

# MOVING TO CROATIA

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Residence, company formation  
and taxation for non-EU citizens



**CLIENT GUIDE**

Updated 25 August 2026

For non-EU citizens, internationally mobile families and business owners

# Executive overview

A non-EEA national may generally incorporate and own a Croatian company, but company ownership does not by itself provide permission to live or work in Croatia. The immigration route, corporate structure and personal extraction strategy should be planned together.

**KEY PRINCIPLE** Croatian company law and immigration law operate independently. Share ownership or a directorship does not itself create a right of residence or the right to work.

## At a glance

| Question                                        | General position                                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Can a non-EEA national own an Croatian company? | Generally yes, subject to company, sanctions, regulated-sector and investment-screening rules.                         |
| Does incorporation grant residence?             | No. A separate immigration permission is required.                                                                     |
| Can the owner work in Croatia?                  | Only if the person holds a permission allowing the intended employment, management or self-employment activity.        |
| Is there a no-work route?                       | Croatia does not have a broad passive-income retirement visa for any wealthy applicant. Temporary stay may be avail... |
| Can an entrepreneur use a founder route?        | Potentially, if the business and applicant meet the applicable immigration conditions.                                 |
| Main company tax rate?                          | 10% for taxpayers below the statutory revenue threshold; 18% above it                                                  |

## Who this guide is for

- Non-EEA founders planning to relocate to Croatia and build a Croatian business.
- International entrepreneurs who want a Croatian company but may continue living abroad.
- Financially independent individuals considering whether a no-work residence route is available.
- Professionals assessing employment, EU Blue Card or high-skilled routes.
- Families assessing employment, study or family-reunification routes.

## Important terminology

Croatia applies EU free-movement rules to EU/EEA nationals and relevant Swiss arrangements. Third-country nationals normally need a separate immigration basis for residence and, where applicable, work or business activity.

## Choosing a Croatian residence route

Company ownership and immigration permission must be assessed separately.

**BEFORE COMMITTING TO A ROUTE** Confirm nationality, intended activity, salary / business eligibility, family position, funding and tax residence. A company-registration certificate does not itself confer a right to live or work in Croatia.

# 1. Main routes to Croatian residence

The correct route depends on nationality, intended activity, qualifications, salary or business plan, family relationships, funding and whether the person will work locally.

## Employment and high-skilled routes

Employment generally requires a Croatian stay-and-work permit unless an exemption applies. The EU Blue Card is available for qualifying highly skilled employment.

| Route                               | Typical features                                                                                                              | Residence implications                                               |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Stay and work permit / EU Blue Card | Employment generally requires an Croatian stay-and-work permit unless an exemption applies. The EU Blue Card is available for | Permission linked to the qualifying job / route and its conditions.  |
| Digital nomad / business activity   | Croatia offers temporary stay for qualifying digital nomads. Founders carrying on local business activity need a residence/wo | Permission linked to the approved business / self-employed activity. |
| Family / study                      | Documented relationship or eligible study programme; financial and insurance conditions may apply.                            | Permission depends on sponsor / programme and may have work limits.  |

**OWNER-MANAGED COMPANY** Forming a Croatian company does not automatically allow its shareholder or director to work in Croatia. The immigration basis must authorise the actual role and activity.

## Stay and work permit / EU Blue Card

Work-route eligibility, salary thresholds and labour-market conditions should be checked immediately before application because they can change during the year.

## Family and study

Family reunification and study routes are available in defined circumstances. Requirements commonly include evidence of relationship or admission, sufficient funds, insurance and accommodation. Work rights depend on the specific Croatian permission.

# 2. Residence without work / independent means

Croatia does not have a broad passive-income retirement visa for any wealthy applicant. Temporary stay may be available under specific statutory purposes, including digital-nomad, family and other defined grounds.

## Practical implications

- Company ownership, investments or property ownership should never be assumed to create a residence right.
- Passive ownership should be distinguished from active management, employment or self-employment.
- The permission wording and actual day-to-day activity should be reviewed before relocation.
- Proof of funds, health insurance and accommodation may be required depending on the route.
- Tax residence is separate from immigration residence and requires its own analysis.

**NO-WORK RESIDENCE** Croatia does not have a broad passive-income retirement visa for any wealthy applicant. Temporary stay may be available under specific statutory purposes, including digital-nomad, family and other defined grounds.

**WORK RESTRICTION** Passive investment should not be confused with employment, self-employment or active company management. A person carrying out work must hold an immigration basis that permits it.

## Passive ownership versus active management

| Activity                                   | Likely position without work permission                                        |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Holding shares as an investment            | Potentially possible, subject to company law, sanctions, tax and sector rules. |
| Receiving dividends / investment returns   | Potentially possible, with local and cross-border tax consequences.            |
| Managing daily operations                  | Work activity; an appropriate immigration basis is normally required.          |
| Providing services to the company          | Employment / self-employment activity; authorisation should be confirmed.      |
| Drawing salary or management fees for work | Requires immigration, payroll and tax analysis.                                |

## Long-term residence caution

Temporary residence, permanent residence, citizenship residence and tax residence are separate tests. Whether time under a particular permit counts toward a long-term objective depends on the rules in force at the relevant time.

# 3. Entrepreneur and founder routes

## Digital nomad / business activity

A d.o.o. can generally be foreign-owned. Immigration and work authorisation should be settled before the shareholder begins managing or working for the Croatian company.

## Core planning requirements

- A credible business plan and evidence that the proposed activity is genuine and viable.
- Appropriate funding and source-of-funds documentation.
- Evidence of founder skills, qualifications or commercial track record where relevant.
- A residence permission that expressly permits the proposed founder, management or self-employed activity.

| More likely to support a founder application                        | Generally weaker case                                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Innovative or commercially credible venture with documented funding | Passive investment or shell company                   |
| Business plan showing market need and economic substance            | Company formed only to obtain residence               |
| Founder capability and lawful source of funds                       | Unclear activity, funding or local economic rationale |

## Permit duration and limits

Founder permissions are normally conditional on continuing to satisfy the qualifying business and personal requirements.

- Material changes to the business, ownership, employer or activity can trigger a notification or new immigration application.
- Unrelated employment may require separate authorisation.
- The application evidence should be prepared before committing to relocation or local payroll.
- Passive investment should not be confused with a founder or self-employment residence route.

**CONDITION OF PERMISSION** A founder must comply with the conditions of the residence route actually granted. Incorporation alone does not expand work rights.

The usual owner-managed vehicle considered in this guide is the Društvo s ograničenom odgovornošću (d.o.o.). It has separate legal personality and shareholder liability is generally limited, subject to statutory exceptions and capital rules.

## Coordinated Croatia planning sequence

|   |              |                                                                        |
|---|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | IMMIGRATION  | Choose a permission that authorises the intended activity.             |
| 2 | COMPANY      | Design the ownership, management, capital and governance arrangements. |
| 3 | REGISTRATION | Complete company, tax, VAT, payroll and ownership registrations.       |
| 4 | REMUNERATION | Model salary, dividends, pension and social-security exposure.         |
| 5 | COMPLIANCE   | Maintain books, annual accounts, tax returns and sector licences.      |

**SEQUENCE MATTERS** Immigration, company substance, payroll and personal tax residence are legally distinct, but they interact in practice and should be planned together.

## Core formation requirements

| Requirement          | Practical point                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Company form         | Društvo s ograničenom odgovornošću (d.o.o.)                                                                                          |
| Share capital        | Minimum share capital for a standard d.o.o. is EUR 2,500. A simplified j.d.o.o. may be available under separate lower-capital rules. |
| Shareholder          | One or more shareholders are generally possible; foreign ownership is subject to any sector-specific rules.                          |
| Management           | Local company-law requirements for directors / managers must be satisfied.                                                           |
| Registered office    | A valid registered office / business address in Croatia is generally required.                                                       |
| Registration         | Complete the prescribed commercial / company register process.                                                                       |
| Tax registrations    | Register for corporation tax, VAT, payroll and employer obligations where relevant.                                                  |
| Beneficial ownership | Maintain and file beneficial-owner information where required.                                                                       |

## Registration and ongoing obligations

1. Confirm the company form, name, founders, management and registered office.
2. Prepare and execute the constitutional / incorporation documents and contribute the required capital.
3. Complete company, tax, VAT, payroll and employer registrations where relevant.
4. Register legal and beneficial ownership information where required.
5. Maintain accounting records and prepare annual accounts / filings under local law.

6. File corporation tax, VAT, payroll and other returns and maintain sector licences where required.

**FOREIGN OWNERSHIP** A non-EEA person can generally own a Croatian company, but ownership is separate from immigration permission. Banking, sanctions, regulated-sector and tax-residence issues may require additional review.

## 5. Company taxation

a Croatian resident company is generally subject to local corporation tax under the rules described below. Cross-border management, permanent establishments, transfer pricing and treaty residence require specialist analysis.

### Principal company tax rates

| Tax / item                      | Indicative 2026 treatment                                                     |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Corporation tax                 | 10% for taxpayers below the statutory revenue threshold; 18% above it         |
| Standard VAT                    | 25%                                                                           |
| Dividend / withholding          | Domestic withholding and treaty relief depend on recipient and structure.     |
| Payroll / social security       | Separate employer and employee charges may apply.                             |
| Transfer pricing / cross-border | Arm's-length and documentation rules can apply to related-party transactions. |

### Trading-profit illustration

| Calculation                         | Amount                                    |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Illustrative taxable company profit | EUR 100,000                               |
| Indicative company tax              | EUR 10,000 (illustrative lower-rate case) |
| Profit after company tax            | EUR 90,000                                |

This simplified illustration excludes payroll taxes, VAT, withholding taxes, local taxes, incentives and cross-border adjustments. The actual taxable base can differ from accounting profit.

**PLANNING POINT** The headline company-tax rate is not the owner's final tax rate. Additional personal tax, social charges and withholding can arise when profits are extracted.

### Company residence and management

If a Croatian company is effectively managed from another country, or a foreign company is managed from Croatia, dual-residence, permanent-establishment and treaty issues can arise. Board process, decision-making, personnel and operating substance should match the intended structure.

## 6. Personal Income Tax - 2026

Croatian personal income tax uses local-government rates within statutory bands, so the effective rate depends on the municipality/city and income level. Social-security contributions apply separately.

## Principal personal-tax considerations

| Personal-tax component        | 2026 position                                                                                                            |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Employment / business income  | Croatian personal income tax uses local-government rates within statutory bands, so the effective rate depends on the mu |
| Dividends / investment income | Dividends and profit distributions to individuals are subject to Croatian income-tax rules and possible withholding; tre |
| Social security               | Separate rules may materially affect salary / director remuneration.                                                     |
| Treaty relief                 | Can affect residence, withholding and double taxation.                                                                   |
| Annual changes                | Thresholds and reliefs should be reconfirmed before implementation.                                                      |

The final liability depends on residence, deductions, family position, social-security classification, municipality or local taxes where relevant, and treaty relief.

### 2026 planning point

Personal tax thresholds and social-security rules should be confirmed for the taxpayer and payment type at the time remuneration is implemented.

**PERSONAL TAX** Do not use a single headline rate as a personal forecast. Residence, deductions, social contributions, family position and treaty relief can materially change the result.

### Dividends and investment income

Dividends and profit distributions to individuals are subject to Croatian income-tax rules and possible withholding; treaty relief may reduce tax for non-residents.

### Tax residence is separate from immigration

Tax residence depends on residence/home and personal/economic ties, with day-count and treaty rules relevant in cross-border cases.

## 7. Salary, director remuneration and dividends

Owner-directors commonly extract value through salary, director remuneration, dividends, pension contributions or a combination. Each route has different company, personal-tax, payroll, social-security, cash-flow and immigration consequences.

### Salary / employment remuneration

- Normally deductible for the company where commercially supportable and incurred for the business.
- Subject to payroll withholding and the applicable personal income-tax and social-security rules.
- Employer social contributions, pension and other payroll obligations may apply depending on the country and arrangement.
- A non-EEA owner must hold permission that authorises the underlying work or management activity.

### Director / management remuneration

Board or management fees require separate tax and payroll analysis. The treatment can depend on whether the individual is an employee, executive director, board member or non-resident and on any applicable treaty.

### Dividends

- Paid from distributable profits after company tax and subject to proper corporate approval.

- Not normally deductible in calculating company taxable profit.
- Domestic withholding tax may apply to dividends depending on recipient and structure.
- Dividends and profit distributions to individuals are subject to Croatian income-tax rules and possible withholding; treaty relief may reduce tax for non-residents.
- Dividends are investment returns and do not by themselves create a right to work or manage the company.

**IMMIGRATION CHECK** Changing the extraction method does not cure an immigration mismatch. Salary or management activity requires a permit that authorises the underlying work.

## 8. Combined company and shareholder illustration

This simplified example shows the company-level position before any personal tax on distribution. It is not a recommendation or a complete shareholder tax calculation.

| Stage                                | Illustrative amount                                                  |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Company taxable profit               | EUR 100,000                                                          |
| Company tax                          | EUR 10,000 (illustrative lower-rate case)                            |
| After-tax amount before distribution | EUR 90,000                                                           |
| Personal tax on distribution         | Depends on residence, dividend rules, withholding and treaty relief. |
| Net amount personally retained       | Requires case-specific calculation.                                  |

**EFFECTIVE RESULT** The combined company-and-shareholder burden cannot be stated reliably from the company-tax rate alone. This guide therefore avoids presenting a single combined effective rate as a recommendation.

### Salary versus dividend comparison

| Salary / remuneration                                           | Dividend                                                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Usually deductible for the company if properly incurred.        | Not normally deductible for the company.                    |
| Payroll tax and social contributions may apply.                 | Dividend / investment-income tax and withholding may apply. |
| May support pension / employment contribution history.          | Investment return rather than earned remuneration.          |
| Requires work permission where the owner performs the activity. | Does not itself authorise work or management.               |
| Must be commercially supportable.                               | Requires distributable reserves and corporate approval.     |

This comparison is deliberately high-level. The appropriate mix depends on company profitability, the owner's tax residence, immigration permission, pension strategy, payroll classification, treaty relief and whether profits are retained or distributed.

## 9. Recommended planning sequence

The sequence matters. Incorporating first and addressing immigration or tax residence later can create a company that the founder is not legally permitted to operate in Croatia, or can create unintended cross-border tax exposure.

1. Confirm nationality, current residence and whether an entry visa or preclearance is required for Croatia.
2. Identify the immigration route before committing to relocation, employment or active company management.
3. Test the relevant employment, Blue Card, entrepreneur, family, study or no-work route against the actual facts.
4. Define ownership, management, registered office, capital and banking arrangements for the Društvo s ograničenom odgovornošću (d.o.o.).
5. Prepare the employment file or founder business plan, funding and source-of-funds evidence.
6. Incorporate and complete company, tax, VAT, payroll and beneficial-ownership registrations.
7. Agree a compliant salary, dividend, pension and payroll strategy with Croatian advisers.
8. Review personal and company tax residence, treaty exposure, permanent establishments and continuing obligations elsewhere.
9. Complete post-arrival residence, population/tax registration and other local formalities where required.

### Documents commonly required

| Immigration and personal                      | Company and commercial                               |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Passport and civil-status documents           | Constitutional / incorporation documents             |
| Employment contract or founder-route evidence | Business plan and financial forecasts                |
| Proof of qualifications / funds / insurance   | Funding and source-of-funds evidence                 |
| Family, study or accommodation evidence       | Management, address and ownership details            |
| Tax-residence / social-security file          | Tax, VAT, payroll and beneficial-owner registrations |

DO NOT RELY ON INCORPORATION A company-registration certificate proves that the company exists. It does not prove that a non-EEA founder may enter Croatia, live there, work for the company or manage it.

## 10. Cross-border and advisory considerations

### Tax residence is separate from immigration residence

a Croatian residence permit does not by itself determine tax residence. Domestic residence tests and double-tax treaties must be analysed separately.

### Operating from another country

a Croatian company managed from abroad can create foreign permanent-establishment, payroll, social-security, VAT and company-residence issues. The owner's home country may also tax salary, director fees, dividends or capital gains.

### Remote work and foreign employers

Working physically in Croatia for a foreign employer can create local payroll, social-security or personal-tax exposure even where the employer is abroad. Treaty day-count rules are not a universal exemption.

## Regulated and professional activities

Company registration does not replace professional licences or regulatory permissions. Financial services, insurance, legal work, healthcare, recruitment, transport, food, hospitality and other regulated sectors may require separate Croatian or EU authorisation.

## Questions to resolve before proceeding

- What is the applicant's nationality and current country of tax residence?
- Will the person be employed in Croatia, run a business, or remain only a passive shareholder?
- Which immigration route actually authorises the intended activity?
- How much funding is available and can its source be documented?
- Where will company management decisions actually be taken?
- Will profits be retained, paid as salary, contributed to pension arrangements or distributed as dividends?
- Does the person have ongoing tax, company, social-security or estate-planning exposure elsewhere?

**PROFESSIONAL REVIEW** Immigration, corporate, tax, payroll, social-security and regulatory advice should be coordinated. A structure that works for tax may not satisfy immigration conditions, and a residence route may restrict the intended company role.

## About the Founder - Gary Day

### Founder and Senior Wealth Advisor

**A DISCIPLINED INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE** Gary combines military discipline with decades of experience helping internationally mobile clients navigate cross-border financial decisions.

Gary Day is the Founder and a Senior Wealth Advisor at Elysium Wealth Advisors, bringing over 25 years of international financial-services experience across the United Kingdom, Europe and the Middle East.

Gary began his professional career in the British Army before moving into financial services in 1990. That background shaped the disciplined, structured and analytical approach that continues to underpin his work in wealth advisory and financial planning.

He has held senior advisory and leadership roles within FCA-regulated firms in the UK and has extensive experience advising expatriates, internationally mobile professionals and high-net-worth individuals. His work focuses on bringing clarity and coordination to complex, multi-jurisdictional financial arrangements.

### Core areas of expertise

- Cross-border financial planning
- Estate and succession planning, including UAE wills
- Pension structuring and transfers
- Investment portfolio design and analysis
- Individual and corporate protection planning

# Gary Day

Founder and Senior Wealth Advisor



## A DISCIPLINED INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Gary combines military discipline with more than 25 years of international financial-services experience, supporting internationally mobile clients with structured cross-border planning.

*Founder profile | Elysium Wealth Advisors Group of Companies*

## Professional qualifications and specialist education

| Area                        | Background                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS | Level 4 Diploma in Financial Services; Financial Planning Certificate; CF2 Investment and Risk.                                        |
| SPECIALIST ADVICE           | Mortgage Advice; Equity Release; Long-Term Care; Level 6 Award in Pension Transfers.                                                   |
| INVESTMENT & MARKETS        | Hedge Funds, Equity Portfolio Management and Fixed Income Portfolio Management - New York Institute of Finance.                        |
| INTERNATIONAL STUDY         | Programmes through KU Leuven, HarvardX and the IMF, together with specialist Islamic banking, insurance and investment certifications. |

Gary regularly works with clients across the EU, the UAE and other international markets, supporting Elysium Wealth Advisors' commitment to bespoke, client-centred planning.

## Official sources and further information

- Croatian Ministry of the Interior - temporary stay, work and digital nomads
- Porezna uprava - corporation tax, VAT and personal tax
- START / Court Register - company formation
- Ministry of Justice and Public Administration - company law
- Croatian Employment Service - labour-market procedures
- Official sources and thresholds should be checked again immediately before any application or transaction.

### Important Disclaimer

This guide is provided for general information and client education only. It does not constitute legal, immigration, tax, accounting, investment, pension or regulatory advice, and it does not take account of any person's objectives, financial position, nationality, residence, domicile or individual circumstances. All tax figures and worked examples are illustrative only and must not be treated as personal calculations, forecasts or recommendations.

The information is based on public and official sources reviewed up to 25 August 2026. Laws, salary thresholds, occupation lists, administrative practices, tax rates and official interpretations may change. Before taking action, obtain written, case-specific advice from appropriately qualified Croatian immigration, legal, tax and accounting professionals and, where relevant, a suitably authorised financial adviser.

Particular points to reconfirm at the action date include immigration salary and funding thresholds, company-registration requirements, personal tax bands, social-security rates, dividend withholding and any treaty relief.

### About this guide

Prepared as a client education document by Elysium Wealth Advisors Group of Companies. The guide is designed to support an initial professional discussion and should be supplemented by a written, case-specific assessment.

## WhatsApp contacts

To arrange an initial discussion, contact Elysium Wealth Advisors using the most convenient regional WhatsApp number:

| Region         | WhatsApp          |
|----------------|-------------------|
| Spain / Europe | +34 674 587 950   |
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### Publication note

This guide is a general overview of Croatia residence, company formation and taxation as at 25 August 2026. It is not legal, tax or immigration advice. Rules, thresholds and administrative practice can change, and individual circumstances can materially affect the outcome. Obtain country-specific professional advice before acting.