
AS MANY AS 50,000 EXPATS COULD RETURN TO LIVE IN CROATIA

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Croatian expats who lost their jobs in EU members states have started returning to Croatia following the outbreak of the coronavirus, aware that medical expenses, in case they get infected, will be much higher there than in Croatia, the Vecernji List daily wrote on Monday.

In case the crisis lasts, the number of expats returning to Croatia will rise because as foreigners in other EU countries they will be among the first to get laid off, the daily said.

According to demographer Stjepan Sterc, those who left Croatia over the past several years will return to Croatia because they will lose their jobs in the crisis and will be unable to pay expensive rents and apartment leases in the EU.

It is difficult to estimate how many of them will return, but under the assumption that approximately 350,000 Croats have emigrated and that many of them will lose their jobs during the crisis, it can be estimated that up to 50,000 of them could potentially return to Croatia, Sterc said.

This does not mean that all of them would return immediately, but later and over the next several years. The number of returnees will depend on Croatias reaction to the economic crisis, the daily said.

Sterc points out that it is not certain that second and third generation Croatians will return to Croatia because they have established themselves outside and will not leave their places of residence.

Expats who have left Croatia in recent years will be the ones returning because of the crisis, many will be jobless and unable to pay expensive rents in the EU. In this situation, people are expected to return to the safety of their home, he said, before adding.

Crises like this show that the national concept of the state is important because all strategic decisions of states are made within borders. In order to develop, we must rely on our total wealth and population, whether in or outside the country. We need to develop incentive models for the return of emigrants, not only in terms of physical return but also when it comes to investments in Croatia. If they invest in Croatia, they should be exempted from paying some taxes because our economy will not be able to grow with such a force of natural decline in population.

The Croatian government says they are closely monitoring the situation and all Croatian citizens who wish to return to the homeland are welcome, and they will consider all options for how they can help them and facilitate their return to Croatia.

With diplomatic help, a total of 1,200 expats have returned to Croatia in recent days.

<https://www.croatiaweek.com/as-many-as-50000-expats-could-return-to-live-in-croatia/>

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