



Completed National Reports and National Strategies for the Social Dimension should be sent to the Bologna Secretariat by email (secr@bologna2009benelux.org) no later than

1 November 2008.

PART I

BOLOGNA PROCESS TEMPLATE FOR NATIONAL REPORTS: 2007-2009

Notes:

BFUG members are strongly encouraged to consult other stakeholders about the contents of their National Report.

Please complete your National Report in English using this template (shaded areas) and return it to the Secretariat by email. Where appropriate, please include precise web references to legislation or other documentation. Please add comments as appropriate under each question to describe the current situation. Please try to keep text brief, while aiming to answer all questions comprehensively.

National Reports will be posted on the Bologna website in their original form.

Information from National Reports will form the basis of the Stocktaking Report to be presented to Ministers when they meet in April 2009.

Details

| | |
|---|--|
| Country | Croatia |
| Date | 9 January 2009 |
| BFUG member (one name only) Position | Mr. Luka Juros, Directorate for Higher Education, Ministry of Science, Education and Sports Acting Head of Department for the Development of Higher Education |

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|----------------------------|--|
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1. Main developments since London 2007

Please describe the important developments relating to the Bologna Process, including legislative reforms and changes in institutional structures, since the London meeting in 2007.

In the previous stocktaking report (2005-2007), the Republic of Croatia reported about the restructuring of all degree programmes in 2005, the introduction of a new system of recognition in the same year, and the increase in the activities of the Agency for Science and Higher Education in its external quality assurance role. The main developments in the Bologna Process in Croatia since that time are the following.

In April 2007 the Croatian Parliament passed Amendments to the Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education which introduced two significant changes to the system of incentives for investments from enterprises into the higher education sector. Firstly, the definition of persons and legal entities who can apply for state funding of scientific projects was broadened. Secondly, a system of tax reductions was introduced in which scientific research allows for a reduction of tax obligations. Both of these incentives encourage the collaboration between the higher education institutions, research institutes and the private enterprises. This also facilitates the

commercialization of scientific research and the entry of private funding into higher education.

The Croatian Government adopted the Baseline for the Croatian Qualifications Framework in July 2007. The Baseline determines the glossary of terms, outlines the CROQF aims and principles (which follow the guidelines in the proposals and discussions for the Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA and the European Qualifications Framework) and sets out the credit ranges and qualifications gained. The national committee for the establishment and implementation of the CROQF, which was established in September 2007, includes all relevant stakeholders (among others are the representatives of the academia, the employers and the trade unions). A 5-year working plan was adopted and in April 2008 a special Operations team was assembled for the development of draft documents.

The EU/CoE/UNESCO format of the diploma supplement was established in Croatia through the Ordinance on the Content of Diplomas and Diploma Supplements in January 2005. Amendments to this Ordinance that came into force in April 2007 ensure that all students graduating from the reformed Bologna study programmes at Croatian higher education institutions from 2007 will receive their diploma supplements automatically, free of charge, in Croatian and English and in the EU/CoE/UNESCO format. The Ministry of Science, Education and Sports (MSES) issued a nation-wide handbook in July 2008.

In July 2007 the new Act on Student Council and other Student Organizations was passed. The Act reformed the system of student representation in Croatia and allowed stronger student oversight over the functioning of their representatives. The new Act also stipulates that all higher education institutions shall have a student ombudsman. The student ombudsman is appointed by the student representative body and has the authority to discuss student complaints with the management of the institution, advise students on their statutory and legal rights and assist them in any disciplinary cases.

The Act on Academic and Professional Titles and Academic Degree was passed in September 2007 and established an overarching system of titles for students graduating from Bologna study programmes, as well as provided a framework for comparison of pre-Bologna and Bologna titles. Following the publishing of the list of

all new academic and professional titles and degrees by the Rectors' Council, the higher education institutions have been setting up the rules and procedures for this equalization process.

The incentive for polycentric development of higher education has continued in Croatia since 2007, with the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports (MSES) and the Development and Employment Fund of the Republic of Croatia investing 8 million euro to support the establishment and development of professional study programmes outside of traditional higher education centres.

The Agency for Mobility and the EU Programmes was established in 2007 with a mandate of implementing the EU Lifelong Learning Programme (a part of which is ERASMUS programme for higher education mobility). The Agency is also providing support for the ECTS coordinators at higher education institutions.

2. Partnership

Please describe the structure which oversees the implementation of the Bologna Process in your country.

The three-dimensions oversight of the implementation of the Bologna Process that was reported in the 2005-2007 period has been continued in this period as well. The three dimensions are: operational coordination, stakeholder information dissemination, and wider information dissemination.

Operational coordination includes activities related to the development of legislation or bylaws. This process is coordinated either by the MSES which, in consultation with the main stakeholders, introduces legislative and administrative changes at the national level, and the Croatian Rectors' Conference through its Committee for the Implementation of the Bologna Process which coordinates joint activities and provides guidance to higher education institutions.

The National Bologna Follow-up Group consists of 21 members and includes representatives of Croatian universities, polytechnics and schools of professional higher education, trade unions, the Croatian Student Council, the business sector, the National Council for Higher Education, the Agency for Science and Higher Education and the nongovernmental organizations active in the higher education sector. The Group discusses avenues for further change and in this way serves as an advisory body to the MSES on further activities within the Bologna Process. It also disseminates information among the main stakeholders. As part of the reform

process, the functioning of the National Bologna Follow-up Group and its role is currently being re-evaluated.

The Tempus projects "Moving ahead with the Bologna Process in Croatia" and "Furtherance of Bologna Process in Croatia" which worked on information dissemination about the Bologna Process finished at the end of 2007. As part of the projects, a booklet about the Bologna Process for employers was published conjointly with the Croatian Chamber of Economy.

In March 2008 the national group of Higher education reform experts was founded with support from the European Commission. The experts held three conferences in Rijeka, Split and Zagreb, promoting and informing the stakeholders about elements of the Bologna reforms. It is notable that at the Zagreb conference, a special presentation and training was held for new student ombudspersons by the Austrian student ombudsman.

a) Does your country have a national working group for Bologna follow-up ¹

Yes No

b) Does your national Bologna follow-up group include representatives of

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Ministry | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Rectors' conference | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Academic staff | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Students | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Staff trade unions | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| National Quality Assurance Agency | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Employers | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

Other (please specify) Other representatives in the national Bologna follow-up group include representatives of the National Employment Bureau, the representatives of a postgraduate student nongovernmental organization, and representatives of the NGO Institute for the Development of Education.

c) Does your country have a Bologna promoters' group²

Yes No

d) Does your national Bologna promoters' group include representatives of

| | | |
|---------------------|---|--|
| Ministry | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Rectors' conference | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Academic staff | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

¹ A group that develops policy proposals for implementing the Bologna Process

² A group that supports/advises HEIs on implementation of the Bologna Process

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Students | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Staff trade unions | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| National Quality Assurance Agency | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Employers | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (please specify) _____ | | |

Please add any additional comments if necessary:

The first Bologna promoters' group was founded in Croatia in 2004 as part of the Tempus project Cro4Bologna, which was coordinated by the University of Zagreb (<http://www.unizg.hr/tempusprojects/Cro4Bologna/prva.htm>). The project disseminated information and provided advice about the Bologna process during the introduction of the restructured study programmes in 2005. However, after the completion of the project the work of the Bologna promoters was largely taken over by the national Bologna follow-up group.

The work of the first Bologna promoters' group has been continued through the work of higher education reform experts, which were established in March 2008 with support from the European Commission. This group includes five of the previous Bologna promoters, and thus ensures continuation of previous expertise and work.

DEGREE SYSTEM

3. Stage of implementation of the first and second cycle

a) Please describe the progress made towards introducing the first and second cycles.

In the 2005/06 academic year, following an evaluation of all study programmes offered in Croatia, three main cycles of study were introduced and students could no longer enrol in the pre-Bologna programmes.

After the Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education was passed in 2003, all higher education institutions were legally obliged to restructure their study programmes in accordance with the principles of the Bologna Process and apply them for accreditation to the MSES. The MSES requested a recommendation from the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE). The NCHE appointed expert committees which, in cooperation with the Agency for Science and Higher

Education, performed evaluations and submitted reports. A draft report was sent to the HEIs which could provide comments and submit further clarifications and additions. The National Council then provided a final evaluation of the proposed study programme and recommended to the minister to issue or deny an accreditation.

b) Please give the percentage of the total number of all³ students below doctoral level enrolled in the two cycle degree system in 2008/09.

| Total number of all students below doctoral level | Number enrolled in the two cycle degree system in 2008/09 ⁴ | % of all students enrolled in the two cycle degree system in 2008/09 |
|---|--|--|
| 138,026 (2007/2008) | 104,740 (2007/2008) | 75.8% (2007/2008) |

Important note: The number of students above is quoted from the Central Statistics Bureau (report is available at: http://www.dzs.hr/Hrv/Publication/2008/8-1-7_1h2008.htm). This number does not include the students in the so-called "apsolventi" status, i.e. students who have finished all coursework, but who have not yet completed all their examinations and other course requirements. By law, these students have still got the full-time student status with all student rights. The official national statistics have not been collecting these figures in the past, and their collection started in 2008.

The data for 2008/09 were not available at the time of the preparation of this report; they will normally be available in spring 2009.

c) Please add comments which accurately describe the current situation regarding implementation of the two cycle system in your country:

The two cycle system is completely implemented in Croatia. The major task ahead of the system at this point is the curriculum reform, including the correct implementation and linking of the expected learning outcomes with the student workload (and thus the allocation of ECTS credits). This is a task which overlaps

³ "All" = all students who could be involved in 2-cycle system i.e. NOT those in doctoral programmes and NOT those in short HE programmes. *NB Students of ALL study fields are taken into account*

⁴ If countries have more recent data available after November 1, they can provide an update but no later than January 15, 2009

with the development of the Croatian Qualifications Framework, and will be supported by external and internal quality assurance procedures.

4. Stage of implementation of the third cycle

Please describe the progress made towards implementing doctoral studies as the third Bologna cycle.

Please include:

- the percentage of doctoral candidates following structured doctoral programmes including both taught courses and independent research
- the normal length of full-time doctoral studies
- other elements⁵ apart from independent research that are included in doctoral study programmes
- the supervisory and assessment procedures for doctoral studies
- information on whether doctoral studies are included in your country's qualifications framework and linked to learning outcomes
- information on whether interdisciplinary training and the development of transferable skills are integrated in doctoral studies
- information on whether credit points are used in measuring workload in doctoral studies.
- Information on the status of the doctoral students (students, early stage researchers, both)

After the evaluation of the first and second cycle of Bologna structured study programmes in 2005, the National Council for Higher Education began with the evaluation of third cycle study programmes. It is no longer possible for new students in Croatia to enrol into the pre-Bologna third cycle programmes. The only exception are students who graduated from or are completing the pre-Bologna research master programmes (magistarski znanstveni studij in Croatian), who can proceed into the all-but-dissertation status and complete their third cycle programme in accordance with universities' regulations of this matter. By law, this right will expire in the year 2011.

In 2007/08 academic year there were 71 third cycle study programmes offered in Croatia. The doctoral studies that were aligned with the Bologna process last for three years and a study programme normally includes both taught courses (usually 20-30%) and independent research (usually 70-80%). ECTS credits are

⁵ E.g. taught courses in the chosen discipline, other taught courses, teaching activities (if these are required as part of doctoral studies), etc.

also normally assigned in the doctoral studies, but higher education institutions are free to determine the number of credits necessary for the achievement of the all-but-dissertation status.

The status of doctoral students in Croatia is that of both students and early stage researchers. All doctoral students follow a structured study programme and they are expected to conduct an original piece of research as part of their studies. In addition, a significant number of doctoral students are also employed at HEIs and research institutes as teaching assistants (asistenti in Croatian) or junior researchers (znanstveni novaci in Croatian).

Most third cycle programmes include interdisciplinary training and the development of transferable skills. Students are normally required to deliver in-class or conference presentations and publish a number of texts as part of their doctoral programme. In addition, all doctoral students who are employed at higher education institutions as junior researchers or teaching assistants also teach in first or second cycle programmes. There is a need to strengthen the teaching of transferable skills as part of doctoral programmes.

Normally no compulsory preparatory courses are needed to embark on doctoral studies.

The supervisory and assessment procedures are an integral part of the doctoral studies. Supervision is conducted through the work of an individual mentor with a student, while assessment is done by an expert committee in which the mentor is a member.

Doctoral studies have been included in the proposal for the Croatian Qualification Framework (CROQF) as the final, eighth level, and in the final document on the CROQF they will be, like all other levels, linked to learning outcomes.

5. Relationship between higher education and research

a) Please describe the main trends in the role of higher education institutions in research in your country.

Scientific and research activities in Croatia are carried out within an institutional system that consists of five types of institutions: (a) public (state) institutes; (b) institutions of higher education; (c) other corporate bodies like the Croatian

Academy of Sciences and Arts and health care institutions; (d) independent institutes; and (e) corporate industrial institutes. The first three types of institutions make up the state or public sectors of R&D, while the corporate in-house institutes and independent institutes form the private business sector of R&D. Research activities in Croatia are mainly carried out by the public research sector, which consists of seven universities and 26 public institutes. Higher education institutions contributed with over 63% of research papers published in Croatia in 2007.

Higher education institutions play a crucial role in the implementation of the research policy Action Plan 2007-2010 (the document is available in English from: <http://public.mzos.hr/Default.aspx?sec=2193>). The trends of their role can be summarized as follows:

- to intensify the application of quantitative methods and international statistical indicators in the evaluation of science policy. The Action plan identifies 23 main items in the present R&D system and outlines the targets that should be achieved by 2010 to overcome gaps.
- the integration of Lisbon agenda goals into national science and technology policy, especially in terms of increasing investment in R&D and balancing private and public investment. This trend is especially pronounced after the full membership of Croatia in the EU framework programmes since 1 January 2006.
- the strengthening of the commercialization of research results, knowledge transfer and innovation-based entrepreneurship. The most recent initiative for further development of the innovation system is the foundation of the National Innovation System Council (NISC) of the MSES, inaugurated by the Action plan.
- closer cooperation of government bodies in the planning and implementation of science and technology policy. The Government of Croatia adopted in April 2008 the establishment of the two high-level government bodies for science and technology development – the Strategic Council for Science and Technology (SVEZNATE) and the National Innovation System Council of MSES (VNIS).

b) Please outline any measures to improve co-operation between higher education institutions and other private and public institutions that undertake research. Please include:

- percentage of GDP spent on research

- from public funds
- from private funds
- total annual national research expenditure (expressed in national currency)
 - from public funds
 - from private funds
- percentage of research carried out in higher education institutions (in terms of funding)
- details of the funding mechanisms for doctoral students in your country

MSES is pillar institution for creating and implementing state policy in the area of science, technology and higher education. The substantive part of budget resources for R&D is distributed by the MSES through the programme Research Projects, intended to support all fields of science regardless of thematic area and type of research.

The gross domestic expenditure for R&D (GERD) in Croatia in 2007 was HRK 2.553b or approximately €348.8M (R&D intensity amount to 0.93% of GDP). As reported for 2007, the majority of GERD, or 59% (HRK 1.512b or approximately €206M), is coming from the government while the private (business) sector contributes 41% (HRK 1.038 or approximately €141.7M). Public-sector expenditures on R&D amount to 0.62% of GDP while the private sector spent much less, about 0.38% of GDP.

The total budget of the MSES in 2007 for scientific activities amounted to HRK858m (approximately €117,2m), amounting to 8% of the total government budget. The budget for research projects amounted to €18.4M in 2007 (increase 3, 4% from 2006).

Government finances in 2007: 77.3% of university research and 79.3% of public institutes' research while the business sector finances a small portion of university research (10.1%) and that of public institutes (5.1%). In addition, from 2004 to 2007 over 5,300 new jobs have been created in science and all levels of education, of which 1,400 have been opened in science and an additional 1,280 solely for new junior researchers. This is the largest recorded employment increase in these systems to date.

The “Junior researchers programme” is launched and managed by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports (MSES). The main aim of the programme is to

increase the number of young researchers in science and higher education institutions and provide them with training. The programme includes old pre-Bologna master's and PhD students employed at scientific institutions as research/teaching assistants.

The Programme consists of three main components, as follows:

- Support for new posts for junior researchers in science and higher education institutions,
- Scholarships for junior researchers for pre-Bologna Master and Doctor of Science programmes,
- Securing funds for their accommodation e.g. leasing apartments in special residential buildings in Zagreb and favourable loans for apartment purchasing.

Owing to the Young researchers programme the number of young scientists has increased significantly in the 10-year period, from 915 in 1996 to 2,942 in 2007. Regularly, almost 72% of the young researchers (2006-2007) are located at universities. About 22% are at public institutes, while the remaining researchers (6%) are affiliated with institutions like research units at hospitals, the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts and private industrial institutes.

- c) Is there any tracking system to follow the further career of doctoral graduates?
Yes No If Yes, please specify:

The system of career support services is currently being developed at higher education institutions in Croatia.

6. Access⁶ and admission to the next cycle

Describe the arrangements for access between the first and second cycles and between the second and third cycles.

6.1 Access and admission between the first and second cycles

⁶ Access as defined in the Lisbon Recognition Convention: "Access: the right of qualified candidates to apply and be considered for admission to higher education."

Please indicate:

a) the percentage of first cycle qualifications that give access to the second cycle

All first cycle qualifications give access to the second cycle (100%).

b) any first cycle qualifications that do not give access to the second cycle (please specify)

There are no such qualifications.

c) any special requirements for access to a second cycle programme in the same field of studies: *please tick whether graduates must:*

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|--|---|
| sit entrance exam | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | In some cases <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| complete additional courses | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | In some cases <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| have work experience | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | In some cases <input type="checkbox"/> |

If the answer to the last point is yes, please specify what type of work experience is required:

d) any further special requirements for access to a second cycle programme in the same field of studies

There are no requirements for transfer from university first cycle programme to professional second cycle programme, but the universities autonomously determine conditions for admission to university second cycle programme after the completion of professional first cycle programme. Universities may set additional courses and difference exams as requirements for students who are transferring from professional to university studies, and these courses usually focus on the development of research skills or theory-based knowledge.

e) to which students the above special requirements apply (*please tick*):

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| all students | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| holders of particular first cycle qualifications | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| students of the same field coming from other HEIs | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

f) which of the requirements apply to students coming from other fields of studies (*please tick*):

| | | | |
|--------------------|------------------------------|--|---|
| entrance exam | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | In some cases <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| additional courses | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | In some cases <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| work experience | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | In some cases <input type="checkbox"/> |

6.2 Access and admission between the second and third cycles

Please indicate:

- a) the percentage of second cycle qualifications that give access to the third cycle

All second cycle university qualifications give access to the third cycle, but holders of second cycle professional qualifications have got to pass additional courses and examinations to prepare them for participation in a research study programme. The percentage of second cycle qualifications that give access to the third cycle is thus 85%.

- b) any second cycle qualifications that do not give access to the third cycle (please specify)

Second cycle professional qualifications (15% of all second cycle programmes) do not give automatic access to the third cycle, requiring students who wish to continue their studies to complete additional coursework at universities.

- c) any measures planned to remove obstacles between cycles

Currently, there are under preparation amendments to the Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education. Regarding the question of access and admission between the second and third cycles, this is still to be discussed with the higher education institutions.

7. Employability of graduates/ cooperation with employers

a) What measures are being taken to enhance the employability of graduates with bachelor qualifications? Please include the most recent statistical data on the employment status of graduates of all cycles.

If your higher education institutions also provide professional bachelor programmes, please provide employability data for both types of bachelors separately

The Republic of Croatia reformed all its tertiary education programmes according to the three-cycle system in 2005. As a result, the first complete cohort of first cycle graduates are expected to leave their higher education institutions during the second half of 2008, and the first comprehensive statistical information about their employability prospects will not be available before the academic year 2009/2010.

As part of the TEMPUS SCM project Furtherance of Bologna Process in Croatia, a survey was conducted in cooperation with the Croatian Chamber of Economy about the expectations of business from graduates holding bachelor qualifications. Based on this survey, a Bologna process handbook for employers was published at the end of 2007.

A national employability conference was held in July 2008 with over 300 participants representing all stakeholders relevant to employability of highly educated persons. The conference presented the Bologna Process reforms, answered the more prominent questions identified in the Tempus project survey and presented the national-level policy changes to improve the employability of Bologna Process graduates.

In July 2008 a reformed national regulation was passed that aligned all civil service employment regulations with the Bologna Process academic and professional qualifications.

Also in July 2008 a national guidelines were published for the issuance of the diploma supplement document. The guidelines specifically built on the Bologna Process ECTS discussions from the end of 2007 and emphasized the relevance of the description of learning outcomes for the increase in employability of graduates.

The MSES is currently developing a handbook for employers with a detailed system for comparing the old and the new qualifications system and guidelines for the establishment of new employment qualification requirements.

In general, there is need to improve the systems for monitoring career paths of graduated students.

b) To what extent there is a dialogue in your country between higher education institutions and employers on:

- curriculum design, work placements and international experience
Significant Some A little None
- accreditation/quality assurance
Significant Some A little None
- university governance

Significant Some A little None
c) Are first cycle graduates able to pursue careers in the public service on an equal footing with other graduates?

Yes No In some cases

d) Have you aligned recruitment procedures and career structures in the public service to take account of the Bologna changes?

Yes No In some cases

If no, or in some cases only, please explain the current situation:

8. Implementation of national qualifications framework

Please answer the questions below. Please add comments which accurately describe the current situation in your country.

a) Has the national qualifications framework been prepared⁷?

Yes No

Comment At the beginning of 2006 the MSES formed a working group which began preparations for development of the Croatian Qualifications Framework (CROQF). A proposal for the CROQF was completed and during November and December 2006 it was presented to and discussed with all the relevant stakeholders at three national conferences. Based on the work of this working group, the Croatian Government adopted the Baseline for the Croatian Qualifications Framework in July 2007.

The CROQF is comprised of eight levels, with additional four sublevels which were introduced to address the particularities of the Croatian education system. Levels six, seven and eight correspond to the three cycles in the overarching Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA. The levels have been described through credit ranges and qualifications gained after the completion of studies within a certain level. The Baseline determines the glossary of terms, outlines the CROQF aims and principles (which follow the guidelines in the proposals and discussions for the Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA and the European Qualifications Framework) as well as the mentioned credit ranges and qualifications. The national committee for establishing and implementing the CROQF was established in September 2007. All relevant stakeholders are represented in the committee, including the academia, representatives of the employers and representatives of the trade unions. The national committee established an operational team consisting of educational experts, whose task it is to build the description of competences (in the wide sense of the term) and define the general learning outcomes for each level of the CROQF. In December 2008 the National Committee adopted the generic descriptors for all CROQF levels, and started a national consultation process which is opened until the

⁷ A national framework of qualifications compatible with the overarching framework of qualifications of the EHEA

end of January 2009. The National Committee also approved the proposal for setting up 26 Sector Working Groups, as well as their role and duties in the design of qualifications standards.

The web site of the CROQF was developed and is available online from the web site of the Croatian Government at <http://hko.vlada.hr>.

b) Does the framework or proposed framework include generic descriptors for each cycle based on learning outcomes and competences?

Yes No

Comment The operational team of the CROQF is now defining the common standards and descriptions for all levels, which will serve as a basis for development of detailed descriptions for all qualifications based on measurable learning outcomes and competences. The subgroup within the Agency for Vocational Education has already proposed descriptors for and key competences for the first four levels of the CROQF. In December 2008 the National Committee adopted the generic descriptors for all CROQF levels, and started a national consultation process which is opened until the end of January 2009.

c) Does it include ECTS credit ranges for the first and second cycle?

Yes No

Comment All study programmes in Croatia use ECTS credits for measuring students' workload and, as such, the CROQF includes ECTS as well.

d) Has the NQF been nationally discussed with all stakeholders?

Yes No

Comment Three national conferences were held at the end of 2006 as part of the development of the Baseline for the CROQF, and very extensive presentation and discussion of the work on the development of CROQF has been undertaken since. These consultations included all stakeholders in the academia, the employers, trade unions, nongovernmental organizations, experts and others. It is important to note the assistance that Croatia has been receiving in this process from the European Training Foundation. A similar consultation process is foreseen for the passing of generic descriptors.

If the answer to d) is No, please answer question e):

e) has a timetable been agreed for consultations with all stakeholders?

Yes No

Comment

If the answer to d) is Yes, please answer the following questions:

f) Are all formal arrangements decisions for implementing the framework in place and have the necessary formal decisions for establishing the framework been taken?

Yes No

Comment

g) How far has the implementation of the national qualifications framework progressed (**please tick one**)

- The framework is fully implemented. All qualifications have been added to the NQF through a QA procedure (e.g. accreditation)
- There is significant progress on implementing the framework
- The work of describing all qualifications in terms of learning outcomes and competencies has been completed
- There is a timetable for implementation and the work has started
- Work on implementing the framework has not yet started but a timetable for implementation has been agreed
- Work on implementing the framework has not yet started and there is no timetable for implementation

Comment There is significant progress on implementing the national qualifications framework in the three Bologna cycles. The timetable foresees that the complete framework, including self-certification and development of sectoral descriptors, will have been completed in Croatia by 2012.

h) What is the stage of progress on the self-certification of compatibility with the EHEA framework ?

Completed Started, but not yet completed Not yet started

Comment

i) Has the self-certification report been published?

Yes No

Comment

Please add any additional comments if necessary:

Comment

NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE EHEA (ESG)⁸

9. Reviewing the QA system against the ESG⁹ and national support for implementation

a) Has your national QA system been reviewed against the ESG?

Yes * No Not yet, but such a review is planned
(Please specify time) _____

b) If a review has been undertaken or is planned, please give further details of the review process.

**done only partly, but its completion is planned for 2009*

During CARDS 2003 project "Furtherance of the Agency for Science and Higher Education in its Quality Assurance role and development of supporting Information System", a model of external audit and manual for the audit were developed and accepted. Pilot project of external audit of HEIs' QA system was successfully carried out at 3 out of 7 Croatian universities. An annual audit plan was also drafted.

In July of 2007 National Council for Higher Education adopted 3 year evaluation plan of HEIs (that started in 2008 with pilot projects on 3 different HEIs), which also included the evaluation of some elements of QA system.

A new act on quality assurance is being planned for adoption in the beginning of 2009, which will implement the suggestions outlined by the CARDS project and align the Croatian QA system completely with the ESG.

c) If a review process has been undertaken, did it result in any of the following:

Stakeholder consultation on changes required to the national QA system?

Yes No

The introduction of specific financial or other incentives aimed at improving the internal quality assurance processes in institutions?

Yes No

If Yes, please give details of these incentives:

In CARDS 2003 project the HEIs' QA units, foreign consultants and QA experts helped improve the external and internal QA procedures. ASHE QA department organized seminars and workshops for the QA units at all Croatian universities, polytechnics and schools of professional higher education, aimed at improving their internal QA procedures. Students were regularly invited and participated in a number of these seminars and conferences.

Agency-trained foreign auditors also participated in the external audit.

⁸ <http://www.bologna2009benelux.org/documents/Standards-and-Guidelines-for-QA.pdf>

⁹ ESG - Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

The National Foundation for Science established a call for projects to support the establishment of quality assurance units at Croatian higher education institutions. Over 2500 new full-time equivalent positions were provided to the Croatian higher education since 2004 and the higher education institutions were autonomous to use these new positions in accordance with their internal strategies. Universities normally used several positions to establish QA offices and centres.

- Other measures

Yes No

If Yes, please outline these measures

The outcomes of CARDS 2003 project provided the expert advice and analysis that helped ASHE to initiate the changes of national legislation that are now in motion. It is expected that a new law broadly regulating this topic will be passed at the beginning of 2009.

- d) If incentives and/or other measures have been introduced with the aim of improving the internal quality assurance processes in institutions, has any evidence of the impact of these changes been gathered?

Yes No

If Yes, please give details of how evidence of the impact of the changes was gathered, and of the main outcomes that it demonstrates

ASHE organized seminars/workshops on establishing and improving internal QA system at HEIs and gathered information on the outcomes of these seminars. Information on the outcomes of pilot project (external audit) were also collected and analyzed. This data was used for the improvement of the following: development of HEIs' strategies, positioning of HEIs, staff development, staff and student mobility, HEIs' internal QA documents and transparency of QA systems, as well as for defining and understanding the differences between ISO and ESG quality assurance standards.

9.1. Internal quality assurance in higher education institutions

Describe the internal QA systems in place in your HEIs.

Higher education institutions autonomously determine which QA system they will use. Most higher education institutions have decided to establish a QA unit which oversees and promotes the QA-related activities, as well as coordinate the implementation of the student surveys.

ASHE helps HEIs' QA units to improve their internal QA systems and provides expert training and advice on implementing QA systems.

Please comment in particular on the following aspects, giving references to relevant websites:

- a) How many HEIs have published a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality?

All HEIs Most HEIs Some HEIs No HEIs

b) How many HEIs have arrangements in place for the internal approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards?

All HEIs Most HEIs Some HEIs No HEIs

Please describe what kind of arrangements are in place

All HEIs have their internal approval processes in place, but they have yet to improve processes of monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards. Following the introduction of new study programmes in 2005, it is the monitoring and reviewing mechanisms that are being developed at this time.

c) How many HEIs have described their programmes in terms of learning outcomes?

All HEIs Most HEIs Some HEIs No HEIs

d) Are student assessments at HEIs designed to measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes (based on published criteria) applied in a consistent way?

All HEIs Most HEIs Some HEIs No HEIs

Please describe how the above is achieved.

All HEIs have published regulations on graduate, undergraduate and postgraduate studies that also include criteria on student assessment. Some higher education institutions still need to improve their formulation of the intended learning outcomes, which is a prerequisite for consistent assessment.

e) How many HEIs publish up to date, impartial and objective information about the programmes and awards offered?

All HEIs Most HEIs Some HEIs No HEIs

Additional information if necessary

10. Stage of development of external quality assurance system

Describe the external quality assurance system operating in your country.

Please include:

a) the stage of implementation of your external quality assurance system

ASHE has developed an external audit model and presented it in the manual for audit. The audit consists of 4 phases: planning, execution of audit (including a visit to the higher education institution), reporting and follow-up. It is based on a peer review that includes trained experts (all the stakeholders).

The Republic of Croatia has introduced and has constantly been implementing the system of accreditation of new higher education institutions and study programmes. This accreditation procedure (based on written peer review) accredited 1200 study programmes in line with Bologna principles since 2005. Twenty new higher education institutions have been accredited in the same period.

In 2008, an institutional evaluation was launched, with the procedure and core documents fully in line with European standards and guidelines for quality assurance in higher education.

According to the evaluation plan adopted in 2007, all existing universities, polytechnics and schools of professional higher education shall be evaluated in the following 4-year period.

It is planned that a new law regulating quality assurance in higher education will be passed in 2009, with the aim of further alignment of the Croatian quality assurance system with the one outlined in the European Standards and Guidelines.

b) does your external quality assurance system operate at a national level;

Yes No

If **No**, please specify:

c) does your external quality assurance system cover all higher education¹⁰

Yes No

If **No**, please specify which types of institutions or programmes are not covered by your external quality assurance system:

d) which of the following elements are included in your external quality assurance system:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| - self-assessment report | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| - external review | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| - publication of results | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| - follow-up procedures | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

e) has a peer review of the national agency(ies) according to the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA already taken place

Yes No

If **No** is there a date set for the review? Yes (please specify date 2009) No

¹⁰ Higher education: all types of courses of study or sets of courses of study, training or training for research at the post secondary level which are recognised by the relevant authorities as belonging to a country's higher education system.

11. Level of student participation

From the following, please indicate all aspects of quality assurance in which students are involved:

- a) in governance of national agencies for QA. Yes No In some cases
- b) as full members in external review teams Yes No In some cases
- c) as observers in external review teams Yes No * In some cases
- d) as part of the decision making process for external reviews Yes No In some cases
- e) in the consultation process during external reviews (e.g. arrangements for external reviewers to consult with students) Yes No In some cases
- f) in internal quality assurance (e.g. periodic review of programmes) Yes No In some cases
- g) in preparation of self-assessment reports. Yes No In some cases
- h) in follow-up procedures: Yes No In some cases

*Please add any additional comments, especially if students are **not** involved in any of the aspects:*

in c)* - they're not observers but full members

12. Level of international participation

In which of the following is there international participation in quality assurance

- a) the governance of national agencies for quality assurance Yes No In some cases
- b) the external evaluation of national quality assurance agencies Yes * No In some cases
- c) teams for external review of institutions or programmes, either as members or observers Yes No In some cases
- d) membership of ENQA Yes No In some cases
- e) membership of any other international network

Yes

No

If **Yes**, please specify:

The Agency for Science and Higher Education is a member of the INQAAHE since 2006, and of the CEE quality assurance network since 2008

Please add any additional comments, especially if there is no international involvement in any of the aspects:

In b)* - In January of 2007, ASHE applied for the ENQA membership but was refused by the Board of ENQA as it didn't fulfill all the ESG standards (Part 3). At this moment ASHE has the 'associate' status. ASHE plans the external evaluation after the changes of the national legislation take place (in 2009).

RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND STUDY PERIODS

13. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement

Describe the stage of implementation of the Diploma Supplement in your country. Please include the percentage of all students graduating in 2009 who will receive a Diploma Supplement (if less than 100%, please explain)

The EU/CoE/UNESCO format of the diploma supplement was established in Croatia through the Ordinance on the Content of Diplomas and Diploma Supplements in January 2005. Amendments to this Ordinance that came into force in April 2007 ensure that all students graduating from the reformed Bologna study programmes at Croatian higher education institutions from 2007 will receive their diploma supplements automatically, free of charge, in Croatian and English and in the EU/CoE/UNESCO format. The Ministry of Science, Education and Sports (MSES) issued a nation-wide handbook in July 2008.

100% of students graduating from Bologna-aligned programmes in 2009 will receive a diploma supplement. Since obligation only exists to issue the diploma supplement to the students of the three-cycle programmes, students from pre-Bologna programmes do not automatically get a diploma supplement. Higher education institutions are autonomous in determining whether they will issue diploma supplements to such students, but due to the differences in the curriculum design and the absence of a number of required diploma supplement elements from the old study programmes, these students normally receive a transcript of records which does not completely correspond in format with the format of the diploma supplement.

a) Is the Diploma Supplement issued to students graduating from:

- 1st cycle programmes Yes No
- 2nd cycle programmes Yes No
- 3rd cycle programmes Yes No
- remaining "old type" programmes Yes No Not applicable
- short higher education programmes Yes No Not applicable

b) which of the following apply to Diploma Supplements issued in your country:

- issued in a widely spoken European language Yes No
 - *please specify the language* All diploma supplements are issued in English and Croatian languages free of charge. The national regulations allow higher education institutions to issue diploma supplements in other languages as well, but a fee may be charged in such cases.
- issued free of charge for a fee
- issued automatically on request
- corresponds to the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format
- a national Diploma Supplement is used that is different from the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format

13.1. Use of Diploma Supplement for recognition of qualifications

Please describe the way in which the Diploma Supplement is used for the recognition of foreign qualifications (or studies). Please comment in particular on the following aspects, giving references to any relevant websites and documents:

a) The Diploma Supplement is used as the reference document when admitting holders of foreign qualifications to the second and third cycles.

Yes No

Comment Academic recognition of foreign qualifications for purposes of access into second or third cycle programmes, by law, is under the authority of higher education institutions. In the evaluation of the candidates' qualifications, the institutions normally use diploma supplements as reference documents. Examples of such use include:

University of Zagreb

http://www.unizg.hr/fileadmin/rektorat/dokumenti/akademski_ured/Dokumentacija_z_a_akademsko_priznavanje.pdf

University of Rijeka

<http://www.uniri.hr/hr/studiji/ivk/konacno-6.7.2007/Obrazac%20za%20akademsko%20priznavanje.pdf>

b) Holders of foreign qualifications who present a Diploma Supplement in a widely spoken language do not have to provide official translations of their qualifications.

Yes No

Comment The diploma supplement is normally used to help reduce the need for translation of additional documents, but the key documents still need to be translated into the Croatian language. This requirement is based on the law stipulating the public administration procedures in the Republic of Croatia. For purposes of academic recognition, the only documents which need to have official translations into the Croatian language are the official qualification and the official grade transcript. In addition, for purposes of professional recognition, the official translation of the diploma supplement is required.

- c) Holders of foreign qualifications who present a Diploma Supplement in a widely spoken language do not need to prove through other documents the validity of the qualifications in the awarding country (for further studies or employment in the non-regulated part of the labour market).

Yes No

Comment The recognition procedures in the Republic of Croatia require all applicants to present a number of documents for purposes of academic or professional recognition. The list of these documents is available at the web site of the Croatian ENIC office: <http://www.azvo.hr/enic>

- d) Specific action has been taken at a National and Institutional level to enhance the use of the Diploma Supplement as a communication tool towards the labour market

Yes No

Comment Further information about the national measures to enhance the use of the diploma supplement in this respect is available in the answer to the question number 7.

Institutions have taken part in the national activities for the promotion of diploma supplement through advisory and expert role. At present, institutional activities for the promotion of the diploma supplement are being developed.

14. National implementation of the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention

Describe the stage of implementation of the main principles and later supplementary documents¹¹ of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

- a) Does appropriate legislation comply with the Lisbon Convention?

Yes No

If Yes, please demonstrate how it is achieved: Recognition of foreign education qualifications and parts of study is based on the Act on Recognition of Foreign Educational Qualifications (Official Gazette, no. 158/2003 and 198/2003) and the Act on Amendments to the Act on Recognition of Foreign Educational Qualifications (Official Gazette, no. 138/2006).

Under mentioned acts, recognition of foreign higher education qualifications is carried out for the purpose of employment (professional recognition), or

¹¹ Recommendation on the Criteria and Procedures for Recognition (2001); Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees (2004); Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education (2001)

continuation of education (academic recognition) in the Republic of Croatia, and Croatian citizens, foreign citizens and persons without citizenship are entitled to recognition of foreign education qualifications.

Following principles are already included in national legislation:

- applicants' right to fair assessment
- recognition if no substantial differences can be proven
- demonstration of substantial differences, where recognition is not granted
- provision of information about Croatian and foreign HE programmes and institutions, addressed to individual(s), institution(s), potential employer(s) or others (provided by Croatian ENIC/NARIC office, which cooperates with Department for Higher Education of the Agency for Science and Higher Education that has all detailed information regarding accredited higher education programmes in Croatia, and also with other foreign ENIC and NARIC offices).

b) Does appropriate legislation comply with the later Supplementary Documents:

i) Recommendation on the Criteria and Procedures for Recognition

Yes No

If Yes, please demonstrate how it is achieved: - Provisions referring to the assessment of foreign qualifications apply, mutatis mutandis, to the assessment of periods of study.

- Procedures and criteria for the assessment of foreign qualifications are transparent, coherent and reliable (all information about procedures and criteria for recognition of foreign higher education qualifications are provided at the web site of Croatian ENIC/NARIC office, within the official web site of the Agency for Science and Higher Education, www.azvo.hr).

- In the assessment of foreign qualifications concerning higher education, the international and national legal frameworks should be applied in a flexible way with a view to making recognition possible.

- In all cases where the decision is different from the recognition requested by the applicant, including in cases where no form of recognition is possible, the competent recognition authority informs the applicant of the reasons for the decision reached and his or her possibilities for appealing against it.

- Information on the procedures and criteria for the assessment of foreign qualifications concerning higher education are available to the applicants through official web site of competent authorities (Croatian ENIC/NARIC office maintains a web site, www.azvo.hr/enic, within the Agency for Science and Higher Education web site, www.azvo.hr. The site is available in Croatian and English language and all the relevant information regarding the procedure for recognition, including application forms, are published on it).

- The time normally required to process recognition applications, counted from such time as all relevant information has been provided by applicants and/or higher education institutions, is specified to applicants and optimum deadline for issuing final decision is within 3 months.

- Fees charged for the assessment of foreign qualifications are payable in the currency of the Republic of Croatia. Administrative fee for professional and academic recognition of foreign higher education qualifications of a completed undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate programme is 400 KN which is approximately €60. Administrative fee for recognition of periods of study spent in

a foreign higher education institution is 200 KN which is approximately €35. Low income groups, refugees, displaced persons and other disadvantaged groups do not pay the administrative fee for the recognition.

- Requirements for the translation of documents are clearly specified, especially as concerns the need for authorised translations by sworn translators, and are limited to key documents. Diploma Supplement is used to help reduce the need for translation of other key documents.

ii) Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees

Yes No

If Yes, please demonstrate how it is achieved: Joint study programmes are explicitly recognized and allowed in the Croatian higher education system in all three cycles, as stipulated by the Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education.

There are also no legal obstacles for the recognition of foreign joint degrees.

Croatian legislation creates no obstacles for the recognition of joint degrees. Foreign joint degrees are recognised with the greatest flexibility possible, unless it is possible to demonstrate that there is substantial difference between the joint degree for which recognition is sought and the comparable qualification within the Croatian higher education system.

iii) Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education

Yes No

If Yes, please demonstrate how it is achieved: Qualifications issued through transnational educational programmes, complying with the provisions of the present Code, are assessed in accordance with the stipulations of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

c) which of the following principles are applied in practice

i) applicants' right to fair assessment

Yes No

If Yes, please describe how it is ensured at national and institutional level At a national level it is ensured through national legislation, Act on the Recognition of Foreign Education Qualifications (Official Gazette, issue 158/2003, 198/2003 and 138/2006).

At an institutional level it is ensured through provision of clear and transparent information about the procedures and criteria for evaluation and recognition of foreign qualifications.

ii) recognition if no substantial differences can be proven

Yes No

If Yes, please describe how it is ensured at national and institutional level Upon completion of the process of recognition of foreign qualification, if no substantial differences can be proven, competent authority issues a positive decision on recognition which gives person a right to practice profession, enter the labour market or to continue his or her studies.

lii) demonstration of substantial differences, where recognition is not granted
Yes No

If Yes, please describe how it is ensured at national and institutional level Within final decision of recognition (both academic and professional recognition procedure), if the recognition is not granted, reasons for not recognizing foreign HE qualification are clearly stated.

iv) provision of information about your country's HE programmes and institutions
Yes No

If Yes, please describe how it is done in practice In the Republic of Croatia the Register of Higher Education Institutions (available in Croatian at: http://pregledi.mzos.hr/ustanove_VU.aspx) is available on the web site of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, containing a list of all higher education institutions in the Republic of Croatia that are accredited.
In the near future, detailed information regarding accredited higher education programmes offered in the Republic of Croatia will be available on public web site of Agency for Science and Higher Education.

v) do you have a fully operational ENIC
Yes No

If Yes, please describe the role of your ENIC in recognition and information provision a) nationally and b) internationally Croatian ENIC/NARIC Office is an information centre for academic mobility and recognition of foreign higher education qualifications. Office is a part of European Network of National Information Centres on recognition and mobility.
a) Nationally - Office provides information on foreign education systems and qualifications, especially about HE programmes and institutions, to individual(s), institution(s), potential employer(s) or others. Also, Office is involved in a process of recognition of foreign higher education qualifications, as a party in a process of professional recognition of foreign higher education qualifications and as an advisory body in the process of academic recognition of foreign higher education qualifications.
b) Internationally – Office provides information on national education system and higher education qualifications upon the request of foreign authority dealing with recognition of qualifications and also participates in all relevant events (conferences, seminars, etc) concerning recognition matters.

Also, it is proposed that Croatian ENIC/NARIC Office becomes National contact point in accordance with requirements of Directive 2005/36 EC which deals with recognition of professional qualifications. The law regulating this issue is expected to be passed at the beginning of 2009.

d) As additional information, please describe any actions to implement fully the Convention and the later Supplementary Documents.

Croatian ENIC office should be detached from a recognition process as a party and it should become only information centre and advisory body, providing information and recommendations on foreign and national higher education qualifications and systems of education to interested parties (national and international competent authorities, higher education institution(s), individual(s), potential employer(s) and other foreign ENIC and NARIC centres). This is foreseen to be implemented as part of future amendments to the general recognition legislation.

15. Stage of implementation of ECTS¹²

Describe the implementation of ECTS in your country.

- a) Please include the percentage of the total number of higher education programmes¹³ in which all programme components are linked with ECTS credits
- 100% 75-99% 50-75% <50%

In the academic year 2007/2008 75.8% of all students were enrolled in the Bologna-aligned study programmes.

- b) Are ECTS credits linked with learning outcomes¹⁴ in your country? Please tick one:

No In some programmes In the majority of programmes
In all programmes

- c) If you use credit system other than ECTS, please give details of your national credit system:

i) is it compatible with ECTS? Yes No

ii) what is the ratio between national and ECTS credits?

- d) Are you taking any action to improve understanding of learning outcomes?

Yes No

If Yes, please explain: The National Foundation for Science, Higher Education and Technological Development has organised in 2008. tenders for development of institutional strategy for implementing learning outcomes and developing

¹² Please refer to definitions in the ECTS User's guide,

http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/socrates/ects/guide_en.html

¹³ Except doctoral studies

¹⁴ Clarification: Learning outcomes in the form of knowledge, skills and competences are formulated for all programme components and credits are awarded only when the stipulated learning outcomes are actually acquired

institutional guide for defining measurable learning outcomes. Six projects were given a funding.

In line with this topic is also continuous work on Croatian Qualification Framework, which is going to be finished in 2009. and will contain description of learning outcomes achieved in all educational institutions and position them in relation to each other in Croatia and in international exchange.

Also, MSES has published a brochure on Diploma Supplement (and distributed it to all HEIs in Croatia), which also explains links between learning outcomes, ECTS credits and students' workload.

In addition, a number of Tempus projects in the past dealt with the improvement of the understanding of learning outcomes, as do all current curriculum development Tempus projects.

Finally, all official ECTS documents have been widely disseminated among HEI governing bodies.

e) Are you taking any actions to improve measurement and checking of student workload?

Yes No

If Yes, please explain: Higher education institutions routinely conduct student surveys, and part of those surveys at some higher education institutions check for student workload. These mechanisms will be developed in parallel to the mechanisms for monitoring and reviewing curricula, as well as other internal quality assurance mechanisms.

f) Are you taking any actions to assist HE staff or other stakeholders in applying ECTS.

Yes No

If Yes, please explain: The activities in this respect overlap with the activities presented in the answer to question d).

LIFELONG LEARNING

16. Recognition of prior learning

Describe the measures in place to recognise prior learning (RPL), including non-formal and informal learning (for example learning gained in the workplace or in the community).

a) Do you have nationally established procedures in place to assess RPL as a basis for access to HE programmes?

Yes No

General comment: By law, it is not possible in Croatia to have a nation-wide procedure to regulate access into higher education programmes. Admissions regulations are, by law, set individually by each higher education institution. As such, higher education institutions individually decide how they will recognize prior learning as part of the admissions procedure.

It is expected that the development of the Croatian qualifications framework will create a non-binding framework which will facilitate the recognition of prior learning for purposes of admissions processes.

b) Do you have nationally established RPL procedures in place to allocate credits towards a qualification?

Yes No

If Yes, please specify: The Act on Adult Education of 2007 formally introduced informal and non-formal learning into the Croatian educational system. Based on this Act, it is possible for higher education institutions to recognize informal or non-formal learning and allocate credit for learning outcomes achieved in this manner. The national guidelines for such recognition will be based on the description of national learning outcomes which will be prepared as part of the Croatian Qualifications Framework.

c) Do you have nationally established RPL procedures in place to allocate credits for exemption from some programme requirements?

Yes No

General comment: By law, it is not possible for the national legislation to prescribe procedures at higher education institutions for academic assessment of students. However, based on the 2007 Act on Adult Education, higher education institutions can use prior informal or non-formal learning in their internal regulations. These regulations can specify that prior learning can be used as basis for allocation of credits, in which case such allocation needs to be well documented and would be subject to external quality assurance.

d) To what extent are any such procedures applied in practice?

Comprehensively Some A little None

Please describe the current situation: Some of the more prominent examples of the development of such procedures are:

The strategy for the development of the University of Rijeka 2007-2013 foresees the introduction of recognition of prior learning at the University (accessible in Croatian at: http://www.uniri.hr/hr/propisi_i_dokumenti/SVURI01-01Strategija.pdf)

The Regulations on Studying of the University of Zagreb foresees the possibility of exceptionally prepared candidates to bypass the entrance examination at the higher education institutions (accessible in Croatian at http://www.unizg.hr/fileadmin/rektorat/dokumenti/novosti2008/PRAVILNIK_O_STUDIRANJU_kona_na_LEKTORIRANA_verzija_PDF.pdf).

Croatian higher education institutions routinely allow students with exceptional knowledge, skills and competences to bypass some course requirements and advance more quickly in their study programme.

The recognition of prior learning at Croatian higher education institutions is in its early stages and an important step forward will be further work on the Croatian Qualifications Framework. This will set the non-binding standards upon which higher education institutions can rely when drafting their own regulations.

17. Flexible learning paths

Describe legislative and other measures taken by your country to create opportunities for flexible learning paths in higher education, to encourage participation by under-represented groups.

As we reported in 2007, the Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education places no obstacles for the provision of flexible learning paths in higher education. Any provisions that deals with such issues are determined autonomously by the respective higher education institutions. This includes admission criteria, flexible delivery methods for part-time students and an increasing number of summer courses.

Measures to encourage participation from under-represented groups are presented in the social dimension part of this report, but some measures are presented here.

Students with disabilities above 50% on a national scale receive full tuition fee remission, a special state scholarship to defray living costs and are admitted to the study programme irrespective of their ranking at the entrance examination, as long as they have satisfied the minimum entrance standards. In addition, at most higher education institutions in Croatia entrance examinations are adapted to the special needs of students with disabilities. There is also a special category of state scholarships for students from worse-off backgrounds.

All Roma students in Croatia receive a state scholarship as support for living expenses.

Activities focusing on adult students will form a part of the action plan for the Joint Assessment of Employment Priorities between the European Commission and the Republic of Croatia. These measures will focus on adults who have not completed higher education and the reform of the part-time studying system and their introduction is planned in the course of 2009 and 2010.

Full-time students at all higher education institutions in Croatia enjoy 0% tax rate for any wages earned while studying, financial contribution towards costs of accommodation (if not accommodated in student dormitories), a 75% subsidy for all meal costs in student mess halls and full health insurance. In addition, around 40% of students in Croatia enjoy free local transportation (all students in Zagreb), and a large number of students at other higher education institutions receive local transportation cost subsidies. The transportation subsidies are fully or in part funded by the local municipalities.

a) Are there specific measures in place to promote flexible learning paths within the national qualifications framework?

Yes No

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation The state of development of the Croatian qualifications framework has not yet reached the level at which the specific measures for promotion of flexible learning paths would be developed.

b) Are there any measures to support HE staff in establishing flexible learning paths?

Yes No

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation Flexible learning paths in Croatian higher education are an integral structure of every higher education programme and support measures are a portion of regular staff development activities.

In addition, the delivery of part-time study programmes is lightly regulated on the national level, and some higher education institutions provide additional remuneration to the staff who deliver such programmes.

Croatia needs additional experience and exchange of practices in increasing the flexibility of learning paths in part-time study programmes.

c) Is there flexibility in entry requirements aimed at widening participation?

Yes No

Please add comments to describe the current situation and, where appropriate, differences between the three Bologna cycles At many higher education institutions, entrance examinations are adapted to the special needs of students with disabilities.

Veterans of the Homeland war, and children of certain categories of Homeland war veterans only need to satisfy the minimum entrance standards in order to gain admission to higher education.

The Rectors' Council of Croatia in May 2008 recommended all higher education institutions in Croatia to provide flexible entrance examinations to students entering second cycle study programmes, due to the different times in which first cycle students will be completing their studies within an academic year.

d) Are there any flexible delivery methods to meet the needs of diverse groups of learners

Yes No

Please add comments to describe the current situation and, where appropriate, differences between different Bologna cycle The provision of education is being diversified with more opportunities for distance studies and e-learning, which is currently being developed under the JEP Tempus project Education Quality Improvement by E-learning Technology. In 2008 the Rectors' Conference of the Republic of Croatia adopted the proposal of the Tempus EQIBELT project to establish offices for e-learning at all Croatian universities.

Higher education institutions normally provide special examination procedures for students with disabilities.

Many HEIs provide lectures at times which are adapted to the needs of part-time students. However, there is need to improve these delivery methods since not all HEIs provide lectures at late afternoons or evenings.

e) Are there modular structures of programmes to facilitate greater participation?

Yes No

Please add comments to describe the current situation and, where appropriate, differences between different Bologna cycle In all study programmes in Croatia a certain number of ECTS credits is dedicated to core courses, while the remaining

ECTS credits can be gained through a selection of elective courses either from the same or other study programmes.

f) If possible, please provide any statistics on the results of measures taken to create opportunities for flexible learning paths in higher education, to encourage participation by under-represented groups,

The number of students with disabilities has been rising rapidly in the past few years, and an increase of 39% in the number of students with disabilities studying at Croatian HEIs was recorded between 2004 and 2006.

The number of part-time students has also been rising, and it has risen by over 20% between 2002 and 2007. This rise is, in part, a result of these studies being used in lieu of full-time studies.

A process of introducing a nation-wide IT system at higher education institutions (ISVU) is under way, and it will provide more detailed statistics as more HEIs start using the system over a longer period of time.

JOINT DEGREES

18. Establishment and recognition of joint degrees¹⁵

a) Describe the legislative position on joint degrees in your country.

Are joint degrees specifically mentioned in legislation?

Yes No

Does the legislation fully allow:

i) establishing joint programmes?

Yes No

If No please explain what are the obstacles

ii) awarding joint degrees?

Yes No

If No please explain what are the obstacles

b) Please give an estimate of the percentage of institutions in your country which are involved in

i) joint degrees

75-100% 50-75% 25-50% 1-25% 0%

ii) joint programmes

¹⁵ A *joint degree* is a single degree certificate awarded by two or more institutions, where the single degree certificate is valid without being supplemented by any additional national degree certificate.

75-100% 50-75% 25-50% 1-25% 0%

c) What is the level of joint degree/ programme cooperation in your country

| | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| In the first cycle? | None <input type="checkbox"/> | Little <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Widespread <input type="checkbox"/> |
| In the second cycle? | None <input type="checkbox"/> | Little <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Widespread <input type="checkbox"/> |
| In the third cycle? | None <input type="checkbox"/> | Little <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Widespread <input type="checkbox"/> |

d) In which subject areas/disciplines is joint degree/programme co-operation most widespread (please list if possible)?

In Biomedicine, Humanistic and Social Sciences, Arts and Interdisciplinary field.

e) Estimate the number of joint programmes in your country

15

f) Describe any actions being taken to encourage or allow joint programmes.

Also, according to the Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education, joint programmes are allowed, but it is up to HEI's to start a procedure and propose such a study programme for evaluation to The National Council for Higher Education.

g) Are there any specific support systems for students to encourage joint degree cooperation?

There are no such support systems currently in place and we are looking forward to possible examples of best practice.

MOBILITY

19. Removing obstacles to student and staff mobility

a) What measures have been taken by your country both at governmental and institutional level to enhance student and staff mobility and overcome main obstacles?

The strategic plan of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports is to enhance student and staff mobility by full participation in the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) by 2010. The Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes, the government agency in charge of the implementation of the LLP and Youth in Action in Croatia, has become fully operational. The Agency is currently undergoing an accreditation process and it is expected that individual mobility activities within sectoral programmes will be open to Croatian institutions from 2009. Participation in individual mobility within Erasmus shall increase mobility of Croatian students and university staff.

Possibilities for student and staff mobility are also available through TEMPUS *Joint European Projects*, ERASMUS MUNDUS - *Balkan Cooperation Window (scholarships for Master programmes in the EU)* and ERASMUS MUNDUS-*External Cooperation Window (staff and student mobility among networks of higher education institutions from EU and the third countries)*. Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes is responsible for dissemination of information on both programmes. These programmes are financed from the EC Instrument for

Preaccession Programme (IPA). The Ministry of Science, Education and Sports is planning to participate in these programmes until 2010 – a target year of the Ministry for full participation in the Lifelong Learning Programme and ERASMUS MUNDUS programme. The Memoranda of Understanding for these programmes are expected to be concluded by the end of 2009.

At institutional levels, HEIs in a number of fields are cooperating on a national level to promote mobility. Such cooperation is taking place in the construction of joint admissions procedures which facilitate the selection of different institutions, or through cooperation in the delivery of study programmes, which facilitate the recognition of study periods at another HEI in the country.

At the governmental level, on the basis of bilateral agreements and executive programmes of cooperation concluded between the Croatian Government and 20 other countries, the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports funded in previous years over 4.000 months of scholarships per year for exchange. The MSES also awards financial assistance to postgraduate and doctoral specializations abroad. In 2008. 139 scholarships of up to €5,000 each have been awarded.

b) Have arrangements for visas, residence and work permits been amended to enhance student and staff mobility?

Yes No

The new Act on Foreigners which was passed in 2007 contains provisions for a faster and simpler procedure of legal registration for foreign citizens whose purpose of residence in Croatia is studying or lecturing. Special provisions are envisaged for EU citizens.

c) Is there financial support for national and foreign mobile students and staff?

Yes No

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation:

Apart from the support mentioned in the question a), in 2008 the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports and the Agency for Mobility and EU programmes have launched the Bilateral Academic Mobility Programme financed by the Ministry and implemented by the Agency. The Programme offers financial support to national students and staff going abroad and its purpose is preparation of higher education institution for future participation in ERASMUS.

d) Are study periods taken abroad recognised?

Yes No

The recognition of periods of study abroad follow the principles of the Lisbon Convention and the administrative procedures described in the answer to the

question number 14. All universities have set up a structure for recognition of study periods of their students abroad.

In order to prepare higher education institutions with special regard to Erasmus, as well as of clarifying issues appearing in this context, the Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes, the national agency for the implementation of the Lifelong Learning Programme and Youth in Action programme, organized 3 workshops for university and faculty ECTS coordinators of Croatian higher education institutions at the end of 2008.

e) Is there accommodation for mobile students and staff?

Yes No

Foreign students and staff are accepted at student dormitories of all universities in Croatia. The ongoing project of building university campuses in several cities includes expanding the capacity of student dormitories so quotas for foreign students and staff will be increased.

f) Have any measures been taken to increase outward student and staff mobility?

Yes No

With the aim of increasing mobility of Croatian academic community the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports has allocated to the Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes 200.000 EUR in order to launch the Programme of Bilateral Mobility in Higher Education for the academic year 2008/09. As the basis for mobility should serve existing and new bilateral agreements between Croatian universities and universities abroad. Within the Programme, universities in the Republic of Croatia will receive funding via Agency to organize mobility and subsidize outgoing students and staff. Purpose of the study abroad for students can be studying, for teaching staff both teaching and training and for non-teaching staff the purpose can be training. A minimum duration of study abroad for students is 1 month and the maximum duration is 5 months. For staff it is minimally 1 day and maximally 5 days. The amount of the grant for students for one month is 300 EUR and for staff up to 1000 EUR for a week. Approximately 100 students and 20 staff members are expected to participate in the Programme in the 2008/2009.

20. Portability of loans and grants

a) Are portable grants available in your country?

Yes * No

*Comment.

MSES offers portable grants to Croatian students studying abroad under bilateral executive programmes in those instances when the grant offered by the partner

country is deemed too low. In such cases MSES will provide additional funds and even cover health insurance costs while Croatian students are studying abroad. Apart from such support, portable grants are only available to third cycle students on a competitive basis. In order to understand the issue of portability of grants and loans in Croatia, the tuition fee system in Croatia needs to be explained. At most higher education institutions in Croatia full-time students receive either full fee remission or no fee remission. Tuition fees are a part of the income of higher education institutions which supplements what the HEIs normally receive as part of the lump sum budget. The quota of students who pay no tuition fee is fixed and is adjusted only incrementally or after a substantial increase in the capacity of a HEI. As such, the state funds in the current higher education budgeting system in Croatia are not provided to HEIs in the form of student grants which could be made portable. An adjustment of the lump sum budgeting system of higher education in Croatia is planned for 2009. Discussions about the current tuition fee system are planned as well.

b) Are portable loans available in your country?

Yes No

In Croatia there does not currently exist a national loan system, so no loans can be made portable through national legislation. As part of the discussions about the tuition fee system, loans will also be addressed.

THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE EHEA AND COOPERATION WITH OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD

21. Implementation of strategy

a) Describe any measures being taken by your country to implement the strategy "European Higher Education in a Global Setting"

The Republic of Croatia has been providing EHEA information and promoting the structural reform processes and the importance of strong stakeholder involvement. The details of measures are presented below.

b) What has your country done to:

i) improve information on the EHEA outside Europe?

Croatia has provided all the EHEA-relevant information on the web sites of its specific organizations and agencies. Therefore, the Croatian higher education system in the context of the EHEA structural changes is described on the web sites of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, the Agency for Science and Higher Education, the Agency for Mobility and EU programmes, as well as on the web sites of Croatian universities.

In addition to this, all Croatian contacts in extra-European fora for higher education (eg. World Higher Education Database, Euromed initiative) emphasize the Bologna Process and participation of the Croatian higher education system in the EHEA.

Finally, in all bilateral contacts in the area of higher education with non European countries, Croatia has been emphasizing the main elements of the EHEA and how they promote quality and equity in higher education. This has been particularly notable with the different issues relating to recognition.

Following the establishment of a chair in sinology at the University of Zagreb, stronger inter-HEIs cooperation was established with the People's Republic of China.

ii) promote European higher education, enhance its world-wide attractiveness and competitiveness?

Due to the relatively small size of the Croatian higher education sector, the promotion of the EHEA has mostly been taking place in bilateral contacts. Notable contacts were established with countries in South America, due to a strong Croatian diaspora there, as well as some Northern African countries.

iii) strengthen cooperation based on partnership in higher education?

Most of the cooperation of Croatian higher education institutions takes place within the EHEA itself. However, the support of the US government has enabled conferences and workshops to be organized with some US higher education institutions and policy makers.

At the University of Zagreb a study programme in sinology was strengthened with additional lecturers and junior researchers.

iv) intensify policy dialogue with partners from other world regions?

Information on the three-cycle study programmes and other elements of the Bologna Process were provided to all non-European countries that expressed interest or required assistance. It needs to be noted that these contacts took place on a case-by-case basis.

It may be necessary for the Bologna Process to provide an opportunity for intensifying policy dialogue on the level of the entire process, rather than on the initiative of individual member states.

v) improve recognition of qualifications with other world regions?

The recognition of qualifications in Croatia follows completely the principles of the Lisbon Convention and the supplementary documents. As such, the recognition of all qualifications follows the same principles irrespective of where they were obtained.

c) What measures have been taken in your country to implement the *OECD/UNESCO Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education*? Please describe.

The measures for implementation of *OECD/UNESCO Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education* form a part of regular reform processes and particularly Bologna process reforms in the Croatian higher

education sector. This is particularly the case in quality assurance and recognition of qualifications.

d) Are the OECD/UNESCO Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education applied to

i) cross-border provision of your education programmes?

Yes No

If Yes please explain in what ways the guidelines are applied Those Croatian higher education institutions that deliver cross-border joint study programmes undergo evaluation and accreditation quality assurance processes on par with other Croatian programmes. These, in turn, incorporate the principles of quality assurance as advised by the European Standards and Guidelines in Quality Assurance. Further alignment of these procedures will be a part of the new law regulating quality assurance in Croatian higher education.

The recognition of foreign qualifications and study periods is aligned with the Lisbon Recognition Convention and therefore applies the OECD/UNESCO Guidelines as well.

ii) incoming higher education provision?

Yes No

If Yes please explain in what ways the guidelines are applied Foreign students arriving at Croatian universities are provided clear information on their course obligations and regulations regarding their stay in Croatia. Offices for international students also provide other necessary forms of support. There is, however, need to further strengthen the number of programmes being offered in foreign languages, as well as encourage the support for international students at polytechnics and schools of professional higher education.

FUTURE CHALLENGES

22. Main challenges for higher education

Give an indication of the main challenges ahead for higher education and the Bologna Process in your country in the short and long term.

The main short term aim in higher education reform in Croatia is the structural reform of universities. This will allow universities to build stronger development strategies, as well as better implement the Bologna Process reforms. The other short term aim in the Bologna process in Croatia is the adoption of the new law regulating the status and the remit of the quality assurance agency. Finally, the third short term aim is the development of a strong higher education information and statistics system.

The long term aims of the higher education reform include the adoption and self-certification of the Croatian Qualifications Framework, the reform of the system of tuition fees and student welfare, the strengthening of HEIs in using the lump sum budgeting and the reform of curricula with the aim of stronger implementation of the learning outcomes approach. The role of students in the reform processes at all institutional levels needs to be continuously strengthened.

PART II

TEMPLATE for NATIONAL STRATEGIES on THE SOCIAL DIMENSION of THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

Practical instruction

The answers to this questionnaire will be included in the general national report on the implementation of the Bologna Process and reach the Bologna Secretariat (e-mail: secr@bologna2009benelux.org) by November 1, 2008. **Please do not exceed the length of 10 pages for the national strategy on social dimension.**

The questions in Annex C are not included in the questionnaire itself but are to be considered as reference material which could facilitate the drafting of the information on the national strategy.

I. Definition of the Social Dimension in the London Communiqué

“We strive for the societal goal that the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education should reflect the diversity of our populations. We therefore pledge to take action to widen participation at all levels on the basis of equal opportunity.”

II. AS IS SITUATION (Current state of affairs)

1. Which groups in society are still underrepresented in your national higher education system? What are the main obstacles to participative equity in terms of access and successful completion of studies?

The Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education, paragraph 77 guarantees equity (regarding race, colour, sex, language, religion, political opinion, national or social origin, wealth, social status, disability, birth, sexual orientation and age) when students apply for admission to HEIs.

Concerning underrepresented groups, as stated, there are no legislative obstacles, but there is a need for more significant participation of the Roma students, students with disabilities and mature people in tertiary education. In addition, there is a need to introduce stronger support mechanisms for students from socially disadvantaged backgrounds.

Recently there have been some studies published which indicate that the level of representation of students originating from lower income families may be lower than had been assumed until now. There is a need to collect further information in order to plan targeted activities.

Overall, one of the main obstacles to participative equity in access and completion is the relative inflexibility of the system of tuition fees. Higher education institutions in Croatia autonomously determine not only the levels of tuition fees, but also the system according to which they will be charged. The current system at most, if not all, Croatian HEIs grants complete tuition fee remission based only on the criteria of merit and at most higher education institutions in Croatia the tuition fees are based on the system of “all or nothing” (i.e. students either pay full tuition fee or nothing at

all). The University of Zagreb introduced a scaled tuition fee system in 2007, but this system is still merit-based only and does not take the students' social status into account. As such, there is limited scope of support in the current tuition fee system for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

An additional challenge is that higher education institutions have not yet adapted their entrance examinations to address the special needs of the adult learners and to fully recognize prior learning.

Finally, objective obstacles to participative equity exist in the small capacity of student housing.

2. Please describe what measures your Government is taking to increase the representation of the groups identified in the question above. Please refer to the possible actions listed in the Bologna Working Group report on the Social Dimension and Mobility (see Annexes A and B to this document).

Students with disabilities above 50% on a national scale receive full tuition fee remission, a special state scholarship to defray living costs and are admitted to the study programme irrespective of their ranking at the entrance examination, as long as they have satisfied the minimum entrance standards. Also, at most higher education institutions, entrance examinations are adapted to the special needs of students with disabilities.

All Roma students receive a state scholarship as support for living expenses (as stated in Action plan for *Decade for Roma 2005-2015* and as is practiced for years). Also, the Directorate for National Minorities was founded as part of Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, and its task is, among others, to implement the national strategy of enhancing the number of Roma students in higher education.

As most of mature/older students prefer and need to study part-time, Croatian HEIs have started to adapt their programmes to the need of part-time students and deliver them in the evenings or at the weekends. On the other hand, part-time students are expected to pursue the same number of courses as full-time students and they cannot receive a full tuition-fee remission (although they usually do pay a substantially reduced tuition fee). This needs to be further addressed

The Croatian government provides competitive scholarships which are approximately equivalent to the amount of an annual tuition fee for several categories of students. Some of these scholarship categories aim to increase equity in higher education, and eligible students for those scholarships are:

- students who undertake to work in socially disadvantaged areas of the country after graduation
- students who are children of persons with war-related disabilities
- students from lower income families
- students who lived in foster families or in child care homes
- students with disabilities
- students who were disadvantaged in access to higher education due to being in the Croatian Army during the Homeland War, or their children.

3. Describe what measures are being taken by the Government to help students complete their studies without obstacles related to their social or economic background. Again, please refer to the possible actions listed in the Bologna Working Group report on the Social Dimension and Mobility (see Annexes A and B to this

document). Please indicate whether the measures apply to all students or only to certain levels or types of higher education institutions.

Between 2004 and 2008, state budget allocated for HE increased by 47%, or almost 12% per year. Most of this money has been directed on Bologna process reforms and in improvement of students' welfare provisions.

Since the beginning of the academic year 2008/2009, no tuition fees are charged for studying full time at 2nd cycle programmes in Croatia.

New student dormitories are being constructed in Zagreb, Rijeka, Osijek, Split Dubrovnik and Zadar. Overall, over €250 million in loans has been approved or was earmarked between 2004 and 2008 for capital investments at Croatian higher education institutions.

Other student welfare provisions in Croatia include:

- 75% subsidy of meals in student mess halls for all full-time students
- strongly subsidised accommodation for full-time students accommodated in student dormitories, and financial support for those accommodated in private facilities
- free local transportation for around 50% of students in Croatia, and subsidised transportation for an additional 20%
- free health insurance for all full-time students
- tax relief for parents of every child who is a full-time student
- full-time students in Croatia pay no taxes if they work part-time as students
- students who have no parents receive a special national allowance.

Some local communities provide free preparation courses for enrolment into higher education for secondary students.

A new national foundation for scholarships is being established, which will increase the overall amount of financial support provided for students.

New polytechnics and schools of higher education were established between 2005 and 2007 outside of traditional higher education centres, which decreases the cost of attending higher education through provision of higher education closer to the place of living.

4. Does your country have statistical and/or other research evidence at disposal to underpin the identification of underrepresented groups and the main obstacles to participative equity (see Q 1) ? If yes, please specify. Or are regular student survey organised with the aim to provide data concerning the social dimension?

The identification of the underrepresented groups in Q 1 above has been done as part of other research efforts conducted as part of the work of the United Nations Development Programme office in Croatia, and the work on the drafting of the Joint Inclusion Memorandum, the Joint Assessment of Employment Priorities and the OECD Tertiary Education Review in Croatia. Among other sources of currently available information were the national youth strategy, national Roma strategy and national strategies for persons with disabilities.

Main statistical source on national level for any kind of research is provided by the Central Bureau of Statistics, but data provided is not enough for complete and in-depth research concerning social dimension and social-profile of average Croatian student.

In respect to this topic, Croatia is to participate in the next round of EUROSTUDENT survey which is to start in 2009 and last until 2011, but the first drafts of report (and results) should be available as early as 2010.

In addition, there is a separate initiative under way to build a national higher education information and statistics system. As part of this initiative, an analysis of the existing separate information system is under way, and special legal provisions are planned in order to support the establishment of information and statistics systems at higher education institutions.

III. PROCESS TOWARDS A MORE INCLUSIVE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM (strategy for the future)

5. How do you plan to tackle the challenges identified under Q 1 in the near future (2008-2010)?

(a) Which concrete goals do you want to achieve?

The concrete goals which the Republic of Croatia aims to achieve until the end of 2010 are the following:

- increase availability and quality of data on social dimension
- reduce the overall drop-out rate
- increase the availability of affordable student housing
- increase the provision of student services at higher education institutions
- increase percentage of students from underrepresented groups in HE

It is currently planned to establish a separate Students' Scholarship Foundation, which will take over the administration of scholarships from the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, as well as increase the amount of available scholarships.

(b) What actions are planned for the different target group identified above to overcome the obstacles in access, participation and completion of studies by students? Please refer to Annex B and to the suggested approach outlined in the 2007 report from the Bologna Process Working Group on the Social Dimension and Mobility (Annex C to this document).

The draft Action Plan for higher education reform in 2009 and 2010 foresees the following activities related to the social dimension of higher education:

- promotion of the establishment of student counselling and advisory services at HEIs
- the monitoring of the establishment of student ombudsman offices
- as part of quality assurance measures, monitoring of systems of addressing of student grievances at HEIs
- support and training for student representatives and student ombudspersons in promoting student interests at HEIs

- the establishment of the Students' Scholarship Foundation
- analysis of the existing system of student mess halls subsidies and the drafting of a proposal for reform of the existing system
- analysis of opportunities for provision of alternative student housing facilities
- analysis of the existing system of part-time study and the drafting of a proposal for reform of the existing system
- participation in EUROSTUDENT survey, thereby increasing the quality of available social dimension data

Additional wider policy activities which will be pursued in addition to the ones outlined in the Action Plan:

- strengthening the lump sum funding system, one of the measures of which will be to introduce financial measures to encourage establishment of fair access policies at HEIs
- continuous building of new campuses (new lecture halls, libraries, seminar rooms, laboratories...), while re-adapting existing facilities to students with disabilities
- introduction of a new higher education statistics and analysis system, possibly with a new national body to deal with this issue
- increasing the number of study places at HEIs
- introduction of career advising at HEIs.

(c) is there a specific budget for these measures for underrepresented groups ? If yes, please provide details

There is specific budget planned for capital investment, student scholarships and mess halls subsidies. Additional funds will be provided as part of regular increases in funding of higher education, but specific details depend on range of activities of individual HEIs.

d) is there a timeline for action? If yes, please provide details.

Considering Action plan and timeline for EUROSTUDENT IV survey, these actions should be finished until 2011, although some/or most of the actions (e.g. stronger participation of Roma students in HE, increasing mobility, regional cooperation) are continuous, without any final timeline.

The draft Action Plan for higher education reform in 2009 and 2010 foresees the first group of activities in 5b to be finished by the end of 2010. The Action Plan outlines the specific timeline for each activity, and it should be published on the web site of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports in the beginning of 2009.

6. What arrangements are planned for monitoring progress towards more equitable access, participation and success?

These arrangements were outlined above, and include improvement in statistics, evaluation of existing policies and financial measures for encouragement of fair access policies.

IV. INFORMATION ON THE NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PREPARATION, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGIES

Please indicate which authority or other actor is responsible for the preparation, implementation and evaluation of the national strategy and describe the way in which the various stakeholders are involved. Did your country designate (a) contact point(s) for the national strategy? If so, please add the coordinates of the national contact point(s).

In the preparation of this document the results and recommendations from a conference organized by Institute for the Development of Education (an NGO) were used. The conference was held on November 26, 2008 with participation from members of the academic community, civil society, governmental representatives, experts, students with disabilities, national minorities and other stakeholders.

Mostly, Ministry of Science, Education and Sport is responsible for preparation of long-term and short-term strategies on national level, but also all stakeholders (universities, faculties, academies...) can individually set and design their own strategy considering question of underrepresented groups in HE.

Different contact points or persons responsible will be designated for different actions in this strategy.

Abbreviations and translations used:

ASHE – Agency for Science and Higher Education (Agencija za znanost i visoko obrazovanje)

CROQF – Croatian Qualifications Framework

HEI – Higher education institution

MSES – Ministry of Science, Education and Sports

NCHE – National Council for Higher Education

NISC - National Innovation System Council

Teaching assistant – asistent

Junior researcher – znanstveni novak