



MINISTRY OF SOCIAL POLICY AND YOUTH

NATIONAL SOCIAL REPORT

2016

REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Republic of Croatia (hereinafter: RC) has joined the process of drafting the National Social Report (hereinafter: Report) for the third time, the Report entailing an overview of the situation in the field of social protection. The Report has been drafted by the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Pension System, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Science, Education and Sport, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, Office of Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities and the National Bureau of Statistics. The Report is divided into 2 subject areas:

The first part entails an overview of reforms conducted in the field of social protection, comprising initiatives and policies in the area of social inclusion and poverty, pensions, health, education and long-term care, adopted (incorporated into law or currently in the middle of a legislative procedure) within the Open Method of Coordination. The afore mentioned policy reforms which the RC Government carried out based on Country Specific Recommendations for 2015 as well as based on national priorities, refer to the period from June 2015 to June 2016. The Report makes use of data which are entailed in the National Reform Programme for 2016¹ (hereinafter: NRP), the Convergence Programme of the Republic of Croatia for the period 2016 - 2019². (hereinafter: Convergence Programme), as well as including data from national documents of the Republic of Croatia.

The second part entails an overview of the measures within social protection area which are aimed at seekers of international protection/asylees/persons under subsidiary protection. The aforesaid comprises an access to social and health care, accommodation, education, language learning, measures related to the prohibition of discrimination and other measures. The information gathered relate to the period from January 2015 to June 2016.

2. POLITICAL CONTEXT

Parliamentary elections were held on 8 November 2015. The results of the election in relation to the governing coalition of parties of the left centre under the name of Hrvatska raste (Croatia Grows) led by the Social Democratic Party of Croatia and the opponent party of the right centre under the name of Domoljubna koalicija (Patriotic Coalition) led by the Croatian Democratic Union came out very close which propelled the latter to enter into a coalition with the independent party Most Nezavisnih Lista (Bridge of Independent Lists), which earned the biggest number of mandates alongside the two largest parties. On 28 September 2015 the Croatian Parliament has convened for the 8th time for a constitutional seating. On 22 January 2016 the Parliament has confirmed the members of the new Government led by *non-partyaffiliated* Prime Minister, Mr. Tihomir Orešković. A clash of both sides within the governing coalition has resulted in the Parliament voting distrust in relation to the Government. At the time of drafting this report a technical Government is at power, while the new parliamentary elections will take place on 11 September 2016.

3. KEY MACROECONOMIC DATA AND DATA HIGHLIGHTING THE OVERALL ECONOMIC GROWTH³

During 2015, the 6-year-old negative trend in the economic landscape has been brought to a halt, resulting in the rise of gross domestic product by 1.6%⁴. The positive contribution to the growth in the gross domestic product in 2015 is primarily attributable to the demand on the national market, mostly

¹http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2016/nrp2016_croatia_hr.pdf

²http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2016/cp2016_croatia_hr.pdf

³ The data were taken from the Convergence Programme of the Republic of Croatia for the period 2016 - 2019

⁴ Data on the gross domestic product for 2014 and 2015 are preliminary.

driven by household consumption, but also to the net foreign demand. In the mid-term period it is likely that the economic situation will have a positive outlook amid gradual acceleration in economic growth. In 2016 and 2017 a continuous growth in gross domestic product from 2 to 2.1% is foreseeable, which will then further accelerate up to 2.3% in 2018 and 2.5% in 2019. The biggest contribution to economic growth through the entire forecast period will further stem from domestic demand. The contribution of net foreign demand will be somewhat positive in the period between 2016 and 2018, despite gradual reduction amid the acceleration of economic activity and reaching up to a somewhat negative value in 2019.

Table: Macroeconomic framework for the period 2016– 2019

	2015	Forecast 2016	Forecast 2017	Forecast 2018	Forecast 2019
BDP – growth in real terms (%)	1,6	2,0	2,1	2,3	2,5
Household consumption	1,2	1,8	1,8	2,0	2,5
Consumption at national level	0,6	0,3	0,8	1,4	2,0
Gross investment into fixed capital	1,6	2,5	3,2	3,5	4,5
Export of goods and services	9,2	5,2	5,5	5,6	5,4
Import of goods and services	8,6	4,7	5,3	5,9	6,3
Contributions to the growth of GDP (% points)	1,6	2,0	2,1	2,3	2,5
Household consumption	0,7	1,1	1,1	1,2	1,5
Consumption at national level	0,1	0,0	0,2	0,3	0,4
Gross investments into fixed capital	0,3	0,5	0,6	0,7	0,9
Changes in reserves	0,0	0,1	0,1	0,1	-0,1
Export of goods and services	4,2	2,5	2,8	2,9	2,9
Import of goods and services	-3,8	-2,2	-2,5	-2,9	-3,2

Source: National Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Finance

Household consumption will be the main driving force of growth in domestic demand in the mid-term period. Its recovery has already started in 2015, after three years of continuous decline and will pace up in the following years, adjusting to a large extent to the dynamics of growth in the income available to households in correlation with further recovery on the labour market and the renewed *consumer faith* in conditions of relatively low and stable inflation. Alongside fiscal consolidation, no considerable contribution of the consumption at national level is to be expected in the mid-term period to the economic growth. The growth of gross investments into fixed capital, already recorded in 2015, will continue to step up through the entire mid-term period, but it will not reach the levels from the precrisis period. The increasing rate of exhaustion of structural and investment EU funds will lend an impetus to the described dynamics of investment activities. The growth of investments in the private sector will gradually reach the growth of the wider public sector towards the end of the forecasting period amid rising levels of business optimism and enhancement of the investment climate, followed by steadfast implementation of structural reforms which shall make entrepreneurship easier. Despite forecasted growth of foreign demand after domestic goods and services, the growth of export in goods and services in real terms will be lower in the following years than it was during 2014 and 2015, due to lack of positive effects of re-export and access to the common EU market. A commencement of positive changes in the share of domestic export sector on the export markets is expected, but they will be less felt compared to the period 2013 – 2015. In correlation to the aforementioned slowdown in the growth of export and the lack of effects of re-export, it is expected that there will also be a slowdown in the growth of import in goods and services in 2016. However, owing to increasing final demand, import will again accelerate in growth towards the end of the forecasted period.

The recovery of the economic activity, recorded in 2015, has had a favourable influence on the labour market, and the positive trends shall continue to have an impact, although weak in intensity, in the following period amid forecasted employment growth and decreasing unemployment rate.

Furthermore, it is expected that the economic recovery will also have a positive impact on the participation rate of the work force, inspite of unfavourable overall demographic movements.

4. SOCIAL PROTECTION IN GENERAL

4.1. SOCIAL INCLUSION/POVERTY – INDICATORS AND INITIATIVES

The latest figures on the indicators of poverty and social inclusion were obtained from data collected by a Survey⁵ on the income of citizens, conducted in 2015 (Croat. ADS 2015). According to first results the at-risk-of-poverty rate⁶ in 2015 in the Republic of Croatia amounted to 20.4%. Whereas the at-the-risk-of-poverty threshold⁷ for one member household amounted to HRK 24,900.00 a year, this regarding a household containing two adults and two children amounted to HRK 52,290.00 a year. The figure pointing to persons befallen with the risk of poverty or social exclusion⁸ amounted to 29.4%, while the figure pointing to persons living in grave deprivation⁹ amounted to 13.9%. The figure concerning persons living in households with very low employment intensity¹⁰ totalled 14.6%. The income inequality distribution or the quintile share ratio (S80/S20)¹¹ was in the same year according to first results 5.3 (in 2014 it was 5.1), which means that 20% of the population with the highest equivalent of income received a 5.3 times higher income than 20% of the population with the lowest equivalent income.

The Gini coefficient¹² was somewhat higher in 2015, when it amounted to 30.9%, as opposed to 2014 when it was 30.2%. The aforementioned figures point to the **following conclusions:**

- The at-risk-of-poverty rate has gone up one percentage point in relation to 2014, which in 2015 amounted to 20.4% (in 2014 it was 19.4%), which means that approximately 855,400 persons in the RC live at the risk of poverty;
- The figures relating to persons at the risk of poverty or social exclusion, persons living in grave material deprivation (4 or more criteria) and persons living in households with very low employment intensity do not show considerable alteration in relation to 2014;
- According to indicators for people at the risk of poverty or social exclusion, 29.4% or 1,231,300 people in the RC are at risk of poverty or severe material deprivation or living in households with very low work intensity;

⁵The Survey on the population income is an annual research conducted on a panel sample of private households. At EU level this research (SILC, Statistics on Income and Living Conditions) is an obligatory research and a referential source of data which ensures monitoring and comparing of income statistics, indicators of poverty and social exclusion.

⁶The at-the-risk-of-poverty is a fundamental indicator of poverty, showcasing the percentage of people having equivalent disposable income below the threshold of poverty.

⁷The at-the-risk-of poverty threshold is set at 60% of the middle value (median) of the equivalent disposable income of all households.

⁸Presents the percentage of people at the risk of poverty or in grave material deprivation or living in households with very low employment intensity.

⁹Presents the percentage of people who live in households which can not afford, exclusively due to financial reasons, at least four out of nine components of material deprivation entailing the following: 1) delays in payments of rent, utility bills, hire purchase installments or other loan payments, 2) the household being unable to provide each of its members a week of rest in a week out of home, 3) the household being unable to afford a meal with meat, chicken, fish or a vegetarian equivalent every second day, 4) the household being unable to face unexpected financial expenses, 5) the household being unable to afford a phone, 6) the household being unable to afford a colour TV, 7) the household unable to afford a washing machine, 8) the household being unable to afford a car, 9) the household being unable to afford adequate heating in the coldest months.

¹⁰Presents a percentage of people living in households in which all its work capable members worked less than 20% from the total number of months within the referential period.

¹¹Indicator of income inequality which measures the size of the gap between the highest and lowest population incomes.

It presents a relation between the fifth and the first quintile of the income distribution, that is the relation of the total income equivalent of 20% of the population with the highest equivalent disposable income and the total equivalent disposable income of 20% of the population with the lowest income.

¹²Measure of unequal income distribution- if there was a perfect equality (if every person would receive the same amount of income), then the coefficient would be 0%. The more the percentage is nearing 100%, the income inequality is greater.

- The indicators of income distribution inequality (quintile share ratio S80/S20) and the Gini coefficient show a rise in 2015 in relation to 2014, which signals a further increase in inequality over the disposal of income between the population with the lowest and highest income.

According to the latest released statistical data¹³ on the total expenditure of social protection in 2014 following the ESSPROS methodology, they amounted to 21.6 % of the GDP, meaning a decrease by 0.1% in relation to 2013 when they amounted to 21.7% of the GDP.

Overview of social protection expenditure with regard to the function of social protection:

	Share of GDP
Total social protection expenditure in 2014	21.6
Total expenditure of social protection benefits	21.2
FUNCTIONS OF SOCIAL PROTECTION	
Sickness/health care	7.1
Disability	2.6
Old age	7.2
Surviving and supported family members	2.1
Family/children	1.5
Unemployment	0.5
Housing	0.0
Social exclusion not classified elsewhere	0.2

Source: National Bureau of Statistics

The reaching of the national target in decreasing poverty and social exclusion adhering to Europe 2020 Strategy is in close correlation with the implementation of the Strategy for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in the Republic of Croatia (2014-2020)¹⁴ (hereinafter: Strategy) from 2014. Measures in different fields defined by the Implementation Programme have been successfully implemented following on the previous year and a Report is being drafted, which will await its adoption by RC Government in the 3rd quarter.

Measures which will facilitate the reaching of the target:

- Ensuring humanitarian aid in kind and other support programmes aimed at people in severe deprivation - FEAD;
- Developing adoption quality and an equal distribution of accommodation service within adoptive families in the Republic of Croatia;
- Intensifying the deinstitutionalization process of social welfare homes;
- Funding multiannual programmes of civil society organisations with the aim of developing and expanding the network of social services;
- Co-financing educational expenses of pupils and students of low socioeconomic status and pupils with developmental difficulties.

What has been done so far and future plans:

- In June 2016 a call has been published for the submission of project proposals on „Ensuring school food for children at the risk of poverty“, financed within the Food and Basic Material Assistance Operational Programme in the Programming Period 2014-2020 out of the Fund for European Aid to

¹³Released on 27 May 2016 within the publication 10.1.5. Social Protection in 2014 in the Republic of Croatia
National Bureau of Statistics

¹⁴ More details in the National Social Report of RC for 2015

the Most Deprived (FEAD), aimed at the alleviation of the most extreme forms of child poverty, especially with reference to food distribution in schools. It has not been designed as an replacement for existing programmes of food subvention, but as an added value which shall make the aid available to a larger number of children. The programme has a value of HRK 9,360,000.00.

- In the process of preparing the call, the publication of which is being planned, in June 2016 an E-counselling was held on the drafting of the summary of the call for submissions of project proposals on „Alleviating poverty by providing help to the most deprived by way of distributing food and/or basic material assistance“ financed by FEAD. The call has been directed at alleviating the worst forms of poverty by offering non-financial help, that is food and basic material assistance to the most deprived as an additional initiative which complements already existing national programmes. The programme has a value of HRK 38,480,000.00.
- As for the Adoption Development Plan, a Professional work group was formed in the Republic of Croatia for implementing and monitoring the Plan. The group consists of representatives of the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth, social welfare institutions, Croatian UNICEF, academic community and associations of children adopters.
- The drafting of 10 Individual Home Plans is under way in order to conduct the planned initiatives. The plans are part of the Operational Plan of Deinstitutionalization and Transformation of Social Welfare Homes and other Legal Entities which Provide Social Welfare in the RC between 2014 and 2016 with the aim to prepare projects with these homes for using funds of ESF and EFRD. This will surely lead to the intensification of the process.
- The EFRD has for the deinstitutionalization process foreseen an Appendix to the Programme for the awarding of three grants for the first phase, which will go towards financing infrastructural investments into the development of social services in the community for 32 institutions of social welfare involved in the Operational Plan of Deinstitutionalization and Transformation of Social Welfare Homes and other Legal Entities which Provide Social Welfare in the RC between 2014 and 2016. . These facilities provide services for persons with disability (18 institutions) and children and youth with behavioural problems, children and youth without adequate parental care (14 institutions). The funds shall also finance social welfare centres located in the same region. The total amount of these three allotments is EUR 33,265,647.20.
- For the deinstitutionalization process, within ESF, there have been prepared two Summaries of the Operation for the First Phase of the Project, which foresees financing investments into the development of social services within the community for 32 institutions of social welfare involved in the Operational Plan of Deinstitutionalization and Transformation of Social Welfare Homes and other Legal Entities which Provide Social Welfare in the RC between 2014 and 2016. These facilities provide services for persons with disability (18 institutions), children and youth with behavioural problems and children and youth without adequate parental care (14 institutions).
- - As for the financing of multiannual programmes of the organisations of civil society with the aim to develop and expand the network of social services, in 2016 the Ministry is continuing to implement the third year of the three-year programme– from 1 June 2016 to 31 May 2017. To implement this, the amount of HRK 30,250,000.00 has been secured out of available means pertaining to a part of the revenue arising from games of fortune in 2016. HRK 22,750,000.00 shall be awarded to 92 associations of persons with disability, and HRK 7,500,000.00 to 40 associations performing social and humanitarian activity. At the moment the contracting for the third year is in process.

4.1.1. Measures targeted on disabled persons, youth and children

Measures for **life and work enhancement for people with disability** are being improved through EU projects. In the scope of the programme of awarding grants „Expanding the Network of Social Services in the Community- Phase III“, which is targeted towards projects maintaining the development of social services in local communities which entail groups in disadvantaged conditions in order to improve the possibilities of their employment as well as family members who care for another member in the family with the goal of reconciliation of their family and professional life. Between June and September 2015, 28 contracts on awarding grants were concluded, which are momentarily being implemented. The programme has a value of HRK 31,997,980.00 In the scope of the programme of awarding grants

„Development of Personal Assistance Services to Persons with Disabilities“, 51 contracts on the award of grants, momentarily being implemented, have been signed in the period between October and December 2015. The goal is to consolidate social inclusion of persons with disability through further development and to raise personal assistance service quality for persons with the gravest and highest percentage of disability and persons with intellectual or mental disorders, and to raise the employment among persons who are disadvantaged on the labour market through their employment as personal assistants. The programme has a value of HRK 26,941,979.00.

The final proposal of the National Strategy of Equalisation of Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities between 2016 and 2020 (hereinafter: Strategy) is being drawn up at the moment and will be forwarded to further procedure. The Strategy includes many aspects of life and work of persons with disabilities, from family, health to employment and other subjects. According to figures of the Croatian Bureau of Employment (hereinafter: CBE) 2,613 persons with disabilities were employed until 31 December 2015 (an increase by 39.2% in relation to 2014 when the number of employed persons with disability was 1,877). 1,688 persons with disabilities were included into the measures of active policy of employment in 2015, of which 1,094 persons were newcomers, which makes an increase by 51.73% in relation to 2014 when there were 721 newcomers into the programme.

In the period between 1 January and 30 June 2016, through the mediation of CBE, 1,485 persons with disabilities were employed, accounting for 1.1% of the total population of employed persons in the records of CBE. During the same period in 2015, 1,372 persons with disabilities (1% of the total population of employed persons in the records of CBE) were employed, being an increase by 8% at semiannual level. Until 30 June 2016, 882 persons with disabilities were included into the measures of active policy of employment, of which 473 men (53.63%) and 409 women (46.37%). In the same period in 2015, a total of 1,046 persons with disabilities were included in the measures of active policy of employment. At the beginning of 2016 there were 577 persons with disabilities involved in the programmes of active policy of employment, who continued to use these measures. From January to June 2016, 305 persons with disabilities were newly included, of which 137 men (44.92%) and 168 women (55.08%).

The Institute of Expert Evaluation, Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities (hereinafter: Institute), more precisely the Department for Expert Evaluation as an organisational unit of the Institute conducts various expert evaluations with the aim to realise the rights in the field of social welfare, pension insurance, professional rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities, rights under maternity and parental benefits, protection of military and civilian victims of war and to realise the rights in other fields. The expert evaluation procedure is conducted in two stages. In the first stage, the expert evaluation is carried out in the organisational units of the Department for Expert Evaluation – regional offices in Zagreb, Osijek, Rijeka, Split and Varaždin, as well as at 12 separately designated work places: Bjelovar, Karlovac, Sisak, Koprivnica, Požega, Slavonski Brod, Vukovar, Pula, Gospić, Dubrovnik, Šibenik and Zadar, while in the second stage the procedure is carried out in the Central Office in Zagreb.

During 2015, the Institute received a total of 92,465 applications for an expert evaluation, of which 53,260 were finalized, while the remaining 39,205 applications remained in the procedure and were dealt with in 2016.

In the first 6 months of 2016, a total of 47,372 applications were received (a total of 86,577 applications have been in the procedure including the remaining ones from the year 2015), of which 46,380 were finalized, while the remaining 40,197 applications are in the process of consideration.

In the reporting period the obligation of fulfilling a quota regarding the employment of persons with disability (hereinafter: quota) is still to be observed by all employers who take on a minimum of 20 employees. The quota refers to employers from the private and public sector and is set at the rate of 3% of the total number of employees. The Institute monitors the fulfillment of the quota obligation by using data from the register of the Croatian Bureau of Pension Insurance regarding employed persons with disabilities. On the day of 30 June 2016 the register had a record of 8,734 entities who are under the obligation to fulfill the quota, of which 3,991 did so, while the quota was not filled by 4,743 entities, which are then put under the obligation to pay financial benefit owing to neglecting the obligation of

employment of persons with disabilities. The register has a record of a total of 11,739 employed persons with disabilities.

As to the policy of developing and improving of professional rehabilitation, the Professional Rehabilitation Services Standards have been applied from 15 July 2015, which the Minister of Employment and Pension System issued by a Decision. The same applies to the Price List of Professional Rehabilitation Services for 2015 and 2016, also issued by the Decision of the Minister on 6 October 2015. These documents established the grounds for the opening of the Centre for Professional Rehabilitation (hereinafter: CPR). Its task is to perform procedures of professional rehabilitation conforming to the Professional Rehabilitation Services Standards, to provide, systematically and in line with the demands of the labour market, the education and training to persons with disabilities in order to find work and offer professional support to employers in the process of employing a person with disability. The CPR Zagreb has been operating since October 2015, CPR Osijek since December 2015 and CPR Rijeka since April 2016.

The Institute has during the reporting period continuously performed payments of the incentives to the employers who employed persons with disabilities, adhering to the Regulation on Incentives for Employment of Persons with Disabilities and the Regulation on Setting the Quota for Employment of Persons with Disabilities. The incentives were paid for the following purposes: subvention of the salary of a person with disability, co-financing expenses for education, co-financing expenses of the adjustments made to the place of work – architectural adjustments, co-financing expenses for the adjustments to the work conditions – technical adjustments, co-financing interest rates on loans meant for purchasing machines, equipment, tools or appliances needed for employing a person with disability, financing expenses of professional support, separate means for programmes of innovative employment, separate means for creating new jobs and employment maintenance in integrative workshops and protective workshops, payment of financial awards for employment above the obligatory quota. The incentives were used in 2015 by 463 employers for the employment of 1,427 persons with disabilities, whereas in the first 6 months of 2016 they have been used by 266 employers for employing 938 persons with disabilities.

Concerning young population, till the end of 2014 and during 2015, the Croatian Bureau of Employment led a campaign with the Ministry of Labour and Pension System whereby it presented the Youth Guarantee. 35 presentations in total were held, in which young persons, employers and partners took part (link <http://www.gzm.hr/vijesti/raspored-predstavljanja-garancije-za-mlade/>). To advertise the initiative, two kinds of flyers of Youth Guarantee were printed, available in the Centres for Professional Information and Career Counselling (hereinafter: CPICC) and Centres for Young Persons in the RC.

On 5 November 2015 the Ministry of Labour and Pension System (hereinafter: MLPS), the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport (hereinafter: MSES), CBE and the Croatian Bureau for Pension Insurance (hereinafter: CBPI) signed the Agreement on Business Cooperation for Data Exchange.

The Agreement became the foundation for the project „Setting up the System for Monitoring NEET Persons“ which is currently designed by the MLPS and which shall to a greater extent be co-financed by the European Social Fund (hereinafter: ESF) (according to Direct Allocation of Funds within the Priority Axis 1 „High Employability and Work Force Mobility“).

From June 2015 to June 2016, 120,181 young people until then in the records of unemployed persons kept with the Croatian Bureau of Employment found work, that is 47.1% of the total number of employed in the records of the CBE (255,372). In the aforementioned period, 101,546 young persons were employed on a regular employment contract. 25,136 young persons in that period were newcomers to the initiative of the active policy of employment, that is 60% of the total number of new participants in the initiative of active policy of employment. With reference to the EU Council Recommendation on the integration of long-term unemployed on the labour market, the CBE has from 15 February 2016 started to prepare an Action Plan for the Integration of Long-Term Unemployed Persons.

In the scope of the National Programme for Youth for the Period from 2014 to 2017, one of its prioritised issues relates to social protection and inclusion of youth. The main goals are: (1) to determine and use systematically the categories of risk of social exclusion of youth in order to collect data about

them; (2) to raise the awareness and efficiency of key participants in the policymaking for youth, coming from the education, employment, health and social welfare system, in order to satisfy the needs of different categories of youth at the risk of social exclusion; and (3) to enhance the system of support for youth at the risk of social exclusion.

In September 2015, a National Body for Interdepartmental and Intersectoral Coordination for the Monitoring of youth at the Risk of Social Exclusion (hereinafter: National Body) was established, in which representatives of relevant institutions and organisations work together.¹⁵ The National Body analysed the existing categories of young people at the risk of social exclusion and worked out a proposal of a new system entailing categories of risk of social exclusion. Currently a more detailed description of certain categories is being devised, along with the analysis of the existing mechanisms and instruments for monitoring youth at risk of social exclusion, as well as the analysis for each category of existing initiatives involving youth. This shall be followed by taking further steps with the aim to accomplish goals mentioned in the National Programme for Youth.

As to child protection, a Draft of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Strategy for the Year 2016 has been drawn up in line with the adopted National Strategy for **the Rights of the Children** in the Republic of Croatia for the period 2014 to 2020 (hereinafter: National Strategy), which prescribes in detail the concrete activities of the interdepartmental bodies for implementation of individual measures (the document shall be forwarded for adoption to the Government of the RC).

4.1.2. Activities related to the process of deinstitutionalization

There is a large number of children in the RC still placed within institutions of social care, one of the reasons being the insufficient availability and accessibility of certain services in the community which would guarantee quality care for children and youth without them being separated from their family surrounding. In line with the „Operational Plan of Deinstitutionalization and Transformation of Social Welfare Homes and other Legal Entities which Provide Social Welfare in the RC between 2014 and 2016.“ (hereinafter: Operational Plan¹⁶) in the period between June 2015 and June 2016 the following was achieved:

- 7 out of 13 individual plans of deinstitutionalization and transformation of homes for children and youth without adequate parental care and children and youth with behavioural problems have been devised, continuous support has been provided in the preparation of home projects to be submitted for EU funds (ESF, ERDF);
- qualified employees within social welfare homes and centres of social welfare involved in the process of deinstitutionalization have participated in continuous education in order to enhance competences for the implementation of the process;
- a certain number of flats/houses have been put at disposal for providing the service of organised accommodation in the community (State Office for Administration of State Ownership / DUUDI /Croatian abbreviation/, local and areal/regional selfgovernment units/ JLP(R)S /Croatian abbreviation/, donations of other participants);
- an analysis of children adoption in the RC has been worked out in order to get an overview of the adoption situation, with special insight into numerical data on family-related and family-nonrelated adoptive families, possibilities of accommodation in family-nonrelated adoptive families, the reasons why certain places within these aren't filled and reasons why children are being adopted (with reference to collected data and conducted analysis, proposals were defined for further development of adoption).

¹⁵The Ministry of Social Policy and Youth, Ministry of Science, Education and Sport, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds, Ministry of Labour and Pension System, Office for Human Rights and Rights of the National Minorities, Office for Associations, National Bureau of Statistics, Agency for Education and Training, Croatian Bureau of Employment, Law Faculty of the Zagreb University, the Faculty for Education and Rehabilitation and associations of Youth and for Youth.

¹⁶ 2015 National Social Report of the RC

From June 2015 till June 2016 a total of 471 children and young persons without adequate parental care and children and young persons with behavioural problems were deinstitutionalized. A total of 6 homes for children without adequate parental care at the end of June 2016 met the basic conditions for their transformation into centres for providing services in the community.

4.1.3. Active policy measures of the labour market and employment, and access to integrated employment

The Government of the RC adopted in December 2014 the Guidelines for the Development and Implementation of the Active Employment Policy in the Republic of Croatia for the period from 2015 to 2017 (hereinafter: Guidelines) which define priorities, goals and activities of the active employment policy in the aforementioned period. Based on the Guidelines the implementation of support interventions continued on with regard to employment, further development and self-employment, professional vocational training for jobs without an employment contract, education of unemployed persons, public works and supports for maintenance of workplaces. A total of 38,411 persons were newly included from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 into the initiative of active employment policy conducted by the CBE. 4,950 new persons were included into the employment benefits, 2,513 persons into the self-employment benefits, 482 persons received benefits for further education, 1,803 persons were included in the education programme meeting the needs of the labour market, 18,053 persons were included in professional training for jobs with no employment contract. 9,046 persons were employed in public works, whereas 1,564 persons received benefits for maintaining their workplaces. The measures of active employment policy were used by a total of 65,313 persons during 2015, of which there were 23,718 active beneficiaries at the beginning of the year, while 41,595 persons joined during 2015. HRK 526,306,560.00 from the State Budget (hereinafter:SB) were spent for the implementation of the active employment policy, whereas HRK 12,926,919.00 were spent from the OP Development of Human Resources account – means used up for the measures of the active employment policy and expenditures of financial aid from ESF, as well as HRK 160,280,345.00 from OP Efficient Human Resources account – means used up for the measures of active employment policy and expenditures of financial aid from ESF funds.

The CPICC have continued to offer services of lifelong professional guidance. From June 2015 to the end of June 2016 its services were used by 61,639 persons with the aim to obtain professional guidance and career counselling. The CPICC centres (in places where they were established) are recognized as core places for the identification and activation of the NEET group, including establishing the kind of cooperation and responsibility of individual partners as well as creating preventive measures.

In places where CPICC was not established, Centres for Youth (operating within regional offices of the CBE) take over its role with regard to the NEET. Having that in mind, from the beginning of 2016 the Centres have been signing Cooperation Agreements with partners at local level with reference to the process of identification and activation of the NEET group. The Centres have until 1 May 2016 signed forty Cooperation Agreements with different organisations (secondary schools, faculties and universities, volunteer centres, Roma association, social welfare centres, institutes for public health, youth associations, craft organisations and developmental agencies).

A significant step in the systematic solution of the status of lifelong professional guidance and career management as well as implementation of lifelong professional guidance into educational systems, systems of employment and social inclusion was made also by the adoption of the Strategy for Lifelong Professional Guidance and Career Development in the Republic of Croatia 2015-2020 by the Croatian Government on 28 October 2015.

4.1.4. Measures tackling fight against discrimination and segregation reduction

Adhering to acts in force in the field of combating discrimination and in the field of equality of sexes, the CBE conducts activities whereby the competitiveness of hard to employ groups of unemployed persons (young persons, women, long-term unemployed, unemployed over 50 years of age, persons of the Roma community, Croatian defenders from the Homeland War, single parents, victims of domestic violence and treated addicts) is enhanced. Hard to employ persons are characterised by insufficient competitiveness and mobility on the labour market owing to inadequate education level, lack of work experience, inadequate age, family and/or social conditions. On 23 and 24 March 2015 in Zagreb an educational seminar took place, involving CBE counsellors (advisors) working with persons with disabilities. The aim of the education was to enhance the competences of the advisors for establish the status of the persons with disabilities, with regard to the changes and amendments of applicable legislation, which were laid down after the education of advisors held in September 2014.²⁵ advisors for the employment of persons with disabilities participated at the educational seminar.

On 25 February 2016 in Zagreb an educational seminar for advisors of the CBE was held on the subject „System of providing support for victims of human trafficking and the integration policy of foreigners into Croatian society“. 23 CBE employees took part in the seminar.

In order to raise the employment perspectives of women, there are various activities performed with the purpose of their strengthening. The activities include activation and motivation of women inactive on the labour market by advising, helping them to define their individual plan of finding work, workshops for active job seeking, boosting competences and professional skills (education, enhancing literacy skills, professional training for employed women, professional training for the job without an employment contract), stimulating the employment of women and female entrepreneurship. To include unemployed persons into the labour market, in the period between June 2015 and June 2016 8,645 unemployed women participated in the activities of individual counselling in order to be active jobseekers. In the same period 163,810 women signed a professional plan of jobseeking with the corresponding activities. To the same end, a counselling took place for self-employment, in which 2,589 women participated and workshops were organised, with 2,011 women being involved. 1,247 women received self-employment benefits.

5. PENSIONS

Relating to Recommendation Number 2 of the EU Commission regarding pensions, new reform measures point to changes in the penalisation manner in case of early retirement, that is, instead of the decrease until today by 0.10 to 0.34%, a linear penalisation would be introduced of 0.34% per month of early retirement. This would mean 4.08% per year, 20.4% at most for 5 years of early retirement, whereas the average EU penalisation stands between 3.6% and 6% per year of early retirement. The age at which one can choose early retirement and the full retirement age of women and men are being quickly brought into a balance (the age is increased by 6 months yearly instead of by 3 months as it was until now). The average pensionable service of a full retirement beneficiary is 32 years, that of an early retirement beneficiary 36 years, of the disability pension beneficiary 22 years, and that of a family pension beneficiary 27 years. The average pension service of all beneficiaries of pensions granted according to the Act on Pension Insurance¹⁷ equals to 30 years. The amount of years has in the last ten years gone up by one year. Although the average age for entering full retirement age and early retirement age has been gradually increasing, because of the gradual increase in average life expectancy, a tendency lasting many years also continues into 2016, whereby the average duration of pension liability has been also on the rise: the average full retirement pension liability lasts for 20 years and 5 months, the disability pension 18 years and 8 months, and the family pension 17 years and 10 months. The aforesaid gives justification for the change in the legal framework which entails modifications in the manner of penalisation of early retirement and shifting the bottom age limit for entering into early retirement.

¹⁷Official Gazette, Number: 157/13, 151/14, 33/15, 93/15

A comprehensive analysis of workplaces and professions¹⁸ has been made regarding pensionable service which is considered to have a longer duration, which is set to protect the employees working under especially difficult work conditions with respect to health and work ability. Occupational health and safety at work experts from the Croatian Institute for Health Protection and Safety at Work made an analysis together with representatives of competent ministries and social partners after inspecting several workplaces in order to familiarise themselves directly with the work conditions by implementing stipulated measures concerning safety at work and the well-foundedness of the established accelerated pension plan. It was a lengthy, complex and demanding task preceded by an analysis of available elaboration on the evaluation of risk based upon which certain workplaces were awarded the status, an analysis of data relating to the sick-leaves of employees performing difficult work and data on occupational diseases and accidents at work and beneficiaries of disability pensions. The National Reform Programme foresees in 2016 a 50% decrease in the total number of workplaces and professions in which the pensionable service is calculated in an extended duration. The performed analysis attested to this. The interdepartmental work group which consisted of representatives of ministries, social partners and a professional body continues its work to propose modifications to the existing legal framework.

The Ministry of Labour and Pension System shall, aided by the changes to relevant acts and interrelated regulations, prescribe the application of an enhanced algorithm of medicinal expertise based on guidelines and exact definition of objective diagnostic methods, specifically by examining the functional abilities of the insurance beneficiaries. There shall be a new systematization (graduation) of disability and corresponding new pension and social benefits harmonised with the changes in legislature and economy and the modern labour market in the Republic of Croatia and the EU.

6. HEALTH AND LONG-TERM CARE

To stipulate preventive actions, a National Programme has been launched in 2015, by the motto Live Healthy, alongside the National Programme of Early Detection of Visual Impairment and the National Programme of Health Protection of People with Diabetes 2015-2020.

6.1. Primary health protection

New IT tools for managing the outcome of treatments were introduced in 2015 and 2016 by a Decision on the grounds of concluding a contract on implementing health protection from the compulsory health insurance¹⁹: revision of medicines for people over 65 years of age who use 3 or more medicines on prescription in order to avoid unwanted medicine interaction, side effects and polypharmacy, conducting panels on the subject of dermatitis of children is being valued as an indicator of quality performance in pediatric practices on the primary health protection level, conducting of panels of pregnant women in gynecology practices on primary health protection level to discover early signs of pathological pregnancy is being valued as an indicator of work quality performance, rational prescribing of antibiotics is being valued as an indicator of work quality performance in general/family medicine, a panel for monitoring body weight index in cases when the preventive check-up established an increased body weight or undernourishment, and a panel on cardiovascular risks of the target population at the age between 40 and 65.

The application of these tools for preventive measures in primary health care will in the long term prove beneficial in relation to population health and will thereby lead to a reduction of health expenditures.

In the field of long-time medical attendance (care) on primary health protection level, within the scope of work of palliative care, means were introduced to facilitate the activities of a coordinator for palliative care with the aim to organize and coordinate all participants who provide palliative health care,

¹⁸ More on this subject: National Reform Programme for the year 2016; page 15

¹⁹ Official Gazette, Number: 156/13, 11/14, 12/14, 34/14, 54/14, 74/14, 106/14, 157/14, 25/15, 36/15, 69/15, 79/15, 82/15, 91/15

palliative care and attendance on the territory of one county. Each coordinator has available funds to form a mobile specialist team. This shall result in the optimisation and rationalisation of the system and adequate spending of disposable funds.

6.2. Secondary and tertiary health protection

In 2015, a new contracting model of clinical and specialist-consiliary health protection was introduced, whereby individual diagnostic-therapeutic groups (DTG) and diagnostic-therapeutic procedures (DTP) can be arranged. In clinical health protection the upfront payment as payment method is gradually abandoned, which is then replaced by payment after the performance of agreed procedures.

A monitoring of key performance index (KPI) is beginning to take hold within clinical health protection (number of insured persons per acute care beds in defined time periods and the total number of cases in specialist-consiliary health protection per health worker) along with the indicator of quality –QI (general mortality rate, percentage of day hospital treatment and the percentage of treatment by a reserve antibiotics in the total number of cases). These indexes led to the possibility of comparing health institutions of the same category, of tracking changes within the institution through a certain period of time, the aim of which is to stimulate a positive competition with regard to achieving quality performance in social protection. The aforementioned indexes are evaluated through contracts concluded in 2016.

6.3. Long-term care

A Strategy Plan for the Development of Palliative Care 2014-2016 is currently being implemented, which does not constitute the palliative care system as a primarily new/additional system, but it is being established based on a shift in the function of presently available resources, by backing up and providing professional training and setting up new procedures and work standards.

10 pilot projects in primary health protection (mobile teams) are currently in the implementation phase. These were agreed with the Croatian Institute for Health Insurance (hereinafter: CIHI) in the Primorje-Gorski kotar County, Istra County, Krapina-Zagorje County, Međimurje County, Osijek-Baranja County, Vukovar-Srijem County, Požega-Slavonija County, Dubrovnik-Neretva County and in the City of Zagreb, financed by funds for special CIHI programmes. Adhering to the Network of Public Health Service, the CIHI contracted 352 beds for palliative care within clinical health institutions and in one institution for palliative health care.

In relation to primary health protection and accessibility of care in the community, an out-of-hospital palliative care is administered through the activity of general/family medicine, on-site medical protection and health protection and health attendance in the patient's home. Along with the named activities and in compliance with the Changes and Amendments to the Network of Public Health Service²⁰ a network of coordinators of palliative care is planned at primary health protection level and in the field of palliative care, further, a network of 67 intensive care health centres and a network of 14 beds in the institution for palliative care. The health centre or the institution for home care chosen by the unit of regional self-government shall coordinate activities of palliative care at the level of the regional self-government.

An accessible prolonged treatment is being carried out in line with contracted hospital beds for long-term treatment and palliative care. Within the Network of Public Health Service, 352 beds are foreseen for palliative care: of which 215 beds are planned in general hospitals, 123 beds in special hospitals and 14 beds in the Institution for Palliative Health Care Hospice „Marija Krucifiksa Kozulić“.

²⁰Official Gazette, Number 113/15

7. EDUCATION

Measures defined within the field Education and Lifelong Learning, in line with the Strategy for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (2014 - 2020) are aimed towards establishing a system of equal opportunities for every child to receive education regardless of the social group to which he or she belongs. To that aim, all children are under obligation to attend pre-school. The number of children in one year preceding primary school, involved in the compulsory programme of attending pre-school in 2015, amounted to 41,691 children, producing the expenditure in the State Budget of a total of HRK 6,400,000.00. Further on, in the year 2015, the practice of co-financing the expenses of pupils of lower socio-economic status and pupils eligible to it on the basis of fulfilling special regulations has continued, whereby 24,630 pupils received free textbooks, producing the expenditure in the State Budget of HRK 15,315,107.52. We'd like to point out that in 2015, 74,000 pupils used co-financed/fully financed transport, which contributes to the increase of the total number of children enrolling and finishing secondary education, producing the expenditure in the State Budget of HRK 325,039,738.00.

7.1. Providing class assistants and professional communication mediators

The existing legislative framework of primary and secondary school teaching and education regulates the right of every child/pupil with developmental disorders to an adequate programme and education form, whenever it is possible in its surrounding, ensuring the required programme and professional support and the spacial, pedagogical-didactical adjustment, all this under recognition of the child's needs, interests, skills and abilities, conforming to all strategic documents by the RC and international documents it adopted. The MSES monitors and guarantees the right to education of 19,035 (5.89%) pupils with difficulties, who attend standard or special institutions and provides professional, programme-related and financial support to the system of teaching and education in order to foster equal opportunities for the complete inclusion of pupils with developmental disorders into the life of the community to which they belong. In March 2015, the Regulation on Teaching and Education of Pupils with Developmental Disorders in Primary and Secondary Schools²¹ was published, based on principles of inclusive education and an individualised approach (recognition and acceptance of every child's diversity and the adjustment of schools and education system to the child/pupil in order to facilitate the pupil's participation in everyday school life and local community). It offers education, primarily within the regular system, to every pupil with developmental disorders based on his/her skills, abilities, interests, affinities and needs (an individual methodological approach to every pupil). The implementation of the aforementioned Regulation will lead to a greater extent of the inclusion of children/pupils with developmental disorders into the regular system of teaching and education. Transport is guaranteed, along with the financing of special teaching material and tools, based on the Decision on the criteria for financing the increasing expenses of transport, special teaching materials and tools, and diet of pupils with developmental disorders.

7.2. Teaching and education in the language and writing of national minorities

Following positive ordinances of the RC, national minority members have the opportunity to receive education in their mother tongue, from pre-school to higher education. The education of pupils entirely in the language and writing of national minorities (model A) is making good advances, whereas the number of pupils in primary schools wishing to attend classes teaching the culture and language of national minorities (model C) is on the increase. The school curriculum created in the language and writing of national minorities has, in line with the Act on Teaching and Education in Primary and Secondary Schools²² and national pedagogical standards, a general part, but it also obligatorily entails a part, which has to do with the inherent features of national minorities (mother tongue, literature, history, geography and the cultural creativity of a national minority - arts and music). The part of the curriculum with inherent features of the national minority is being decided by the MSES after having obtained an opinion from associations of the national minority.

²¹ Official Gazette, Number 24/15

²² Official Gazette, Number: 87/08, 86/09, 92/10, 105/10, 90/11, 5/12, 16/12, 86/12, 126/12, 94/13, 152/14

With regard to education of members of the Roma community, there have been activities implemented, based on the National Roma Inclusion Strategy for the period from 2013 to 2020, with the goal to enhance access to quality education including primary, secondary and higher education, with special attention to eradicating possible segregation in schools, preventing early school drop-outs and facilitating an easier school-to-work transition. Children of the Roma community are guaranteed a place within pre-school programmes to bridge the gap between the socio-economic situation in which these children find themselves and the prospects for their successful integration during compulsory primary education. The pre-school programme/pre-school shows great results and demonstrates the necessity of organising pre-school teaching groups for all children of the Roma community. Measures outlined by the Action Plan (which includes co-financing of the parent's expenses, attending pre-school, after school care, offering scholarships to secondary school pupils, etc.) for children and pupils of the Roma community are carried out successfully.

8. SOCIAL PROTECTION AND THE MIGRANT CRISIS

During 2015, 211 asylum seekers and 5 persons under 18 without escort were registered in the RC. The RC continues to remain a transit country for asylum seekers, not a country of final destination. During the migrant crisis, the number of asylum seekers didn't increase until the end of 2015, although more than 660,000 migrants crossed the territory of the RC. However, between January and June 2016 their number increased considerably owing to the closing of the border on the West Balkan route. This was the reason why a certain number of migrants stayed in Croatia and couldn't continue the journey towards Western Europe. On top of that, the number of transfers increased in line with Dublin III Regulation (EU) No. 604/2013, as EU countries returned all migrants and asylum seekers who passed through Croatia during the migrant crisis.

The Act on International and Temporary Protection²³, in force since 2 July 2015, regulates the principles, conditions and the procedure of approval of international and temporary protection, status, rights and obligations of the applicants for international protection, asylum seekers, foreigners under subsidiary and temporary protection and the conditions and procedure of cessation of the granted asylum, subsidiary and temporary protection. The rights of these persons are also regulated by other acts as well as by-laws, for example by the Decision on a List of Safe Countries of Origin in the process of being approved international protection²⁴, which considers 10 countries „safe countries of origin“ in the process of approval of international protection.

Based on the Act on International and Temporary Protection, the Office of Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities of the Croatian Government (hereinafter: Office of the Government) coordinates the work of the Permanent Committee for Implementing the Integration of Foreigners into Croatian Society and corresponding Work Group formed by representatives of ministries and non-governmental organisations, and other entities participating in the procedure of integration of persons under international protection into Croatian society.

The RC also participates in the European Programme of Relocating and Moving Citizens of Third Countries or People without Citizenship, who fulfill requirements of a grant of international protection, in line with the conclusion of the European Council of 25 and 26 June 2015 and later decisions of the EU Council No. (EU) 2015/1523 of 14 September 2015 and No. (EU) 2015/1601 of 22 September 2015 and adhering to the Decision of the Croatian Government (16 July 2015) on relocating and moving citizens of third countries or people without citizenship who fulfill requirements of a grant of international protection. To comply with the aforesaid, the RC is under obligation to accept 1,580 people by September 2017, who shall be relocated or moved to its territory. Arising from the stated obligation, the RC issued a Decision (16 July 2015) on organising an interdepartmental work group to implement the Decision on relocating and moving citizens of third countries or people without

²³ Official Gazette, Number 70/15

²⁴ Official Gazette, Number 45/16

citizenship, who fulfill requirements of a grant of international protection. The interdepartmental work group then drafted an Operative Plan to implement the obligations of the Republic of Croatia in the European Programme of relocating and moving citizens of third countries or people without citizenship who fulfill requirements of a grant of international protection (the plan was coordinated by the Ministry of Exterior and European Affairs). The above document presents standard operative procedures and serves as a foundation for further elaboration of the activities of competent bodies of state government as it has been laid out in the Operative Plan.

In order to accomplish the best possible integration of foreigners into Croatian society, other documents were drawn up alongside the Operative Plan: An Action Plan Draft for the Integration of People Granted International Protection for a three-year-period²⁵, a Protocol Draft on Treatment of People Granted International Protection and an Action Plan Report Draft for Removing Obstacles in the Realisation of Certain Rights Pertaining to the Integration of Foreigners in the Period between 2013-2015 for the year 2015.

The aforesaid documents were supposed to be passed until end of June 2016, but considering the present situation (technical Government), they had to be delayed.

In October 2015, the *Guide on Integration of Aliens* was published in English and French (*Guide through Integration – Basic Information for the Integration of Aliens into Croatian Society*).

8.1. Rights of seekers of international protection within the social welfare system

A seeker of international protection²⁶ has a right to stay in Croatia from the day of claiming this right till until the decision upon the the request is enforceable. This right gives the person the freedom to move freely on the entire territory of Croatia, except in cases laid down by law when movement can be limited.

The family members of the seeker of international protection are also entitled to the right of stay. These persons have the right to an accommodation in the Reception Centre for asylum seekers, where they are provided with food and clothes, reimbursement of the costs of public transport for the purpose of securing a grant of international protection, and financial aid.

If the seeker of international protection has regular income in the amount higher than the minimal salary in Croatia, he/she may be asked to cover a part or the entire costs of accommodation. The seeker of international protection has a right to financial aid, except when he/she has an employment agreement and earns an appropriate income to secure an adequate standard of living, if he/she has the financial means or these are provided otherwise. If he/she has financial means of his/her own then he/she may find accommodation anywhere in Croatia at his/her expense, with prior approval obtained from the Ministry of Interior.

The seeker of international protection has the following rights: right to a procedure led in the language he/she understands, right to information on rights, liabilities and the procedure of granting international protection and legal counselling, right to health protection, compulsory and secondary education, free legal assistance before administrative court in the first instance, freedom of religion, work unless within nine months from the submission of application no decision was made, the seeker not being held accountable for it, and a right to name a special guardian to minors and to persons deprived of legal capacity in the procedures. All seekers of international protection are also entitled to free public transport in the City of Zagreb, and have a guaranteed accommodation in the Reception Centres for

²⁵Covers the following fields: social care and health protection, accommodation and housing, language learning and education, employment, international cooperation, interdepartmental cooperation and raising awareness about the problems of people granted international protection.

²⁶A seeker of international protection is a foreigner who makes a request for international protection, until the decision upon the the request is enforceable (source: Central State Portal).

asylum seekers in Kutina and Zagreb. 248 such persons are currently lodged in the Reception Centre in Zagreb and 58 in Kutina.

Minor seekers of international protection have a **right to a compulsory and secondary education under the same conditions as Croatian citizens**. In most cases, minors don't speak Croatian and they have the opportunity to attend preparatory or additional Croatian courses, as well as additional courses in certain subjects if needed. The school is set up close to the Reception Centre, so that minors don't have to use public transport. Five times a week, Croatian and English courses are held in the Reception Centre. Apart from courses, Reception Centre users are also entitled to free legal assistance twice a week, offered by the Croatian Legal Centre and the Croatian Centre for Peace Studies. Attendance of Croatian, history and cultural classes with the purpose of integration into the Croatian society is voluntary for the seekers of international protection.

Adhering to the Act on Compulsory Health Insurance and the Health Protection of Foreigners in the Republic of Croatia²⁷ (hereinafter: the Act), in force since 1 July 2013, the RC, provides, on the state budget account of the Ministry of Health, the funds for expenses arising from health protection to the seeker of international protection, foreigner under temporary protection, asylee, foreigner under subsidiary protection, minor foreigner located in the Republic of Croatia without parental care, that is without parental escort or escorted by any other adult person responsible to care for him/her, and to the foreigner staying illegally in the Republic of Croatia, lodged in the Reception Centre or whose forceful replacement had been temporarily put off or who was given a deadline for return.

The scope of right to health protection of special categories depends on the status of the foreigner in the Republic of Croatia. A seeker of international protection may then have the right to urgent medical assistance, while a foreigner under subsidiary protection and an asylee have the scope of right to health care as an insured person on grounds of the compulsory health insurance. A foreigner who is illegally staying in the Republic of Croatia has a right to urgent medical assistance, but has to cover health care expenses. Should they not be paid, these expenses are then covered by allocated funds from the state budget.

The Ministry of Health has been entering into one-year-contracts since 2014 with health centres in the Zagreb County and the City of Zagreb on mutual rights and obligations for providing services of urgent medical assistance for the seekers of international protection and foreigners who are staying illegally in the Republic of Croatia, addressing the needs of the Reception Centres for foreigners in Jezevo and the Reception Centre for asylum seekers in Zagreb. Since 2015, it has also concluded contracts with the Health Centre in Kutina to address the needs of the Reception Centre of asylum seekers in Kutina.

From 2015, a seeker of international protection who has been subject to torture, rape or suffered from other grave forms of violence, as well as a seeker of international protection with special needs, may receive psychological support from a doctor-psychiatrist in the health institution in Popovača – Neuropsychiatric Hospital „Dr. Ivan Barbot“, as the said categories of foreigners are lodged in the Reception Centre of asylum seekers in Kutina. The psychiatrist is thus insured according to the contract concluded with the mentioned health institution and provides health protection in the Reception Centre for asylum seekers in Kutina. Alongside doctors, the seekers of international protection are also treated by professionals – social workers. An Agreement is under way, drafted by the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Interior and the International Non-Governmental Organisation „Médecins du Monde“ with the aim to provide services of a medical nurse (4 times a week) and additional services of a doctor (3 times a week).

Changes and Amendments to the Act on Compulsory Health Insurance and Health Protection of Foreigners in the Republic of Croatia will be introduced in the 3rd quarter of 2016, with the aim of harmonisation with the EU *acquis communautaire* as well as to pass by-laws, the provisions of which will regulate manifested shortcomings in the health protection services offered to these persons.

²⁷Official Gazette, Number 80/13

8.2. Rights of persons under international protection within the social welfare system

Under the Act in force, persons granted international protection (asylees and foreigners under subsidiary protection) are entitled to various rights within the social welfare system to the same extent as Croatian citizens having residence in the Republic of Croatia.

Based on the Social Welfare Act²⁸, asylees and foreigners under subsidiary protection as well as Croatian citizens are provided with various kinds of right in the social welfare system, including social benefits in kind, financial benefits and social services laid down by law.

The rights exercised by asylees and foreigners under subsidiary protection are also valid with reference to the members of their family who live legally in the Republic of Croatia under conditions laid down by the Act and special regulation. Asylees and foreigners under subsidiary protection may at any given moment, after they have received the decision on the recognition of international protection, address competent institutions (Social Welfare Centers) to exercise their rights in the social welfare system. The access to rights isn't time limited, and it is the same as for Croatian citizens. The duration of the procedure depends on provisions of the Act on General Administrative Procedure and the decisions must be passed within legally set deadlines. Important to note: seekers of international protection don't have rights in the system of social welfare, but can exercise an exclusive right to a one-off benefit and temporary accommodation under terms laid down by the Act, if their living circumstances should demand this.

According to the Act on International and Temporary Protection²⁹ asylees and foreigners under subsidiary protection have a right to an accommodation. Accommodation is guaranteed up to a period of maximum two years from the day of the recognition of international protection (so, there is a time limitation, as the right to an accommodation starts to be valid from the exact defined time). The state budget covers the expenses of accommodation, whereas the funds are secured by the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth. According to actual practice, asylees and foreigners under subsidiary protection, having the right to an accommodation, are lodged in spaces belonging to the Government of the RC or spaces offered by private landlords. There is no regional dispersion planned at the moment, so that a person granted the right to an accommodation can freely decide where to reside within the RC. There were no considerable legislative changes within the reporting period, which would affect the exercise of rights in the system of social welfare or limit the scope of rights of asylees and foreigners under subsidiary protection. There have been no studies until now which would showcase how the potentially increased number of persons under international protection may influence the system of social welfare.

Considering employment, the CBE was in charge in the period between 2013 and 2015 of implementing measures in the field of the employment of foreigners, especially focusing on asylees and foreigners under subsidiary protection in the Action Plan for Removing Obstacles in the Realisation of Certain Rights Pertaining to the Integration of Foreigners in the Period between 2013 and 2015. The registration of asylees with the CBE is regulated by the Act on Mediation in Employment and Rights in the Period of Unemployment³⁰. The above Act defines that an asylee, foreigner under subsidiary protection or temporary protection in the Republic of Croatia can register with the CBE and will have equal rights and obligations laid down by this Act as a Croatian citizen. The asylee and foreigner under subsidiary protection shall register and enter his/her personal records with the regional/or local CBE office according to place of residence/address. The registration is carried out in person by handing in the *permit of stay* for an asylee/foreigner under subsidiary protection and stating basic information, like the date of birth, personal identification number or citizen identification number given by the Ministry of Interior (hereinafter: MI). In cooperation with the MI, a text in five languages has been published with the most relevant information regarding rights and obligations, which is distributed to asylees and foreigners under subsidiary protection on their first registration with the CBE.

²⁸ Official Gazette, broj: 157/13, 152/14, 99/15 i 52/16

²⁹ Official Gazette, broj 70/15

³⁰ Official Gazette, Number: 80/08, 94/09, 121/10, 25/12, 118/12, 12/13, revised text 153/13.

During this period continuous initiatives were held with the aim of providing information to foreigners about their rights and obligations in the employment system, all in the form of individual consultations. Between 1 January and 30 June 2016 a total of three persons having asylee status were involved in the programme of active employment measures and 101 persons having foreigner status (temporary permit of stay, permanent stay). With regard to the fact that the finalisation of the Action Plan for the Integration of Persons Granted International Protection for the Period from 2016 to 2018 is under way, a Protocol on Integration was made for the CBE in relation to the section Access to Labour Market, which defines the CBE's actions in cases of entering into their register of unemployed, preparations for employment, mediation in employment and involvement in the measures of the active employment policy.

Asylees, foreigners under subsidiary protection and foreigners under temporary protection have a **right to primary and secondary education** like Croatian citizens and can enrol into school institutions in the Republic of Croatia under the same conditions as Croatian citizens. Foreigners who are illegally staying in the Republic of Croatia also have a right to primary education and they shall be given the opportunity to attend classes in primary education if: they are lodged in the Reception Centre for Foreigners or their forceful replacement was temporarily delayed or they were given a deadline for return, within the same deadline. School education is free.

Following regulations are applied to that end:

- the Act on Teaching and Education in Primary and Secondary school³¹
- the Act on International and Temporary Protection³²
- the Protocol on conducting the programme and examining the knowledge of asylum seekers, asylees and foreigners under temporary protection and foreigners under subsidiary protection to enable entrance into the education system of the Republic of Croatia³³
- the Curriculum of Croatian language, history and culture for asylum seekers and asylees³⁴
- the Curriculum of Croatian language for preparatory class, for pupils of primary and secondary school who don't know or don't know Croatian language sufficiently³⁵
- the Curriculum of Croatian language for asylum seekers, asylees and foreigners under subsidiary protection over 15 years of age to join secondary education and the system of education of adults³⁶
- the Protocol on conducting preparatory and additional classes for pupils who have no command of Croatian or have insufficient knowledge of Croatian language, and classes of mother tongue and culture of the pupil's country of origin³⁷
- the Programme of learning Croatian language, history and culture for asylees and foreigners under subsidiary protection with the aim of their inclusion into Croatian society³⁸ - programme for adults.

The mentioned right includes learning of the Croatian language. Asylees and foreigners under subsidiary protection have the opportunity to learn Croatian according to the Programme of learning Croatian language, history and culture³⁹ with the aim of teaching them how to speak and write in Croatian for the purpose of living and working in the Republic of Croatia. From June 2015 Croatian has been taught in the following institutions: Language World – institution for educating adults in Zagreb; Public Open Learning Centre Velika Gorica; Public Open Learning Centre Kutina; Public Open Learning Centre Poreč, Secondary School for Industry and Crafts Pula, and School for Design, Graphics and Sustainable Building in Split. Programme participants acquire the basics of communication in everyday situations. From June 2015 to June 2016, about 40 pupils attended the Programme of learning Croatian language, history and culture. By comparing available national lists collected by ministry

³¹Official Gazette, Number: 87/08, 86/09, 92/10, 105/10, 90/11, 5/12, 16/12, 86/12. 94/2013. and 152/2014

³²Official Gazette, Number 70/15

³³Official Gazette, Number 89/08

³⁴Official Gazette, Number 129/09

³⁵Official Gazette, Number 151/11

³⁶Official Gazette, Number 100/12

³⁷Official Gazette, Number 15/13

³⁸Official Gazette, Number 154/14

³⁹Official Gazette, Number 154/14

departments and institutions that conduct the aforementioned Programme for persons who pursue their right to learn Croatian, certain irregularities were found considering the number of participants. The reasons for them are the following: change in the place of residence as opposed to the place where the classes of Croatian language are being held, transfer from one education group into another, leaving the Republic of Croatia, irregular attendance or withdrawing from attending classes. As the Act on International and Temporary Protection⁴⁰ clearly states that an asylee and foreigner under subsidiary protection is under obligation to attend classes of Croatian language, history and culture, in order that he/she may be included into Croatian society, in case of not fulfilling this obligation, the asylee or foreigner shall have to cover the class expenses to the ministry responsible for education.

In November and December 2015 two workshops were organized at the School of Graphics in Zagreb of providing psycho - social assistance to persons who work with children/pupils with migration background and persons who work with adults having asylee status or the status of foreigners under subsidiary protection. The workshops were organized according to the Programme of learning Croatian language, history and culture for asylees and foreigners under subsidiary protection⁴¹.

Every year, the Republic of Croatia celebrates the International Day of Refugees, on which occasion international organisations and non-governmental organisations promote the rights of refugees by holding public manifestations and presenting the culture of refugees. The event had media coverage during 2016.

⁴⁰Official Gazette, Number 70/15

⁴¹Official Gazette, Number 154/14