

# Comparison of Croatian foreign policy towards Latin America and Middle East

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**Zgurić, Borna; Kos-Stanišić, Lidija; Domjančić, Stjepan**

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# COMPARISON OF CROATIAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS LATIN AMERICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST (2001-2012)

BORNA ZGURIĆ, LIDIJA KOS-STANIŠIĆ,  
STJEPAN DOMJANČIĆ

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## Summary

This paper compares the foreign policies of the Republic of Croatia towards the regions of Latin America and the Middle East, aiming to identify the similarities and the differences. During the 1990s Croatia was primarily interested in diplomatic recognition and the establishment of diplomatic relations. In the period of 2001-2012 Latin America and the Middle East were not able to contribute to the achievement of main foreign policy goals – membership in NATO and the EU – so they stayed out of the interests of foreign policy creators. We argue that Croatia has not established a defined foreign policy towards the mentioned regions, and that political significance of a particular Latin American and Middle Eastern country was determined by its economic importance (Croatian export) and in the case of Latin America by the size of the diaspora. The first section briefly outlines the first decade of Croatian foreign policy (1991-2001) and the second section focuses on the empirical assessment of the determinants of Croatian foreign policy toward the countries of Latin America and the Middle

**Borna Zgurić, M.A.**, borna.zguric@gmail.com, Faculty of Political Science of the University of Zagreb

**Lidija Kos-Stanišić, Ph.D.**, likos@fpzg.hr, Faculty of Political Science of the University of Zagreb

**Stjepan Domjančić, Ph.D.**, stjepan\_domjancic@yahoo.com, Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Croatia

East during the period ranging between 2001 and 2012. Bilateral relations between Croatia and Latin American countries are good but not developed. The reason for this is the geographical distance of Latin America and perception of low significance of majority of the countries, and that will not change. On the other hand, there is no correlation between economic and diplomatic importance of Middle Eastern countries for Croatia. Therefore, Croatia's foreign policy towards these countries was not guided by economic incentives.

**Key words:** EU, NATO, Croatia, Latin America, Middle East, foreign policy

## I. Introduction

We should differentiate foreign policy from bilateral relations. In this sense, whether we are talking about "normalisation", "rapprochement", "re-engagement" (Limaye, 2010) or "revitalization" but also "maintaining" of bilateral relations, it is a mutual process. Bilateral relations have to be "mutually reinforcing" (*Ibid*: 312). Relationships between the countries, mutual interest or even some sort of partnership in a specific area (such as security), have to be based on a deliberate mutual effort (*Ibid*.). In a nutshell, both sides must be active in this effort. Foreign policy, on the other hand, is an "aggregate of standpoints, acts and measures that some state has and undertakes towards foreign countries in an effort to protect its own interests" (Nick, 1999: 240). Foreign policy actors, in this sense and within the constitutional framework of each country, are heads of states, parliaments (especially their foreign policy committees) and governments (*Ibid*: 240). Therefore, foreign policy represents efforts of a certain country aimed towards foreign countries, which do not necessarily include mutual or reciprocal efforts.

The aim of this paper is to compare the foreign policies of the Republic of Croatia towards the regions of Latin America and the Middle East, and to identify similarities and differences. During the 1990's Croatia was primarily interested in diplomatic recognition and the establishment of diplomatic relations. During the period ranging between 2001 and 2012 Latin America and the Middle East were not able to contribute to the achievement of main foreign policy goals – membership in NATO and the EU – so they stayed out of the interests of foreign policy creators. Our hypothesis is that Croatia did not have a defined foreign policy towards the mentioned regions, and that the political significance

of a particular Latin American and Middle Eastern country was determined by economic importance (Croatian export) and, in the case of Latin America, the size of the diaspora.

To confirm our hypothesis we will use quantitative analysis. The paper is organized as follows – an introduction, two sections and a conclusion. In the first section we will briefly review the Croatian foreign policy towards Latin America and the Middle East during the period between 1991 and 2001 and in the second section we analyse the Croatian foreign policy toward the countries of the two mentioned regions during the period between 2001 and 2012.

## **2. Croatian Foreign Policy towards Latin America and the Middle East during the period between 1991 and 2001**

Croatian foreign policy is an organized activity of the Republic of Croatia that attempts to maximize its interests in the relations with other countries and subjects in the international community. Vukadinović (1997: 236-237) claims that from the very beginning Croatian foreign policy was being created as conscious, organized and politically coherent activity, directed toward achieving a wide range of foreign affairs objectives. In 1990s, Vukadinović differentiates three stages of Croatian foreign policy. The first stage was the formation of the state when Croatia was forced to create a foreign policy and foreign and diplomatic personnel at the same time. The recognition of the state, the fight against Serbian aggression and the liberation of Croatian territory were the most important goals.

At the same time, with its independence, Croatia became a small country (Vukadinović, 1993; Jović, 2011). Hence, maintaining prior global politics that Yugoslavia had adopted became impossible at this point. Croatia hence needed to find new standards in its relations to other countries (Vukadinović, 1993: 125). This was not only true of Croatia, but also concerning other former socialist countries that found themselves in a new position and had to change their foreign policies from globalism into something more appropriate and turn to Europe. Furthermore, during the time near the breakup of Yugoslavia, it was sometimes emphasised that nonalignment was "dragging Yugoslavia to Africa" (but also Asia) instead of Europe (Vukadinović, 1991: 178). Croatia, alongside Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia,

while still a part of Yugoslavia, decided to "renounce" nonalignment and aligned themselves with the European option (*Ibid.*). And indeed, in the beginning Croatia completely ignored the nonaligned countries, although later some small steps in the form of recognition of Croatia and the establishment of diplomatic relations were made.

The loss of interest and alienation from the Nonalignment movement, the Mediterranean, but also the Middle East in a broader sense, were not only caused by the new realities of Croatian foreign policy. As Švob-Đokić (1996: 166) notices, although the Mediterranean was considered as a crossroad between North and South, East and West, the cradle of civilisations and a point for the exchange of goods, this notion of the Mediterranean has changed and it became a bit archaic. The Mediterranean has become the cradle of crises, political turmoil, the "divided sea", and the denial of multiculturalism and a hotbed of intolerance. In other words, the Mediterranean became both the place where civilizations clashed (Huntington, 1997), and where clashes within civilizations occurred. The 1990's were the years of Middle Eastern, Balkan and Algerian crises (Švob-Đokić, 1996).

Furthermore, the Mediterranean countries, in this context, have shown very low interest for inter-Mediterranean cooperation. The Countries of the Mediterranean South and North have shown more interest in cooperation with the EU, while mutual exchange and cooperation were largely ignored. The Mediterranean is an area where mutual cooperation was never standardized and rarely successfully organized (*Ibid.*: 173). The dominant forms of relations were when the weaker countries put an effort to affiliate themselves with the stronger ones. In a nutshell, the Arab league, the Black sea basin and the Balkan countries focused themselves on the relations with "global" partners, such as the US or the EU, and not on improving and deepening mutual relations (*Ibid.*).

Croatian foreign policy and diplomacy have a rich history in the Mediterranean area, from the times of the Dubrovnik Republic until Tito's Yugoslavia. However, with its independence Croatia was forced to build a new state apparatus, including the diplomatic service, with parallel involvement in the construction of the military and dealing with military aggression on its own territory (Andrić, 2009).

As stated above, only small steps were made, such as the recognition of Croatia and the establishment of diplomatic relations. In some cases

not even that much was achieved. Here we will focus on 18 countries<sup>1</sup> – Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Yemen.<sup>2</sup>

In the early 1990's Croatian diplomacy was very successful in Latin American countries largely thanks to Croatian immigrants. Numerous formal and informal meetings took place with the Argentinean president Carlos Menem and Argentina recognized Croatia as early as 16<sup>th</sup> of January 1992. From the Croatian representative office in Buenos Aires, efforts were made for diplomatic recognition of Croatia by Uruguay (January 16<sup>th</sup>, 1992), Paraguay (January 27<sup>th</sup>, 1992), Peru (March 15<sup>th</sup>,

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1 Bellin (2004) includes 21 countries in the Middle East area: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, the Palestinian Authority, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Sudan, Tunisia, Turkey, UAE, and Yemen. At the same time she excluded four countries that, although are member of the Arab league, are too remote: Somalia, Mauritania, Djibouti and Comoro islands. Long, Reich and Gasirowski (2011) under the countries of the same region include 14 major countries: Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Yemen, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia; five smaller countries of the Persian Gulf: Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, UAE and Oman; and Palestine. In our analysis we will focus on 18 mentioned countries. We shall also exclude the countries that Bellin (2004) has excluded. Furthermore, we shall exclude Sudan as Long, Reich and Gasirowski (2011) have excluded. However, we shall also exclude Turkey because it is a NATO member and an EU candidate country. Next, we shall also exclude Palestine because the "two state solution" was not yet achieved, thus Palestine is not a sovereign country.

2 Algeria recognized Croatia on 24<sup>th</sup> of April 1992 and diplomatic relations were established later that year, on October 15<sup>th</sup>. Bahrain recognized Croatia on January the 18<sup>th</sup> 1993 and diplomatic relations were established on the very same day. Egypt recognized Croatia on 16<sup>th</sup> of April 1992, and again establishment of diplomatic relations came soon after on October 1<sup>st</sup> of the same year. There is no date when Iraq recognized Croatia, but diplomatic relations were established on January the 4<sup>th</sup> 2005. Iran's recognition came on March the 15<sup>th</sup> 1992, and a month later, on April the 18<sup>th</sup>, diplomatic relations were established. Israel recognized Croatia on April the 16<sup>th</sup> 1992, and diplomatic relations were established some years after on September 4<sup>th</sup> 1997. Yemen recognized Croatia on May the 22<sup>nd</sup> 1992, and the establishment of diplomatic relations came on January the 17<sup>th</sup> the next year. Jordan recognized Croatia on May 17<sup>th</sup> 1992, and diplomatic relations were established two years later on June 29<sup>th</sup> 1994. Lebanon recognized Croatia on July 7<sup>th</sup> 1992, and diplomatic relations were again established two years later on 5<sup>th</sup> of December 1994. Libya recognized Croatia on March 17<sup>th</sup> 1992, but the establishment of diplomatic relations came much later on 30<sup>th</sup> of March 2000. Morocco recognized Croatia on 27<sup>th</sup> of April 1992, and the establishment of diplomatic relations took place two months later on 26<sup>th</sup> of June. Oman recognized Croatia on April the 24<sup>th</sup> 1992, and only a lot later, on June the 30<sup>th</sup> 1997, diplomatic relations between two countries were established. Saudi Arabia recognized Croatia on August the 22<sup>nd</sup> 1994, and diplomatic relations were established the next year on June the 8<sup>th</sup>. There is no date when Syria recognized Croatia, but diplomatic relations were established on 29<sup>th</sup> of August 1997. Tunisia recognized Croatia on 26<sup>th</sup> of April 1992, and diplomatic relations were established on January 30<sup>th</sup> 1993. UAE recognized Croatia on April the 18<sup>th</sup> 1992, and diplomatic relations between two countries were established later that year on June the 23<sup>rd</sup> ([www.mvep.hr](http://www.mvep.hr)). Even some of these dates show the level of importance of these countries for Croatian foreign policy.

1992), Bolivia (January 29<sup>th</sup>, 1992) and Venezuela (May 6<sup>th</sup>, 1992). At the same time, diplomatic and logistic humanitarian aid was being arranged. During January of 1992 Chile (January 16<sup>th</sup>) and Brazil (January 24<sup>th</sup>) recognized Croatia as well.<sup>3</sup> The United Nations, in order to prevent the spreading of war on the territory of the former Yugoslavia, declared an embargo on weapons trade. Because of this, Croatia was forced to acquire weapons illegally in order to defend itself.

The first two Latin American countries that recognized Croatia – Argentina and Chile – helped immensely. The Croatian public was silently in favour of the embargo breach since the illegal weapons were required for the defence of Croatia. After international recognition, Croatia used its presence in international institutions and initiated an action to end the war, liberate its territory and start peaceful reintegration. At the same time, relations with countries that had a friendly attitude toward Croatia and that became our allies in our fight for independence were gaining strength. Although Latin America was friendly, it was no longer a foreign policy priority. After the cessation of hostilities, Croatia was able to focus on the development of its relations with its neighbours, prioritizing relations with European institutions, developing economic relations with the rest of the world and simultaneously strengthening its national security (Kos-Stanišić, 2010: 35-37).

At the end of the "old millennium", the goal of "returning home to Europe" where Croatia belongs was formulated. Jović (2011: 10-11) emphasizes that idea of "back to Europe" meant back to Central Europe or, more precisely, back to Austro-Hungarian circle. Austria, Hungary, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Slovakia were already EU candidates, only Croatia was missing. After parliamentary and presidential elections in 2000 the fourth stage started and new priorities of Croatian foreign policy were determined – accession to NATO and EU.<sup>4</sup>

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3 Croatia was recognised by Colombia on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1992; Mexico May 25<sup>th</sup>, 1992; Panama May 28<sup>th</sup>, 1992; Guatemala December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1992; Cuba May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1995; Costa Rica October 19<sup>th</sup>, 1995; Nicaragua March 29<sup>th</sup>, 1996; Ecuador February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1996. There is no date of recognition, just the date of beginning of diplomatic relations for the Dominican Republic February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2001; El Salvador July 24<sup>th</sup>, 1997; Haiti October 15<sup>th</sup>, 1999; Honduras September 20<sup>th</sup>, 1999 ([www.mvep.hr](http://www.mvep.hr)).

4 Beširević (2013: 88-90) argues that the real Europeanization of Croatian foreign policy began with the launching of the process of Stabilization and Association in 1999. *However, right after the constitutional changes in 2001 the process of adaptation to democratic values of the EU had begun.*

In the post war period Croatia was guided, in the relations with other states, by two groups of goals: the first group comprised of the efforts of achieving membership in the EU and NATO; and the other group were the *ad hoc* goals which were mostly reactions to current events. When discussing the first group of aims, an eschatological approach could be noted. These aims were understood as the end of the road, a final purpose of the totality of engagement; by achieving them, the end of our current labours and the beginning of our enjoyment in the bliss of their achievement would logically follow. The first and the last document that clearly shaped Croatian foreign policy aims was the National Security Strategy from the year 2002 ([www.morh.hr](http://www.morh.hr)). That was the only document which, next to the goals, was also shaping the foreign policy, thus it was shaping the values and interests. Never at a later date was Croatia trying to shape its foreign policy with some policy document. The other group of aims that were constituted as a reaction towards some events in the region actually represent a group of efforts to take position, not so much regarding the event itself, as it is more an effort to take position regarding the attitudes of some other international actors. Therefore, we can only conditionally talk about goals due to the fact that a goal is something that we are trying to achieve with our active engagement. Unfortunately, here we can only talk about finding a way to, with our attitudes or actions, integrate as seamlessly as possible into the mainstream policies (primarily of NATO or/and the EU).

The decision of the European Council in Thessaloniki in 2003, where the EU committed itself to gradually integrating the Western Balkan states into the Union, led to an irreversible political twist. With the transformation of the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), all Croatian parliamentary parties accepted the accession to NATO and the EU as important political goals. Croatia applied for the EU membership in 2003 and was a EU membership candidate country since June 2004. In October 2001 Croatia became the second country to sign the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) with the EU following the breakdown of the former Yugoslavia, although the agreement did not enter into force until February 2005. In June 2006 the EU opened accession negotiations with Croatia, but they were stuck due to Croatian decision to introduce Ecological and Fisheries Protection Zone (ZERP), Slovenian blockade, and problems with the ICTY and the chapter on the



judiciary. Negotiations ended in 2011 and in December of the same year EU and Croatia signed the accession treaty.

On the webpage of the Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration in March 2008 we found basic information on Croatian foreign policy and its main objectives ([www.mvpei.hr](http://www.mvpei.hr)). Croatian basic foreign policy aims were the preservation and strengthening of peace and understanding between countries and nations, strengthening of the international position of Croatia, the creation of conditions for the realisation of basic strategic priorities by joining the European and transatlantic political, security and economic integrations, fulfilment of the assumed international obligations, resolving of all opened issues remaining after the breakup of the former Yugoslavia, establishing good neighbourly relations and co-operation with neighbouring countries based on the principles of equality and reciprocity, establishing friendly relations with the most important actors and countries in the world, strengthening the economic position of Croatia, and promoting the general image of Croatia.

The basic foreign policy aims were: 1) EU membership; 2) NATO membership; 3) enhancing relations with neighbouring countries; 4) developing bilateral and multilateral international co-operation; 5) promotion of Croatian economy; 6) overall promotion of Croatia. Third Countries *in the regions of Latin America and Middle East* were not mentioned. However, they could be found in objectives number 4, 5 and 6.

Croatian foreign policy objective was to develop political and economic relations with all democratic countries in the world and thus, with the Third Countries<sup>5</sup> democracies. The objective of Croatia was to increase the export of Croatian products to all the markets of the world and to attract foreign investment. The overall positive image of Croatia should be primarily based on its cultural promotion worldwide (Kos-Stanišić, 2010: 36-37).

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5 We consider Third Countries to be non EU and/or NATO member countries.

### **3. Croatian foreign policy towards Latin America and the Middle East during the 2001-2012 period**

Croatian foreign policy is reduced to foreign affairs, which means that it is reduced almost exclusively to the technical segment and, to a smaller degree, to a coordinative function of sector policies with foreign policy implications. In this segment, as an example, we can mention the so-called economic diplomacy which is primarily only a reverberant name for facilitating services of easy contacts between the interested parties in the economic sector.

How Croatian foreign policy in the last fifteen or so odd years was focused on two general goals – NATO and EU membership – bilateral relations during that period were limited to areas that directly aided to the achievement of these goals. Foreign policy actually had the attributes of lobbying. Due to the fact that the NATO membership was understood primarily from the aspects of defence and security, foreign policy was, in the context of NATO membership, doubly limited – on the one hand it was limited to the key member states (US, Germany, Britain, France), and on the other hand it was limited to a specific spectrum of defence and security themes). Undoubtedly the NATO arrangements, from the Partnership for Peace to the programmes of membership preparations, were used as a tool for the democratic consolidation of the regime. However, the western political elites, as well as a large number of analysts, were exceptionally inclined to overestimating the "NATO influence" on democratization of transitional states, including Croatia. It is correct that NATO (or rather western political elites) aimed for general democratization, but it is also correct that in Croatia this was translated from political to the military field. The ability to accept the new security reality, in the way of believable and trustworthy positioning within that reality, was exchanged for the declamation how Croatia is aware of all the possible security threats that can arise in this globalised world. Even the responsibility for peace and security of the region and the world was mostly highlighted through the prism of sending soldiers to the military missions ("peace supporting missions"), which was at the same time the strongest argument that we are ready for NATO membership (Domjančić, 2012: 70-71).

There were many similarities with Latin America and the relations with the Middle East had no influence on achieving the main Croatian

goals. Hence this area was left out of reach and interests of Croatian foreign policy. One of the saving formulas of the so-called Croatian foreign policy – reducing the general foreign policy issues to narrow sector areas and then their treatment in the sense of the foreign policy surrogates – in this case was not applicable for numerous reasons. Namely, the successful use of the defence and security area in the context of NATO membership, but also in some other aspects, was not applicable in relations with Latin America. In the area of defence and security Croatia had no cooperation with Latin America, no accredited military envoys, no signed agreements, not even occasional courtesy meetings. Therefore Latin America did not meet the requirements of the main criteria which were guiding Croatian foreign policy actions up to this point: 1) it did not have influence on achieving two main goals (NATO and EU); 2) it did not generate issues which would demand Croatia's reaction on a daily political basis, or rather in the context of the NATO and EU membership. On the issues that, in the global sense, originate in the Latin American area (or areas) Croatia can stay quiet or ignore these issues without even being noticed.

Concerning Middle East, the situation is quite different. This region is the main generator of global (in)security and is present in general foreign policy themes throughout the world. Therefore, in the context of the EU membership, Croatia cannot ignore this region. However, as the reduction of the general foreign policy themes to the defence and security ones is one of the significant attributes of Croatia's foreign policy, the absence of a clear Croatian policy towards the Middle East is more easily concealed.

### **3.1. Croatian foreign policy towards Latin America**

This section argues that during the period between 2001 and 2012 Croatia did not have a defined foreign policy towards Third Countries (non EU and/or NATO members), and the political significance of a particular Latin American country was determined by economic importance (Croatian export) and the size of the diaspora. To test this hypothesis we have used quantitative analysis. In order to determine the degree of political-diplomatic *significance* of a Third Country in the region of Latin America to Croatia in the period between 2001 and 2012 we have created Table 1.

**Table 1:** Political-diplomatic significance of Latin America to Croatia (2001-2012)

Country	Republic of Croatia Embassy	Republic of Croatia Consulate	Bilateral agreements	Inter-parliamentary friendship group	State visits
Argentina	YES	YES	YES (5)	YES	NO
Bolivia	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO
Brazil	YES	YES	YES (7)	YES	NO
Chile	YES	YES	YES (9)	YES	YES (3)
Dom. Rep.	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
Ecuador	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
El Salvador	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
Guatemala	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
Haiti	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
Honduras	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
Colombia	NO	NO	YES (1)	NO	NO
Costa Rica	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
Cuba	NO	NO	YES (12)	YES	YES (1)
Mexico	NO	YES	YES (3)	YES	NO
Nicaragua	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
Panama	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
Paraguay	NO	NO	YES (1)	NO	NO
Peru	NO	YES	YES (1)	NO	NO
Uruguay	NO	YES	YES (1)	NO	NO
Venezuela	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO

In order to achieve the specific goals, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs applied different foreign policy techniques and instruments, so the dependent variable was the primary means of political-diplomatic activity which is the main form of government activity directed towards other countries (the existence of Croatian diplomatic mission; the existence of Croatian consulate; the existence of signed bilateral agreements and acts; the existence of inter-parliamentary friendship groups between Croatia and a particular country; state visits). The source of information

for the analysis were web pages of the Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (now Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs), web pages of the Croatian Parliament, internal documents from the Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department for Central and South America and the documents from the Department for North America.

According to Table 1 we can confirm that in the period between 2001 and 2012:

Firstly – Croatia maintained diplomatic missions in Argentina, Chile and Brazil, and three consulates in Argentina (Tucumán, Córdoba and Rosario), two in Chile (Punta Arenas, Antofagasta) and one in Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Venezuela, Uruguay and Mexico;

Secondly – Croatia had signed 12 new bilateral agreements with Cuba (all together there are 16), nine new bilateral agreements with Chile (all together 17), seven new bilateral agreements with Brazil (all together eight), five new bilateral agreements with Argentina (all together 11), three new bilateral agreements with Mexico (all together four), and one new bilateral agreement with Uruguay (all together four), Peru (all together two), Paraguay (all together two) and Colombia (all together two) – Croatia only had agreements that established diplomatic relations with all other Latin American countries;

Thirdly – Inter-parliamentary friendship groups existed between Croatia and Brazil, Croatia and Chile, Croatia and Cuba, Croatia and Argentina and Croatia and Mexico;

Fourthly – State visits, the highest expression of friendly relations between two sovereign states, in this case visit of the Croatian president, prime minister or minister of foreign affairs. Croatian president Stjepan Mesić (2005), ministers of foreign affairs Tonino Picula (2001) and Kolumba Grabar Kitarović (2005), visited Chile.<sup>6</sup> Croatian president Stjepan Mesić (2009) also visited Cuba for the second time.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Croatia as a future EU member was invited to EU-CELAC summit in Santiago de Chile in January 2013 and it signed Memorandum of Understanding between the Croatian Government and the Government of the Republic of Chile on the Partnership and Cooperation (Memorandum on Strategic Partnership).

<sup>7</sup> Bilateral relations between Republic of Croatia and Cuba are good and friendly, and they originated during the time of Nonalignment. More concretely, two countries cooperate in the Mixed inter-governmental committee that deals with economic, political, cultural and scientific cooperation. President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić in the year 2006 participated in the summit of the Non-Aligned movement in Havana, where he lobbied and got support for Republic of Croatia to become the non-permanent member of the Security Council. In September of 2009

Depending on how many indicators are present for a certain Latin American country, we have classified them in three categories. The first category has a high degree of political-diplomatic *significance* (five "yes" – Chile), second category is of medium *significance* (four "yes" – Argentina, Brazil; and three "yes" – Mexico, Cuba), and third category is of little *significance* (two and one "yes").

**Table 2:** Degree of political-diplomatic significance of Latin American countries to Croatia

High political-diplomatic significance	Medium political-diplomatic significance	Low political-diplomatic significance (2 YES)
Chile	Argentina	Bolivia
	Brazil	Peru
	Mexico	Uruguay
	Cuba	Venezuela

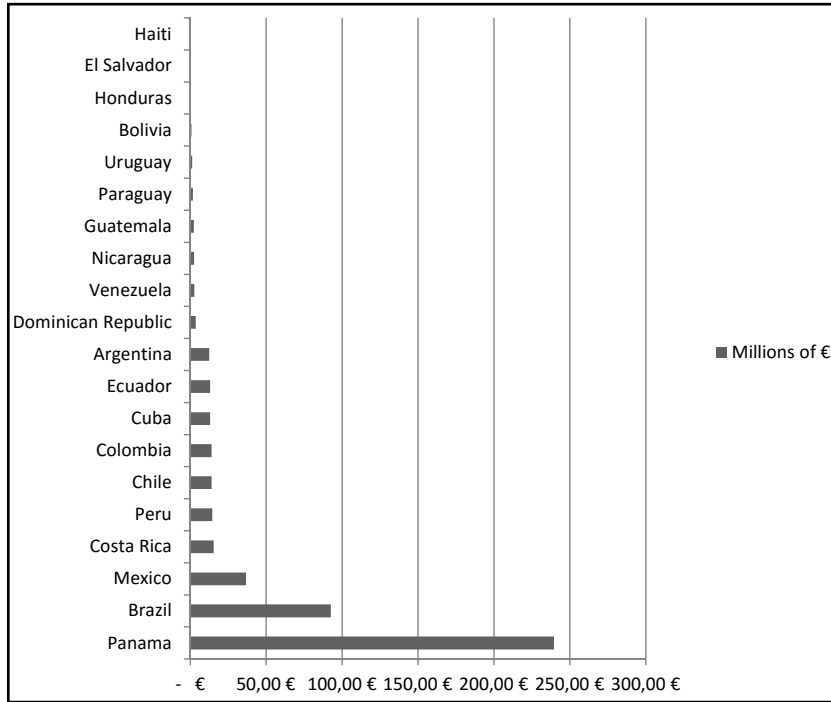
The countries with which Croatia has established only diplomatic relations or has signed just one agreement during period between 2001 and 2012 are seen as irrelevant (Colombia, Paraguay, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Panama).

The independent variable was economic importance, e.g. Croatian export to a particular Latin American country (the source of economic data was the Central Bureau of Statistics and the Croatian Chamber of Economy) and number of immigrants of Croatian origin (the source were internal documents from the Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

To rank all the countries of Latin America, according to their importance for the Croatian economy in the period between 2001 and 2012 we created a table of Croatian export to Latin America in thousands of Euros (see Appendix 1) and Chart 1. We used the data from the Central Bureau of Statistics and the Croatian Chamber of Economy. According to export data from 2001 to 2012 it was easy to identify the economic significance of each Latin American country for the Croatian economy. Panama was in first place with 239.5 million Euros in exports, main-

Mesić made an official visit to Cuba. On that occasion three memorandums on cooperation were signed (on culture, sport and high education).

**Chart 1:** Croatian export to Latin America in millions of Euros (2001-2012)



ly ships and nautical equipment that made up over 96 % of exports. It should be noted that there is a general trend that ships are registered under a flag of convenience, and the Panamanian flag is very popular, so we counted just 4 % of the amount – 9,58 millions of Euros.

The independent variable was also the number of immigrants of Croatian origin (the source were the internal documents from the Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs). There is a large number of Croatians and descendants of Croatian emigrants living in Argentina (according to an estimation over 250,000 around 8,000 born in Croatia). The estimation is that around 200,000 people in Chile are of Croatian origin (almost 1.3 % of the total number of inhabitants in Chile), as well as around 900 Croatian citizens that are living in Chile (persons born in Croatia and the descendants of emigrants who received Croatian citizenship).

In Brazil there are around 25,000 descendants of Croatian emigrants, in Peru 5,000, in Bolivia 4,000, in Paraguay 5,000, in Venezuela 5,000, in Colombia 3,000 and in Uruguay 3,000. Variable measuring the size of diaspora is measured by a number of citizens of Croatian origin living in these countries. Given large differences in the size of immigrant communities ranging from 250,000 to less than 5,000, this variable is also measured as a natural logarithm of the number of citizens of Croatian origin. All the values on all three variables are averages from the period between 2001 and 2012. Variable measuring the political-diplomatic importance is constructed by adding several elements that identify the strength of political-diplomatic links. These include the presence of an embassy, presence of a consulate and the presence of an inter-parliamentary friendship group and an occurrence of a state visit. All of these elements are coded as 0 or 1 if any of the elements are present. The fifth element includes the number of bilateral treaties signed in a period between 2001 and 2012, and here countries are separated in three groups, where countries with only a diplomatic recognition treaty are coded as 1, countries that have between one and three other treaties are coded as 2, and countries that have more than four treaties are coded as 3. The variable measuring the strength of political-diplomatic links is constructed by adding all these five elements in a single variable where each element is composing 20 % of the final value of the variable. The contribution of the variable measuring the number of bilateral treaties is calculated by dividing this variable by 3.

The variable determining the economic importance is measured by the size of Croatian exports to countries of Latin America measured in Euros. Given the presence of a very high range of values which reflect not only economic importance, but also the size of the country, and the presence of outliers with very high values, this variable is converted so that a natural log of the number measuring the size of exports is taken. Preliminary analysis shows a high degree of correlation between political-diplomatic importance and economic importance ( $r=0.59$ ,  $t=3.13$ ), and political-diplomatic importance and the size of diaspora ( $r=0.63$ ,  $t=3.52$ ). The strength of these relationships is confirmed for both variables in a simple linear regression analysis. The results in Table 3 indicate that the impact of these two variables is roughly equally important, and that they account for the bulk of variation in the strength of political-diplomatic linkages between Latin American countries and Croatia.



It is apparent that this relationship is mostly driven by the importance of three or four countries with somewhat higher economic importance and very large number of citizens with Croatian ethnic origin, namely Argentina, Chile and Brazil.

**Table 3:** Regression analysis of determinants of political-diplomatic importance of Latin American countries for Croatia

	B	Std. Error	Beta
(Constant)	0,018	(0,066)	
Size of diaspora	0,033***	(0,009)	0,541
Economic importance	0,092***	(0,029)	0,482
Adjusted R square	0,591		

N=20, \*\*\*p<0,001

### 3.2. Croatia's foreign policy towards Middle East

This section will also try to determine the correlation between economic importance (trade in goods) and political importance of Middle Eastern countries for Croatia. To determine the significance of a specific Middle Eastern country for Croatia in the period between 2001 and 2012 we have created the following table. The sources of information for the analysis were again the web pages of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, the web pages of the Croatian Parliament, internal documents from the Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Division for Africa and Middle East.

From this table we can conclude the following:

Firstly – Croatia has diplomatic missions in Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Israel, Qatar, Libya and Morocco; four consular offices in Israel (Caesarea, Ashdod, Kfar Shmaryahu, and Jerusalem), one consular office in Egypt (Alexandria), Jordan (Amman), Lebanon (Beirut), Oman (Muscat), Syria (Damascus) and Tunisia (Tunis).

Secondly – Croatia has signed 10 bilateral agreements with Israel (out of 18), nine with Iran (out of 25) seven with Egypt (out of 20), seven with Qatar (out of eight), six with Jordan (out of nine), five with Morocco (out of 11), five with Oman (out of six), three with Lebanon (out

**Table 4:** Political-diplomatic significance of Middle East to Croatia (2001-2012)

State	Republic of Croatia Embassy	Republic of Croatia Consulate	Bilateral agreements	Inter-parliamentary friendship group	State visits
Algeria	YES	NO	YES (2)	NO	NO
Bahrain	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
Egypt	YES	YES	YES (7)	YES	YES (5)
Iraq	NO (special mission)	NO	YES	NO	NO
Iran	YES	NO	YES (9)	YES	YES (1)
Israel	YES	YES	YES (10)	YES	YES (10)
Yemen	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
Jordan	NO	YES	YES (6)	NO	YES (7)
Qatar	YES	NO	YES (7)	NO	YES (3)
Kuwait	NO	NO	YES (1)	YES	NO
Lebanon	NO	YES	YES (3)	NO	NO
Libya	YES	NO	YES (3)	NO	YES (3)
Morocco	YES	NO	YES (5)	YES	NO
Oman	NO	YES	YES (5)	NO	YES (2)
Saudi Arabia	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
Syria	NO	YES	YES (2)	NO	YES (1)
Tunisia	NO	YES	YES (1)	NO	NO
UAE	NO	NO	YES (2)	NO	YES (1)

of four), three with Libya (out of four), two with Algeria (out of three), two with Syria (out of three), two with the UAE (out of four), one with Kuwait (out of five) and one with Tunisia (out of two).

Thirdly – Inter-parliamentary friendship groups exist between Croatia and Egypt, Croatia and Israel, Croatia and Iran, Croatia and Kuwait, and Croatia and Morocco.

Fourthly – High official visits, in this case visits of the head of state, prime minister and the foreign office minister, are considered as the highest expression of friendly relations between two countries. Croatia

**Table 5:** Degree of political-diplomatic significance of Middle Eastern countries to Croatia

High political-diplomatic significance	Medium political-diplomatic significance	Low political-diplomatic significance (2 YES)
Egypt	Iran	Algeria
Israel	Qatar	Kuwait
	Jordan	Lebanon
	Libya	Tunisia
	Morocco	UAE
	Oman	
	Syria	

made 10 such visits to Israel, seven to Jordan, five to Egypt, three to Libya and Qatar, two to Oman, one to Iran, Syria and UAE.<sup>8</sup> No such visits have been made to Algeria, Bahrain, Iraq, Yemen, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia and Saudi Arabia.

According to the presence of these indicators in a specific Middle Eastern country we can put them into three separate categories. First category (five "yes" – Egypt, Israel) represents a country of high political-diplomatic significance for Croatia. Second category (four and three "yes" – Iran, Qatar, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Syria) represents a

<sup>8</sup> In March 2003 Minister of the Foreign Affairs Tonino Picula visited Iran. In October of the same year President of the Republic Stjepan Mesić visited Libya. In 2004 he visited Jordan. In November of the same year Minister of Foreign Affairs Miomir Žužul attended the funeral of Yasser Arafat in Cairo, alongside high ranking diplomats and heads of states and governments of other countries. In 2005 Prime Minister Ivo Sanader made a visit to Jordan (February) and Israel (June). In 2005 president Mesić visited Israel twice and Jordan once. He again visited Jordan in 2007. In February 2007 Minister of the Foreign Affairs Kolinda Grabar Kitarović visited Cairo. In 2008 president Mesić made state visits to Syria and Israel, and two state visits to Jordan. In 2009 he again visited Israel and Jordan, alongside Egypt and Oman. Prime Minister Sanader also made a visit to Israel in October 2008. The Minister of the Foreign Affairs Gordan Jandroković in October 2009 visited UAE, Qatar and Oman. In May the next year he visited Israel. President Mesić visited Qatar in February 2010, and the new President of the Republic Ivo Josipović visited Libya in the November of the same year. Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor visited Libya in September and Egypt in December of the same year. Prime Minister Kosor also visited Israel in March 2011. Minister of the Foreign Affairs Vesna Pusić visited Egypt and Qatar in November 2012. President Josipović also visited Qatar during the same month. Furthermore he made two visits to Israel in 2012. During these visits he also visited Golan Heights and Palestinian Authority.

country of medium political-diplomatic significance for Croatia. Third category (two or one "yes") represents a county of low political-diplomatic significance for Croatia.

Again, the countries with which Croatia has established only diplomatic relations or has at least one signed agreement during the period between 2001 and 2012 are seen as irrelevant (Bahrain, Iraq, Yemen and Saudi Arabia). Bilateral relations (in the area of defence) with the countries in the Middle East and North Africa are very scarce – Croatia does not have an accredited military envoy in any of the countries, and only Iran has a military envoy accredited for Croatia; bilateral defence cooperation is very humble and visible only in the last year or so.<sup>9</sup>

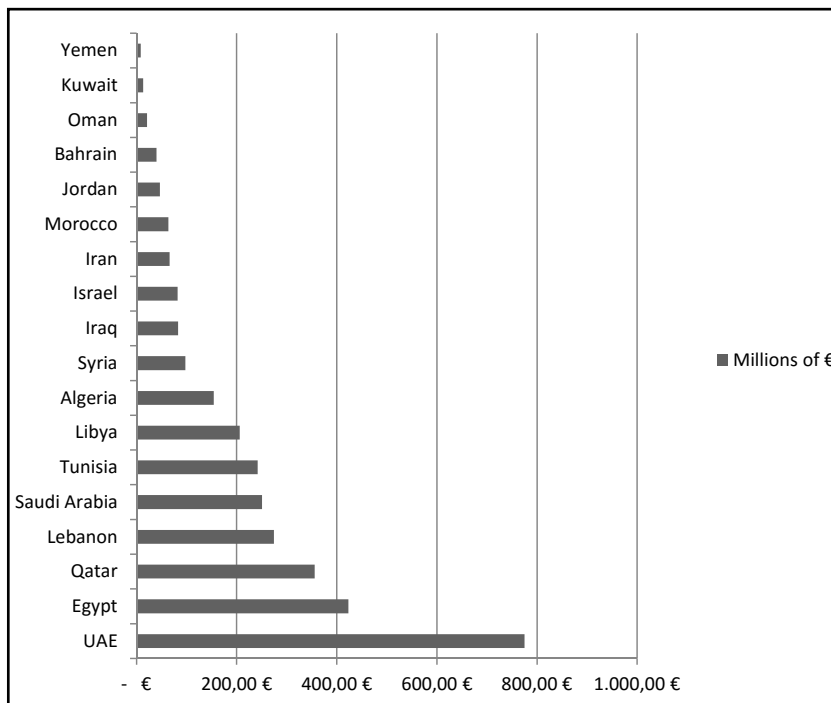
To rank all the countries of Middle East, according to their importance for the Croatian economy in the period between 2001 and 2012 we have created a table of Croatian export to Middle East in thousands of Euros (Appendix 2)<sup>10</sup> and Chart 2. According to export data from 2001 to 2012 it was also easy to identify the economic significance of each Middle Eastern country for the Croatian economy. The first place undisputedly belongs to the UAE with the Croatian export reaching 775.1 million Euros. The lowest value of goods that Croatia exported to a Middle Eastern country was to Yemen with the export worth only 8.4 million Euros.

The independent variable was again economic importance, but not the size of diaspora since Croatia has no diaspora in the Middle Eastern countries. Besides that, we repeated the same process from above.

9 In this sense the training of military pilots from Oman in Croatia is the only real and visible bilateral arrangement (during 2014 12 Omani pilots were educated in Croatia). Cooperation with Iraq is taking place only in the context of NATO membership, or rather as participation in the NATO training mission in Iraq. Beside that only small, more or less courtesy, visits of high officials of the Ministry of defence to the Armed Forces of Qatar (in March of 2014 the chief of staff of the Armed Forces of Republic of Croatia visited the international exhibition and conference on naval defence and maritime security "DIMDEX 2014" in Qatar), Morocco (the Minister of Defence Ante Kotromanović visited Morocco in April 2014), and Oman (in June 2014 the chief of staff of the Armed Forces of Republic of Croatia visited Oman in the official visit to Omani armed forces), and the Qatari military delegation to Croatia, which was put in the context of promotion of Croatia's military industry ([www.morh.hr](http://www.morh.hr)).

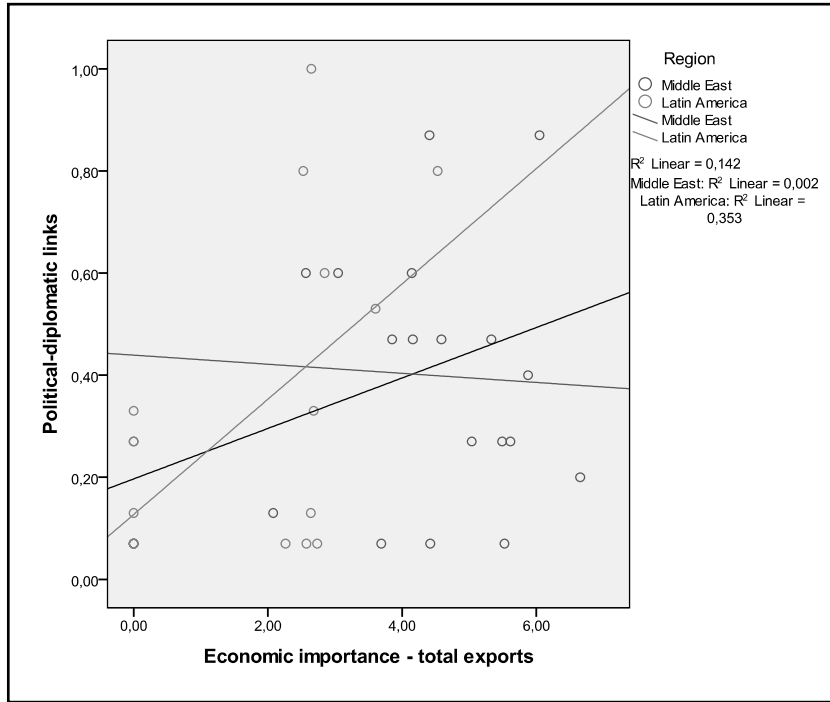
10 The original data for Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria and Tunisia in the years 2001 and 2002 was in USD currency. The currency was exchanged to Euros according to values that were in force on the dates January the 1<sup>st</sup> 2001 and 2002. The original data for Bahrain, Iraq, Iran, Yemen, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia and UAE from the year 2001 until and including 2009 were in USD currency. The currency was exchanged to Euros according to values that were in force on January the 1<sup>st</sup> 2001 until January the 1<sup>st</sup> 2009. The rest of the data was originally in Euros.

**Chart 2:** Croatian export to Middle East in millions of Euros (2001-2012)



Variable measuring political-diplomatic importance is constructed by adding several elements that identify the strength of political-diplomatic links. These include the presence of an embassy, the presence of a consulate and the presence of an inter-parliamentary friendship group, and the occurrence of a state visit. All of these elements are coded as 0 or 1 if any of the elements is present. The fifth element includes the number of bilateral treaties signed in the period between 2001 and 2012, and here countries are separated into three groups, where countries with only a diplomatic recognition treaty are coded as 1, countries that have between one and three other treaties are coded as 2, and countries that have more than four treaties are coded as 3. The variable measuring the strength of political-diplomatic links is constructed by adding all these five elements into a single variable where each element makes up 20% of

**Figure 1:** Relationship between economic importance and political diplomatic-significance



the final value of the variable. The contribution of the variable measuring the number of bilateral treaties is calculated by dividing this variable by 3.

The variable determining the economic importance is measured by the size of Croatian exports to the countries of Middle East measured in Euros. Given the presence of a very high range of values which reflect not only economic importance but also the size of the country, and the presence of outliers with very high values, this variable is converted so that a natural log of the number measuring the size of exports is taken. All the values on both variables were again averages from the period between 2001 and 2012. Preliminary analysis indicates a lack of correlation between political-diplomatic significance and economic importance for Middle Eastern countries. Figure 1 shows the relationship

between economic importance and political-diplomatic significance for both regions. Green regression line for Latin America confirms the impact of exports on political-diplomatic links in that region, while blue, slightly negative but non-significant regression line, shows the lack of connection between exports and our main variable of interest in the Middle East region.

#### 4. Conclusion

Quantitative analysis has confirmed that *during the period between 2001 and 2012* there was a high degree of correlation between political-diplomatic importance on the one hand and economic importance and size of the diaspora on the other, but only in Latin America. It is apparent that this relationship is mostly driven by the importance of three countries with somewhat higher economic importance and a very large number of citizens with Croatian ethnic origin, namely Argentina, Brazil and Chile. Furthermore, bilateral relations between Croatia and Latin American countries are good but not developed. The reason for this is the geographical distance of Latin America and the perception of unimportance of the majority of countries, and that will not change.

There is no correlation between economic and diplomatic importance of Middle Eastern countries for Croatia. Therefore, Croatia's foreign policy towards these countries is not influenced by the economic incentive. However, as mentioned above, Middle East is a region that generates a lot of international (in)security issues. Like many Middle Eastern countries, Croatia is a Mediterranean country, as well. As the security situation in Iraq, Syria and Libya deteriorates Croatia should be wise to reshape its foreign policy toward the mentioned region. If the economic incentive is not enough to establish closer diplomatic ties, security imperative should be a reason enough to form at least closer relations along the security line.

With Croatian accession into the EU in 2013, we can conclude that Croatian foreign policy has achieved the most important goal and is now in a need of re-conceptualization. The country has to change its single-objective based foreign policy to join NATO and EU for a multiple-objectives foreign policy approach. It will need to harmonise its own priorities with those of other EU members. Information regarding Croatian foreign policy priorities in 2013 can be found on the webpage

of the Croatian Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs. They are: positioning within the EU institutions, positioning in the region, cooperation with NATO partners, multilateral cooperation and Special Projects ([www.mvep.hr](http://www.mvep.hr)).

Croatia could in the future be a very important case to show how a former Third Country, from the region of Western Balkans, is reshaping its foreign policy and how Europeanization takes place. In this sense Croatia can choose between three major foreign policy transfer strategies – Croatia could download, upload or crossload Europeanization (Ruano, 2013). This pretty much means that Croatia could adapt its foreign policies towards mentioned regions to the EU policies. Croatia could maybe try to form its own policies and transfer them to the EU level or by actively working with other EU partners a policy crossload or policy convergence could take place.

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