

**Speech of Deputy Speaker Željko Reiner on the occasion of the National
Day of the People's Republic of China**

27 September 2019, Esplanade Zagreb

Your Excellency, Ambassador Xu,
Honourable Members of the Parliament and Government,
Distinguished ambassadors,
Dear guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is truly an honour to be here with you today on the occasion of the National Day of the People's Republic of China. Allow me to warmly greet you on behalf of Speaker of the Croatian Parliament Mr. Gordan Jandroković, members of the Croatian Parliament and myself.

I always like to stress that Croatia and China nurture ever-growing friendship and partnership. We are honest and reliable partners and we share traditionally good political relations based on mutual trust, respect and understanding.

I am very pleased that frequent and friendly communication between our highest state leaders confirms the common interest of deepening and strengthening the existing friendly cooperation. It is important that we have the support of all the highest political structures in order to continue cooperation in all areas.

Of course, *Pelješac Bridge* project has brought our cooperation to a new, higher level, based on mutual trust and team-work that will, hopefully, result in further Chinese investments in Croatia.

Besides our excellent bilateral cooperation that was crowned this year with the visit of Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang to Croatia, we highly appreciate our cooperation within China+17 format. We are looking forward to results of this cooperation, especially in the form of investments in Croatian infrastructure, energy and transport.

Croatia fully supports One Belt One Road Initiative with the aim of stronger transport and energy connectivity between China and Europe, especially having in mind similarity of this Initiative with the Central-European "Three Seas Initiative" that Croatia is strongly committed to. Croatia has a favourable

geographic position and potential to expand both maritime and land connections between China and Europe, due to this advantage.

I would like to use this opportunity to remind us all of the great Croatian explorer Marko Polo who has opened the European gate to China and permanently linked the two continents. We recall our history and rediscover it with a new, modern perspective and ways of connecting Europe and Asia.

This year we mark the Year of culture and tourism of Croatia and China. In this regard I am very pleased with opening of the international photo exhibition "Our Silk Road" that we had an opportunity to visit earlier. A series of exhibitions and events that were held in both our countries throughout this year show that people-to-people contact is essential for our overall cooperation. By proudly presenting parts of our culture we are opening the most important gate of our friendship: showing who we are, where we come from and what defines us. And most importantly, we are welcoming our friends to become a part of our world – Chinese to better understand Croatians, and Croatians to become more acquainted with China.

Dear friends, happy National Day.

Thank you.