



Independent national experts network in the area of adult education/adult skills

Full Country Report - Croatia

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**Independent national experts network in the
area of adult education/adult skills**

Full country report - Croatia

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1.0 COUNTRY OVERVIEW (STATISTICAL ELEMENT HAS BEEN INSERTED BY ECORYS FROM UPDATED TRENDS FOR THE ENTIRE POPULATION)

1.1. Employment rate – entire population

Table 1.1: Evolution of employment rate - national average (2010-2016) compared to EU data

Geographical area	Years									Targets	
	2000	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	EU 2020	National 2020
EU-28 average	:	67.9	68.6	68.6	68.4	68.4	69.2	70	71	75% of the 20-64 year-olds in employment	62.9
Member State	:	60	62.1	59.8	58.1	57.2	59.2	60.6	61.4		

Source: Employment rates by age and educational attainment level (%) Eurostat code *lfsa_ergaed*, last updated 25 April 2017.

Explanatory note: This table compares the average employment rate of the population (ISCED all levels) aged 20 to 64 in a given Member State over the period 2000-2016 to EU targets and average, including the EU2020 target, national 2020 targets and the average EU employment rate for 2016.

-Comparison to EU2020 target

Despite an improvement between 2015 and 2016 (60.5% to 61.4%), the 2016 (table 1.1), unemployment remains significantly below the EU2020 target (75%). Moreover, a significant drop in the activity rate explains more than half of the overall reduction in the unemployment rate¹. The unemployment level remains high, and in combination with persistently low and declining activity points to a large untapped labour potential. The working-age population is shrinking due to both ageing and emigration trends. Data for 2015 points to an acceleration of the negative demographic trends recorded in Croatia over the past two decades.²

-Comparison to National 2020 target

The National target for the year 2020 is 62.9% employment rate, as shown in the table 1.1 Croatia is in the year 2016 just 1.5% (61.5%) lower than the target requirement. It is necessary to understand that this is due to labour market reforms, which increased the flexibility of the labour market. This has resulted in a surge in temporary contracts. This is

¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2017-european-semester-country-report-croatia-en.pdf>

² <https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2017-european-semester-country-report-croatia-en.pdf>

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especially the case among young people: for those aged 15-29, 47.1 % of contracts in 2015 were temporary, compared with an EU average of 32.2 % for the same age group. The share of fixed-term contracts in total employment grew from 15.6 % in Q3-2013 to 24.2 % in Q3-2016 according to national statistic³. The trend is visible in all sectors of the economy but especially in construction, private services and tourism, due to the high seasonality of their activity. The 2016 country report showed that these trends have been underpinned by both increased inflows of people moving into employment and a higher probability of temporary employment for all categories of workers. In addition, some atypical contracts that are designed only for specific circumstances – professional contracts ("ugovor o djelu") and student contracts – appear to be increasingly used (CELSI, 2016, close to 65% of all regular students is working on such contracts,⁴ On a positive note, recent data show that an increasing share of temporary employees (37.8 % in 2015) did make the transition to permanent employment.

-Comparison between 2016 national data and the EU-28 average for 2016

The employment rate for 2016 is 61.4%, compared to an EU-28 average of 71% for this year. If we compare the average data for EU-28 for 2016, and data for Croatia in the year 2016 it is still the case that Croatia is 9,6% lower than EU average (Croatia 61.4%, EU 71%). We can see that Croatia has made some progress in employability but this is far from EU target in 2020 (75%).

-Evolution over time

As indicated in table 1.1 from the period 2005 until 2016 we can see that Croatia has consistently lagged behind the EU-28 average. However, from the document "Country Report Croatia 2017 Including an In-Depth Review on the prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances"⁵ (p. 31) we can see that in 2016, the activity rate (age 15-64) declined by 2.5 pps., to 65.6 %, with particularly large falls among the low skilled, especially those of 25 to 55 years. Limited availability of attractive job opportunities may have discouraged labour market participation and contributed to increasing migration outflows. Indeed, the share of 'discouraged' workers (jobless people available to work but not seeking employment) amounted to 5% of the total population (15-74) in 2015, which is more than double compared to the EU average and has increased significantly since 2008 (3 %).

³ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2017-european-semester-country-report-croatia-en.pdf>

⁴ Mrnjavac, Ž. 2015. Poticati samozapošljavanje i stvaranje malih poslova. In: Davorko Vidović, ed. Zaposlimo Hrvatsku: Strateške smjernice za rast zaposlenosti. Zagreb: Hrvatska gospodarska komora. 83-95. (Croatian only)

⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2017-european-semester-country-report-croatia-en.pdf>

1.2. Participation rate – entire population

Table 1.2: Evolution of participation rate in education and training - national average (2010-2016) compared to EU data

	Years									Targets	
	2000	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	⁶EU 2020	National 2020
EU-28 average	:	9.6	9.3	9.1	9.2	10.7	10.8	10.7	10.8	-	-
Member State	:	2.1	3	3.1	3.3	3.1	2.8	3.1	3	15% of adults in lifelong learning (LLL)	-

Source: Participation rate in education and training by sex and age (%), Eurostat code trng_lfse_01, last updated 25 April 2017.

Explanatory note: This table compares the participation rate in lifelong learning of adults aged 25-64 to EU data over the period 2000-2016.

-Comparison to EU2020 target

Croatia is lagging behind in upgrading skills and the re-skilling the working age population. In 2016, only 3 % of adults (25-64) reported having participated in lifelong learning, which is 0.1% less than in year 2015(table 1.2).

-Comparison between 2016 national data and the EU-28 average for 2016

There is no national data about the participation of adults in adult education at all, therefore is not possible to compare national statistics and data from EU. The only data we can comment are those from EU statistics. The participation rate of adults in education is far below the EU average of 10.8 %. This is a particular concern given the generally low educational attainment of the working-age population, and especially given that 50% of the unemployed are long-term unemployed who run a higher risk of becoming inactive due to their obsolete or eroded skills.

-Evolution over time

The data from the 2005 until 2016 indicates that average for those 8 years is 2.94% of adults that were enrolled in any kind of education and training. The lack of adequate policies and budget from the Government for adult education is the reason for the low number of adults enrolled in education. Government document state that target for enrolment in adult

education till 2020 is 5% (five percent), not the 15% as in EU⁷. This is a realistic projection if we take in consideration the economic context and potential of Croatia.

1.3.Trends for low qualified adults

1.3.1 Share of low qualified adults

Table 1.3: Share of low-qualified adults (ISCED 0-2) – national data (2010-2016) compared to EU-28 average 2016

Geographical area	Years								
	2000	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
EU-28 average	:	30.6	27.3	26.6	25.8	24.8	24.1	23.5	23
Member State	:	27.2	22.7	21.8	19.5	18.7	17.1	16.6	16.9

Source: Population by educational attainment level, sex and age (%), Eurostat edat_lfse_03, last updated 25 April 2017.

Explanatory note: this table compares the percentage of the population with low qualifications (ISCED levels 0-2) in 2016 to the EU-28 average for 2016 and the period 2000-2016.

-Comparison to EU-28 average

As shown in table 1.3, the share of low-qualified adults (ISCED 0-2) at 16.9% that is slightly more than in the year 2015 (16.6%), but is 6.1% lower than EU-28 average (23% in 2016). Croatia still doesn't have a policy on how to enrol low-qualified workers in education.

-Evolution over time

The share of low-qualified adults stood at 27.2% in 2005 and had decreased steadily until 16.6% in 2015. The level then rose to 16.9% in 2016.

If we compare statistical data from the year 2005 until the year 2016 we can see a continuous drop in the percentage of enrolment old lower skilled (qualified) adults in some kind of reskilling or upskilling. This is due to lack of adequate systematic development of state policy and budget. It is not likely that unemployed low qualified adults (or if they are employed they have a minimum salary) are able to pay for upskilling or reskilling. Some programmes are made by the Croatia Service for Employment but this is not enough. The Croatian Service for Employment has different measures for education but they cannot educate entire population.

⁷ http://www.azoo.hr/images/AZOO/Cjelovit_sadrzaj_Strategije_obrazovanja_znanosti_i_tehnologije.pdf

1.3.2. *Employment rate of low skilled adults*

Table 1.4: Employment rates of low skilled adults (ISCED 0-2) – national data (2010-2016) compared to EU-28 average 2016

Geographical area	Years								
	2000	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
EU-28 average	:	55.7	53.8	53.4	52.7	52	52.6	53.2	54.3
Member State	:	45.2	46.7	43.5	41.2	39.3	38.8	40.5	39.2

Source: Employment rates by age and educational attainment level (%) Eurostat code lfsa_ergaed, last updated 25 April 2017.

Explanatory note: This table compares the employment rates of those with low qualifications (ISCED levels 0-2) to the EU average over the period 2010-2016.

-Comparison to EU-28 average

Table 1.4 presents data for the employment rates of low skilled adults. The Croatian average is 39.2%, that is 15.1% less than EU-28 average (54.3%). There are less jobs for low skilled adults. The Adult education system doesn't help them to obtain the new skills which are necessary for the labour market. Adult education is not priority in Croatia.

-Evolution over time

In Croatia the employment rate of low skilled adults stood at 45.2% in 2005, and although fluctuating over time to some degree, demonstrated an overall fall to the level of 39.2% by 2016.

The 2016 level is lower than in the year 2015 by 1.3%. Due to the economic crisis Croatia has lost a lot of jobs for low skilled adults across a sustained period of time. In the year 2014 there was 40.5% employed low qualified adults, but in the next two years the employment rate decreased. The labour market needs more and more skilled adults with specific knowledge. A recent study (CEDEFOP, 2016) shows there are also shortages in professions requiring higher skills (ICT professionals, mechanical engineers and secondary mathematics teachers) mainly due to shortcomings in the education system.

1.3.3. *Participation rate of low skilled adults*

Table 1.5: Participation rate of low skilled adults – EU average in comparison to national average

Geographical area	Years								
	2000	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
EU-28 average	:	3.7	3.9	4	3.9	4.5	4.5	4.3	4.2
Member State	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	0.3

Source: Participation rate in education and training by sex and educational attainment (%), Eurostat code and trng_lfse_03, last updated 25 April 2017.

Explanatory note: This table compares the participation rate in lifelong learning of adults aged 25-64 with low qualification levels (ISCED levels 0-2) to EU data and over the period 2000-2016.

-Comparison to EU-28 average

As indicated in table 1.5, the participation rate of low skilled adults enrolled in adult education and training in the year 2016 is only 0.3%. This is first time over a long period that we have some national level data in statistics but in comparison to EU-28 average (4.2%) it is very low. This is due to lack of systematic measures by the Government for adult education in programmes of reskilling or upskilling.

-Evolution over time Due to lack of previous data we cannot evaluate over the period country overview)

2. BRIEF OVERVIEW OF ADULT LEARNING SYSTEM

Adult education in Croatia includes formal and non-formal education.

Since 2007, **formal** adult education has been regulated by the Adult Education Act⁸, as well as through other implementing regulations. For an institution to engage in formal adult education, an agreement from the Ministry of Science and Education must be granted. Every educational programme administered must receive a positive evaluation from the Agency for VET and AE as well as from the Ministry. Institutions that offer adult education programmes must keep a register of all learning participants (*Andragoški zajednički upisnik polaznika - AZUP*).⁹

Even though the institutions are obliged to keep statistical data, they often ignore it, resulting in the Agency for VET and AE having no real data or statistics on the number of participants, the adult education programmes they have completed, or the number of persons employed in adult education. According to incomplete information available from the Agency, there were approximately 569¹⁰ registered adult education institutions at the start of 2016. The total number of formal adult education programmes registered by the Agency for VET and AE is 9,777. This represents the total number of programmes for which the adult education institutions have obtained approval from the Ministry of Science and Education, but there is no data on the number of institutions that have actually implemented these programmes in the past two years.¹¹ Formal adult education is not financed from the state budget. Participants usually pay for their adult education programmes themselves. Croatia does not have university courses for the training of the teachers working in adult education.

Non-formal adult education is not regulated by law, and is delivered through a variety of programmes that individuals may choose to participate in. In Croatia, there is no official data on the number and types of programmes offered. There is also no data on the number of participants in non-formal education. In Croatia, many different organisations can implement adult education programs: NGOs, religious communities and private companies. Non-formal adult education on a national level also includes different programmes that have been approved by individual ministries or by professional organisations in order to obtain a license to carry out certain types of work. There are several examples of such programmes. The Croatian Chamber of Economy organises education and examinations for real estate agents. The Ministry of Economy conducts education and examinations in the field of public procurement in order to obtain a license for public procurement. Vocational organisations also organise training for members in the fields that are relevant for certain professions (Croatian chamber of civil engineers, Croatian Council of Physiotherapists, Croatian Medical Chamber, Croatian Chamber of Architects, etc.). The financing of non-formal education is usually up to the interested individual. It is important to re-emphasise that neither the statistical monitoring of this form of education, nor the quality control of programmes exist at present.

⁸ <http://www.zakon.hr/z/384/Zakon-o-obrazovanju-odraslih>

⁹ <http://www.asoo.hr/default.aspx?id=868>

¹⁰ Data from the Agency for VET and AE at author's request

¹¹ Data from the Agency for VET and AE at author's request

2.1. Main features and a concise summary of historic development

The latest figures from Eurostat in terms of participation in formal education and training are presented in table 2.1 below. The figures offer a breakdown by educational level, and indicate that over the 25 year olds engaged in formal adult learning, are mostly participating at bachelor's, master's and doctoral level (or their equivalent level). The data presented in the table are the sum for the years 2013 to 2015.

Table 2.1 Number of participants in formal education and training by level of education and age (2013-2015)

	Age 20-24	Age 25+	Total
Level of education (i.e. basic, vocational, higher)			
Primary	0	0	0
Lower secondary	0	0	0
Upper secondary	318	340	658
Post-secondary non-tertiary education		0	
Short-cycle tertiary education		19	
Bachelor's or equivalent level		53,331	
Master's or equivalent level		58,365	
Doctoral or equivalent level		9,481	

Source: Eurostat, Eurostat database table "Pupils and students enrolled by education level, sex and age (educ_uoe_enra02)", accessed 2017.29.09.

2.2. Main providers

2.2.1. Key providers¹²

The Ministry of Science and Education is an important institution in the field of adult education in Croatia; as well as being the only state institution dealing with adult education it is also the key body regulating all sectors of education, including formal adult education. Adult education institutions which deliver accredited educational programmes do so based on the guidelines set up by the Ministry, with the learner as the final beneficiary.

The Adult Education Council is a Governmental counselling body consisting of representatives of key stakeholders in adult education, facilitating cooperation and ensuring synchronised policy and strategy formulation, resulting from a consensus among major stakeholders. The Council monitors the adult education system and proposes measures for its development, provides opinions on legislative and implementing regulations and proposes

¹² Source: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Croatia:Main_Providers

mechanisms for financing from public sources. It consists of a chairperson and twelve members, appointed by the Government of the Republic of Croatia on the basis of a proposal of the Minister of Science and Education. The candidates for chairperson and members are nominated by the heads of central state administration bodies, adult education institutions, professional and business organisations, trade unions and employers' associations.

The Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education was established in law in February 2010 after the merger of two agencies. These were the Agency for Training and Adult Education established by the Decree of the Government of the Republic of Croatia (Official Gazette 59/06) in May 2006 and The Agency for Vocational Education established by the Decree of the Government of the Republic of Croatia in January 2005.

The tasks and role of the Agency are:

- performing analytical and developmental tasks in the field of vocational and adult education
- coordinating proposals of professional bodies
- performing professional supervision of vocational and adult education institutions
- providing professional advice and counselling services
- professional education and training of employees in the field of vocational education
EAEA Country Report on Adult Education in Croatia: Helsinki, 2011 9
- innovation, monitoring and evaluation of vocational education programmes
- stimulating cooperation and participation in the implementation of vocational education programmes and projects
- maintaining a database and providing information to state administration bodies and the relevant ministry on records and other relevant data regarding the monitoring of the state of vocational and adult education and its development
- preparing analyses of management processes in vocational and adult education
- defining criteria for the establishment, implementation and monitoring of systematic funding of adult education with regard to programmes, investment and material management.

2.2.2. Providers

Adult education in Croatia is provided by open universities, elementary schools (single structure primary and lower secondary education institutions), middle schools (upper secondary education institutions), higher education institutions, foreign language schools, institutions providing accommodation and care to people with special needs and pedagogical and other institutions.

Adult education institutions can be established by Republic of Croatia, local or regional government units, or other legal and physical entity. The **Institution Act** regulates adult education institutions. Adult education institutions perform their tasks independently, in mutual cooperation, in cooperation with other education institutions and other legal entities.

Adult education institutions can carry out their activities if registered for providing adult education and if they meet the requirements regarding; their facilities, staff and material conditions defined in the programme, which has to be in line with the standards and norms for its implementation. The standards, requirements, the methods and procedures for determining whether the institution complies with the legal requirements are set out by the minister.

2.3.Main types of publicly financed provision¹³

2.3.1. Accreditation for the provision of adult education programmes

The Act on Adult Education is accompanied by four ordinances, which define the adult education field in more detail:

- Ordinance on the standards, norms, method and procedure for the compliance assurance in adult education institutions
- Ordinance on the contents, form and mode for keeping and storing andragogic documents
- Ordinance on adult education records
- Ordinance on public certificates in adult education

In accordance with the Act and the ordinances, adult education programmes can be provided by the institutions registered for the provision of adult education. Institutions interested in the provision of formal adult education programmes must obtain the accreditation for adult education programme provision from the Ministry of Science and Education. The accreditation for the adult education programme provision is issued upon the request by the institution, after the completion of the administrative procedure.

In addition to the application, the institution must also submit the programme for which the accreditation is requested and the evidence showing that the material and staff requirements for the provision of the programme are met. The Agency VET and Adult Education provides an expert opinion on the adult education program. An adult education programme is developed by the institution, taking into account the age, experience, acquired education, knowledge, skills and abilities of the learners.

2.3.2. The mandatory content of an adult education programme includes:

- the programme title, title and the level of the occupation or jobs complexity according to the National Classification of Occupations;
- secondary education qualification or secondary vocational education qualification, or knowledge, skills and abilities acquired upon the completion of the programme;
- enrolment requirements;
- syllabus (duration in teaching hours per subject or teaching content), framework programme per subject or teaching contents for professional development and training programmes;
- overall duration of the programme; modes for the assessment.

¹³ Source: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Croatia:Main_Types_of_Provision

The mandatory content of a foreign language adult education programme includes the teaching contents and the number of teaching hours for each module and its level. It also includes the provision modes, modes for the assessment of the knowledge, conditions for the enrolment of learners for each module and level, the level of proficiency demonstrated at the final exam, facilities, staff, didactical and other requirements for the provision of the programme.

2.3.3. Raise Achievement in Basic Skills

Elementary adult education is conducted according to the **Elementary Adult Education Curriculum**, passed by the Ministry of Science and Education. This is a framework curriculum - the implementation of the curriculum should include determining the initial level of the candidate's knowledge and the operational programme development, taking into account the individual needs of the candidate and the possibilities offered by the programme (MSES, 2003).

2.3.4. Duration

The Elementary Adult Education Curriculum (Official Gazette 136/03) foresees six 18-week education terms. Accordingly, the total duration of the single structure adult education is three school years. The first and second education terms correspond to the regular lower primary education level, comprising grades one to four, and targets the candidates who have not completed the first four grades of the single structure education. These terms comprise 180 teaching hours, during which the Croatian language and mathematics are taught and studied.

The objective of these terms is teaching general educational content through the literacy training of the candidates. The third to sixth education terms correspond to the regular lower secondary education level, comprising grades five to eight. During these terms, general education content is structured into subjects.

The mandatory number of teaching hours is between 234 (in the third education term) and 354 (in the sixth education term), and the subjects covered are (depending on the education term): Croatian Language, Mathematics, Art, Music, a foreign language, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, History, Geography, Basic Civic Education, Industrial Arts with ICT, and Physical Education.

During the fifth and sixth education terms, learners choose elective subjects – various training programmes for simple jobs (150 teaching hours), which can be completed simultaneously with the single structure education programme, thus preparing the learners for their first occupation.

2.3.5. Providers and governing authorities

Operational programmes for adult education are developed and adopted by adult education institutions and approved by the MSES on the basis of the expert opinion by the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education. With a view to providing quality

assurance of the operational programmes, the Agency (2012) issued guidelines for adult education institutions on planning and programming adult education, with the emphasis on the definition of learning outcomes acquired by the candidates and the linking of the outcomes to the contents of learning in specific topics and teaching units.

2.3.6. Flexibility

According to the Single Structure Adult Education Curriculum (Official Gazette 136/03), the candidates enrol in a specific education term based on the number of previously completed grades, while the operational curriculum is adjusted depending on the background knowledge of the candidate, as assessed in the initial examination. The Adult Education Act (Official Gazette 17/07) presents the opportunity for adults to prove their knowledge, skills and abilities regardless of the mode in which they were acquired, by taking the exams organised and conducted by the adult education institution in charge of implementing the programme for the acquisition of knowledge, skills and abilities in question.

2.3.7. Certification

Certificates acquired in adult education programmes are of equal value as the certificates issued after the completion of these programmes in the regular system, which means that the rights which the learners acquire through these programmes (possibility to continue education, employment) are the same as the rights pupils acquire through the programme in the regular education system.

2.3.8. Funding

The cost of implementation of single structure adult education programmes and upper secondary adult education programmes, for the adults who have completed single structure education, are covered from the state budget, pursuant to the provisions of the Adult Education Act (Official Gazette 17/07). This means that the completion of single structure education and training for simple jobs is free of charge for the learners.

2.3.9. Future Development

The proposal of the new model for elementary adult education in the Republic of Croatia emphasises the development of key competences for lifelong learning. The model is based on the principles of flexibility and addressing the needs of adult learners and is focused on learning outcomes and their evaluation, the application of acquired knowledge and skills. It takes into account previously acquired knowledge and skills of the adults. The model is aimed at various groups of learners, ranging from the most vulnerable to the economically active population with acquired qualifications.

A special focus is placed on the inclusion of adult groups with low or insufficient level of education which, due to the economic crisis, unemployment, unfair social or life circumstances, have not had the opportunity to develop and realise their potential in order to actively contribute to the community in which they live and the labour market more widely.

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Additionally, a main focus of the single structure adult education model is the inclusion of the elements of key competences in other adult education forms. It is important to say that this model marks a shift from the existing single structure adult education curriculum, which is subject-based (Official Gazette 136/03), opening new opportunities for the completion of single structure education.

The draft of the new model for the elementary adult education was developed within the framework of the project "Implementation of European Agenda for Adult Learning", implemented by the Department for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education of The Ministry of Science and Education from 2012 to 2014. The proposal was developed by a working group of experts with various credentials/ backgrounds and representing various organisations (including the Ministry of Science and Education, the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education, the Education and Teacher Training Agency, the Croatian Employment Service, the Ministry of Labour and Pension System, the Adult Education Institutions Organisation, MMV counselling for development, and the Institute for Social Research – Centre for Research and Development of Education). In the process of developing the new model for single structure adult education, the guidelines of the European and Croatian education policies in the field of adult education were taken into account. Additionally the available data on the education of the population of the Republic of Croatia and the findings of the experts on development trends and main challenges facing the adult education system were assessed.

The objective of the working group was to construct a single structure adult education model which could initiate reforms in adult education leading to an offer of more relevant programmes, improved provision practice, more favourable learning outcomes for all learners and increased participation in the adult education. The new model of single structure adult education takes into account the announced curricular changes in the regular education system and the changes that are already underway as a result of the implementation of the Croatian Qualifications Framework. The proposal of the model is the first step in the reform of adult education, which should be accompanied by the activities related to the elaboration of additional documents, the improvement of adult education institutions, and the training of andragogic staff to implement the new model.

2.3.10. Achieve a Recognised Qualification during Adulthood

Adult education programmes for qualification acquisition are drafted in accordance with the prescribed programs of the Ministry.

2.3.11. Enrolment requirement

Completed single structure education, special conditions for each programme, for example: medical clearance (contraindications). Retraining programmes can be entered in by the learners who have completed upper secondary or upper secondary vocational education in order to obtain a new occupation/qualification.

2.3.12. Duration of the programme and the form of teaching

Adult education programmes for obtaining an upper secondary qualification, upper secondary vocational qualification, lower vocational education qualification or retraining programmes are conducted on the basis of a regular education programme. The minimum number of hours for each subject cannot be lower than 50% of the number of hours for theoretical classes prescribed in the regular education curriculum, regardless of the teaching mode.

Practical classes and tutorials are conducted in a number of hours prescribed in the regular education curriculum. The most used forms of classes are consultation-tutoring and correspondence-consultation classes. Consultation-tutoring classes are held in a form of a group and individual consultations.

Group consultations take up to 2/3 of the total number of hours defined in the programme for each subject; they are conducted with the whole group, and are mandatory for all learners. The remaining 1/3 of the total number of hours are used for individual consultations, which are conducted in accordance with the planned schedule and according to the needs of the learners, in the institutions, using e-mails, etc. Correspondence-consultation classes are conducted in group and individual consultations using correspondence. The minimum duration for group consultations is 10% of the total number of hours planned for each subject, prescribed in the regular education curriculum.

Group consultations can be organised in different periods. During the introductory consultation, the learners are given the instructions related to: programme provision, organisation of teaching, subjects content, consultations schedule, self-learning and teaching letters which are awarded to the learners. Group consultations have a cyclic schedule; the learners bring their homework to the consultations in teaching letters and are given the feedback on their achievement in a certain part of a teaching content/programme. Group consultations, depending on the teacher's plan and the needs of the learners, can comprise teaching and explanation of a certain part of the teaching content, which should always be adjusted to the specific needs of the teaching group. Individual consultations through correspondence are conducted using the special didactical resources for self-learning, for example, teaching letters in the written form, CD-s or web-pages, which should be provided and adjusted to the elaborated methodology by the institution. Individual consultations are conducted by e-mail, phone or fax, at the forums or using other means of communication, according to the needs and possibilities of the learners.

In order to obtain an approval by the Agency, besides the programme, two teaching letters should be submitted to the Agency: one of general educational content and one of vocational content in any subject.

2.3.13. Examination

The procedure for the subject exams is prescribed in the Ordinance on the standards, norms, method and procedure for the compliance assurance in adult education institutions. Learners must apply for each subject exam on the prescribed form (exam application), which can be created by each institution independently, in accordance with the prescribed elements of the

Ordinance on the content. The form and mode for keeping and storing andragogic documents includes a space on the back for the minutes of the course of the exam completed by the subject teacher.

The mode of the final exam in the professional development and training programmes is determined in the programme and it has to be conducted in front of a committee consisting of three members appointed by the expert body of the institution. Learners apply for the final exam on the application form for the final exam and the content of which is prescribed under the mentioned ordinance. The preparation and presentation of the final project and the State Matura Exam for adult learners are conducted in the way prescribed for the regular education system (Ordinance on the preparation and presentation of the final project, Ordinance on the State Matura Exam).

2.3.14. Final exam of acquired knowledge and skills

At the end of the professional development and training program, the learners take the final exam in the theoretical part (oral and/or written) and the practical exam. The form of the theoretical exam, the types of questions and the exam content are determined based on the specific features of the program, teaching contents and planned competences and learning outcomes. Additionally, the mode for the practical exam should be determined based on the specific programme and jobs for which the learners have undertaken the training or the professional development course. For example, the task can be: to fulfil a certain task, to perform a part of a job, to conduct a procedure, to present or demonstrate something.

2.3.15. Facilitate the Transition to the Labour Market for the unemployed or those at risk of unemployment (ALMMPs)

Training and professional development programs are adopted by the adult education institution on the basis of the studies on educational needs or labour market needs, using the amended methodology. The programmes should be adjusted to the age, previous education, knowledge, skills and abilities of the learners and should ensure acquiring, complementing and widening of knowledge, skills and abilities for a particular profession.

Training programs are aimed at the acquisition of knowledge and skills required for the performance of the simpler jobs. **Professional development programs** are aimed at widening and improving the acquired professional knowledge for the learners who have completed upper secondary school, related to the demands of the labour market and the goal of the acquisition of the knowledge in new techniques and technologies and their application.

2.3.16. Conditions for enrolment

Conditions for the enrolment of learners in professional development and training programmes are the following: the level of previous education (single structure, upper secondary or higher education), age and other requirements of the specific programme (previous work experience and/or medical clearance proving that the learner's health condition is appropriate for the jobs for which the learner is being prepared).

In addition, specific conditions that might be required for a specific job can be listed (e.g., drivers license, ICT skills). Determining the enrolment requirements for professional development programme requires a precise definition of previous education of the learner, which has to be in the same or a similar professional field.

2.3.17. Duration of the programme and the forms of teaching

Training programmes have a minimum duration of 120 hours. Professional development programmes have a minimum period of 150 hours for refreshing and improving the acquired knowledge, skills and the acquisition of new knowledge in the profession of same complexity level; or 500 hours for jobs of a higher level of complexity (except for the computing education programmes), according to the Ordinance on the standards, norms, method and procedure for the compliance assurance in adult education institutions.

A higher number of practical classes and tutorials is recommended for the training programmes, since the learners are mostly trained to perform simpler jobs. There is maximum of four hours per day for theoretical classes, while tutorials and practical classes can be taught for an increased number of hours. The duration for theoretical and practical classes taught in the institution is 45 minutes, while the duration for practical classes taught outside the institution is 60 minutes. The choice of the mode for delivering programme depends on the staff, technological, organisational and other capacities of the institutions.

Under the existing practice, professional development and training programmes are generally delivered in regular and consultation-tutoring classes, while consultation-correspondence classes are mostly used in the programmes for the acquisition of upper secondary vocational qualifications and retraining (or acquisition of the qualifications). Other forms of classes are less frequent and are often used as ways and methods for the improvement of teaching, e.g., use of ICT.

2.3.18. Certification

Public certificates contain the following information: title and address of the adult education institution, classification mark and date of issuance of the certificate, identification number of the learner (number from the registry of learners); name, surname and gender of learner, personal identification number (OIB); date, place and country of birth; citizenship, name of a parent, title of the adult education programme, name, surname, the signature of the person in charge for the educational group and of the adult education institution principal, a place for the seal of the adult education institution, classification mark and date of the accreditation for the program.

The professional development certificate contains: information on the obtained education and the basis for the enrolment into the professional development programme, title of the professional development programme, duration of the professional development programme, teaching contents, date of the final exam in teaching contents. Training certificates also contain: information on the obtained education and the basis for the enrolment into the training programme, title of the training programme, duration of the training programme, teaching contents, date of the final exam in teaching contents, titles of the jobs for which the

learner is trained. The foreign language certificate contains information on the name of the language and the level of proficiency, including: "Names of levels: A1 (beginner level), A2 (elementary level), B1 (intermediate level), B2 (independent level), C1 (advanced level), C2 (proficient level)", text: "Grades for the performance: excellent (5), very good (4), good (3), sufficient (2)."

2.3.19. Higher education for adults

Not applicable for Croatia.

2.3.20. Continuing VET (targeted at individuals and/or companies and/or public sector employees)

Continuing VET education for adults usually comprises of programmes for obtaining a licence ("majstorski ispit") for practising a particular craft. It is organised by the Croatian Chamber of Craft. For this licence participants have to pay a fee. The licence is basic requirement to be a mentor for the pupils from secondary VET schools for in-company training.

2.3.21. Liberal (Popular) Adult Education

Foreign language programmes for adults provided by adult education institutions must comply with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Provision for foreign language is divided in modules for each level. The minimum duration of the programme for one module, including exams, is 70 teaching hours.

The programme for each level builds upon the previous level, taking into account the principle of equal progression. Mandatory content of the programme is prescribed in Article 20, Paragraph 3 of the Ordinance on the standards, norms, method and procedure for the compliance assurance in adult education institutions.

The level of language proficiency for the learners with previous knowledge of a foreign language is tested at the institution. Fast learners can accelerate through the programme by means of an early transfer to the next module within each level. In order to transfer from one level to another, the learners must pass the exam for the level they are currently attending and thus prove that they are ready to progress on the next level. After they pass the exam, the learners obtain a certificate on the passed level, in accordance with the Ordinance on public certificates in adult education.

Employed learners can obtain the right to a minimum of seven days of education leave per year to participate in programmes provided in accordance with this Act. The right to education leave is determined under a mutual agreement between the employee and the employer. In order to be granted the right to an education leave, the employee must submit the application for the enrolment in the programme and the certificate of attendance and completion of the programme to the employer. Certificates of attendance and completion of the programme are issued by the adult education institution free of charge.

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The educational leave can be either paid or unpaid. During the paid educational leave, the employee receives a full salary.

2.3.22. Other (if any)

More informal adult education or education of adults in areas of self-development and leisure activities (such as painting, pottery, health, reading club, bridge etc.) is also provided generally through short programmes. The participants pay for such kind of non- formal adult education. "University for the third age" operates in Zagreb (as a part of Peoples Open University Zagreb), and offers this kind of adult education programmes.

3. ADULT LEARNING POLICIES

3.1. A summary of major developments/changes since 2010 and key current policy priorities in the field of adult learning and those specifically targeting low-skilled/unemployed

3.1.1. Present situation

Currently adult education in Croatia is recognised as part of a unified education system of the Republic of Croatia (Adult Education Act (Official Gazette 17/07, Article 1). Adoption of the **Adult Education Act** in 2007 created the preconditions of re-institutionalization and legal and statutory regulation of the education system adults. Law was preceded Adult Education Strategy, which was adopted by the Croatian Government in 2004.

The Adult Education Strategy (2004) represents an important step forward in the development of this system. It first signifies stronger public recognition of lifelong learning. Secondly, it officially recognises and positions adult education as a distinct and fully fledged element of the overall education system in Croatia. Consequential legislative actions were anticipated by the adoption of the **Adult Education Act** in 2007 and a year later the associated legislation. Finally, the necessary institutional framework was provided by establishing the Agency for Adult Education in 2006. The subsequent merger (in 2010) of the Agency for Adult Education and the Agency for Vocational Education in the Agency for vocational education and adult education and establishment of the dedicated public body titled the Council for Adult Education (in 2007), as an advisory body of the Government of the Republic of Croatia.

Today, the adult education system in Croatia is based on the principles of:

- lifelong learning;
- rational use of educational resources;
- geographical vicinity and access to education for everyone under the same conditions, in accordance with their abilities;
- autonomy and freedom in choosing the mode, content, type, means and methods of education;
- respecting differences and inclusion;
- professional and moral responsibility of the andragogic staff;
- educational offer quality guarantee;
- respecting the personality and dignity of all learners.

3.1.2. 2013

The Law on CROQF (Official Gazette, 22/13) was adopted in February 2013 as a result of an intensive dialogic and structural cooperation between all main stakeholders in the education and economy sectors. The Law established the CROQF legally by putting generic qualifications to certain qualifications levels. It also prescribes referencing of the CROQF in relation to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and to the Qualifications Framework of the

European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA) and finally it prescribes the institutional framework for the implementation of the CROQF. COQF is important for adult education.

3.1.3. 2014

The most important event in the creation of basic policy for adult education is the adoption of the Strategy for Education, Science and Technology, which also includes adult education as a part of lifelong learning in 2014. The strategy provides a holistic approach to education and is focused on several main goals which pervade the strategy: a high quality, efficient and relevant education available to all, under equal conditions.

3.1.4. 2015

No policy documents were made in the year 2015 concerning adult education.

3.1.5. 2016

The Ministry of Science and Education put the new Law on Adult Education up for public consultation (August 2016)¹⁴. The consultation is still open. The actual Law on Adult Education is not compatible with the changes made in CROQF and the suggested changes in VET.

Longer-term priorities:

- to establish a national information system of adult education, which would contain information about the programmes, students, adult educators and funding of accredited programmes. The existing register developed in the project "Cards 2004 - Adult Education" in the year 2009 has to be improved.
- to develop a unified national system of quality assurance in the adult education system
- to provide professional development and licensing of adult educators

For the implementation of these activities it will be necessary to secure approximately €5 million from the ESF over the next five years, as stated in the Strategy for Education, Science and Technology. These funds are intended only for the improvement of the adult education system.

¹⁴ file:///F:/Finalna%20verzija/Nacrt_prijedloga_Zakona_o_obrazovanju_odraslih.pdf

3.2. Major national economic-social strategies (and indicate if they refer to adult learning)

3.2.1. Operational programme under the 'investment for growth and jobs' 2014-2020¹⁵

In this government document, there are three objectives for education including adult education.

Table 3.1 Government objectives for education

Selected thematic objective	Selected investment priority Justification for selection	Justification for selection
Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning.	Improving the quality and efficiency of access to, tertiary and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups.	The EU2020 strategy establishes the headline targets for education and life-long learning development: at least 40% of 30-34 year olds completing tertiary or equivalent education; share of 30-34 year olds with completed tertiary education in EN 26 EN Selected thematic objective; Selected investment priority; Justification for selection Croatia was 24.5%, though in EU it was 35.5%. Croatia's target for 2020 is 35%. The main challenges in education are labour market relevance and quality of provision across all educational sectors. At tertiary level, some 60% of students study social sciences and humanities, whereas the numbers graduating in technical and medical sciences continue to fall. Employment rates of recent

¹⁵Source: <http://www.europski-fondovi.eu/sites/default/files/dokumenti/Operativni%20program%20U%C4%8Dinkoviti%20ljudski%20potencijali%202014.-2020..pdf>

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		<p>graduates are significantly lower than in the EU-28, with statistics showing that between 29% and 54% of young people worked in a job outside their field of study. Although tertiary education enrolment has risen, attainment has levelled off since 2010 and drop-out rates are extremely high. Croatia's population has lower digital skills than the EU average (CSR).</p>
<p>Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning.</p>	<p>Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non-formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences.</p>	<p>Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non-formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences.</p>
<p>Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning.</p>	<p>Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes.</p>	<p>The main challenges in education are labour market relevance and quality of provision across all educational sectors. Outdated vocational education and training system is undergoing reform in the form of new school curricula based on sector skills analyses and comprehensive occupational and qualification standards. More than 95% of 20-24 year olds complete a form of upper secondary education and the majority of vocational education and training students continue to higher education. However,</p>

according to AVETAE, fewer than half of vocational education and training graduates end up employed in a job matching their field of study. More than 70% of first year students surveyed in 2011 planned to eventually enrol in a graduate course. This level of attainment and ambition masks the fact young people may be lacking skills or motivation to enter labour market earlier. Employer engagement, work-based learning and career guidance across secondary and tertiary education are lacking (CSR).

All three objectives recognised by the government are related also to adult education. According to the Croatian law, any person older than 15 years if not in regular school is part of the adult education system. Another important detail is that a number of different ministries, or other stakeholders like the **Croatian Employment Service** are able to organise adult education programmes (up-skilling, re-skilling).

3.3. Distribution of responsibilities regarding adult learning

The following authorities are included in the management of the adult education system in Croatia:

- Government of the Republic of Croatia.
- Ministry of Science and Education, which is the governmental body responsible for the whole education system, including adult education. This particular Ministry is also responsible for strategic guidance and development, as well as the implementation of reforms in the education sector.
- The Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education, which is a public institution founded in June 2010 by the Act on Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education. Since 1 July 2010, the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education has been established, which merged two agencies that were closed in June 2010 – the Agency for Adult Education, and Agency for Vocational Education and Training. Adult education institutions (public open universities, primary schools, secondary schools, higher education institutions, language schools, housing and care institutions for persons with special needs, prisons and other institutions) which implement formal programmes of adult education are

classified as public institutions according to the Institutions Act (Official Gazette, 35/08). The adult education providers can be founded by the Republic of Croatia, local and regional self-governing units and other legal and physical entities. The majority of institutions are situated in the most developed areas, specifically around big cities. Nevertheless, there is broad network of institutions spanning the entire territory of the Republic of Croatia.

- Adult education institutions prepare and deliver adult educational programs. They include public open universities, primary schools, secondary schools, higher education institutions, foreign language schools, housing and care institutions for persons with special needs, and pedagogical institutions.

There is no distribution of responsibilities in adult education between national, regional and local governments. The Ministry of Science and Education is responsible for the educational system in Croatia.

3.4. Lifelong learning strategy¹⁶

Under the implementation of the European education policy and the promotion of adult education and lifelong learning in Croatia, there is an emphasis on the unskilled and low-skilled workers. In 2012, the Ministry of Science and Education launched the projects under the Implementation of **EU Agenda for Adult Education**, which were part of the Lifelong Learning Sub-Programme Grundtvig from 2012 till 2014. Subsequently they became a part of the Erasmus+ programme of the Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) of the European Commission. The primary focus of the projects is the implementation and promotion of the Council Resolution on a Renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning (2011/C 372/01,) with a special focus on bringing together and networking between the stakeholders in the adult education system at the local and national levels.

Implementation of the **Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning** (2006/962/EC) promotes the acquisition of key competences for lifelong learning, with the emphasis on the unskilled and low-skilled Croatian workers, forming a basis for their further personal and professional development. Within the framework of the previous two-year project Implementation of the EU Agenda 2012-2014, the Ministry passed the Recommendations for the quality development of adult education and lifelong learning system in the Republic of Croatia, which included the Proposal of the competencies model for the primary adult education. The Strategic plan of the Ministry of Science and Education for the period 2013-2015 set a priority of increased accessibility and participation in the adult education programmes in the dissemination of the lifelong learning policy and emphasises the necessity of focusing on increasing the attractiveness of adult education and expansion of the network of programmes and institutions for adult education.

¹⁶ Source: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Croatia:Lifelong_Learning_Strategy

In this context, continued support for the primary adult education and training is planned within the framework of the literacy project, with the objective of facilitating the inclusion of individuals who did not complete the primary education into the lifelong learning process.

In the period 2012 – 2014, as a follow-up to the European education policy and the promotion of adult education and lifelong learning in the Republic of Croatia, focussing on the low-skilled workers, the Ministry of Science and Education implemented the Renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning through the project "Implementation of European Agenda for Adult Education". This is a part of the Lifelong Learning Sub-Programme Grundtvig of the Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Sustainability of the project will be ensured by the reform of the adult education system under the new Strategy for Adult Education of the Republic of Croatia. These reforms are based on the Renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning, the amendments to the Adult Education Act and all relevant secondary legislation, the competences model for fundamental skills and the curriculum for the primary adult education.

3.5. Adult learning policy framework (regulatory and implementing acts) (for further information see [Eurypedia](#)).

Until 2004, when the national Strategy of Adult Education was adopted, development and provision of adult education in Croatia was focused on the primary and secondary level. The afore mentioned national Strategy systematically and comprehensively elaborated the issue of the further development of the adult education system in Croatia, and stated the importance of legal regulation, the provision of financial support, promotion of non-formal and informal learning and the importance of adult education on all educational levels, including tertiary education.

In 2007, the Law on Adult Education was adopted, for the first time clearly highlighting that adult education should be an integral part of the Croatian education system. This law is also the first official document which introduces and distinguishes the concepts of formal, non-formal and informal learning.

In 2013 the Law on the Croatian Qualifications Framework, a general framework law, was passed, which laid the foundation for the recognition of the learning outcomes that an individual acquires through various training programmes as a part of their formal qualification. This is a general framework law and it was used in creating the Strategy for Education, Science and Technology. The educational outcomes are based on competences, which was not the case before in the educational system.

The most important recent activity in the field of adult education in Croatia is the implementation of the new Strategy for Education, Science and Technology (2014)¹⁷. This is the first comprehensive education strategy in the Republic of Croatia, based on the lifelong

¹⁷http://www.azoo.hr/images/AZOO/Cjelovit_sadrzaj_Strategije_obrazovanja_znanosti_i_tehnologije.pdf

learning approach where adult education has been included as an important element. This Strategy replaces the former National Strategy of Adult Education (2007)¹⁸.

For the development of the Strategy for Education, Science and Technology the data from the last Population, Households and Dwellings census (2011) and the Population According to Education Features, was of great importance. The Census data was very important for the development of new policies, because the Croatian administration was able to form a general consensus of the overall educational achievements of the entire population. Before the 2011 Census, 2001 data was being used. After the 2011 Census the picture has completely changed (e.g. in 2001, 18.62% of population in Croatia had no primary education, while in the year 2011 this is the case for only 9.53% of the population).

The most important challenge for Croatian adult education will be the implementation of the Strategy for Education, Science and Technology. To face this challenge there has to be a change in legislation in order to face the goals included in the Strategy. These goals are:

- Ensuring the prerequisites for increasing involvement of adults in lifelong learning and education
- Improving and expanding learning, education, training and the acquisition of qualifications for work
- A more effective public administration
- Improving the organisation, financing and management processes of adult education

Each of these goals should be achieved through measures that are listed in the Strategy document. According to the Strategy, 5% of the adult population should be enrolled in adult education by 2020. The involvement of adults in education is currently around 2.4%.

3.5.1 Legislative framework

The legal framework of adult education system in Croatia is established by the following acts:

- Croatian Qualifications Framework Act (Official Gazette 22/13),
- Act on Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education (Official Gazette 24/10)
- Primary and Secondary Education Act (Official Gazette 87/08, 86/09, 92/10, 105/10, 90/11 and 16/12)
- Vocational Education Act (Official Gazette 30/09)
- School Inspection Act (Official Gazette 50/95)
- Expert Pedagogical Supervision Act (Official Gazette 73/97)
- Adult Education Act (Official Gazette 17/07)
- Strategy of Adult Education, Ministry of Science and Education s (2004), Zagreb
- "Guidelines for Strategy for Education, Science and Technology" (Committee of the Ministry of Science and Education s in cooperation with the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, April 2012)

¹⁸ [file:///C:/Users/POU/Downloads/A%20Strategy_for_Adult_Education%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/POU/Downloads/A%20Strategy_for_Adult_Education%20(1).pdf)

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- Vocational Education and Training System Development Strategy of the Republic of Croatia 2008 – 2013
- Ordinance on Public Documents in Adult Education (Official Gazette 129/08)
- Ordinance on Standards and Regulations as well as Methods and Procedures for Determining the Fulfilment of Requirements in Adult Education Institutions (Official Gazette 129/28)
- Ordinance on the Contents, Form and Method of Keeping Andragogical Documentation (Official Gazette 129/08)
- Ordinance on Records in Adult Education (Official Gazette 129/08)
- Ordinance on Amendments to the Ordinance on Public Documents in Adult Education (Official Gazette 52/10)
- Ordinance on Amendments to the Ordinance on Standards and Regulations as well as Methods and Procedures for Determining the Fulfilment of Requirements in Adult Education Institutions (Official Gazette 52/10)

3.5.2. *Implementing acts/programmes*

Implementing acts are in chapter 3.5.1. Implementing act is also Operational Programme under the 'Investment for Growth and Jobs' 2014 -2020 (Efficient Human Resources Operational Programme 2014-2020).

3.6. Quantitative targets

Government document Operational Programme Under the 'Investment for Growth and Jobs' Goal (ESF - Efficient Human Resources Operational Programme 2014-2020) outlines the national level targets in Croatia linked to Adult Learning. The other document linked to youth adult education is" Plan of Implementation of Youth Guarantee 2017 -2018".

Table 3.2 Targets linked to AL in broader economic policies/LL strategies/framework or implementing act

General information		Progress toward target			
Target (target figure and date to be achieved by)	Adoption date (e.g. 31/03/2013)	Initial value (at date of adoption)	Current value	Summary of progress against target	Source of information
Number of participants (adult learners) who have obtained qualifications	2014	5,000			Operational Programme Efficient Human Resources 2014 - 2020 2014HR05M9OP001 - 1.3"1

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Number of adult participants assigned to vouchers for education	2014	10,000			Operational Programme Efficient Human Resources 2014 - 2020 2014HR05M9OP001 - 1.3 ¹
Participants with pre-tertiary education (ISCED 1 to 4)	2014	17,000			Operational Programme Efficient Human Resources 2014 - 2020 2014HR05M9OP001 - 1.3 ¹
Plan of implementation of Youth Guarantee 2017-2018	2017	11,820			http://www.gzm.hr/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Usvojeni-PIGZM-2017-2018-web.pdf ¹⁹

3.7. Quality assurance

Quality assurance is managed and monitored by the [Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education](#).

According to the author's expert opinion, the Government statements regarding the intent to strengthen the quality assurance system, quality assurance does not meet its actual implementation'. There is also a lack of communication between all authorities included in adult education. The providers face many problems in providing adult education, and with the development of curricula for the implementation of programmes. This is a well known problem, often brought up for discussion in seminars, conferences etc.

To conclude this section, we can point out that no changes have been made in the legislative or main policy papers over 2015 and 2016. A suggestion had been made that the Law of Adult Education has to change according to the Croatian Qualification Frame only.

3.8. Future policy developments (envisaged or under discussion already)

Future changes in relation to adult education are not clearly stated in official government documents.

From the author's perspective, it seems that nobody from the authorities accepts adult education as a significant part of the educational system in Croatia. Following the parliamentary election (2016), the new government will be formed, after which the changes (if any) made in relation to adult education will become clear.

¹⁹Vlada Republike hrvatske (2017): Plan implementacije garancije za mlade 2017 -2018 (Implementation Plan off Youth Guarantee 2017- 2018) <http://www.gzm.hr/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Usvojeni-PIGZM-2017-2018-web.pdf>

4. INVESTMENT IN ADULT LEARNING SYSTEMS AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS

4.1. Total investment in adult learning and change over time

Croatia does not have data for the total investment in adult education over the time. Many different ministries are involved in adult education through projects. Often it is the case that part of the projects from various ministries is for adult education (up skilling or retraining). Therefore it is not easy to collect such information. The CEDEFOP adult learning financing database ranges from 2010 - 2013. Croatia was not part of the EU at this time and it is not listed in this database. Croatia will invest approximately €5,500,000 in projects in adult education from 2016 until 2018 (this amount is for on-going projects, usually last 3 years).

Croatia has invested in adult education projects approximately €10,000,000 from different EU funds (IPA, Gruntwig) since it became eligible for these funds.

It has to be mentioned that through its national budget Croatia invests in salaries and other expenses for the labour force within the adult education sector (including people working in agencies and ministries for adult education system).

4.2. Public national investment

The Agency for VET and AE in Croatia states that 61% of participants pay for their AE, 18% is financed by employers, 9% by Croatian Employment Service, 4% by regional governments and only 2% by the Ministry of Science and Education²⁰. At the national level, the important question is how much should be invested in developing the system of adult education as a part of LLL, and what can be financed at the level of each individual (participant) in AE.²¹ The majority of participants in adult education pay for their own education (61%), and only 6% are financed from the state budget. National funding in AE is provided for primary adult education through the voucher for participants, or through the Croatian Employment Service for short training programs. In the following text, the use of the EU funds in adult education will be described. It is not possible to know what proportion of the national budget is being used for adult education in Croatia. The problem is that there are a lot of different kinds of education which are not classified as a part of adult education. Many educational programmes are carried out by different ministries (The Agency for VET and AE was not included for these projects; e.g. Ministry of Agriculture has a project for the training of young farmers – this was stated in a published article²². It is possible that this education was a part of a different ESF measure). It is arguably necessary that the Agency for VET and AE to be a part of any educational project involving adults. If the Agency is not included, they cannot be responsible for quality assurance, as it stated in government documents. From the authors point of view

²⁰https://ec.europa.eu/epale/sites/epale/files/znamo_li_u_republici_hrvatskoj_koliko_odraslih_osoba_zaista_sudjeluje_u_obrazovanju_odraslih.pdf

²¹ Opinion by the author gathered from different discussions with participants of training, co-workers or other colleagues

²²http://www.komora.hr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=357:edukacija-mladih-poljoprivrednika&catid=47:projekti-&Itemid=71

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the main problem is that the Agency for VET and AE does not have an overview of overall funding in adult education in Croatia. Unfortunately, It has not been possible to access information about the funds for adult education that Croatia has received from ESF.

Research from the budget of The Ministry of Science and Education from 2013 to 2016 shows that there is no budget for adult education. The Ministry finances the Agency for VET and AE (salaries and other expenses). In the budget line transfers for the project of LLL to different providers, what they offer is not transparent. These transfers are mostly made from the EU funds. From my experience in LLL in Croatia the projects for regular schools from primary to tertiary education are present.

Once again, the opinion of the author of this report is that this amount of money must be spent on the building of the system of primary adult education. It is necessary to develop a curricula for primary adult education, as well as teaching and learning materials. A similar project was carried out in Serbia (Second chance – Systemic development of Elementary, Practice Based Adult Education in Serbia).

In the budget of Ministry of Science and Education under the budget line Development of the system of Adult Education is the sum of 4,570.976 HRK (app. 613,300 €). This budget line does not refer to the co-financing of the projects in adult education. In the budget it is not clearly stated which project refers to adult education but all projects are under one or several lines, dependent of nature of the costs. It has to be taken in consideration that there are a lot of projects conducted by several ministries. It is possible that only a part (budget) of the overall project has an adult education focus. In the table below are listed projects in adult education in Croatia.

Table 4.1 Breakdown of public national investment

General information		Progress toward target				
Title of public investment source	Financing amounts	Targeted number of participants	Targeted level of provision	Total	Year the funding started	Reference document
Education, training and retraining of unemployed persons	€10 mil	5000			2015	http://www.hzz.hr/default.aspx?id=28345
Support for social inclusion and	€ 13,5 mil	n/a			2017	http://www.strukturnifondovi.hr/natjecaji/1426

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employment of marginalized groups						
Support adult education by incorporating priority education programs aimed at enhancing the skills and competences of learners to increase employability	€ 4 mil	n/a			2017	http://www.esf.hr/natjecaji/obrazovanje/podrska-obrazovanju-odraslih-polaznika-ukljucivanjem-u-prioritetne-programe-obrazovanja-usmjerene-unapredenju-vjestina-i-kompetencija-polaznika-u-svrhu-povecanja-zaposljivosti/
Youth guarantee	€ 91 mil	11,280			2017	http://www.gzm.hr/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Usvojeni-PIGZM_2017-2018-web.pdf ²³

4.3. EU support via structural funds (primarily ESF) planned/launched as part of 2014-2020 financial framework

According to the data on financial support to the Member States between 2014 and 2020 (available in July, 2016 for the European Commission from Operational Programmes for the European Social Fund (ESF)), the planned financial support from the European Union for the investment priority most directly targeting adult learning, i.e. Investment priority 10.3 – Enhancing access to lifelong learning, is EUR 160 million. In the text presented, the financial information was collected from different sources. It is difficult to present exact data because in Croatia more than one authority is responsible for adult education. It is possible that adult education has been administered under different measures and was not declared as adult education (different Ministries, Croatian Employment Service). Even the Agency for VET and AE has not got valid information about the financing of adult education from EU funds, but their opinion is that this is not a correct figure. When they summarise all projects in education it is far from the 160 million euros in planned EU financial support.

²³ Vlada Republike Hrvatske (2017): Plan implementacije garancije za mlade 2017 -2018 (Implementation Plan for Youth guarantee 2017 -2018) http://www.gzm.hr/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Usvojeni-PIGZM_2017-2018-web.pdf

Data from the Efficient Human Resources Operational Programme 2014-2020 states that the sum predicted for LLL is €450 million. This sum is predicted for the whole educational system, but Croatia has announced €160 million will be spent on adult education.

New projects from the 2016:

1. Project "EPALE National Support Service for the Republic of Croatia". The project lasted from January 1, 2016 to January 31, 2016. The EPAL platform has been developed to become a reference point for adult education in Europe for all professionals in the field. The aim of this project was to familiarize the Croatian andragogian community with the EPAL platform. The other aim was to motivate the community to participate in platform creation and support to Central Support Services (CSS) in creating quality content on a multilingual, dynamic, interactive and innovative platform. The project was funded by the Erasmus + program.

Budget for this project was 119.084,64 EUR.

2. ***Podrška obrazovanju odraslih polaznika uključivanjem u prioritetne programe obrazovanja, usmjerene unapređenju vještina i kompetencija polaznika u svrhu povećanja zapošljivosti "***

"Support adult education by incorporating priority education programs aimed at improving the skills and competences of learners to increase employability". The tender was open until 31.05.2017.²⁴

Within the priority sectoral areas of the Operational Program Efficient Human Resources (Tourism and Hospitality, Agriculture, Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Information Technology and Health) selected programs will support the enhancement of adult learners' skills for the following target groups:

- Adults without completed elementary education,
- Adults with lower levels of qualifications including level 4.1 according to the kko,
- Adults between the age of 15-34 without qualifications (only with completed basic education),
- Long-term unemployed persons older than 34 with a level of qualification corresponding to level 1 - 4.2 according to the croqf (croatian qualification framework).

The general objective:

- Increasing the involvement of adults in employment education

²⁴ <http://www.asoo.hr/defco/default.aspx?id=3676>

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Specific objective:

- Enable the acquisition of first qualification and / or the acquisition of a higher level of qualification and retraining in order to increase the level of knowledge, skills and competences of adults and their competitiveness in the labour market.

The budget for this project is €4,000.000. Croatia has to co-finance 15% of total amount.

3. *Projekt "Promocija cjeloživotnog učenja"*²⁵ The "Lifelong Learning Promotion" project is co-financed by the European Social Fund and is the Agency for Vocational Education and Training. The project is funded within the framework of Call for Proposals Operations Bodies to be funded as a direct allocation of funds under Priority Axis 3 "Education and Lifelong Learning", Operational Program "Effective Human Resources" 2014-2020, published by the Ministry of Labour And the Retirement System.

The project lasts a total of 36 months (three years).

The objective of the project is to raise awareness of the importance of lifelong learning and increase adult participation / involvement in lifelong learning processes in order to boost adult competitiveness at national and local levels. Lifelong learning is the strategic goal of the Republic of Croatia. This project will try to respond to identified problems in the adult education system such as insufficient and inadequate curriculum offerings and lack of financial incentives for all stakeholders, as well as situational barriers such as age, educational level.

The project will carry out a series of activities such as the promotion, information and provision of opportunities for adult education and training. Special attention will be directed to identified target groups such as students, adult learners, unemployed persons, persons with lower qualifications, unfinished persons Elementary education, members of the Roma national minority, immigrants and long-term unemployed over 45 years of age. Likewise, the project will also focus on activities aimed at strengthening the capacity of stakeholders involved in the development and implementation of adult education systems at national and local level (pre-tertiary institutions, adult education institutions, higher education institutions, etc.)

The project started in December 2016.

The project has 6 activities:

- Designing a Comprehensive and Continuous Promotion of Lifelong Learning and Adult Education in the Republic of Croatia
- Implement a Lifelong Learning Promotion Campaign
- Organisation of the Lifelong Learning Week
- Organisation of the International Andragogy Symposium

²⁵ <http://www.asoo.hr/default.aspx?id=1173>

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- Organisation and implementation of education for Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education / Ministry of Science and Education employees Development and implementation of a program of strengthening the competences of the Andragogy staff.

The budget for this project is 11,506,396.61 HRK, (1.500.000€) of which 9,780,414.17 HRK (85%) co-finances from the European Social Fund and 1,725,955.44 HRK (15%) from national funds.

4.4. EU support via structural funds (primarily ESF) provided as part of 2007-2013 financial framework

Croatia was not a member of EU until 2014, therefore it could not use structural funds (ESF) until the year 2014. The funds from EU in the period before Croatia joining EU were IPA. The available data for that period is below.

Using EU funds, AE Croatia has implemented several projects.

- *Regional Network of Local Learning Institutions* (2011), total value of which was €4.096,471.27, and EU co-financing amounted to €3.407,682.34. The contracting rate for this Grant Scheme was 97.36%. Results: 20 contracts were signed, 112 persons were trained in different areas of project implementation, and adult education institutions were equipped for the implementation of the modernised and / or new adult education programs, with the cost of the equipment amounting to €1 million. 19 modernised or new adult education programmes have been developed and implemented in a total of 58 institutions, in which approximately 2,850 adults were educated²⁶;
- *Regional Network of Local Learning Institutions - phase II*²⁷ (EU Social Fund Development of HR 2007-2013). The total value of the project is €4,200,000, and EU co-financing amounts to €3,686,655. There are 20 signed contracts, and the project is being implemented in 43 institutions. As the project is ongoing the exact outputs remain unknown;
- There were several projects concerning education implemented by other ministries (for example the Ministry of Agriculture), but adult education was not their primary goal, and the Agency for VET and AE was not included in those projects;
- The Agency for Mobility is responsible for a smaller project within former Grundtvig and Erasmus programmes. According to data on their web page, in 2013 there were 88 activities funded with €522,448 (index of success 97.09%)²⁸. The Erasmus+ program started in 2014. In AE, they financed a strategic partnership to the sum of of €420,384, and educational activities of individuals with €139,812 (100% successful).²⁹ In 2015 they financed strategic partnerships with a total of €455,527 EUR (100%

²⁶ <http://www.ljudskipotencijali.hr/en/Odrzana-zavrsna-konferencija-projekta-Regionalna-mreza-lokalnih-obrazovnih-ustanova.htm>

²⁷ http://www.asoo.hr/UserDocsImages/DEFCO_web_ESF_2007_2013_Otvoreni_Ograniceni_pozivi/Ja%C4%8Danje%20kapaciteta%20ustanova%20za%20obrazovanje%20odraslih%20%E2%80%93%20faza%20II_.pdf

²⁸ mobilnost.hr/cms_files/2015/11/1448380753_izvjesce-ampeu-2014.docx

²⁹ mobilnost.hr/cms_files/2015/11/1448380753_izvjesce-ampeu-2014.docx

success), and educational activities of individuals with €91,861 (97% success). The success rate is a ratio between planned and realised activities and the budget.³⁰

The Agency for VET and AE should arguably be more active in cooperation with The Ministry of Science and Education in proposing projects related to adult education by establishing priorities in accordance to the labour market needs.

4.5. Effectiveness of investment

Croatia has insufficient financial resources for adult education allocated in the state budget. Adult education is mostly financed through projects financed from ESF (previously IPA) and co-financed by Croatian budget with the rate of 15% of the total amount. Project are usually well conducted and the financial rate from EU fund is well spend.

Croatia has not made a major effort to allocate additional funds for adult education from ESF and the state budget. It is very challenging for Croatia to formulate and design new proposals for the projects in adult education that could be co-financed from ESF to meet the goals toward EU 2020 as well as to meet national targets. As stated in document ESF "Operational Programme Efficient Human Resources 2014 - 2020 2014HR05M9OP001 - 1.3 "1 the allocation from ESF is €160 million for adult education.

Croatia has to make major efforts in writing projects proposal in order to have more investment in adult education.

³⁰ http://mobilnost.hr/cms_files/2016/04/1461059407_2-izvjesce-ampeu-2015-v4.pdf

5. ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING POLICY

This section addresses the key question: "to what extent is the present adult learning structure in your country sufficient or not to meet the needs related to adult learning? What are the gaps or weaknesses?" In doing so, the response covers six key areas assessment areas as below:

This assessment of current adult education policy is based on the report of the special group, whose job was to monitor the advancement of adult education.³¹ The group for the monitoring of the implementation of the part of the Strategy related to education consists of experts from institutions involved in formal adult education: vocational schools, the Agency for Vocational training and Adult Education, the Ministry of Labour and Pension Systems, the Croatian Employment Service, the Ministry of Science and Educations, universities, the Croatian Chamber of Crafts, and the Croatian Employers Association. They have analysed available official documents and reports from authorities responsible for the fulfilment of measures, and produced the report.

In the report by the expert group for the monitoring and planning of the implementation of adult education strategy from 2016³² the following is stated:

- The greatest progress has been made concerning *Objective 1: Providing conditions for increasing the participation of adults in lifelong learning and education*. In the implementation of 13 of the planned 18 measures, which were primarily reported by the Agency for VET and AE, Croatian Employment Service, Ministry of Labour and Pension System and individual ministries were involved. These measures were mostly implemented through project activities. All activities for these measures were achieved through projects, and not as continuous work;
- For the implementation of *Objective 2: Improving and expanding learning, education, training and professional development through work*, two measures have been developed. The one that is currently in implementation is concerned with the elaboration of specific adult education programmes and training for small and medium-sized enterprises, and also for the existing and potential entrepreneurs;
- Regarding *Objective 3: Establishing a system of quality assurance in adult education*, the Committee for implementation of the Strategy for Education, Science and Technology has information about the start of one of the eight planned measures (improving the criteria and the implementation of the counselling of the education institutions in the process of accreditation and re-accreditation of adult education programs) which takes place in the framework of regular activities of the Agency for VET and AE;
- To accomplish *Objective 4: Improving the organisation, financing and management processes of adult education*, one of the six planned measures was implemented by the National Council for Human Resources Development. The measure is defining steps

³¹http://novebojeznania.hr/UserDocsImages/Dokumenti%20za%20web/Izvje%C5%A1%C4%87e%20o%20provedbi%20SOZT_do%2031.3.2016..pdf

³²http://novebojeznania.hr/UserDocsImages/Dokumenti%20za%20web/Izvje%C5%A1%C4%87e%20o%20provedbi%20SOZT_do%2031.3.2016..pdf

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and procedures of coordinating state and 11 non-state stakeholders in the harmonisation and development of the adult education system.

The delay in realising Objectives 3 and 4 has three different causes:

- A lack of data from The Ministry of Science and Education which is responsible for the implementation of 11 activities, 7 of which are related to Objective 3 (to which Activity 4 is added, which cites "relevant ministries" as holders of four measures). Without an unequivocal definition of the holder (in the report there are problems defining project holders) and without a strong and constructive involvement of stakeholders with the legal mandate, regulatory and coordinating activities in the field of adult education, the implementation of the Strategy of adult education is not feasible;
- A lack of regulation in the field of adult education, more precisely, the adaptation of the Adult Education Act and related regulations as a prerequisite for many activities, especially in order to meet Objectives 3 and 4. Neither the Committee for implementation of the Strategy for Education, Science and Technology, nor the expert working group in charge of monitoring and planning the implementation strategies of adult education are informed or involved in the development of the Law on adult education;
- Given that the public funding of adult education is limited, in this segment of the Strategy a certain number of measures and activities regarding financing of the implementation of the Strategy has been identified. This is planned in the framework of the third priority axis of the OP Effective Human Resources 2014-2020, which is focused on the *improving the quality of educational system for adults and general support for improving their skills and competences*.

However, there is an obstacle. The project cannot start until the ex-ante conditions related to the Strategy for vocational education are fulfilled. Another risk arises from the need for timely and detailed programming, planning and preparing summaries of operations ("project pipelines"), in accordance with the proposals of the Expert Working Group. Activities, the implementation of which are planned for 2016 were to have finalised summaries by the end of the first quarter of 2016, but the Commission was not aware of this. Without the strong involvement and coordination of bodies responsible for the implementation of specific measures as beneficiary institutions, the Strategy will not be effectively implementable in this aspect.

The following sub-sections assess the existing policy through the lens of the six key success factors for effective adult learning policy that have been identified in a recent study.³³

³³ Key success factors, indicating the strength of evidence (available in all languages): <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/policy-tool/key-success-factors>; Study "An in-depth analysis of adult learning policies and their effectiveness in Europe": <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/final-report-20150817-en.pdf>

5.1. Develop learners' interest in learning

The Lifelong Learning Week is a national educational campaign that directly addresses citizens. It encourages the realisation of the notion of the promotion of learning and education, and develops a learning culture. The Lifelong Learning Week is organised by the Agency for VET and AE, and has been held since 2007 throughout Croatia.

The Agency has established an award known as "*Maslačak znanja*" (Dandelion of Knowledge). The main aim of the award is to inspire and motivate all citizens of the Republic of Croatia to engage in some form of learning and education by emphasising and promoting real life examples of adult learners involved in different programmes and types of learning. The award consists of a small sculpture, a certificate and a learning voucher for an educational programme chosen by the award winner. A candidate may be any individual who is a citizen of the Republic of Croatia who has participated and completed various educational and learning (formal, non-formal and informal) which have been driven by personal motivation in the last five years regardless of their age, sex, the level of previously acquired education, social status or any other characteristics.

This is a national promotional activity, but it is necessary to include local and regional governments in the whole process of adult education in order to achieve better results. The local and regional governments may (according to the Law of Adult Education) contribute a third of the cost of education for participants, but they are not doing that.

5.2. Increase employers' investment in learning

Employers in 2014 introduced greater support of training. Employers can now ask for a tax deduction of up to 60% of the general cost of adult education and 25% of the costs of special training. Small and medium enterprises can achieve up to 80% tax relief (Croatian Parliament in 2014)³⁴. Only a small number of companies are applicable for this tax relief, partly because of a lack of familiarity with the structure and because of the complexity of the related administrative procedures³⁵.

5.3. Improve equity of access for all

The regional differences in Croatia are great. Consequently, access to adult education is not the same for all potential participants. Regional and local governments do not participate in adult education. In some areas the proportion of low-educated adults is larger, especially in the areas where the Roma population is located. They leave the regular school system early, and they do not tend to participate in adult education because they do not see the advantage.³⁶ Their unemployment rate is high, even in the cases where they have better education. Some special projects for Roma people were implemented in Croatia (financed by

³⁴ Croatian Parliament (2014), Odluka o proglašenju zakona o izmjenama i dopuni zakona o drzavnoj potpori za obrazovanje I izobrazbu, http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2014_02_14_288.html

³⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/docs/2015/monitor2015-croatia_hr.pdf

³⁶ http://www.unicef.hr/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/RECI_Croatia-report_CRO-final-WEB.pdf

Roma Education Fund Hungary), but this has not been enough. According to the Croatian Law on Adult Education, the people participating in adult education are those over 15 years of age who have not completed regular school system education (early leavers or dropouts from the school).

5.4. Deliver learning that is relevant

The Croatian Employers Society has organised panel discussions about the education and needs of employers. This discussion was oriented towards VET education. The topic of the discussion held on 1 September 2016 was the "*Labour Market and Educational System*"³⁷. From the short report, it is clear that adult education was not a topic of this panel, but some elements identified the problem that schools produce qualifications which are not needed in the labour market. These people need training for another job and this is where adult education comes to action. Some points from this panel discussion included³⁸:

- There are big gap between the needs of the labour market and the school system in preparing young people for jobs. It is often the case that, after finishing school, people lack the competences needed for work and consequently need an extra year to learn at work;
- Over 60% of unemployed people have no adequate schooling and cannot be included in the labour market. The labour market has no need for these low-level skills. The school system and employers do not cooperate in the analysis / interpretation of labour market needs. The unemployed often need new training for different jobs, which can be delivered by the AE programs;
- Unemployed people registered with the Croatian Employment Service are often educated, but this is a mostly political measure because these people cannot find a job after they leave education. Nobody is tracking them after education and, in many cases, they remain unemployed.

5.5. Deliver learning that is of high quality

Quality assurance in adult education has not been formalised yet. The basic document for quality assurance is the document that refers to vocational education and the Croatian Qualifications Framework³⁹. Quality assurance in adult education is still at the discussion stage. Different models for quality assurance in adult education were presented by experts from different countries at the International Anagogical Symposium in 2015.

³⁷<http://www.hup.hr/01092016-okrugli-stol-hup-a-i-hanza-medije-trziste-rada-i-sustav-obrazovanja-i-nepovoljni-demografski-trendovi-radnicka-cesta-52-hup-zagreb-1000.aspx>

³⁸ <http://www.hup.hr/okrugli-stol-trziste-rada-i-sustav-obrazovanja-i-nepovoljni-demografski-trendovi.aspx>

³⁹ <http://www.zakon.hr/z/566/Zakon->

5.6. Ensure coherent policy

Participants in adult education (Agencies, Ministries, AE providers, government on all levels) have to coordinate their activities in order to achieve the objectives of the Strategy for Education, Science and Technology. However, the lack of funds and institutional support is not enabling the construction of an effective adult education system. The most active organisations in this field are the Agency for VET and AE (their core business), the Ministry of Labour and Pension Systems, and the Croatian Employment Service. The Croatian Employment Service provides adult education for unemployed persons, but a small number of them are actually being educated. Up to 31 July 2016, 769 unemployed individuals were educated in various programmes, and 735 persons were supported in further education. This represents a small number (0.69%) in comparison to the total number of unemployed people (217,089) on the same date⁴⁰.

The data from the Annual Report of Croatian Employment Service about the training of unemployed persons in Croatia is presented in Table 6.1. The greatest number of people included in training was in 2011 (4.37%). 2011 was the year of Croatian parliamentary elections. Political measures were mentioned on the panel discussion organised by the Croatian Employers Society. Between 2012 and 2015, the ratio of those involved in training was very small (under 1%) in comparison to the total number of unemployed persons. The important data is that every employer in Croatia gives 1.7% of each employee's salary to the Croatian Employment Service, as a special tax. A lot of measures are financed from this budget and just a small amount is used to train unemployed people for new jobs. When it comes to the labour market needs for specific qualifications, the Croatian Employment Service has to cooperate with employers and local governments.⁴¹

⁴⁰ http://www.hzz.hr/UserDocsImages/stat_bilten_07_2016.pdf

⁴¹ Opinion of the author

6. STRENGTH AND WEAKNESSES OF THE ADULT EDUCATION SYSTEM

6.1. The main trends as regards main statistical indicators

In terms of progress against Europe 2020 targets and comparison of low-qualified adult rates (in comparison to overall employment rate), Croatia has a low-qualified employment rate of 39.8% compared to a EU average rate of 52.6%) and an overall employment rate is 60.5% (EU average rate 70%). To meet the Europe 2020 target of 75%, there has to be significant investment in new jobs. If we compare over the year we can say that Croatia was better in year 2010 when low-qualified employment rate was 46.2% and overall employment rate was 62.1%.

Participation in LLL for Croatia is 3.1% (EU average is 10.7%). It will be very challenging for Croatia to achieve EU 2020 target of 15% adult participation in LLL. Attainment levels for the percentage of adults with low qualifications (ISCED levels 0-2) in Croatia has decreased between 2010 and 2015 and was below the EU average in 2015. In 2015, 16.7% of adults had low qualifications in Croatia, in comparison to an EU average of 23.5%.

The main weakness in Croatia is the lack of statistical data in this field. The Agency for Vocational Education and Training (Agency) keeps records (on an annual basis) on the number of active adult education institutions and the number of adults enrolled in formal adult education programs. However, despite the adult education institutions having an obligation to report this information in a database, they do not regularly do it. Therefore, the number of enrolled students is incomplete.

The Agency does not keep records on the participation of adults in informal and non-formal adult education. The informal adult education sector is under the umbrella of private companies, associations, etc. They offer various opportunities to acquire additional knowledge and skills. Since there is currently no statutory obligation to keep track of attendance records it is difficult with certainty to estimate how many adults participate in informal and informal forms of learning.

In order to have continuous records of attendance of adults in various educational programme it is necessary to build the system (methodology and obligation of providers) to record the data about programmes, providers and participation of adults on the national level. This data will be of great help in creating of policies in adult education.

Croatia is still behind EU average in all indicators of adult education.

6.2. The legal framework, governing adult learning, including policy targets

6.3. Strengths

There are a large number of registered adult education institutions for formal adult education⁴². The majority of institutions are situated in the most developed areas, around cities; nevertheless, there is a broader network of institutions covering / spanning the entire territory of the Republic of Croatia. This enables the accessibility of adult education for participants from the whole country.

A variety of educational programme which enable adults to obtain different kinds of formal education (spanning primary education linked to facilitating access to the labour market to vocational education and training for 1-4 years to acquire additional qualifications) and non-formal education depending on the individual needs of adults. Programmes for obtaining secondary school or professional qualifications / retraining and lower professional qualifications are implemented based on programmes prescribed by the regular education curriculum, but can be adapted to the participants' needs. Regardless of the teaching method, the total number of theoretical classes is up to half the amount prescribed by the regular educational curriculum. For education and training programmes there is an opportunity for previously obtained knowledge and skills in practical classes and practicum to be recognised.

For education and training programs, there is a possibility of the recognition of previously obtained knowledge and skills in practical classes and practicum.

However, Croatia has to make some changes to its legal framework, first by accepting the new Adult Education Act, which will be in harmony with other acts Croatian Qualification Frame, Vocational Education and Training Act and Strategy for Science, Technology and Education.

6.3.1. The investment in learning

The investment in adult education is not sufficient. Croatia must find ways to make adult education more available to adult learners. Adult education has to be integrated as a 'real' part of the education system in Croatia. Some enhancements/ increases were made in financing the projects in AE from ESF, but this is far from the amount of money Croatia can get from EU funds (160,000,000) till the 2020. Croatia needs more projects to enhance the adult education system.

6.3.2. The assessment of 6 areas of policy intervention:

- Improve learners' disposition towards learning – as stated in previous chapters from the government documents Croatia has to make more efforts to improve the adult educational system by making some changes in the legal framework and in financing

⁴² According to the Agency for VET and AE, data received by request of author

adult education. Over time, some changes have been made, but it is still not sufficient in order to achieve EU target 2020 in attainment level of adults included in education from present 3.1% to 15% as a EU target.

- Increase employers' investment in learning – some changes have been made in Croatia. Employers can now ask for a tax deduction of up to 60% of the general cost of adult education and 25% of the costs of special training. Small and medium enterprises can achieve up to 80% tax relief (Croatian Parliament in 2014)⁴³. Only a small number of companies is included, in part because of a lack of familiarity with this possibility, and because of the complexity of the related administrative procedures.
- Improve equality of access for all - The regional differences in Croatia are great. Consequently, access to adult education is not the same for all potential participants. Regional and local governments do not participate in adult education. Usually there is no connection between local government, providers and labour market. Therefore, it is hard to build adult education to meet needs of employers on local level. There is need to improve communication between all stakeholders regarding adult education.
- Deliver learning that meets the needs of employers and learners – some progress have been made in learning adults to meet needs of employers. This kind of education is made by Croatian Employment Service. Sometimes it is very difficult to get adults in programmes because they are not interested in jobs (mostly crafts). Provides offers a lot of learning programmes which often do not correspond to labour market needs. Even regular VET schools have problem to get pupils in some programmes needed in a labour market (construction, carpets etc.).
- Deliver high quality adult learning – Quality assurance in adult education is still at the discussion stage. Different models for quality assurance in adult education were presented by experts from different countries at the International Anagogical Symposium in 2015.
- Co-ordinate an effective lifelong learning policy – at the moment adult education is not priority in Croatia, some changes have been made (legal framework, strategy) but due to lack of financing adult education it is very hard to transfer measures foreseen in "paper" to the real needs of society. This is very challenging for Croatia and will be over next few years.

6.4. Weaknesses

Croatia does not have accurate statistical data for formal, non-formal and informal learning in adult education. Statistical monitoring over a long period of time allows for educational policy in adult education to be created;

Ensuring the quality of adult education programmes. There is no institution that regulates and sets quality standards for educational programmes. Once the Ministry approves a programme of formal education, no-one controls its implementation. In non-formal education, the situation is more complex. As there is no information about the programmes that are offered

⁴³ Croatian Parliament (2014), Odluka o proglašenju zakona o izmjenama i dopuni zakona o drzavnoj potpori za obrazovanje I izobrazbu, http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2014_02_14_288.html

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(who the educators are and what the duration of those programmes is), it is not possible to determine the quality of programmes and educators offered. Non-formal education is left to private companies, associations, chambers and various Ministries;

Croatia does not have professional educators in the field of adult education. In the last 20 years there has been no study programmes established for experts participating in adult education. The Agency for VET and AE conducts informal trainings, but there is no system of certification for people working as experts in adult education.

7. FURTHER POLICY REFORMS AND ORIENTATIONS NEEDED

For further development and improvement within adult education, it is necessary to adopt the new Adult Education Act in accordance with the Strategy for Education, Science and Technology. It would then regulate important issues regarding adult education in accordance with the European education policy through:

- Defining the quality assurance system by external evaluation and self-evaluation of adult education institutions;
- Standardising the procedure for adopting the programme for qualifications in accordance with the Croatian Qualifications Framework;
- Securing accreditation for programmes and coordinating them with the needs of the labour market, students and wider society;
- Creating a licensing system for andragogy and andragogic workers;
- Clearly defining standards for the establishment of adult education institutions;
- Implementing law enforcement in the field of adult education in order to prevent unjust competition;
- Monitoring of the funding of adult education programmes;
- Planning system databases and records in the field of adult education;
- Creating a register of accredited programmes in adult education;
- Establishing a sustainable system of financing for adult education at the national level.

7.1. To what extent current policy sufficiently addresses those challenges

Croatia did not make any changes in terms of policy reforms. The Law of Adult Education is still being re-written. There is no information when it could be adopted in the Parliament. Curricular reform have been stopped due to the political crisis over the last two years. Adult education is not in the focus of interest in the political arena.

New legislation⁴⁴ is under preparation with the aim of improving the quality of institutions, programmes and teaching for adult learning. However, there has been no significant progress with the system for recognising and validating non-formal and informal learning as it is dependent on progress made in updating the CROQF (Croatian Qualification Frame) standards. The Public Employment Service is currently reviewing its active labour market policy measures in order to take into account the findings of the 2016 external evaluation⁴⁵. Nevertheless, resources for re-training programmes, and life-long learning in general as well as employer engagement remain insufficient.

Without the adoption of a new Adult Education Act, general changes in adult education are not possible.

⁴⁴ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2017-european-semester-country-report-croatia-en.pdf>

⁴⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2017-european-semester-country-report-croatia-en.pdf>

7.2. What key additional future policy reforms and orientations could be needed (including, but not limited to financing) to address those challenges

As stated in the chapter 7.1 overall changes in policy reforms must start with the change of Adult Education Act. Furthermore, changes in financing adult education, modernising the curriculum in VET adult education have to be made. It is necessary to include adults in higher education.

As inactivity among people 50+ is very high compared to EU average, reforms to avoid inactivity traps and make work pay are envisaged in NRP, in order to prolong working lives and stimulate later retirement, while strictly regulating disability retirement. (Pension Insurance Act from 2013 determines early retirement replacement rate and expands the group of retired persons who can work and receive partial pension). According to recent projections, working-age population (15-64) is about to decline by 5.7% between 2010 and 2020, which is why it is important for efficient human resource strategy to invest in older workers.⁴⁶ In this achievement have to be involved all stakeholder including employers because working age will incise.

7.3. Whether there are any particular issues with policy implementation and the functioning of the adult education system.

Currently there are a lot difficulties in policy implementation, as stated in Government report for the year 2016 - "Croatia is lagging behind in upgrading skills and re-skilling the working age population. In 2015, only 3.1 % of adults (25-64) reported having participated in lifelong learning. Even though this is slightly higher than previous years, it is far below the EU average of 10.7 %. This is a particular concern given the generally low educational attainment of the working-age population and especially given that 50% of the unemployed are long-term unemployed who run a higher risk of becoming inactive due to their obsolete or eroded skills. New legislation is under preparation with the aim of improving the quality of institutions, programmes and teaching for adult learning. However, there has been no significant progress with the system for recognising and validating non-formal and informal learning as it is dependent on progress made in updating the CROQF standards. Nevertheless, resources for re-training programmes, and life-long learning in general as well as employer engagement remain insufficient."⁴⁷

⁴⁶ <http://www.strukturnifondovi.hr/UserDocsImages/Novosti/FINAL%20OP%20EHR.pdf>

⁴⁷ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2017-european-semester-country-report-croatia-en.pdf>

8. SUMMARY

8.1. An updated summary of the country statistical performance (concise country overview submitted as a separate document);

From statistical data in this report, it is clear that Croatia has a big challenge ahead to achieve goals in Europe 2020. The problem is that this data is not reliable. Croatia has not yet developed its own statistical methodology in adult education. This is a problem particularly with non-formal education. With no developed statistical methodology, it is hard to have an overview of what is going on in adult education and to plan further policy change. We can state that from statistical data presented, that a small percentage of the population is involved in adult education, whether formal or non-formal. Only a small number of adults over 51 years of age participates in education (10%). Participation in lifelong learning remains very low, due to an underdeveloped adult education system. The system of adult education is weakly governed. The proportion of adults taking part in education and training was 2.5%, which is far below the EU average of 10.7%.

The latest figures from Eurostat in terms of participation in formal education and training offer a breakdown by educational level, and indicate that over 25 year olds engaged in formal adult learning mostly participate at bachelor's or equivalent level, master's or equivalent level and doctoral or equivalent level. The data presented in the table are the sum for the year 2013, 2014 and 2015.

The participation in adult education, especially of those over the age of 51, is low because of early retirement. This point was emphasised in the CSR for Croatia. Such early retirement policy creates a high risk of poverty in old age, especially for those with short working lives. The government is making some changes in this regard, but it is very slow. Adult education has not been a priority matter for public policy makers. The adult education system is not developed enough and funds are always missing.

Some progress in adult education has, however, been made in the last five years. The Strategy for Education, Science and Technology has created a good foundation for AE. The appetite for adult education and lifelong learning is not very present in Croatian society. A huge number of unemployed people in Croatia are potential candidates for adult education. The missing link is the cooperation of all institutions on a national, regional and local levels.

8.2. An updated summary of key challenges faced; (in-sufficiency of current policies/reforms/financing and

8.2.1. Challenges for adult education:

Building a system of adult education based on labour market needs;

- Creating new curricula based on competences, and not on facts (subjects);

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- Including more elderly people in adult education, in order to discourage them from early retirement;
- Dividing responsibility for adult education between state, regional and local governments;
- Ensuring funding for adult education at the national level;
- Full incorporation of adult education in the educational system in Croatia, as a part of LLL
- Creating a national statistical data in formal, non-formal and informal adult education

8.3.An updated summary of further policy reforms needed

Further development of the policy:

- Developing the system of quality assurance in adult education (methodology, responsibility of stakeholders in AE);
- Developing standard (competences) for teachers, as well as for others involved in AE;
- Developing a system of accreditation of programmes for adult education, and linking them to the Croatian Qualification Frame (CroQF);
- Developing a methodology for collecting statistical data in adult education;
- Developing a system to train teachers in adult education;
- Developing the validation of non-formal and informal learning of individuals.

Croatia did not make any changes in terms of policy reforms. The Law of Adult Education is still being re-written. There is no information when it could be adopted in the Parliament. This new Adult Education act is very important to built coherent legal framework for Adult Education with other (newer) policy documents such as Strategy for Science, Technology and Education.

Croatia must make significant progress with the system for recognising and validating non-formal and informal learning. Additionally, the resources for re-training programmes, and life-long learning in general as well as employer engagement remain insufficient.

Adult education is an important part of acquiring competences after completing formal education, but the State is not doing enough to help with this problem. Society is developing faster than education policies.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1: List Of Adopted Legal Acts, Strategies, Laws

Name	Date of adoption	Short description of content
Adult Education Act	7 th February 2007	This act regulates adult education, encompasses a whole adult learning process. New Adult Education Act was proposed in 2016 but is not adopted.
Ordinance on Public Documents in Adult Education	20 th October 2008	This Ordinance prescribes the name, content and form of public documents for adults in the acquisition of secondary and secondary vocational qualifications, retraining, improvement, acquisition of lower qualifications, training and in elementary school education.
Ordinance on Standards and Regulations as well as Methods and Procedures for Determining the Fulfilment of Requirements in Adult Education Institutions	20 th October 2008	This Ordinance prescribes standards and norms, as well as the method and procedure for determining the conditions to be fulfilled by the institution for the implementation of adult education programs
Ordinance on the Contents, Form and Method of Keeping Andragogical Documentation	20 th October 2008	This Ordinance prescribes the content and forms of documentation run by institutions that have the approval for the implementation of adult education programs and the manner of keeping, preserving and storing.
Ordinance on Records in Adult Education	20 th October 2008	This Ordinance prescribes the content and way of keeping records of institutions that have the approval for the implementation of adult education programs, programs, attendants, workers, and records of other data important for monitoring the situation and development of adult education activities that are united in the Joint Register of Institutions.
Ordinance on Amendments to the Ordinance on Standards and Regulations as well as Methods and Procedures for Determining the Fulfilment of Requirements in Adult Education Institutions	21 th April 2010	Few minor changes of original Ordinance.

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Ordinance on Amendments to the Ordinance on Public Documents in Adult Education	21 th April 2010	Few minor changes of original Ordinance.
Vocational Education Act	20 th February 2009	This Act regulates secondary vocational education and training as an activity enabling the development and acquisition of competences required for obtaining vocational qualifications.
Primary and Secondary Education Act	From the year 2008 till 2012 with all amendments	This Act regulates the activity of primary and secondary education and education in public institutions.
Act on Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education	12 th February 2010	This Law establishes the Agency for Vocational Education and Adult Education and regulates the status, activity and organization of the Agency as a public institution.
Croatian Qualifications Framework Act	8 th February 2013	This Act establishes the Croatian Qualification (CROQF) and regulates its application. The Act establishes the relation of the CROQF with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the Qualification Framework of the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA) and indirectly with the national qualification systems of other countries.
School Inspection Act	4 th July 1995	This Act regulates the duties, rights and powers of the school inspection
Expert Pedagogical Supervision Act	27 th July 1997	This Act regulates the professional pedagogical supervision, the conditions and the way of performing it. The authority of the professional pedagogical supervisor or the other person performing the tasks of professional pedagogical supervision
“Guidelines for Strategy for Education, Science and Technology”	April 2012	Guidelines on how to create Strategy for Education, Science and Technology for Croatia
Strategy of science, technology and education	17 th October 2014	Croatia recognizes education and science as its development priorities that can only bring long-term social stability, economic progress and cultural identity

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Annex 2: Inventory Of Policy Interventions

Name of intervention	Source (with hyperlink)	Budget	Outputs	Which of the 6 building blocks for successful adult learning policies does it target? (tick all relevant)						Further details/description (purpose, duration, responsible entity etc.)
				Fosters learners' interest in learning	Employers' investment in learning	Improve equity of access for all	Learning that is relevant	High quality learning	Coherent policy	
Strategy of science, technology and education	http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2014_10_124_2364.html			√	√	√	√	√	√	
	http://www.europski-fondovi.eu/sites/default/files/dokumenti/OPULJP%20hr%2020150213%20%282%29.pdf			√	√	√	√	√	√	

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Operational Programme Efficient Human Resources 2014 - 2020 2014HR05M9OP001 - 1.3“1										
Croatian Parliament (2014), Odluka o proglašenju zakona o izmjenama i dopuni zakona o drzavnoj potpori za obrazovanje i izobrazbu (Act of state support for education in companies)	http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2014_02_14_288.html				√		√			Employers can now ask for a tax deduction of up to 60% of the general cost of adult education and 25% of the costs of special training. Small and medium enterprises can achieve up to 80% tax relief
Croatian Qualifications Framework, CROQF	http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2013_02_22_359.html					√	√	√	√	
National Strategy for Disabilities for Persons with Invalidity from 2017 to 2020	http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2017_04_42_967.html			√	√	√	√	√	√	

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