

PRESS RELEASE

## Croatian retailer Studenac to open new distribution center next year

*New facility near Zagreb will eventually create around 500 new jobs, as top local retailer by store count bolsters its logistics network to support continued growth*

**Zagreb, June 18, 2024** – Studenac, the fastest growing food retailer in Croatia in terms of revenue over the past five years, agreed to build a new distribution center near the country's capital Zagreb that will open next year, deploying state-of-the-art solutions to enhance the efficiency and capacity of its logistics network, ensuring shorter delivery times to stores and improving collaboration with suppliers.

The new center in Velika Gorica will cover 36,000 square meters and eventually create approximately 500 new jobs. Studenac currently has a central distribution center in Dugopolje, near the coastal city of Split, which supports cross-dock operations in Zadar, as well as semi cross-docks in Dubrovnik, Pazin, Zagreb and Kutina.

“Since the change in the ownership happened in 2018, Studenac has evolved from a local trader to one of the nationwide leaders in the retail sector in Croatia,” said **Dragan Baškarad**, a member of the Studenac Management Board. “As we implement our growth strategy, we continue to invest across our business to ensure we continue meeting our customers’ expectations for high quality and fresh products. We expect that the solutions we’re deploying in the new center will ensure the greatest possible efficiency all along our supply chain.”

Studenac has more than tripled its store network in almost six years, expanding throughout the country via a combination of organic growth and acquisitions, and the company sees potential for further growth based on its unique proximity retail concept.

The location in Velika Gorica offers excellent road connections. It is intended that the facility will feature a new Warehouse Management System (WMS) to integrate all operations, and an automatic replenishment system that will optimize stocks in the entire network. Studenac plans to embed environmentally friendly solutions including a comprehensive waste management system and solar panels on the roof.

“The construction of this distribution center is another significant step forward in our operations,” said Studenac CEO **Michal Senczuk**. “The new facility is scheduled to begin operations in the second quarter 2025 with the aim to boost efficiency all along our supply chain, while at the same time improving the quality of the product offering in our stores. Logistics is one of the company's competitive advantages, and we intend to use it as a foundation to further develop our network, continuing to roll out our concept of proximity stores.”

This project is being implemented in cooperation with the real estate company Log Expert and with the support of consultants from Graphene Partners, which specializes in supply chain management advisory services.

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**About Studenac:**

Studenac is a Croatian retail chain established in 1991 in Omiš. Since 2018, when it embarked on a comprehensive business transformation marked by numerous acquisitions and organic growth throughout the country, it has become the largest food retailer by number of stores in Croatia.

Studenac prides itself on convenient and accessible stores that meet all of its customers' daily needs, reflecting its dedication through a distinctive single-format customer proposition that is "I sitno i bitno" ("both small and essential").

With continuous growth and innovation based on its unique and single format of proximity stores, Studenac has established itself as the only cutting-edge player operating in this part of the Croatian market. With digitalization firmly embedded in its DNA, Studenac is one of the fastest-growing players in the expanding Croatian grocery sector. Over the past six years, the company managed to expand its network by over 1,000 stores, having completed eight significant acquisitions amounting to over 650 stores, and opening nearly 400 stores organically.

By the end of 2023, the company managed over 1,250 stores across Croatia and had over 6,000 employees. Studenac has established a strong presence in local communities, from bustling urban centers like Zagreb and Split to rural regions with lower population density.

Since 2018, Studenac has been owned by a fund managed by Enterprise Investors, one of the largest private equity firms in Central and Eastern Europe.