

ADDRESS BY MS JILLIAN O'KEEFFE, REPRESENTING THE IRISH FOREIGN
MINISTRY, TO THE LAUNCH OF THE MEŠTROVIĆ €15 / Kn150 COIN AT THE
CROATIAN NATIONAL BANK ON FEBRUARY 12th, 2007

Governor Rohatinski, Minister, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dobar dan,

I am delighted to have been invited to the launch today of the commemorative coin in honour of the work of Ivan Meštrović. The coin design has a special meaning for both Ireland and Croatia. Eighty years ago, Meštrović was invited to submit a design for the first coins of the Irish Free State. The Irish Free State formerly came into existence in 1922. The country is now known as Ireland, of course.

W.B. Yeats, the world-renowned Irish poet also happened to be the chairman of the design committee for the design of the new coins of the Irish state. He had met Meštrović many years before and was very impressed by his work. It was on his personal recommendation that the government of the Irish Free State invited Meštrović as one of five designers to participate in the competition to choose the design of the new coins. Unfortunately, the invitation was sent to the wrong address and by the time Meštrović submitted his proposal it was too late. The deadline for the consideration of all proposals had passed. Very generously, he then donated his design to the Irish Free State.

The Central Bank of Ireland and the Croatian National Bank have worked closely together on this project. I would like to thank all involved for their involvement in taking this opportunity to promote and strengthen the already strong cultural links between Ireland and Croatia.

Hvala lijepa!