Adriatic-Baltic-Black Sea Initiative

A TRIANGLE OF STRONGER PARTNERSHIP
Excellencies, members of the diplomatic corps,

I consider fostering stronger Central European cooperation as one of the key pillars of my foreign and European policy. The twelve European Union Member States, which span across the area between the three European seas, the Adriatic Sea, the Black Sea and the Baltic Sea – Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia – have an enormous potential to enhance their cooperation to the benefit of the entire EU and wider transatlantic community.

This geographical area was a common economic and cultural space for centuries. Unfortunately, for many decades most of these countries were deprived of the opportunity to pursue their individual objectives, as historical events impeded further development of this European area. All of these countries have fortunately been reconnected through their accession to the EU. The gap between the so called “Old” and “New” Europe is still highly visible and present. In order to overcome this gap and avoid its widening, we need stronger regional cooperation among us, the members of “New” Europe, with the inclusion of our natural partnering country, Austria.

With this in mind, on the margins of this year’s fall session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, I initiated a preparatory meeting of the Adriatic-Baltic-Black Sea Initiative. This informal initiative is aimed at facilitating intergovernmental coordination and cooperation along the corridor and attracting the proactive engagement of the business community for innovations and investments. I would like to emphasize its informality. This initiative would not be duplication of existing mechanisms or fora, but would simply bring our countries together, assuring synergy of many established sub-regional cooperation mechanisms – Baltic cooperation, the Visegrád Group or various trilaterals and quadrilaterals.

I believe that issues such as energy and energy security, transport infrastructure and responses to these issues contain the appropriate and useful foundation for unleashing the full potential of the national economies of our countries, therefore expanding our economic cooperation and enhancing our exports.

Energy
Cooperation in the field of energy would enable stable and faster economic development, with the objective of ensuring a better quality of life for our citizens.

The key to improving energy security, and thereby the security of our economies, lies in our closer cooperation; especially by linking gas or oil pipelines, through mechanisms of capacities (of energy facilities or storage facilities) and integration of the markets. We must not allow ourselves to fall behind in respect to the development of competitive and well integrated markets, nor deprive ourselves of the advantages resulting from the security of supply.
Croatia is offering projects that make full use of our geographical position between the Mediterranean and Central Europe. These are the construction of the Adriatic-Ionian Gas Pipeline and its link with the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline as well as the construction of an LNG terminal in Omišalj on the island of Krk. These two projects are in line with the endeavours of European energy policy to diversify gas supply routes.

Which is why, I believe that we have to enable energy to flow between the Baltic, the Adriatic and the Black Sea, advocate for full integration of our markets, support mutual interconnections and energy projects.

Transport
The destiny of relatively small countries is that they have to develop their national economies to a large extent with the assistance of the global economy. For this reason, Croatia, which is too small to rely solely on its domestic demand for its economic recovery, must seek space for its economic development through export.

All the countries along the Adriatic-Baltic-Black Sea corridor are very export-oriented. Their economic development depends greatly on export opportunities and some countries seek opportunities for growth outside the framework of European market.

Linking transport infrastructure along the Adriatic-Baltic-Black sea corridor, creating a fast and accessible intermodal route combining road, railway and river transport will enable faster connections. I consider this especially important for the transport of EU goods, both inbound and outbound, as well as for the economies of our countries, especially those whose sustainable development very much depends on the exports to the European or/and global market.

Economy
Croatia recognizes that transportation is an instrument that makes possible a more robust growth of its exports and revitalization of the competitiveness of its economy. Croatia wants to adequately take advantage of its geographical position using for this purpose the European network of major transport corridors, and to more successfully integrate Croatia’s economy in international trends. The economies of our countries are in many respects complementary. Our interests complement each other in many fields and economic sectors. I think that we can expand our existing cooperation and open new areas of cooperation if we approve our mutual communication and coordination, jointly appear on third markets and exploit our common potential. We could achieve a special synergic effect through possible co-financing of joint projects with resources from EU funds, be it for research of new products, manufacturing processes or common appearance and marketing activities on new markets, education, tourism or increasing competitiveness.

Forming a strong joint market within the region gives us a possibility to develop and raise our competitiveness within the EU, and on the global market. Joining our capacities in both service and industry sectors gives us a strong position to compete and further develop our knowledge and expertise.

The industries present in our countries give us an opportunity to form a full product value chain in our region, covering all levels and stages of product development, production, logistics, marketing and sales. This way the complete added value will be realized in our countries, while all capacities and workforce will be employed through skill diversification.

Respecting our national specifics and interests, I believe that we can be more successful in achieving our interests and objectives, especially in the field of energy and transport policies, and particularly in the achievement of our common objective which is preserving the values on which the European Union is founded.

In closing, let me share that we envisage meetings of the Initiative not only at the Presidential level, but also at the sectorial level, even encouraging business-to-business and people-to-people contacts and networks. The Initiative would therefore serve to facilitate the efforts needed to create a strong cooperation in energy, transportation, digital communication and economic sectors. I already announced holding the first meeting of the Initiative during 2016 in Croatia. This first meeting would bring together statesmen, experts and the private sector interested in joint projects.

I am proud to say that the Initiative has received strong support, underlining the advantage of the informality of the Initiative and its project orientation. By expanding existing cooperation along the proposed lines, Central Europe will become more secure and more competitive.

Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović
A Croatian-Bulgarian Economic Forum was held during the official visit of President Rosen Plevneliev to Croatia. (See Views and News No 1, page 07)

President Grabar-Kitarović, the President of Austria, Heinz Fischer, and the President of Slovenia, Borut Pahor, held a trilateral meeting devoted to regional cooperation. (See Views and News No 1, page 08)

President Grabar-Kitarović, together with heads of state and senior officials of the EU and international bodies took part in the celebrations marking the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II. (See Views and News No 1, page 11)

President Grabar-Kitarović discussed together with President of Romania, Klaus Werner Iohannis, the importance of improved energy and transportation networks between Zagreb and Bucharest, during his official visit to Croatia. (See Views and News No 1, page 17)
President Grabar-Kitarović met with Austrian President Fischer to discuss Austria’s interest in investments in the energy sector and common interest in respect to establishing the Adriatic-Baltic corridor.

(See Views and News No 1, page 18)

President Grabar-Kitarović briefed Slovak President Andrej Kiska on the initiative to strengthen cooperation along the Adriatic-Baltic corridor.

(See Views and News No 1, page 19)

President Grabar-Kitarović participated in the GLOBSEC 2015 Global Security Forum.

(See Views and News No 1, page 20)

“This visit will contribute to the cooperation within the Adriatic-Baltic corridor...” said President Grabar-Kitarović on the occasion of the official visit of the President of the Republic Lithuania Dalia Grybauskaitė.

(See Views and News No 1, page 21)
President Grabar-Kitarović participated at the South Eastern Europe Gas Connectivity Conference (CESEC).

(See Views and News No 1, page 24)

President Grabar-Kitarović together with Slovenian President Pahor and Austrian President Fischer participated in the debate in “The Future of Europe” at the European Forum Alpbach.

(See Views and News No 1, page 28)

President Grabar-Kitarović participated in a panel entitled “New Global Order: Confrontation or Partnerships?” at the Bled Strategic Forum.

(See Views and News No 1, page 29)

Croatia and Poland jointly work on connecting the Adriatic and the Baltic.

(See Views and News No 2, page 17)
President Grabar-Kitarović organized a preparatory meeting of the “Adriatic-Baltic-Black Sea” Initiative that was held on the margins of the fall session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

(See Views and News No 2, page 8)

President Grabar-Kitarović paid an official visit to Hungary.

(See Views and News No 2, page 18)

The meeting of Presidents of the Visegrád Group countries including the President of Croatia.

(See Views and News No 2, page 19)

Young leader support the Adriatic-Baltic-Black Sea Initiative.

(See Views and News No 2, page 15)

UPCOMING OFFICIAL VISIT OF PRESIDENT GRABAR-KITAROVIĆ TO SLOVAKIA.
Strong support to „The Adriatic-Baltic-Black Sea Leaders“ Initiative from all the States involved

NEW YORK, 29 September

The President of the Republic of Croatia, Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, organized a preparatory meeting of the „Adriatic-Baltic-Black Sea“ Initiative that was held on the margins of the fall session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

President Grabar-Kitarović presented the concept of this informal initiative, stating that it is aimed at strengthening the overall cooperation in Central Europe, in politics, economy, infrastructure, and security stressing that the initiative does not aim to duplicate the existing organizations or mechanisms of cooperation, but rather to focus its activities concrete projects that would be of interest for the States involved, but also for the entire European Union and the broader Transatlantic community.

The meeting was evaluated as visionary and the Initiative was called a “game-changer” by participants. The platform was strongly supported, emphasizing the opportunities for joint planning and implementation of policies that would strengthen this cooperation. Participants emphasised the advantage of the informality of the initiative and its project orientation, while complimenting its timing due to the need for urgent action.

The Initiative would improve overall mutual communication and coordination, which would allow participating states to jointly appear on third markets,
thus enabling common potential. This would eventually result in concrete joint projects, be it for research of new products, manufacturing processes or common appearance and marketing activities on new markets, education, tourism or increasing competitiveness.

The participating countries confirmed that their interests are complementary in energy, transportation, digital communication and economic sectors. By expanding existing cooperation along the proposed the Central European region will become more secure and more competitive.

Representatives of all eleven invited Member States of the European Union participated in the meeting: Presidents of Bulgaria, Poland and Romania, Rosen Plevneliev, Andrzej Duda and Klaus Werner Iohannis respectively, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia Miroslav Lajčak, Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Hungary, Marina Kaljurand, Edgars Rinkēvičs, Linas Antanas Linkevičius and Péter Szijjarto respectively, Permanent Representative of Austria and Slovenia to the UN, Jan Kickert and Andrej Logar respectively, and the Political Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, Petr Drulák.

The Initiative received strong support from the States involved as well as from the United States, whose Special Envoy and Coordinator for International Energy Affairs in the US State Department, Amos Hochstein, participated at the meeting as an observer.

The meeting was also attended by the President of the Atlantic Council of the United States of America, Fred Kempe, and the Vice-President of the Atlantic Council, Damon Wilson, who, as a follow-up to last year’s report by the Atlantic Council “Completing Europe – From the North-South Corridor to Energy, Transportation, and Telecommunications Union” supported the Initiative of the Croatian President for strengthening Central European cooperation.

President Grabar-Kitarović announced that the first meeting of the Initiative will be held in the spring of 2016 in the Republic of Croatia and would gather statesmen, experts and the business community so that all stakeholders interested in potential common projects could meet at the same place.
The area of the countries participating in the Adriatic-Baltic-Black Sea Initiative accounts for 28.41% of the entire territory of the European Union Member States, while its population accounts for 22.34% of the total population of the EU.

The GDP of the countries of the initiative accounts for just 10.26% of the GDP of the EU, and the GDP per capita is around € 12,500 which is around 45.89% of the GDP per capita of the EU. The investments account for 15.77% of the total EU investments.

In the European Parliament, which has 751 Members, the countries of the initiative together have 217 seats, whereas in the European Council they have 118 votes out of the total of 352.
### Specific indicators by country

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Source: European Union, European Commission the autumn 2015 forecast
Atlantic Council on the Adriatic-Black Sea-Baltic Initiative

"Europe is at inflection point in its history and the vision of a Europe whole, free, and at peace is under pressure from within and outside its frontiers. Reinforcing European integration and trying Central and Eastern Europe closer to the rest of the European Union (EU) is of critical importance. Economic growth and energy security are backbones of the resilience of the EU, but both are weak spots in the chainmail of Europe. The Atlantic council is committed to supporting your leadership on the North-South Corridor and completing Europe through infrastructure development in the energy, transportation, and telecommunications sectors. As an integrated set of energy, transportation, and digital links spanning from the Baltic to the Adriatic and Black Seas, the North-South Corridor is critical to the cretation of a single European market, a cornerstone to the vision of a united Europe."

We stand ready to provide assistance to the Adriatic-Baltic-Black Sea Leader’s platform to facilitate intergovernmental coordination and cooperation along the corridor and engage the business sector on both sides of the Atlantic."

The Report of the Atlantic Council “Completing Europe – From the North-South Corridor to Energy, Transportation, and Telecommunications Union” supports the goals of the Adriatic-Baltic-Black Sea Initiative and it can be found at http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/images/publications/Completing-Europe_web.pdf
A New Dawn for the Adriatic-Baltic region

From the early 1990s until the onset of the global financial crisis, in 2008, the economies of Adriatic-Baltic region established a record of growth that few regions have matched. Their inherent strengths were unleashed, attracting a flood of foreign direct investment that drove productivity improvements and growth.

While these economies continue to struggle to regain momentum in the face of weak demand, we find that they have the potential to move back to a faster growth trajectory. Doing so will depend on a series of initiatives to make the most of the region’s proven advantages and build new capabilities.

Prior to the crisis, the region was among the fastest growing in the world. From 2000 to 2008, GDP grew by 4.6 annually, four times as fast as in Western Europe. Regions core strengths – highly educated yet affordable workforce, stable macroeconomic and favourable business environment and strategic location – attracted a flood of investment in those economies. The flow of capital helped modernise factories and introduced more efficient methods that helped raise productivity. The region developed a globally competitive outsourcing and offshoring (O&O) industry, the industry now growing at twice the rate of India’s O&O sector.

The crisis, however, exposed significant weaknesses in the region’s growth formula. High GDP growth across the region was heavily dependent on consumption, fueled by strong credit growing and lagging savings. When the crisis hit, foreign direct investment flows – 80 percent of which had originated in Western Europe – virtually collapsed. Demand in Western Europe, which takes nearly 60 percent of region’s exports, also fell sharply. Now, ageing threatens to shrink the labour force in the coming decade, creating yet another barrier to growth.

A new growth model would expand exports of higher-value-added goods and services, increase productivity in lagging domestic sectors, and finance growth with renewed foreign direct investment and higher savings:

Expand high-value-added exports. The region has recently become a net exporter of knowledge-intensive manufactured goods (including finished automobiles and parts, aerospace products, and electronics), with a surplus equivalent to 2 percent of GDP. It can evolve, for example, from being the source of inexpensive labor for Western European carmakers to providing broader, higher-value functions. This would also help to increase intra-region trade, currently at less than 20% of total exports.

Unleash growth, productivity, and investment in domestic sectors. The region’s construction, transportation, retail, and network industries (such as railroads and electric utilities) continue to show significant productivity gaps compared with their counterparts in Western Europe. These economies should encourage companies to invest in equipment and to adopt modern
methods and materials. Truckers could consider moving up to higher-value-added services, such as logistics.

**Renew foreign direct investment and generate higher domestic savings.** These economies have among the world’s lowest savings rates – a problem reflected in long-standing current-account deficits. The region should promote the further development of stable financial markets and more liquid corporate bond and equity markets, as well as create demand for financial products by reforming pension and insurance systems.

Our research shows that implementing such strategies can help the region achieve GDP growth rate of 4-5 percent a year – about its average from 2000 to 2008. To support this growth, these economies need:

**Infrastructure.** The region should invest more than 5 percent of GDP in infrastructure, up from a recent average of 4.1 percent. More than 20 percent of this investment must go into roads, which would help to bring trucking productivity closer to EU-15 levels, among other benefits.

**Regulation and institution building.** While these economies have advanced in the global rankings for providing a good environment for business, additional regulatory reforms can help attract investment and encourage entrepreneurship.

**Education and skills.** Despite the region’s success in providing highly skilled labor, it must make additional investments in education and training in fields such as advanced manufacturing and outsourcing. Overall, it lacks outstanding research universities, and its postsecondary education is not well aligned with the labor market’s needs. Another immediate priority should be to revamp vocational training to create a workforce with job-ready skills and reduce youth unemployment.

**R&D and innovation.** R&D spending in the region averaged 0.9 percent of GDP in 2010, compared with 2.9 percent in the United States, 2.1 percent in the EU-15, and 1.4 percent in the BRIC. The region should also further cooperate and develop regional industry clusters in knowledge-intensive industries and increase industry – university collaborations and support for start-ups. A good example are automotive and aerospace clusters in Central Europe.

While we believe that these strategies would work across all the economies, including Croatia in particular, we also understand that they have individual needs as well. We believe a new growth model and renewed efforts to address the issues that hold back growth can make the region one of the global economy’s most dynamic areas of economic development.

Young leaders support the Adriatic-Baltic-Black Sea Initiative

NEDŽAD HAZNADAR
Head of BABSI Project

BABSI is not merely an idea, a Baltic-Adriatic-Black Sea Initiative has come to life. The first Summit of young political leaders of the new EU member states was held between 23rd and 24th October 2015 in Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, sponsored by Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, President of the Republic of Croatia and co-sponsored by Milan Bandić, Mayor of Zagreb, and supported by the European Parliament Press Service in Croatia.

The word Summit was used deliberately, not as a result of ignorance, but aiming to point out the importance and the level of this event. The Summit was attended by delegates from 8 countries throughout the BABSI region, most of them currently acting as representatives of national parliaments or at the European Parliament and were delegated by party presidents from the broadest political spectrum, ranging from the extreme left, through the largest Social Democratic and People's/Conservative parties, to representatives of Liberals, the Green Party and the extreme right. It was the first and the unique opportunity to bring together young professional politicians, the future leaders acting on the European scene, irrespective of the party they belong to. They were provided the opportunity to meet and exchange experiences.

Consequently, the use of the word Summit was entirely justified, as this was, in a way, an event of historical importance. The selected delegates of the new member states conveyed a powerful message for the general public in their respective countries, as well as for the entire European Union, stating that new member states were prepared to act beyond their national and state boundaries, hence we are talking about cross-border and trans-ideological activity concerning the search for and the finding of new guidelines on co-operation and development within the European Union, as well as the EU itself.

In addition to the previously mentioned benefits of cross-border and trans-ideological co-operation, the specific result of the Summit – “Zagreb Charter” – was formulated and presented by its participants on the second day of the Summit.

It is important to highlight that Baltic-Adriatic-Black Sea Initiative occurred as a natural process within the EU and hence we have reasons to believe that the development of BABSI will provide a boost to the existing integration processes, such as, for instance, the Danube Charter and the Visegrad Group, and contribute to a more active involvement of both the Balkan and the Baltic states in the establishment of shared values, policies and requirements (safety, energy, traffic and the digital sector, to name a few) and work jointly on their implementation.

The interest of the public and the media in this multilateral political event, the first of this type, in addition to a vast amount of interest aroused at the individual level, as well as among political parties, associations and in the NGO sector from 11 member states, was at a surprisingly high level. The Summit was visited by delegates of diverse Embassies not only from the EU member states, but also at an intercontinental level, who showed a vast amount of interest.

As Summit organisers we can express our utmost satisfaction with the results of the first event from the BABSI Initiative and we are currently preparing new conferences for 2016 with immense ambition and attention. The conferences will be held in Croatia, as well as throughout the BABSI region through co-operation with partner organisations.
1st Summit “Nova Europa: Europe of Ideas”
of Young Political Leaders from “New” EU Member States

ZAGREB RESOLUTION

We, the representatives of parliamentary represented political parties from Croatia, Slovenia, Hungary, Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania and Bulgaria

Recognizing the differences in our political ideologies and party platforms,

Recalling the relatively different historical, political, economic and social paths our states have followed,

Noting that the present-day interests of our states do not always coincide,

Acknowledging that the prolonged financial crisis and the persistent inflows of refugees and migrants from conflict-torn regions have placed enormous strain on our countries’ economies and/or on inter-country relations,

Deploring the insufficient unity of European Union Member States and the slow decision-making processes of the Union which threaten the future of the European project and its citizens, yet

Attempting to overcome our personal and political biases through respect for and dialogue with our political opponents,

Identifying that our states share common domestic and international challenges in the areas of youth unemployment, energy diversification and security, transport connectivity, refugee and migratory crisis, and foreign policy,

Believing in the importance of cooperation as the foundation for further growth, development and democratization,

Recognizing that political stability is the foundation for economic development and growth,

PROMOTE the initiation of a broader, deeper and nationally balanced debate on the future of the European Union and its institutions,

URGE for the equal treatment of all EU Member States and their residents, while respecting our cultural diversity,

SUPPORT the cooperation in the Baltic-Adriatic-Black Sea region, in particular in the areas of economy, security, transport, energy, and research and innovation.

CALL for the further and sustainable economic development of “new” EU Member States, through the improvement of the single market, and promotion of entrepreneurship, knowledge-intensive manufacturing, the exploration of new markets, and economies of scale,

BACK the improvement of the transport connectivity between the states of the Baltic-Adriatic-Black Sea region as a foundation for the intensification of business, cultural and political exchange,

STRESS the importance of young generations for both economic development and social concord and CALL for increased opportunities for their early involvement in positions of responsibility in the political and economic sectors,

EMPHASIZE the importance of energy diversification and collaboration between “new” Member States for the reduction of their energy dependency which places significant strain on national economies, and CALL for an active approach on local, regional and EU level towards the diversification of energy sources and supply,

REQUEST a common European Union approach, taking into consideration the point of view of “transit” countries, towards the lasting tackling of the refugee and migratory crisis which shows no indication of slowing down.

CALL all key national and European Union actors to respect the fundamental European values and provide real solutions instead of looking for short-term political gain.

CALL for new content and ideas to address the contemporary challenges our countries and the broader European Union face.
Croatia and Poland jointly work on connecting Adriatic-Baltic-Black Sea

KRAKOW, 8 September

President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović met with Polish President, Andrzej Duda. They discussed political, economic and security issues with an emphasis on strengthening cooperation among the Central European countries from Adriatic-Baltic-Black Sea Initiative.

“We are working together on launching a much stronger dialogue between the countries of Adriatic-Baltic-Black Sea,” stated the President after her meeting with President Duda adding that this refers to a number of issues such as transport corridors and transport infrastructure, energy and energy security, as well as cooperation in security issues.

The two Presidents also discussed the enlargement of the European Union and NATO to the states of South East Europe, to those countries aspiring to full membership. They highlighted that candidate countries should implement reforms more resolutely and vigorously, and that the European Union should send a positive message on the future of membership. Croatia and Poland remain advocates of the enlargement and of greater cooperation of member states in NATO and the European Union.

President Duda stated that the Adriatic-Baltic-Black Sea Initiative is an indicator of a more ambitious and stronger foreign policy which coincides with his foreign policy priorities.

During her visit to Poland, President Grabar-Kitarović, participated in the 25th Economic Forum in Krynica, where she took part in a panel discussion entitled Towards a Resilient Europe. Strategies for the Future together with Polish President, Andrzej Duda, and Macedonian President, Gjorge Ivanov.

Commenting on economic development, President Grabar-Kitarović emphasised that we have to make the European Union more attractive in order for it to reposition itself at the global level and that we have to facilitate business in Europe, with further preservation and promotion of our fundamental values. She underscored that we have to additionally expand cooperation at the level of the European Union and at the level of European regions. An example of such cooperation is the Adriatic-Baltic-Black Sea Initiative. “We have to strengthen European regions such as the Adriatic-Baltic-Black Sea, since this strengthens the Union itself from within”, highlighted Croatian President.

The panel participants agreed that economic growth and security will determine the strength of Europe and that common economic policy must focus on raising competitiveness and innovation.
Croatia and Hungary-two neighbouring and amicable countries that share a rich history and a common European future

BUDAPEST, 7 October

President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović paid an official visit to Hungary where she met with the Hungarian President, János Áder.

During the meeting, overall relations between the two States and the migrants crisis, as well as all the consequences that the two States and the entire European Union are facing were discussed. It was mutually concluded that Central European countries depend on one another but that great opportunities for cooperation have been missed. In this sense, the Adriatic-Baltic-Black Sea Initiative has been highlighted as praiseworthy because it connects States and encourages them to cooperate. Special emphasis was laid on opportunities for strengthening economic cooperation.

Regarding the presence of national minorities in both States, the Croatian and Hungarian President agreed that they form a special connection between the two nations and are a great treasure.

President Grabar-Kitarović thanked Hungary for its sincere support of Croatia, both at the time of the Homeland War and at the time of the entire accession process of Croatia to the European Union and NATO.

President Grabar-Kitarović began her official visit to Hungary with a meeting with the Speaker of the National Assembly, László Kövér, with whom she agreed that Croatia and Hungary are two amicable States sharing a rich history and a common future in the European Union. Further, during her official visit, the President laid a wreath at Budapest’s Heroes’ Square and met with the Prime Minister of Hungary, Viktor Orbán.

Likewise, she gave a lecture at Corvinus University in Budapest on the topic “Croatia’s Contribution to Central European Cooperation: It is Time to Strengthen the Central European Flank of the EU and NATO.” The President expressed her firm belief that the States of Central Europe together can do much more in terms of supporting each other within the framework of the European Union, but also in terms of increasing the competitiveness of their economies by establishing mutual links in energy, transportation, telecommunications and the economy, to their benefit and to the benefit of the entire EU and broader transatlantic community. In this context, the President presented the Adriatic-Baltic-Black Sea Initiative whose aim is strengthening all forms of Central European cooperation: political, economic, infrastructural and security.
The President of Croatia at the Meeting of Presidents of the Visegrád Group countries

SUMMIT OF THE HEADS OF STATE
BALATONFÜRED, 8-9 OCTOBER 2015

BALATONFÜRED, 8-9 October

President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović participated in the Meeting of Heads of State of the Visegrád Group as a special guest and upon closing thanked the Presidents of the Visegrád Group countries for their partnership relation toward Croatia.

The President emphasized that during the two day Summit discussions were held which determine the future of our nations, as well as this part of the continent, addressing the themes of migration, climate change, energy, and the security and stability of our neighbourhood, the area of South East Europe.

Commenting on climate change, all the Presidents agreed that they had great expectations of the forthcoming Paris Conference. President Grabar-Kitarović emphasized that the agreement that was reached in New York by accepting related goals of sustainable development from the post-2015 Agenda is an extremely important breakthrough.

Moreover, she said that establishment of energy connections among our nations is of common interest. Energy efficiency and energy independence are essential elements of national security and political stability of every nation and its economy, economic trends and standards of citizens.

“With the construction of an LNG terminal on Krk and with the establishment of connections with the Visegrád Group nations and within the framework of the Adriatic-Baltic-Black Sea Initiative that we have recently presented, we would ensure not only energy, but also political and economic independence of our countries from possible manipulations, such as turning off the gas supply or price manipulations,” President Grabar-Kitarović accentuated.
Chinese President Xi welcomed the Adriatic-Baltic-Black Sea Initiative

Saying that Croatia is an important State for the Chinese initiative “One Belt, One Road” and for the strengthening of Chinese cooperation with Central European countries within the framework of the China+16 Initiative, with a special emphasis on energy and transportation, President Xi welcomed the Adriatic-Baltic-Black Sea Initiative.

The China-Europe Land-Sea Express Line launched recently at the China+16 CEECs summit in Suzhou corresponds greatly with the objectives of the Adriatic-Baltic-Black Sea Initiative. Developing the seaport corridor based on the ports of Adriatic and Baltic countries is in line with the development of the Belt and Road and cooperation on industrial capacity.
Vice President Biden extended his support to the Adriatic-Baltic-Black Sea Initiative

During her meeting with US Vice President Joe Biden, President Grabar-Kitarović presented the Adriatic-Baltic-Black Sea Initiative.

Vice President Biden extended his support, stressing the importance of developing infrastructure in Central Europe: „Infrastructure matters.”