

OCTOBER 15, 2013

CROATIA JOINS THE EUROPEAN UNION

Croatia has become the 28th member of the European Union, with crowds joining celebrations in the capital Zagreb.

Croatia is the first new EU member since Bulgaria and Romania joined in 2007. It is 10 years since it applied.

Croatia's split from Yugoslavia triggered a 1991-1995 war to secure its independence. But with one in five unemployed and Croatia's national debt officially classed as junk, some Croatians feel joining an economic bloc with its own serious troubles will do little to improve their prospects.

Concerns about Croatian corruption and organised crime remain among some EU leaders, and Croatia will not yet join the single currency or the free-movement Schengen zone, where most EU citizens are not subject to passport checks.

Croatia in figures:

- Population: 4.4 million (UN, 2012)
- Capital: Zagreb
- Main language: Croatian
- Main religion: Christianity
- Area: 56,594 sq km (21,851 sq miles)
- GNI per capita: €10,389 (World Bank, 2011)

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