

History is made in Zagreb as DSACT signs Croatia's Declaration on Completion of Integration - ACT

Written by Robin Michelle Barnett, Staff Writer
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The Croatian military has completed the process of adjustment to NATO standards and is the first to do so within only three years.

A declaration-signing ceremony in Zagreb marked the full integration of Croatia into the Alliance on Thursday, 25 October 2012.

Merely three years ago, on 1 April 2009, Croatia completed the accession process and joined the alliance as a member, thus sharing the benefits of collective security. Croatia considered a full membership of NATO as the most efficient investment in the permanent stability and prosperity of South Eastern Europe.

"By joining the Alliance in April 2009, Croatia fulfilled one of its two strategic goals, the other being accession to the European Union, which is scheduled for 1 July 2013," said Chief of the General Staff of the Croatian Armed Forces (CAF), Lieutenant General Drago Lovric.

Over the past three years, Croatia has worked with Allied Command Transformation (ACT), Joint Force Command (JFC) Naples and the component commands to develop and adapt their own structures and forces to improve interoperability and commence modernisation of the CAF. Croatia is actively involved in current operations with the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the Kosovo Force (KFOR) while also developing her armed forces through transformation.

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The certification was conducted by a national team of certified evaluators in line with NATO's Combat Readiness Evaluation (CERVAL) standards and under the supervision of a team from the Allied Force Command in Madrid.

"Croatia has shown that it is a reliable partner and actively contributing member at all levels; I am proud to say that Croatia's integration process was well coordinated and completed within a very short period of only three years," said the Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (DSACT), General Mieczyslaw Bieniek.



The declaration on the completion of NATO integration was signed by Lovric and DSACT with past Chiefs of the General Staff in attendance. DSACT commended Croatia for ongoing efforts and encourage the continued transformation and modernisation of her forces.

"On behalf of Croatia, we want to thank NATO, notably ACT and JFC Naples, for their efforts and support in aiding Croatia in achieving integration," said Lovric. "There is still work to do but Croatia is committed to meeting its obligations; thanks to the support and friendships created in the integration process, the Croatia Armed Forces (CAF) is now well placed to achieve those objectives and fulfill a major role within the Alliance.