



**KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA**  
**NATION RELIGION KING**

**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

**Department of Europe**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Outcomes of the First Session of the Bilateral Political Consultations  
between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of  
Cambodia and the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia**

On 4-5 November 2024, His Excellency Mr. Khuon Phon Rattanak, Secretary of State of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia, paid a visit to the Republic of Croatia.

During his stay in Zagreb, His Excellency Mr. Khuon Phon Rattanak co-chaired the First Session of Bilateral Political Consultations between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia and the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia, with His Excellency Mr. Frano Matušić, State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia.

The two co-chairs commenced by expressing deep satisfaction of the good relations and cooperation between the two countries. They were convinced that these fruitful and productive consultations will pave the way to new areas of multifaceted cooperation encompassing diplomatic, trade, demining, tourism, people-to-people exchange, and cultural spheres. The consultations also foster deeper mutual understanding through the exchange of views on regional and global issues of common concerns and interests.

His Excellency Mr. Khuon Phon Rattanak highlighted Cambodia's socioeconomic transformation from a war-torn nation to a fast-growing lower-middle-income economy and is also on track to gain upper-middle-income status by 2030 and high-income status by 2050, underscoring the country's achievements in rebuilding after the Khmer Rouge era. He also provided a comprehensive briefing on the Six Priorities Policy Programme and the Pentagonal Strategy-Phase I of the new Royal Government of Cambodia. His Excellency Mr. Frano Matušić acknowledged this shared history of overcoming post-conflict challenges and emphasized the importance of peace and human capital development as cornerstones for state-building. The recovery paths of both countries have fostered a mutual understanding of each nation's transformative journey in state-building and development.

Recognizing the potential for economic growth, both sides discussed on the way to expand trade and investment through mechanisms such as a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), interactions between their chambers of commerce and holding of business forums. His Excellency Mr. Khuon Phon Rattanak informed his counterpart key sectors for cooperation, including agriculture, food processing, manufacturing, and infrastructure. His Excellency Mr. Frano Matušić underscored Croatia's technological strengths, particularly in food processing. He also stressed that given the shared histories of conflict, demining emerged as a priority area for collaboration. He shared Croatia's advanced demining expertise and proposed that Cambodia could engage with Croatian demining companies, which have extensive experience in this field.

To foster tourism and cultural exchange, both co-chairs discussed a possibility of the establishment of a sister-city partnership between Siem Reap, Cambodia's significant cultural hub, and Dubrovnik, Croatia's renowned historic city since both are also UNESCO heritage sites. The cities offer opportunities to enhance cultural tourism and share sustainable tourism practices.

Looking forward to the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations in 2026, both sides discussed celebrating this milestone through high-level interaction on suitable and mutually convenient opportunities and high-level exchange of congratulatory letters. The anniversary presents a unique opportunity to showcase the friendly relations of Cambodia and Croatia and explore further avenues of cooperation.

The co-chairs concluded the consultations by expressing their deep satisfaction with the fruitful outcomes. Following the session, His Excellency Mr. Frano Matušić hosted a working lunch in honour of the Cambodian delegation where both sides exchanged views on regional, international and multilateral affairs of common interest.

Besides of the successful and highly productive co-chairing the First Bilateral Consultations, His Excellency Mr. Khuon Phon Rattanak led the Cambodian delegation, with support from Croatia's Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs and Rijeka Port Authority, visited Rijeka Port.

In discussions with Mr. Denis Vukorepa, Executive Director of Rijeka Port Authority, both sides sought to explore opportunities for maritime cooperation through mechanisms such as knowledge sharing, joint working groups, and port investment. The Cambodian delegation was also given an impressive presentation on an overview of the port's major projects and had the opportunity to visit the key ongoing projects.

Phnom Penh, 13 November 2024

