

STRATEGY
FOR LIFELONG CAREER GUIDANCE IN THE
REPUBLIC OF CROATIA 2016-2020

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMEUP – Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes
ASHE – Agency for Science and Higher Education
AVETAE – Agency for Vocational Education, Training and Adult Education
CAO – Central Applications Office
CEDEFOP – European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
CES – Croatian Employment Service
ICCC – Informing and Career Counselling Centre
LCGC – Lifelong Career Guidance Centre
CMS – Career Management Skills
CPII – Croatian Pension Insurance Institute
CROQF – Croatian Qualifications Framework
ECTS – European Credit Transfer System
EC – European Commission
ELGPN – European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network
EQAVET – European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training
EQF – European Qualification Framework
ESCO – European Skills/Competencies, Qualifications and Occupations
ESF – European Social Fund
ET 2020 – Education and Training 2020
ETF – European Training Foundation
EU – European Union
EURES – European Job Mobility Portal
EUROGUIDANCE – European network of national resource and information centres for guidance
EUROSTAT – Statistical Office of the European Union
GDP – Gross Domestic Product
ICT – Information and Communications Technology
ID – Identification
IT – Information Technology
LCG – Lifelong Career Guidance
LMI – Labour Market Information
LMIS – Labour Market Information System
LPE – Local Partnerships for Employment

YSN – Young Scientists Network

MLPS – Ministry of Labour and Pension System

MODOC – Project for Modernising Doctoral Education through Implementation of CROQF

MoSES – Ministry of Science, Education and Sports

NCAE – National Council for Adult Education

NCDHP – National Council for the Development of Human Potential

NCSHET – National Council for Science, Higher Education and Technological
Development

NEET – Not in Employment, Education or Training

NGO – Non-governmental Organisation

NRP – National Reform Programme

OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

OP – Operational Programme

PES – Public Employment Service

PISA – Programme for International Student Assessment

QAE – Quality Assurance and Evidence-base Framework

RPL – Recognition of Prior Learning

STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

YG – Youth Guarantee

VNFIL – Validation of Non-formal and Informal learning

GLOSSARY

1. **Career centre** is a place where people receive career guidance. Career centres offer various services or interventions ranging from self-help materials (e.g. books, information sources or access to ICT-based career support) to one-to-one support from career guidance counsellors. It is also possible to establish a virtual career centre, i.e. an online career portal, which is considered as a particular type of career centre.
2. **Lifelong career guidance** – a range of activities that enable citizens of any age and at any point in their lives to identify their capacities, competencies and interests, to make educational, training and occupational decisions and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings in which these capacities and competencies are learned and/or used. Term “professional counselling” is often used which implies help to individuals in making choices and decisions on education, training and employment. Professional guidance can be targeted at entrepreneurs (Entrepreneurship guidance) and is generally targeted at career development (Career guidance). This kind of guidance is often implemented in schools whence the term school counseling/guidance (Educational counselling/guidance).
3. **E-guidance** – professional counselling or career guidance that is delivered using modern communication technologies and which may or may not directly involve a guidance counsellor. This term is often used to describe the provision of information or the use of self-assessment tools and exercises via the Internet. It may involve phone conversations with guidance counsellors or, less frequently, the delivery of previously recorded information.
4. **Informal learning** – activities in which an adult accepts viewpoints and positive values, as well as skills and knowledge acquired from everyday experience and various other influences and sources from his or her environment.
5. **Non-formal learning** – organised learning processes aimed at training adults for work, different social activities and personal development.
6. **Quality assurance** – activities involving planning, implementation, evaluation, reporting and improvement of quality, implemented so that the lifelong career guidance activities (programme content, form, assessment and outcome evaluation, etc.) would meet the quality demands expected by the stakeholders.
7. **Early school-leaver** – a person who has dropped out of school before the end of compulsory education. Early school-leavers are defined as people aged 18-24 who have only primary school education.
8. **Drop-out** – a person who withdraws from an education or training programme before its completion. The term includes a broader definition than “early-school leaver“.
9. **Career guidance counsellor, Career adviser, Career counsellor** – counsellors that assist people to explore, pursue and attain their career goals. Counsellors have received professional education and training and possess a recognised professional qualification. They assist individuals to achieve greater self-awareness, develop a life/work direction, increase the understanding of learning and work opportunities and learn how to guide oneself in managing learning, work and career transitions.
10. **Counselling** – an interaction between a counsellor and an individual in helping them to resolve a specific problem, issue or subject. Counselling includes active listening to an

individual and communicating through understanding, respect and empathy; clarifying goals and assisting individuals with the decision-making process.

11. **Labour market information systems (LMIS)** – Systems, mechanisms or processes of collecting, organising and providing information on the labour market situation and/or occupations and jobs. This includes tracking changes on the labour market, employment, workplaces and occupations. These systems often have databases connected to ICT systems that can be accessed online. They are usually intended for guidance counsellors as well as users of self-help services.
12. **Career guidance services** – a range of services offered by a particular career guidance provider. These might be services designed for different groups of users or for different ways of providing these services (e.g. face-to-face, group, online, telephone, etc.). The term is sometimes used to refer to the range of services offered by a number of different service providers in a specific area (region or country).
13. **Career management skills (CMS)** – a range of competencies which provide structured ways for individuals (and groups) to gather, analyse, synthesise and organise personal, educational and occupational information, as well as the skills to make and implement decisions and transitions. CMS are learning, training, employment and life skills, which people need to manage their careers effectively.
14. **Validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL)** – A process of confirmation by an authorised body that an individual has acquired learning outcomes in accordance to a relevant standard. This includes four different phases: (1) identification – through dialogue about particular experiences of the individual; (2) documentation – recording of individual experiences; (3) formal assessment of these experiences; and (4) recognition leading to certification, i.e. partial or full qualification.

I. INTRODUCTION

Lifelong career guidance (LCG) is a range of activities that enables individuals at any point in their lives to identify their interests, competencies and opportunities to make educational, training and occupational decisions and to manage their own career (EU Council Resolution 2004, 2008). LCG activities provide individuals with professional help in their career development by taking into account the individual's psychophysical characteristics, knowledge and skills, as well as characteristics of work and employment opportunities. The ultimate goal is a successful and content individual and a society with workforce demands fulfilled in a rational and quality manner (matching of supply and demand on the labour market).

The importance of LCG is being increasingly recognised at the European and national levels. The rapid economic and technological changes necessitate a transition from the “job-for-life” concept to the concept of “lifelong employability”. The need to constantly match and improve competencies in a volatile labour market and the growing diversification in the offer of educational programmes has increased the need for a planned career development.

LCG is an essential component of modern education systems and is considered a vital dimension of lifelong learning and the training system, for the purpose of (re)directing all generations towards acquiring the skills required in the 21st century. In the present context of high unemployment rates, LCG may make people aware of the learning possibilities that lead to the development of new skills required on the labour market or increase the number of self-employed persons and entrepreneurs, regardless of their age and level of education. LCG as such contributes to achieving the goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy, such as decreasing the school dropout rate, increasing the participation rate in tertiary education, increasing the employment rate and fighting social exclusion.

Although LCG measures are primarily focused on the individual, the benefits that stem from guidance and counselling extend much further than that. By their nature, they link the individual plans of a person to the economic and societal goals of the economy. They can be utilised in companies, local communities or educational institutions for the purpose of improving learning outcomes, knowledge-transfer, productivity and innovativeness. In summary, LCG may help individuals and organisations adapt more successfully to the circumstances and become productive in new and uncharacteristic economic and societal conditions.

In this context, the drafting and adoption of the Strategy for Lifelong Career Guidance in the Republic of Croatia (hereinafter: Strategy)¹ by the Government of the Republic of Croatia represents an initial step and a priority in systematically addressing the role of LCG and career management and the implementation of LCG in education systems, employment systems and social inclusion. It also provides a formal framework for promoting LCG and providing high-quality information on career, counselling, guidance and education and rounds up key stakeholders in developing the provision of services by defining their roles and competence and at the same time invoking the best international practice and trends, especially those present in Europe. The purpose of the Strategy is to encourage human resources development with an emphasis on CMS.

The purpose of drafting this Strategy is to identify the priorities, measures and activities in establishing the LCG system and to serve as the basis for providing citizens access to high quality LCG services so that they can develop their careers throughout their lives in accordance with their capacities, interests, personality traits and labour market needs. This document is an

¹ Words and conceptual frameworks that denote gender refer in equal measure to the male and female gender, regardless of whether they are used to denote the male or female gender in laws and other regulations – Article 43 of the Gender Equality Act (NN 82/08)

important basis for the use of EU funds as an aid in the development of the system and the provision of services falling within defined competences.

II. VISION

The overall goal of drafting this Strategy is to establish a coherent, clearly structured institutional system of support the process of LCG, based on a multidisciplinary partner approach with a clearly defined purpose, concrete aims and a balanced matrix of competences and responsibilities. Such a system will provide all interested citizens with access to high quality and fast service, which will enable them to efficiently achieve their career development goals, by aiming to direct them in accordance with their capacities, interests, personality traits and labour market needs.

AVAILABILITY

The LCG system in the Republic of Croatia will provide all citizens with easier access to the appropriate services and information in order to provide lifelong career development support.

EFFICACY

Ensuring the efficacy and quality of services that will be implemented under LCG is one of the most important challenges this Strategy will have to tackle and it includes a partnership approach (multidisciplinary and interinstitutional) at all levels of LCG.

III. PRINCIPLES

The following principles underlie the establishment of LCG:

1. User-centred

- independence – the LCG provided respects the freedom of career choice and personal development of the citizen/user
- impartiality – the LCG provided is in accordance with the citizen's interests only, is not influenced by provider, institutional and funding interests, and does not discriminate on the basis of gender, age, ethnicity, social status, qualifications, ability, disability etc.
- equal opportunities – the LCG provided enables and promotes equal opportunities for all citizens in education and work

2. Service availability

- availability – all citizens have a right to access LCG services at any point in their lives²
- accessibility – the guidance provided is accessible in a flexible and user friendly ways such as face to face, telephone, e-mail, e-portals, in order to satisfy different citizens' needs
- continuity – the guidance provided supports citizens during learning and career, and

² European Social Charter, (1996 Revision) Article 9

during personal and societal transitions they undertake and/or encounter

- transparency – the nature of the guidance services provided is immediately apparent to the citizen
- friendliness and empathy – LCG providers provide a welcoming and understanding atmosphere for the citizens
- responsibility – guidance providers conscientiously and responsibly provide services by taking into account only the individual's wellbeing, while the individual takes responsibility for its realisation

3. An interinstitutional and partnership approach in guidance services

- Guidance services are accessible at all stages of career development in institutions that naturally follow the development path. Depending on their needs, users may use guidance services in all segments of the LCG system, while the guidance staff must assess which system is the most suitable for the user. The guidance services provided through different systems are mutually complimentary and aggregated for the wellbeing of the individual and the community

4. Multidisciplinarity

- the guidance provided takes into account contemporary scientific insights as well as good practice developed in LCG systems in Europe and worldwide

5. Holistic approach – respecting the individuality and individual differences

- LCG provided respects the citizen's/users decisions in personal, social, cultural and economic context

6. Adapting procedures and services to vulnerable groups

- The range of services needs to be adapted in order to make them available to all citizens regardless of their physical, communication or other limitations. Services should be developed in a way that will ensure availability to all citizens regardless of their habits and lifestyle.

7. The provision of high quality updated information

- appropriateness of career guidance methods – the guidance methods used have a theoretical and/or scientific basis, relevant to the purpose for which they are used
- continuous improvement – guidance services have a culture of continuous improvement including regular citizen feedback and continuous evaluation that provides career guidance counsellors with opportunities for continuous development and improvement
- right of complaint/explanation – in case when they are not satisfied with guidance services, the citizens have a right to complain through official procedures as well as a right to an explanation from the service provider
- competent staff – staff providing guidance services have nationally accredited competencies to identify and address the citizen's needs, and where appropriate, to refer the citizen to more suitable institution/service; also, the service providers are obligated to undergo continuous training in order to competently perform their tasks

8. Focus on competence development

- while providing LCG, the guidance counsellors should identify the competencies of

users and guide them in improving existing and acquiring new competencies in order to increase their employability on the labour market

9. Confidentiality

- data protection – Citizens have a right to protection and privacy of personal information they provide in the LCG process. All personal data obtained during the provision of LCG are considered to be professional secret and are treated as such.

IV. RELEVANT DOCUMENTS FOR DEFINING THE PRIORITIES AND GOALS OF THE STRATEGY

The economic crisis that peaked in 2009 affected the economy, made citizens increasingly susceptible to social risks and hindered their chances of employment and career development. The crisis especially affected the younger demographic. Despite the high unemployment rates in many countries, there is an evident lack of skills in STEM occupations (science, technology, engineering and mathematics). Besides that, aging of working age population in Europe is also an evident trend.

In order to tackle the problem, EU countries developed several policies aimed at reforming education, training and the labour market. LCG played a central role in the process because of its efficiency in developing the skills and attitudes that are vital for achieving employment and a successful career.

IV.1. European initiatives, programmes, packages and recommendations

Two Resolutions of the Education Council (2004; 2008) have **highlighted** the need for strong guidance throughout one's lifetime so that citizens can acquire education and career management skills and the transitions between and within both education/training and work. The Resolutions have outlined four priority areas: the development of CMS, accessibility of services, quality assurance and databases for policy and systems development and co-ordination of services. Member states were invited to modernise and reinforce their LCG policies and systems.

The Europe 2020 Strategy, which was launched in 2010, promotes a model of growth that is not focused solely on increasing the GDP. The overall goal is that the EU and its member states emerge from the economic crisis stronger and that the implementation of reform and other measures for increasing employment and creating new jobs will bring about a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy with a high level of employment, productivity and social cohesion. The two main goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy pertain to employment and increasing the quality of the education and training systems:

- **Employment:** The aim of the EU is to increase employment rate to 75% of the population aged 20-64 and in this respect the Republic of Croatia has set a national goal of increasing the employment rate of the population aged 20-64 to 62.9% by 2020.
- **Increasing the quality and efficacy of the education and training system** – the goal of the EU is to increase the share of the population aged 30-34 with completed tertiary education to 40% and to reduce the dropout rate to 10%. In the area of tertiary education, the Republic of Croatia has set a national goal of 35% share of the

population aged 30-34 years that have completed tertiary education and to reduce the dropout rate to 4%.

Croatia's participation in the **European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN)** has established a strong foothold for the development of the LCG system in the Republic of Croatia³.

The aim of the ELGPN is to assist EU Member States (and neighbouring countries eligible for the Erasmus + programme) and the European Commission in developing European cooperation on LCG in the education and employment sectors. The network was established by the Member States with the purpose to promote cooperation between Member States in implementing the priorities identified in the Council Resolutions on lifelong guidance (2004; 2008). The ELGPN represents a major development in support of the national LCG policy in Europe. It also represents an innovative form of the Open Method of Co-Ordination within the EU. The ELGPN ensures regular contacts with other relevant bodies and networks at the national, European and international level, including links with the ETF, CEDEFOP, EUROGUIDANCE and the European Network of Public Employment Services (PES), as well as with the reformed EURES.

Framework for development of this Strategy is defined in the ELGPN guidelines:

Guidelines for Policies and System Development for Lifelong Guidance: A Reference Framework for the EU and for the Commission

The guidelines were adopted in February 2015. The aim of the Guidelines is to help improve the quality and efficacy of the career management of all EU citizens. They are an easy manual for national and EU policy-makers in the fields of education, training, employment and social inclusion, for social partners, for LCG providers, and for EU citizens themselves.

The **Euroguidance Centre** in Croatia was established in 2011 within the Agency for Mobility and EU programmes (AMEUP) as a national support center for professional guidance. The centre monitors the current state of LCG in the Republic of Croatia and develops promotional and educational activities for LCG practitioners in education and employment, provides information on the news and examples of good practice in LCG and encourages the cooperation and mobility of LCG experts in the education and employment fields at the national and European level.

The Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training (ET 2020)⁴ from 2015 defines new priorities aimed at reforming the education systems of EU Member States. The goal of this Strategy is to encourage Member States to take measures that will ensure that young people acquire the skills and competencies required for the labour market with an emphasis on entrepreneurial and other transversal skills.

The “New skills for new jobs” initiative⁵

The goal of this initiative of the European Commission is to develop efficient ways to analyse and anticipate skills that will be required for future labour markets and use that knowledge for developing an education system that will enable citizens to acquire the required skills. This initiative focuses on skills and competencies that the individual does not possess. The document invites Member States to ensure LCG and support for job seekers in order to identify the competencies required for employment at new jobs.

European Social Charter (1996 Revision) Article 9 – The right to vocational guidance: “With

³ <http://www.elgpn.eu/>

⁴ 2015 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020)

⁵ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52008DC0868&from=EN>

a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to vocational guidance, the Parties undertake to provide or promote, as necessary, a service that will assist all persons, including persons with disabilities, to solve problems related to occupational choice and progress with due regard to the individual's characteristics and their relation to occupational opportunity: this assistance should be available free of charge, to both young persons, including schoolchildren, and to adults”.

New initiatives

European manuals containing guidelines for encouraging workers' and learners' mobility (e.g. the EUROPASS⁶ portfolio) are currently being developed, as are **harmonising tools** whose purpose is to clearly evaluate study programmes. Among them, ECTS credit system is the best known, and it was designed to make it easier for students to move between different study programmes (i.e. universities), including transfers between universities in different countries. The EQF aims at making national qualifications, which are obtained in all forms of education, from primary education to higher education, recognizable across Europe. Another important tool is ESCO, which aims to reduce the mismatch of skills on the international labour market. However, the purpose of these tools is to provide information only. LCG policies and practices could bridge the gap between those tools and assist in making them personally, socially and economically beneficial and creating positive outcomes for unemployed young people and young people that are “underemployed” in jobs below their qualifications.

A reliable analytical database and monitoring process are necessary for an efficient ET 2020 framework and shall be implemented in cooperation with Eurostat, the Eurydice network, the CEDEFOP centre, the OECD and other organisations.

In 2015 the European Commission initiated the adoption of the **Recommendation on the integration of the long-term unemployed**, since long-term unemployment affects 12 million people in the EU (5% of the active population). More than half of the unemployed are long-term unemployed and this high rate remains steady. The chances of finding employment dwindle after a long period of unemployment and re-entering the labour market also becomes increasingly difficult. The main purpose of the Recommendation is to provide Member States with guidelines and support in providing services that would facilitate the transition from long-term unemployment to employment in which LCG plays a vital role.

IV.2. Relevant documents of the Republic of Croatia

All the aforementioned initiatives and recommendations, as well as examples of good practice in the EU create a starting point for drafting the Strategy for Lifelong Career Guidance in the Republic of Croatia and are also recognised and used in the drafting of national documents relevant for the implementation of LCG.

National Reform Programme

The 2015 National Reform Programme describes measures undertaken by the Government of the Republic of Croatia in order to resolve structural challenges faced by the Republic of Croatia, in accordance with the recommendations of the Council of the European Union from July 2014. With the aim of providing a complete and comprehensive approach to economic

⁶ The Europass portfolio consists of five documents that have been designed in such a way as to help people present their skills and competencies in a clear and comparable manner in the European Union. The Europass format CVs enable employers to identify the skills and knowledge of job applicants acquired through work experience and education in different countries.

reforms, the Government has set **three main objectives** of structural policies described in the NRP 2015:

- promoting growth, external competitiveness and re-establishing balance in the Croatian economy,
- resolving weaknesses in public sector governance and increasing public sector efficiency,
- increasing the sustainability of the general government debt and strengthening the management of public finances.

The **Youth Guarantee** represents a structural reform that will enable quick activation for young people aged 15-30 within four months of leaving education system or losing employment in order to stay connected to the labour market and avoid long-term unemployment or inactivity. The “Guarantee” refers to a good-quality offer of an employment, a traineeship, an apprenticeship or continued education. Pursuant to the Youth Guarantee, the following priority areas of action have been identified: employment; continued education; apprenticeship and traineeship; entrepreneurship.

The Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan, which was adopted in 2014, contains a complete description of the reforms and measures that will be implemented in order to establish a support system and facilitate the transition from education to work and to establish a Youth Guarantee system. Special emphasis is placed on: high quality career guidance for youth, lifelong education, counselling and youth empowerment, activities aimed at remaining in school and the development of youth services by the Croatian Employment Service (CES), especially regarding support to employment and mediation, on-the-job training programmes, traineeship and apprenticeship, the support for youth self-employment, further development of measures tailored to the specific needs of youth and building capacities of stakeholders on the local labour market.

The aim of the **Strategy of Education, Science and Technology** (“Official Gazette”, No. 124/14) is to build a system for identifying, encouraging and developing individuals' competencies and potential and to reinforce LCG service providers. In the Strategy, emphasis is placed on LCG at all levels of the education system, ranging from early and preschool education to primary and secondary education and ultimately higher education and adult education.

It should be noted that a **new Programme for the development of vocational education and training in the Republic of Croatia** is currently being developed, which will significantly improve the vocational education system.

Croatian Qualification Framework (CROQF)

CROQF is a mechanism that links the labour market to education. It establishes quality foundations, procedures and capacities for creating occupational and qualification standards in order to implement and develop a CROQF system for the purpose of developing competitiveness in the Republic of Croatia.

CROQF is a mechanism for identifying the mismatch between labour supply and demand at a competence level. In order to analyse labour market needs as required by the CROQF, which lies within the competence of the national authority responsible for labour, a number of employers were interviewed in an Occupational Standards Survey, which has been conducted to obtain data on key jobs and the relevant knowledge and skills required for jobs that constitute a single occupation. Identifying the knowledge and skills required by a large number of employers allows the creation of an occupational standard. Upon the recognition of an occupational standard, a qualification standard may be defined, which serves as the basis for

developing educational programmes. On the basis of this methodology defined by the CROQF, the necessary occupational competence sets are connected with the sets of learning outcomes in educational programmes. In this way, educational relevance in accordance with labour market needs is achieved.

Industrial Strategy of the Republic of Croatia 2014-2020 (“Official Gazette”, No. 126/14)

This Strategy, within its priority goals, envisions operational measures for strategic cooperation between the industry and the education system and adapting the education system to industry needs. These measures include: planning the needs of the industry and the education system for human resources in 10-year cycles, matching the priorities and goals with the Strategy of Science, Education and Technology, adapting the system of education and science to the needs of new technologies and the “green economy”, developing an incentive model for further education and the employment of the older and more experienced workforce, developing an incentive system for attracting high-quality and educated workforce, working on increasing the attractiveness of vocational occupations, strengthening the development of the scholarship and mentorship systems and developing a system for the “identification, evaluation, attraction and retention of talented and promising individuals”.

Strategy for Innovation Encouragement in the Republic of Croatia 2014-2020 (“Official Gazette”, No. 153/14)

The main goal of this Strategy is to increase the level of competitiveness of the Croatian economy and increase social welfare by investing in knowledge, creativity and innovations. The Strategy envisions long-term stimulation of innovations development and the systematic encouraging of innovations as the foundation of a successful economy and society: through strategic goals and thematic pillars, the most important of which for LCG is thematic pillar IV, which envisages measures for strengthening human resources for innovations and creating an encouraging environment for researchers that are competitive at international level. Within this pillar three priorities and accompanying measures have been identified: encouraging the development of new skills required for research, technological development and innovation, provision of counselling services in this area, which also includes training for service providers, encouraging researcher mobility between the public and private sectors.

The **Development Strategy of the Vocational Education System in the Republic of Croatia 2008-2013** recognised the importance of the continued harmonization of education with labour market needs. In order to better satisfy labour market needs, it is necessary to further develop and strengthen LCG in vocational education as an important tool of education and employment policy, including strengthening the capacities for the provision of LCG services.

The **Guidelines for the Development and Implementation of Active Labour Market Policy in the Republic of Croatia 2015-2017** emphasise the importance of creating a high quality data on labour market needs that also refers to the prediction of future needs and are an important basis for implementing LCG activities as a means of support for individuals at any point in their lives when making decisions about choosing an occupation, education, training or employment.

LCG programmes are developed and designed through the coordinated work of the education and employment systems, so a **Forum for Lifelong Career Guidance** was established as a mechanism of cooperation between all the stakeholders involved with LCG on a national level.

The **Operational Programme Efficient Human Resources 2014-2020** as the basis for developing the Projects and as a source of funding:

The thematic objectives of the Operational Programme Efficient Human Resources 2014-2020

are elaborated as follows:

- promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility;
- promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and discrimination;
- investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning;
- enhancing the institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and an efficient public administration.

Priority axes are elaborated under the thematic objectives and include high employment and labour mobility, social inclusion, education and lifelong learning, good governance and technical assistance.

Priority axis 8, investment priority vii, specific objective: increase the accessibility and quality of publicly provided labour market information and services, including ALMP, quotes the following: “The Ministry of Labour and Pension System will develop capacities for policy implementation, secure monitoring and policy impact assessment and data exchange with partner institutions (Register of Human Resources) and develop software for analytical and reporting purposes to the stakeholders and public.”

Priority axis 10, investment priority iii, enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non-formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competencies of the workforce and promoting flexible learning pathways, including career guidance and the validation of acquired competencies, under the third specific objective identifies the activities of development and implementation of high quality lifelong learning programmes for acquiring partial qualifications and programmes for validation of prior learning with a view to increase qualification levels of adults and organisation of events and activities aimed to increase participation in LLL programmes (e.g. Lifelong Learning Week).

V. THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

Croatian Qualifications Framework Act (“Official Gazette”, No. 22/13)

This Act establishes the Croatian Qualifications Framework (CROQF) and stipulates its implementation. It also regulates the system of qualifications in the Republic of Croatia by introducing a qualification standard based on an occupational standard which consists of sets of learning outcomes. The *National Council for the Development of Human Potential* (NCDHP) is a body in CROQF implementation which assesses and validates public policies, primarily policies related to education, employment, LCG and regional development, from the perspective of their influence on developing human potential and their contribution to achieving the strategic goals and competitiveness of the Republic of Croatia, as well as on development of society. The NCDHP is a body that may give recommendations to responsible ministries on the needs of society/economy for development of certain qualifications and/or occupations (e.g. “career adviser”) and on the need for high-quality and organised implementation of student support centres at the universities.

Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education (“Official Gazette”, No. 45/09)

Article 4 of this Act regulates the assurance and improvement of quality in science and higher education by establishing the Agency for Science and Higher Education, which within the scope of its activities, encourages the development of scientific skills, knowledge and research on the science and higher education quality system in the Republic of Croatia. Student support services that include career development services are part of an internal quality system at higher education institutions whose continuing improvement is encouraged by the Agency through the provision of counselling services and external assessment. The Central Applications Office (CAO) is established in the Agency and is responsible for the provision of

support to applicants via the provision of career information as one of the activities included in the wider process of career guidance. During the application procedure and enrolment in the first year of undergraduate and graduate studies, the CAO offers support to applicants by providing information on conditions for enrolment into higher education institutions, application procedure rules and answers to the applicants' inquiries.

Volunteering Act (“Official Gazette”, No. 58/07, 22/13)

This Act regulates the issue of the Certification of Competencies Acquired through Volunteering, which contributes to increasing their value and recognition on the labour market. The volunteer project allows a person to apply the knowledge acquired through formal education, expand his/her social network and get the opportunity to meet potential employers by performing community service.

Labour Act (“Official Gazette”, No. 73/13, 93/14)

Labour Act prohibits direct or indirect discrimination in the field of labour and labour conditions, including selection criteria and conditions in employment, advancement, professional guidance, vocational education and training, retraining in accordance with specific laws.

Act on Employment Mediation and Unemployment Rights (“Official Gazette”, No. 80/08, 121/10, 25/12, 118/12, 12/13 and 153/13)

This Act regulates employment mediation, LCG, education aimed to increase employment of the labour force, unemployment insurance, active participation in the labour market with a view to promoting the geographical and professional mobility of the labour force along with new employment and self-employment, sources of funds for activities and the organisation, management and operation of the CES.

Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons Act (“Official Gazette”, No. 157/13, 152/14)

Article 4 of this Act stipulates, inter alia, that disabled persons have the right to professional rehabilitation under general conditions and if necessary due to the nature and severity of the disability or the success of the rehabilitation process, attend adapted or special programmes at special schools and institutions for professional rehabilitation.

The Act sets out that professional rehabilitation must inter alia include the assessment of remaining work and general abilities, provision of career guidance (informing, counselling and assessment of professional abilities), assessment of the possibilities for implementing, developing and improving professional development training programmes, additional trainings, retrainings and programmes for maintaining and improving work and social skills and capacities in the period leading up to employment, the provision of information and counselling on assistive technology in learning, work, etc.

Adult Education Act (“Official Gazette”, No. 17/07)

Article 1 of this Act defines the entire process of adult learning, while Article 3 defines the terms formal, non-formal, informal and self-guided learning. In addition to this, Article 4 stipulates which institutions may implement adult education. The Act is undergoing revision stipulating that the CROQF shall be used as an instrument for drafting and approving formal adult education programmes and granting licenses to adult education institutions.

Primary and Secondary Education Act (“Official Gazette”, No. 87/08, 86/09, 92/10, 16/12, 86/12, 126/12, 76/13, 94/13 and 152/14)

Articles 57 and 115 of this Act stipulate the cooperation of schools with employment services and other institutions with a view to providing information in a timely manner, enable vocational guidance for pupils and provide training for primary and secondary school teachers.

National Curriculum Framework for Pre-School Education and General Compulsory Primary and Secondary Education creates the prerequisites for the acquisition and development of LCG competencies through optional subjects and intersubject topics.

Ordinance on the Enrolment of Pupils in Secondary School (“Official Gazette”, No. 49/2015) – Articles 19 and 23 of the Ordinance regulate the means of assessing school achievement of pupils with developmental difficulties and severe health problems, which includes the recommendations of 3-5 educational programmes, recommended by the CES career guidance counsellors.

Ordinance on the Primary and Secondary Education of Pupils with Developmental Difficulties (“Official Gazette”, No. 24/2015)

VI. SITUATION ANALYSIS AND POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENTS

VI.1. Lifelong career guidance services in primary and secondary schools

Providing information regarding career guidance and enabling career guidance/counselling in schools as a means of prevention and “early intervention” plays a vital role in providing support for young people in successfully managing career transitions. Guidance in educational institutions not only assists pupils in choosing their future career, but also prevents them from leaving school early and encourages them to pursue higher education and training.

Educational institutions are places where young persons are introduced for the first time to formal guidance related to further education and/or labour market transitions. At the present time, several different models of career guidance services exist in educational institutions in Europe and an increasing number of countries are moving away from the traditional model of providing career guidance, by offering a wide range of opportunities for receiving information and counselling. The key driver of change was the widely accepted notion that lifelong learning is paramount for economic growth in Europe and that such change would contribute to the restructuring of education systems. This gives guidance counsellors at schools the opportunity to significantly contribute to this process, seeing that they are trained to help pupils in solving problems, acquiring new knowledge and developing skills.

Bearing in mind the importance of providing pupils with systematic support in developing skills to make informed career choice decisions and developing skills and work habits that are important for one's future career and lifelong employment, the need arose to provide an overview of the current career guidance situation in primary and secondary schools in the Republic of Croatia. Therefore, a research on the existing capacities of primary and secondary schools to implement career guidance was conducted in 2014.⁷ The results of the research, elaborated through four types of capacities (institutional, implementing, professional and material) which were available to primary and secondary schools in the Republic of Croatia for the provision of career guidance to pupils, indicated that there is ample room for improvement.

Institutional capacities: The presence of the topic of career guidance (or the lack thereof) in school documents and the lack of defined objectives and purpose of these activities points to the fact that career guidance is not a priority for schools and that it is just one of the many (low

⁷ The survey was conducted by the Euroguidance centre for supporting career guidance systems that operate within the Agency for Mobility and EU programmes. The survey was conducted by researchers Dr Margareta Gregurović and Natalija Lukić and the results are available on the Euroguidance centre website: http://www.mobilnost.hr/prilozi/05_1419414275_Izvjestaj_EUROGUIDANCE_FINALNO.pdf

priority) activities that fall within the scope of activities of expert associates. When researching work methods, it was established that schools give precedence to the group provision of information and counselling to pupils and parents regarding education opportunities and that they pay significantly less attention to preparing pupils for job seeking, raising self-awareness and transversal skills required for work and life and also decision-making skills and setting life goals .

Implementing capacities: It is hardly surprising that a strong emphasis is placed on the implementation of group activities given the workload of expert associates in schools: schools with more than 500 pupils have, on average, a lower number of expert associates than prescribed by the Croatian National Pedagogical Standard. Primary schools with 500-1000 (or more) pupils have, on average, only three expert associates, while secondary schools with the same number of pupils have 1.7 expert associates on average.

Although the research results confirm that the career guidance of pupils in their two final years of compulsory education (grades 7 and 8) is implemented in 84.3% of schools, a need for introducing elements of career guidance in the earlier stages of education is recognised, so that pupils are prepared for making career management decisions at later points of their lives.

Professional capacities: Although expert associates capably handle the tasks and obligations for the most part of their service, a strong need was noted for investing in their further and continued training, especially in the development of professional aspirations and the provision of information regarding the available information-communication tools that could assist them in the career guidance of pupils.

Material capacities: The research results show that schools lack the funds to purchase career guidance tools (e.g. diagnostic tests), which forces them to use resources such as free information materials available online and the catalogue of educational programmes. The results also indicate a lack of funds for covering the expenses of professional development and associates' education, as well as a limited offer of seminars and expert meetings that focus on career guidance within the system.

Despite its limitations, the education system utilises various ways to contribute to the provision of career information and decision making regarding pupils' further educational and career development. A large and diverse range of written information material is being published. The Ministry of Science, Education and Sports publishes a brochure on the enrolment of pupils in secondary schools every year. In order to provide pupils with useful information on curricula in further education, educational institutions regularly organise promotional activities, such as Open Doors Days, Come Eighth-grader, Career Days, Crafts Fairs, Job Fairs, University Fairs etc.

Following the outcome of the research, the Euroguidance Centre that operates within the Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes, in cooperation with the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb, the Institute for Social Research in Zagreb, the Ivo Pilar Institute and the Education and Teacher Training Agency, organised two-day seminars on career guidance throughout 2014 and 2015 that were intended for subject teachers and expert associates - pedagogues and psychologists in primary and secondary schools, for the purpose of expanding the knowledge of counsellors relating to the provision of support to pupils in developing skills and work habits in order to develop future career and long-term employability, i.e. improving psychologists' knowledge required for the career guidance and counselling of pupils and the provision of support to teachers and parents in developing pupils' skills and work habits in order to develop work values, CMS and lifelong employability.

One of the most important career guidance systems is established within the Croatian Employment Service. The education system in cooperation with the CES starts implementing

career guidance activities for third-grade and often again for fourth-grade secondary school pupils. The career guidance of pupils begins with analysing pupils' career intentions through the application of the Survey on Vocational Intentions of Primary and Secondary School Pupils, which is conducted by the CES and includes all final year pupils of primary and secondary schools. The survey identifies indecisive pupils and pupils with health problems and other developmental difficulties that require professional assistance in choosing further education. Also, aggregated survey results identify trends in pupils' career intentions and are forwarded to partners in the fields of education and employment. A new pupil survey system using e-surveys is currently being implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports.

Pupils with developmental difficulties and severe health problems are referred to psychodiagnostic assessment, which includes psychological testing, an interview and an examination by an occupational health specialist. Upon providing career guidance, the expert team's opinion is issued along with recommendations for educational programmes in accordance with the individual pupil's capacities and abilities, as well as the labour market needs and education possibilities in that area.

Job Fairs, Career Guidance Days and other similar events are organised regularly, as well as activities promoting craft occupations sought for at the labour market in order to provide information to pupils in a timely manner.

The CES regularly conducts analysis and predictions of labour market needs, which serve as the basis for the Recommendations for the Educational Enrolment Policy and Scholarship Policy that are delivered to the ministry responsible for education system for the purpose of harmonizing education with labour market needs.

Following the abovementioned, existing limitations for conducting career guidance activities in Croatian schools have been identified, as well as associates' needs for professional development. The research results show that the burden of expert associates' should be reduced, since they are mostly responsible for conducting these activities, and that cooperation with external stakeholders should be intensified. The Republic of Croatia does not currently provide initial education for career guidance counsellors in the system of higher education, nor does it provide a single professional development programme on this subject, which is certainly a precondition for establishing and developing a LCG system in the areas of primary and secondary education.

Lifelong career guidance in the context of vocational education development

Vocational education is an integral part of the education system that includes a majority of secondary school pupils. Unlike grammar and art schools, vocational education is characterised by its natural and close connection with the labour market, as well as its role in social inclusion. The majority of vocational education programmes have remained virtually unchanged in the past two decades, meaning that the currently valid programmes do not reflect the technological development and professional trends and do not necessarily reflect the labour market and economic needs. The large number of different programmes and their narrow specialisations are typical of Croatian vocational education. It should also be noted that pupils are guided towards a certain vocation relatively early in their lives, which is especially noticeable when choosing narrowly focused occupations that provide a limited set of skills and knowledge.

While a part of vocational education is work-based (especially through vocational education for crafts), which is in accordance with EU recommendations, pupil education mostly takes place in educational institutions with limited contact with the world of work. Initial qualitative changes of this part of the system were made after the CROQF was adopted and new curricula

were developed for the purpose of acquiring the required qualifications in vocational education (AVETAE) based on learning outcomes.

Based on the adopted Strategy of Education, Science and Technology⁸ and with consideration to the complexity and specificity of the vocational education and training system, the Programme for Development of Vocational Education and Training System in the Republic of Croatia is currently being drawn up, which will define the methods of implementation of the set strategic guidelines.

The National Curriculum for Vocational Education shall be developed and implemented in order to determine the joint values, principles and goals of all forms of vocational education. This document shall also define the proportion of basic (general education) and specific vocational competencies; provide a framework for electivity and modularity of vocational education and basis for development and implementation of curricula for acquiring qualifications in the regular education system.

Harmonizing vocational education with labour market needs is one of the priorities of the Programme for Development of Vocational Education and Training System. Vocational curricula developed on the basis of the National Curriculum for Vocational Education form the foundation for increasing the relevance of vocational education and training with regard to the labour market. Horizontal and vertical pupil mobility will be taken into account when drawing up the curriculum. Development of new curricula is followed by the development of textbooks and auxiliary teaching materials and teacher education on implementation of new vocational curricula. Since development of new vocational curricula is not possible without the involvement of employers, who should be included in the drawing up and development process, emphasis will be placed on raising employers' awareness about their responsibility in educating new staff, as well as on educating employers about implementing new vocational curricula. It is also important to optimally plan a school and programme network in cooperation with local and regional government units and to establish competence centres.

Competence centres are multi-purpose regional school network centres that provide excellence in vocational education, modern curricula and innovative learning models, teacher, lecturer and mentor excellence, as well as high quality infrastructure, constructive and creative partnerships with employers, the public sector, social partners and innovative and creative companies and institutions that bridge the gap between the world of work and the world of education. The main purpose of competence centres is to provide high quality initial and continuous vocational education aimed at pupils, students, employed and unemployed persons as well as at continuous professional development for teachers and mentors. The goal is to develop optimal competence centres network within particular sectors and to establish cooperation (networking) between regional competence centres from different sectors and, ultimately, with similar foreign centres. The main goal of the competence centres is to harmonize vocational education with labour market needs by intensifying cooperation with employers, especially when it comes to defining the required competencies and qualifications, as well as drawing up and implementing new curricula based on qualifications and occupational standards and by ensuring high quality practical teaching and apprenticeship, which will ultimately increase the quality of competencies that pupils acquire through vocational education.

Upon the adoption of the Programme for Development of Vocational Education and Training System, all existing legislation shall undergo adjustments in accordance with the Programme, as well as with the Strategy of Education, Science and Technology.

In addition, it will be important to ensure media attention and promotion of work-based learning, which will increase the attractiveness of these occupations among the general public.

⁸ "Official Gazette", No. 124/14

Recommendations included in the document “New Priorities for European Cooperation in Education and Training”⁹ focus on all forms of work-based learning, with special emphasis on apprenticeship, through the inclusion of social partners, companies, chambers and vocational education and training providers, as well as by encouraging innovation, entrepreneurship and further development of quality assurance mechanisms in vocational education and training in accordance with the recommendation of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQAVET) and, within the quality assurance system, the establishment of continuous information and feedback provision system within the initial and continuous vocational educational and training systems based on the learning outcomes.

VI.2. Lifelong career guidance services in higher education

Current information on the situation on the labour market shows a mismatch between labour supply and demand. A significant number of people who have completed secondary and tertiary education are unemployed, but at the same time employers have trouble finding experienced and qualified workforce, which indicates a big disproportion between labour supply and demand at the labour market, i.e. that the educational institutions have not aligned their study programmes with labour market needs and have insufficiently cooperated with employers who should employ people after completion of their education.

Shortening the duration of university education, increasing university completion rate, reducing the university enrolment quotas on universities which educate large number of students in vocations that do not lead to employment, increasing quotas of students enrolling in university programmes that lead to a degree required for occupations sought for at the labour market and enabling employment upon receiving a bachelor's degree will make the system more efficient.

It is also necessary to harmonize the number and profile of study programmes with social and economic needs. Achieving the optimal number of study programmes and enrolment quotas requires an analysis of the content of study programmes and of synchronisation of learning outcomes and acquired competencies with actual societal needs, which indicates a lack of cooperation between the economy and the educational institutions.

Many employers state that lack of practical skills is the main reason for poor youth employment. By improving the cooperation between higher education institutions and the employers (in terms of vocational training and apprenticeship) could reduce these shortcomings. A weak entrepreneurial culture is one of the bigger economic issues in the Republic of Croatia, since the lack of the organised and systematic acquisition of entrepreneurial knowledge and skills during compulsory education does not encourage students to take the initiative and greater responsibility for their own future. This leads to a situation that people usually wait for jobs instead of creating them.

The current student support system in the areas of LCG and CMS at certain higher education institutions is organised within the student counselling centres whose goal is to overcome students' personal problems. At other higher education institutions, it constitutes a separate organisational unit. Prospective students that require counselling on the acknowledgment of certain knowledge that has been acquired through non-formal and/or informal means, which exempts them from taking certain courses, constitute a separate group.

Taking into account years of experience and examples of good practice from other EU Member States, Career Development Centres at universities and other higher education institutions in

⁹ 2015 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020)

the Republic of Croatia are being developed. In addition, certain university constituent parts offer particular services or implement activities for improving CMS, such as job fairs, the presentations of key employers from a specific sector and/or profession etc. Some institutions actively implement LCG activities when the students decide where to enrol, but also during their education when they choose optional courses and topics for their undergraduate dissertations.

At the moment, one of the fundamental issues which Croatian science system needs to tackle is the underdeveloped system of postgraduate doctoral studies and the lack of expert mentors in certain fields that would develop independent young researchers which are competitive on an international level.

Another problem is the extremely low demand on the Croatian labour market for persons with doctorate academic level. On the other hand, the Croatian science and higher education system lacks the capacity to absorb the existing number of young scientists which also results in unemployment of otherwise internationally recognized young researchers.

The analysis of research conducted within the project for Modernising Doctoral Education through Implementation of CROQF (MODOC 2013-2014) on a representative sample of 1225 subjects indicate that the current doctoral studies for the most part prepare doctoral researchers for pursuing a career in science and higher education, but not in the business sector or for starting their own business. The results obtained from the MODOC analysis is analogous to the conclusion reached by the employers. Furthermore, 10-22% of doctoral students will have completed their doctoral studies within 7 academic years on average, while the percentage of doctoral students that will have dropped out of their doctoral programme in the same period ranges from 5% to 11%. 71% of all doctoral students will have completed their doctoral studies in 7.5 years on average.

Improving competencies and developing transversal skills in young scientists (such as professional efficiency, self-governance, career management etc.) can be achieved in cooperation with the economic sector and via a mentoring system.

The establishment of unified counselling centres will yield multiple benefits, such as the networking of undergraduate students and students of integrated studies, doctoral students and post-doctoral researchers, as well as reducing costs at the level of the whole science and higher education system.

This type of cooperation will allow universities and other higher education institutions to increase the chances of their students for employment, the success of their own researches and the transfer of technology to society. Researchers and teachers will receive better research and teaching content, better possibilities for funding projects and better opportunities for publishing. Companies will have the opportunity to develop products and services, required skills and knowledge and to generate income in the future.

VI.3. Lifelong career guidance in the context of lifelong learning and employability

Adults are often unaware of re-training options available to them and might have limited insight into their own capacities and knowledge. Adults that choose a less suitable and realistic path of acquiring qualifications need to clarify their own expectations and increase self-awareness, as well as take note of possible alternative ways to acquire desired qualifications.

Career Management Skills refer to the use of a person's own key competencies for the purpose of learning, work process management, communicating, and efficient and independent problem

identification/solving. In addition, these skills facilitate more structured and informed career choices.

The aging workforce of the EU forces companies to ensure that the knowledge of their retiring employees is substituted and transferred to younger employees. Career guidance can provide support for mentoring activities, thus allowing the older and more experienced employees to act as mentors or to monitor and guide the progress of younger or newly employed workers.

Frequent periods of unemployment and nonstandard careers of the employed are on the rise across the EU, especially for people midway through their careers. A study entitled “*Navigating difficult waters*”¹⁰, which was carried out on behalf of the CEDEFOP in 2014, investigated the careers and personal stories of middle-aged persons. The findings indicate numerous cases of instability and difficulties in taking a sensible career development path, which is often the result of a lack of information and access to high quality career guidance, as well as lack of CMS. The study has also shown that persons who received this type of career development support from public employment services are less likely to return to unemployment and to receiving social security benefits. A less thorough approach to providing career information may also be taken and counselling may be provided in accordance with the user's individual needs, as long as the users/clients are profiled in an in-depth manner. In these cases, information pertaining to the labour market, education, training and the recognition of qualifications must be reliable and provided by trained counsellors who can adjust the offer to the user's profile. Also, a counsellor may introduce a person to the opportunities of *volunteering for acquiring and developing competences* and the Certificate for competencies acquired through volunteering, which increases the value and provides recognition of the acquired competencies on the labour market, as well as to the existence of volunteering centres that may assist the person in finding a volunteering project that will allow him or her to apply the skills acquired through formal education, expand their social network and meet potential employers by performing community service.

Career guidance in the context of lifelong learning and employment enables:

Efficient investment in education and training: Increasing the number of participants and the completion rates of education and training programmes through improved understanding and matching of individuals' interests and capabilities with learning opportunities. Adult education in the Republic of Croatia has a long tradition of institutional operation, as evidenced by a broad network of public open universities – public adult education institutions that provide all forms of education for persons over the age of 15, such as adult primary education programmes, , training for simpler occupations, secondary education programmes, re-training for occupations, training programmes and foreign language programmes. Adult education institutions function as public and private institutions. Adults attend classes that are tailored to their needs and taught full time or in a form of consultative and instructive course programmes where they are required to have group and individual consultations or enrol in a correspondence and consultative course programme that utilises special didactic self-learning resources or take multimedia classes taught with the aid of modern media and resources. Adult education participants are given the chance to analyse their career development opportunities and choose adult education programmes that will allow them to maximise their potential, while taking into account the needs of the local labour market.

Labour market efficiency: Increasing work capacity and motivation, increasing job retention percentage, reducing job search timeframe and period without employment through improved understanding and matching of individuals' interests and capabilities to job and career development opportunities, through raising awareness of current and future employment and

¹⁰ <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/navigating-difficult-waters-learningcareer-and-labour>

learning possibilities, including self-employment and entrepreneurship and through geographical and professional mobility.

Social inclusion: Supporting educational, social and economic inclusion and reintegration of all citizens and groups, including early school leavers and foreigners, especially the ones that have trouble finding and understanding information pertaining to learning and work, which leads to increased social inclusion, active citizenship and reduced long-term unemployment and poverty.

Social equity: Assisting citizens in overcoming obstacles based on gender, ethnicity, disability, social status and the level of education when learning and at work.

Economic development: Increasing employment rates and upgrading the existing skills of the workforce in order to create a knowledge-based economy and society.

Lifelong career guidance services in the employment system

The Croatian Employment Service is responsible for carrying out systematic and organised LCG activities in the employment system. CES implements LCG principally as part of employment preparation and the provision of assistance in developing CMS and improving active job search competencies for the unemployed and other job seekers.

LCG services are primarily given to unemployed persons and other job seekers. The implementation of these activities affects the level of employability and improvement of job seekers' competencies and acts preventively on matching supply and demand on the labour market. Moreover, special emphasis is placed on early identification of students with medical and other disabilities, who are also faced with social exclusion.

Most LCG service users are involved in group activities and are given information via brochures, newsletters, web services and other means of group information provision. Group work is structured and organised by the CES counsellors in accordance with the principle of client empowerment. Unlike the provision of information, group counselling has an educational purpose, i.e. provides an opportunity to improve active job search skills and competencies, as well as achieve personal growth and develop CMS that refer to the means of collecting and using personal, educational and world of work information, as well as to the skills required to make and implement decisions and accomplish career transitions (from the education system into the world of work, between jobs etc.).¹¹

Persons that require individual access to information are given the option of individual information provision and counselling, which in turn enables development and more frequent use of self-help methods based on new technologies and e-counselling.

Employment education programmes implemented by CES include activities of preparation, professional selection, and referral of applicants to education programmes and monitoring of their progress, as well as financing and cofinancing of education programmes. Education programmes aim to increase employability, meaning that an unemployed person can be included in employment education if the education programme is structured in accordance with the established labour market needs and the psychophysical capacities of the unemployed person. In that way the competencies of the unemployed will match the current and predicted labour market needs. Educational activities are carried out within active labour market policy measures (financing and cofinancing of employment and education) and in cooperation with

¹¹ European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN), 2013

local and regional self-governance units, as well as within various projects cofinanced by EU funds.

Special emphasis is placed on working with hard to place unemployed people, especially people with disabilities. In order to prepare unemployed people with disabilities for employment, professional rehabilitation is used as a vehicle for determining remaining work and general abilities, provision of information, counselling and assessing professional opportunities, as well as providing training, re-training, additional training and the implementation of programmes for maintaining and improving work and social skills and capacities during the period leading up to employment. Emphasis is placed on individual and holistic approaches to the unemployed person. Unemployed people with disabilities are given the opportunity to participate in various kinds of group counselling that are modified in accordance with the type of their disability, in order to encourage them to search for jobs more actively and seek social and psychological support.

Employers are, for the most part, provided with professional selection services, assessment of applicants' individual possibilities and counselling in the area of human resources management, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises without human resources departments.

VI.4. Lifelong career guidance in the context of Youth Guarantee implementation

High youth unemployment rate, early school leaving and the social/economic inactivity of young Europeans have become a deep-rooted and burning issue over the past few years. Combined, they pose a great challenge to European social values, which are important for the European social model and cohesion policy. In accordance with this, a new European initiative for youth, known as the Youth Guarantee, has been proposed at the EU level. The Youth Guarantee (YG) seeks to ensure employability for young people under 25 (30) years of age. It serves as a tool for preventing early school leaving, providing support for the reintegration of young people into the labour market and providing support in transition from education to work. The goal is to build a youth support system that would ensure quick activation on the labour market and facilitate the transition from education to work.

The Guarantee's success will be reflected in the efficient cooperation of a number of social institutions, including schools, career guidance organisations, public employment services, private service providers, volunteer groups and other non-governmental organisations as well as families and the young people themselves. LCG services are a cohesive factor among these partners and an integral part of integrating youth into the labour market.

Many young people leave school very early and people with NEET status face a significantly higher risk of long-term unemployment, irregular employment, poverty and social exclusion. Economic inactivity at a young age can have serious and permanent consequences, as well as detrimental work outcomes and identities, which is also known as the “scarring effect”. Young migrants are especially affected by early school leaving, which has a negative effect on their education outcomes and labour market participation.

Career guidance and counselling may point out the flexibility of acquiring qualifications, including the validation (acknowledgement) of non-formal learning, which is especially important for people that have been outside the education system for a long time.

Career guidance can take place at a number of different points in a young person's life:

- **early interventions** include early engagement with career guidance services on entry point, first interview and individual action planning, to clarify personal goals and opportunities and also to connect personal interests and skills with labour market

opportunities.

- **guidance and mentorship** are tools for sustaining personal engagement. Mentorship, which includes the participation of members of the local community with successful careers, is viewed as an effective means of prevention, as well as in the strategies for labour market or education reintegration.
- **facilitating choices** between the elements of the YG (such as between traineeship and apprenticeship) to support people in finding pathways that align their personal interests with positive labour market outcomes by providing complete information on all occupations and the required qualifications offered by the system
- supporting young people after they find employment and help them with individual career plans and targets to retain them in a non-subsidised placement or in self-employment.

There are a number of possible obstacles in effective delivery of LCG to support young people through the YG:

- Fragmentation of some career guidance services (for example, those in schools, universities, vocational education providers and public employment services) could make it difficult for young people to transition from one service to another as their circumstances change.
- Stakeholders need to have a full knowledge of the young people in their area and their current labour market activity. Tracking their activity may be problematic where there is no incentive for young people to register with a service unless they see an immediate benefit from doing so.
- There is a need for public employment and career guidance services to be familiar with employers' needs in their area so that they can offer accurate information and appropriate advice to young people, but also to employers and educational opportunity providers.
- The challenge for career guidance counsellor is that of aligning personal ambitions of young people with local labour market opportunities and mobility possibilities, which in times of economic crisis may present them with limited or unattractive choices.
- There is a need to provide an infrastructure that is responsive to different groups of young people and also to the changing needs of an individual.
- Finally, there is the omnipresent challenge associated with limited resources that restrain access to a developmental process for all young people whilst in school or through their young adult lives.¹²

In order to allow early identification and timely provision of professional help to people facing social exclusion, career guidance is provided in the final years of primary and secondary schools. Due to a professional approach and a well organised LCG system that starts in primary school, i.e. early interventions, early school leaving rate in the Republic of Croatia is very low (cca. 2.7% according to the 2015 Eurostat data)..

Lifelong Career Guidance Centres (LCGC)

LCGCs (in places where they are established) are centres for outreach and activation of NEETs, including defining the type of cooperation and the responsibilities of particular partners, as well as creating preventive measures. LCGCs are currently active in 11 locations. 22 LCGCs will have been established in the Republic of Croatia by 2020. In places where LCGCs have not (yet) been established, Youth centres within the CES local/regional offices are responsible for the NEET group.

¹² ELGPN Concept note No.4 – “The Youth Guarantee and Lifelong Guidance”, Dr Tibor Bors Borbély-Pecze (Hungary) & Jo Hutchinson (United Kingdom), 2013

LCGCs are based on a partnership approach that is integrated in all of the Centre's activities: user outreach, service provision, knowledge exchange and upgrade of the LCG system. The purpose of networking is to achieve a joint goal: enhancing user competencies in order to increase competitiveness and restore the balance of labour supply and demand. Establishing new and maintaining existing partnerships at a local level is paramount for outreach and activation of NEETs.

Youth centres – activation of NEETs registered by the CES

In addition to working with unregistered NEETs (in places where LCGCs have not been established), it is necessary to motivate and activate registered unemployed young people.

Youth centres are centres for working with the aforementioned group, which are organised within the local CES branches and will be organised for branches with a significant number of registered young people. Amendments of the current professional job searching plan have been prepared in order to improve the monitoring of activities pertaining to working with young people registered with the CES, by taking into account the activities included in the YG. The goal of youth centre counsellors is to provide a high quality offer to young people within four months of entering unemployment that will reintegrate them in the labour market through employment, apprenticeship, traineeship or continued education. The new functionality of the professional plan will facilitate the tracking of unemployed persons, including inclusion in active employment policy measures.

Thereby, youth centre counsellors shall take the following four courses of action:

- facilitate youth employment
- provide education for acquiring or upgrading qualifications
- provide traineeship and apprenticeship programmes
- support self-employment and entering entrepreneurship.

The goal is to build a youth support system that would ensure quick activation on the labour market and facilitate transition from education to work.

The web portal for LCG (e-Guidance)¹³ is intended for the broadest group of users. It was established with the idea of providing one place for easy access to information necessary for choosing education programmes, job searching, upgrading future business plans, setting and achieving career objectives. The e-Guidance web portal offers helpful information and advice with regard to career development and decision making. The web portal offers the “Career Compass”, which is a tool that enables search divided into target group categories, such as pupils, students, the unemployed and employed. The tool provides the most relevant information pertaining to each group. The web portal is available at www.e-usmjeravanje.hr.

VII. KEY CHALLENGES

In order to harmonise the LCG goals and activities in the Republic of Croatia with all the relevant strategic documents pertaining to LCG in the European Union, it is necessary to define the priorities in accordance with the specific ELGPN recommendations in guidelines for policies and development of LCG system.

¹³ The e-Guidance web portal was established within project „New approaches by the CES in providing customer service“

The aforementioned documents define the key challenges of LCG as follows:

- enable access to LCG services and information
- provide high quality and efficient LCG services
- provide LCG for all target groups (pupils, students, adults, employed, unemployed, disadvantaged young people and other disadvantaged groups)
- professionalise LCG counsellors
- establish career centres
- enable the acquisition of CMS
- raise awareness of the importance of LCG

VIII. PRIORITIES

On the basis of strategic documents, key challenges and Commission recommendations, it is possible to identify the measures and activities that will be implemented between 2016 and 2020 for the purpose of pursuing the following **priorities and goals**:

1. ESTABLISHMENT OF A LCG SYSTEM

- 1.1. Establish an institutional model for provision of LCG services
- 1.2. Identify roles/responsibilities of all service providers
- 1.3. Develop the role of the Forum for Lifelong Career Guidance as a strategic body that deliberates further development of LCG and monitors the implementation of LCG services

2. ENCOURAGING LCG ACCORDING TO LABOUR MARKET AND ECONOMY NEEDS

- 2.1. Define labour market needs / labour market analysis
- 2.2. Develop LCG services according to labour market and economic needs

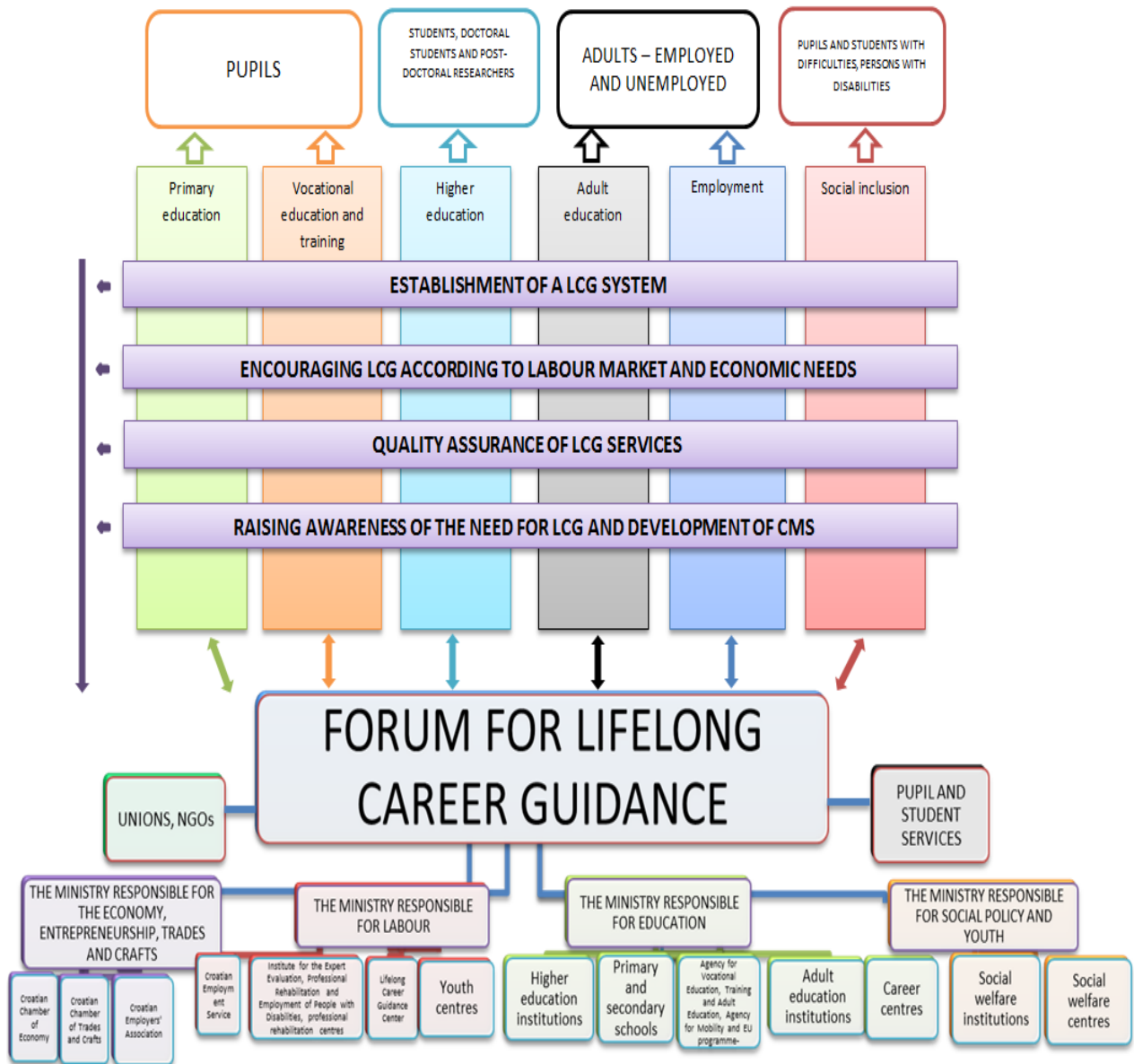
3. QUALITY ASSURANCE IN LCG SERVICES

- 3.1. Establish a quality assurance system of LCG services
- 3.2. Establish a quality assurance and monitoring system of all service providers / service evaluation
- 3.3. Professionalisation of LCG counsellors
- 3.4. Develop a system for monitoring and evaluation of LCG services

4. RAISE AWARENESS OF THE NEED FOR LCG AND DEVELOPMENT OF CMS

- 4.1. Raise awareness and knowledge of the importance of LCG and labour market trends

Diagram showing the interconnection between institutions in the LCG system



IX. GOALS AND MEASURES

PRIORITY 1 ESTABLISHMENT OF A LCG SYSTEM

LCG activities support the lifelong learning and employment policy by “translating” them into direct citizens' support. A well-coordinated LCG system contributes to the coherence of a system that includes education, training and employment support and, most importantly, explains the potential options that are available to citizens.

Efficiency of the system depends on coordination of institutions that provide career guidance services. Guidance activities currently overlap frequently or are absent altogether, which is why it is necessary to improve intersectoral communication in order to achieve synergy between different LCG service providers at both national and local levels.

The actual and latent demands of individuals for LCG services will almost certainly increase in the years to come. Employers, unions, non-governmental organisations, public employment services, social and healthcare institutions play a pivotal role in helping increase the number and quality of career opportunities.

LCG services need to be developed for a wide range of citizens that are contemplating career development and making decisions about education or employment. Included in these groups are young people who are at risk of leaving school early, vocational education or training participants, students, doctoral students, post-doctoral researchers, the employed, the unemployed, senior citizens, people with disabilities and all people with limited access to the labour market.

When drawing up the Strategy for Lifelong Career Guidance the following **four target groups were identified:**

- primary and secondary schoolpupils;
- students, doctoral students and post-doctoral researchers;
- adults that seek career advice (unemployed, employed, self-employed);
- employed, employers, unions and stakeholders (schools, universities, adult education institutions, employers, unions, NGOs, local self-governance units...)

Within this priority following goals were determined:

- 1.1. Establish an institutional model for provision of LCG services
- 1.2. Determine roles / responsibilities of all institutions providing services
- 1.3. Develop the role of the Forum for Lifelong Career Guidance as a strategic body that deliberates further development of LCG and monitors the implementation of LCG services

GOAL 1.1 ESTABLISH AN INSTITUTIONAL MODEL FOR PROVISION OF LCG SERVICES

Measure 1.1.1 Create a legal framework for implementation of LCG services with clearly defined responsibilities and authorities

How will the existing situation be changed by implementing the suggested measure?

Although the previous chapter suggests that the laws of the Republic of Croatia contain provisions that regulate LCG, there is currently no legislation in the Republic of Croatia that defines the institutions responsible for implementation of LCG activities, and what are their responsibilities and roles in particular systems. The corresponding legislation would ensure the implementation of LCG services for all target groups (pupils, students, adults, employed, unemployed, disadvantaged young people and other disadvantaged groups at the labour market) and would clearly define the responsibilities and roles of particular institutions that would finally be obliged to provide these services. The required competencies and profiles of LCG professionals would also be defined, as well as the professional requirements that need to be met by LCG centres.

What developmental needs of the system will be met by implementing this measure?

The creation of a legal framework will enable a clear distribution of LCG service providers' responsibilities and roles and establish a coherent system for monitoring individuals at all stages of personal and career development. The embedding of a module in primary and secondary school curricula will improve CMS. Improving students' CMS will reduce the probability of early school leaving, which is the result of choosing an inadequate education programme and which causes a range of problems. Solving these problems requires the use of extensive sources provided by individual institutions. An upgraded guidance system for students with disabilities will provide better service and prevent subsequent social exclusion. Providing high quality Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) counselling services at higher education institutions will facilitate the acquisition of relevant qualifications for the labour market and make competencies that individuals have acquired more visible to employers. The establishment of unified counselling centres will yield multiple benefits, such as networking of undergraduate students and students of integrated studies, doctoral students and post-doctoral researchers, as well as reducing costs at the level of the whole science and higher education system. Adult education participants will be given the chance to analyse their career development opportunities and choose adult education programmes that will allow them to maximise their potential, while taking into account the needs of the labour market.

Measure 1.1.2 Continuously develop existing and future LCG Centres at local and regional level and encourage their specialisation

How will the existing situation be changed by implementing the suggested measure?

Improving the work of existing LCG Centres, by strengthening their connection with relevant partners at the local level and opening new Centres in all regions will make the LCG services provided as part of regular CES activities more available to pupils, students, unemployed and employed persons. However, the insufficient capacities and infrastructure cannot meet the demands of all interested citizens in a high quality manner. Enhancing cooperation between the Centres, primary and secondary schools, and other relevant institutions at the local level would enable systematic student monitoring, recognition of their abilities, interests and other relevant factors for career choices and development.

The establishment of Centres specialising in crafts would ensure that students are provided with information and counselling pertaining to craft occupations and the world of work. Adult education institutions will provide relevant information for persons entering retraining,

professional vocational training or training programmes. Implementation of this measure will satisfy the needs of the system by developing qualified personnel and creating materials and tools for providing LCG services (IT etc.).

Implementation of suggested measure will lead to the establishment of new modernised Centres that provide LCG services based on the criteria required for granting permission to particular institution to become LCG centre. Experts employed at LCG Centres need to acquire new knowledge and skills in order to become qualified for working with target groups. Calls for tenders, especially for projects funded by the ESF, will strengthen the offer of existing institutions, while the new Centres will be given the opportunity to achieve long-term development and sustainability.

Since the system for providing LCG services at all levels in the Republic of Croatia, ranging from primary schools to employers, is still at its early stage, at this phase of its development it is extremely important to explore and identify examples of good practice that can serve as a model for further system upgrades. Each system should build its own LCG model of providing services which includes the description and placement of an organisational unit performing LCG (services) that deals with career counselling and provision of information at the system level and, if required, at the constituent level. In the next phase a proposal to amend existing regulations that regulate the system structure should be drafted. Finally, resources should be redistributed and personnel support should be ensured in order to provide LCG services according to the defined model. Specialisation will provide an expert approach to different user groups and will better meet their specific needs.

What developmental needs of the system will be met by implementing this measure?

LCG services are vital for increasing employment rate in transitional labour markets because they provide individual support to persons investigating the possibilities of education and employment.

Establishing LCG centres in different institutions (adult education institutions, associations, social welfare centres, campuses etc.) will expand the range of new LCG services provided and make them more available to their users, as well as increase their visibility in their operating environment. Encouraging their specialisation is particularly important. Establishment of LCG centres could lead to transformation of adult education institutions into local and regional LCG centres, especially in smaller towns. LCG centres will contribute to increased quality of life and provide opportunities and availability for individuals who desire to permanently improve their knowledge and skills. Centre specialisation will make better use of the counsellors' resources. When undergoing specialisation, special emphasis will be placed on Centres that would provide services for the purpose of developing entrepreneurship and self-employment.

By increased participation of institutions from other sectors in career guidance, especially primary and secondary education systems will make LCG services more available to all students and increase the CES capacity for working with unemployed persons and employers. The Centres will also facilitate partnerships at the local level, which will lead to better and improved user service.

Identification and exploration of existing examples of good practice will provide the systems with a foundation for building their own model more efficiently based on previously scrutinised possible models, while taking into account the specific nature of their own institution, which is responsible for designing an appropriate model. The institutional model that describes the required structure is necessary insofar that it determines what measures need to be implemented by the systems and their constituents in order to ensure the unobstructed provision of LCG services.

Measure 1.1.3. Develop a model for cooperation between institutions that implement and utilise LCG at the local, regional and national level and establish a career development

data exchange system

How will the existing situation be changed by implementing the suggested measure?

Institutions that provide some form of LCG at all levels are loosely connected at the present time. It is necessary to instigate formal and informal cooperation between system stakeholders, ranging from providers to the economy, which will ultimately enable the high quality and purpose-serving provision of LCG services. With the introduction of the career development data exchange system, all process participants will have access to numerous and high quality information that will allow them to provide better services.

What developmental needs of the system will be met by implementing this measure?

Legal framework, regulations and public tenders must give precedence to institutions that have established the LCG system, thus allowing more efficient use of public funds for education and improvement of knowledge and skills required for the labour market and personal development, as well as those that employers and individuals invest in.

Measure 1.1.4. Establish RPL counselling in adult education within examination centres

How will the existing situation be changed by implementing the suggested measure?

Accredited examination centres that encourage networking of smaller education institutions that do not have the capacity to implement RPL should be established in order to validate previously acquired knowledge in adult education. Examination centres do not have to employ full-time personnel but only a qualified counsellor, external experts, administrative personnel and a person responsible for work quality. For the purpose of ensuring quality, only persons that fit the standard profile may perform the function of assessors. Information pertaining to the content of the assessment programme must be transparent and available to everyone.

What developmental needs of the system will be met by implementing this measure?

Introduction of an RPL system in adult education simplifies the process of acquiring formal qualifications for adults who have already acquired certain competencies, since they are not obligated to participate in the entire formal programme of acquiring competencies. The provision of high quality RPL counselling services focused at applicants will contribute to the success of the RPL system.

Measure 1.1.5. Establish an institutional model for the provision of LCG services at higher education institutions

How will the existing situation be changed by implementing the suggested measure?

This measure shall be implemented in four steps. It is necessary to conduct a survey on good practice models at renowned higher education institutions. Since the system for providing LCG services at higher education institutions is at initial stage, in this phase it is extremely important for universities to explore and identify examples of good practice that can serve as a model for further system upgrades. The second step will consist of higher education institutions creating their own models for the provision of LCG services at universities and their constituents (in case of disintegrated universities), which includes the description and placement of an organisational unit performing LCG (services) that deals with career counselling and provision of information at the university level and, if required, at the constituent level, e.g. constituents with a large number of students or regulated professions due to the specific nature of career guidance. The third step will consist of a proposal to amend existing regulations that regulate the organisation of higher education institutions. Universities adopt statutes that regulate their organisation, activities and operations, structure, constituent status and other important issues. In addition, constituent statutes regulate the operation and organisational units of an individual college. Following the

elaboration of service provision model and analysis of required regulation amendments, higher education institutions shall recommend amending the university and constituent statutes (in case of disintegrated universities), i.e. regulations that regulate the organisation, names of internal organisation units and their scope. Finally, resources should be redistributed and personnel support should be ensured in order to provide LCG services according to the defined model.

What developmental needs of the system will be met by implementing this measure?

Connecting universities with other universities in the Republic of Croatia or abroad will allow them to identify potentially good institutional models of LCG service provision at higher education institutions. Identification and investigation of existing examples of good practice will provide the higher education institutions with a foundation for building their own model more efficiently based on previously scrutinised possible models, while taking into account the specific nature of their own institution responsible for creating an appropriate model. Institutional model that describes the required structure is necessary insofar that it determines what measures need to be implemented by the universities and their constituents in order to ensure unobstructed provision of LCG services. Making the required amendments to the regulation that regulates the organisation of higher education institutions and provides for an organisational unit (service) whose scope includes LCG has led to the creation of space within the internal organisation of the higher education institution suitable for providing LCG services.

Measure 1.1.6. Establish an institutional model at the agency responsible for ensuring quality in science and higher education

How will the existing situation be changed by implementing the suggested measure?

The agency responsible for ensuring quality in science and higher education needs to examine examples of good practice at foreign national agencies. In the second step the Agency regulates its internal organisation (the role of the agency in LCG shall be elaborated in Agency's internal regulations). The statute regulates activities, internal organisation, work organisation, professional tasks and administrative work that fall within the scope of the Agency as well as activities included in the individual tasks. Organisational units are determined by the Agency's internal organisation. Following the elaboration of the service provision model and analysis of the required amendments of the current regulations, the Agency shall, if required, recommend that amendments to the statute and other required regulations be made.

What developmental needs of the system will be met by implementing this measure?

Making the required amendments to the regulations that regulate the organisation has led to creation of an organisation that is suitable for provision of LCG services.

Measure 1.1.7. Establish cooperation between LCG centres and institutions with stakeholders, especially employers

How will the existing situation be changed by implementing the suggested measure?

Level of cooperation between end users, local communities, educational institutions and employers remains insufficient. Employers should be informed about the LCG centres' modes of operation. Employers should be presented with the advantages of cooperating with LCG centres and the opportunities they provide through lectures and workshops. Furthermore, formal and non-formal models of cooperation between the employers and the centres should be established with the aim of providing efficient problem solutions and improving work and cooperation in LCG.

Employers are the key LCG stakeholders, considering that they are able to provide the adult education system with the most detailed information on labour market needs. Information provided to institutions/centres by employers will give them better insight into labour market

needs in the area of their operation and will allow them to develop programmes aligned with the labour market, which in turn will direct prospective participants to enrol in the programmes, depending on their own capacities. This measure will ensure that the creation and implementation of adult education programmes meet the demands of the labour market. Networking of Local Partnerships for Employment (LPE) should be further enhanced at the regional and national levels and LPE systems, that already function independently with more or less potential and initiatives should also be encouraged.

What developmental needs of the system will be met by implementing this measure?

Education programmes with clearly defined learning outcomes which are suited for the challenges of the labour market will be developed. This is most relevant to the active working population, since adult education will enable them to meet the current needs of the labour market. Participation and utilisation of expert elements when choosing the adult education programme will provide end users with flexibility and security in the labour market, while employers will have qualified and well-educated human resources at their disposal.

Communication and implementation of LCG activities with employers will enable the alignment of qualifications with workplace demands and provide the individual with support in achieving sustainable employment. LCG conveys a message of personal responsibility, employability, opportunity making, dealing with unemployment and understanding the cause of unemployment. This will allow the Centres to link the target groups with employers and the entire learning and work related process will be based on cooperation and benefits of all stakeholders.

This measure will develop programmes suited to labour market needs and will also encourage participants to seek training for occupations that are more sought after in the labour market. Priority will be given to development and adoption of those programmes that efficiently prepare the active working age population for the labour market. . This should reduce unemployment in a particular area and increase the educational activity of the population. The unemployed would have easier access to employment and the employed would acquire new competencies, which would provide employers with a qualified workforce, depending on the current needs for their occupation.

Measure 1.1.8. Develop a model for bipartite cooperation between employers' associations and branch trade unions on LCG opportunities

How will the existing situation be changed by implementing the suggested measure?

Stakeholders will develop their skills for participating in social dialogue on LCG (in accordance with the principles of good practice) and enable the development and enhancement of competence centres through a systematic approach and continuing dialogue between branch trade unions and employers' associations, as well as through their bipartite cooperation (through the establishment of bipartite groups).

What developmental needs of the system will be met by implementing this measure?

The strengthened involvement of employers/employers' associations and workers/unions in the systematic processes of LCG will provide relevant access to information about the labour market, its structure, manner of functioning, employment trends, interaction between supply and demand, and interconnection (networking) of all stakeholders involved in the LCG process. It will also contribute to the greater involvement of small and midium-sized enterprises in the processes of LCG and competence centres.

Measure 1.1.9. Design and further develop LCG services in the workplace

How will the existing situation be changed by implementing the suggested measure?

Career guidance services in the workplace will be implemented in several directions: continuing

and systematic effort to raise individual awareness of the importance of career management; encouraging workers to value their own knowledge and skills through career guidance at the employer's or in the labour market; assessment of workers' knowledge in relation to the competencies required by the workplace, i.e. duties carried out in the workplace and creating a training programmes for individuals that do not meet the required standards. In order to enhance the employer's capacity for carrying out these activities, it is necessary to promote the exchange of experiences between employers in human resource management and encourage employer and union involvement in designing and implementing LCG programmes.

What developmental needs of the system will be met by implementing this measure?

Raising individual's awareness of the importance of managing one's own career through systematic access to information and active participation (via their representative organisations – employer/union associations) in the relevant processes of career guidance in the workplace.

GOAL 1.2 IDENTIFY THE ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL SERVICE PROVIDERS

There are several service providers currently operating in the Republic of Croatia (CES, qualified services and cooperatives in schools, competence centres, career centres at universities and their constituents, ASHE 's Central Application Office, adult education institutions (career centres, i.e. examination centres for validation of non-formal and informal learning - VNFIL) and other legal entities. However the role of particular LCG service providers is not clearly defined by the regulations.

Measure 1.2.1. Identify the role of service providers and their cooperation with employers

How will the existing situation be changed by implementing the suggested measure?

Regulations should clearly identify the role of each service provider and the type of cooperation with employers. Clearly identifying the role of institutions is a prerequisite for regulating the LCG system, which ultimately leads to improved LCG service provision, a stronger role of individual LCG service providers and the development of institutional activities. Connecting with the economic sector is vital because of labour market needs and the recognition and acquisition of required competencies.

What developmental needs of the system will be met by implementing this measure?

A clear distribution of responsibilities and roles of particular institutions in providing LCG services will provide the end user with a high quality service and will equally distribute the responsibilities and roles of individual institutions that work with certain target groups of users. Connecting with the economic sector will ensure more efficient provision of LCG services to users in accordance with the actual economic needs.

Measure 1.2.2. Develop a career guidance system for pupils that enables the development of CMS

How will the existing situation be changed by implementing the suggested measure?

The current school curriculum does not place sufficient emphasis on development of CMS, which are, alongside the basic skills and knowledge acquired during formal education, key to individuals' career development. These skills refer to the means of collecting and using information about oneself, education and the world of work, as well as skills required for making and implementing decisions and achieving career transitions (from education to work, from work to work etc.).

Developing a system that would enable acquisition of these skills and defining the responsibilities and roles of individual institutions in pupils' career guidance activities would facilitate career management and would raise awareness among individuals with regard to their own capacities, interests and values, as well as the opportunities provided by education and work.

What developmental needs of the system will be met by implementing this measure?

Introducing these topics in school curricula would enable teachers and expert associates to work on the development of CMS through regular teaching and special activities.

A well-developed support system for pupils in primary and secondary education would prevent possible subsequent social exclusion, unemployment, emotional, financial and other negative consequences that are the result of choosing inadequate education and failing to acquire the skills and knowledge required in the labour market.

Measure 1.2.3. Improve the career guidance system for pupils with developmental difficulties

How will the existing situation be changed by implementing the suggested measure?

Career guidance for pupils with developmental difficulties has been traditionally implemented by CES interdisciplinary expert team. Counselling is carried out at the end of the eighth grade and based on the Opinion of the career guidance service pupils may be given precedence or direct enrolment in the recommended programmes. Career guidance for pupils is a complex process that includes cooperation between different experts and should be carried out during the entire period of the pupil's education in order to align the education process with the pupil's difficulty and to guide the pupils towards areas that would allow them to develop and fulfil their potentials. Bearing in mind the CES limited capacity for providing this type of service and the fact that education professionals in primary and secondary schools have the opportunity to become well acquainted with the pupil's capacities over the years, efficiency, limitations and other "soft" skills, it is necessary to establish a system wherein schools would have a greater role and responsibility in the guidance process. Establishing an interdisciplinary interinstitutional committee for pupils with developmental difficulties at the local level would enable monitoring pupils throughout education and identifying their potential and limitations for the purpose of choosing a better career pathway, increasing the individual's inclusion in society and improving quality of life. Adjustment of assessment procedures for the purpose of assessing pupils with developmental difficulties and training of expert associates and other experts involved in working with children with developmental difficulties would improve the identification of the pupil's specific characteristics and capacities and would ultimately provide higher quality services.

What developmental needs of the system will be met by implementing this measure?

A well-developed support system for pupils with developmental difficulties would prevent subsequent social exclusion, unemployment, emotional, financial and other negative consequences that are the result of choosing inadequate education and failing to acquire the skills and knowledge required in the labour market.

Measure 1.2.4. Determine and improve activities of institutions in higher education: the Agency responsible for quality assurance in science and higher education and higher education institutions

How will the existing situation be changed by implementing the suggested measure?

It is necessary to determine activities of institutions that provide LCG services in higher education with legal regulations.

The agency responsible for quality assurance in science and higher education should develop activities of the Central Admissions Office - CAO at the information level that would allow applicants to make an informed decision, by including information on the quality and relevance

of study programmes with the provision of career information. The Agency should make available information relating to the relevance of study programmes (e.g. if a research on monitoring employability was conducted, at the university or external research, the CAO should make the research results available to students). Furthermore, the Agency should provide information on the quality of study programmes.

The activities of higher education institutions should also cover the services of RPL counselling (counselling on the process of recognition of prior learning). At the centralized level (at the rectorate), counsellors for RPL should provide insight to applicants into the possibilities of providing RPL on their constituents. The counsellors at the university will conduct workshops on preparing resumes and portfolios and inform applicants on colleges which offer certain qualification. For the implementation of RPL on the constituent, the information system is crucial: a person at the university sends the data to the constituent. If necessary, the applicant is given an opportunity to attend an additional course at the constituent, based on the course schedule, after which a professor carries out an evaluation in accordance with the standards and programmes. The institution develops services throughout the year in preparation for the next academic year.

What developmental needs of the system will be met by implementing this measure?

Determining the activities of individual institutions in providing LCG services through legal provisions is crucial for regulating the LCG system because it provides an institutional framework for the development of the system. Legal regulations will determine the existing activities and develop additional activities that will improve the LCG system.

The Central Applications Office already offers support to the applicants during the application procedure and enrolment in the first year of undergraduate and graduate studies, by providing information on conditions for enrolment into higher education institutions, application procedure rules and answers to the applicants' inquiries. For the purposes of this measure, the Agency should determine the existing activities of the provision of career information, but also provide information on the relevance and quality of the study programme. Such an approach will enable the applicants to provide an informed decision.

Higher education institutions will develop the services of RPL counselling (counselling on the process of recognition of prior learning). Since Croatia has already developed a RPL system, it is essential to provide RPL counselling in order to ensure the support to RPL system in higher education in the Republic of Croatia. Providing quality RPL counselling services aimed at the applicant will contribute to the success of the RPL system, which will enable faster acquisition of relevant qualifications in the labour market. In addition, the competencies that individuals already have will become more visible to employers.

Measure 1.2.5 Develop a system of LCG for workers / employers / trade unions

How will the existing situation be changed by implementing the suggested measure?

Develop access to a LCG services for all target groups in a way that provides accessible range of information, free of charges, on labour market needs and opportunities of the individual to manage one's own career. In general development of the LCG system, specifically develop institutional models connecting the CES, employers' associations and other business associations and trade unions, which will enable systematic access to information on trends in the labour market. At the moment, except for LCGC and some adult education institutions, there is no established system of LCG intended for the citizens, especially participants who wish to attend some of the adult education programmes. Realization of the proposed goal will establish a network of institutions that will establish and strengthen the offer of LCG at the local and regional levels.

What developmental needs of the system will be met by implementing this measure?

Establishing an institutional model for the provision of LCG services will lead to better connection of stakeholders in the system (institutions, trade unions, employers and workers) and

compliance of educational, formal, non-formal and informal programmes with the labour market. Stronger involvement of employers and workers and/or their organizations in the systematic processes of LCG will ensure the availability of relevant information on the labour market, its structure, the way it functions, on employment trends, interaction of supply and demand, interconnection (networking) of all stakeholders in the process of LCG.

GOAL 1.3 DEVELOP THE ROLE OF FORUM FOR LIFELONG CAREER GUIDANCE AS A STRATEGIC BODY THAT DELIBERATES FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF LCG AND MONITORS IMPLEMENTATION OF LCG SERVICES

Forum for Lifelong Career Guidance in the Republic of Croatia was founded on 24 March 2014 by the Decision of the Minister of Labour and Pension System as an interdepartmental body with the goal of ensuring effective coordination of participation of all relevant stakeholders in providing LCG through agreed roles, activities, responsibilities and continuous dialogue.

Measure 1.3.1. Strengthen the role of Forum for LCG as the body for coordination and cooperation

<i>How will the existing situation be changed by implementing the suggested measure?</i>
Forum carries out activities aimed at the coordination of activities and cooperation between stakeholders of the LCG system, thus achieving the necessary level of collaboration and cohesion among the various stakeholders of the labour market and improving LCG services for different user groups. In its work, it will develop new standards and procedures, using examples of good practices from the EU.
<i>What developmental needs of the system will be met by implementing this measure?</i>
Joint work of the members on regular periodic evaluation of priorities, goals and measures for the establishment and improvement of the LCG system in Croatia and proposing new measures will contribute to further improvement of the system's quality.

Measure 1.3.2. Establish cooperation with National Council for Development of Human Potential

<i>How will the existing situation be changed by implementing the suggested measure?</i>
Cooperation between NCDHP and Forum for LCG is suggested in order to propose harmonised policies. Since LCG and career management are an important part of human resource development, which is based on cooperation of all stakeholders in the education system, employment system and other stakeholders, through continuous dialogue and mutual provision of information between members of Forum and NCDHP, efficient coordination of stakeholders and collaboration in developing measures for harmonization of employment, education and LCG policies is ensured. In its work, NCDHP makes recommendations concerning the process of planning and developing human resources.
<i>What developmental needs of the system will be met by implementing this measure?</i>
NCDHP estimates, evaluates and harmonizes public policies, including the LCG policy, taking into account their impact on human resource development and achievement of strategic objectives and competitiveness of the Republic of Croatia. Cooperation between Forum for LCG and NCDHP enables more effective integration and harmonization of policies of

education, employment, LCG and regional development.

Measure 1.3.3. Establish collaboration with the Euroguidance Centre

How will the existing situation be changed by implementing the suggested measure?

The cooperation between Euroguidance Centre and Forum for LCG is suggested with the goal of coordinating activities and cooperation within the LCG system. Euroguidance is the European network of national centres to support LCG, and the main objectives of the network are to promote the European dimension in LCG and provide information on LCG and mobility for learning purposes. Both objectives are aimed at encouraging the international mobility of persons in education and training, and drawing attention to the wide range of methodologies and practices in other European countries.

What developmental needs of the system will be met by implementing this measure?

Joint work of the members on regular periodic evaluation of priorities, goals and measures for establishment and improvement of LCG system in Croatia and on proposing new measures will contribute to further improvement of the system's quality. Also, the inclusion of the Euroguidance Centre will contribute to the better harmonization of the Croatian system of LCG with the LCG systems of other EU countries, which will facilitate access to examples and implementation of good practice.

PRIORITY 2 ENCOURAGING LCG ACCORDING TO LABOUR MARKET AND ECONOMY NEEDS

GOALS:

- 2.1. Define the needs of the labour market / labour market analysis and use of data for LCG purposes
- 2.2. Develop LCG services in accordance to the needs of the labour market and the economy

GOAL 2.1 DEFINE THE NEEDS OF THE LABOUR MARKET / LABOUR MARKET ANALYSIS AND USE OF DATA FOR LCG PURPOSES

Explanation

Process of learning and acquiring qualifications lasts for several years and it is difficult to know with certainty what knowledge and skills employers will need in the future. For this reason it is extremely important to monitor and try to predict the future needs of the labour market.

Measure 2.1.1. Ensure the availability of information on labour market needs and projections of future labour market needs

How will the existing situation be changed by implementing the suggested measure?

The main goal is to make projections of employment by business activities in the Croatian economy and on the impact of increase/decrease of future employment on demand for occupations that are part of the 25 sectors defined by the Croatian Qualifications Framework Act. The information contain a projection of employment by economic sectors in a five-year period and analysis of impact of employment growth by economic sectors on demand for occupations

by the CROQF sectors at the level of occupation groups.

Based on the need for medium-term and long-term forecasts of the labour market in certain economic sectors MLPS established the CROQF portal that brings together all the relevant data on employment, unemployment and number of students of secondary and higher education programmes in one place. In this way, all users of the abovementioned portal can be aware of the labour market trends in order to predict trends in economic sectors and thus focus their career on growing branches of the economy.

What developmental needs of the system will be met by implementing this measure?

Providing an on-line platform and its further improvement will ensure the widespread availability of information on public services and public needs and provision of support and information for users and prospective service providers in the field of innovation.

Measure 2.1.2. Develop a system of Human resources record

How will the existing situation be changed by implementing the suggested measure?

Human resources record, as a further step in informatisation of data exchange among government institutions, will be a place to connect the key registers in the Republic of Croatia which describe position and career path of individuals in the world of education and work. Selected contents of various registers will be connected and special attention will be paid to the three basic statuses of the citizens: *employment, unemployment and inactivity*.

What developmental needs of the system will be met by implementing this measure?

The main beneficiaries of this Record will be government institutions, which will use each other's existing data in order to accelerate the exercise of rights and opportunities for individuals and institutions arising from development policies and will serve as a basis for drafting strategies, integrated policies and measures to allow monitoring of specific groups that are excluded from the labour market and education.

GOAL 2.2 DEVELOP LCG SERVICES ACCORDING TO THE LABOUR MARKET AND ECONOMY NEEDS

Measure 2.2.1. Ensure the availability of career guidance services to pupils during education, taking into account needs of the labour market and economy

How will the existing situation be changed by implementing the suggested measure?

Currently, pupils are usually given information and counselling services if they have some difficulties that limit their choice of occupation. Information on occupations, the world of work and employment opportunities, as well as opportunity for counselling, are not systematically provided or made available to other pupils. Development of a transparent system of Labour Market Information (LMI), which would be based on an ongoing analysis of necessary knowledge and skills and data of various relevant institutions, would ensure that pupils are informed in a timely manner and that the service is available to them. Improving access to career guidance services for pupils will result in pupils being better informed for making career decisions and, ultimately, enable them to make a choice of an occupation that is in accordance with their abilities, interests, values and needs of the labour market.

What developmental needs of the system will be met by implementing this measure?

Career guidance in the education system should be developed and strengthened because career development is a life-long process and because it is closely related to the learning and education of a person in the broadest sense, e.g. teaching young people how to learn, how to choose an occupation, manage a career and, in particular, to develop entrepreneurial competencies. Strengthening the education system to provide LCG services, as well as involving employers in education and other relevant partners, will develop a career guidance system in accordance with the needs of the labour market and economy, while the responsibility for the provision of

information and counselling to pupils will be distributed among all relevant stakeholders.

Measure 2.2.2. Develop IT infrastructures of LCG Centres and continuous development of e-Guidance services (web design, design of tools for self-assessment and other tools to improve CMS)

How will the existing situation be changed by implementing the suggested measure?

Implementation of traditional methods and techniques for providing information and counselling to pupils and introduction of e-services, in order for the various stakeholders to inform pupils about careers, education, occupations and the world of work throughout the pupils' education, will increase the willingness of pupils to choose occupations in demand on the labour market and enable the availability of information to pupils in a form and channel (e-services) appropriate for them. Informing pupils about the sought-after occupations and gender equality in the choice of occupation will reduce stereotypes about male or female occupations and will increase the number of pupils enrolled in the occupations of the future. Various forms of counselling (individual and group) to pupils who need the assistance will enable better preparation for the labour market and acquisition of CMS.

What developmental needs of the system will be met by implementing this measure?

Partnership approach will increase the quality of the provided service and allow the systems to operate in a connected way and to monitor the changes that occur in each system. Introduction of new technologies and channels used to provide information to pupils will free institutional capacities to provide information services and increase capacities for provision of individualized services. With the establishment of database, records and analysis systems in accordance with labour market needs, centres will be more open and accessible to the general public. IT connectivity of all stakeholders in the system who have databases and records at their disposal (Agency, CES, CPII), will enable centres to provide faster and better information via the web and other IT tools about labour market needs, but also on appropriate educational offers that respond to those needs. This will enable systematic and flexible provision of information to users at a lower cost.

Measure 2.2.3. Develop a model of traineeship, mentorship, apprenticeship and work trial for pupils and students and strengthening the role of mentoring

How will the existing situation be changed by implementing the suggested measure?

By exploring the world of work in primary and secondary schools and in higher education, pupils/students will be able to make more informed decisions about their career. Mentors of occupational practice should determine interests, abilities, desires, preferences and capabilities of students in order to determine an area of occupational practice that best suits each of them. Individual counselling is important, i.e. it is important to review job possibilities with a student who is referred to occupational practice and to discuss the expectations the student has. Mentors of occupational practice shall draft a list of companies where students carry out professional practice, i.e. a database of companies interested in having students come to perform practice, leaving open the possibility that students may themselves find a company to perform occupational practice with. Mentor concludes an agreement on occupational practice with employers on behalf of the college. Mentor also develops a plan for performing occupational practice, keeps records on the occupational practice completed by students and draws up reports on completed occupational practice.

What developmental needs of the system will be met by implementing this measure?

This measure will contribute to linking academic and business sectors, i.e. students and employers who need to have opportunities opened up for them for cooperation and mobility in terms of mentoring, occupational practice and employment. Occupational practice should be

closely connected with the study programme and conducted in such a way as to be a productive work experience for both student and employer. In this way, employers have the opportunity to find out about the competencies and capabilities of students during their studies and provide them with opportunity for employment in their company or institution after they complete their studies.

Measure 2.2.4. Develop LCG services for long-term unemployed, taking into account the needs of the labour market and the economy

How will the existing situation be changed by implementing the suggested measure?

Chances of finding employment diminish after a long period of unemployment and re-entering the labour market also becomes increasingly difficult. Among main obstacles to re-entering the labour market is the erosion of acquired skills. Therefore, it is necessary to further strengthen and improve the existing individualized approach implemented by CES, which would ensure the long-term unemployed person an in-depth individual assessment of the current situation (employability score, employment obstacles, review of past activities in finding a job) and direct them through counselling towards appropriate programmes for training and upgrading their skills and knowledge required on the labour market and inform the unemployed about the support offered at the national, regional and EU levels (EURES). The procedure will result in an offer designed for the specific needs of the long-term unemployed person and it combines services and measures offered by various organizations.

It is also necessary to develop models of work trials, traineeship, work training for long-term unemployed persons (especially young long-term unemployed) and persons with difficult access to the labour market.

What developmental needs of the system will be met by implementing this measure?

Establishment of partnerships between employers, employment services, social services and government units will ensure that the individual programme (offer) is suitable for the real needs of employers and workers. To this end, support services for employers will continue to be developed in order to facilitate the professional reintegration of the long-term unemployed, as well as the specialization and profiling of activation counsellors (through the ESF funds).

Measure 2.2.5. Improve LCG services for persons with disabilities

How will the existing situation be changed by implementing the suggested measure?

Persons with disabilities are a vulnerable group in the labour market that should be given special attention during mediation in employment and career guidance. Adoption of the Act on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities created the preconditions for further improvement of the system. It is the very activities of professional rehabilitation that are aimed at professional and vocational training, employment and work of persons with disabilities in professions or occupations where they will achieve the most favourable work performance with the lowest chance of further damage to their remaining work and general capabilities, where procedures of LCG play an important role. Professional rehabilitation services are performed by the Centres for professional rehabilitation with an individualized approach of an expert team.

What developmental needs of the system will be met by implementing this measure?

The establishment of partnerships between employers, employment services, social services and Centres for professional rehabilitation, as well as the education system, will ensure that the individual programme (offer) is suitable for the real needs of persons with disabilities. This will help persons with disabilities find their place in the labour market, in accordance with their capabilities recognized together with their career guidance counsellor.

Measure 2.2.6. Provide support to employers in human resources development and

strengthen the employability and adaptability of workers

How will the existing situation be changed by implementing the suggested measure?

Contribute to better education of employers and Human Resources Management Services for acquisition of knowledge in the field of human resources management by establishing centres for assessment. In order to preserve employment, services that provide assistance to employers and trade unions during company restructuring will be improved, and promoting and encouraging lifelong learning and career development will aid and motivate workers to improve their adaptability and employability in areas relevant to the economy, especially in the priority defined strategic documents.

What developmental needs of the system will be met by implementing this measure?

Harmonization of acquiring qualifications and skills with labour market needs and more flexible adjustment of strategic and legal measures aimed at LCG as a response to the imperatives of economic and social policy.

Measure 2.2.7. Strengthen the role of employers and trade unions in developing and maintaining quality standards of learning in the workplace

How will the existing situation be changed by implementing the suggested measure?

Encourage human resources development with active and permanent commitment of employers, trade unions and relevant institutions that care about human resources development, especially in the field of research of competencies by occupation, by implementing broader career counselling activities and identifying needs for the number and structure of qualifications.

What developmental needs of the system will be met by implementing this measure?

Significant involvement of employers and trade unions in relevant education policies, particularly in the LCG field, and strengthening their capacities.

Measure 2.2.8. Develop incentives for employers to provide increased investments in education of employees, development and implementation of occupational practice, and strengthening the role of mentoring for pupils and student

How will the existing situation be changed by implementing the suggested measure?

Numerous studies supported by statistical data on the labour market situation point to insufficient knowledge and skills of young people that can be acquired only through practical work (practice) during education. To further encourage employers to organize and acquire conditions for implementation of practice, it is necessary to encourage employers to participate in the mentoring system.

Development of incentives would encourage employer investments in education of employees and greater involvement of employers in implementation of practice. Employee education, practical training and mentoring represent a direct or indirect cost to the employer, so with regard to the role of employers in achieving the aims of LCG, it is necessary to structurally encourage employers to invest financial resources. A systematic approach to these measures could lead to significant development and realization of activities from the very definition of LCG and to development of education system in general.

What developmental needs of the system will be met by implementing this measure?

Significant involvement of employers in the education system will enable pupils and students to acquire practical knowledge and skills during their education and significantly improve their employability level after graduation. Such an approach would contribute to a stronger connection between education and business sectors in terms of mentoring, occupational practice and employment.

Measure 2.2.9. Develop incentive policies that will increase the involvement of adults in all levels of education

<i>How will the existing situation be changed by implementing the suggested measure?</i>
Defining quality incentives for individuals/employees/citizens would certainly contribute to significant involvement of adults in all levels of education and recognition of the value of education as a starting point for development of individual careers, and thereby to development of competitiveness and prosperity of the society. Perception of the public in this regard in Croatia is still very low, as shown by poor achievement of goals of the Lisbon agenda, i.e. by Croatia's significant lagging behind the EU average in number of persons involved in adult education. Extremely low public expenditure for this purpose (the majority through ALMP measures) and lack of quality incentives, primarily for citizens who would have built their own competitiveness through education, represent key issues that further favoured creation of such a situation.
<i>What developmental needs of the system will be met by implementing this measure?</i>
Development of incentives and ALMP measures would increase the involvement of adults in all levels of education.

PRIORITY 3 QUALITY ASSURANCE IN LIFELONG CAREER GUIDANCE SERVICES

Explanation

Currently, there is no work quality standard set for LCG counsellors in the education system, while they are developed in the employment system¹⁴. Furthermore, initial education of professionals who carry out LCG activities for end users varies significantly and the coverage of topics on this subject in individual study programmes is scarce and insufficient for development of competencies and skills needed to work in this area. Establishment of quality standards would ensure provision of quality services and uniform application of methods and techniques used in work with specific target groups. Also, procedures would be standardized and minimum conditions for implementation of quality services to entities that provide LCG services would be ensured.

GOALS:

- 3.1. Establish a quality assurance system in providing LCG services
- 3.2. Establish a quality assurance, monitoring and work relevance system of all service providers/service evaluation
- 3.3. Professionalization of LCG counsellors
- 3.4. Develop a monitoring and evaluation system in providing LCG services

GOAL 3.1 ESTABLISH A QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM IN PROVIDING LCG SERVICES

Measure 3.1.1 Establish a quality standards of LCG services

<i>How will the existing situation be changed by implementing the suggested measure?</i>
LCG services, except in the employment system, are provided to pupils with no established quality standards and clear guidelines, methods and techniques for working with the different target groups of users. Drafting a document with defined course of activity with specific groups of users, responsibilities, methods, techniques and tools would ensure the quality of provided

¹⁴ Quality Standards for the Career Guidance and Selection Services at the Croatian Employment Service, 2015

service, balance implementation of services by different experts and institutions and allow for monitoring customer satisfaction with the service provided. development of specialist study programme would enable initial education of professionals who carry out these activities at all levels of education, and development of training programs would enable continuous lifelong education of experts who work in this field.

What developmental needs of the system will be met by implementing this measure?

Quality standards of LCG services will provide quality of services provided to customers and enable development of services in line with users' needs, changes in the labour market and other relevant factors. Professionalization of counsellors, establishing quality standards, application of new developments and examples of best practices in the field of LCG for pupils would set the foundations for further development of the overall LCG system that would fit the needs of end users.

Measure 3.1.2 Establish a quality system within the LCG centres

How will the existing situation be changed by implementing the suggested measure?

A qualitative guarantee for the proper operation of LCG centres in terms of their fundamental purposefulness is ensured with the establishment of a quality assurance system. Quality assurance of LCG centres should achieve better connection between the choice of educational programmes and the labour market for each student, but also personal development of students as active citizens.

Accordingly, it is necessary to:

- define criteria for introduction of a quality system
- designate an accreditation body that would carry out licensing of future LCG centres
- define levels (gradation) of competence of LCG experts
- define tools for measuring LCG achievements
- create complete analytical information system that links all LCG elements (of all stakeholders)

What developmental needs of the system will be met by implementing this measure?

This measure will establish a quality LCG service to support individuals when choosing a programme or occupation according to their own capabilities, but also to current labour market needs. A quality system within the LCG centres will ensure better evaluation of non-formal and informal learning and establish an approach focused on the user.

GOAL 3.2 ESTABLISH A QUALITY ASSURANCE, MONITORING AND WORK RELEVANCE SYSTEM OF ALL SERVICE PROVIDERS/SERVICE EVALUATION

Measure 3.2.1 Establish operational structures for e accreditation procedure of LCG centres; determine criteria for quality and processes of continuous evaluation of their work

How will the existing situation be changed by implementing the suggested measure?

Currently, there is no system of accreditation for institutions that carry out LCG, which is necessary to enable evaluation of quality of their work and their employees in the future and, if required, to reward and award additional points to institutions that carry out LCG at different tenders. In addition, it is important to continuously evaluate the work of these centres, as well as professionally strengthen institutions that conduct the evaluation and quality control.

What developmental needs of the system will be met by implementing this measure?

Criteria for quality will ensure that all centres are of the same quality and harmonized for work

with the target groups and, therefore, all end-users will have the same opportunities.

GOAL 3.3 PROFESSIONALIZATION OF LCG COUNSELLORS

Measure 3.3.1 Professionalise the work of career guidance counsellors

How will the existing situation be changed by implementing the suggested measure?

LCG services are currently provided by experts with different educational profiles (usually psychologists, pedagogues and educational and rehabilitation specialists) who have different background knowledge and skills needed to work with pupils and other users. Development of occupational standards and qualification standards for career guidance counsellors would enable development of a curriculum for acquisition of qualification for occupation of career guidance counsellor.

Creating a system of continuous professional training for expert associates in schools, other educational staff (class teachers, teachers and other education professionals) and other experts would enable lifelong learning for experts and encourage professional preparedness of students. Experts educated in the field of LCG would improve the existing working methods and techniques and would continually adapt them to the needs of pupils. Cooperation with international institutions in the field of LCG and presentation of examples of good practice, as well as research in the field of LCG and monitoring new scientific findings, would enable continuous development of the entire LCG system of end users.

What developmental needs of the system will be met by implementing this measure?

Interdisciplinary approach to education of experts would enable the acquisition of necessary knowledge, skills and competencies for experts from various fields (labour market, education, psychology, social work, pedagogy, economy, rehabilitation, etc.) relevant for the provision of LCG services. Educated experts are the foundation of the development of services and methods, and the entire LCG system in the Republic of Croatia.

Measure 3.3.2 Develop Occupational and Qualification Standards for LCG counsellors and develop system of continuous training of LCG counsellors in adult education

How will the existing situation be changed by implementing the suggested measure?

To define learning outcomes and teaching content/topics that should be an integral part of the programme for licensing managers in adult education system, the competencies of LCG counsellors in adult education need to be clearly defined. In developing the programme for licensing managers in adult education system, competencies for LCG will be taken into account and content will be integrated into the programme. Manager in adult education plays a key role in the education processes in an institution (because he is also a expert manager). One of the key expert roles of a manager should be career guidance of participants in adult education programme, which contributes greatly to personal development of participants, depending on their capabilities, as well as to appropriate education in accordance with the current challenges of the labour market. It is also important to develop the competencies of counsellors to provide LCG services for people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. All LCG counsellors should be constantly trained to meet user needs.

What development needs of the system will be met by the measure?

This measure will strengthen the “knowledge triangle”, i.e. better connection of education with labour market needs, but also open up opportunities for participants of adult education programmes. The measure will also determine part of the programme for manager in adult education and part that relates to the provision of LCG service to the programme participants themselves. When legal requirements for licensing of managers in adult education are adopted, if

educational content for acquisition of competencies for LCG counsellors are an integral part of the programme for licensing managers, it will inevitably lead to better connection in service provision between education, LCG and labour market. Development of occupational standards and qualifications for career guidance counsellors will enable acquisition of qualifications and learning outcomes for that occupation, transfer of knowledge and skills to provide LCG services and development of a system of continuous training for career guidance counsellors. Continuous training will ensure quality of service, development of experts for career guidance in the adult education system and their interconnection.

GOAL 3.4 DEVELOP A MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEM IN PROVIDING LCG SERVICES

Explanation

Since the Strategy improves LCG system at all levels, it is important to regularly collect and analyse data on implementation of measures and interventions in order to obtain indicators of level of progress towards the set goals and achieved results. Through evaluation system, implemented interventions are evaluated in terms of adequacy of the measures, implementation and results achieved. The goal is to determine whether the interventions meet a series of internationally recognized criteria, such as efficiency, relevance, impact and sustainability. Monitoring and evaluation system should include changes in environment, i.e. unforeseen circumstances arising during implementation of measures in order to adapt measures to changed circumstances.

Measure 3.4.1 Develop a reporting system of institutions responsible for implementation to Forum for Lifelong Career Guidance

How will the existing situation be changed by implementing the suggested measure?

To ensure the continued implementation of activities related to LCG and of quality services, Forum for LCG will develop and adopt an Action Plan for implementation of the Strategy, identifying responsible institutions, deadlines for implementation and performance indicators, based on which institutions responsible for implementation of certain activities will prepare reports showing measures and activities undertaken with service users. This way, the Forum, as an interdepartmental body that brings together all stakeholders in the field of LCG, will get comprehensive insight into implementation of LCG services provided and, if necessary, propose a revision of goals and plans in order to improve the level of services provided to users.

What developmental needs of the system will be met by implementing this measure?

It will ensure continuity in implementation and enable systematic benchmarking of current activities and proposing new ones in order to improve the LCG system and services.

PRIORITY 4 RAISING AWARENESS OF THE NEED FOR LIFELONG CAREER GUIDANCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF CAREER MANAGEMENT SKILLS

Career Management Skills are skills that enable people to manage their own career development. They refer to the methods of collecting and using information about oneself, education and training opportunities and the world of work, as well as to skills required for

making and implementing decisions and achievement of career transitions (from education system into the world of work, from one job to another, etc.). Therefore, they are of great value to individuals in creation and implementation of life project where work, whether they are an employee or self-employed, has a central place. Services and tools to help citizens in using sources of data and information on possible career developments must be set in a manner that suits the user's needs. Consequently, it is necessary to raise awareness of citizens and conduct systematic provision of information to the public about the range of services that are carried out in the context of LCG.

GOAL 4.1 RAISE AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE ON THE IMPORTANCE OF LCG AND LABOUR MARKET TRENDS

Measure 4.1.1 Ensure availability of information and possibility of LCG for all target groups within adult education system

<i>How will the existing situation be changed by implementing the suggested measure?</i>
There is no uniform system of information availability on LCG at the level of the Republic of Croatia, especially in the field of adult education. Users will have available the information on labour market and general employment trends, labour market structure, the way the labour market works, interaction between supply and demand of the workforce, diversity of national, regional and local labour market, equality and diversity within an occupation as key factors in selection of adult education programmes. Without an objective insight into the state of things, participants cannot choose appropriate program in accordance with the labour market needs and their own capabilities. Special emphasis is on strengthening capacity of the centres to adapt educational programmes for persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. It is necessary to adapt the methods and techniques and existing instruments for testing/assessing persons with disabilities and members of other vulnerable groups.
<i>What developmental needs of the system will be met by implementing this measure?</i>
Participants will be better informed and will be able to make better decisions when choosing adult education programmes or areas in which they want to achieve improvement, regardless of whether it is a formal or informal form of education. This measure will facilitate a better connection between education and labour market.

Measure 4.1.2 Continuously organize, expand and improve campaigns and promotion activities that contribute to promotion of the role and importance of LCG

<i>How will the existing situation be changed by implementing the suggested measure?</i>
Concept and role of LCG is relatively new and unfamiliar for most of social partners at the national and local level, as well as for citizens of the Republic of Croatia. Potential users are not familiar with benefits and role that LCG has in today's global society that requires rapid reaction to changes around us. Because of the abovementioned facts, it is necessary to initiate and carry out promotion activities that will enable the availability of information for each individual and society as a whole on how LCG can have a positive impact and open up new opportunities for employment and personal development, for example, through job and career fairs, promoting occupations, encouraging projects aimed at improving the visibility of LCG, etc.
<i>What developmental needs of the system will be met by implementing this measure?</i>
Provision of information on LCG and LCG itself provide information to individuals on opportunities in education and employment, changes of occupation, qualifications available to them and skills and competencies they possess, which increases job search activity and provides lifelong learning. In addition, this measure will ensure increased provision of information to

potential students about the possibilities of internal and international mobility.

Measure 4.1.3 Raise awareness about LCG and labour market trends

How will the existing situation be changed by implementing the suggested measure?

Raise awareness of the need to make full use of existing potential of society and through career guidance activities for pupils, students, employed and unemployed, employers and trade unions, actively encourage the choice of those careers that a person has a predisposition and interest for, but which, on the other hand, provide better employability in the framework of the strategic areas of economic development of the country. In this respect strengthen the roles of relevant stakeholders, including employers' associations, trade unions and education system in relation to CES, which still bears the majority of these activities in schools, for example, by proposing and participating in development of programmes for entrepreneurs with a focus on understanding positive effects in daily operations of companies since the introduction of lifelong learning and LCG, especially in the area of innovation, research and development activities and by encouraging development and education of trade union structures on the meaning of LCG and opportunities for workers. Special emphasis is placed on raising awareness on the importance of developing *entrepreneurial competencies* as an impetus of the entire economy, as well as a method for creating new jobs and overcoming unemployment.

What developmental needs of the system will be met by implementing this measure?

Developed LCG system between the social partners, employers and workers (employees) will enable a more systematic approach to managing one's own career and raising awareness of LCG in the labour market and an adequate response to the needs and market trends.

X. MONITORING/EVALUATION

In preparing a Draft Strategy for Lifelong Career Guidance in the Republic of Croatia 2016-2010, the highest level of involvement of all relevant stakeholders of the labour market and education was achieved. It is clear that in the Republic of Croatia, there is an consensus on the need to establish a system of LCG, as well as a need for improvement of existing examples of good practice in the Republic of Croatia, with the intention of achieving priorities and objectives arising from the European and national requirements.

Objectives and measures place an emphasis on different target groups and on different types of guidance and support services for pupils, students, doctoral candidates, post-doctoral candidates, unemployed and employed in order to increase employability and development of CMS and on support services in human resources management aimed at employers, in particular in conditions of restructuring.

Monitoring and evaluation of interventions in the field of LCG is a key prerequisite in order to determine actual effectiveness and create foundations for further planning of the same. Therefore, it is important to determine whether interventions have achieved their goal of an evidence-based and economically rational approach in relation to the invested funds.

Systematic evaluation enables possible redesigns of measures and services if any prove ineffective or inadequately targeted and, therefore, the part that specifies them is flexible and subject to change.

The Strategy defines main challenges, priorities and objectives of activities based on which the Operational Implementation Plan will be drafted for a period of two years and it will elaborate in detail a list of interventions, as well as a list of measures and activities to respond to

identified challenges, taking into account the implementation criteria and deadlines, indicators, sources of financing, users, institutions responsible for certain actions, procedures for monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the measures undertaken.

Complete monitoring of implementation activities is entrusted to the Forum for LCG¹⁵, as an interdepartmental coordinating body, which will, based on the annual reports of all institutions responsible for the implementation of measures, evaluate the implementation and propose amendments for the subsequent period. Representatives of relevant ministries and agencies, CES and social partners are participating in the operation of the Forum.

¹⁵ The Forum was founded by the Decision of the Minister of Labour and Pension System on 24 March 2014.