

THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND



Support to Education and Training: 2014-2018

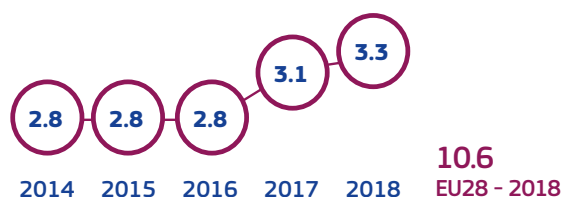
CROATIA

SUMMARY

ESF Thematic Objective 10 funding is used to support education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning. Over 529 million euro has been allocated to such projects in Croatia, with 43 991 participations having taken place by the end of 2018. This factsheet summarises the main actions, outputs, results and lessons learned so far in the use of this funding in Croatia.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

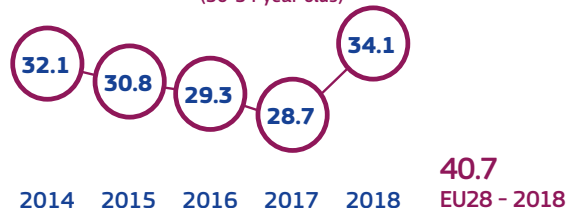
Early school leaving (ESL) rate (%)



► The rate of **early school leaving (ESL)** is very low in Croatia, and achieves the national target of 4% or lower, and easily achieves the EU2020 target of 10% or lower.

► The **tertiary educational attainment rate** rose from 24.5% in 2012 to 34.1% in 2018, but Croatia remains below the EU2020 target of 40%. In addition, the unemployment rate of those with tertiary qualifications is relatively high, partially linked to the fact that most students pursue degrees with low employability rates in humanities and social sciences.

Tertiary educational attainment rate (%)
(30-34 year olds)

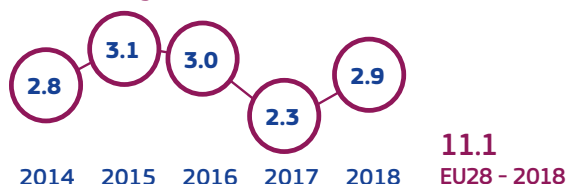


► The **limited participation of the adult population in education and training**, 2.9% in 2018 (well below the EU average), and the unsatisfactory level of quality and relevance of available programmes, are additional obstacles to labour force employability and qualification levels.

► **Educational achievements** in reading, mathematics and science were **below the OECD average** in 2015. Reforms are needed to change school teaching methodologies and to introduce continuous after school training.

► Curricula and programmes at all levels of education are often **outdated and not aligned with labour market demand**, especially in vocational education and training (VET).

Participation rate in education and training by adults
aged 25-64 (%) (last 4 weeks)



EXPLANATORY NOTES

ESF European Social Fund

TO10 Thematic Objective 10

OP Operational Programme

IP Investment Priority

* Figures present the situation for ESF operations under Thematic Objective 10 and its four Investment Priorities (IPs) for the programming period 2014-2020 implemented up to the end of 2018, as reported on 1 October 2019. In many instances, operations are not yet complete at this stage, or have only recently started.

* As one person could participate more than once in ESF operations over time, the number of participations is reported. These figures exclude Technical Assistance.

* Where the breakdown of participants according to employment status, age, and level of education does not add up to 100%, it means that it was not possible to include characteristics of a number of participants in some OPs.

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ESF PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS IN CROATIA

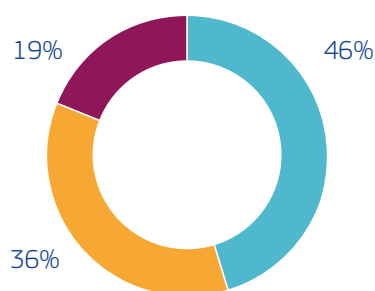
- ▶ There is **one** ESF Operational Programme (OP) in Croatia: '**Efficient Human Resources 2014-2020**'.
- ▶ The OP's priorities for education and training are:
 - ▶ to **encourage more students in STEM, ICT fields, in particular female students**, and in other areas identified by national economic development and industrial strategies.
 - ▶ to provide **incentives for improving work-based training systems**, developing VET sector curricula, and establishing national and regional centres for the improvement of quality assurance and in-service teacher training.
- ▶ support the establishment of a **comprehensive and sustainable system of inclusion of children with disabilities** in kindergarten and primary education, as well as in-service teacher training programmes for teachers and other staff working with students with disabilities.
- ▶ to support the **validation of informal learning and adult learners** to raise their qualification levels.

32% of total ESF funding¹...

€529 411 765

...is allocated to the following TO10 investment priorities: **access to quality tertiary education (46%)**, **access to lifelong learning (36%)**; and **improving the labour market relevance of education and training (19%)**.

Allocation of ESF TO10 funds



- Improving quality and access to tertiary education - IP10.ii
- Enhancing access to lifelong learning - IP10.iii
- Improving the labour market relevance of education and training - IP10.iv

STATE OF PLAY

The rate of allocation of the ESF TO10 budget is improving (up from 10% in 2016 to 48% in 2018), but the level of actual spending is among the very lowest in the EU.

Number of overall participations in TO10 programmes by the end of 2018:

43 991

- ▶ **16 224** participations in operations to improve the quality of and access to higher education. Most of them were below the age of 25 and inactive. This represents an achievement rate of 66%.
- ▶ **25 222** participations in operations to enhance access to lifelong learning. Most of them were below the age of 25, with primary and secondary education. This represents an achievement rate of 70%.
- ▶ **25 222** participations in operations to improve the labour market relevance of education and training. Most of them were employed and educated to tertiary level. This represents an achievement rate of 102%.

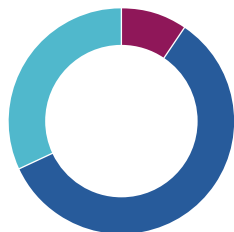
¹ This includes EU-only funding and co-financing from the Member State.

² The total does not add up to 100% due to rounding issues.

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PARTICIPANT PROFILES WHEN RECEIVING SUPPORT

Employment status



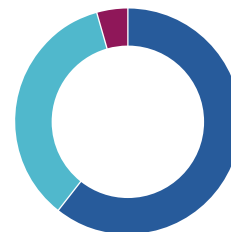
9% (4 080) Unemployed
55% (24 121) Inactive³
30% (13 312) Employed

Sex

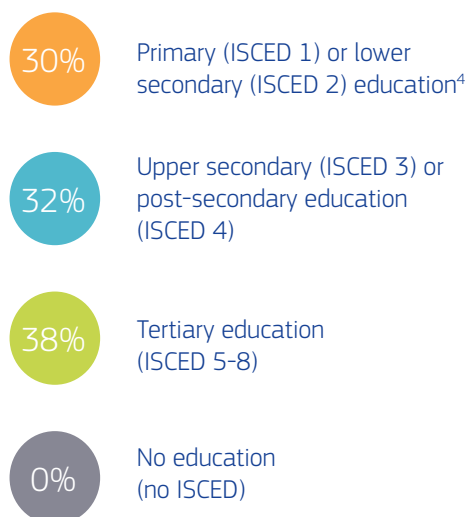
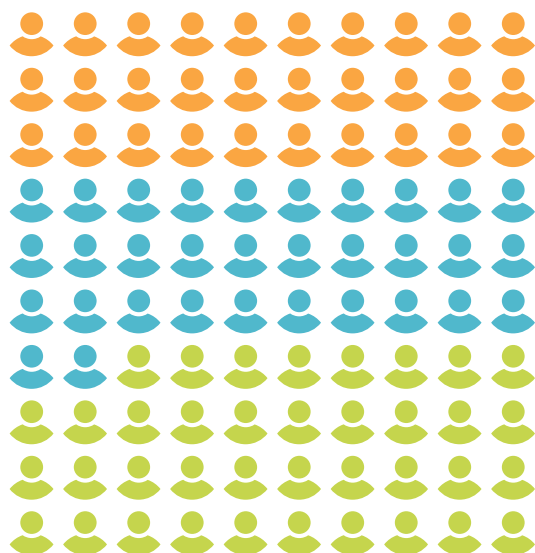


59% Women
41% Men

Age



57% (25 286) <25 years
33% (14 465) 25-54 years
4% (1 666) >54 years



2 272
Migrants

63
Other disadvantaged

4 968
Participants with disabilities

55
Homeless

Key achievements to date of ESF T010 operations in Croatia include⁵:

- ▶ **4 993** successful results have been achieved to date following participation in an activity funded by ESF T010, of which:
 - ▶ **3 131** inactive participants went on to engage in job searching
 - ▶ **658** participants went into education or training
 - ▶ **847** participants gained a qualification
 - ▶ **357** participants moved into employment
 - ▶ **730** participants had an improved labour market situation six months after leaving their project.

³ The inactive population can include pre-school children, school children, students, pensioners and housewives or -men, for example, provided that they are not working and not available or looking for work.

⁴ ISCED is the UN reference classification for organising education programmes and related qualifications by education levels and fields.

⁵ Participants' data are collected when starting an operation. Data on results are collected at the end of an operation or even later. Because of this time lag the two sets of data (participations and results) should not be directly compared.

LESSONS LEARNED SO FAR

► Coherence with country specific recommendations (CSRs)

The OP strategy aligns clearly with the CSRs for Croatia which focus on measures to improve the labour market relevance and quality of education outcomes by modernising the qualification systems, by putting in place quality assurance mechanisms and by improving school-to-work transitions, notably through strengthening vocational education and work-based learning.

► Coherence with other European Structural and Investment funds

ESF TO10 projects in Croatia are coherent with other strands of ESF funding. There is also good coherence with the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) in terms of boosting opportunities for young people and facilitating their labour market inclusion, and with the ERDF in developing the STEM fields, adequate labour skills and ICT in schools.

► Need for simpler reporting systems

Key challenges in progressing the implementation of ESF TO10 projects include the need to simplify further management procedures and to reduce administrative steps and requirements. The preparation and development of a unified contract management and reporting information system – eFunds – should ensure faster and more efficient communication between different stakeholders in ESF projects in Croatia.

► Capacity challenges

In order to improve the efficient selection and implementation of projects, managing and control authorities in Croatia require more capacity. This includes additional management staff and the provision of on-the-job training in ESF procedures and management practices.

► Impact on digital education

Combined ESF and ERDF funding has allowed the implementation of a major digital education reform in Croatia through the combination of the 'e-Schools' project, piloted in 151 schools and currently being rolled out across the whole country, and the Curricular reform project, first piloted in 74 schools and now being progressively implemented in all schools. Implementation of both projects is planned to finish in 2022.

PROJECT EXAMPLES

► E-schools

ESF is supporting the development of digital maturity of schools and digitally competent teachers to ensure they are prepared for the application of ICT innovations in their own pedagogical practices. ESF funds are contributing to the wider e-Schools initiative which is aiming to increase information and communication technology (ICT) use in primary and secondary education in Croatia by providing ICT equipment and educational tools for schools and teachers.

► IURISPRUDENTIA

The project aims to improve the quality of education at law faculties of Osijek, Rijeka and Split universities. It develops qualification standards for integrated undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and for professional administrative programmes. It also aims to develop partial occupational standards.

► Qualifications framework

The project develops occupational standards and qualifications for teachers in line with the implementation of the Croatian Qualifications Framework. The project concentrates in particular on teachers of IT, physics, biology, chemistry and mathematics.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

European Commission, Study Supporting the Evaluation of ESF support to education and training (Thematic Objective 10)

Evaluation Plan of the Operational Program Effective Human Resources 2014-2020: http://www.esf.hr/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Evaluacijski_plan_2014-2020_izmjene_2019.pdf

The ESF in Croatia: <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=383&langId=en>

Website of the ESF in Croatia: <http://www.esf.hr/europski-socijalni-fond/razdoblje-2014-2020/>

