEKA: A MARITIME GATEWAY TO EUROPE

The new Zagreb Deep Sea Container Terminal (DSCT) will turn Rijeka into the region’s leading, trade hub



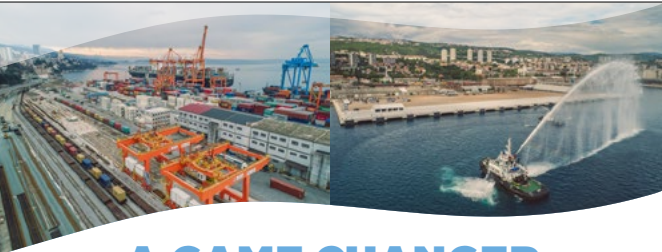
As the largest port in the country, for three centuries Rijeka has played a central part in Croatian trade and transport. That role is continuing in the 21st century, with the opening of the €350 Zagreb DSCT poised to provide the port with the largest container capacity in the Northern Adriatic. “This year we are celebrating the 300th anniversary of Rijeka’s proclamation as a free port by the Holy Roman Emperor Charles VI,”

says the city’s Mayor, Vojko Obersnel. “Ever since then, the growth of the port has had a direct impact not only on our city, but on the development of all Croatia.” Recent investments have strengthened Rijeka’s standing as an engine of national growth. Earlier this year, the Port of Rijeka Authority completed

construction of the 400-meter first phase of the new deep-sea Zagreb DSCT, partly funded by the World Bank. The authority is now in the final stages of selecting an international partner to operate the facility and expand its dock to a length of 680 meters. Taking advantage of water depths of up to 20 meters, the new terminal will enable the Port of Rijeka for the first time to be able to welcome the latest generation of giant container ships.

Meanwhile, investments in new road and rail connections will help turn Rijeka into the port of choice for shippers from Asia looking to reach Central European markets. By using the Adriatic route rather than sailing through the Straits of Gibraltar, ships from China can reach Europe almost one week earlier, making Rijeka the ideal transit hub for the markets of Central and Southeastern Europe.

“Our vision is to become the largest and most competitive container port in the area and one of the most important ports for connecting the Far East and Central Europe,” says Denis Vukorepa, executive director of the Port of Rijeka Authority. “We will become the intermodal transport center for the entire region.”



## A GAME CHANGER IN THE NORTHERN ADRIATIC SEA

The Port of Rijeka Authority has completed the development of the Zagreb Deep Sea Container Terminal and invites port terminal operators to register their interest and bid for the concession to develop, operate and manage the new facility.

[www.portauthority.hr](http://www.portauthority.hr)



# BAKAR: GROWTH ENGINE OF THE NORTH

This historic town continues to play a major role in the regional economy



In the far north of the country, the port town of Bakar played an important part in the emergence of Croatia as an industrial and naval power. Around the year 1800 Bakar was even the largest city in the country, with almost three times the population of Zagreb.

To this day Bakar is rich in cultural treasures and maritime heritage. One of the oldest towns on the Adriatic, Bakar’s city center has been protected since 1968 and is home to some of the finest fortresses, churches and ancient houses in northern Croatia. The town makes for a popular

daytrip for regional tourists, who make sure to dip the famous Bakar’s biscuits in wine as tradition dictates.

While continuing to play a significant role in the economy of northern Croatia, the city has implemented a new, more sustainable strategy for growth since the closure of a giant coke factory in 1995 and the launch of the Bakar Industrial Zone (BIZ) in 2004. Out have gone the polluting heavy industries, making way for a new breed of smaller companies in sectors such as services, retail, processing, logistics, construction, engineering and light manufacturing.

Drawn here by attractive land prices and by first-rate infrastructure, with easy connections to the Mediterranean and central Europe, as well as straightforward licensing procedures, 200 businesses already call the BIZ home. Employing more than 4,000 people, Bakar authorities believe that the industrial zone has potential to become an economic driving force for the entire region.

“Our main goal is to have more than 10,000 people permanently employed at the BIZ, with all its 5 million square meters in use,” says Tomislav Klari, the Mayor of Bakar.

An aerial photograph of the Bakar Industrial Zone, showing the town and the sea. The town is illuminated with lights, and the sea is dark. The sky is dark, and there are some lights visible on the horizon.

## EXCELLENCE & VISION

With an exceptional geo-strategic location, **BAKAR INDUSTRIAL ZONE** provides businesses with the necessities to operate, create new production capacity & employment. The most developed business zone in Croatia with a significant impact on the economic development of the region & the whole country.

The logo for the Bakar Industrial Zone, featuring a stylized 'B' made of red and black blocks.

**BAKAR INDUSTRIAL ZONE**

[www.zigo.hr](http://www.zigo.hr)



# DI KLANA: CONSTANTLY INVESTING IN INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY

INTERVIEW WITH



## Can you introduce DI Klana to our readers?

Wood processing has been one of the leading activities in the Klana region for about one hundred years. The company was founded in 1911 and today DI Klana is one of Europe's leading chair manufacturers. It grew due to its geo-strategic location, highly motivated and trained workforce, and above all, the long-standing reliable and loyal customers from neighboring countries.

DI Klana has always had a constant supply of timber from the area and easy access to distribute its production either by road or shipping. These factors also contributed to its success

We are constantly investing in innovation, technology and human resources which is key, in my opinion, to any company's development and growth.

In 1992 an Italian company bought part of DI Klana and became its main shareholder. They brought new machinery to the company.

## Can you tell us a bit about DI Klana's production?

We manufacture more than one hundred models of chairs – classic, rustic and modern designs for any kind of interior. The models are made of beech and oak solid wood, in

combination with different types of seats that can be solid, wicker or upholstered. DI Klana produces over one million chairs a year. We have an ISO 9001 certification as well as a FSC® certificate.

Exports represent 98% of our revenue. We export to France - about 50% of our production, and then mostly to Italy and Germany. We work with big retail chains in these three countries.

## What about new markets?

We are always looking for new markets to expand our reach. But when you want to expand you need to fight harder with the competition, especially the Chinese. However, in general, people still recognize and prefer quality products, especially European ones. The Chinese products that have similar quality of ours, have the same price.

Today, some companies are finding a partner to work with in China and maybe we will do that too in the future, but it is not our strategy at the moment because we have enough work in Europe at the time being.

## Who designs your chairs?

We started manufacturing our chairs based on the designs and creations given by our



Miladin Marković  
Director  
DI Klana

clients. We did that for a long time. But, for the last 4 years we have also been designing our own chairs – we have our own designers and sometimes we outsource the designs.

Right now, our own designs represent 60% of our production while the remaining 40% reflects specific designs given by our clients.

## What is the company's mission?

Our mission is to “supply customers in time, with the highest quality products under the most favorable conditions, with sustainable development and protection of the living and working environment always in mind”.

What sets DI Klana apart is the fact that we are in charge of the whole process of making a chair, from the moment we get the wood to the finished product. Italian factories, for example, do the mounting and varnishing only, they are only in charge of the final stages of the production line and they use subcontractors for the initial stages of producing a chair.

And deadlines, delivering your product timely is pivotal, or else you are out of the game.



## How many people work at DI Klana?

We have around 400 employees who work in two shifts. Lack of workforce is one of the issues the entrepreneurs in the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County face and especially in our sector, wood processing and manufacturing, because we cannot pay our workers the same as other sectors like construction or pharmaceutical can. So we try to compensate in other ways. We encourage teamwork and encourage our people to interconnect with their peers beyond work too because a better work environment makes people happier. And whatever problems our employees have, we try to deal and solve them together. You need to understand your workers and provide what they need; that is the way to keep your workforce and avoid they go somewhere else.

Human resources are of the utmost importance to us. DI Klana also provides scholarships to students of the newly established Wood Technology School in Rijeka as well as to two departments of the Forestry Faculty in Zagreb. By doing so, we secure we will have qualified and trained workers in the wood processing business in the future.

I always like to point out that we have a lot of female employees that in many aspects are more productive than their male counterparts. Also, they have a better sense of beauty and aesthetics in the design and production of a chair.

## How does DI Klana keep up with new technology trends in your sector?

Manufacturing a chair is very demanding so you really need to be on top of what is new in the sector. Two years without investing in technology is enough to leave you behind your competitors and what the market demands. DI Klana has been investing around €1 million every year; one of our latest investment was three robots that pack chairs and this alone cost us €400,000.

But no matter how much you invest in new technologies; you still need the human factor to manufacture a chair. There are parts of the process that you still need a person, for example, to upholster a chair.

## What is the key for success in your sector?

Tradition and a long time in the sector are important, but not the main elements for a successful business. There are furniture factories that were founded only 5 years ago and are quite successful in the market. What is definitely important for the customers is quality. They'd rather buy products from an established company that offers quality products than from someone who just started the business. I always say that quality and price are the mother and father of our business.

### FACTS

1911  
company was founded

100  
models of chairs

1 million  
chairs manufactured  
a year

98%  
exported





# JGL: INNOVATION IN RIJEKA & ABROAD

## INTERVIEW WITH



### Could you please introduce us to JGL?

JGL was founded in Rijeka in 1991 as the first private joint-stock pharmaceutical company in Croatia. We develop and manufacture drugs in specific therapeutic areas, with a focus on the senses and with the aim of improving the quality of life by taking care of health, JGL offers products in nearly all technological forms and different legislative categories and operates in around 50 foreign markets, primarily in the CIS (Russia, the Ukraine, Kazakhstan) and SEE markets.

### How has JGL evolved to become what the company it is today?

In every company's life there are some significant decisions that give a new dimension to its present and future. We always knew we could grow and dreamed of advancing from a small local laboratory to an international pharmaceutical company that operates beyond the Croatian borders.

With persistence, patience and a lot of passion and energy during the last 28 years we established ourselves internationally and today we have 160 brands, 460 products, 1,360 variations and 6,000 articles present in 50 markets in the world, which represents around 75% of our total income.

### Which are your key brands?

Aqua Maris, Meralys, Vizol S and Dramina for the global health market.

### How competitive is JGL?

As an international pharmaceutical company with business standards that match European practice, we believe we can have a really strong presence in the global health market. Despite problems we are experiencing because of competition, which is getting stronger each day, we are entirely dedicated to our development and corporate projects that are product- and export-oriented.

### What is the company's vision?

Any company's vision must be geared towards the long term and remain accessible and at the same time inspiring. Our vision, that motivates and leads us, is to be a pharmaceutical company specialized in the development and production of sterile products with added value in ophthalmology and otorhinolaryngology, as well as the leader in the use of sea water for health purposes which requires a high technological and therapeutic focus because it is such a niche product.

### What have been key moments for you?

In 2015 we completed our most important



Ivo Usmiani  
President, Board of  
Directors, JGL

corporate and strategic enterprise, JGL Pharma Valley, a project that started in 2013 always with sustainability in mind. This is an almost €50 million project. Thanks to it, JGL is today ranked among the leading manufacturers of sterile pharmaceutical forms (drops, sprays and BoV) in the European Union.

The building of the JGL Pharma Valley complex opened the door to our future. It was a great challenge for all of us and the Croatian designers and contractors that participated in it, and we are proud that we finished this project in the record time of just two years.

This project is a good example that it is possible to realize big industrial projects and build demanding complexes in a relatively short period of time in Croatia, as long as there is a clear vision and business concept, a globally competitive product and a strong project team.

### What does this important investment mean to the city of Rijeka?

Our factory has changed the view of those

entering Rijeka. Today, Rijeka is a symbol of modernity in a once repressed industrial area. It also contributes to the process of regenerating the image of the city, which is known for its strong and innovative industries.

Besides the obvious economic benefits for the local community, our project is an example of perseverance of the city's entrepreneurship and has shown the possibility to create new industries based on knowledge and innovation in a short period of time.

### What is the main challenge for Croatian companies in your opinion?

In today's economy, based on volume, the only companies that survive are those which can internationalize their products. This highly dynamic era and a constantly changing environment requires companies to adapt quickly and be very disciplined.

We are living in a time of abundance of products and global competition, so the main question is how to differentiate and become recognizable as well as how to fulfill or even outdo our customers' expectations.

### What are your priorities now?

The company's focus is on the development and production of drugs for the senses, additional capacities in the existing plants for sterile forms, the new plant for Bag-on-Valve forms and solution equipping which will certainly contribute to the realization of the company's strategy which is going one step further with its key brands for the global health market.

We need to make the company have a more effective and efficient production, be able to respond faster to today's market needs, which are getting more demanding, and optimize our business expenses.

### What does sustainability mean to the management?

We always try to be a reliable and responsible member of the community we live and work in. Since our founding, we've recognized the importance of investing in the local community. Therefore, as company, we are



often involved in sponsoring, donating and/or launching projects and initiatives which contribute to the development of our micro social environment. For the last 13 years JGL has been recognized as one of the Croatian companies that always promote sustainable development.

Through our yearly reports on our sustainable development, we present to the public our accomplishments achieved with the implementation of technological solutions and production practices, as well as the areas in which we still have a lot of work to do and our goals concerning environment protection and social responsibility.

Moreover, we are working on building partnerships all over the world every day to actively participate in the strengthening of the global health system, increasing the product accessibility and finding sustainable solutions for health challenges of today, but also of tomorrow.

We are constantly striving to improve and enhance our working and ecological conditions by consciously reducing our impact on the environment, managing our business with responsibility and supporting the highest ethical standards on every step of the production of quality products - from research and development to the sales and marketing.

### Your message to our readers?

By keeping up with the trends of the pharmaceutical industry, JGL is constantly trying to improve itself by respecting the standards and very strict and demanding rules of good manufacturing practices which regulate the pharmaceutical industry.

#### FACTS

50  
markets where  
JGL is present

964  
employees

160  
brands

+€126 million  
turnover





# RIJEKA: A CITY THAT SERVES AS A FAST-GROWING EXPORT PLATFORM

The largest city in northern Croatia, Rijeka is in the driving seat of the national economy

Since the end of the Croatian War of Independence in 1995, the northern county of Primorje-Gorski Kotar and its administrative capital Rijeka have emerged as among the country's most important drivers of economic growth.

Home to Croatia's largest port and benefitting from extensive road and rail connections to central Europe, the region has spearheaded the transformation of the country from a socialist system based on heavy industry into a free market economy dominated by small and medium enterprises, specialist manufacturers and the services sector.

"Before the civil war, Rijeka was an industrial city," Rijeka Mayor Vojko Obersnel says. "Now in the place of big factories there

are mostly small and medium businesses engaged in designing, IT, manufacturing, construction, trade and professional, scientific and technical activities."

Pharmaceutical manufacturer JGL is typical of the new breed of forward-looking businesses based in Rijeka. Established in 1991 as the first privately held pharmaceutical company in Croatia, JGL specializes in developing over-the-counter products for the respiratory, ophthalmology and dermatology markets. To make innovative solutions such as the Meralys decongestant and Aqua Maris nasal spray, JGL uses water from the purest parts of the Adriatic Sea, drawing on hundreds of years of tradition and using the most sophisticated sterilization technologies.



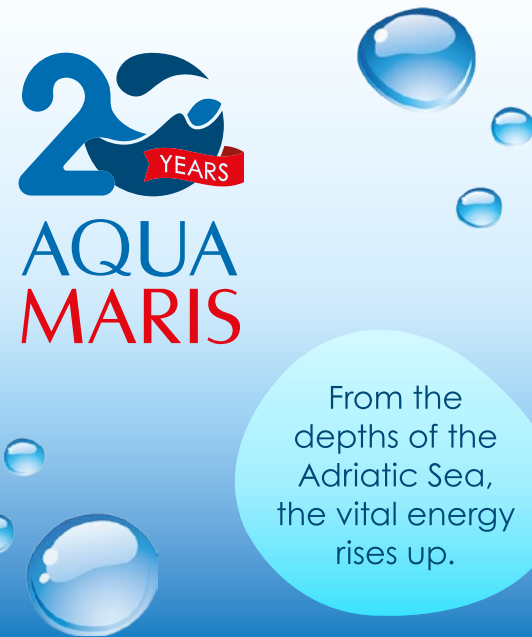
YOUR IDEAS INTO PRACTICE



**KLANA**

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[www.diklana.hr](http://www.diklana.hr)



For over 20 years helping families live life to the full, breathing in every moment.

Since starting life in one small laboratory in Rijeka, JGL has internationalized rapidly and now operates in around 50 countries. To sustain its growth in the global health market, the company invested nearly €50 million in building a state-of-the-art research and production facility in Rijeka, which was completed in 2015 after two years of work.

"With our new factory we have shown that it is possible to create new industries based on knowledge and innovation in a short period of time," says Ivo Usniani, President of the Board of Directors of JGL. "It is a good example of the entrepreneurial culture that exists in Rijeka."

It is not only local pharmaceutical companies who have successfully internationalized their businesses. Given the region's excellent road, rail and sea links, the area serves as an excellent platform for exports in all sectors of the economy.

Building on the region's long heritage in the timber industry, in recent years furniture producer DI Klana has grown into

one of Europe's leading furniture brands. Established in the mountainous region of Gorski Kotar in 1911, with easy access to high quality wood, today DI Klana obtains 98% of its revenues from exports to markets such as France, Germany and Italy. Producing over one million chairs per year, in more than 100 different models, DI Klana's 400 skilled and motivated employees have helped earn Croatia an international reputation for furniture production.

"We are constantly investing in innovation, technology and human resources," says Miladin Marković, Director of DI Klana. "This is the key to our company's growth."

"Because of our forests, there are significant opportunities for investment in the wood processing sector," adds Zlatko Komadina, the President of Primorje-Gorski Kotar County. "While we are always very careful to protect our environment, small and medium-sized businesses in these resource-based industries are playing a big part in the continued growth of our economy."





Produced by ELITE REPORTS in partnership  
with ASIA INTERNATIONAL REPORTS. Ltd

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