

# Croatia

## *Ethnicity in Croatia*

### *Group selection*

Data for 1991-1995 are from the 1991 Census. Data for 1996-2009 are from the 2001 census and include the demographic changes that occurred as a result of the war. Croats are the majority ethnic group of Croatia. The Bosniaks are the second largest ethnic minority group in Croatia, but they are still in the process of constituting their identity and organizations.

We identify the following politically relevant ethnic groups:

**Bosniaks, Croats, Hungarians, Italians, Roma, and Serbs.**

### *Power relations*

#### *1992-1995*

From independence in 1992 until 1995, during the war, Croats held a clear monopoly over political power while other ethnic groups did not play a role on the political parquet. Since the end of the civil war, there have been a few ministers of ethnic minorities included in the government. During the war of independence against Serbia, the Serb ethnic group, although having lived on Croatian territory for centuries, was repressed and many Serbs were forced to flee to Serbia. Until 1995 there were large populations of Serbs living in the Krajina region centered around the city of Knin as well as in Eastern Slavonia. These regions had unsuccessfully declared independence from Croatia in 1991 after Croatia had declared independence from Yugoslavia, thus during the war the Serbs are coded as self-excluded. In August 1995 most of the ethnic Serbs were expelled. Since then, the Serbs are discriminated. Minority Rights Group International (<sup>1287</sup>) reports that the Croatian government pursues a “nationalist policy mainly targeting Serbs, with Serbs exposed to denunciation, harassment, threats and killings, both inside and outside of the (former) war zones”. Although the atmosphere for returning has improved, the government has been unwilling to end discrimination against returning Serbs, particularly over occupancy, property and status rights. More than a decade after the war, most ethnic Serbs from Croatia remain outside the country as refugees (<sup>1288</sup>).

<sup>1287</sup> [Minority Rights Group International, 2003]

<sup>1288</sup> [Minority Rights Group International, 2003]

*1996-2017*

Since 1996, the Croats are coded as “dominant”.

In the Croatian parliament, eight seats are reserved to 22 recognized minorities. Serbian minorities are designated three representatives. Hungarian and Italian minorities are designated one representative each. Czech and Slovak minorities share one representative. Austrian, Bulgarian, German, Polish, Romany, Romanian, Ruthenian, Russian Turkish, Ukrainian, Vlach and Jewish minorities share another representative. Albanian, Bosnian, Montenegrin, Macedonian and Slovenian minorities share a third representative (1289)

<sup>1289</sup> [Election Guide, 2011]

The Roma face many obstacles, including lack of knowledge of the Croatian language, lack of education, lack of citizenship and identity documents, high unemployment, and widespread discrimination (1290). The U.S. State Department reports that “open discrimination and harassment continued against ethnic Serbs and Roma” (1291).

<sup>1290</sup> [U.S. State Department, 2006 ,Äi 2009]

<sup>1291</sup> [U.S. State Department, 2006 ,Äi 2009]

The Italian minority is based in Istria. The Italian community is highly active in public affairs with many community associations. There are daily Italian radio broadcasts and Italian libraries (1292). The Italian minority also has a representative in the Croatian parliament (1293, 10).

<sup>1292</sup> [Minority Rights Group International, 2003]

<sup>1293</sup> [Tatalovic, 2006]

Bosniaks organize cultural and religious events, traditional holidays and have a Bosniak library (1294). In 2004, the Bosniak National Community in Croatia asked the Croatian parliament and president to solve the legal status of Bosniaks in accordance with the Constitutional Law on the National Minorities’ Rights (1295).

<sup>1294</sup> [Minority Rights Group International, 2003]

<sup>1295</sup> [One World, 2012]

Traditionally, the Hungarian minority lives in Bjelovar, Osijek, Zagreb and Baranj. The Hungarian community has a publishing house, a central library, daily radio broadcasts in Hungarian, and associations that promote frequent visits and exchanges with neighboring Hungary (1296). It also has a representative in the Croatian parliament (1297, 10).

<sup>1296</sup> [Minority Rights Group International, 2003]

<sup>1297</sup> [Tatalovic, 2006]

The newest government with Andrej Plenkovic as prime minister was formed in October 2016. All members of the cabinet belong to the Croat Democratic Union (HDZ) or MOST, which is a party that emerged regionally, but does not represent a specific minority group. The three ministers that are “independent” are Croats. Therefore, it can be stated that the Croats are still the dominant ethnic group in power.

Bosniaks, Italians and Hungarians are represented in parliament and are therefore considered powerless.

Even though the Serbs and the Roma are also represented in the national parliament, they have to be considered discriminated. According to a report by Amnesty International, discrimination persists against ethnic minorities, particularly Serbs and Roma. Serbian refugees returning to Croatia faced high difficulties in regaining their property in 2016. Furthermore, obstacles prevent Serbs from finding employment in the public and private sector, and even though mi-

nority rights exist, they are not or only insufficiently implemented. Roma face high obstacles in receiving identity documents and access to public services, housing, education and employment (<sup>1298</sup>).

<sup>1298</sup> [Amnesty International, 2017]

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## *Political status of ethnic groups in Croatia*

*From 1992 until 1995*

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Croats	0.781	MONOPOLY
Serbs	0.122	SELF-EXCLUSION
Roma	0.0077	DISCRIMINATED
Bosniaks	0.0047	IRRELEVANT
Italians	0.0044	IRRELEVANT
Hungarians	0.004	IRRELEVANT

*From 1996 until 2017*

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Croats	0.904	DOMINANT
Serbs	0.043	DISCRIMINATED
Bosniaks	0.0073	POWERLESS
Italians	0.0042	POWERLESS
Roma	0.004	DISCRIMINATED
Hungarians	0.0033	POWERLESS



Figure 241: Political status of ethnic groups in Croatia during 1992-1995.

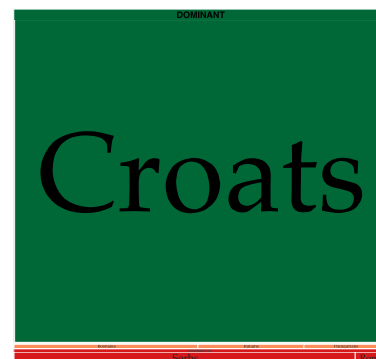


Figure 242: Political status of ethnic groups in Croatia during 1996-2017.

## *Geographical coverage of ethnic groups in Croatia*

*From 1992 until 1995*

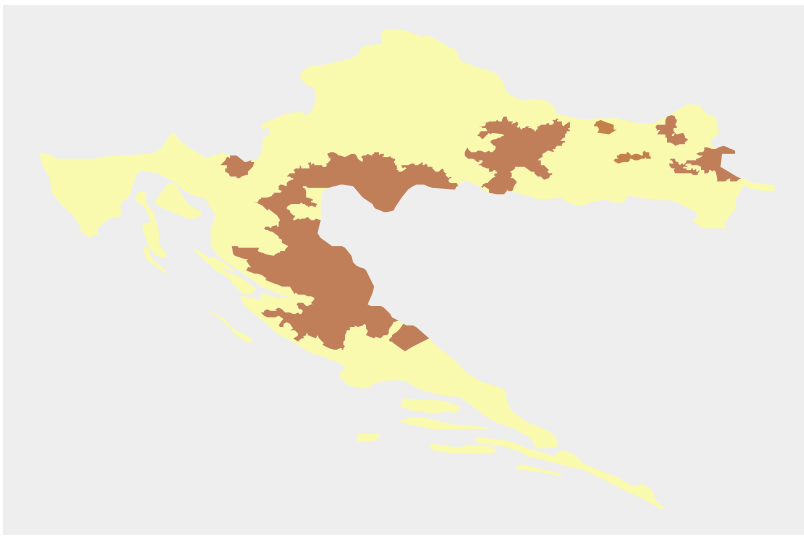


Figure 243: Map of ethnic groups in Croatia during 1992-1995.

	Group name	Area in km <sup>2</sup>	Type
■	Croats	42 395	Regionally based
■	Serbs	13 671	Regionally based
	Roma		Dispersed

Table 74: List of ethnic groups in Croatia during 1992-1995.

*From 1996 until 2017*

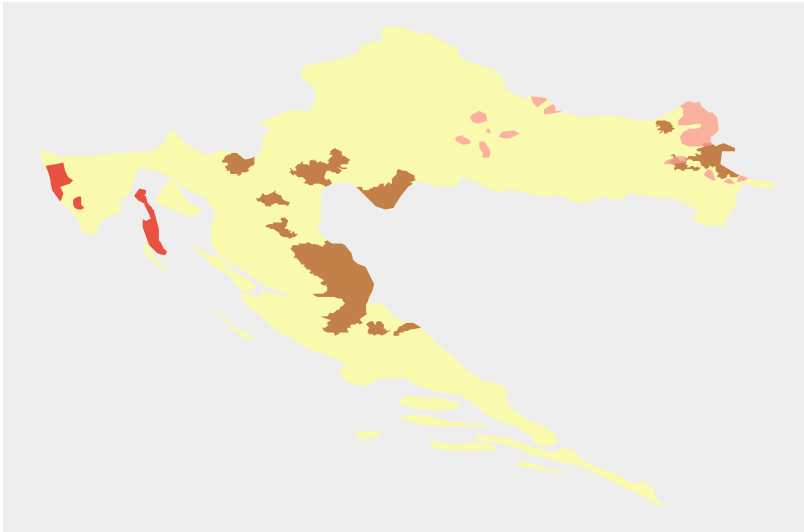


Figure 244: Map of ethnic groups in Croatia during 1996-2017.

Group name	Area in km <sup>2</sup>	Type
<span style="color: yellow;">■</span> Croats	55 823	Statewide
<span style="color: brown;">■</span> Serbs	5065	Regionally based
<span style="color: pink;">■</span> Hungarians	1295	Regionally based
<span style="color: red;">■</span> Italians	751	Regionally based
Roma		Dispersed
Bosniaks		Dispersed

Table 75: List of ethnic groups in Croatia during 1996-2017.



## *Conflicts in Croatia*

*Starting on 1992-04-28*

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Croatia	Serbian Republic of Krajina	Serbs	1992-04-28	Explicit	Yes	Yes
Government of Croatia	Serbian irregulars	Serbs	1992-05-30	Explicit	No	Yes