

Speech by Dean Prof. Ivan Koprić at the opening ceremony of the renovated building of the Faculty of Law of the University of Zagreb at 3, Trg Republike Hrvatske on 18 March 2025

Dear invitees, guests and colleagues, let me extend a warm welcome to you all, in the order stated by the moderator of today's ceremony, and thank you all for coming to the celebration of the completion of the works and the opening of the fully renovated building of the Faculty of Law, University of Zagreb at number 3, Trg Republike Hrvatske.

After suffering major damage in the 2020 earthquakes, the complex and demanding works of the comprehensive renovation of this building began in July 2023 and were completed in December 2024. The contract on the allocation of non-refundable funds from the Ministry of Science, Education and Youth for the comprehensive renovation of this building provided almost 7.9 million euros, of which 6.6 million euros were used for construction works. The funds were provided by the European Union Solidarity Fund, the National Recovery and Resilience Plan under NextGenerationEU and the State Budget of the Republic of Croatia.

Originally, this was the Palace of the Croatian-Slavonic Economic Society, built in 1877/78 as a two-story building in the Neo-Renaissance style. There was an exhibition pavilion on each side of the building. The facades of the exhibition halls have three arched semicircular openings, which were restored to their original state with glass panes. The pavilions, which only have a ground floor, are connected to the main part of the building by corridors. The third floor of the building was added between 1922 and 1924. The building, which is the work of the architect Franjo Klein, is located within the Zagreb Green Horseshoe and represents an individually protected cultural property. The building consists of a basement, ground floor, three floors and an attic, with a net usable area of 2,185 m², with the gross developed area of 3,195 m².

The most difficult part of the comprehensive renovation was the refurbishment of the roof, the repairs of the basement and the restoration works. In addition, the building was structurally strengthened, the facades were renovated, a large part of the installations were replaced, a new elevator was installed, leading from the basement to the attic, and a small green space was laid out, which adds to the beauty of the renovated building.

The main contractor was the company MDK GRAĐEVINAR d.o.o. from Veliko Trgovišće (director Krunoslav Pavlinić). The contractor of the restoration works was TERRACOTTA d.o.o. from Zagreb with Jelena Mavrić Varga as the main restorer. The main designer for the preparation of the design and technical documentation for the comprehensive renovation of the building was STUDIO KUŠAN d.o.o. (Tomislav Kušan), and the chief supervisory engineer was Igor Hranilović from the company INFO-G from Zagreb.

The building that we are opening today is the temporary headquarters of the faculty. In addition to the administration office and faculty professional services, the building houses a

reading room and an IT room for students, a lending library, four lecture halls with a capacity of 230 seats, and about forty teachers' offices.

I would like to take this opportunity to mention that, with the support of the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the Ministry of Science, Education and Youth, we are currently carrying out a comprehensive renovation of two more faculty buildings, the ones at 4, Ćirilometodska and at 51, Nazorova, and we are preparing project documentation and obtaining the necessary approvals and permits for the construction of the Heritage Library building on the site of the current smaller ground-floor building in the courtyard, which is one of the most important infrastructural scientific and development projects of the Faculty of Law.

Until the completion of the comprehensive renovation of the other buildings, we are working in extremely challenging conditions, which, however, does not distinguish us from other larger faculties whose buildings were also damaged by the 2020 earthquakes.

In addition to the Government of the Republic of Croatia, the Prime Minister himself, and the Ministry of Science, Education and Youth, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Ministries of Physical Planning, Construction and State Property, Justice, Administration and Digital Transformation, Labor, Pension System, Family and Social Policy, the Central Agency for Financing and Contracting of Programmes and Projects of the European Union, as well as all other bodies, institutions and individuals who provided assistance and support to the Faculty of Law in the challenging conditions of post-earthquake reconstruction. I would like to thank all our students, the teaching staff and other employees for their understanding of the circumstances in which we work. I would like to thank all my colleagues from other faculties and academies and the Rector's Office our university, as well as other universities in Croatia for lending us their premises and providing professional and other support. We owe our gratitude to many others, too many to mention on this occasion.

Allow me to conclude by highlighting three lessons that we have learned at the faculty over the past five years, from the devastating earthquake of 22 March 2020 to the present moment.

First of all, we have learned to appreciate the premises and other infrastructure of the faculty and have realized its value, not only in terms of use but also in financial terms. We are grateful to the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the Ministry of Science, Education and Youth for the significant non-refundable financial resources, owing to which the faculty now disposes of structurally renovated, safe and high-quality premises for teaching, scientific research and professional work.

Secondly, in the critical situation in which we have been working in recent years, we as a faculty have shown resilience and adaptability. The new conditions have brought about stronger ties and institutional renewal. Holding classes at about fifteen different locations and placing various parts of our administration at another dozen locations in the city has

brought further integration, with the help of digitalization and the possibility of performing some activities online. We want to continue in this direction, connecting even more closely with our European and global academic and scientific research community.

Thirdly, we have once again become aware of our social role and responsibility. Next year, the Faculty of Law in Zagreb will celebrate 250 years of continuous operation. It has been a long series of decades with many challenges, crises and pressures. Our connection with the academic and university community and our strong institutional anchoring in Croatian society have ensured the continuity of higher education in law, and thus the bringing up of professionals for critical social professions that protect citizens' rights and work for the common good, promote social solidarity and the success of the judiciary and the public sector, building key state and public institutions.

Finally, this Saturday, on the fifth anniversary of the earthquake, we will open the doors of this beautiful building to all citizens. We will show them all its features and tell them about the progress of the renovation, including many interesting details. I cannot help but express my regret that the doors of the building where our headquarters used to be, which many recognize as the Faculty of Law building, the one at 14, Trg Republike Hrvatske, will still be closed on that day, because its renovation has not even begun five years after the earthquake.

Thank you all for coming and for the support you have shown to the Faculty of Law of the University of Zagreb.