



**Speech of Deputy Speaker of the Croatian Parliament Željko Reiner at a Ceremony on the occasion of the conferment of the Order of Diplomatic Service Merit Gwang-Hwa Medal**

**13 January 2020**

Esteemed President of the Constitutional Court Dr. Miroslav Šeparović,  
Your excellency Ambassador of Republic of Korea Mr. Dong Chan Kim,  
Dear friends, my dear family,

First I would like to express my deepest thanks to the President of the Republic of Korea Mr. Moon Jae-in for awarding me with a rare honour, one of the highest civilian decorations that a foreign national can get by the Republic of Korea – the Gwanghwa order of merit 1<sup>st</sup> grade. This decoration is given for „outstanding meritorious services in the interest of enhancing national prestige and promoting amity with allies“. Indeed, our two nations and states are connected with true friendship. Although geographically very far, there are many similarities between our two nations confirming the Korean proverb which says „The crayfish sides with the crab.“ I would also like to express my gratitude to the former ambassador of Republic of Korea in Croatia, his excellency Mr. Park Won-sup for initiating the process of awarding me with this highest honour as well as the present ambassador his excellency Mr. Dong Chan Kim, who was most persistent and persuasive that I should be awarded with this order of merit and to whom I direct my deepest thanks.

I have tried to further deepen the existing friendship between our two countries, Republic of Korea and Croatia for a number of years in many ways, among others participating in the Croatian-Korean business club activities, promoting Korean culture and particularly literature, up to visiting Republic of Korea and meeting the highest Korean officials only one day after the historical meeting between president Moon and president of North Korea Kim Jong-un as the first representative of a foreign state. All these prove how true is the Korean proverb „Where there’s a will, there’s a way “. In all my actions I always had on mind that I should be proactive and not just wait that some things happen but without rushing as another Korean proverb says „Don’t drink the kimchi soup first.“ To succeed in this, you have to have affection for the friendly country and its people, learn about its history, culture and mentality



of its inhabitants, and have a lot of love. As Korean screenwriter Ha Myung-hee wrote in her famous medical drama *Doctors*: “I’m going to go where my heart takes me, even if it’s a messy road.” So did I. I went where my heart has taken me in my relations with Korea and Koreans knowing how right was the poet Yun Dong-ju when he wrote: „And I must walk the road that has been given to me“. I had to walk the road that has been given to me as well, and therefore I tried to invest all my efforts in establishing even better relations between Croatia and Republic of Korea and promoting amity between our two countries. I hope that this decoration is a sign that this has been recognized and that I have succeeded in this, to be moderate, at least to a certain extent. I can only promise that I will continue working on bringing our two nations as close as possible in the future as well.

Thank you very much.