

Preparation of the 2010 Joint Report on the implementation of the Education and Training 2010 work programme

CROATIA

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CHAPTER 1: KEY COMPETENCES FOR LIFELONG LEARNING AS PART OF COHERENT AND COMPREHENSIVE LIFELONG LEARNING STRATEGIES (MAX. 10 PAGES)

QUESTION 1

In what concrete ways has your country developed its provision for Key Competences since 2006? Has there been any link to your country's lifelong learning strategy? Which actors have been involved? What use was made of the European framework and the work of the cluster on key competences (if possible, please provide concrete examples)?

In what concrete ways has your country developed its provision for Key Competences since 2006?

The overall framework for development of education in Croatia is the **Education Sector Development Plan 2005-2010**¹. Its focus is on encouraging development towards the knowledge-based society and economy, in line with the EU Lisbon Strategy. The Action plan for the implementation of the *Education Sector Development Plan 2005-2010 for 2009-2010* was adopted in December 2008. The Action plan envisages introduction of the system of indicators for measuring the level of harmonisation of the education system in Croatia with the ones in the EU member states.

The Education Sector Development Plan 2005-2010 has been largely promoted in the school year 2006/2007 with 56 plenary sessions and 542 workshops for the school principals and teachers. The objective of the plenary sessions and workshops was to present the changes that the education system was confronting in terms of shift from the content-based to the competence-based education. More particularly, the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on Key Competences for lifelong learning (2006/962/EC) was presented.

The new **Primary and Secondary Education Act** (Official Gazette 87/08) has been adopted in 2008. The new Act gives the legal framework for the enhancement of quality in education. As it is stated in the new Act, it is among the basic goals of education to ensure a systematic approach to teaching, stimulating and enhancing pupils with basic academic, lifelong learning and vocational competences, to equip them for living and working in a social and cultural context which is changing in accordance with the demands of the market economy, modern information and communication technologies and scientific developments and achievements. Finally, according to the new Act, it is crucial to render pupils capable for lifelong learning.

In the **Strategy for the Development of the National Curriculum for Preschool, General Compulsory and Secondary School Education** developed in 2007 the new approach to teaching has been promoted. It is characterised by the shift from the idea of knowledge transfer to that of development of competences. The quality of education based on the competences development is set as a goal and a principle of Croatian education policy. The Strategy is a developmental document open to changes and improvements depending on the needs and developmental tendencies in the education area, as well as on the various studies and evaluation results, collected and developed by the NCEAE, Institute for the Social Researches and other bodies. The Strategy recognises the fact that the new changeable society and market economy require the ability for constant acquisition of new knowledge

¹ Education Sector Development Plan 2005-2010 was created by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports and adopted by the Government of the Republic of Croatia in June 2005

and skills of adjusting to changes. They cannot be acquired through a traditional education system which functions as a transfer vehicle and is oriented towards the knowledge of facts.

Strategy for the Development of the National Curriculum for Preschool, General Compulsory and Secondary School Education provided the basis for the creation of the **National Curriculum Framework**. The new competence-based draft National Curriculum Framework includes all the key competences recommended by the European Reference Framework on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning: communication in the mother tongue, communication in foreign languages, mathematical competence, competences in science and technology, digital competence and more transversal competences such as learning to learn, social and civic competences, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, cultural awareness and expression. The document introduces the goals and values of education, the key competences that pupils must acquire through preschool, primary and secondary education, as well as vocational competences for the secondary-school-level vocations. The standards for the competences of the educators and teachers, as well as school principals and advisors are also being developed. The National Curriculum Framework corresponds to European standards, especially regarding VET, and serves as the basis for the national curricula for preschool education, primary obligatory education and general secondary education, as well as for all other required documents and handbooks. The Draft text of the National Curriculum Framework was developed in 2008 and then published on the website of the Ministry of Sciences, Education and Sports (MoSES) (www.mzos.hr). All stakeholders including the individuals (teachers, pupils, parents, scientists, citizens) were invited to participate with their comments in the publicly open discussion. The comments are being taken into consideration and the finalisation of the National Curriculum Framework is envisaged in the course of 2009. The New School Curriculum Framework (2008/2009) for the preschool, primary and secondary school education will be based on the National Curriculum Framework and will accordingly comprise all the Key Competences.

Has there been any link to your country's lifelong learning strategy?

In March 2004 The Government of the Republic of Croatia and the National Council for Competitiveness adopted “**55 recommendations for the growth of the Croatian competitiveness**”, and highlighted four key national strategic objectives:

1. Realisation of the sustainable growth of GDP;
2. Reduction of unemployment;
3. Improvement of the quality of life;
4. Increase in the level of community involvement.

In this document it is recognised that the attainment of these objectives is based on education for growth and development. Education will contribute to the growth of competitiveness if the following is attained:

- increasing the level of education of the population,
- constant modernising of the contents and methods of education at all levels of the education system, and the orientation toward the development of basic competences,
- establishing a system of evaluation and self-evaluation of the quality of educational processes and outcomes,
- increasing the allocations to education by the employers and the state,
- more involvement in the processes of education and learning (starting with the preschool system).

The document provided the basis for the development of the Education Sector Development Plan 2005 - 2010, Croatian National Educational Standards and National Curriculum Framework.

On its way to the European family of the «knowledge-based society», Croatia accepts lifelong learning as a basis of its whole education system, for the purpose of realizing and improving permanent employability and active citizenship.

Croatian **Vocational Education and Training Development Strategy** has been adopted in 2008 and the **Act on Vocational Education and Training** was adopted (Official Gazette 30/09) in 2009. (see question 10) The Act on Vocational Education and Training defines the key competence as a set of knowledge and skills necessary to meet basic needs, developing social cohesion, democratic society and employment. The Act also states that the main goal of vocational education and training is to enable pupils to acquire key competences as well as vocational competences. In addition the Act defines sector councils as well as the National VET Council. The sector councils will define standards for different occupations and contribute to the development of curriculum for VET occupations.

The **Strategy for Adult Education** and an Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for Adult Education were adopted by the Government of the Republic of Croatia in 2004. (see question 12). The methodology for the development of the training programmes in adult education has been developed. The training programmes for adults should be compatible with the future Croatian Qualifications Framework (CROQF). (see question 9). The training programmes are competence-based and indicate the learning outcomes that a learner should have achieved by the end of the training programme. A further intention in designing the programmes in this way is to lay the foundation for their transformation into qualifications that could also be obtained on a credit basis, including through the recognition of prior experiential learning in the future.

Which actors have been involved?

The Key stakeholders that participate in the development of all strategic documents are the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports (MoSES), Education and Teacher Training Agency (ETTA), Agency for Vocational Training and Education (AVET), Agency for Adult Education (AAE), National Centre for External Assessment of Education (NCEAE), Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE), Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship, Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts, Croatian Chamber of Economy, various committees comprised of stakeholders representatives and education institutions with their associations.

What use was made of the European framework and the work of the cluster on key competences (if possible, please provide concrete examples)?

Representatives of the Republic of Croatia are actively involved in the work of few clusters, particularly in the Key Competences - Curricular Reform Cluster, set up in 2006 to assist in the implementation of the Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning, adopted by the European Parliament and the Council in December 2006². Throughout a series of PLAs seminars and meetings a wide range of policy and implementation issues relevant for achieving the Work Programme Education and Training 2010 has been addressed. PLAs were held in Belgium, Flanders (2007), Hungary (2007), Greece (2007) and Austria (2008). The focus of these four PLAs has been on the implementation of key competences and in particular the cross-curricular or transversal key competences (learning to learn, social and civic, initiative taking and entrepreneurship, cultural awareness and expression). In April, 2008, a joint seminar was held with the Teachers and Trainers cluster. The cluster also participated in a PLA on Adult Literacy (Dublin 2008). Member States'

² Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning (OJ L 394/30.12.2006.) 394
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/sit/en/oj/2006/l_39420061230en00100018.pdf.

experts have looked into the policies and measures in national contexts that are needed to enable schools and other learning organisations to support the development of key competences among young people. During the Cluster meetings and PLAs conclusions and recommendations have been developed.

Working programme „Education and Training 2010“, European Reference Framework on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning, reports with conclusions are translated into Croatian language and delivered to different stakeholders in different sectors of education system as highly valuable tool for understanding of key features and directions for the development of education system.

Documents, materials and learning lessons developed in the KC Cluster are published on the website of the ETTA (www.azoo.hr/projekti). The use of this material is highly recommended from the policy level to the operational as a tool for individual reflection of the advisors and teachers on their own everyday working life and pedagogical practice.

QUESTION 2

How is each of the eight key competences (Mother tongue; Foreign languages; Maths, science and technology; Digital competence; Learning to learn; Social and civic competence; Initiative taking and entrepreneurship and Cultural awareness and expression) included in (i) the national framework curriculum (or equivalent document, including for example at the regional level) for compulsory education, and (ii) for VET?

Key competence	General education (primary, lower and general upper secondary education)	Vocational education and training
Mother tongue	Included within formal subject, through cross-curricular themes, through extra-curricular activities, with external actors - in cooperation with cultural institutions, city libraries, theatres, music halls, centres for cultural education, museums etc.	The same as for general education.
Foreign languages	Included within formal subject, through cross-curricular themes, through extra-curricular activities, with external actors – schools for foreign languages, through using of the <i>European portfolio of foreign languages</i> . In addition, the MoSES has introduced the programme of early foreign language acquisition. Since the beginning of the school year 2005/2006 all primary school pupils of the first four grades have been included in the programme of early foreign language acquisition and over 60% of pupils learn a second foreign language in the next four grades of primary school.	Included within formal subject, through cross-curricular themes, through extra-curricular activities, with external actors – schools for foreign languages.
Maths, science and	Included within formal subject, through cross-curricular themes, through extra-curricular activities, with external actors – regional and national competitions organised by the ETTA in	Included within formal subject, through cross-curricular themes, through extra-curricular activities, with external actors –

technology	cooperation with the professional associations.	regional and national competitions organised by the ETTA and AVET.
Digital competence	Included within formal subject in higher classes of the primary school, through extra-curricular activities, with external actors.	The same as for general education.
Learning to learn	Included through curricular and cross curricular activities by active inclusion of the pupils in the learning process and in the projects of the real community social problem solving.	The same as for general education.
Social and civic competence	National curriculum for human rights and democratic citizenship education themes from the preschool to primary and secondary school education. Possibilities of cross-curricular activities and extracurricular real social problem solving. Moreover, annual school projects showcase at local and national level is organised by the ETTA and the MoSES. Each project includes interdisciplinary skills such as: reading, discussion, writing, analysing graphs, problem solving in small groups, cooperative learning techniques, role play, studying the laws and Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, writing official letters and applications, etc. The students systematically study the problem, document it and draw up a plan for solving the problem. Parents and people from the local community who can help in solving the problem are involved in the realisation of the project.	National curriculum for human rights and democratic citizenship education themes from the preschool to primary and secondary school education. Possibilities of cross-curricular activities and extracurricular real social problem solving.
Initiative taking and entrepreneurship	In the frame of the National curriculum for human rights and democratic citizenship education the module of the projects for the community social problems solving has been developed. Projects are based on research of the selected problems and solution of the problem on the base of related law and real entrepreneurial possibilities.	Included as cross-curricular activity and elective program: ECO NET project, training firms in VET schools.
Cultural awareness and expression	Cultural field of education is composed from the music education, art education, media education, physical education, technical education, and different projects between schools and theatres, museums and other cultural institutions. Cultural education is a part of the school curriculum for all pupils. People from all backgrounds and locations do access cultural experiences within the education system. Within formal subject, Through cross-curricular themes (<i>arts, music, physical and health education</i>) Through cross-curricular	Cultural education is a part of the school curriculum for all pupils. Possibilities of cross-curricular activity. Cultural field of education is composed from the music education, art education, media education, physical education, technical education, and different projects between schools

	themes.	and theatres, museums and other cultural institutions
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QUESTION 3

By what means does your country seek to support schools and teachers (in compulsory education and VET) to ensure that *all* young people leaving compulsory education have developed these competences to a level that equips them for adult life?

The National Programme of Measures for the Implementation of Compulsory Secondary Education has been introduced in 2007 and the campaign “Secondary School Education for All” followed. The National Programme was developed by the MoSES on the basis of the Feasibility Study conducted by the Institute of Social Science “Ivo Pilar” and the Institute of Public Finance. The objectives established in the Programme are as follows: to increase the number of young persons enrolled in secondary education, to create the preconditions for their better social inclusion, especially for young individuals with special needs, to create better conditions of living and education, to improve the working conditions of teachers, to define the tasks of the relevant bodies of state administration and of public institutions, to enhance cooperation in the fields of labour and education, to harmonize the Croatian education system with the European education system, to create the preconditions for lifelong learning.

By extending obligatory secondary education, the state takes on the responsibility of providing for pupils’ education until the completion of secondary school, that is, at least up to the point of receiving an initial qualification or occupation, which provides the pupil with professional competence and the administrative prerequisites for further education.

The compulsory secondary school education has been introduced gradually through a number of measures, such as constructing and equipping a number of schools, improving the material status of the teachers who will take on the additional workload due to the implementation of the project, securing the budgetary funds for the financing of free textbooks, free transportation and free housing in student dormitories. The MoSES has offered a model, the funds and mechanisms that would make secondary education accessible to everyone.

The Government’s project of introducing free textbooks in the school year 2007/2008 is one of the largest projects that have ever been carried out in Croatia’s school system. It presents an incentive measure aimed at bestowing upon all the pupils in the Republic of Croatia the constitutionally granted equal right to education and providing support to parents in catering for education of their children. The value of the project lies in the fact that the MoSES supplied all primary school pupils with completely new textbooks (419), which have been prepared in compliance with the new Primary School Curriculum, adopted in August 2006. Textbooks have been distributed to 2.440 schools (including the branch schools), 452.000 pupils, 24.000 classes, and total of 8.648.000 books.

The Act on Primary and Secondary Education Textbooks (Official Gazette, 36/06) that came into force in 2006 regulates the publication of textbooks. The Act allows teachers to independently choose textbooks among those approved by the MoSES. The enforcement of the Act for the first time prescribed the total number of three textbooks per subject (those that

teachers and educators mostly opted for). Along with the three chosen textbooks, teachers can choose three additional newly approved textbooks.

The Act has for the first time permitted the withdrawal from the market of those textbooks with inaccurate and outdated information, as well as those that are not in accordance with the curriculum and the Textbook Standard (Official Gazette, 7/07).

The Act has also addressed the issue of the conflict of interest, regulating that authors of textbooks cannot be the employees of the MoSES, AVET, ETTA, or NCEAE, who are in a position to influence the textbook selection.

The Act on Amendments and Supplements to the Textbook Act (Official Gazette, 141/06) was adopted in 2006. It regulates the financing of the textbooks for compulsory education from the state budget. The Textbook Standard, adopted in 2007, among other things, foresees the long-term use of textbooks and prescribes the licences for publishers, as well as high-quality textbooks.

QUESTION 4

What are the current structures for ensuring that all adults have opportunities to develop their key competences set out by the Recommendation?

The Adult Education Act (Official Gazette 17/07) recognizes adult education as an integral part of the Croatian education system, thus enabling anyone who had left the formal education system for any reason to re-enter the system and continue his or her education without any limitations. Under the vertical mobility principle, these people are given a chance not only to return to primary school and receive their initial qualification, but to receive secondary and tertiary education as well.

The by-laws for the implementation of the Adult Education Act: By-law on Standards and Specifications in Adult Education Institutions, By-law on the Contents, Form and Method of Keeping Andragogical Documentation, By-law on Public Certificates in Adult Education and By-law on Records in Adult Education Institutions (Official Gazette 129/08) are the foundation for the development of adult education system in Croatia. For the first time the by-law on Standards and Specifications in Adult Education Institutions provides legal framework for foreign languages programmes to be recognised as a formal education programmes.

In line with the Accession Partnership, the Government of the Republic of Croatia together with the European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities has prepared Joint Inclusion Memorandum (JIM). The document was signed in May 2007. In May 2008 Joint Assessment of the Employment Policy Priorities of the Republic of Croatia (JAP) was prepared and signed by Government of the Republic of Croatia, and the European Commission, Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. In both documents adequate attention is given to adult education and lifelong learning as factors for improving social inclusion and enhancing employability. Therefore appropriate measures are taken to improve adult education system, especially through Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance-IPA (established by the EU Council Regulation 1085/2006).

QUESTION 4.a

What, if any, are the current adult target groups and the specific provisions put in place for them?

The Government of the Republic of Croatia approaches adult education with inter-ministerial collaboration of all relevant ministries, with the MoSES at the helm. A number of programmes implemented by various ministries and institutions targets different groups of adults. The specific target groups include: unemployed persons, Homeland War veterans, illiterate persons, young people with inadequate education, disabled persons, victims of family violence, young adults, adults without primary or secondary education, senior citizens, adults with special needs, minority groups, women, etc. Among the great number of various initiatives, the following could be mentioned as examples of good practice: the Programme for the Professional Training and Employment of Croatian Veterans (includes vocational training and retraining for a known or unknown employer) by the Ministry of the Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity, the Education for Entrepreneurship Project by the Ministry of the Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship, the Programme of Education for Employment by the Croatian Employment Service.

Since 2003 the project "For a Literate Croatia: the Way to a Desirable Future" continues funding of elementary education for adults, as well as acquiring of first occupation. The project targets adults age between 15 and 50 without elementary school. The project was recently reviewed under Project CADRS 2004 "Adult Learning" and the new curriculum proposal has been developed. The revised curriculum will adopt a functional literacy approach to defining literacy and it concentrates more on content, learning outcomes and key competences.

The Act on State Subsidy for Education and Training (Official Gazette 109/07.) provides a tool through which employers can lower the costs of the education and training of their employees. Expenses recognized by the Act are: tuition fees for seminars, conferences, workshops, trainings and specialisations both in Croatia and abroad, the costs of supporting materials and teachers.

In the year 2008 the AAE has started the project "Investment in Education for the Jobs in Short Supply" with the purpose of harmonising the requirements of the labour market with the educational structure in three Croatian counties. The project target group is the working age population interested in education for the occupations that are defined as jobs in short supply by the Croatian Employment Service and its regional offices.

IPA Operational programme Human resources development includes certain target groups such as: women, unemployed young people, older workers and other vulnerable groups.

QUESTION 4.b

What national data are available on the participation of adults (and any adult target groups identified as priority) in provision designed to develop their key competences?

Under the CARDS 2004 Adult Learning project database is established within the AAE. Methodology for data collection in adult learning was developed relating to programmes (formal and non-formal), providers and qualifications. Data on participants in adult learning, as well as programmes, providers and qualifications on offer will be gradually obtained. Concept for non-public and public online availability of database, as well as the corresponding elements necessary for the sustainability of the database, is identified.

QUESTION 4.c

In designing the provision for adults, what collaboration is in place with representatives of other policy areas, social partners and other stakeholders?

In designing different provisions the collaboration is moved to a next level forming true partnership with all social partners.

It is primarily embodied in the structure of the Adult Education Council, which consists of representatives of ministries, employers, unions and education institutions. Its main task, as an expert and advisory body to the Croatian Government, is monitoring the development of adult education and proposing measures for its enhancement. The Council also proposes funding for adult education programmes from the state budget.

In order to shape and promote provisions for adults different working group are formed after consultation with relevant ministries, professional organizations and other stakeholders. Good example are Sector Councils which are tripartite bodies composed of the representatives of social partners, economy/employers' representatives, faculties and schools.

QUESTION 5

How have curricula, statements of teacher competence requirements, or equivalent guidelines, for (a) initial and (b) in-service teacher education been developed to ensure that teachers are equipped to implement a competence-based approach (e.g. the teacher as co-constructor or facilitator of learning, team teaching, collaboration between teachers and parents, participation in school development, formative assessment techniques, and self-directed professional development)? Have any specific measures been taken in the area of VET teachers and trainers?

In accordance with the Primary and Secondary Education Act (Official Gazette 87/08), the National Education Standard for the Primary and Secondary Education, the Act on Vocational Education and Training (Official Gazette 30/09) the continuous professional education and training are compulsory.

Implementation of the new National Curriculum Framework, based on competences, requires a change of approach to teaching and learning, and to teacher training. ETTA in cooperation with the university experts and experts from NGO's is developing a new concept of the compulsory teacher training.

Professional supervision is organised for the teacher beginners during their first working year. With the successful completion of the introduction programme teachers need to pass the state exam organised by the ETTA.

ETTA provides an annual catalogue with the compulsory trainings offered to the teachers. Specialised trainings at the national and regional level are organised for the teachers' regional coordinators (teacher trainers) to bring them familiar with the changes in different fields of the education system, with the new methods of active teaching and learning, with the new modules of the curriculum and other educational topics.

Continuous professional education of teachers is offered at the county level by **Teacher Councils** founded for each subject or cross-curricular subject such as democratic citizenship. The County Teacher Councils' meetings are valuable tool for exchanging of good practice and individual approaches to teaching, the teachers' critical reflection of their own pedagogical practice and for providing support in solving of different problems arising in changeable educational practice. A network of County Teacher Councils was set up in 2006.

Teacher Council coordinators are excellent and experienced teachers who have obligation to transfer information and train the teachers' members of the County Council for the

competences they achieved at the specialised trainings at the national level. They are the teachers who understand the new approach to teaching and accept the new teaching paradigm. Finally they provide professional assistance for teachers who need it. Accordingly, they have less teaching hours and are additionally paid for their organisational activities.

There are many excellent teachers in Croatian schools who have been learning and undergoing professional training during their work. Many of them finished various forms of additional training in the country or abroad. Quality changes in the Croatian education system would not be possible without their knowledge and efforts. It is the Teacher Council's task to identify individuals who stand out in their work and recommend their methodologically shaped experience that has been photo-documented with examples of good practice to other teachers.

ETTA is responsible to organise conferences and workshops based on a topic chosen by the schools themselves. Plenary sessions are provided by the representatives of the MoSES, ETTA, and NCEAE or by individual university professors, practitioners and other experts. By collecting information on the difficulties that schools are faced with, ETTA has become familiar with teachers' needs and it therefore participates in the planning and enforcing of professional training in cooperation with the MoSES, faculties, professional associations, NGOs.

Specialised trainings are offered by the ETTA to the principals of the primary and secondary schools and to the most successful teachers promoted in teacher mentors and teacher advisors who have, accordingly, higher salaries.

One of the core tasks of the AVET is the organization and implementation of in-service training for vocational teachers. The in-service training plan is structured according to teachers' target groups and educational sectors. There are two main types of in-service training of vocational teachers - strengthening of competences in the teachers' specialized field of work, and strengthening of competences in the field of didactics, methodology, psychology and pedagogy. The in-service training also helps in strengthening teachers' competences for the implementation of all VET system development reforms.

Special attention was given to increasing effectiveness in education management through providing training opportunities for principals of preschool institutions, primary and secondary schools and student dormitories. A Committee for the Development of a Curriculum for the In-service Training of Principals of Primary and Secondary Schools was formed in 2007. The Committee has developed the Principals' Training Programme and the Draft Proposal for the Implementation of the Principals' Training Programme with the goal of developing and improving the professional competences of principals, with special emphasis on school system organisation and management.

Teachers' training programme for the VET teachers has been designed in the framework of the CARDS 2003 project: Upgrading VET Schools - Establishing Centres of Excellence, under the first component: Modernisation of the VET system and professional education of VET teachers. The Programme of initial education and training and the Programme of continuous professional development, established under the first project component are based on competences, interdisciplinarity, multi-funtionality, new approach to teaching, orientation towards the pupils, cooperation between colleagues, creativity, individual approach, flexibility of modular curricula, combination of the theoretical and the practical work and self-development.

The Vocational Education and Training Development Strategy (2008-2013) states the following objectives:

- to develop the mechanisms for monitoring the VET teachers' professional training and development by the end of 2010,
- to create the curriculum for VET teachers' professional training and development in the first half of 2011,
- to establish the standards and qualifications for the VET teachers by the end of 2012,
- to create the curriculum for VET teachers' education in the first half of 2013.

QUESTION 6

What approaches (including new ways to organise learning) does your country take to promote the acquisition of transversal key competences in compulsory education and VET (in particular learning to learn, social and civic competence, initiative taking and entrepreneurship, and cultural awareness and expression)?

The Strategy for the Development of the National Curriculum for Preschool, General Compulsory and Secondary School Education (2007) is competence-based and it promotes the acquisition of all key competences including the transversal ones. The following is stated in the Strategy:

Adapting to the socio-cultural and other changes and tendencies in the contemporary society development clearly demonstrates the need for changes in education. Priority is given to those relating to the development and acquisition of basic competencies, which are defined in the European competency framework and are being introduced in the respective national curricula of all the EU member countries. These are the linguistic and communicational (mother tongue and foreign languages), mathematical, IT-related, scientific, entrepreneurial, cultural awareness, social and civil competencies which allow for a responsible and efficient involvement and creative action in changeable socio-cultural conditions. The new demands in the field of education are not oriented solely towards increasing pupils' success rates, but also towards the need to render pupils capable of facing a changing world and to acquire competencies in contemporary education areas. This reflects itself in the need for the extension of general compulsory education. Acquisition of a secondary school diploma or a university degree can no longer guarantee absolute competence or proficiency to efficiently perform professional, civil or family roles and tasks. If one is to be professionally involved in the labour market and in the life of a community, one should be highly motivated and capable of constant learning. Contemporary education, whose goal is a democratic and knowledge-based society, demands from an individual to be a complete and responsible person who will spare no efforts for socio cultural advancement. There is both a need and an obligation to direct the education of children and youth to those values that aim at preserving national, regional and local cultural heritage, as well as at affirming the historical and cultural legacy in one's personal life and surroundings. This educational goal requires a concept of systematically rendering youth more susceptible to others and to their own personal environment, to a wider context of living marked by pluralism of cultures and religions, a multi-linguistic society and diversity of moral values. It requires competencies which facilitate cohabitation and mutual understanding. Therefore, the youth needs to be taught and rendered capable for life in their local community as well as in a wider one. The education system in the Republic of Croatia needs to contribute to a faster economic growth, to social interconnection, to the democratic development of society and to a faster and more successful integration of Croatia into the European Union.

The most efficient way for the development of the transversal key competences is in compulsory democratic citizenship topic included cross-curricularly at all levels of education as well as an optional subject. Moreover, annual school projects showcase at local and national level is organised. Presented projects are evaluated by a committee comprised of judges, scientists, journalists and important public persons. Projects of the community social

problems solving are based on the solving the real but small social problems. The problems may be connected with every possible significant problem from which local community is suffering. (For example: lack of the school playground facilities, lack of the traffic signals around the school, lack of the space for free time activities in the school or in the local community, lack of the facilities for the pupils with difficulties, entrepreneurial projects, preserving of the cultural heritage, creative cultural solutions, intercultural projects and so on).

The AVET is working on adaptation of the vocational education and training system to the needs of the employers (economy, public/state sector), individuals, higher education system and the society as a whole. It tries to do this by linking together all the education system stakeholders into Sector Councils. Sector Councils are tripartite bodies composed of the representatives of social partners, economy/employers' representatives, faculties and schools. The Sector Councils are run by the AVET. Some of the activities of the Sector Councils are: proposing educational sectors, proposing occupations within each educational sector, proposing qualifications within each profession or among professions, defining the competences important for each qualification, proposing a network of programmes, pointing out regional development particularities to be addressed by the educational system etc.

QUESTION 7

How is summative and formative student assessment geared to develop key competences? Please explain what concrete guidelines for schools and teachers are used (such as the Common Framework of References for languages) and/or other methods applied.

The National Curriculum Framework suggests that each educational level should have well defined assessment procedures for formative, summative, teamwork, project work, given activity realization, etc. Both parents and pupils should be acquainted with assessment levels and pupils achievement expectations. Self evaluation should be combined with external evaluation and used as a reference point for further development of the curriculum.

National exams have been installed as a permanent system of external evaluation of educational achievement (see question 8).

At the moment, the higher education institutions use the same forms of assessment for measuring acquisition of key competences as other comparable subjects in the study programmes. The Universities autonomously determine procedures and conditions for student assessment. By law, it is not possible for the national legislation to prescribe procedures at higher education institutions for academic assessment of students.

The Croatian Qualifications Framework (CROQF) is going to enable assessment of pupils and students against clear quality criteria for gaining a set of competences. The CROQF is a unified system that allows for learning outcomes to be measured and compared to each other (see question 9).

QUESTION 8

How does your country - at national and or regional and local levels - evaluate the outcomes of education and training systems in relation to key competences? How is such evidence used for developing policy?

The National Programme of Measures for the Implementation of Compulsory Secondary Education sets forth the measures and activities intended to boost secondary school enrolment and completion rates, as well as to reduce dropout rates, enhance the quality of secondary education in Croatia and harmonise it with that of the European education systems, create prerequisites for better social involvement and higher employability of youths, especially those with special needs, behaviour disorders, physical disabilities, and those without family support and to create opportunities for lifelong learning, responding to the demands of temporary life and economy.

Secondary school education for pupils in grammar schools and four-year-long vocational and art schools ends with the passing of the State Matura Exam. The State Matura is a standardized instrument for quality assessment and improvement in education, which shall gradually replace admissions exams at many higher education institutions. The first generation to take the State Matura Exam at the end of their secondary school education will graduate in 2010.

The MoSES has appointed the State Matura Council, which supports the process of introduction of the State Matura to the Croatian education system

National exams have been installed as a permanent system of external evaluation of educational achievement, with the aim of developing a nation-wide quality-assessment system and facilitating improvement in education. The exams are carried out by the NCEAE in cooperation with secondary schools and institutions that implement programmes for secondary adult education. National exams will ensure harmonization of pupils' academic achievement nation-wide. In the interest of continuous improvement of the quality of their work, secondary schools are required to use the results of the national exams and other indicators of education outcomes in analysis and self-evaluation.

The first international evaluation of education quality within the scope of OECD's PISA project by testing pupils of the age of 15 was carried out in 2005 in 40 schools on a sample of 1600 pupils. The experimental evaluation was carried out in 2005 in 40 schools on a sample of 1,600 pupils. The first real examination was carried out in 2006 (5,250 pupils in 159 secondary and 9 primary schools). The results were published in 2007, offering an insight into the quality of education on an internationally comparable basis. Croatia ranked 26th out of the 57 countries participating in the PISA project.

The Universities autonomously evaluate learning outcomes, and the evaluation of the acquisition of key competences at higher education institutions is a part of the regular external quality assurance procedures. These procedures aim to comply fully with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance.

CHAPTER 2: TRANSVERSAL LIFELONG LEARNING ISSUES (MAX 2,5 PAGES)

QUESTION 9

What progress has your country made in the development and implementation of a coherent and comprehensive lifelong learning strategy?

The Croatian Government has adopted the Baseline for the Croatian Qualifications Framework (CROQF) in July 2007. The working group was formed after consultation with relevant ministries, professional organizations and stakeholders. The mission of the working group was to elaborate the Foundation for the Development of the CROQF. This document was completed in December 2006 and presented to all the relevant stakeholders. In July 2007, the Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted the Foundation for the CROQF, and in September 2007 the Government established the Committee for the Development of the CROQF with the task of examining the possible modalities for establishing the CROQF. Subsequently, the MoSES established the Operational team (to assist the National Committee) consisting of educational experts whose task it is to elaborate the description of competences (in the wide sense of the term) and define the general learning outcomes for each level of the CROQF. In December 2008 the National Committee adopted the generic descriptors for all CROQF levels, and completed the national consultation process. The National Committee also approved the proposal for setting up 26 Sector Working Groups, as well as their role and duties in the design of qualifications standards. The web site of the CROQF was developed and is available online from the web site of the Croatian Government at <http://hko.vlada.hr>. In January 2009 CROQF initial Terminology Glossary has been introduced. Public call for members of qualification work teams has been published, and at the same time the Training Handbook for the members of qualification work teams is being produced. It is expected that the development of the CROQF will create a non-binding framework which will facilitate the recognition of prior learning and development of specific measures for promotion of flexible learning paths.

The CROQF is based on the Croatian educational tradition, the current condition and level of development of the society, the needs of the economy, of the individual and of the society as a whole, the guidelines of the European Qualification Framework (EQF) and the international regulations adopted by the Republic of Croatia. The aim of the CROQF is to connect learning outcomes achieved in all educational institutions and position them in relation to each other in Croatia, and in an international context. The CROQF sets clear quality criteria for gaining a set of competences that a learner can expect to have after completing education for a qualification of a certain level and volume. The CROQF is a unified system that allows for learning outcomes to be measured and compared to each other.

The CROQF encompasses eight reference levels, with additional four sublevels reflecting the special characteristics of the Croatian education system. Each reference level is described in terms of student workload, level, measurable learning outcomes, competences obtained and professional profile, and closely related to the national and institutional quality assurance systems. Development of CROQF will enable: accessibility of education throughout lifetime, better employability through development of a system for evaluation and recognition of competencies acquired at work (prior learning) or through other forms of learning (non-formal and informal learning),

A plan of activities for the development of the CROQF by 2012 has also been developed, and it includes the following activities:

- training of sector councils in order to create new qualifications (in 2009)
- introduction of new qualifications through the work of sector councils
- development of amendments on laws and other legislative documents (in 2010)
- development of new curricula through the work of sector councils (in 2011-2012).

CHAPTER 3: VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (MAX 2,5 PAGES)

QUESTION 10

What progress has your country made in increasing the attractiveness of VET programmes and their relevance to the labour market?

Croatian **Vocational Education and Training Development Strategy** has been adopted in 2008. The Strategy has been developed based on the basic proposition that education is among strategic development priorities for Croatian society. Croatian VET Development Strategy relies on the principles and goals of EU education strategies. The Strategy is based on the concept of lifelong learning and on the principles of partnership, flexibility and adjusting education outcomes to the labour market needs. This document contributes to strengthening the system towards the development of the competences of the population according to changed economic circumstances. The **Act on Vocational Education and Training** was adopted (Official Gazette 30/09) in 2009. It regulates education and training at the secondary school level and guarantees horizontal and vertical mobility. It is also learning outcome oriented. The Act foresees social partnership and differentiates formal, non-formal and informal learning.

Croatian VET Development Strategy is a key document for development of vocational education and training in Croatia. The priorities identified by the Strategy are, among others, improvement of the quality and attractiveness of VET. The development of new curricula through the work of sector councils will contribute to the relevance of VET programmes to the labour market and their attractiveness.

As a good example of increasing the attractiveness of VET the AVET is organizing competitions and festival of VET school pupils. The pupils have the opportunity to show their competences in front of the representatives of employers and local community. For their achievement they are rewarded a certain amount of points which can be used for university enrolment.

The Republic of Croatia is a member of the organisations Euro Skills and World Skills.

Moreover the AVET assures that the professional development of VET teachers could be carried out in the relevant companies.

In addition, in 2006, 13 sectoral councils have been established in order to enforce the link between the VET and the labour market. The sectoral councils have been working on restructuring of existing vocational qualifications.

CHAPTER 4: HIGHER EDUCATION (MAX 2,5 PAGES)

QUESTION 11

In the area of Modernisation of Higher Education what progress has your country made in relation to:

- Plans/measures to diversify the income streams of Higher Education Institutions?**
- Plans/incentives to encourage Higher Education Institutions to open up to lifelong learners?**

Plans/measures to diversify the income streams of Higher Education Institutions?

In order to modernise the system of financing higher education institutions the MoSES started the transfer of financial support to universities in the form of block budget (lump sum) in 2007. This lump-sum financing provided the universities with a new mechanism for long-term strategic planning, as well as a greater degree of autonomy. As the European University Association claimed in its 2008 publication, greater financial autonomy should help facilitate diversification of university income streams (EUA 2008 Financially Sustainable Universities towards Full Costing in European Universities). At this point, there is a new law being discussed which will further elaborate the conditions of lump-sum funding and which aims to introduce three-year funding contracts.

In 2007 the Croatian Parliament passed Amendments to the Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education, which introduced significant changes to the system of incentives for investments from enterprises into the higher education sector. These changes have facilitated the entry of private funding into higher education.

One of the basic goals for Croatia during the following years is a significant increase of the education level of general population. In order to achieve that goal, it is necessary to increase capacity and quality of higher education which is focused on developing ability to acquire knowledge as well as R&D. Thus the MoSES has adopted Action Plan to Encourage Investment into Science and Research in 2008. The main goals of this Action plan are development of the knowledge-based economy and voluntary acceptance of the EU guidelines (Lisbon Strategy) in the area of science and research.

The National Foundation for Science, Higher Education and Technological Development of the Republic of Croatia (NFSHETD) supports research and technological projects and international cooperation within higher education system. Their activities span from building institutional capacity for scientific research and providing financial support to reform of higher education. The NFSHETD is also a full member of European Science Foundation.

The Education Sector Development Plan 2005-2010 encompasses measures for the reform of Higher Education. These policy measures include increase of higher education expenditures (increase spending per student). The overall funding of tertiary education has increased by over 48% since 2004, both from the state budget and from own income of tertiary education institutions. However, the current funding regulations are not based on financing students but on financing institutions. To further the issue of financing the higher education the MoSES has joined the consortium which was built by an NGO Institute for

Development of Education for a Tempus Structural Measure project Towards Equitable and Transparent Access to HE in Croatia. Its main objective is to contribute to ensuring equitable and transparent access to higher education in Croatia by removing financial obstacles, improving data availability and building capacity for action.

Plans/incentives to encourage Higher Education Institutions (HEI) to open up to lifelong learners

The Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education enables HEIs to establish and perform lifelong learning activities and programmes. The University of Rijeka has included LLL in its document University of Rijeka Strategy 2007-2013 and plans to found Centre for lifelong learning. This Centre will administrate the procedure for accreditation of university programmes for LLL and procedures for recognition of prior learning as well as promote and entice LLL on the University. The University of Zagreb with its partners has undertaken Tempus SCM project Lifelong learning in university context which goal was to raise awareness of university constituents of the need for the integrated and clearly regulated approach towards the implementation of life-long learning and continuous professional education activities.

A number of faculties have opened up LLL centres catering to the needs of their communities. Three examples are listed below:

1. The town of Novalja signed the Agreement on Cooperation with the Faculty of Law of the University of Split. It applies to mutual cooperation covering:

- in-service training for the employees of the administration offices of the Town of Novalja (organising courses, seminars, workshops for public administration, English for lawyers (or German or French))
- offering legal assistance for the establishment and operation of public offices of the Town of Novalja, and
- using expert and library materials for the needs of the employees of local self-government

The Town of Novalja cooperates with the University of Split within the Lifelong Learning Centre of the Faculty of Law, using the premises of the Town of Novalja. As a result of the cooperation, expert symposia and summer schools (seminars) will be held for interested citizens and employees of local self-government of the County of Lika-Senj. The Town of Novalja will provide assistance to users of the mentioned services that the Faculty of Law will organise for interested citizens and local self-government institutions, and for a wider audience if needed.

2. The University of Rijeka issued the Strategy 2007–2013. It is stated in the Strategy that the University of Rijeka will organize lifelong learning programmes and establish the institutional structure for their implementation. Lifelong learning programmes will be open to people of all ages, especially senior citizens (University for senior citizens), so as to enable the continuous education and personal development of every individual. An accredited procedure (a credit-based system) will be carried out for the lifelong learning programmes. The same standards of quality that are implemented in university studies will be applicable to the lifelong learning programmes, so the learners will be able to use the acquired credits for building and further developing their academic and professional profiles. Furthermore, the University of Rijeka plans to establish an institutional structure for the accreditation of past formal and informal education. Programmes for lifelong learning will be an integral part of the regular activities of university officials and staff members.

3. The Lavoslav Ruzicka Polytechnic promotes forms of adult lifelong learning through its educational programmes “The Cisco Network Technologies Academy” (education for computer network managers) and “The Microsoft Academy” (training for management of the Windows XP system). In the near future the Lavoslav Ruzicka Polytechnic plans to apply for approval of the “English for Business Purposes” programme, in accordance with the Adult Education Act. In the long term, the Polytechnic is considering consolidating these and similar programmes to become the core of a Centre for Adult Education within the Polytechnic.

In October 2007 the Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes was established as a national coordinating organization for Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013 (Comenius, Erasmus, Grundtvig, Leonardo da Vinci and Transversal programme). Their activities include organisation of bilateral mobility schemes and partnerships.

CHAPTER 5: ADULT EDUCATION (MAX 2,5 PAGES)

QUESTION 12

What progress has your country made in promoting an increased participation in adult learning?

Driven by the realisation that the knowledge provided by the traditional education system is no longer sufficient in keeping up with the rapidly growing amounts of new knowledge, but that lifelong learning should become the basis for every modern education strategy, and understanding that the system of adult learning is of key importance in the realization of the principle of lifelong learning, the Government of the Republic of Croatia, in 2004, adopted the Strategy for Adult Education, the key strategic document for adult learning in Croatia. The Strategy was drafted by the Adult Education Committee, appointed by the MoSES. After emphasizing the century-old tradition of institutional adult education in Croatia, the Strategy stressed the importance of knowledge as 'the basic production force in human society and the main precondition for its success,' and recognized the need for acquiring the 'literacy for the 21st century' as a precondition for the development of both the individual and the society. It recognized the importance of lifelong learning, gave an overview of the existing adult education system, its educational infrastructure and steps previously undertaken in the direction of adult learning system development, and set up the objectives serving as guidelines for the further development of the system.

The Strategy sets the following objectives:

- to develop measures, organisational and financial conditions and those regarding personnel for realising lifelong learning as a right and an obligation of all the citizens of the Republic of Croatia: women, men, youth, senior citizens, retired people, the employed, the unemployed, housewives, employers, war veterans, the poor, the illiterate; including the imagination and abilities of all Croatian citizens and their active participation in all aspects of life with a view to enable the «starting off of Croatia»;
- to develop a system of adult education/learning that will offer equal opportunities for quality learning throughout life to all people, and in which education is based on and results from the demands and needs for learning;
- to develop measures for joint and coordinated action of the relevant ministries, social partners and educational institutions;
- to create legal and professional prerequisites for establishing comprehensive adult education as an integral part of the Croatian education system;
- to adjust educational planning and programming, the strategies and ways of teaching and learning, so that people's knowledge and skills match the possibilities and needs of individuals as well as the demands of jobs and occupations, work and the social environment;
- to encourage and equip people to participate in all spheres of life, especially in social and political life at all levels, including European level;³

³ European Report on Quality Indicators of Lifelong Learning, Brussels, 2002

- to encourage the use of new information and communication technology in lifelong learning and adult education, as it, among other things, enables an individual approach to learning, that is more suitable for adults (the choice of the most convenient time for learning and other favourable conditions);
- to speed up the integration of labour and learning – in line with the OECD economies – as new trends support a continuous link between education and labour, instead of the traditional separation between learning and lifelong labour.

The adoption of the Strategy was to serve as an invitation for all stakeholders to 'build partnerships at all levels in order to contribute to the development of the Republic of Croatia through lifelong learning'.

The policy presented in the Strategy was further developed in the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for Adult Education (2004).

Following the guidelines of the Strategy, in 2006 the Croatian Government founded the Agency for Adult Education (AAE). The AAE is responsible for monitoring, developing and evaluating the system of adult education. The AAE also evaluates programmes for adult education, provides professional advice, supervises adult education institutions and carries out training activities for adult education teachers. The Adult Education Council was established in 2007 as an expert advisory body of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, whose tasks are monitoring the state of adult education and proposing measures for its development, proposing and providing opinions on legislative and implementing regulations and proposing financing mechanisms for state-funded adult education programmes. The mission of the Adult Education Council is also to harmonize partial educational policies under one united national educational policy. Under the CARDS 2004 Adult Learning project 2007-2009 a methodology was piloted for developing short training programmes for basic occupations. The methodology comprises four elements: the Programme Description, the Employment Specification (competences), the Learning Specification (learning outcomes to be demonstrated in terms of skills and knowledge) and the Assessment Specification. The training programmes are competence-based and labour market oriented. The methodology was originally developed under CARDS 2003 VET project and was adopted for designing all types of programmes in adult education.

AAE has implemented a series of activities in order to promote adult education for the purpose of increased inclusion of adults in education.

First of all, it started a website www.aoo.hr and www.cjelozivotno-ucenje.hr, as well as an e-mail account info@oo.hr. Within the Component 6 of the CARDS 2004 Adult learning project, it organized a one-year comprehensive national campaign called "Add knowledge to experience" in order to raise public awareness of the importance of lifelong learning and to inform the public on learning opportunities. Lifelong Learning Week was organized within the campaign from 29 September to 3 October 2008 in Zagreb and in three counties: Vukovar-Srijem County (Vukovar), Lika-Senj County (Gospić) and Šibenik-Knin County (Knin). Within the Lifelong Learning Week, in addition to numerous workshops and lectures in the county capitals, AAE also organized the Lifelong Learning Fair with about 50 stands set up, at which Zagreb adult education institutions presented their activities and programmes. Furthermore, various activities were undertaken within the campaign at the Education fair in Šibenik and at the Open door days in Rijeka and Osijek, where educational programmes of the counties were presented, as well as at the Zagreb forum. "Add knowledge to experience" brochure has also been published. It is a kind of manual for learners on key information about adult education institutions in Croatia, useful websites, information on professional information centres etc. In addition to that, the AAE published various promotional materials (leaflets): about the Agency, Lifelong Learning Week, CARDS 2004 Adult Learning and about the International Literacy Day.

On the occasion of the International Literacy Day, the AAE organized a discussion on the concept of literacy in the 21st century at the European House in Zagreb on 8 September. The above mentioned activities attracted great attention of the media, which provided adult learners with more information.

Media releases: television (13), radio (9), print media (26), websites (60)

List of abbreviations:

MoSES – Ministry of Science Education and Sports

ETTA - Education and Teacher Training Agency

NCEAE - National Centre for External Assessment of Education

AVET - Agency for Vocational Education and Training

AAE - Agency for Adult Education

ASHE – Agency for Science and Higher Education

NFSHETD National Foundation for Science, Higher Education and Technological Development of the Republic of Croatia

CROQF – Croatian Qualifications Framework

EQF - European Qualifications Framework