

# Ivo Sanader

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## Ivo Sanader



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### **8th Prime Minister of Croatia**

**In office**

**December 23, 2003** – *present*

**Preceded by** [Ivica Račić](#)

**Succeeded by** [incumbent](#)

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**Born** [June 8, 1953](#)

[Split, Croatia](#), (formerly [Yugoslavia](#))

**Political party** [Croatian Democratic Union](#)

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**Ivo Sanader** [ˈi̯ɔ̌ sana dɛ̌r] (born [June 8, 1953](#) in [Split](#)) is the current [Prime Minister of Croatia](#) (President of the [Government](#)).

After the victory of his [Croatian Democratic Union \(HDZ\)](#) in the 2003 parliamentary elections the President of the Republic named Sanader the Prime Minister designate on [December 9, 2003](#). When [Croatian Parliament](#) subsequently gave its consent by 88 votes (out of 152) on [December 23, 2003](#) Sanader was formally appointed. His predecessor as Prime Minister was [Ivica Račić](#) of the [Social Democratic Party](#).

Sanader has close relations with other moderate conservative politicians in Europe, including [Austrian Chancellor Wolfgang Schäussel](#), [Bavarian Prime Minister Edmund Stoiber](#) and [German Christian Democratic Union](#) leader [Angela Merkel](#).

Sanader was the last [statesman](#) to visit [Pope John Paul II](#) in the [Vatican](#), in February [2005](#), a few weeks before his death.

Sanader has a PhD in [Romance languages](#) and [comparative literature](#) from [Innsbruck University](#) in [Austria](#). Besides his native [Croatian](#) he is fluent in [German](#), [English](#), [French](#) and [Italian](#). He is married and has two children.

**[[edit](#)] [Early political career](#)**

Sanader returned to Split from Austria at the beginning of the 1990s. His first public office was manager of Croatian National Theatre in Split. In 1992 he was elected as an HDZ's deputy to the lower house of the Croatian parliament. Shortly thereafter he became Minister of Science and Technology (1992-1993). From 1993 to 1995 and 1996 to 2000 he was a Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs.

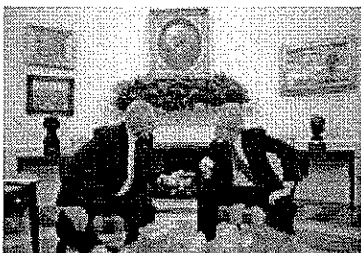
In 2000, following Tuđman's death, HDZ suffered defeat at parliamentary elections. Furthermore, their candidate Mate Granić also failed to enter the second round of the presidential elections. Granić then left to form the Democratic Centre party hoping to attract moderates from the HDZ. Inner-party election within the HDZ ensued in April that year and Sanader emerged victorious as a compromise candidate.

Initially Sanader criticized the ICTY indictments against Croatian Army generals which had provoked much discontent in Croatia. In 2001 he took part in a massive rally against a war crimes indictment against general Mirko Norac. Sanader also criticised Ivica Račan and his cabinet's stance towards the ICTY. Afterwards, he gradually began to distance the party and himself from the protests somewhat softening his criticism towards the government.

Sanader focused his efforts on transforming the HDZ into a modern pro-European right-of-center party. However, his course was challenged by the right-wing of the party led by Ivo Paolić. The ensuing leadership struggle culminated at the 2002 party convention. Sanader, who was supported by Vladimir Šeks and Branimir Glavač, managed to win his second mandate. Paolić left the party to form his Croatian Bloc, but failed to draw many of his former supporters from the HDZ.

Sanader was now able to concentrate on defeating Ivica Račan and his left-of-centre coalition at the 2003 parliamentary elections. HDZ, nevertheless, failed to win the absolute majority in Sabor, even with its new allies the Democratic Center and the Croatian Social-Liberals. However, in the post-election negotiations Sanader ensured the support of ethnic minority representatives, nominally left-wing Croatian Party of Pensioners and the Independent Democratic Serbian Party.

## **[edit] Prime minister**



 At the White House.

Sanader's government main foreign goal is Croatia's entry into the European Union and NATO. As a result of the successful implementation of the Association Agreement - signed with the European Union in 2001 - Croatia has become an official candidate for the entry into the EU. Sanader's HDZ has also sought to establish better relations with minority parties and has continued to promote minority rights. Amongst other factors contributing to the positive opinion of the European Commission and the European Council regarding Croatia's bid to become an EU member were Croatia's cooperation with the ICTY, continued economic growth and country's compliance with the political and economic criteria established by the 1993 Copenhagen European Council. Croatia is expected to complete negotiations with the EU shortly after Sanader's term of office.

Since the inception of his term Croatia has experienced an economic growth of around 4 per cent annually as well as improvements in the judicial system and land registry. However, the cabinet has also seen some changes, notably the departure of the foreign minister Miomir Ćurubić who was accused of corruption.

Furthermore, Sanader's government was challenged by the rising tide of Euroscepticism in the country. In October 2005, following the formal start of EU accession negotiations, opinion surveys showed Sanader to be the most popular Croatian politician. Only a few weeks later, his government's decision to sign a treaty compensating Austrian citizens whose property had been nationalised in the post-WWII Yugoslav era met with strong opposition from Croatia's president Stipe Mesić. This, in turn, reduced Sanader's popularity in the polls. The subsequent arrest of Ante Gotovina in Spain also had a damaging effect on the popularity of Sanader's government.