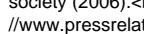




## World Bank Group Executive Director Frank Heemskerk Visits Croatia

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Mr. Frank Heemskerk, Executive Director of the World Bank Group, made a two-day visit to the Republic of Croatia to see the economic progress the country has made. Mr. Heemskerk, a Dutch national, presides over the so-called "Dutch Constituency" in the World Bank Groups Head Quarters in Washington, representing the interests of 13 countries, including Croatia. This was his second visit to Croatia after his appointment to this function in April 2013. Mr. Heemskerk participated in the launch workshop for the Social Protection System Modernization Project, jointly organized by the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth and the World Bank. There he heard first-hand which reforms the authorities will undertake to improve the social protection of the most vulnerable groups in Croatia, while making the system itself more efficient and less costly. At the workshop, Mr. Heemskerk discussed with Ms. Milanka Opacic, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Social Policy and Youth, and Mr. Siniša Varga, Minister of Health, the importance of this reform program to better target the most vulnerable in a financially sustainable way. Mr. Heemskerk also met with Mr. Boris Lalovac Minister of Finance who is also the Croatian Governor for the World Bank Group, Mr. Boris Vujcic, Governor of the Croatian National Bank, and attended an event with business community representatives organized by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Discussions focused on the most pressing challenges Croatia is facing in speeding up economic recovery, while at the same time maximizing the benefits of European Union membership and improving the business environment. During the visit Mr. Frank Heemskerk, Executive Director of the World Bank Group, stated that, "The Croatian economy and its people are facing some serious challenges after years of recession. I am encouraged, however, to see how the Croatian government and the private sector are partnering with the World Bank Group to boost economic recovery. Unfortunately there are no quick fixes. But the collaboration, in which Croatia draws from the global expertise and financing opportunities offered by the World Bank Group help to make the Croatian economy more efficient and competitive, while safeguarding the most vulnerable people in the country." Prior to taking on the position as Executive Director of the World Bank, Mr. Heemskerk worked in both private and public sectors. From 2011 to 2013, he was a member of the Executive Board of Royal HaskoningDHV, an independent, engineering and project management consultancy with 7,000 staff members and 100 offices worldwide. From 2007 to 2010, he served as Minister for Foreign Trade of the Netherlands and was responsible for the Post, Telecom, ICT, Consumer Policy, and Tourism. From 2003 to 2006, he was a member of the House of Representatives of the Netherlands, where he was the spokesperson for the Dutch Labour Party (PvdA) on financial supervision, economic affairs, and health care reforms. Mr. Heemskerk is also a co-author (with Professor Dolf van den Brink) of a book on the impact of ageing on Dutch society (2006).  
Media Contacts  
Zagreb  
Vanja Frajtic  
Tel : +385 1 2357 297  
vfrajtic@worldbank.org  


### Pressekontakt

The World Bank

DC 20433 Washington

### Firmenkontakt

The World Bank

DC 20433 Washington

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