

**SPEAKING NOTES  
THE HONOURABLE NOËL A. KINSELLA  
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE**

**ON THE OCCASION OF A RECEPTION CELEBRATING TWENTY YEARS  
OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN CANADA AND CROATIA**

**SPEAKER SCHEER'S DINING ROOM (216-N)  
24 APRIL 2013**

Minister Maras,

Speaker Scheer,

Ambassador Grubišić,

Ministers,

Honourable Senators and Members of the House of Commons,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a pleasure to welcome all of you on this auspicious occasion, as we mark a milestone in diplomatic relations between Canada and Croatia. This is a celebration of twenty years of diplomatic relations.

After two decades we have what I may term the nuts and bolts of diplomatic relations well in place. Canada has an embassy in Zagreb, and Croatia has its embassy in Ottawa and a consulate in Mississauga. In addition, an honorary consul, Captain Marko Mladineo, has been located in my own province of New Brunswick and has been working in Saint John since 2011. Over the past twenty years numerous educational, social and commercial programs have been established.

In the area of parliamentary diplomacy, to cite one example of an offshoot of formal diplomatic relations, Inter-Parliamentary Union delegates from Canada and

Croatia cooperate on important international issues through the work of the Union's Twelve-Plus Geopolitical Group.

During my time as Speaker of the Senate, I have visited Croatia twice and have developed a strong interest in the country as well as a deep affection for its people.

During our Canadian delegation's visit in 2006, the Foreign Policy Committee of Croatia was examining Croatia's application to the EU and NATO and Croatia's relations with neighboring countries, among other things. We had fruitful discussions on matters of international interest, trade, and education between our two countries, as well as possibilities for exchanges between our two countries' committees.

There have been a number of visits to Canada by prominent parliamentarians from Croatia as well, including Ms. Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration in 2006, His Excellency Speaker Bebic in 2009 and Minister Jandroković in 2009. It was also my pleasure to spend some time with Rear Admiral Ante Urlić on several occasions, most notably when he visited New Brunswick three years ago.

Behind the brickwork which constitutes our physical embassies and beyond the numerous bilateral agreements of our two countries are, of course, people. Canada has been fortunate to enjoy the diligent work of strong Ambassadors from Croatia, including His Excellency Mr. Grubišić. There have been notable successes over the years in part due to their engagement. Among them are the abolition of the military questionnaire requirement for a visa, followed by the removal of a visa requirement altogether, the support Croatia had from Canada for its membership in NATO and the general amity of relations between our countries.

An important element in successful diplomatic relations – and I think we can say that our diplomatic relations have been successful – is the joy of meeting and

working with new people. The formal diplomatic relations of the past twenty years have led to close personal relationships between Canadians and Croatians.

Diplomatic relations work best when people get along well. It is a pleasure, therefore, to be part of this reception which brings us together. I look forward to a continued strengthening of the relations between our countries and between our people in the coming years.