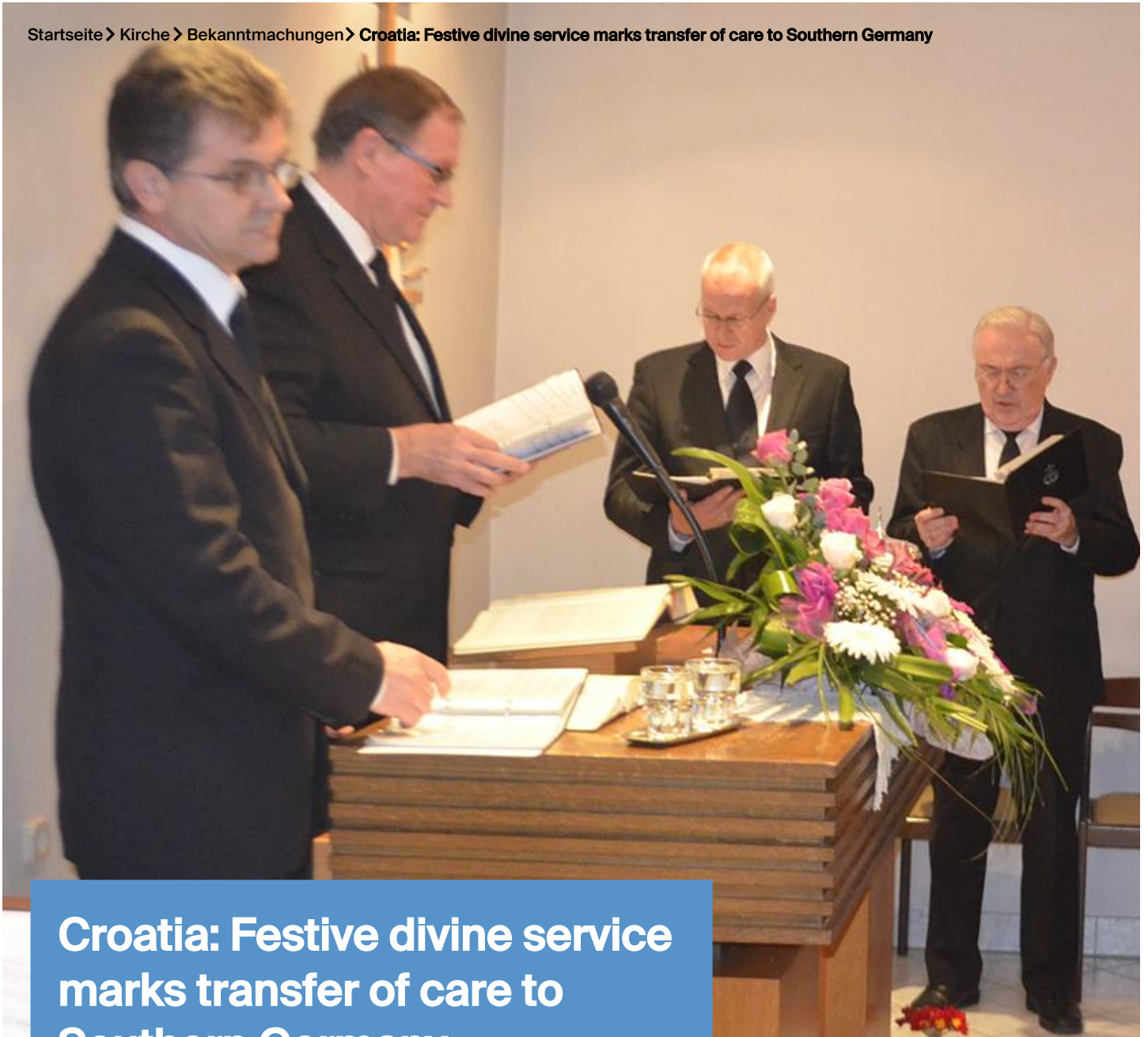




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## Croatia: Festive divine service marks transfer of care to Southern Germany

Varaždin / Zagreb. As previously announced, the pastoral and administrative care of the New Apostolic congregations in Croatia has been assigned to the District Apostle district of Southern Germany. The official transfer of care took place last weekend. To this end, the two District Apostles—Markus Fehlbaum from Switzerland and Michael Ehrich from Southern Germany—each conducted divine services, one of them in the congregation of Varaždin and the other in Zagreb.

District Apostle Fehlbaum made the change official in a divine service in Varaždin on Saturday, 15 March 2014. A day later, on Sunday, 16 March, District Apostle Ehrich conducted a divine service in the congregation of Zagreb. In addition to the members of the congregation, the advisor to the Croatian president was also present. Beyond that, the service was attended by many guests, all the ministers of

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the district, as well as the ministers from Austria who had seen to the pastoral care of the country's members over the previous years. Television and radio stations were also on hand to capture the event of this transfer to the new District Apostle district, which had been announced in the media in the days preceding it.

### **Switzerland and Austria previously responsible**

The history of the District Church of Croatia has been unsettled and interesting. In 1947, a New Apostolic sister from Germany moved to the city of Kriševci. She and other church members who came to the country over the course of the years were at first cared for by a Priest from Slovenia. The first divine services took place once a month in Zagreb. Right from the start it was the Apostles from Austria who saw to the needs of the members in the nearby land. Many of their names are still remembered with gratitude to this day. Since the early 1980s, Apostle Rudolf Kainz had been responsible for the affairs of the New Apostolic Church in the country. He also ordained the first local Priests for the congregations of Zagreb and Zadar. Over the ensuing years, new congregations such as Varaždin and Darda also came into being. Today the New Apostolic Church in Croatia numbers 151 members. There are four congregations and seven missions. Seven ministers provide for the pastoral wellbeing of the members there.

### **Similar languages and cultures**

Already in December of last year, District Apostle Markus Fehlbaum informed his lead ministers in Switzerland and Austria in particular about the upcoming change. In his notification letter he wrote as follows: "For many years now, the District Churches of Serbia, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Bosnia-Herzegovina have been in the care of the New Apostolic Church of Southern Germany. The members in these countries either have the same or very similar languages and cultures as the country of Croatia, which is in our care. Now the fellowship and faith of the members in this region is to be strengthened by this merger. For this reason, Croatia will in future also belong to the same District Apostle district as the aforementioned District Churches."

### **Further expansion desired**

In the view of District Apostle Michael Ehrich, further expansion would be desirable in Croatia. At the same time, he looks back in gratitude upon the often difficult work of the pioneers who had so strongly identified with their Church. "It was only because of this that they were able to make things move and bring such sacrifices," he said. "They put aside their own interests and, in many cases, dedicated their whole life to the Lord and His cause. He expressed the desire that such attitudes would also apply to future endeavours in the Lord's work in this country. "In the process it is important to focus more on the possibilities and opportunities than on the difficulties," he noted.

The New Apostolic Church in Croatia also has a website of its own at [www.nacrkva.hr](http://www.nacrkva.hr).

20 March 2014



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