

**Education Policy in Education for Democratic
Citizenship and the Management of Diversity in
South East Europe**

Stocktaking Research Project

Country Report: Croatia

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1. National context

The Republic of Croatia is, according to its 1990 *Constitution*, a "unitary and indivisible democratic and social state" in which "the power derives from, and belongs to the people" seen as "a community of free and equal citizens that exercise their power either through free election of their representatives or by direct decision-making". It stretches over 56.538 sq. km of land and sea with population of 4,784.265 (1991 Census; the 2001 Census estimates are 4,554.000).

The Croatian people have experienced turbulent and discontinuous social, political and cultural changes throughout their history. Documents testify that Croats inhabited their homeland in the 7th century. In the beginning of the 10th century Croatia became the kingdom recognised by the pope that also encompassed the territories of Bosnia and Herzegovina. After the extinction of the Croat dynasty in the 11th century, the Croatian Parliament (*Sabor*) came to the decision to preserve the state by establishing personal union with the Hungarian kings. The decision had many detrimental effects on the development of Croatia in the centuries to come. The territory in which Croats lived was disintegrated and ruled by different rulers (Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, Venice and the Ottoman Empire) that frequently traded and exchanged Croatian territory. Nevertheless, the Croatian Parliament located in Zagreb resumed considerable sovereignty over the territories that were included into the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. It was responsible for the nomination of the Croatian viceroy (*ban*) as well as for the organisation and staffing of domestic administration. Although the official language of the Parliament was Latin until 1848 and despite permanent clashes of interests among Croatian parties represented, as well as between Zagreb and Vienna/Budapest, the Parliament managed to preserve a considerable level of autonomy inside the Monarchy and thus to act as an integral political factor, particularly from the middle of the 19th century when the issue of nation building became the key driving force in Europe. Additionally, Croats preserved the sense of "people-hood" in this period through shared language, customs and religion. The majority was socialised into a peasant society having little contact with foreign administration and formal schooling. A strong integrating force was the Roman Catholic church which, from the Middle Ages onward, used the Croatian language in its liturgy. The preservation of the state institutions and national symbols as well as the sense of "people-hood" shared by the population were crucial points for the 19th century national awareness building. The idea was spread over the "all Croatian lands" by number of Croatian intellectuals, artists and politicians (*Illirian Movement*), especially after an attempt to introduce Hungarian as a compulsory language into Croatian schools. The national movement was organised around the idea that Balkans Slavs (Bulgarians, Croats, Serbs, Slovenes) were descendants of a single illustrious race, the Illyrians and, since at that time language and linguistic uniformity were seen as an essential prerequisite for political independence and/or unity, that they should have its own independent state.

When after WW 1 in 1918 the Croatian Parliament broke off the ties with the Habsburg Monarchy, Croatia joined the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs. With no consent from the Croatian side, the State was in a matter of months renamed into the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats

and Slovenes headed by the Serbian king. As a consequence, Croatian Parliament was dissolved from 1920 until 1939 for the first time in its history. The Serbian king proclaimed dictatorship and once more renamed the state into the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. With the beginning of the WW2, Croatia emerged as a sharply divided society. On the one side were those that were loyal to the Independent State of Croatia ruled by the Ustasha Movement that came into power through its collaboration with German and Italian nazi/fascist regimes., On the other, were the followers of the Antifascist Movement which from 1943 was headed by the State Antifascist Council of the National Liberation of Croatia. The former managed to bring independence from the Serbian regime at the expense of human rights and freedoms, pluralism and social integrity, while the latter offered a new version of South Slavs integration at the expense of Croatian national interests. By the end of the WW2, communists managed to fully marginalise the role of other political parties in the antifascist movement, particularly liberal and traditionally oriented peasants' leaders. They turned the end of the war and the dissolving of the Ustasha regime into a one-party victory and laid down the foundations of the post-war communist Yugoslavia.

The new state evolved as a socialist federation of six republics, five of which were, in the terms of Anthony D. Smith, ethnic nations and the sixth (Bosnia and Herzegovina) was recognised as such in the 60s through the hybridisation of religion and ethnicity (Muslims). The integration of the state was assured through a repressive communist party apparatus that controlled all spheres of life by fictitiously acting "from the ground". Civil liberties were suppressed, liberal ideas condemned and national strivings punished. Croats experienced two waves of mass political exodus following the end of WW2 and after 1971 with a great number of emigrants between these periods. The number of Croats living in Diaspora was thus enlarged to over 2 million. The need to stabilise and politically modernise the country led the communists to adopt a new Constitution in 1974 that introduced elements of a confederate system by giving more autonomy to the republics.

The Constitution not only failed to stabilise the country but also caused new tensions on national and political grounds. With the collapse of communism in Europe, Croatia and Slovenia opted for more dynamic democratic changes. In spring 1990 both countries decided to independently organise multi-party elections. In May 1990, the *Croatian Democratic Union* (HDZ) led by Dr Franjo Tuđman won a majority of seats in the Croatian Parliament. The new Croatian Constitution was proclaimed in December 1990 and in May 1991 the referendum showed that 94 percent of Croatian citizens supported the idea of Croatian sovereignty, independence and autonomy. Relying on the results of referendum, the Croatian Parliament adopted the Proclamation of Sovereignty and Independence of the Republic of Croatia on June 25, 1991.

The militant Serbian nationalists living in Croatia received the Proclamation as a threat. Manipulated and assisted in arms by the Serbian Government led by President Milošević, who from a hard-line communist suddenly became a militant nationalist, and the Yugoslav Army that remained "the last fortress of communism", Croatian Serbs engaged in an aggressive war against Croatia. In few months, one third of Croatian territory was already occupied and nearly half a million of its citizens displaced from their homes. Following the attack on Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992 Croatia additionally cared for 300.000 refugees. In the summer of 1995, part of the occupied territories was regained through military and police operations while the remaining part (Eastern Slavonia) was peacefully reintegrated in January 1998. The reintegration led to a huge migration of Croatian Serbs from the formerly occupied territories to Serbia.

In less than a decade Croatian citizens have been faced with number of deep crises and challenges: from post-communist enthusiasm, awareness-rising and nation-building, through the loss of national territory, the experience of insecurity, aggression and displacement, to the

renewal of social fabric and the re-balancing of pluralism, the reconstruction of national economy and the restoration of human potentials, as well as the renovation of natural resources for the country's further development and growth.

Unfortunately, independence and war victory did not automatically bring long-expected benefits to Croatian citizens. Partly due to the war and partly to an autocratic political leadership, the democratic changes that most of the post-communist countries were passing through rather continuously in that period, were halted in Croatia. The parliamentary democracy remained at an immature stage as well as civil society. Political rhetoric dominated over the need for political correctness and responsibility and nationalistic discourses were frequently used by political elite as instruments of public manipulation. The legal system was adopted to provide for nepotism, corruption and arbitrariness, leaving an average citizen unprotected from the power structures. The national enthusiasm that marked the beginning of 90's turned to social apathy by the end of 90s with the lack of vision, low level of citizens' empowerment and their almost non-existent participation in decision-making processes, especially among the young. The implementation of privatisation policy deprived many Croatian citizens of their rights to have a share in the distribution of the society's wealth which they themselves had accumulated during socialism. Modernisation and social development was equated with populism and false traditionalism; the society was once more divided on ideological, ethnic and religious grounds.

The general election held on 3 January 2000 brought victory to two opposition political blocks, one formed by the *Social Democratic Party of Croatia* and the *Croatian Social Liberal Party* which secured 40 percent of the popular vote and another formed by *Croatian Peasant Party*, *Croatian People's Party*, *Istrian Democratic Parliament* and *Liberal Party* with 16 percent of the votes. The two blocs formed a six-party coalition that announced, in its *2000-2004 Action Programme*, comprehensive changes with a view to pull the country out of the economic and social crisis and, moreover, to create a solid foundation for economic and social development in the years to come. The principles, to which the Government has committed itself, are:

- development of democracy and civil society
- strengthening of market-economy, and the
- preparation of Croatia for integration into the European Union

Some of the areas to be primarily targeted are: the change of legislation in line with the EU standards; the stabilisation of public finance and the introduction of an efficient budget management; the reduction of the state power and of public spending, as well as the rationalisation of the use of public resources; strengthening of the rule of law; making the state and local government more efficient, accountable and responsive to the citizens' needs and demands; the promotion of the entrepreneurship as well as the quality education, science and technology.

1.1. Social context

Although there has been no systemic research on the changes in Croatian society during the last decade, the results of several small-scale studies indicate that it has assumed a bipolar structure. The middle class has almost disappeared and the society is being divided into the two opposing groups, in terms of income, wealth, power and dominance. On the one side is a group, small in number, of "nouveau riches" for which the term "mafocracy" has been coined. This group is, in the perception of many, the only beneficiaries of the introduction of market economy and privatisation, except possibly for those involved in new communication technologies. The dominance of the so called mafocracy was reputedly ensured mainly through links to the former

government structures and, especially, to a small number of former political leaders. The year 2000 parliamentary changes challenged their social position but did not alter their economic privileges, as the process of privatisation and its misconduct have not yet been thoroughly reviewed. On the other side, there is a majority of impoverished citizens that live little above existence minimum. Those who work regularly without pay for months and those who are unemployed occupy the lowest niches of this group.

Due to the lack of data, the recent shift in political power that brought disconnection in the former wealth-power-dominance structure does not allow us to define a social mobility system nor to determine the mechanisms of social restructuring in Croatia nowadays. It remains unclear whether social positions are still reproduced through family background, ethnicity/nationality and/or political "correctness", or are more dependent on the level of education and/or market opportunities. Everyday experience would seem to show that the role of education in upward mobility is still limited to a small number of cases, that ethnicity/national background has less and less importance and that party and nepotistic mechanisms still prevail - although market forces may soon alter such relations.

Another two important features of Croatian social structure are demographic loss and the depopulation of island areas. Indirect and direct losses in population are the consequence of wars and of a negative migration balance in the 20th century. As indicated above, more than 2,000,000 of the first, second and third generation Croats live in Diaspora. As a direct and indirect outcome of the last war, it is estimated that 250-350,000 Croatian citizens have left the country. Up to 20,000 persons has been declared killed or missing, and over 30,000 are remained disabled. It is estimated that over 120,000 young men and women have migrated to the developed countries all over the world and that an almost equal number of Croatian Serbs who were living on the occupied territories left the country after the reintegration.

As the figures below show, the average age of Croatian population is high and the reproduction rate is unfavourable. The death rate is slightly higher than the birth rate (11.3 as compared to 11.2) producing a negative natural increase of - 0,1. Demographic trends are positive in urban centres and negative in almost all rural areas, especially on small islands where the problem of continuous depopulation has been faced throughout the century. Despite the fact that the parent-child bonds remain strong throughout one's life, most Croatian families live as two-generation social units and the average number of persons per household is 3.1. By 1991, more than half of the population (54.29) lived in 14 municipalities, towns and cities, including Zagreb, the capital, which has a population of 1 million.

The structure of population by sex and age as well as the life expectancy at birth by sex, are the following:

Population by sex (1991 Census)

<i>Total</i>	4,784.265	%
Men	2,318.623	48.5
Women	2,465.642	51.5

Population by age (1991 Census)

0-14	19.8
15-24	13.6
25-64	55.0
65 and over	11,6

Life expectancy at birth by sex (1988-1990):

Total	72.27
Men	68.59
Women	75.95

Population aged 15 and over by educational attainment (1991 Census, in percentage)

	Total	men	women
No schooling or unknown	10.1	6.3	13.5
4-7 of basic schooling	21.2	17.6	24.6
basic school	23.4	22.4	24.2
vocational school	12.7	17.8	8.0
technical school	11.5	12.3	10.9
grammar school	2.3	1.8	2.8
non-grammar secondary school	9.5	10.9	8.1
non-university college	4.0	4.5	3.7
university (faculty and art academy)	5.3	6.4	4.2

Population aged 10 and over by illiteracy (1991 Census, in percentage)

Total	2,97
Men	1,16
Women	4,78

1.2. Political context

Croatia has been established as a parliamentary multiparty republic. The work of the central government is based on the principle of the sharing of power as well as of co-operation and control among its legislative (Parliament), executive (President and Government) and judicial branches. The exercise of central power is further limited by the Constitutional right to local and regional self-government. The supreme head of the executive power in Croatia is the President.

The political scene includes several major and middle-size parties and a great number of small parties with specific political interests and programmes. Although many still lack clear political priorities, the major ones are, with some exceptions, now becoming more stabilised and balanced on the left-right continuum. Contemporary political pluralism consists of 74 parties as registered by the Ministry of Administration and Judiciary by June 2001. A total of 7 parties represent the political interests of national and ethnic minorities or communities:

- 4 Serbian (*Independent Democratic Serbian Party, Party of Danubian's Serbs, Serb People's Party, Serbian Democratic Party of Baranja*)
- 1 Italian (*Italian Democratic Union*)
- 1 Roma/Gypsy (*Romany Party of Croatia*).

Serb People's Party holds one seat in the Parliament.

From 1990 to 2000, the *Croatian Democratic Union* held a majority of seats in the Parliament. At the 3 January 2000 parliamentary elections, the two opposition blocks secured 56 percent of the votes and later formed a six-party-coalition government headed by the *Social Democratic Party of Croatia's* leader Ivica Račan (*Croatian Social Liberal Party, Croatian Peasant Party, Croatian People's Party, Liberal Party, Istrian Democratic Parliament*). The candidate of the *Croatian*

People's Party, Stjepan Mesić, won the presidential elections. The parties represented in the Parliament and the number of seats they currently hold (in percentage), is as follows:

• <i>Social Democratic Party of Croatia (SDP)</i>	30.46 %
• <i>Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ)</i>	27.15 %
• <i>Croatian Social Liberal Party (HSLs)</i>	14.60 %
• <i>Croatian Peasant Party (HSS)</i>	10.60 %
• <i>Istrian Democratic Parliament (IDS)</i>	2.65 %
• <i>Democratic Centre (DC)</i>	2.65 %
• <i>Croatian Party of Rights (HSP)</i>	2.65 %
• <i>Croatian People's Party (HNS)</i>	1.32 %
• <i>Liberal Party (LS)</i>	1.32 %
• <i>Alliance of the Croatian Littoral and Highland (PGS)</i>	1.32 %
• <i>Croatian Christian Democratic Union (HKDU)</i>	0.66 %
• <i>Croatian Independent Democrats (HND)</i>	0.66 %
• <i>Slavonia and Baranja Croatian Party</i>	0.66 %
• <i>Serb People's Party</i>	0.66 %

Although the-six-party coalition is passing through a number of crises and has recently been reduced to the "group of five" and although the government and administration structure is still burdened by political divisions, the coalition has shown that political dialogue is possible at all levels. The government has, in some sectors more than in others, initiated discussion with local leaders, non-governmental and professional organisations in drafting, financing and the implementation of policy programmes, legislative and the plans of actions. However, the changes are still slow and often handicapped by a narrow politicisation of public and professional life.

1.3. Cultural Context

Croatia is a multicultural, multilingual, multi-religious and multi-ethnic country. *Multiculturalism* in the narrow sense of the term refers to differences in the style of living. For Croatia, this distinction is applicable to regional, rural-urban and sex/gender differences as well as to the age variations. *Multilingualism* refers to the existence of different languages recognised officially (usually as bilingualism in the territories where non-Croats make the majority of the population) or practised in everyday encounters of citizens of different linguistic background. The category can as well be extended to include dialect and regional variations of both majority and some minority languages. *Multi-religiosity* refers to different religious practices in Croatia, including atheism. *Multi-ethnicity* covers the differences in ethnic (self)identification of Croatian citizens. The Croatian legal system differentiates between national minority and ethnic community, reflecting the dualism inherited from the communist past. The status of national minority has a group that by origin belongs to a nation with its majority living within its own state (e.g. Albanians, Hungarians). Ethnic minority is a group that by its origin differs from the majority of the population but has no majority of the same origin that lives in its own state (e.g. Roma/Gypsies). These groups *de jure* enjoy equal rights and are guaranteed equal protection by law. This is probably the reason why in the amended Article 3 of the *Constitutional Law on Human Rights and Freedoms and Rights of Ethnic and National Communities and Minorities in the Republic of Croatia*, which establishes the principle of equal protection of all persons belonging to minorities, all groups are listed by name and recognised as "national minorities", including Roma/Gypsy population.

According to the 1991 Census, Croats make 78.1 percent of the total population while 21.9 percent goes, according to the Preamble of the Constitutional Law, to 22 minority groups: Albanians, Austrians, Bosniaks, Bulgarians, Czechs, Germans, Greeks, Hungarians, Italians, Jews, Macedonians, Montenegrins, Poles, Roma/Gypsies, Romanians, Russians, Russianians, Serbs, Slovenes, Turks, Ukrainians and Vlachs. Five out of 22 are the "new minority groups" i.e. those groups that were recognised as constitutive peoples/nations in former Yugoslavia (Bosniaks formerly referred to as Muslims, Macedonians, Montenegrins, Serbs and Slovenes).

Contemporary ethnic composition of the country is as follows (1991 Census, in percentage):

Croats	78.1
Serbs	12.2
Muslims	0.9
Slovenians	0.5
Hungarians	0.5
Italians	0.4
Czechs	0.3
Albanians	0.2
Montenegrins	0.2
Others	6.7

The Roma/Gypsy population makes 0.14 of the total. The group is historically small in number although recent estimates done by some ethnic associations put the population at around 40,000 which is over six times more than the official data from the 1991 Census. The discrepancy in statistics may be the consequence of the waves of (re)migration of the population in the last decade as well as an outcome of a long history of stigmatisation and segregation of Roma/Gypsy population in former Yugoslavia. Over two-thirds of Roma/Gypsies living in Croatia are long-term settlers and over 70 percent of them live in 7 municipalities, a second largest group settled on the outskirts of the Croatian capital. Most of them still live in disadvantaged conditions: poor housing, lack of water supplies and electricity, illiteracy, high rate of unemployment, etc. An average Roma/Gypsy family has three times more children than an average Croatian family and, in the same time, far too little means for living. Some 30 percent of the families have either four or five children. The groups differ in dialect, religion and settlement. A significant number of Roma/Gypsy population (70 percent), known as *Bajaši*, speaks a dialect of the Romanian language (*Ljimba alu Bajašalor*) and belongs either to Roman Catholic or Orthodox Church. The *Romani čib* dialects are spoken by *Lovari*, *Kalderaši* and *Kanjari* who identify themselves either as Catholics or Orthodox, as well as by *Arlije*, *Gurbeti* and *Đambasi* who belong to Islam. The former two groups consider themselves as autochthonous Croat Roma/Gypsies and feel distant from the third group that came recently from different parts of former Yugoslavia. These intra-group divisions have a negative impact on the promotion of Roma/Gypsy interests in Croatia. The population has now 16 different ethnic associations and institutions with no shared and integrated agenda which make it even more difficult for the group to define and pursue its common interests.

Religious composition of the country comprises the following communities (1991 Census):

Roman Catholic	76.5
Orthodox	11.1
Islamic	1.2
Protestant	1.4
Atheists	3.9
Others or unknown	6.9

The ecumenical dialogue has been held for a while among the high-ranked representatives of major denominations although very little has yet been achieved at the lower levels of church hierarchy and among the believers. Freedom of conscience and religion is guaranteed by the *Constitution of the Republic of Croatia*. Article 42 further stipulates that "All religious communities are equal before the law and separated from the state." However, the process of "privatisation" of religion is still to be achieved. The transformation of the churches from a former role of national gatekeepers to modern civil institutions is disjointed and slow in Croatia as in many post-communist countries, due to a long period in which religious sentiments were used and abused for political purposes.

The Croatian language and Latin script are in official use in the Republic of Croatia. The Constitution stipulates that " in particular local units and under the terms regulated by laws, another language as well as Cyrillic and some other script may also be in use besides Croatian language", (see the next chapter for details).

The state's markers derive from the history of Croatian people. The flag symbolises the unification of historical Croatian lands. It consists of red, white and blue that were the colours of the 19th century Illyrian Movement known as Croatian national renaissance. In its centre is a shield-shaped coat of arms filled with red and silver squares and crowned with five historical symbols: the oldest Croatian coat of arms and the coats of arms of the Dubrovnik Republic, Dalmatia, Istria and Slavonia.

The days recognised as national holidays are: New Year's Day, Labour Day, Bleiburg and the Way of the Cross, Victims Day, Statehood Day, the Day of the Antifascist Struggle, Homeland Thanksgiving Day, Assumption of Mary and Christmas. Other holidays for which a paid one-day-leave is guaranteed apply to the members of religious communities, i.e. Orthodox Christmas, Epiphany, Easter Monday, The Ramazan Bayram, All Saints' Day, Kurban Bayram, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

1.4. Economic context

Until very recently, Croatia was confronted by deep economic crisis which was the combination of transitional recession and war devastation. It has sustained direct and indirect war damages totalling to HRK 236.4 billion (US\$ 37.4 billion. The GDP dropped by 21.1 percent in 1991. In 1993 it fell by another 17.7 percent, and in 1993 by an additional 8 percent. Of a total of 488 municipalities in the Republic of Croatia, 362 sustained war damage to a certain extent and some 1,200 companies suffered direct damage. The war also caused loss of some 150,000 jobs. Vast areas of agricultural land are still contaminated by land mines and unsafe for use. Industry and tourism were reduced to one third of their pre-war capacity until the summer of 2001. The structure of national economy in which agriculture accounted for 10%, industry for 30% and services for 60% was severely disturbed. At the same time, the need for nation building, extremely high war expenses, reconstruction, accommodation of refugees and displaced persons, the improvement of social well-being of the citizens, as well as an expensive state apparatus, placed severe upward pressure on expenditures. Between 1991 and 1999, public sector spending increased by more than 16 percent.

Some of the indicators for 1998 and 2001 are presented in the table below:

<i>Selected economic indicators*</i>	1998	2001
GDP (mill US\$)	21,628	21,195
Real GDP (% growth rate)	2.52	4.21
Real private consumption (% growth rate)	-0.6	5.3 (I-IV)
Real general govern. consumpt. (% growth rate)	2.3	-2.7 (I-III)
Real investments(% growth rate)	2,5	11,6 (I-III)
Industrial production (pa, %change)	3.7	7.0 (I-III)
Trade balance (mill US\$)	-4,147	1,853 (I-V)
Domestic public debt (mill US\$)	15,047.8	22,900.2 (IV)
External public debt (mill HRK)	21,049.7	43,430.3 (IV)
Total public debt (% GDP)	26,2	38,2
Unemployment rate (pa, % change)	17.2	22.75 (I-IV)
Average monthly net wages (pa, % change)	12.8	8.3 (I-III)

*Source: The World Bank Country Office Zagreb (based on the Central Bureau of Statistics, Croatian National Bank, Ministry of Finance)

Recently, the stabilisation program has begun to show the first signs of economic recovery. Upward trends are recorded in exports, industrial output, retail trade, salaries and tourist-bed-nights. Privatisation has been largely completed; nearly two thirds of the economy is privatised and more than three quarters of banking assets are in private hands. In 2000, the Government reduced expenditures by some 5 percent of GDP and has continued to do so in 2001. However, because of the high taxes a considerable part of the economic activity still goes underground thus reducing the profitability in the formal sector. The rate of investments is still very low.

2. Policies and legislative base

Three groups of documents are described below:

- constitutional provisions,
- the laws on education
- the laws on the protection of human rights and freedoms and the rights of national and ethnic minorities or communities

2.1. General considerations

The Croatian authorities are in the process of preparing for extensive and systemic legislative changes. A large number of new laws are being drafted with a view to making the legal system of the country more efficient in meeting the needs of democratic development and more congruent with the European integration processes. The changes are pertinent to the *Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the European Communities and Its Member States and the Republic of Croatia*, initiated in May 2001, as well as to other international and national agreements.

Croatia has signed and ratified a large number of international and European legal instruments relevant for the promotion of EDC and MofD, including *the European Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities* and the *Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination*. The government is now considering the acceptance of Article 14 of the Convention that would allow individuals and groups of individuals to file petitions before the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

A) The Constitution of the Republic of Croatia

The Constitution in Article 3 determines that "the highest values of the constitutional order of the Republic of Croatia are: *freedom, equality, equality of nations and sexes, peacefulness, social justice, respect for human rights, inviolability of ownership, conservation of natural and human environment, the rule of law, and a democratic multiparty system*. Article 14 establishes the fundamental principles of equality before the law as well as the right of every individual to enjoy all rights and freedoms "regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, education, social status or other characteristics". Among the civil and political liberties, the Constitution in Article 38 guarantees the freedom of the media and prohibits censorship, while Article 39 stipulates that any call for the incitement to national, racial or religious hatred or any form of intolerance shall be prohibited and punishable.

Article 15 the Constitution refers to the right of the members of national minorities. Republic of Croatia guarantees equal rights to the members of all national minorities and, in particular, the right to express their nationality, to use freely their language and script and to exercise their cultural autonomy. In addition to the general suffrage, the law may provide, to the members of national minorities, the right to elect their own representatives to the Croatian Parliament. Equality and protection of the members of national minorities are governed by the Constitutional law adopted according to the procedure valid for the adoption of organic laws.

Articles 40 establishes the freedom of conscience and religion and free public expression of religion or other conviction while the Article 42 stipulates that "all religious communities are equal before the law and separated from the state". Subject only to such limitations as prescribed by law, religious communities are free to practice their religion in public, establish and administer schools and institutes as well as social and charity institutions and "shall, in their work, enjoy the protection of, and assistance from the state".

Articles 65-66 set forth the main principles related to education. The Constitution stipulates that "(p)rietary schooling shall be compulsory and free" and that "(e)veryone shall have access, under the same conditions, to secondary and higher education in accordance with his abilities". Under the conditions provided by law, citizens may open private schools and teaching institutions. In addition, Article 67 guarantees autonomy to the university in making decisions on its organisation and activities, in accordance with the law.

B) The laws on education

The Law on Pre-school Upbringing and Education

The Law determines pre-school education as an integral part of the Croatian educational system which begins with the nursery and kindergarten and ends up at the pre-collegiate level. It establishes the principles of equality of access, freedom of parental choice, and a humanistic approach to child development as the basis for pre-school upbringing and education. It stimulates the variety of educational forms in which pre-school education can be established, including alternative and short-term specialised and school-preparation programmes and stipulates that these programmes may be carried out by public, private or church organisations. The main focus is on the fulfilment of comprehensive needs of pre-school children, their well-being and pro-social competencies as well as their parent's interests following humanistic and developmental approaches of high standard.

The Law on the Changes and the Amendments of the Law on Primary Schooling and the Law on the Changes and the Amendments of the Law on Secondary Schooling

The new laws on the changes and amendments of the laws regulating primary and secondary schooling passed through Parliament in June 2001, after a number of trials in drafting a comprehensive, non-partial law on education. Two main reasons for the adoption of changes were said to be the quest for the decentralisation of financing and for fostering the autonomy of schools and local communities in decision-making and management. The need for assuring more responsibility at local level was also mentioned among the reasons. Unfortunately, some of the major systemic strategies that have emerged recently, i.e. a standard driven accountability, whole school reform, market strategies and a horizontally and vertically shared decision-making system, have not been discussed nor legally defined in Croatia yet.

Both new laws on primary and secondary schooling recognise schools as legal entities. The founder of educational institutions can be the Republic of Croatia, local and regional self-government units, religious communities and other legal and natural persons. Public needs in primary schooling are determined by pedagogical standards issued by Parliament. The teaching language is Croatian except for the minority school and the schools with international programmes. The laws stipulate that alternative programmes and methods may be used in education and that parents and students have the right to choose the type, form and methods of learning. School statutes regulate the organisation and governing of the school, including the election of the principal and the role of the parents' council. The main governing body is the school committee comprising of representatives of teachers and teacher assistants, parents' council and the local/regional government. In the secondary school, the representatives of the students' council may participate in the work of the school committee when decisions on students' rights and responsibilities are made but have no right to vote. The committee is solely responsible for the nomination of school principal. The laws also stipulate that central and local/regional governments share in financing public schools. The resources from the state budget are allocated, *inter alia*, to teachers' salaries, in-service teacher training, additional expenditures for minority programmes and the programmes for the gifted, information provision to schools, co-financing of private schools and for capital investments. The *Law on Education in Language and Script of National Minorities* regulates the education of primary and secondary school minority students.

The Law on Higher Education

A draft new law on institutions of tertiary education has been prepared and is now being reviewed and discussed in the academic community. It is influenced by the standards of the *Bologna Declaration*, as well as the *CRE International Institutional Quality Review* and the *Report of the Universities Project Visiting Advisors Programme of the Salzburg Seminar*. It is expected that the changes will target several major drawbacks of the existing system, in particular the institutional autonomy in decision-making on personnel and allocation of resources, academic freedom, standards of achievement, evaluation and quality control, transparency and accountability, partnership in financing, intra-institutional and inter-institutional co-operation, in particular between the Ministry of Science (responsible for the tertiary sector, including pre-service teacher education) and the Ministry of Education and Sport (responsible for the pre-tertiary sector and in-service teacher training), etc.

The existing Higher Education Law (Article 3) recognises the principle of academic autonomy and freedom (freedom of scientific, artistic, and technological research and production; autonomy in designing educational, scientific, artistic, and professional programmes; appointing personnel and heads of institutions, decision-making on study regulations and student enrolment criteria,

determination of internal organisation, etc.) but fails in determining appropriate standards, conditions and control mechanisms for the exercise of such autonomy.

The Law on Scientific Research

As with the Law on Higher Education, a draft new Law on Scientific Research is in the process of being reviewed and discussed by research institutions and the university. The findings of the project on Scientific Policies of the South-East European Countries in Transition - Case Study: Croatia indicate a long-lasting marginalisation and stagnation of the R&D field caused by the lack of public awareness of the importance of scientific research for social development. Croatia has no systemic and long-term designed scientific research policy. Investment in science is lagging far behind European standards, reaching as low as 0.40 percent of GDP, financing is centralised while management is still politicised, the infrastructure and support systems are underdeveloped, internationally recognised evaluation and quality control have not been established and a dynamic science-state-public interaction has not yet been achieved.

The existing law stipulates that research activities in Croatia shall be outlined by the National Scientific Research Program. Article 6 recognises the following principles as the bases for scientific research: a) freedom of research and creativity; b) public access to research results; c) protection of intellectual property rights; d) competitiveness of scientific programs and proposals; e) inalienability and safety of man's individuality and dignity; f) scientific ethics and the responsibility of scientists for the results of their work; g) environmental protection; h) links between scientific research and higher education, and i) international scientific co-operation.

The Students' Conference Law

A new law regulating students' participation is now being prepared with a view to providing them with a more active role in decision-making processes. The existing Law recognises the right of students and their representatives to participate in the management of higher education institutions or the universities in a rather passive manner. They are eligible: a) to define and implement their programmes in the field of education, culture, sport and technical culture, as well as other programmes which interest them, to be financed from the state budget and other resources; b) to organise and implement the programmes promoting their social and economic well-being; c) to nominate student representatives in the international student organisations and other relevant organisations; d) to give comments on draft regulations relating to their status, as well as to their social and economic condition; e) to support the passing of regulations in their interest and f) to carry out the tasks determined by other laws or statutes.

C) The laws on the protection of human rights and freedoms and the rights of national and ethnic minorities or communities

The Constitutional Law on Human Rights and Freedoms and Rights of Ethnic and National Communities and Minorities (Constitutional Law of Human Rights)

The Croatian authorities are now in the process of drafting a new constitutional law on the rights of minorities in consultation with the Venice Commission mainly to overcome some of the shortcomings in the implementation of minority provisions. The existing Law provides extensive guarantees of the rights and freedoms of national and ethnic communities and minorities in key areas of life including non-discrimination and equality, free participation in the public sphere, protection from any act that may endanger their existence; free choice and the protection of their

identity, free choice of education, public and private use of native language and script, freedom of religion, access to public media, development and protection of cultural heritage, possession and public use of their collective objects and symbols, as well as the freedom to organise for the protection of their interests. Article 5 explicitly guarantees the right to cultural autonomy. Furthermore, the Law addresses the issue of minority participation in public affairs and minority representation at state and local levels, including special administrative arrangements in areas where national minorities constitute a considerable proportion of the population. The Law also grants special status to certain districts with a majority of ethnic minority members, the provision that was reinforced in 2000 after having been suspended for some years. Article 4 guarantees the assistance of the Republic of Croatia in strengthening the relations between minorities and their states of origin with a view to promoting their national, cultural and linguistic development.

The Law on the Use of National Minorities Language and Script in the Republic of Croatia

The Law determines the conditions under which the languages and scripts of national minorities may be used in equal fashion to the Croatian language: in courts as well as in the procedures and documentation of local and regional administration, in the names of public institutions, geographical areas, streets, etc. This provision applies: a) to towns, municipalities and counties where national minority constitutes the majority in the population; b) when an equal use of minority language is ensured on the basis of an international agreement to which Croatia is a signatory; c) when the use is recognised by the statute of a municipality or a town, and d) when it is recognised in the work of administration by the statute of a county on whose territory there are municipalities and towns where the provision is applied. In any case, an official use of minority language must be approved and recognised by the acts of a local unit.

The Law on Education in the Languages and Scripts of National Minorities

The Law sets the framework for the implementation of national minorities right to education in their language and script from pre-school to the university level, comprising regular schools and other forms of education, such as seminars and summer and winter schools. Other laws regulate the establishment and management of such schools, and their legal status. The Law stipulates that minority schools and/or classes may be established with a smaller number of students than in the case of the majority language-led schools. According to Article 6, the minority education programme consists of a common core and specific minority subjects or courses (minority language and literature, history, geography and culture). It is obligatory for a minority student to learn the Croatian language and the Latin script. Minority education programmes are determined and approved by the Ministry of Education and Sport on the basis of reviews done by minority associations. Articles 10-15 envisage that: a) minority school and/or class teachers should be qualified professionals, belonging to a minority or non-minority, who are fluent in the minority language and script; b) school documentation, certificates and diplomas are written in both minority and majority languages and scripts; c) the governing body of the minority school consists, at least, of a qualified majority of national minority representatives; d) a minority school principal may be chosen from the minority group or from a non-minority group providing he/she is fluent in the minority language and script; e) minority education advisers and minority school inspectors working in the Ministry of Education and Sport should be of a minority background or non-minority professionals who are fluent in minority languages and scripts; f) minority school teachers are educated at appropriate institutions of higher education or are assisted in their preparation in another way; and g) minority schools may use textbooks from their native countries upon the approval of the Ministry. Minority education is financed from the state budget. Minority schools may also receive additional funding from other resources.

2.2. Education for democratic citizenship

2.2.1. Curriculum

Croatia has no national curriculum in a proper sense of the word. As noted in *The Basis for Restructuring of Educational System of the Republic of Croatia*, "curricula do not define the required level of knowledge to be acquired for the planned material neither do they define the time required for a particular quantum of knowledge, i.e., for the processing of individual teaching units. Hence, the perpetual misconception of pupils being overloaded, of curricula being too extensive and impossible to complete". The document issued by the Ministry of Education and Sport entitled the *national Plan and Programme for Primary and Secondary Schools in 2000* is a collection of elementary and secondary course objectives and contents developed by professionals belonging to particular disciplines. The document is still heavily program-oriented and lacks criteria for assessment and quality control. It reflects a centralised system in which the Ministry controls the input (the programme and syllabuses) while the output (the level of students' learning) is left to teachers and their evaluation skills. The mandate of school inspectors is to control the implementation of a course's (school subject) programme on the basis of school documentation, while educational advisers working at the Ministry assist the teachers in finding more adequate methods of a particular programme implementation.

The 2000 national Plan and Programme for Primary and Secondary Schools has the *National Human Rights Education Programme* included as part of regular school activities. The document suggests that it may be implemented cross-curricularly or as an optional subject or programme, in regular teaching, as well as in extra-curricular activities depending on the school or teachers' preferences. Teachers are advised to decide on the implementation strategy in co-operation with their students, colleagues in school, parents and local community having in mind the level of their own preparation and of their students, as well as the availability of local resources, including the assistance of non-governmental organisations. Unfortunately, the implementation strategy has not yet been devised, and it is still unclear to many teachers and school principals whether the integration of the *National Human Rights Education Programme* in formal schooling is obligatory or not. This means that its implementation still depends on teachers' interests and/or the "permissiveness" of the school principal, who may refuse the programme on the basis of an overloaded schedule. Neither *The Basis for Restructuring of Educational System of the Republic of Croatia* nor *The Strategy for the Development of Education in the Republic of Croatia for the 21st Century* has offered solutions to resolve this ambiguity. Moreover, neither of the documents has established clear relations to the *National Human Rights Education Programme* and to EDC and MofD, in particular.

The Programme is based on an integral, multifaceted and life-long approach to learning *about*, *for* and *in* human rights, democracy and civil society. It encompasses pre-school, lower primary, upper primary and secondary school programmes as well as an adult education programme. The initial assumption of the Programme is that the right to education is the basis for the exercise of all other rights and freedoms recognised as "the universal, indivisible and inalienable values of humanity". "Whether and to what extent the individual will develop his/her innate potentials to

his/her own benefit, the benefit of his/her society, as well as of future generations depends on learning and teaching goals, contents and methods". Consequently, the Programme envisages an education that is:

- equally accessible to all, regardless of individual differences among students in view of their national, ethnic, religious, linguistic or other background, opinion or worldview;
- diversified in organisation, content and methodology so as to meet the individual needs of every student and the general interests of the community to which the pupil belongs;
- based on humanistic science and facilitated through the use of modern communication and information technologies;
- focused on respecting human dignity and the fundamental values of a democratic community.

The main aim of the Programme is to assist children, young people and adults in learning the basic principles and values of democracy and civil society, as well as to develop intellectual and social skills for an active and productive participation in a pluralist and parliamentary democracy. Human rights education is defined as a holistic and a life-long process of the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values and perspectives that are indispensable for the promotion of personal dignity and democratic society. The axis of the Programme consists of the concepts of universal human rights and fundamental freedoms, equality, social justice and inclusion, civil awareness and responsibility, pluralism and intercultural understanding, tolerance and the respect for differences, co-operation and partnership, peace and non-violent conflict resolution, as well as social stability and security. It is said that individual freedom and development of society depend on "an individual understanding and acceptance of these values, as well as on strengthening of social institutions for their promotion and protection".

The Programme comprises the following issues for each educational level:

- national and international background and context (international and national human rights standards, legal provisions, existing approaches, etc.)
- psychological and pedagogical foundations for the implementation of the programme;
- specific objectives in the development of knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and behaviour;
- programme units and specific topics;
- implementation strategies (democratic school environment, methods and social forms in learning/teaching for human rights).
- systemic monitoring/observation, assessment and evaluation (quality of students' interactions and team-work; self-awareness and respect for democratic rules and procedures in the school; the cases of discrimination and exclusion on ethnic, religious, socio-economic or ability grounds)
- the role of the teacher (reflexive, competent, empowered and caring professional);
- the prerequisites for a systemic approach to human rights education (appropriate legal instruments; teacher training; preparation of school administration and educational specialists; co-operation and partnership with parents and local community, including governmental and non-governmental organisations; development of teaching and learning materials; involvement of the media);

The implementation is based on two strategic concepts:

- a) the CARROT MULTI-LEVEL APPROACH - from a synergic individual experience at the lower primary education level, through a descriptive analysis and interpretation at the upper primary education level, to an interdisciplinary synthesis at the tertiary education level;
- b) the PIRA MULTI-METHOD APPROACH (participation, interaction, reflection and anticipation).

Global units that permeate the Programme at all levels:

- *ME level*, relates to the development of self-awareness, personal autonomy, self-respect and self-criticism;
- *ME AND THE OTHERS level*, relates to the development of awareness of differences, the development of openness, tolerance and respect for others, co-operation and solidarity;
- *US level*, relates to understanding of the shared needs of society/community based on the principles of human rights and freedoms, equality, justice, pluralism and interdependence;
- *THE WORLD AS A WHOLE level*, refers to the development of global awareness, multiple perspective, the sense for the interconnectedness of culture and nature, and the individual responsibility for global changes.

2.2.2. Structural/organisational

The Croatian government has no specific policy on EDC that reflects broad democratic principles and basic human rights in the arrangements made for the government and management of schools. With the exception of the *National Human Rights Education Programme*, these principles are more or less integrated into specific action programmes targeting, i.e., the issue of equality, as well as into more general strategic documents defining the changes in education. Some of the documents are described below.

Working Programme of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for the 2000 - 2004 Period

The Programme emerged from the Six-Party-Coalition Agreement on the organisation of the legislative and executive power in the state. It is based on a fundamental commitment to the building of a civil, democratic and market-oriented society integrated into the European Union. The ultimate goal is the achievement of a free, safe and comfortable life for all Croatian citizens, by strengthening democratic processes and civil society. Particular goals encompass: a) the development of a parliamentary system and the promotion of political dialogue and tolerance; b) the decentralisation of government functions and financing; c) the development of a modern, effective and feasible legislative system with a view to achieving the highest level of human rights protection; d) the promotion of the quality of citizens' life by fostering economic growth; e) the acceleration of privatisation and restructuring; f) the integration of Croatia into European and global economic associations, including the promotion of free trade and competitiveness; g) the implementation of an effective social welfare policy; h) the establishment of efficient health care services; h) the increase in budget transfer to education, science and culture; i) the promotion of co-operation and friendly relations at the international level and good neighbourly relations.

National Programme of Action for Children in the Republic of Croatia

The Programme was adopted by the government in 1998 in compliance with the UN General Assembly Resolution on the *World Summit for Children* held in 1990, which, *inter alia*, requires all states and other members of the international community to act towards achieving the goals defined by the *World Declaration and the Plan of Action*. Furthermore, the government issued a decision on establishing a national Council for Children. The main task of the Council is to continuously monitor the implementation of the National Programme of Action, as well as to co-ordinate the activities of the government and other organisations in the field. The Programme addresses, *inter alia*, the protection of the rights of the child, specific needs of poor children and their families, as well as of disabled children and those living with the risk. Its main strategy is

focused on public awareness raising with a view to make the problems of these groups of children widely known.

National Policy of the Republic of Croatia for the Promotion of Equality

The Policy was adopted in 1997 in line with the *Declaration and the Platform of Action of the Fourth World Conference of Women* held in Beijing in 1995. The Platform stresses the need for the empowerment of women in decision-making processes in all spheres of life. Croatian National Policy for the Promotion of Equality defines 12 target areas, including goals, measures and implementation mechanisms in relation to the promotion and protection of the human rights of women and their equality; strengthening their position in political structures; their health protection, education, in-service training, and their participation in the economy, science and culture. It also sets guidelines for the prevention of violence to, and discrimination against women and discusses the risks to women in armed conflicts. The Government Commission on Equality has been established with a view to promoting and monitoring the implementation of the national policy in line with the Beijing principles.

The Basis for Restructuring the Education System of the Republic of Croatia

The text was developed as an attempt to analyse the current educational situation and to define priorities for developing a "21st century Croatian school" in the context of European integration. Education is seen as a national strategic priority tightly linked to development, globalisation and identity formation. Influenced by the UNESCO fourfold strategy for the promotion of education pertinent to the 21st century (learning to be, to know, to act and to live together), the document outlines the main purposes, objectives and principles of educational reform, including organisation, educational standards, curricula, assessment and evaluation procedures, teacher pre-service and in-service preparation, financing, etc. Among the principles of educational reform are: the promotion of human rights, pluralism and democratic values, as well as the right to choose, equality of opportunity and the rights of minorities; development of the European identity; strengthening of autonomy and decentralisation processes; promoting professional ethics and responsibility; enhancing intellectual capital and international compatibility, etc.

The Strategy for the Development of Education in the Republic of Croatia for the 21st Century

The Strategy has been developed as an integral part of a comprehensive strategy for development of the Republic of Croatia in the 21st century. The task was carried out by 19 groups of domestic and international experts under the auspices of the Croatian government. The government adopted the document in June 2001. The key principles on which the Strategy is based are the following: person-centred approach, justice, openness, responsibility, confidence, co-operation, globalisation, identity development, efficiency, demographic recovery, the promotion of human resources and optimism. The document defines priorities and objectives in three broad areas: society, economy and international relations. Social changes encompass administration, judiciary system, education, science, technology, communication and information technology (E-Croatia), health protection, social security, culture, environment, and regional development.

Educational strategy is based on a broad analysis of the existing situation. The findings demonstrate that Croatian educational system does not comply with the European standards and that it lacks in-built mechanisms for promoting structural changes. The key strategic objective of educational reform is seen as "a modern, plural, efficient and development-oriented system of lifelong education based on the concepts of 'education for all' and the 'learning society'". The following changes are proposed:

- developing staff, infrastructure and financial resources for the integration of all children into the pre-school programmes in the year prior to the elementary school;
- reducing primary education to a period of 6 years while extending compulsory education to 9-10 years, including more optional courses and more open possibilities at the post-compulsory educational level, all in the context of lifelong learning
- reforming national curricula
- giving top priority to the promotion of information-communication technologies in education
- enhancing the efficiency of higher/university education by reducing the length of pre-graduate study and by making it more general, while extending the post-graduate study
- strengthening of the quality control in higher/university education, enhancing international co-operation in designing and implementing the curricula and in developing university management
- recognising formal and informal adult education as part of an overall educational policy, provide better integration of adult education programmes and balancing them with the market needs
- increasing investments in education, decentralisation of educational management and the improvement of educational infrastructure
- modernisation of teacher training and education
- promoting education for democratic society by affirming pluralism and by strengthening school autonomy and the role of school in a local community development.

2.2.3. Teacher training

The government has no policy on the content of, or priorities for initial teacher training and/or for in-service teacher training except for the organisation and duration of pre-service programmes. This is mainly due to the fact that decisions on teacher training are divided between the Ministry of Education and Sport and the Ministry of Science and Technology. The former is responsible for in-service teacher training, while the latter is central for pre-service teacher education. The Ministry of Education and Technology determines organisation, conditions and enrolment quotas for teacher training, while the Ministry of Education and Sport is expected to set educational (pedagogical) standards, the task that has not been achieved satisfactorily, yet There is no clear dialogue scheme between the two ministries nor the body established at the government level with a mandate to co-ordinate their work in this area.

Pre-service teacher training is carried out in two types of institutions: teachers' training and non-teachers' institutions of higher education. Teacher training institutions are of two types: a) non-university teachers' academies and teachers' high schools (for teachers of primary schools) and b) (university) pedagogical and other teachers' training faculties (for teachers of secondary schools). Teachers graduating from non-teacher training institutions (e.g. technical high schools or faculties) must complete special pedagogical-psychological courses prior to or upon their employment by schools.

Duration of the courses of study is determined on the basis of the curriculum's complexity and the time necessary for its mastery. Undergraduate university studies last at least four years while undergraduate professional studies last at least two years. University teacher training curricula are drafted by teacher training institutions, adopted by faculty councils, reviewed by the National Council for Higher Education, approved by the University Senate and financed by the Ministry of

Science and Technology. The strategies and mechanisms of quality assessment and control are either non-existent or underdeveloped.

2.3. Valuing cultural diversity and social cohesion

2.3.1 Curriculum

In 1991 when Croatia parted from Yugoslavia the national priorities became democratisation, privatisation and European integration, on the one side, and national renewal and integration, on the other side. The long-term objectives of educational reform were defined as: a) life-long learning; b) extension of elementary schooling; c) application of modern information-communication technologies and d) development of pre-graduate and post-graduate teacher training programs. Short-term objectives included:

- de-ideologisation and depoliticisation of schools, programmes and textbooks;
- changing of educational legislative;
- shift from Yugoslav patriotism to national identity;
- introduction of new curricula in all forms and levels of education in line with developed countries, including the reintroduction of gymnasium
- reintegration of religious classes and religious schools into the school system, and the
- establishment of private schools.

The framework in which the changes took place was termed "Croatisation". The process was understood in terms of standardisation of the Croatian language and the renewal of Croatian traditional values, religion, national symbols and national institutions, with a due reference to the strengthening of pluralism, as well as the European and global perspective. Such a combination of priorities became a challenge to educational authorities for at least three reasons: a) the system was still highly centralised; b) the principle of pluralism, ethnic and religious in particular, appeared inconsistent with the principle of national renewal and c) the attack on Croatia further strengthened ethnocentric tendencies in education. Thus, in the first half of the 90s, instead of pluralism and democracy, education (at the level of policy drafting, school management and staffing, curricula and textbooks) became permeated with texts conveying the ideas of national exclusiveness, purity and homogenisation. The issues of equality of differences, multiple identities and social inclusiveness were devalued and suppressed. Education (history and literature, in particular) became a powerful instrument for the transmission of Croatocentrism and/or an "integrated Croat-ness" that refused to see national, ethnic and religious diversities as a key trait of Croatian society and as an enrichment of Croatian history.

To minimise the "misuses and abuses" of education in the democratic development of Croatian society in the future, it is important that the Ministry of Education and Sport reviews the existing policies and practices in order to be able to set up convincing and efficient guidelines for a democratic and inclusive school practice based on a more balanced reading of the three main documents: *Working Programme of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for the 2000 - 2004 Period*, *The Basis for Restructuring of Educational System of the Republic of Croatia* and *The Strategy for the Development of Education in the Republic of Croatia for the 21st Century*. It seems that these documents are developed with no reference to each other and that the latter two lack coherent view on educational changes in the context of an inclusive pluralist policy as a means of strengthening equality, democracy and social cohesion.

The national Plan and Programme for Primary and Secondary school refers to the need for enriching cultural diversity in defining the objectives of specific courses but does not explicitly refer to inclusive identities nor does it address the need for social cohesion based on the recognition of the principle of pluralism. As in many other countries in the world, the principle of cultural pluralism is recognised in the Croatian educational system mainly in terms of minority educational provisions. The approach reflects rather narrow understanding of multiculturalism in which different groups are served by the state in pursuing their particular educational interests while the "shared" interests are believed to be assured through the core of national curriculum to which all groups must ascribe. Needless to say, such "ethnocentric multiculturalism" in which there is no exchange of ideas, values and practices among the groups is far too inadequate for making cultural diversities instrumental for social cohesion.

Minority education in Croatia is an integral part of the national educational system. Its organisation, structure and content is determined by the *Constitutional Law on Human Rights and Freedoms and Rights of Ethnic and National Communities and Minorities*, *The Law on Education in the Languages and Scripts of National Minorities* and the general laws on primary and secondary education, as well as by the national Plan and Programme. According to Article 6 of the *Law on Education in the Languages and Scripts of National Minorities*, minority education programmes consist of a common core and specific minority subjects or courses (minority language and literature, history, geography and culture). They are determined and approved by the Ministry of Education and Sport upon the reviews done by minority associations and are fully financed from the state budget. Minority children may be educated in their native language and script from the pre-school to higher education level in one out of three officially recognised models of minority education. Roma/Gypsy children are chiefly in mainstream schools; some also attend summer schools where they learn about their native culture, history, literature, etc. Minority programmes rarely involve principles of EDC and/or inter-culturalism, Notwithstanding, some multinational/multiethnic counties jointly develop multicultural programmes to celebrate international days (e.g. Vukovar for the European Day).

Another aspect of diversity reflected in the curricula relates to religion. Religious education was introduced into schools in 1991/92 as a 2 hours per week optional subject. Depending on the number of students, it may be organised in schools or in religious communities. Roman Catholic religious classes are organised in schools for almost 80 percent of all primary school students and 77 percent of all secondary school students. Other religious communities (Orthodox Church, Evangelical Church, Jewish Community, Islamic Community, Adventist Church, Evangelical Church etc.) chiefly organise religious instruction inside their institutions. Each religious community proposes its programme to the Ministry. The programme is implemented upon its verification by the Ministry of Education and Sport.

2.3.2. Structural/organisational

In the *Working Programme of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for the 2000 - 2004 Period* the protection of minority rights and the promotion of their status is recognised as "one of the fundamental political tasks of the Government", relying on the constitutional and legal provisions, relevant international documents and a positive tradition of inter-ethnic relations in Croatia. "The continued renewal and building of multi-ethnic confidence is the basis for the stability of the democratic order as one of the significant elements of Croatian national interests." The government has committed itself to promoting the status of minorities in co-operation with the international community and, thus, expects international support and assistance in this process. To this end, it will:

- take "all the required steps to eliminate elements of inequality of Croatian citizens, members of minority communities, present in practice";
- provide for the "full enforcement of laws regulating the rights of minorities and assuring their liberties, equality, and preservation and recognition of their identity and their participation in public life";
- "remove all the obstacles that thwart full civil integration of national minority members in Croatian society", and
- propose, *inter alia*, adequate solutions for assuring positive discrimination in electoral legislation so as to provide, along with general civil rights, for their special rights as well in the proposing and election of their representatives.

The document stresses that "the members of minorities living in Croatia represent a bridge for the advancement of relations with their countries of origin" and that they also "encourage the countries whose compatriots live as a minority in the Republic of Croatia to improve the status of the Croatian minority in such countries and to provide for their liberties and rights".

Unfortunately, the government commitments to developing an inclusive strategy for promoting cultural pluralism and minority education in Croatia have not been fully reflected in strategic documents. An inclusive educational strategy based on the recognition and respect for cultural diversities in which the minority interests are merged with the interests of the mainstream society remains to be developed.

2.3.3. Teacher training

The government has no policy on the content of, and priorities for, pre-service teacher training and/or in-service teacher training for MofD apart from the basic assumptions that derive from the requirements of specific disciplines, the science of didactics (general theory of teaching methods) and the laws regulating mainstream or minority education. One of the setbacks for higher education reform in this field is the dissolution of the National Council on Higher Education whose mandate included the issues of teacher education. According to the *Law on Education in the Languages and Scripts of National Minorities* minority programmes are taught by qualified professionals belonging to minorities or non-minority professionals who are fluent in specific minority language and script. Minority teachers are trained at appropriate institutions of higher education or are "assisted in their preparation in another way".

2.4. *Cross-cutting issues*

2.4.1. Life-long learning

Instead of the notion of *life-long learning*, *life-long education* is mentioned as a strategic concept among Croatian professionals and policy-makers. It is mostly understood in terms of schooling of adults than in terms of a continuous and inclusive system of formal, non-formal and in-formal opportunities to learn throughout life. This tendency is the result of several factors. Croatia has a long tradition of adult education with its first institutions established as far as in 1912. After WW2 a number of people's universities, workers' universities and a certain number of adult primary schools, evening secondary and post-secondary schools were established. Many of them were well staffed and equipped making the Croatian adult education system one of the most developed in Europe. Nevertheless, the educational reform of the 70s, based on the idea of learning at the work place instead of in educational institutions, led to fragmentation and almost

caused the dissolution of the whole system. By the beginning of the 90s the system underwent another series of changes. Andragogy, a separate discipline of pedagogy - i.e. the science of education - for research in adult education that dominated the field, was now attacked as "a fabrication of communism". The financial assistance to andragogical centres as well as to the publication of a unique Croatian andragogical journal was halted.

In the meantime, a life-long focus on adult education was stressed. Adult education became legally recognised as an integral part of primary and secondary education. Finally, the *Law on Folk Open Universities*, of 1997, provided for institutional and programmatic diversification of adult education. The 1996 network of adult education institutions with approved programmes consisted of 51 adult secondary schools, folk open universities, private adult schools and other institutions with similar programmes. From the middle of the 90s the number of programmes in human rights education, non-violent conflict resolution and facilitation, education for democracy, tolerance and intercultural understanding, etc. has been growing rapidly. The 1998 Summer Academy organised by the Croatian Community of Folk and Open Universities focused solely on education for human rights and democracy. Teachers at the Zagreb Folk and Open University were invited by the National Human Rights Education Committee to develop the National Adult Human Rights Education Program and are now providing training for trainers in the field, in co-operation with university professors, non-governmental organisation and the Ministry of Education.

The concept of lifelong-learning is referred to in *The Basis of the Education System in the Republic* of the Ministry of Education but is inadequately defined. The document states that "One of the most important functions of the contemporary school is to develop a child's motivation to adopt learning and to acquire knowledge as a constituent part of life, developing the need and ability for life-long learning.

The first official text in which life-long education is recognised as the key strategy for educational change is the *Strategy for the Development of Education in the Republic of Croatia for the 21st Century*. The document defines future the Croatian educational system as a network of formal, non-formal and informal institutions of different levels and forms closely linked through the strategy of continuous partnership. The life-long perspective in education is explicitly defined as the prerequisite for strengthening civil society and for sustainable economic development.

2.4.2. Research and policy development

Research activities in Croatia are regulated by the *Law on Scientific Research*. Scientific projects are carried out by the faculties, institutes and institutions for higher education. The priorities of the *National Programme on Scientific Research for the 1996-1999 Period* are derived from the scientific fields/disciplines and do not include any reference to educational policy development. No explicit reference is made to the development of democracy and civil society and to EDC and MofD, in particular. Although the mandate of the National Scientific Council is said to ensure systematic development of scientific research activity by evaluating the results as well as the position and development of science from the standpoint of international comparison, quality and the benefit to the society, until now little has been done to assess the impact and the role of scientific research on society development. The *Report of the Universities Project Visiting Advisors Programme of the Salzburg Seminar* conducted in May 2000 states that despite the fact that the "universities have the intellectual capital and the know-how to make tremendous contributions to national development and prosperity (...) they have not been invited as partners

in developing societies' reform nor do they seek partnership with industry, government and NGOs to enhance its role in the society". It is unclear whether the issues of EDC and MofD would be explicitly addressed in the future in a new research policy, the draft of which seems to focus on achieving more unity among research, education and economic development. The main aim is to make the system more flexible and open to innovations, including virtual possibilities (e.g. virtual clinics for remote coastal areas).

2.4.3. International co-operation

The Government is now becoming more active in seeking international, bilateral and multilateral co-operation in devising and implementing educational reform. Such late involvement is, at least partly, the outcome of the fact that the country was (and in some fields is still) deprived of the main international assistance programs throughout the last decade for different, mainly political, reasons. In 2000 Croatia hosted high delegations of five SEE countries, the EU and other international organisation at the *Zagreb Summit*, organised with a view to promoting reconciliation and co-operation, as well as to strengthening democracy and stability in the region with the support and assistance of the European Community. The *Final Declaration of the Summit* announced the launching of the Community assistance program known as CARDS (*Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Democratisation and Stabilisation*) that is now in operation. Croatia is also an active partner in the Stability Pact and other international programmes. However, in relation to EDC and MofD, the Ministry of Education and Sport still plays a passive role in establishing international co-operation. It is more a receiver than an active seeker of international support and assistance. A number of projects that are carried on in this field have been officially approved by the Ministry, mostly based on *ad hoc* agreements between the Ministry and an international organisation or institution.

2.4.4. Quality assurance

As stated earlier, Croatia has no policy for quality assurance in education. The issue has received considerable attention during the last decade but no satisfactory solution has yet been found. Primary and secondary education is still predominantly program-oriented, while higher education is more professor-oriented. The existing *Pedagogical Standard* regulates a small portion of the problem, mainly related to organisational and financial aspects of teaching at the pre-tertiary level. The Ministry of Education and Sport is now in the process of defining new criteria but draft papers do not explicitly address the EDC and MofD dimensions. According to the *Report of the Universities Project Visiting Advisors Programme of the Salzburg Seminar*, of May 2000, "The level of accountability is partly due to the lack of evaluation and transparent processes. (...) Neither university nor faculty assurance strategy has been developed. The pilot process to evaluate teaching staff has not received any significance. (...) The Young Researchers Programme that was introduced few years ago still has no mechanism for a systemic, cross-faculty evaluation. (I)t should be a part of a university quality assessment strategy that no university has developed yet."

2.4.5. Information and communication technologies

The development of information and communication technologies in education is recognised as one of the top priorities in all official papers dealing with educational reform. In *The Basis for Restructuring of Educational System of the Republic of Croatia*, the diversity of communication

is recognised as one of the key principles of educational reform and information technology literacy as one of the main objectives of a new national curriculum. The *Strategy for the Development of Education in the Republic of Croatia for the 21st Century* links information communication technologies to knowledge and skill acquisition, counselling, assessment, co-operation and system development. No explicit reference to the implementation of ITC in EDC and MofD has been made in these documents.

The Ministry of Education and Sport's document on the *Informatisation of School System* defines the objectives of informatisation of schools; elementary computer literacy for all; communication-information infrastructure; training of teachers and professional assistants; co-operation and partnership in relation to informatisation of schools, etc. The document is the basis for the development of School Network CROSNET, aiming at linking all pre-tertiary schools with the Ministry of Education and Sport, providing schools' with access to the Internet, the setting up of a central register and data-bank and preparing teachers for the use of ITC in their daily work. The Ministry of Science and Technology has issued a similar document for the tertiary education sector.

3. Policy implementation measures

3.1. *General considerations*

Since January 2000, the Croatian government has been busy in redefining national priorities to bring them closer to the European standards of developing social and economic well-being, democracy, civil society, pluralism and social cohesion. These goals were clearly recognised in the *Working Programme of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for the 2000 - 2004 Period*. The document also points out that education is one of the strategic instruments for promoting democratic changes. Notwithstanding, education has not received full attention, neither from the government nor from society. There is still a tendency to devalue the importance of educational reform in comparison to other sectors of society (e.g. the share of education is only 3.4 percent of GDP). This might mean that education is still perceived in terms of spending, instead of in terms of an important resource for society's development.

In 2000 *The Basis for Restructuring of Educational System of the Republic of Croatia* and in June of 2001 *The Strategy for the Development of Education in the Republic of Croatia for the 21st Century* were launched, defining WHAT SHOULD BE DONE in education to meet society's ends. The former document was developed by a group of experts from the National School Council of the Ministry of Education and Sport and is, therefore, supported by the Ministry. The latter is the work of a group of experts nominated by the central government and it has full support from there. Since these two documents differ in many respects (e.g. the level of consistency and comprehensiveness), it is necessary to consolidate their approaches and to decide explicitly HOW the changes will be achieved with respect to curricula and textbooks, teacher preparation, organisation and management of schools, financing, quality assessment, responsibility of central and local governments, co-operation with the community, etc. In this context, the development of EDC and MofD must be also addressed.

3.2. *Education for democratic citizenship*

3.2.1 Curriculum

The *national Plan and Programme for Primary and Secondary Schools in 2000* does not deal specifically with the issues of implementation. The document is still programme/course-oriented. It is taken for granted that all schools implement the National Programme on a 45 minute-class basis for which they receive money from the state's budget or (recently) partly from local governments. However, the publication on the *National Human Rights Education Programme* does deal with the implementation measures. Apart from defining the objectives, contents, (units of knowledge and skills for each age cohort) and assessment procedures, the Programme addresses the issue of implementation in reference to legal provisions, school management and organisation, teacher and parent preparation, co-operation with NGOs and local community associations, teaching/learning materials, financing, etc.

The National Human Rights Education Programme was developed by experts who worked under the auspices of the National Human Rights Education Committee of the Government of Croatia in the context of the UN Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004). It rests on the results of the UNESCO and the Netherlands Government sponsored project *Peace and Human Rights for Croatian Primary Schools* and the Calabasas Centre for Civic Education Project *Citizen and the Constitution - Foundations of Democracy*. Upon the revision made by over 40 NGOs and international organisations, as well as the approval by the government, the Programme was published in a separate edition and disseminated to primary and secondary schools. It does not refer explicitly to EDC although it does include all key dimensions of EDC and MofD, e.g. the notion of an empowered, active and responsible citizen; implementation strategies (insertion, cross-curricular permeation, the combination of both); reference to particular knowledge, skills, values and competencies; arrangements to ensure that human rights education goals are well reflected in the curriculum and learning/teaching materials, etc. *Ad hoc* observation of its implementation in some schools shows that teachers who have adequate preparation manage to efficiently integrate the human rights education programme into their courses and that they sometimes do that in co-operation with local NGOs thus linking several other projects under the human rights education umbrella.

The Ministry of Education and Sport is in the midst of developing an implementation policy for the *National Human Rights Education Programme* for primary and secondary schools, based on reviews and evaluation of existing practice. It is expected that it will address EDC and MofD issues with a view to integrating them more explicitly into the programme. The policy should also take into account a number of educational activities that are carried on by NGOs at the local level in peaceful conflict-resolution, civic and political literacy, democracy, social responsibility, the rule of law, equality, human rights or the child's rights. Throughout the last decade, while the regular system was "frozen", Croatian NGOs were engaged in preparing teachers to deal with new educational concepts and approaches. Some, e.g. Centre for Peace, Non-violence and Human Rights; Forum for the Freedom of Education; Small Step; Centre for Peace Studies; European House; School of Peace, have enough expertise to be recognised by the Ministry of Education and Sport in its attempt to strengthen human rights education in schools.

3.2.2. Structural/organisational

The development and implementation of the National Human Rights Education Programme is co-ordinated by the Human Rights Education Committee, a special body of the government established in 1996 with the mandate to deal with the matters of human rights promotion and protection through education at a national level. Upon the establishment of the National Human

Rights Committee in 2000, the National Human Rights Education Committee came under the Ministry of Education and Sport with the mandate to assess the implementation of the Programme, propose changes and co-ordinate teacher training in this field. In order to ensure more efficient implementation of the Programme at the local and school level, the Ministry of Education and Sport has recently nominated 21 human rights education county co-ordinators. Full co-operation between them and the Ministry as well as between the National Human Rights Education Committee and the National Human Rights Committee remains to be established.

Part of the implementation and assessment tasks in human rights education, including probably EDC and MofD dimensions, will in the future be carried out by a newly established Centre for Educational Research and Development, a joint initiative of the Government of the Republic of Croatia/Ministry of Science and Technology and the Open Society Foundation. The Centre is charged with assisting the government in designing implementation policy and concrete measures for the *Strategy for the Development of Education in the Republic of Croatia for the 21st Century*.

Several other institutions and bodies in the state structure that are directly related to the promotion of human rights may influence development and implementation of human rights education and EDC in Croatia in the future:

- Croatian Parliament Committee for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities
- Ombudsman
- Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for National Minorities
- Commission of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for the Relations with Religious Communities
- Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for non-governmental organisations

3.2.3. Teacher training

Due to the lack of clear priorities and a comprehensive strategy for the development of higher education, faculties and their departments are in reality extremely autonomous in changing the content of the curricula. Without a systemic study in this field, it is difficult to say with any precision which teachers' training institutions in Croatia run courses that promote EDC and MofD. Currently, several pre-graduate and post-graduate courses integrating the principles of EDC and MofD are carried out at the University of Zagreb:

- Teachers' Academy has two optional pre-service courses: *Education for Human Rights* (Department for primary-school class teachers' training) and *Education for Development* (Department for pre-school teachers' training);
- Department of Education of the Faculty of Philosophy conducts several courses relevant for this field: *Interculturalism and Education*, *Educational Anthropology* (pre-graduate level) and *Intercultural Pedagogy* (post-graduate level). From 2000/2001 the academic year 2000/2001, an integrated scheme of postgraduate education has been introduced comprising the following teaching units:
 - *Human Rights, Civil Society and Education*
 - *New Paradigms in National Minorities Education*
 - *Educational Programmes for a Culturally Plural Societies: Comparative Analysis of Aims, Objectives, Contents and Methods*
 - *Global Dimensions of Interculturalism: Theory and Implementation*
 - *Intercultural training Strategies*

- *Educational Policies of International Organisations*
- *Community-Family-School Partnership in Pre-school Education*
- *The Rights of Children in Contemporary Croatian Family Law*
- *Democratisation of Education*
- *Active Learning Strategies*
- *Educational Innovations: Choice-Movement, Home-Schooling and Email Education*
- *European Integration and Educational Changes*
- *Global and Regional Strategies for Educational Changes*
- *School Autonomy and Self-organisation*
- *Alternative Schools*
- *Active and Co-operative Learning*

In-service professional development is obligatory for all teachers. Each school is also required to organise professional development through teachers' councils. Unfortunately, the majority of councils are focused on professional and disciplinary issues.

Training in the implementation of the *National Human Rights Education Programme* has been organised by the Ministry of Education on a regional basis since 1999. Until June 2000 it was organised by the Ministry in co-operation with the Human Rights Education Associates, a non-governmental organisation from the US. Since September 2000 all seminars have been organised by the Ministry. By June 2001 over 1,500 pre-school, primary and secondary school teachers had received basic training in human rights education. Up till now, there is no teacher pre-service and in-service policy that recognises the development of the methodologies and approaches essential to the pursuit of EDC in the context of human rights teaching and/or learning.

It is important to note that from 2000/2001 the Ministry of Education and Sport has recognised teachers' training certificates issued by some NGOs as valid documents for teachers' professional promotion. The Ministry has also recently prepared the *Guide for School Principals* with the addresses of those NGOs that "support educational system in Croatia and contribute to the implementation of national educational objectives".

3.3. Valuing cultural diversity and social cohesion

3.3.1 Curriculum

Forms of education of minority children are determined by the *Law on Education in the Languages and Scripts of National Minorities*. Three models are at present used in Croatia:

Model A - education in the national minority language in a way that Croatian programmes are translated to the minority language; the Croatian language is learned for 4 hours per week from the beginning to the end of schooling;

Model B (bilingual education) - social subjects/humanities are taught in the national minority language while natural sciences are taught in Croatian language; here, too, minority students learn the Croatian language for 4 hours per week from the beginning to the end of schooling;

Model C - nurturing the native language and culture (5 additional hours per week);

Specific implementation policy for minority education is not devised apart from legal regulations and minority programmes as such.

3.3.2. Structural/organisational

National minority children may be educated in their native language and script from pre-school to higher education level. All minority schools are part of the national education system and are financed by the Ministry of Education and Sport. The number of educational institutions with minority programmes (all models) in 2000:

Minority	Pre-school	Primary School	Secondary school	Higher Education
Serbian	10	34	9	-
Italian	24	17	4	1
Czech	2	4 (11)	1	-
Hungarian	2	3 (20)	4	-
Slovak	-	4	-	-

In February 2001, the Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted the *Model for the Realisation of National Minority Members' Rights* developed by the Office for National Minorities, to serve as the framework for the 2001 distribution of the state budget to programmes and activities of the national minority organisations and institutions. The Model envisages a special programme for Roma/Gipsy population as well as a special Roma/Gipsy consultant with the mandate to monitor the implementation of the programme. Two criteria are defined for the selection of the consultant. He/she should be the member of the Roma/Gipsy population and should not hold any higher position in any of the Roma/Gipsy organisations or institutions.

Another source of support for minority programmes is the *Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Non-governmental Organisations*. The Office was established in 1998 upon an Act passed by the Government with the aim of establishing confidence and promoting co-operation between the Government and NGOs as the essential prerequisite for the development of Croatian civil society. The Office initiated the drafting of a new Law on Association and included NGOs representatives into the expert group to prepare the document. Recently, it has initiated a national dialogue to test the provision of the draft document. Interested parties can place their comments either with the Office or with the Ministry for Justice, Administration and Local Self-Government. Since January 2001, the Office has been working in the framework of the *Programme of Co-operation of the Government of Croatia with Non-governmental - Non-profit Sector in the Republic of Croatia*, a legally non-binding document that has a strong moral influence as it was developed through joint action of the Government and NGOs. The document recognises the NGO sector as an integral part of social and political life in Croatia, and sees NGOs as partners to the Government in defining public interests. It determines the rights and duties of both parties toward each other and defines areas of co-operation, namely drafting laws, consultation in the process of development of national programmes, evaluation of national policies, decentralisation, financial support to non-governmental sector etc. Some of the key principles of co-operation are:

- partnership
- transparency in the work of the Government and the NGOs sector
- strengthening the independence of the civil sector
- responsible use of public resources
- promotion of equal opportunities for all
- respect for the principle of subsidiarity as the basis for partnership

- active promotion of non-violence and the recognition of differences

In 1998, the Office developed a Model of Governmental Support to NGOs' programmes in social welfare, human rights, education, active participation of young people, etc. The procedures and the results of the tender were publicised in daily press and the National Gazette. Some of the future activities of the Office are:

- *Development of decentralisation schemes* for financial support to NGOs, in particular, providing support to regional community centres for the development of co-operation among local authorities, profit sector representatives and NGOs
- *Training of public administrators* (central and local) for more efficient co-operation with NGOs
- *Enhancing transparency* of the Office and of all state and local administration bodies
- *Development of NGOs financial assistance and evaluation models* for the allocation of state budget.

In the field of human rights protection and promotion, the government has been lately initiating a number of actions, mostly in co-operation with international organisations. Amongst them are:

- the launching of an international conference on human rights and democratisation (in co-operation with the UNHCR and the European Commission);
- the establishment of the Commission on Human Rights and the National Human Rights Education Committee;
- the development of the National System and Programme for Human Rights Promotion and Protection;
- the establishment of the Office for Human Rights, the National Committee for International Humanitarian Rights, the Working Group on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Intolerance, soon to be reorganised into the National Committee; the establishment of the National Committee for the Promotion of a Multiethnic and Democratic Society;
- the launching of the Human Rights Journal, and
- the opening of the Human Rights Documentary Centre in Zagreb in co-operation with the UNHCR.

3.3.3. Teacher training

See under 2.2.3. and 3.2.3

3.4. *Cross-cutting issues*

3.4.1. Life-long learning

See under 2.4.1.

3.4.2. Research and policy development

Although Croatia lacks policy implementation measures, some of the ongoing projects of the Ministry of Science and Technology bearing relevance for the development in EDC and MofD fields are:

- School Curriculum and the Characteristics of Croatian National Culture;
- Democratic and National Croatian Politics in the 90s;
- Youth Value System and Social Changes in Croatia;
- Educational Aspects of Reintegration;
- Psychosocial Adaptation of Children after the War and School Support;
- Croatian Democracy and Its Media;
- Quality of University Teaching;
- Minorities - Croatia's Link to Europe;
- Croatian History Standards;
- Educational Model for Croatian Danubian Region;
- Religious Communities in Croatia and Their Role in Integration Processes;
- Nation and Religion: Catholicism, Orthodoxy and Islam;
- Modern Democracy and the Republic of Croatia;
- Political Culture in Croatia;
- Structuring of Local Management and Self-management;
- Adult Education in Croatia Based on Social Changes;
- Educational Assistance to Displaced and Returned Children;
- Pedagogical Aspects of Innovative Primary School Curriculum

3.4.3. International co-operation

International co-operation relevant for the implementation of EDC and MofD principles encompasses a number of projects carried on in Croatia on the basis of agreements between the Ministry of Education and Sport and, *inter alia*, the following organisations and/or institutions:

- UNICEF (a series of projects on the rights of the child; education for development, co-operation and tolerance; peaceful conflict resolution and peer mediation; psycho-social support to displaced and refugee children and teachers, etc.)
- UNESCO (Peace and Human Rights for Croatian Primary Schools Project; Associated School Project, etc.)
- UNHCR (technical assistance in promoting human rights and democracy)
- Open Society (numerous educational projects aiming at promoting democracy and civil society; financial support for a newly established Centre for Educational Research and Development)
- Council of Europe (number of projects and activities, including Citizenship Sites and seminars on Human Rights Education and Reconciliation in Eastern Slavonia)
- European Commission (Europe in School, Tempus)
- Center for Civic Education from Calabasas, US (Project Citizen and the Constitution - Foundations of Democracy)
- Kulturkontakt from Vienna (project on Conflict Management and Non-violent Conflict Resolution)
- German Institute for Distance Learning (project on Education for Democracy)
- PRONI Institute from Stockholm (Project on the development of Youth Services in Eastern Slavonia)

Many projects are also implemented by Croatian NGOs with the support of foreign donors, such as USAID, Open Society - Croatia, Dutch, Norwegian, British, Canadian, Swiss and number of other embassies in Croatia, Friederich Ebert Stiftung, Friedrich Neumann Stiftung, Mott Foundation, Olof Palme Center, Winston Foundation for World Peace, Westminster Foundation for Democracy, etc. Unfortunately, very few educational institutions as such have benefited from

their experiences mainly due to the reluctance on the side of the Ministry of Education and Sport to recognise NGOs as partners in the organisation of in-service teacher training and in regular classes.

3.4.4. Quality assurance

No policy implementation measures for quality assurance in education, in general, and in EDC and MofD, in particular, have been adopted, yet.

3.4.5. Information and communication technologies

According to the Ministry of Education and Sport's document on the *Informatisation of School System*, a major part of the informatisation of school policy (School Network CROSNET) has been implemented. Computers are installed in almost all schools; many of them have access to Internet and have developed their web-pages; teachers are trained in ITC technologies and a central register and data-bank has been established. Other activities are still under way, such as the development of the information infrastructure of the Ministry of Education and school web network. Among the tasks envisaged for the nearest future is co-operation with the Ministry of Science and Technology and the Ministry of Culture in developing ITC for schools.

3.4.6. Finance

Prior to 2000, a considerable amount of money from the state budget was allocated to the establishment of the National Human Rights Education Committee and the development of the National Human Rights Education Programme, as well as its printing and dissemination to schools. Teacher training in the implementation of the programme was initially carried out with the assistance of the Human Rights Education Associates, an NGO from the US and the Dutch government. During 2000-2001, the Ministry of Education and Sport allocated some 1,200,000.00 HRK (equivalent of 155,000 US\$) to teacher training seminars in human rights education, including training of the counties' human rights education co-ordinators. Minor assistance was provided through other Ministry's programmes, e.g. youth, projects, citizenship sites, Project on Citizenship and Democracy, etc. The Ministry also contributes to some NGOs-organised seminars by paying their travel expenses, accommodation, etc.

In 1999 some 16,617,000.00 HRK was allocated for the provision of information technology in primary schools and their libraries while only 2,823,000.00 was ensured for secondary schools for the same purpose.

It is mentioned above that minority education programmes are fully financed from the state budget on the basis of the Ministry of Education and Sport's estimates. Minority cultural and educational programmes also receive support from the Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for National Minorities. In 2001, the Office is going to spend a total of 18,000.000.00 HRK from the state budget for joint minority communities programmes as well as for the programmes of 28 individual national minority organisations and institutions. The beneficiaries of the state's budget are the following institutions (in HRK):

Italians (4 organisations and institutions)	3,912.000.00
Czechs (2 organisations and institutions)	1,632.000.00
Slovaks (1 organisation)	612.000.00

Hungarians (2 organisations)	2,000.000.00
Russians and Ukranians (1 organisation)	774.000.00
Serbs (5 organisations and institutions)	4,550.000.00
Germans and Austrians (3 organisations)	320.000.00
Jews (1 institution)	320.000.00
Slovenes (1 organisation)	364.000.00
Albanians (1 organisation)	364.000.00
Bosniaks (2 organisations)	490.000.00
Roma/Gipsy (3 organisations) + special programme	1,234.000.00
Montenegrins (1 organisation)	364.000.00
Macedonians (1 organisation)	364.000.00
Joint programmes for national communities	700.000.00

The Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Non-governmental Organisations is another resource for community programmes, some of which are related to EDC and MofD. In April 1999, the Government supported 351 "priority" programmes (out of 1145 proposed) of interest to local communities development with a total amount of 28.316.522,47 HRK. Programmes in education, human rights and development of civil society received 3,658.066.00 HRK (12.92 % of the total amount). The procedures and the results of the tender were made public in daily press and the National Gazette.

4. Views from the grass roots

4.1. General considerations

Croatia has a long history of grass roots activism. In the 19th century, civil activists were known as guardians of national interests. Many were also self-organised or church-organised into charity groups that cared for the disabled, the poor and homeless children. Women's organisations were offering courses for rural women in reading and writing, hygiene, family economy, cooking and sewing. During communist times, the Croatian civil scene was divided on ideological grounds. Earlier organisations were either dissolved as a remnant of the bourgeois time or absorbed into an extensive system of organisations and institutions established by the Communist Party apparatus with the task of spreading communist ideas to the masses. A minor part remained associated with church charity work or turned into illegal counter-communist organisations dedicated to the task of national liberation; the majority of these left the country and became active abroad.

In the beginning of the 90s communist-led local community organisations disappeared and a new generations of grass roots activists emerged in the context of war. Hundreds of NGOs, community associations, church clubs, youth, neighbourhood and self-help groups were established with the aim of caring for the displaced and refugees. The majority of them were providing humanitarian assistance and post-war trauma psychological treatment to thousands of children and youth that could not cope with the loss of their family members and/or forced displacement. Continuous psychological treatment was also provided to a great number of civilians and soldiers that had been imprisoned and tortured in camps and later were not able to reintegrate into normal life as they suffered from multiple psychological disorders. Among the most sensitive cases that needed continuous assistance were young women who were kept in camps by force and systematically raped. When they were released, many were in the state of late pregnancy and needed not only psychological and psychiatric but medical and social assistance.

Although the idea of combining humanitarian and psychological assistance with training in tolerance, peaceful conflict resolution, intercultural understanding and civil responsibility appeared early on some NGOs agendas, its implementation remained problematic for some time. Many perceived it as a sign of disrespect to a tormented population that needed time to heal the wounds and rediscover the value of reconciliation. Others opposed such programmes believing that they were contrary to national interests in a time of war; this opinion was largely shared by many of the state-supported media that stigmatised NGOs on different grounds. Still some others thought of the programmes as of a form of hidden oppression from the side of a pragmatic West that refused to differentiate between the victims and the perpetrators. On the other side, some NGOs thought that they were not sufficiently prepared for the training of teachers or trainers, believing that training belonged solely to professional institutions. Absurdly enough, these institutions were at the same time literally "frozen" and largely unaware of the need for intervention programmes to prepare teachers to understand and respond efficiently to changed community needs, as well as to contribute actively to restoring the social fabric.

Notwithstanding, as early as in 1992-93, some NGOs, mainly belonging to the Anti-War Campaign Network, e.g. Centre for Peace, Non-violence and Human Rights from Osijek, organised the first teacher training seminars in peaceful conflict-resolution and tolerance. Among the earliest initiatives was a three-day seminar in education for tolerance organised in 1993 by UNESCO and the Croatian Commission for UNESCO that brought together Croatian and Serbian teachers in a school severely damaged by war.

By the end of the war and especially after Croatia regained sovereignty over its occupied territories in 1997, grass roots organisations began redefining their priorities with an aim to fostering democratic changes. This resulted in a proliferation of programmes focused on the preparation of youth, children, teachers, other professionals and ordinary citizens for their active role in shaping the future of their societies. These programmes did not merely introduce new topics, e.g. learning about/for non-violent conflict resolution, intercultural sensitivity, civil responsibility, human rights, tolerance etc., but new teaching/learning strategies and methods, as well, e.g. open discussion, team-work, role-playing, simulation, action-research, brainstorming, active listening, peer-mediation, facilitation, self-help co-operation, networking, lobbying, etc. As more and more teachers were joining non-formal training seminars and workshops in this period, they soon became pioneers in applying new knowledge and skills in their classrooms and in sharing these experiences with their colleagues. In schools headed by rigid principals, these innovations were in the beginning carried on almost illegally, by a small group of teachers who dared to challenge traditional educational practices and rigid regulations.

It is true that Croatian NGOs were in the beginning highly dependent on foreign assistance and programmes. They started by learning from the experience of a great number of international and foreign NGOs, as well as from intergovernmental organisations that brought to Croatia their expertise and enthusiasm for change. Among the most prominent were UNICEF, UNESCO, UNHCR, Council of Europe, Soros' Foundation, OSCE, EU, World Bank, USAID, Helsinki Committee, Amnesty International, Catholic Relief, Caritas, Centre for Civic Education from Calabasas and HREA from the US, Kulturkontakt from Austria, PRONI Institute from Sweden. Croatian activists were combining international approaches with a unique experience of living in a post-communist and a post-war society. Some of the programmes, especially the ones implemented under the auspices of intergovernmental organisations, received permission from the Ministry of Education under the term "co-operation" but very few, until recently, were actually recognised as pieces of good practice that might be used in regular teaching. Unable to

alter rigid university curricula, many university professors and researchers also joined the grass roots scene with an aim to develop and/or test their own educational/training models.

It is practically impossible to list all the projects and/or programmes in EDC and MofD or related fields that have been implemented in Croatia at the grass roots level throughout the last decade, let alone describe each and every one of them. Some organisations have been more focused on teachers and/or unselected public, some have targeted youth and university students (youth for youth activities), while some others have been more oriented toward pre-school and elementary school students. Thousands of initiatives have been performed by NGOs from Zagreb and the neighbouring towns (*Centre for Peace Studies, Small Step, Forum for the Freedom of Education, Amnesty International - Croatia, European House, European Movement - Croatia, Europe Youth Club, Step by Step, Croatian Helsinki Committee, Croatian Debate Society, Centre for Psychological Assistance, Sunflower, Centre for Women's Study, B.a.b.e., Centre for a Direct Human Rights Protection, Magna Carta, Croatian Section of ISHR-IGFM, European Youth Group, European Youth Parliament, Croatian Youth Council, Croatian Legal Centre, Young Lawyers Association, Volunteer's Centre, Local Democracy Agency from Sisak, Committee for Human Rights from Karlovac, etc.*), Central and Eastern Slavonia (*Centre for Peace, Non-violence and Human Rights from Osijek, Europe House Slavonski Brod, Proni Centre in Vukovar, Youth Peace Group Danube, Youth Action Group Osijek*), Rijeka and the neighbouring towns (*School of Peace from Mrkopalj, Homo from Pula, etc.*).

Unfortunately, no systemic analysis and evaluation of NGOs educational activities has ever been made in Croatia. Many important data are already lost due to the lack of interest in assessment of non-formal education among professional researchers, as well as among NGOs themselves. Nevertheless, some activities carried on by grass roots activists are worth mentioning due to quality, duration and scope of their work:

Centre for Peace, Non-violence and Human Rights – a well known non-governmental organisation from Osijek, Eastern Slavonia established in 1992 with the aim of assisting teachers, other professionals, youth and ordinary citizens of different ethnic and religious background in productive non-violent conflict management and resolution based on the promotion of human rights, equality, peace, pluralism and civil society. Two of its major projects are: *Promotion of democracy and civil society* and *Education for Peace Building and Psychosocial Development of Individuals and Community in Eastern Slavonia and Danube Area - Creative Workshops*. The former focuses on preparing citizens for monitoring elections and non-partisan campaigns, assisting in non-governmental sector development and cross-border co-operation. The latter project started as early as in 1992. The initial aim was to assist displaced teachers and children, including returnees, in overcoming their traumatic experiences of war by helping them learn the techniques of trauma management and self-awareness. A long-term objective was to promote a culture of peace and non-violence as a prerequisite for a stable civil society. The projects comprises educational and interventionist components. The educational component is focused on the acquisition of new values and new techniques. It is implemented through workshops and seminars organised continuously every week. The topics include: communication skills, expression of emotions, active listening, human rights protection, co-operation strategies, development of self-respect and self-confidence, decrease in prejudices and the increase in tolerance. After a basic course, participants are introduced to more complex issues, like: stress trauma rehabilitation, reality therapy, alternatives to violence, mediation and conflict resolution, religious tolerance and ecology. The interventionist component focuses on direct psychological assistance through group work and individual therapy. The beneficiaries of the project are teachers, peace activists, children, young people, women and members of religious communities. Their training is organised in three groups: highly experienced (multipliers), less experienced,

and teachers living in previously occupied areas. Recently, the Centre has developed a programme in civil education for the Osijek University (Biology and Chemistry Department). Its activities are now recognised by the Ministry of Education and Sport as ones that "contribute to the realisation of national educational objectives". Its programmes are integrated into the National Catalogue of Teacher Training Seminars.

Small Step - a non-governmental organisation from Zagreb well known for its pioneer work in training teachers in peaceful conflict resolution and peer-mediation since the beginning of the 90s. From 1995- 2000 it carried out a UNICEF sponsored project on *Peaceful Problem Solving, Youth Peer Mediation and Peer Education in Schools* that encompassed over 50 primary schools with a post-war returnee student population throughout Croatia, including Vuklovar, Borovo Selo, Osijek, Dalj, Knin, Topusko, Vojnić, Glina, Karlovac, Zagreb – Kozari Bok. The main aim of the project was to develop a programme for the "multiplication of multipliers", i.e. for the training of teachers, school pedagogues and psychologists in pro-active and non-violent conflict resolution techniques combined with post-trauma relieving strategies in order to prepare them to spread their training knowledge and skills to their students of different ethnic, religious and socio-economic background, as well as to other teachers and parents. In all, over 3,000 students were involved in non-violent conflict-resolution and peer-mediation programme conducted in schools as interactive workshops, either as an extra-curricular activity or as part of regular school subjects. The implementation of the programme was monitored and evaluated and the results were widely disseminated. The programme has been recognised by the Ministry of Education: trained teachers receive certificates from the Ministry's Institute for the Advancement of Schooling and Small Step's seminars are incorporated into the National Catalogue of Teacher Training Seminars issued by the Ministry annually. It is now expected that the programme on non-violence and peer-mediation will soon receive the status of an extracurricular programme.

Forum for the Freedom of Education - a non-profit, non-governmental organisation established in 1992 in Zagreb by a group of teachers and researchers in education dedicated to developing an open and pluralist education system, professional and school autonomy, dignity of students and teachers, as well as quality of education. Forum has organised a number of round tables and discussions on strategic educational issues, including policy-making, educational reform, pluralism in education, educational co-operation among the neighbouring countries etc. In 1997, the organisation initiated a research project on the content analysis of Croatian history textbooks for primary and secondary schools which produced a number of valuable proposals for change. The analysis of history textbooks is now extended to include textbooks in literature, geography and education for democracy in Croatia, Slovenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The *Power to Graffiti* programme was realised in 2000 in co-operation with the Faculty of Political Sciences. It consists of 10 video-units, each dealing with a different issue: politics, state, power, elections, citizens, self-management, public, international relations, and the world and Croatian state. The material is meant to be used in secondary schools. Two more projects have attracted great attention among teachers. *Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking* is by origin an American programme translated and adapted for Croatian needs. It consists of a series of seminars aiming at developing teachers' competencies for promoting creative thinking and democratic relations among their students through the use of interactive teaching methods. *Street Law* is a world famous educational program that focuses on developing legal and civil literacy among young people with the aim of empowering them for an active and responsible role in shaping the future of their societies. Through interactive methods, (case-analysis, role-play, simulation, etc.) they learn basic concepts and skills of participation, dialogue, discussion and negotiation based on legal standards and procedures. The Ministry of Education and Sport has included one of the Forum's programmes in the National Catalogue of Teacher Training Seminars, which means that

upon completion of the seminar teachers receive the Ministry's official certificate, valid for their professional promotion.

Centre for Peace Studies - a non-governmental and non-formal training institution from Zagreb known for its well-organised interdisciplinary courses. It offers two major programmes attended by citizens of different ages, professions, educational status and ethnic background. The *Peace Studies* annual program is focused on promoting peace, human rights and civil society. Upon the revision of the programme, during the 2000/2001 academic year, the following 13 courses are now offered with a total of 212 hours per year: Introduction to Peace Studies; The Art of Non-violence; Understanding Violence; Conflict Management; Human Rights – A Challenge for Change; Civil Politics; Women's Culture of Resistance: Mythologies, Metaphors and Activism; Long-term Non-violence; Technology and Communication; Peace Building; Experiential Learning; Environment Protection and Sustainable Development; National Identities; and Genders Relations. The *Peace Building Program* is chiefly organised for citizens living outside the capital. It consists of 4 sub-programs: MIRamiDA ("Yes-for-Peace Programme") Basic (key concepts in the field); Young MIRamiDa (courses developed for youth and youth activists); MIRamiDa Plus (advanced courses organised for participants from Croatia and the neighbouring countries); and MIRamiDA Partnership (designed for members of political parties and trade unions at the local level as a means of civil society, human right and gender awareness raising). Apart from these programmes, two additional activities are carried on in the Centre: a *Peace Library*, open to the public and the *Public Extra Program* covering issues such as: war crimes, violence and terrorism in Western Europe, conflict transformation in primary schools, introduction to quality science, integrative psychotherapy.. In the year 2000, more than 250 participants were involved in major education programs and an additional 300 took part in public discussions. The programmes are now well received by society and the media, as well as by teachers. Nevertheless, these programmes have not yet been officially recognised as an integral part of adult education and/or lifelong learning by the Ministry of Education.

The Peace and Human Rights for Croatian Primary Schools Project was initiated in 1997 under the auspices of UNESCO, the Government of the Netherlands, the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the Croatian Commission for UNESCO with the aim of developing a comprehensive approach to peace and human rights education for Croatian primary schools. It was carried out by an independent group of researchers from the University of Zagreb, working in close co-operation with teachers and peace/human rights activists from Croatia and abroad. In 1998 the conceptual framework for human rights education (policy paper) and a 1-4 grades programme developed in the project were adopted by the National Human Rights Education Committee as the basis for a comprehensive K-12 National Human Rights Education Programme. The project was carried out in two phases. As well as a Draft Policy Paper, the following learning/teaching and reference materials for teachers and students were prepared in the project: a) Teachers' Manual; b) two Pupils' Textbooks (for grades 1&2 and 3&4); c) Analysis of Programmes in the World; d) Field Research Report; e) Interdisciplinary Dictionary; f) International and National Standard-setting Documents; g) Annotated Bibliography h) International Directory, and i) the Report from the International Symposium "Common Goals – Varieties of Approaches: Promotion of Human Rights, Peace and Democratic Citizenship Through Education". The materials have been permanently used in teacher training seminars organised by the Ministry of Education and Sport. Part of them is already published and disseminated to 500 primary schools, faculty libraries and individual researchers free of charge. The continuation of the project is going to be ensured through the *Centre for Research, Training and Documentation in Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship*, which will soon be put in operation at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Zagreb.

4.2. Chosen approach to data gathering

In order to gather information on the state of EDC and MofD policy in Croatia for the purpose of the Stocktaking Research, a one-day focus group discussion was organised at the University of Zagreb, Faculty of Philosophy, Department of Education on 17 June 2001. The focus group approach was chosen to overcome the obstacles of time and financial resources and to maximise the results of the pilot-type of study, in terms of the identification of key issues in EDC/MofD policy development and implementation. The organisations invited represent various niches in the EDC/MofD sector: policy-making, practice, administration and management, dissemination of information etc. Each of them has specific experiences and expertise and each occupies specific positions in the educational establishment but all are equally important for the development & implementation of EDC and MofD policies and programmes in the country. The group consisted of 22 representatives of the following organisations and/or institutions:

- *grass roots organisations* (Amnesty International - Croatia; Centre for Peace, Non-violence and Human Rights, Osijek; Centre for Peace Studies, Zagreb; Forum for the Freedom of Education, Zagreb)
- *EDC Citizenship Sites in Croatia* (Labin, Našice, Varaždin, Zagreb)
- *teachers* (from pre-school to the university)
- *youth organisations* (European Youth Club)
- *central government* (Ministry of Education)
- *county (local) government* (Zagreb, Vukovar)
- *teachers' trade union* ("Preporod")
- *journalists reporting on education* ("Školske novine", "Novi list", "Večernji list")

Two weeks prior to the meeting all selected organisations were contacted by phone, and a week before each received an invitation letter with a short description of the CoE's EDC project, the objectives of the Stocktaking Research and the key questions on EDC and MofD for discussion:

- 1) national policy
- 2) implementation strategies
- 3) obstacles

An additional list with more detailed questions was distributed at the meeting. The purpose of the list was to serve as a loose agenda for the discussion. It contained the following issues:

- Does the Government have a clear policy for democratic development of Croatian society? What values/principles/priorities are dominant?
- Is EDC and MofD an integral part of Croatian educational policy? Who were the partners in developing the policy?
- How well are different segments of education (schools, universities, local administration, NGOs, youth associations, teacher's trade union, media, church, minority organisations, etc.) informed on EDC and MofD policy?
- Is EDC and MofD policy followed by realistic implementation measures? What implementation agents are envisaged? Does the implementation scheme promote co-operation and partnership between formal and non-formal/grass roots sectors?
- What existing grass-roots EDC and MofD programmes and practices support the implementation of the policy?

- What obstacles do the grass roots organisations face when trying to be part of the implementation scheme? What are the specific obstacles that are encountered by schools and teachers?
- How can the obstacles to EDC and MofD policy implementation be resolved?

4.3. Findings

General Development Policy

The discussion on the policy on democratic development of Croatian society focused on the *Strategy for Development of Croatia in 21st Century*. Since the meeting took place prior to the official adoption of the document, very few participants were familiar with its content. They said they expected it to be congruent with the promises given at the January 2000 elections by the parties now in power. Among the promises that were most often stressed by the participants were: strengthening the rule of law and responsibility/accountability at all levels; promoting better living conditions; recovery of economy based on production and not on import policy; weakening of the power of the state and public administration over the citizen; greater transparency in decision-making; promoting equality, pluralism and "a society that cares for its members"; reducing the privileges of the "new elite" and speeding up the charges against all those that have illegally benefited from privatisation; strengthening solidarity instead of competition until the policy of equal opportunity could fully be implemented, etc. Many participants mentioned discontinuity as the key problem in the development of Croatian society. As one of them put it: *"Every second generation is forced to start from the beginning. Every 20-30 years we are made to believe in new political rhetoric, accept new concepts and ideas on who we as individuals are and how we should behave. People are sick of being treated as infantile creatures that need to be controlled 'from above for their own sake'. We need to think of our own future and the future of our families in continuous terms, be free from arbitrariness and oppression and be able to meet challenges with expectations and not with fear."*

One line of thought permeating the discussion on the macro-society development policy was related to the permanence of a gap between policies and their implementation throughout Croatian recent history. Some participants evaluated policy documents as *"too many papers lacking rational implementation strategies and measures as well as necessary political will"*. One participant argued that *"the communist technology of governing and managing is still around us"*, that it is still deeply rooted in our everyday practice and that we failed in devising and implementing efficient democratic strategies to replace older ones. *"This is not a Croatian specificum. It seems that the world knows very little on how the transition should be led to ensure the desired end."* A few participants explained the imbalance between policy and practice in terms of *"inconsistent policy priorities, weak implementation policy, ad hoc implementation measures and no standards for quality assessment, all of which result in voluntary practice accompanied with the lack of responsibility at all levels."*

EDC and MofD policy

While talking about EDC and MofD policies and its implementation, some of the participants said that, prior to the meeting and the materials received for the discussion, they had had a vague idea of the meaning of the terms and stated that they were not sure whether it should have been understood:

- *in a broader sense*, as a *theoretical concept* covering all educational policies and practices aiming at preparing young people and adults for their active and responsible role in strengthening democracy and civil society, i.e. as a term that best explains today's universal striving for a better (more emancipated and more empowered) position of citizens in relation to their governments not specifically tied to any regional or national policy;
- *in a narrow sense*, as a *policy concept* that primarily depends on a government's vision about what should be done in the society to further democratic processes for which the provisions are or are not guaranteed, either as a reflection of a broader international or regional policies or as the continuation of a classical policy concept of citizenship education in which the main objective of educational action is seen in terms of citizens' loyalty to a democratic state; or
- *in an even narrower sense*, as a *practical concept* that develops mainly "from the bottom", from an active process of self-realisation/self-reproduction of a knowledgeable, skilful and self-motivated citizen, i.e. the process that reflects "a genuine civic ideology" and, as such, has an in-built power not merely to challenge but to change the state structure, organisation and policies in the course of time.

A few participants had problems in linking EDC and MofD concepts with European education policy, only one was fully informed about the conclusions of the Krakow meeting and the majority lacked information on the place of these concepts in the Stability Pact for SEE/Enhanced Graz Process educational scheme.

The majority of them, while discussing EDC and MofD issues, referred to the National Human Rights Education Programme, as well as to their own activities in schools (e.g. the representatives of the Croatian citizenship sites) or to the grass roots practices in general (e.g. representatives of NGOs) and had no problems in adopting the term as a label for their own practices.

In the discussion on the National Human Rights Education Programme and its relation to EDC and MofD the following interesting findings appeared:

- The majority of participants, from both formal and grass roots level education sectors, were not sure whether the implementation of the programme was obligatory for schools and in what way. They said that they had problems in the proper reading of the 2000 national Plan and Programme for Primary and Secondary Schools, where it is officially stated that the Human Rights Education Programme is an integral part of elementary school curricula and that it may be implemented either cross-curricularly, as an optional subject or as an extra-curricular school activity. The main reason for such misunderstanding they see, not only in the fact that an implementation policy and measures do not accompany the integration of the programme into formal educational system, but also in the fact that school principals and teachers feel uncomfortable about implementing it without proper preparation and, therefore, rather stick to the *"old ways of teaching"*.
- A few of the participants from the grass roots level stated that, although co-operation and partnership between schools and NGOs is clearly envisaged by the National Human Rights Education Programme, *"everything is still in a pilot phase"* due to *"a history of segregation, mistrust, avoidance and stereotyping on both sides"*.
- Participants were unaware of the consultation which the National Human Rights Committee had had with number of NGOs in Croatia and abroad in the final phase of development of the National Human Rights Education Programme. Very few were fully familiar with its

principles and the content, and even less had thought of how to integrate their own practices into the programme implementation scheme.

When asked to compare their present position to the one in the last decade all participants agreed that the situation has improved for the non-governmental sector. The government does not discriminate against grass roots organisations, teachers feel more encouraged and free to participate in their programmes, schools are more open to innovations that came from the "bottom", in some communities local government have established partnership with NGOs etc. Although these changes are significant, they are only *"the tip of the iceberg"*. One of the grass roots representatives said that prior to 2000, their position was much clearer than it is now. Before the last parliamentary elections NGOs were perceived by the government as an opposition and treated as an enemy or simply ignored. The lack of communication with the government structure actually made NGOs stronger, with clearly defined priorities. The new situation makes them hesitant in deciding what should be done. The importance of co-operation between governmental and non-governmental sectors is officially recognised, but no important improvement has yet been reached, at least not in terms of *"recognising NGOs as partners in decision-making instead of seeing them as mere aid receivers"*. The relationship is well described by one of the participants: *"We are all friends and partners now but, unfortunately, we do not benefit from such partnership and even worse is that neither do they benefit from us."* Co-operation is still understood in one-sided terms. E.g., *"The Ministry of Education may provide some assistance to a grass roots project but it is seldom interested in its outcomes, whether the project is successful and whether its results may be implemented elsewhere"*. Some NGOs have already accepted this relation scheme and dare not question the effect it has on their own position.

Existing projects, programmes and activities that support the implementation of EDC and MofD

Non-governmental organisations

The representatives of the grass roots sector described several projects and programmes that may be used as examples of good practice in integrating EDC and MofD policies into formal and non-formal curricula, as well as in youth training programmes. Among them are the projects/programmes of Amnesty International - Croatia (programs in human rights awareness raising, including the dissemination of the "First Step Manual"; active approaches in human rights education; competition in children drawings); Centre for Peace, Non-violence and Human Rights (programmes in human rights, non-violence, intercultural understanding, civil participation, etc.); Forum for the Freedom of Education (development of critical thinking skills for civil participation, legal literacy); Centre for Peace Studies (adult education programmes in non-violent conflict resolution, non-discrimination and equality etc.), Small Step (peer mediation in non-violent conflict resolution and human rights education), Europe Youth Club Programmes (learning active and facilitative civil strategies), Centre for a Direct Human Rights Protection (dissemination of valuable learning materials), etc. They stressed their experience in non-formal programme development, the use of active training and learning methods, focus on individualised approaches, flexibility of topics; variety of materials used in training, creating non-authoritarian and responsive educational/learning atmosphere, flexibility in teacher-student relations, skills in co-operation and negotiation with different actors at local, national and international levels, experience in lobbying, campaigning and networking that is highly important in a decentralised system of education.

Many schools, e.g. in Eastern Slavonia have recognised the value of co-operation with NGOs' programs for quality changes in education and support their staff to attend the events. They also expect these teachers to bring innovations into their schools and spread their knowledge and skills among their colleagues and school administration in order to make the institution more open to the needs of their students and the community as a whole.

The representative of the youth organisations highlighted their experience in youth peer training, developing networks on national basis, lobbying, devising non-formal youth programmes in intercultural learning, promotion of human rights and European identity, producing and disseminating active learning materials throughout Croatia.

Citizenship sites

The representatives of Croatian citizenship sites described their experiences in introducing EDC and MofD issues in regular secondary school programmes, their knowledge of obstacles deriving from the lack of support inside and outside the school as well as of the strategies and means of removing the obstacles. The representatives of the Varazdin site described how they managed to meander among internal obstacles to integrate EDC in their programmes. (*"The main issue is not of having the guts to challenge the Ministry but to change school practice when you encounter hostility and opposition from the side of your colleagues because you 'give too much freedom to students'. In such a situation you may either give up or develop a step-by-step strategy for school change. EDC is not a matter of one class. It effects the school as a whole once it is introduced in a single classroom. One needs to be aware of its dynamic potentials and be prepared for confrontation. The strategy should respect the existing school structures and approaches, as well as internal power relations and involve practice of permanent lobbying."*) Teachers involved in the EDC project begin by empowering students to cope with the authoritarianism of the school and individual teachers. (*"Students need to know how authoritarian structures and persons function and be equipped with skills to change it for the benefit of all."*) Their experience in giving students more space to express their opinions about school practice is most valuable. (*"This is a difficult and responsible process. If EDC is practised solely at the level of a game or 'imagine it' discussions, students soon become disinterested, as EDC is then only 'another school task' alienated from real problems. On the other side, if they learn how to participate and express their opinion the question remains on what to do with their knowledge. In order to be convincing schools should create real opportunities for students to use their civil knowledge and skills in reforming school organisation and curricula. School authorities should also open the institution in order to enable their students to co-operate with local forces in changing the community as a whole."*). The results of the Varazdin site are outstanding: *"Teachers pay more attention to their own words and behaviour towards students. Everybody is aware that human rights watch is at work concerning fair treatment and the fulfilment of individual responsibility. Both teachers and students are more open to the opinions of the other side. This has created an atmosphere of mutual care, support and partnership that begins to influence the local community. But authoritarian structures are still there and much more remains to be done"* An important aspect of EDC and MofD in school, according to the Varazdin site is the sensitisation to the perception of the Other. One valuable example of how this might be achieved has been presented in school newspapers issued in the course of the project implementation. Instead of making an interview with school principal or teachers on school issues, they had an interview with a female school cleaner to let the "established" know what the representative of the "unheard school voices" has to say about the role of the school, educational changes, school discipline, etc.

The changes that the EDC project brought to school were also illustrated by the representative of the Zagreb Site. She reported on the development of communication between teachers, students

and school administration: *"When school violence was introduced as the key topic in the project, many teachers refused to join in explaining that there is nothing to be discussed since the school has no such problems, average students' scores are high, etc. In the end, the students' preference was respected and the programme on dealing with violence in school elaborated. Its implementation brought to the surface many hidden conflicts permeating school daily practice (verbal sexism, discrimination against girls in grading school success, etc.). Teachers started discussing their behaviour and became more concerned about students' needs."* An EDC dimension has been gradually introduced in all programmes and soon many teachers began expressed their interest in more adequate in-service training.

The representative of the Labin site spoke of the gradual strengthening of co-operation between the school and the local government and of the importance of support from the local media and parents. (*"Individual teacher initiative is essential but it can only be realised if there is financial, professional, administrative and moral support from the local government and the community. Local media are important partners as they convey the ideas and practices developed by the site to the public creating a climate of opinion in favour of the site's activities."*) She stressed that local community support is the prime prerequisite for any change in the organisation of schools and curricula and that such support depends on mutual recognition of rights and responsibilities. She also pointed out the need for enhancing student autonomy through the students' council, the body that the school established in the course of the citizenship site project prior to the new law on secondary schooling as an outcome of good co-operation at the local level. (*"Through participation in decision making students become responsible not only for their own success but for the quality of school life, school environment etc."*)

Seminars in the implementation of the National Human Rights Programme

Since 1999, the Institute for the Advancement of Schooling of the Ministry of Education and Sport has been organising regional teachers in-service training seminars in the implementation of the National Human Rights Education Programme, in co-operation with university professors and some local NGOs. At the beginning of 2001 a group of experienced pre-school, primary and secondary school teachers joined the group of trainers. The trend is to expand the number of teacher multipliers in the future. The results of evaluation accompanying each seminar show that most teachers benefit from lectures, workshops and discussions on human rights education, especially from those led by their colleagues who share their experiences with them in incorporating new issues and methods into specific courses. Participation in seminars has helped them *"better understand the key concepts and skills their students should acquire"*. They also say *"the exchange of experience and further non-formal networking among them is the most valuable outcome of the seminars as it help them feel more comfortable in altering their classroom practice and in developing more holistic approach to assessment and evaluation of their students' outcomes"*. Notwithstanding, the number of teachers trained in the implementation of the programme is still very small and the gap between them and the others should be bridged soon to remove the obstacles to the programme implementation.

Individual teachers' initiatives

The representative of pre-school organisations spoke of a self-help strategy that has been developed among many of them as a means of compensating for the financial and structural shortcomings of the pre-school sector, as well as of their unfavourable professional position (they are still trained in two-year programmes with no connection to higher levels of education). They call it "in-house training", in which they perform role-play, simulation, brainstorming etc. as a

form of in-service training. Many pre-school teachers and their institutions are linked through informal networks for dissemination of good practice and teaching/learning materials. Many have established strong partnership with parents (the "Open Door Programme), private sector and local administration. The representative said that the Ministry assists them in in-service training but that the number of seminars is far from enough. Some pre-school institutions are focused on communication and participation issues and engaged in the collection and production of learning materials in human rights and EDC both by teachers and children. The Human Rights Picture Book developed by children in one Zagreb kindergarten has been disseminated to other institutions.

Obstacles

A major part of the discussion focused on the obstacles and possibilities for introducing EDC and MofD in education, in general, and in schools, in particular. The comments on obstacles fall into two categories:

Structural/institutional barriers

- *The conception of education* – a new, broader and integrative concept of education has not yet been introduced (policy, theory, practice). Education is still understood by many in terms of schooling and schooling in terms of expenditures, not of investment. Students are still mainly perceived as knowledge-receivers and teachers as knowledge-givers. Academic learning is largely equated with learning of facts derived from a specific discipline, while the acquisition of skills is considered inferior and equated with vocational and technical training. Promotion of education for active and responsible citizenship is handicapped by a widely shared opinion that *"politics has no place in the classroom"* and that *"children should learn not to confront but to obey"*.
- *Educational policy* - There is the lack of a rational, comprehensive, well-balanced and consistent educational policy with clearly stated priorities in the context of lifelong learning, economic well-being, promotion of human rights and freedoms, equality and pluralism, the rule of law, social cohesion and inclusion. (*"It is still unclear to practitioners and probably to policy-makers either, what personal and social goals should be achieved by education. Educational priorities are easily and frequently changed dependent on 'daily politics' with no necessary explanation."*)
- *Implementation strategy* - An efficient and consistent implementation strategy with clearly defined measures and mechanisms for ensuring educational goals (plan of action) is non-existent. This inevitably leads to voluntarism and *ad hoc* solutions in decision-making at all levels and produces insecurity among practitioners as to what and how educational tasks should be fulfilled. (*"Our educational system is a 'patchwork' of hundreds of disconnected or loosely connected regulations, initiatives, practices. There is the need for an urgent balancing of its parts."*)
- *Assessment and evaluation procedures* - Contrary to centralist policy-making and curricula development, assessment and evaluation procedures are extremely decentralised. The system is based on the control of input (explicit statement of educational content) while its output (the quality of students' learning) is left solely to teachers. Quality control policy has not been developed either for a particular educational level or for the system as a whole and there are no national standards of educational achievement to enable a reliable comparison of students' development.

- *Legislative* - Laws on education are drafted and adopted separately and they do not provide the necessary legal basis for the implementation of a life-long learning perspective. Besides, they are still school-oriented and leave little space for the recognition of students and local community development needs. (*"Educational legislative is inconsistent with the modernisation of education. Its thorough revision and reform is needed with a view to fully integrate the system so as to ensure horizontal and vertical mobility."*)
- *Structure, organisation and management* - The educational sector has serious organisational and structural problems: a low level of organisational capacity, frequent organisational and structural changes, especially at the central government, rarely based on rational and pragmatic criteria. The style of management is rather authoritarian and non-participative. (*"It is sometimes hard to grasp who is responsible for what in the administration."*)
- *Decentralisation* - Recently initiated process of decentralisation in education by the laws on primary and secondary schooling has been received with criticism. Many think that the changes came suddenly and that neither local administration nor schools have been adequately prepared to benefit from decentralisation. (*"Decentralisation may be a blessing as well as an obstacle to democratic changes in education. It is positive in a sense that it makes the school principal more directly responsible for a 'living organism of the school'. On the other side, if efficient control mechanisms are not provided by the central government, democratisation of a system still characterised by an authoritarian and centralised tradition, with scarce resources to promote the changes and with a devalued status in the society, may halt the development of local community human resources and strengthen nepotism and local power structure."*) Some think that decentralisation may actually widen the in-state centre-periphery gap and lead to new waves of brain-drain. (*"If quality control mechanisms and affirmative measures for underdeveloped communities do not accompany decentralisation it may lead to the reduction of choice in education, strengthen negative selection in the employment of teachers, weaken teachers' responsibility and foster new forms of dependency and inequality at the local level. In the end, this may trigger brain-drain and leave local community with no human and professional resources for its social and economic restructuring and development."*)
- *Curricula and textbooks* - Educational objectives and contents are determined by the Ministry for each school subject in the National Programme for Primary and Secondary Schools. The programme is still facts-oriented instead of skill-oriented and overload with unnecessary information and so are the textbooks. (*"Some textbooks are mere reflection of a scientific discipline. Their authors turn the school subjects into mini-science. General criteria for textbook quality have not been established. Its adoption by the Ministry is based on the opinion provided by an expert commission also established by the Ministry. The nomination of the commission lacks clear criteria and procedure."*). No policy on the implementation of EDC and MofD dimensions in school curricula has been made. Human rights education is officially part of the national educational programme for primary and secondary schools but many teachers still do not know whether the integration of human rights education in their curricula is obligatory.
- *School climate* - Relations between teachers and students are still predominantly formal and authoritarian. Students are more often punished than encouraged for their initiatives. Competitiveness is high while co-operation and solidarity low, social distance and exclusion of some students is rarely discussed in the classroom. Issues of classroom and school ethos are mostly neglected (*"Parents dare not comment on, or criticise openly school and teachers' work as they believe it might have negative consequences on their children's grades."*)

- *Pre-service and in-service teacher preparation* - Teacher education is more content-oriented and less skill and method-oriented. Many teachers still lack competencies to promote active, participative and co-operative learning, team-work, non-violent conflict resolution, critical and argumentative thinking, action-research, social and intercultural sensitivity, peer-mediation, multiple and global perspective, etc. Their perception of education and international standards underlying democratic changes is still fragmented and non-inclusive. (*"Being unprepared for the implementation of human rights education, EDC and related programmes, teacher tend to ignore their importance and label them 'new Marxism' or 'new ideology'."*)
- *Preparation of administration* - Central and local administration in education are not adequately prepared to resume their roles in democratic changes. They are still predominantly authoritarian, highly bureaucratic and far from being a genuine public service. (*"School inspectors are the most rigid part of the system. They assess the school on the basis of its strict implementation of the National Programme. Teachers regularly fill in school documentation as required but rarely teach 'by the book' in the classroom. It is pity that they dare not show their actual achievements."*)
- *Horizontal and vertical in-government co-operation* - Co-operation inside and between different sectors of the government is either non-existent or weak.
- *School - community relations* - Many schools still operate in isolation from the community and lack partnership relations with parents and local actors (*"Focus on descriptive knowledge, neglect of know-how competencies, distance from other sectors and civil society are the most salient causes of the school's failure in preparing young people for responsible and active citizenship."*)
- *Teacher - grass roots activist relations* - The relation of teachers and grass roots activists is ambiguous. The former are often too much reluctant in entrusting the school tasks to 'non-professionals' while the latter think that their expertise in active approaches surpasses that of teachers. (*"Open school doors are not enough. The scope of responsibility of professional teachers and grass roots activists should be clearly defined and respected in everyday school practice. This presupposes efficient monitoring and quality assessment measures and procedures in order to save the school from too much formalism and too much improvisation. Mutual contribution to democratic changes of both sides depends not only on the share of expert knowledge and skills but on exchange of monitoring and assessment."*)
- *Professional associations* - Professional associations are underdeveloped, disintegrated and marginalised. Their voice is rarely heard in matters of policy and curriculum development. (*"We have 33 professional associations on paper in the country and very few in action."*)
- *Dissemination and exchange of information* - Sharing of information is still unsatisfactory at all levels. The Ministry does not have an efficient system of internal and external information exchange. The central library for administration has been dissolved and the new data bank is not yet in operation. The Ministry staff that attend international conferences often have no clear mandate on their role and, thus, rarely spread information to the schools on a larger scale (*"Every time when the issue of rationalisation of administration is raised it is solved by dismissing those positions that are indispensable for quality work. It is not the profession which decides what should be done but the politicians."*)
- *International co-operation* - The benefits of international co-operation and exchange are not distributed and shared equally. Some schools are over-burdened with dozens of international projects and programmes while the others are left short. In addition, their work and results have not been adequately monitored by the central government, rewarded and reported widely

except for schools having well-developed web-sites. (*"The selection of schools for such projects by the Ministry following bilateral and multilateral agreements is not transparent enough. Some schools and teachers are favoured at the expense of others."*)

- *Finance* - There is a significant misbalance in state expenditures for education when compared to other sectors of society. Financial support of both central and local governments for programme innovations (e.g. human rights education, EDC, intercultural education, etc) and project-oriented work is extremely low and de-stimulating. (*"Much depends on the individual teacher and her/his motivation to introduce new concepts and methods in the classroom often at the expense of his/her spare time and energy. Rewards were non-existent before and now they are, if at all, minimal."*)
- *School facilities* - Most schools lack space and necessary facilities for active and team-learning, project-work, workshops, etc. Classroom furniture and arrangement often supports frontal teaching (*"Pupils still sit in benches for two lined up in rows and look at the back of their peers. One can not expect co-operation and team-work in such environment."*).
- *Grass roots level* - Grass roots level activities lack sustainability, co-operation and transparency (*"Many NGOs behave competitively. Generally speaking, the civil sector needs more co-operation and solidarity. Grass roots organisations still fail to see each other as equally important parts of a civil support system and there is the tendency of self-ghettoisation among some of them."*)
- *Media coverage* - Except for 'Skolske novine', the only newspaper specialised for education, low media interest in education and low level of journalist preparation for reporting on educational issues, in general, and on human rights education, EDC and MofD, in particular, is critical. Education identity in the media is blurred. It is sometimes treated as part of the culture rubric, sometimes in the context of internal politics and more often in the black chronicles. The need to produce sensations becomes far more important than the presentation of good practice or a systemic analysis of educational policy and its implementation. Media are still authority-dependent and politicians/government-centred. Most are short of journalists who have enough expertise to report systematically and critically on educational changes (e.g. decentralisation). Public opinion on education is mainly created through the interviews with high executives. Central media ignore grass roots activities as well as schools' and teachers' work. (*"Journalists are not prepared for educational issues during their study. They learn from personal experience. Their focus depends on the editor's decision. One day they are sent to write about textbooks and tomorrow they are assigned the task of reporting about traffic problems or about shortcomings in milk-industry. One must be a genius to cover all that accurately. And, yet, the media have a great influence on public opinion on education in our country. They might as well be responsible for the fact that the potentials of education for social restructuring and development are still undervalued by the majority."*)

Psychological barriers:

- *Biases against grass roots level organisation* - Misunderstanding and devaluation of the role of grass roots organisations in democratic change is still shared by many in schools, government, public administration and media. (*"When we began to expand our activities in the region we were suddenly portrayed by local political leaders and media as 'homosexuals', 'communists', 'anti-patriots', 'political opposition', 'menace to national cause', etc. Even now, many citizens think of us as of dilettantes and amateurs."*). Such opinions are detrimental for co-operation and they prevent many NGOs from benefiting from the resources allocated to school by the central government for in-service teacher training. (*"When I wanted to put a*

poster of our organisation inside one faculty I first had to ask the dean. He refused it telling me that it was a political act he could not allow.") Despite the government document aiming at promoting co-operation with NGO sector, things are not well advanced in practice. Recognition of NGOs by schools largely depends on the permissiveness of school principals and this may not be based on rational criteria at all. (*"The arbitrariness is the characteristics of those school principals that have no previous experiences with grass roots activities. They still believe that their main function is to be obedient to 'those from above' while controlling 'those from below'.*")

- *Self-stereotyping and self-devaluation among grass roots activists* - Grass roots activists sometimes devalue their own work, believing that civil initiatives are primarily locally bounded and that they lack potential for promoting social changes at the macro level.
- *Devaluation of non-formal training in general* - Teachers who think of their profession in terms of fixed knowledge-delivery, impersonal teacher-student relations and disciplined learning tend to devalue non-formal training for its loose forms and strategies (*"When asked what they actually do in the workshops some teachers respond: 'Well, nothing important. We play a bit, have lot of fun and jump from one topic to the other'."*)
- *Fear of de-professionalisation in education* - Educators fear that an open school system may lead to de-professionalisation of schooling and education, jeopardise their position and lessen their authority among the students. (*"Some teachers feel uneasy when external partners and the public are more directly involved in education, when they can not control the learning process."*)
- *Fear of innovations* - Some teachers and school principals feel fear of innovations in their practice, especially in relation to new methods and strategies for teaching and learning, such as interactive, co-operative and participative styles, team-work, critical analysis, etc. (*"Teachers and students running and/or participating in workshops on non-violent conflict resolution, role-playing, simulation, etc. tend to be perceived as black sheep by their colleagues in the school."*)
- *Stereotypes on Eastern and Western Europe* - Referring to international and regional co-operation and exchange, many educators and school principals tend to refuse to establish co-operation with schools from the Southeast Europe and try very hard to become part of some Western school network. (*"Co-operation with underdeveloped European countries is seen as a sign of failure and the least challenging. After having been under Western influences in education for decades, it is now difficult to switch to East European experiences and see them as valuable resources for learning and change. The 'authority-knows-better' attitude does not apply for Eastern Europe. This should be changed soon as we share a lot."*).

Possibilities in resolving the obstacles

Besides the general provisions, the participants of the meeting spoke of the following possibilities for resolving the obstacles to EDC and MofD implementation:

- develop a comprehensive implementation strategy for the National Human Rights Education Programme with clear links to EDC and MofD at all levels and in all forms of education (*"Human rights education should not be introduced solely as specific school subject; it must remain holistic and cross-curricular with strong EDC and MofD dimensions in order to strengthen students' dignity and promote his/her civil potentials."*)

- put more emphasis on EDC and MofD at upper primary and secondary education level as well as in religious classes;
- develop standard assessment measures and procedures in human rights education, including EDC and MofD dimensions, in order to use the results for further developments in the field;
- strengthen co-operation in decision making at the local level in line with the new laws on primary and secondary schooling that recognise parents and the local community as school partners in decision-making (*"Such co-operation is extremely important. It enables all sides in the process to learn about democratic rules and procedures and to accept responsibility for educational outcomes."*);
- establish intensive courses for young teachers during their interim period in active teaching/learning methods, democratic classroom management, development of student-oriented programmes and qualitative assessment, in co-operation with local grass roots organisations;
- enlarge the list of grass roots organisations recognised by the Ministry of Education and Sport for their expertise in teacher training and education;
- give more prominence to professional associations in policy and curriculum design (*"Recent initiative of the Open Society Institute - Croatia to assist professional organisations in proposing the curricula changes through round tables and discussions among professionals in secondary education should be supported also by the Ministry."*).
- encourage schools participating in international projects and exchange programmes (Europe in School, ASP Schools Project, Globe Project, School without Racism, Healthy Towns, etc.) to share their experience with other schools;
- inform schools with access to the Internet about important governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental sites and provide the necessary means to enable them to contribute to on-line discussions on educational changes in the world;
- establish a special rubric in 'Skolske novine' and, if possible, in other media with information on good practice in human rights education, EDC and MofD, as well as with the analysis of obstacles and solutions, practitioners' opinions, review of books, manuals and textbooks in the field, etc.; ensure more media space for non-formal, grass roots initiatives targeting teachers, students and youth; develop training courses for young journalists in major educational issues (*"The development of a pilot course of this kind has been announced by the Open Society Institute - Croatia for the year 2001/2002."*)

5. Conclusions

Croatia is a typical country in transition, still lacking a rational, coherent, consistent, operative and long-term educational policy. Such a situation is partly due to a communist past when all the policies were mere reflections of the Communist Party's "revolutionary programme" devised, controlled and assessed by the central government. On the other hand, it is also the outcome of a decade of post-communist search for national identity when the searching was halted and handicapped by the war, insecurity of life and economic destabilisation. In such a situation, the need to join a family of highly developed European democracies with well-defined principles of, and strategies for, social development resulted in the production of a series of ill-balanced policy papers in which social priorities were centrally defined in terms of national-state building. All other dimensions of social development were subordinated to this, even when political rhetoric favoured the opposite. The fact that Croatia did not succeed in resolving the quest for nation-state

building through democratic changes and strengthening of civil society was an important determinant of the January 2000 political changes. The shifts in national priorities towards democracy, open market and European integration mark the beginning of a new phase of political restructuring in which more pragmatic and efficient policies are needed as a sound basis for economic stabilisation and social development.

On a general level, the Constitution has been revised and changed, triggering further adaptation of Croatian legislative related, *inter alia*, to strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights and freedoms, minority members' rights, decentralisation and transparency in decision-making, efficiency of education for social and economic development.. Consequently, the government has issued several strategic documents, such as the *Working Programme of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for the 2000 - 2004 Period*; *The Strategy for the Development of the Republic of Croatia in the 21st Century, including the sub-section on education (The White Paper on Education)*; *National Programme of Action for Children in the Republic of Croatia*; *National Policy of the Republic of Croatia for the Promotion of Equality*; *Programme of Co-operation of the Government of Croatia with Non-governmental - Non-profit Sector in the Republic of Croatia* and the *Model for the Realisation of National Minority Members' Rights*. The Ministry of Education and Sport has independently developed *The Basis for Restructuring of Educational System of the Republic of Croatia*.

Despite a considerable number of strategic documents, national policies still lack co-ordination, clear priorities and coherence, especially in education. The two policy documents, one issued by the central government (*The White Paper of Education*) and the other by the Ministry (*The Basis for Restructuring of Educational System*) offer different visions and frameworks for educational development and have different perceptions on the role of formal and non-formal education in democratic processes. Both stress the need for integrating different levels and forms of education in the context of lifelong education and for merging public and private sectors in promoting social and economic goals through education. In the same time, both fail to recognise the triangular nature of educational changes and, thus, mention the third determinant, i.e. civil society, only occasionally. In addition, the issues of human rights protection, empowerment of citizens, equality and non-discrimination, pluralism, inclusiveness, and social cohesion, i.e. the key EDC and MofD dimensions are loosely integrated into the overall structure of both documents.

The weakest point in promoting educational changes, in general, and EDC and MofD, in particular, is the lack of implementation policies and strategies encompassing clear procedures, measures and mechanisms. *Ad hoc* solutions prevail in the implementation of policy provisions. There is also the lack of quality assessment and evaluation strategies as well as of national standards of educational achievement in both general education and specific learning fields, including human rights education, education for democratic citizenship, intercultural education and the like. Control of the quality of input should be replaced by the control of the output on the basis of sound national criteria. The modernisation (democratisation) of the overall educational system depends largely on clear understanding of what knowledge and skills student at a certain level of education should acquire in order to participate efficiently and responsibly in economic and democratic changes. To this end, the curriculum, school/educational institution climate and the role of different social actors in education should be reviewed and reformed. Educational institutions should be more student-oriented and society-oriented, i.e. more responsive to the needs of individual students and the community as a whole.

To achieve these changes, Croatia must review its legislation and policy documents in education once again in order to make a giant step from a 'patchwork' framework to an integrated system of

ideas, organisation and actions. Many prerequisites for EDC and MofD are already there at the legislative level as well as at the policy and, especially, at the practice level but need to be more balanced and integrated through participation, co-operation and partnership of public, private and civil sectors. Grass roots initiatives in EDC and MofD have already been well placed in some schools. It is now time that the bottom-up strategy finds its proper place in national EDC and MofD policy documents and implementation schemes.

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