

Canopy of Prayer

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Dear Prayer Partners in Europe

"The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles. The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." (Psalm 34:17-18) There are multiple ways how this can be applied in our lives, and most currently we can think of the panic regarding the Corona virus. We live our lives with many questions and uncertainties, while there is only one who is certain and He is our Lord! He delivers us from our troubles and saves us. Let us lean on Him, while we continue to live for His glory.

Croatia

The name comes from Latin, and the oldest preserved stone inscription is from the 9th century, where Branimir was called "Duke of Croatians". The oldest preserved record of a Croatian ethnic name (Hrvat) is on the Bashka tablet from the 12th century. Croatians are one of the Slavic tribes, who today inhabit the land of the Dalmatian coast in the south, the Kvarner coast in the north, the peninsula Istria, central Croatia and Slavonia. The country has a "boomerang" shape, which gives her access to sea, mountains and fertile land. In history, while it was independent and most famous for the reign of King Zvonimir (mentioned on the Bashka tablet), it was mostly conquered by Venetians, Turks, and Habsburgs. In the 20th century it became part of Yugoslavia, and in the 90s gained independence. In 2013 it became then the 28th country of the EU. Because of Brexit, it holds the Presidency of the EU sooner than usually expected.

The region of Dalmatia is mentioned in the Bible, when Paul wrote that Titus left him to go to Dalmatia (2 Timothy 4:10). As for the rest of Europe, Croats had access to the Gospel very quickly and different orders of Roman-Catholicism had significant work among the people (Franciscans, Dominicans, Jesuits, etc.). Thus, for centuries Croats considered themselves Roman-Catholic. After the Reformation happened, mostly the northern part of Croatia was affected, so regions of Istria, central Croatia and Slavonia were under that influence. One of the prominent names among the Reformers from Croatia was Mathias Flacius Illyricus (Matija Vlačić Ilirik), though he lived in what is today Germany (1520-1575).



Usually the society is very welcoming but at the same time one can experience extreme behaviours. A certain group of the people still carries the wounds of the war in the 90s. The ethnic issue with the neighbours was nurtured for a very long time throughout history and still comes to the surface today. Sporting events can be one of the best examples where the fans can expose their frustrations.

Croatia nurtures religious freedom and tolerance, so apart from the Roman-Catholic cathedrals and churches, one can also come across Orthodox churches, Evangelical-Protestant churches, Islamic mosques, and some other minority religious groups.

One of the biggest problems of the society is corruption. Though heavily battled against in recent times, still the influences of the past can be seen. "Giving favours", as it is mainly called, is the way of thinking for many people. Unfortunately, they do not even perceive it as problematic and do not consider it sinful. On top of that the people do not recognise the consequences of it for society in general.

Due to the lack of substantial economic growth, the majority have emigrated to the western part of the EU. It has heavily affected the demographic picture of the country. Thus, Croatian Commissioner Dubravka Suica was given the portfolio for addressing demographic challenges in the EU.

Prayer points:

- Repentance of the nation – that they will renounce the old lifestyle and glorify God in a real way (not just religiously and nominally)!
- Creative minds to be given space and influence over society so that the economy can thrive and the people will stay in the country.



Coronavirus

Sadly the EU of Prayer meeting due to take place in Zagreb later this month will not now go ahead, as the Croatian authorities have tightened up their advice about receiving visitors from across Europe, leading to the cancellation of our accommodation. As we look for ways in which we could have our time in Croatia later, let us trust the Lord that nothing would stand in the way of His plan for the new association that will cover the work of the Canopy of Prayer and the EU of Prayer.

Additional prayer points:-

1. Let us pray that the current Corona virus pandemic will not lead to another world-wide financial crisis.
2. Let us pray for a middle way on the EU's external borders between the plight of refugees and the impending collapse of European society.

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