



Youth Wiki national description

Youth policies in Croatia

2017

The Youth Wiki is Europe's online encyclopaedia in the area of national youth policies. The platform is a comprehensive database of national structures, policies and actions supporting young people. For the updated version of this national description, please visit <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/youthwiki>

Croatia

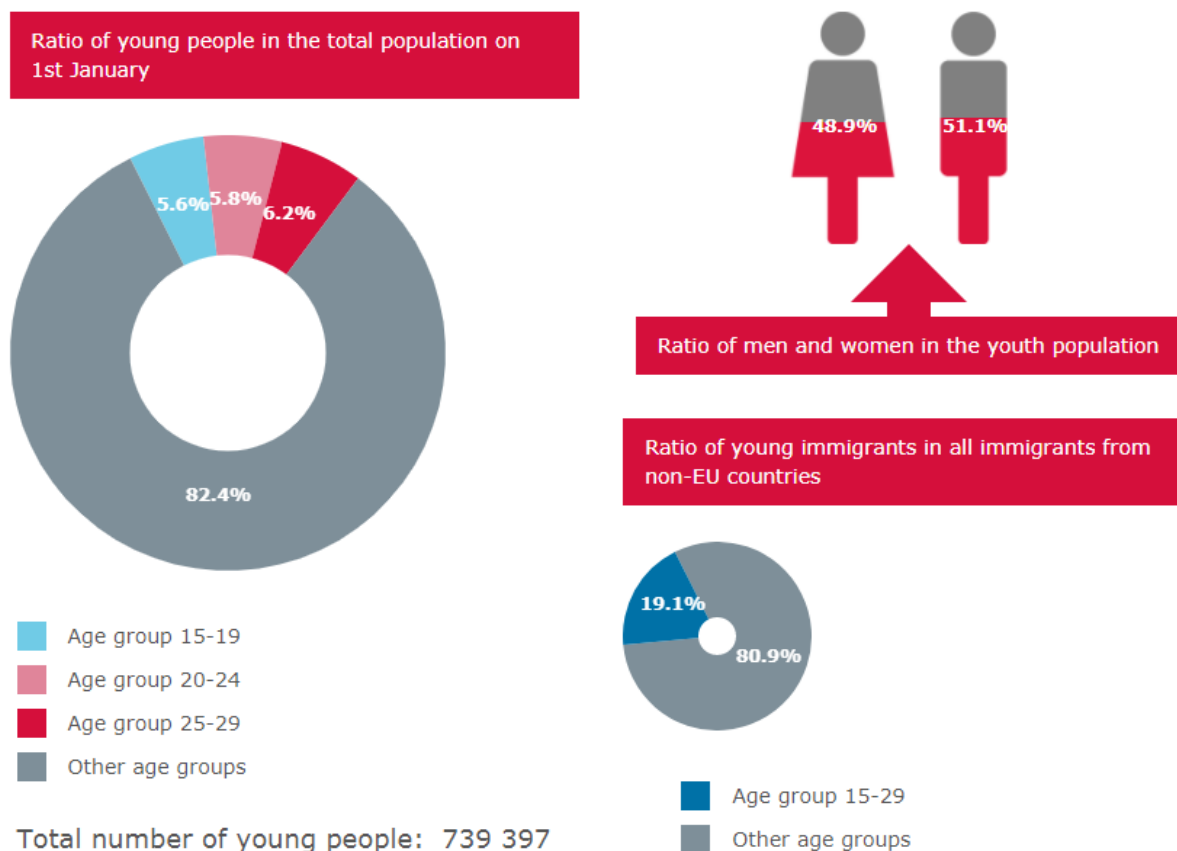
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Overview

Young People in Croatia



References:

Ratio (%) of young people in the total population (2016): Eurostat, yth_demo_020 [data extracted on 21/09/2017]

Absolute number of young people on 1 January for the age group 15-29 (2016): Eurostat, yth_demo_010 [data extracted on 21/09/2017]

Ratio (%) of men and women in the youth population (2016): Eurostat, yth_demo_020 [data extracted on 21/09/2017]

Young immigrants from non-EU countries (2015): Eurostat, yth_demo_070 [data extracted on 21/09/2017]

Youth Policy in Croatia

National youth policy falls within the scope of the Ministry for [Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy](#) and is regulated by the department of youth within this ministry. Even though recognized as a unique field, youth policy is still a shared domain across other ministries, predominantly [Ministry of Science and Education](#) and [Ministry of Labour and Pension System](#).

The needs, potentials and possibilities for young people are not defined nor supported by the Law on Youth but with the strategy ([The National Youth Strategy](#)) which is considered to be the focal point for youth policy in Croatia. Nevertheless, the only normative act within the youth field is the [Law on Youth Advisory Boards](#) which conceptualizes the basic aspects of local youth policy.

Youth policy is made through the participatory process of consultation with relevant youth organization and tends to be supported in evidences produced by scientific research.

In Croatia, the share of young people, aged 15–30 is declining, while at the beginning of the 1990s there was around 21%, according to the last census (2011) there the share of young people in the population is around 18,6%.

1. Youth Policy Governance

Youth policy in Croatia is coordinated by the [Ministry for Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy](#). Apart from that ministry, the youth Council of the Government of Croatia, consisting out of governmental officials, youth organizations and academic community supervises and supports the development of youth policy.

Despite the lack of the law on youth, there is a [National Program For Youth](#) which comperhends objectives and meassures which Croatian state understands as relevant for young people in Croatia.

At the local level there are youth advisroy boards which jurisdiction, scope and obligations are stipulated at the [Law on Youth Advisry Boards](#).

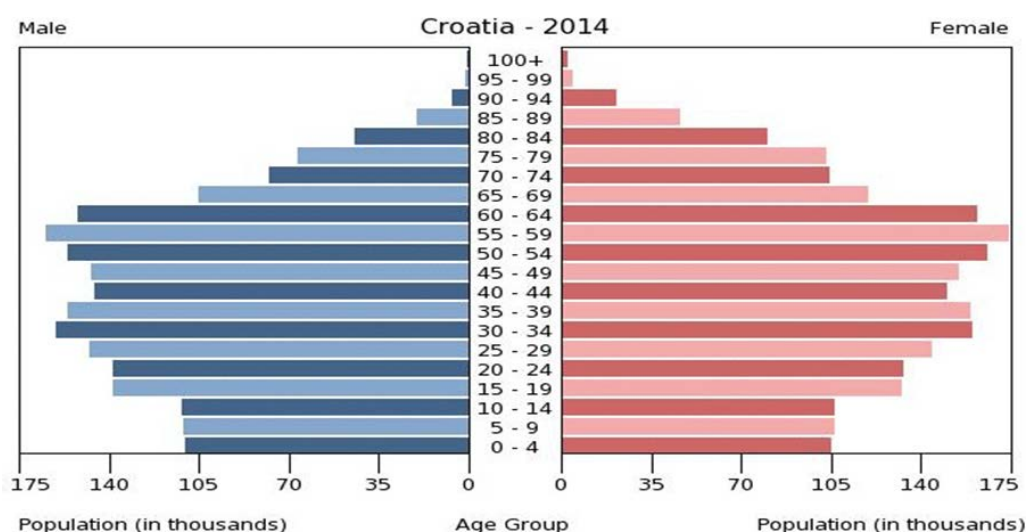
1.1 Target population of youth policy

Pursuant to the [National Youth Programme for the Period from 2014 to 2017](#), 'youth' in the Republic of Croatia refers to those persons between the ages of 15 and 30.

According to the data provided by the Census made in 2011, the youth represents 18.6% of total population in Croatia (794,901 people). Table 1 shows an overview of youth in the Republic of Croatia by age and gender.

	2011		
	TOTAL	MEN	WOMEN
15-19	244177	124918	119259
20-24	261658	133455	128203
25-29	289066	147416	141650

However, the share of young people in the general population has been decreasing in the last few decades. Namely, in 1953, this share was 27.7%, in 2001 it was 20.3%, and the negative demographic picture and the fact that according to the last census of the population in the Republic of Croatia in 2011 there were only 652.428 children (from 0-14 years) indicates that number of young people downtrend in the general population will continue.



the age-gender pyramid

1.2 National youth law

Existence of a National Youth Law

There is no Youth Law in the Republic of Croatia

Scope and contents

Revisions/updates

1.3 National youth strategy

Existence of a National Youth Strategy

In October 2014, the Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted the third youth strategy in the Republic of Croatia entitled [National Youth Program for the Period from 2014 to 2017](#).

During 2013 and 2014 researchers conducted a **research "Needs, problems and potentials of youth in the Republic of Croatia"**. The recommendations derived from this research have greatly influenced the content of the current strategy and/or enabled that, for the first time, we have an evidence-based strategy for young people.

The **aim** of this National Program is to improve the activities of state administration bodies and public institutions that, through their scope and responsibilities, contribute to meeting the needs of young people and improving the quality of their lives for the purpose of their optimal social integration.

The National Work Program contains exclusively those measures and activities that are not covered by other strategic documents (e.g. the Croatian Qualifications Framework Act, the Primary and Secondary School Education Act, the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Science of Education and Sport for 2013 to 2015 is considered for the field of education; the Entrepreneurship Development Strategy in the Republic of Croatia 2013-2020, the Youth Guarantee Implementation, [Act on Employment Mediation and Unemployment Rights](#), the Act on Promotion of Employment for the field of employment and entrepreneurship; the National Health Development Strategy 2012-2020 and the National Strategy on Combating Narcotic Drug Abuse in the Republic of Croatia 2012-2017 for the field of health.

Scope and contents

The document contains 7 priority areas with 40 measures and 118 tasks, for which 17 state administration bodies are in charge. The document also contains recommendations to local and regional self-government units.

The proposed measures and tasks within each area precede the analytical framework as the starting point for their conceptualization.

PRIORITY AREA	SPECIFIC GOALS
Education, professional training and life-long learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educate young people for active citizenship and non-violence Create institutional preconditions for improving youth work Contributing to the competitiveness of young people in the labour market
Employment and entrepreneurship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate the integration of young people into the labour market
Social protection and inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine and systematically use risk of social exclusion for collecting data on youth Make key stakeholders of youth policies,

	<p>in education, employment, health and social care systems, more sensitive and more effective in meeting the needs of different categories of youth at risk of social exclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the support system for young people at risk of social exclusion
Health and health care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the institutional prerequisites for the work of polyvalent counselling centres for young people • Improve the multidisciplinary approach in the implementation of health education
Active participation of young people in society and politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a stimulating environment for the work and activities of youth and for-youth organizations • Ensure the active participation of young people in decision-making processes • Increase the number, quality and availability of volunteer programs for young people
Youth and culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More cultural contents in the educational system, through formal and informal programs from contemporary cultural and artistic practices, for which should ensure continuous financial support • Facilitate all young people, especially young people at risk of social exclusion, access to culture and cultural content • Ensure growth in financial support and increase the number of cultural and media programs and youth activities for young people • To ensure the diversity, development and stability of spatial resources for the implementation of programs and activities of youth and for-youth culture • Provide an analytical and research basis for action in the field of needs, problems and potentials of young people in culture
Youth in the European and global context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a system of support for young people to participate in decision-making processes at the European and global level • Increase the educational, cultural and tourist mobility of young people at the national, European and global levels

Responsible authority for the implementation of the Youth Strategy

The Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy is in charge of:

- developing a strategy for young people,
- implementing measures under its jurisdiction,
- coordinating the implementation of measures,
- preparing the annual report on the implementation of the strategy for young people and referral to the Government of the Republic of Croatia for its adoption,
- ensuring the implementation of the external evaluation of the implementation and the effects of the strategy after the expiry of the strategy.

For the implementation of measure, concerning the competencies, the main designated competent authorities also are: the Ministry of Science and Education, the Ministry of Labour and the Pension System, the Ministry of Economy, Entrepreneurship and Crafts,

the Ministry of Regional Development and EU funds, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of State Property, the Ministry of Health, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, the Ministry of Culture and the State Electoral Commission.

The National Youth Program for the Period from 2014 to 2017 is not part of a general, national development policy, but it is a separate strategy.

Revisions/updates

There are no revisions or updates for the strategy.

1.4 Youth policy decision-making

Structure of Decision-making

Youth policy-making takes place primarily at a central government level. The main responsibility for youth policy lies within the [Ministry for Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy, Parliamentary Committee for Family, Youth and Sport](#).

Apart from the central government, regional and local self-government units also coordinate local and regional youth policy even though this is not explicitly stipulated at the [Law on Local and Regional Self-government](#).

Youth Council of the Croatian Government

The Youth Council is an interdepartmental advisory body of the Government of Croatia purposed to participate in developing youth public policies.

The Youth Council:

- monitors the work of ministries and other state administration bodies in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of youth policies within their jurisdictions and, in this context, provides opinions and recommendations.
- monitors the development of youth organisations and provides recommendations for the improvement of their work and support systems
- provides recommendations for the development of youth policies at the local, regional, national and European levels
- monitors and reacts to phenomena in the society that are significant for youth.

Members of the Youth Council are representatives of relevant government bodies, representatives of scientific institutions, county associations,

- **Local level**

Local and regional self-government

The Republic of Croatia consists of 21 counties (including the City of Zagreb), 127 towns and 429 municipalities. Pursuant to the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia and the [Law on Local and Regional Self-Government](#) (Official Gazette 33/01, 60/01, 129/05, 109/07, 125/08, 36/09, 36/09, 150/11, 144/12, 19/13, 137/15), counties, cities and municipalities are independent in deciding on affairs from their self-governing sphere.

The implementation of measures established in the National Youth Program 2014-2017 is not mandatory for local and regional self-government given their autonomy.

Counties, towns and municipalities decide independently on the financial means that will be provided annually for the implementation of various youth-targeted activities.

However, the Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy has, for the last few years, provided certain funds intended for the preparation of local and regional youth programs in accordance with the specific interests and needs of young people in a specific area.

The National Youth Program 2014-2017 contains **Recommendations to local and regional self-government units** inviting them to work in partnership with the state and civil society organizations in achieving the goals and carrying out activities for the benefit of the youth mentioned in the document.

Counties, towns and municipalities are encouraged to:

- develop, implement and monitor the implementation of their local or regional (regional) youth programs
- Find ways to provide adequate facilities for the implementation of youth and for-youth activities, sports, cultural, educational and similar programs to benefit the community where young people live
- initiate, support and, pursuant their possibilities, co-finance the establishment and operation of youth and for-youth associations, initiatives and informal youth groups in their area; youth associations and youth initiatives, which through their actions encourage the participation of young people in social decision-making and offer them information and education in the said area; inclusion of young people and their associations in the activities of local and regional self-government units, especially the involvement of young people in making all decisions that concern them directly; programs and projects of youth associations and youth that contribute to the goals of the National Youth Program and specific local and regional youth program; programs and projects for cooperation with other associations of youth and for-youth in Croatia and abroad; youth and student information and education media at the local level; projects of establishment and operation of youth clubs at the local level, info centres for youth at the county and local levels and youth centres.

The implementation of recommendation by counties, towns and municipalities is a part of every annual report on the implementation of the National Youth Program submitted by the Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy to the Government of the Republic of Croatia for adoption.

Youth Advisory Boards

The Youth Advisory Boards are advisory bodies of local and regional self-government units that promote and advocate the rights, needs and interests of young people at local and regional level. They are established based on the [Youth Advisory Boards Act \(OG 41/14\)](#), and their members and deputy members are elected for a term of three years.

The Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy oversees the implementation of the Youth Act and gives recommendations to counties, towns and municipalities for its more effective implementation.

Main Themes

The priority areas of the National Youth Program for the period 2014-2017 are determined on the basis of:

- results and recommendations from the research "The needs, problems and potentials of young people in the Republic of Croatia" conducted in 2013 and 2014,
- analyses of valid strategic documents in the Republic of Croatia (the Croatian Qualifications Framework Act, the Primary and Secondary School Education Act, the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Science of Education and Sport for 2013 to 2015 is considered for the field of education; the Entrepreneurship Development Strategy in the Republic of Croatia 2013-2020, the Youth Guarantee Implementation, [Act on Employment Mediation and Unemployment Rights](#), the Act on Promotion of Employment for the field of employment and entrepreneurship; the National Health Development Strategy 2012-2020 and the National Strategy on Combating Narcotic Drug Abuse in the Republic of Croatia 2012-2017 for the field of health.),
- the results of the evaluation of the previous national youth programs, and
- European Commission and Council documents relating to youth, including the EU Youth Strategy.

The National Agency for Youth

The Republic of Croatia has no National Agency for Youth, however there is a National Erasmus+ agency - [Agency for Mobility and the EU funds](#) which actively participates in the youth policy framework.

Policy monitoring and evaluation

Local self-government units are obliged by the [Law on Youth Advisory boards](#) to annually submit a reports on the youth advisory boards program.

In December 2017, for the first time there will be evaluation of the National Youth Strategy conducted by the independent youth researcher.

1.5 Cross-sectoral approach with other ministries

Mechanisms and actors

In the Republic of Croatia, cross-sectoral policy making for youth is based on co-ordination. The ministry responsible for youth is the initiator and coordinator of the youth strategy development. The ministry responsible for youth set up several working groups for the purpose of drafting a valid youth strategy, depending on the priority area. In practice, this meant that the goals, measures, and activities were defined by the representatives of the ministry responsible for the priority area, but in cooperation with youth and for-youth associations working in the respected field as well as representatives of relevant scientific institutions.

Upon completion of drafting a Youth Strategy, it was delivered to all proposed designated competent authorities for additional reading and consent. Having received all the approvals thereof, it was sent firstly to the [Youth Council of the Republic of Croatia](#), and then to the Government of the Republic of Croatia for adoption.

1.6 Evidence-based youth policy

Political Commitment to Evidence-Based Youth Policy

The creation of youth policies in Croatia is being carried out, as stated in the National Youth Program, in line with the recommendations of the European Union and the good practice of the Council of Europe in drafting documents whereby public policies are defined on knowledge-based and evidence-based policy. All policy documents within the framework of policies for young people are based on official statistics, the results of scientific research on youth, the documents of the European Commission and the Council of Europe relating to youth and strategic documents of the Government of the Republic of Croatia in relevant areas. It should be noted that there have always been involved members of the academic community dealing with youth in all expert working groups for the creation, definition, regulation or analysis of any of the youth policy segments.

Cooperation between policy-making and research

There are three mode of co-operation between the research public and policy decision makers. The first modus is doing a research that serves as the basis for the development of normative and other documents related to youth policy. Since 2000, such analyses have been made for the writing of national youth programs, the Youth Act, the Youth Advisory Board Act, and a research to define a work with young people is currently underway. The second mode of cooperation is involving a scientific public in the process of drafting the mentioned documents, i.e. appointing researchers to expert working groups related to youth policy. Since 2000, members of the academic community dealing with youth have been members of all working groups for drafting normative acts. The third mode of cooperation concerns consultations of policy makers and researchers whose scientific interest focuses on a specific aspect of youth policy.

National Statistics and available data source

Croatian Bureau of Statistics; [census 2011](#)

[Institute for Social Research, Center for Youth and Gender Studies](#)

Budgetary Allocations supporting research in the youth field

For 2017 there has been 20.000 kuna allocated for the evaluation of the National Youth Strategy

1.7 Funding youth policy

How Youth policy is funded

At the end of each year, the Government of the Republic of Croatia drafts a proposal for the State Budget for the next year and discuss thereof at the Croatian Parliament. Once the Croatian Parliament adopts the **State Budget**, the Croatian Government can use it. The State Budget contains a line of the ministry responsible for youth of a budget item relating to the implementation of youth policy.

Other ministries responsible for the implementation of certain measures from the National Youth Program do not have special line items for the implementation of these measures, but the funds are in budgetary positions that are specific to their competence.

Financial resources for the implementation of the National Youth Program are ensured not only from the State Budget but also those provided on the basis of the **Decree on the criteria for defining beneficiaries and ways of allocation of a portion of proceeds from games of chance**. The Government of the Republic of Croatia shall adopt the Decree at the beginning of each year for the current year.

The budget in 2015

Table shows the financial resources available to the ministry responsible for youth in 2015

	State Budget	Proceeds from game of chance
Year 2015	HRK 3,985,700.00 (EUR 531,426.00)	HRK 4,283,736.00 (EUR 571,165.00)

The budget in 2016

Table shows the financial resources available to the ministry responsible for youth in 2016.

	State Budget	Proceeds from game of chance
Year 2016	HRK 3,385,700.00 (EUR 451,426.00)	HRK 3,172,584.00 (EUR 423,011.00)

What is funded?

A Call for Proposals of Youth-Oriented Projects **in 2015, financed 28 programs** (14 youth clubs, 4 regional info-centres for youth, 3 youth mobility programs and 7 youth-focused programs in NEET status) and 41 (14 projects focusing on active participation of young people in society, 12 local info centres for young people, 8 local and regional youth programs and 7 projects focused on entrepreneurship training and employment only). The total amount for programs and projects in 2015 amounted to 6,886,881.00 HKN (for programmes 3,992,475.00 HRK, and projects 2,894,406.00 HRK).

Under the Call for Proposals of Youth-Oriented Projects **in 2016, it was continued financing for 28 programs** (14 youth clubs, 4 regional info-centres for youth, 3 youth

mobility programs and 7 youth-focused programs in NEET status) and 51 projects were financed (17 projects focusing on active participation of young people in society, 10 local info centres for young people, 13 local and regional youth programs and 11 projects focused on entrepreneurship training and employment).

Total amount for projects in 2016 amounted to 4,300,000.00 HRK, and for the second year of project implementation was allocated 3,992,475.00 HRK. For 2017, besides financial support for youth-targeted projects and programs provided through State Budget funds and games of chance, 12,000,000.00 HRK will be provided through the European Social Fund and for the "Support for Youth-oriented Programs" tender.

The specific objectives of the above mentioned tenders, which are to contribute to increasing the employability of young people are:

1. Increase information and the provision of counselling services on relevant topics to youth
2. Improvement of social skills and competences that contribute to competitiveness in the labour market and social inclusion of young people

Target groups of the tender include, *inter alia*, unemployed young people aged 15 to 30, including long-term unemployed young people.

The above-mentioned tenders specifically define **activities** relevant to the actual theme, as follows which are:

1. activities aimed at the development of social skills, working habits and other skills that increase the competitiveness of young people in the labour market, and tools and models of cooperation with employers and educational institutions,
2. activities oriented towards activating young people in NEET status (youth who are not in education, employment or training systems) and programs oriented towards an informal education of young people to acquire relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes (from foreign language courses, self-defence, internet safety, training on human rights issues, non-violent conflict resolution and so on),
3. activities oriented towards preventing social exclusion of young people through the development and implementation of counselling, education and information programs aimed at personal and professional development of young people at risk of social exclusion, strengthening peer support for young people at risk of social exclusion, raising public awareness of risks and problems of socially excluded youth, and
4. activities oriented towards information and education about self-employment and social entrepreneurship.

Financial accountability

All who have applied for youth policy funds, and received funds, are

- Responsible of reporting on the funds used (accounting report).
- To report if the main goals of the project/program applied for were achieved.

Use of EU Funds

By 2017, funds from the EU funds have not been used for the implementation of the National Youth Program for the Period from 2014 to 2017.

Some youth and for-youth associations use funds from the EU funds.

The EU funds used are:

Erasmus+

The Agency for Mobility and European Union Programs (hereinafter referred to as the: Agency) was established by the Act on the Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes (OG 107/2007, hereinafter: the Act on the Agency) as a public institution with jurisdiction to implement programmes of the European Union program - Lifelong Learning Program and Youth in Action Program, in accordance with the negotiating position under the Accession

Negotiations of the Republic of Croatia and the European Union in Chapter 26, Education and Culture.

The Memorandum of Understanding between the Republic of Croatia and the European Union on the participation of the Republic of Croatia in the Youth in Action Program and the Lifelong Learning Program 2007-2013 (Official Gazette - International Agreements, No. 4/2011) was signed on 7 December 2010, thus completing the preparatory phase, and since 2011 the full participation of the Republic of Croatia in the mentioned programs with equal rights and opportunities as well as for the member states of the European Union and other countries of full participation of the program began. Memorandum of Understanding entered into force on 30 March 2011.

The Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy carries out the tasks of the national body responsible for ensuring the implementation of this program in the field of youth.

In 2016, an amount EUR 2,759,945.10 was spent for the youth field.

The European Social Fund

For the year 2017, HRK 12,000,000.00 will be provided through the European Social Fund, and for the "Support to Youth-Oriented Programs" call.

1.8 Cross-border cooperation

Cooperation with European countries

A Memorandum on cooperation in the youth sector was signed between the Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy of the Republic of Croatia and the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine.

International cooperation

Council of Europe

The Republic of Croatia has its representative in the European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ). The representative of the Republic of Croatia in the CDEJ was elected member of the CDEJ Bureau for a two year term (2016 - 2017).

EU

The Republic of Croatia regularly participates in meetings of the Youth Working Party (K2) at EU level, as well as in the Youth Conferences and DG Meetings.

The Youth Department of the Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy has two representatives in the National Works Group for the Implementation of Structured Dialogue in the Republic of Croatia.

The Republic of Croatia is a signatory of the Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility through the Youth Card and it is a member of the Board of Coordination of the Partial Agreement.

Bilateral agreements

A Memorandum on cooperation in the youth sector was signed between the Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy of the Republic of Croatia and the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Azerbaijan Republic.

The Government of the Republic of Croatia signed a Memorandum of Understanding concerning Youth Mobility with the Government of Canada.

1.9 Current debates and reforms

In November 2017 a national expert group for the drafting of the new National Youth Program has been formed. It is expected for the new National Youth Program to be confirmed by the government in the first half of 2018.

2. Voluntary Activities

In Croatia there is no Law on Youth Volunteering but there is an [Act on Volunteering](#) where there is the official definition reads: "as an investment of personal time, effort, knowledge and skills out of free will with which services and activities are executed for the well-being of another person or wider public, without existence of any conditions of providing a financial reward or seeking any other material benefit for volunteering accomplished".

The main actor involved in making decisions in the field of youth volunteering is the [Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy](#). This ministry coordinates [National Committee for the Development of Volunteerism](#), an advisory body of the Government of the Republic of Croatia that implements measures and activities aimed to promoting volunteering and work on its development.

2.1 General context

Historical developments

Croatian society inherited tradition of various forms of volunteering whilst being attached to the Church at the beginning of 20th century. During the period of socialism, volunteering was related to sport and culture, and the more present was traditional organising of citizens in volunteer fire-fighting associations (Bežovan, 2004). Historical development of volunteering in Croatia as a research topic is neglected, and this can be said for research interest in volunteering today as well. There are researches of regional and local character that give a very fragmented picture of the situation, dynamics and aspects of volunteering, whereat young volunteering is marginal and insufficiently explored. National research of specifically young populations only began in the previous decade with the study of the widespread volunteering and, in some cases, the types of volunteering.

According to the 2008 European Value Survey conducted among general population in Croatia, there are only 8.3% volunteers, the most of whom are active in religious organizations (5.3%), in educational and cultural activities (3.5%), and sports and recreational organizations (2.3%) (Bežovan and Matančević, 2011). A significant drop in the number of volunteers compared to 1999 may be discussed, when according to the same survey there were 21.3% of them. The authors find causes of this decline in the tradition of informal voluntary work, the widespread economic (non) opportunities, the lack of adequate information and, in the still insufficiently adequate relationship of the society towards voluntary work (Bežovan and Matančević, 2011). Responsibility for a low percentage of volunteering at the individual level is limited. Namely, practicing civic virtues in the form of voluntary work should not be directed only to organizations that already have poorly developed programs for the involvement of volunteers. In other words, the closure of state and public institutions has been detected with regard to the inclusion of this type of work in the area of its activity. In addition, the economic crisis has further directed people to engagement within the circle of family and friends (Bežovan, 2004). It is to assume that the lack of satisfactory functioning of some institutions that should take care of and help the citizens in need contributes thereto.

This situation is related to the overall dynamics of civil society characterized by weak civil participation, lack of trust among citizens, and partly inadequate public institutions'

relations with civil society organizations as well (Zrinščak, Lakoš et al., 2012). Still Zrinščak, Lakoš et al. (2012) state that the development of volunteering over the last decade is evident, and that Croatia is more similar to Slovenia and the Czech Republic on this issue, and/or countries of the Central European circle of more developed civil society than those of the underdeveloped ones such as Serbia, Georgia and Ukraine.

Volunteering can have the features of formalization and informalization. Formal volunteering has the characteristics of contractual relations within the organizational structure and carries therein the authority of the organization, and partly the professional knowledge. The latter is less structured and contains the sense of responsibility borne by the individual social role of friends, neighbours or citizens (Onyx and Leonard, 2002). When it comes to informal forms of volunteering among young people, there is no reliable comprehensive data in Croatia, but there are some recent researches that give a picture thereof ([Ilišin et al., 2013](#)).

According to recent research, 60% of young people have never volunteered, 32% sometimes and 7.8% often volunteered, suggesting a relatively weak presence of volunteer activities among young people (Youth Research of the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth, 2013). According to the youth research data ([Ilišin et al., 2013](#)), the experience of volunteering during 2011, (given that the survey was conducted in 2012), had 13% of respondents. According to the same source, there is a significant proportion of informal structured volunteer work, given that a third of volunteers engaged in helping people with special needs and the elderly, and just over a quarter helped the schoolmates to master the subject matter. A quarter of the respondents participated in the organization of cultural events, and almost one fifth of them organized sports events. Public works in the local community attracted less than a fifth of volunteers, and every sixth volunteer engages in religious activities. Although volunteering is also a chance to gain work experience, a relatively low percentage of them experienced work in the business sector (9%) and non-governmental organizations (7%).

The statistical monitoring of the widespread of formal volunteering was initiated by the introduction of the legislative framework yet in 2007 and as well as the establishment of the [National Committee for the Development of Volunteerism](#), an advisory body of the Government of the Republic of Croatia (RC) carrying out measures and activities related to the promotion and development of volunteering. In that sense, it can be said that, in Croatia, the development of volunteering itself as well as related instruments to encourage and monitor it still are not in full boost.

Main concepts

The basic characteristics of volunteering are voluntarism, performed without remuneration and general usefulness, which are manifested as mutual support, provision of services and active inclusion in society (Barić, 2008). The official definition of volunteering is contained in the [Act on Volunteering](#) (OG 22/13) which reads: "as an investment of personal time, effort, knowledge and skills out of free will with which services and activities are executed for the well-being of another person or wider public, without existence of any conditions of providing a financial reward or seeking any other material benefit for volunteering accomplished".

Volunteering differs in terms of its duration and frequency. Long-term volunteering is the one that a volunteer performs regularly and continuously on a weekly basis for a period of at least three months without interruption. Short-term volunteering is what a volunteer performs one-time or periodically in limited time of duration.

Based on the same Act, eight activities are recognized that cannot be considered voluntary: 1. performing those services or activities that are in contravention of the RC Constitution, laws and international obligations; 2. performing services and activities that imply the payment of cash benefits or property gains without the establishment of employment; 3. performing jobs for an employer that have the characteristics of employment-based relationship; 4. professional training for work without the employment relationship established by special regulations; 5. performing services or

activities that are formally agreed between the two parties (except when it comes to a contract on volunteering); 6. performing services and activities that are considered to be binding between the two persons on the basis of laws or other regulations; 7. executing services in accordance with court decisions and judgments; 8. performing services or activities that are common in close relationships.

2.2 Administration and governance of youth volunteering

Governance

Management structure and involvement of main actors

The main actor involved in making decisions in the field of youth volunteering is the [Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy](#) (MDFYSP) ^[1]. It should be noted, however, that the said MDFYSP is responsible for volunteering regardless of age, so it is not just directed towards the youth volunteering. Under the [Act on Volunteering \(OG 22/13\)](#), MDFYSP is:

- ensuring implementation of this Law and other regulations deriving therefrom,
- monitoring the situation in the field of volunteering and proposing the adoption of appropriate measures,
- collecting data on the number of volunteer organizers, the number of volunteers in the RC and the number of Croatian citizens who volunteer abroad, as well as other data based on annual reports of volunteer organizers,
- convening the inaugural session of the National Committee for the Development of Volunteerism,
- taking other measures and tasks to develop volunteering and implement the Act on Volunteering.

According to the MDFYSP [2015-2017 Strategic Plan](#) of the as the central state administration body responsible for coordinating the policy of volunteering development:

- supervises the implementation of the legal framework and measures to encourage volunteer work within [National Strategy for the Creation of an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development from 2012 to 2016](#).
- provides technical support to the [National Committee for the Development of Volunteerism](#), which is an advisory body of the Government of the Republic of Croatia composed of 19 representatives and experts of public and civilian public sector acting on national, regional and local level to promote volunteering and to propose measures to improve the position of volunteers in society and support to volunteer organizations.

According to the mentioned Strategic Plan, the basic objectives implemented by the Ministry are:

- creation of the National Program for the Development of Volunteering, strengthening and expanding of the network of regional and local volunteer centres,
- promotion of values of volunteering and volunteer mobility,
- improving the institutional framework for volunteer work,
- evaluation of competences acquired through volunteering and recognition of the experience of volunteer engagement during employment,
- encouraging volunteering of all age groups,
- professional support to volunteer organizers,
- measuring volunteer contribution,
- affirmation of volunteering in the provision of public services, particularly social

(¹) The Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy in 2016 and 2017 is responsible for the field of volunteering and youth, whilst the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth (which no longer exists) was in charge in the period 2011-2015. Therefore, both ministries are mentioned in the text, depending on the time period in question.

- proposing other measures in the area of volunteering development.

[National Committee for the Development of Volunteerism](#) is an advisory body of the Government of the Republic of Croatia that implement measures and activities aimed to promoting volunteering and work on its development. It consists of 19 members appointed by the Government of the RC, who are also representatives of the [MDFYSP](#), [Government of the Republic of Croatia for Cooperation with NGOs](#), [Office for Human Rights and National Minorities' Right](#), [National Foundation for Civil Society Development](#), [Ministry of Science and Education](#), [Ministry of Health](#), and representatives of civil society organizations who are volunteer organizers and independent experts. [National Committee for the Development of Volunteerism](#), under the [Act on Volunteering \(OG 22/13\)](#) proposes measures to improve the position of volunteers in society. Then, in co-operation with the relevant bodies, proposes regulations on volunteer benefits, decides on the award of a state volunteering award, initiates the adoption or modification of regulations regulating volunteering, issues the Ethics Code of Volunteers, undertakes other activities for the development of volunteering and performs other measures and activities determined in the [Act on Volunteering \(OG 22/13\)](#).

[Government of the Republic of Croatia Office for Cooperation with NGOs](#) is an expert service of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, which carries out professional tasks from the domain of the Government of the Republic of Croatia with regards to creating conditions for cooperation and partnership with non-governmental, non-profit sector, especially with associations in the RC. Within its scope, the [Government of the RC Office for Cooperation with NGOs](#) performs, inter alia, the work of drafting, systematic monitoring, analysis and evaluation of the implementation of strategic programs for creating a stimulating environment for the development of civil society, and the preparation and implementation of measures of other strategic documents covering activities of cooperation with NGOs and participation in making, systematic monitoring, analysis and evaluation of the normative framework for the activities of associations and other civil society organizations in the RC.

Non-public actors that participate in developing policies in the area of youth volunteering are Regional Volunteer Centres (non-profit/non-governmental organizations - [Volunteer Centre Zagreb](#), [Volunteer Centre Split](#), [Volunteer Centre Rijeka](#), [Associations for Civil Society Development SMART](#) and [Volunteer Centre Osijek](#)) whose main objective is promotion and development of volunteer activities at local, regional and national level. Regional Volunteer Centres have gathered in Croatia in the [Croatian Volunteer Centres Network](#) and thus work jointly with decision-makers in the field of volunteering. In addition to regional volunteer centres, there are also local volunteer centres which, if they meet certain criteria, can become members of the Croatian Volunteer Centres Network.

Cross-sectoral cooperation

Cross-sectoral cooperation in the field of volunteering exists and it is envisaged in strategic and operational documents, as follows: [National Strategy for the Creation of an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development from 2012 to 2016](#) and [National programme for Youth 2014-2017](#). The relevant parts of mentioned documents related to cross-sectoral cooperation are dealt with in more detail in section 2.3. and/or 2.5 herein. Also, representatives of various sectors are represented in the Government Body [National Committee for the Development of Volunteerism](#).

2.3 National strategy on youth volunteering

Existence of a National Strategy

There is no national strategy specifically related to youth volunteering.

The Draft Proposal of National programme for volunteering development from 2015 to 2018 and Draft Proposal of Operative Plan of National program for volunteering

development implementation from 2015 to 2018 is awaiting the adoption. Public consultations related to these two drafts were held in 2015. However, to date, the two official documents mentioned above have not been adopted nor are they available in an integral form.

In the part of the [National Strategy for the Creation of an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development from 2012 to 2016](#) that relates to the priority area: Civil Society and Participatory Democracy, one of objectives is to increase awareness of children and youth about the benefits of volunteering and increase the number of citizens who volunteer. As per that objective, it is envisaged the implementation of measure (Measure 12) that relates to introducing education programmes aimed at acquiring knowledge, attitudes and values in connection with volunteering into the education system. Implementing bodies are the [Ministry of Science and Education](#), the [Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy](#), and co-implementing partners are the [Agency for Education](#), [Croatian Volunteer Centres Network](#), [National Committee for the Development of Volunteerism](#) and the [Government of the RC Office for Cooperation with NGOs](#). The second measure is to develop systems of recognition and validation of pupil and student volunteering in line with the existing positive EU practice. The implementing bodies for this activity are the [Ministry of Science and Education](#) and the [Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy](#), and co-implementing partners are: [Agency for Education](#), [National Committee for the Development of Volunteerism](#) and universities. According to monitoring measures from the [monitoring measures from the National Strategy for the Creation of an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development from 2012 to 2016](#), the first measure is on-going, and the second is completed. on-going, and the second is completed.

The youth strategic document adopted by the Government of the Republic of Croatia – [National Programme for Youth 2014-2017](#) stated the objective in the area of youth active participation in the society dedicated to improvement and promotion of volunteerism. Objective 5.4 of the National Programme refers to increasing the number, quality and availability of volunteer youth programs. Also, it is foreseen that this goal will be achieved through the support of NGO projects involving young volunteers, youth associations and youth organizations that encourage self-organization of young people through volunteering. The implementing body for the said measure is the [Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy](#) (at the time the National Program was adopted, the Ministry was named the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth). Within this measure, it is foreseen that annual tenders are conducted with the aim of supporting projects involving young volunteers and encouraging self-organization of young people through volunteering.

Scope and contents

Responsible authority

The development and supervision of the national Strategy is within the jurisdiction of the [Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy](#)

Revisions/Updates

2.4 Laws and regulations on youth volunteering

Stand-alone law

There is no standing law on youth volunteering.

Other official documents containing guidelines on youth volunteering

Act on Volunteering

The [Act on Volunteering](#) (OG 58/07, 22/13) is in force in Croatia, as amended by the Croatian Parliament in 2013. The [Act on Volunteering](#) (OG 22/13) contains general provisions, basic principles of volunteering, regulates the scope of work of the body responsible for the implementation of the law, the duties and composition of the advisory body, regulates the ethical code, the state voluntary award, determines contractual relations between volunteers and volunteer organizers, their rights and obligations, regulates the supervision of activities, the penalties in case of violation and the final provision.

When it comes to young people, in relation to the national [Act on Volunteering](#) adopted in 2007, the [Act on Volunteering](#) in 2013 additionally contains provisions related to the recognition and evaluation of volunteer work in order to recognize and evaluate competences, skills and experience gained by volunteering. In addition, the changes relate to long-term and short-term volunteering and volunteering in crisis situations, the definition of volunteers, the definition of volunteer organizers, the principle of inclusive volunteering, the situations in which is mandatory to conclude the Contract on Volunteering, and rights and obligations of volunteers and volunteer organizers. Provisions are stipulated by which the volunteer organizers should pay particular attention to ensuring equal conditions of volunteering, with special emphasis on members of socially excluded groups of people for their social empowerment and inclusion in society. It also prescribes the obligation of the volunteer organization to provide adequate assistance and supervision to the volunteers who are members of the socially excluded population groups. For persons wholly or partially deprived of their business abilities, the volunteer contract shall be drawn up by the guardian (legal representative) in writing, taking into account the opinions of the volunteer/user.

Rules and Code of Ethics

In 2007, the Ministry of Family, Veterans and Intergenerational Solidarity passed the [Rules on State Awards for Volunteering](#) (OG 106/07) regulating the procedure for awarding the State Volunteering Award, the manner of public announcement, the content of the proposal, the criteria for selecting the candidate, awards and appearance of medals and charters.

Pursuant to Article 33 of the [Act on Volunteering](#) (OG 58/07, 22/13), the Deputy Prime Minister of the Government of the RC and the Minister of Social Policy and Youth in 2015 adopted a [Rulebook on Content of Report on Services Performed or Activities of Volunteer Organizers](#) (OG 104/15) whereby it prescribes the content of the reports on the services performed or the activities of the volunteer organization, the reporting method, the reporting period and the deadline for submission of reports, and other issues relevant to the report.

In 2008, the [National Committee for the Development of Volunteerism](#) adopted the [Volunteers' Ethic Code](#) (OG 55/08), which prescribes ethical standards and fundamental principles of volunteering that guide the process of volunteer involvement in general well-being activities, and prescribes the rules of volunteer behaviour, volunteer organizers and users of volunteering.

Regulations on standards of quality

The Ministry of Social Policy and Youth adopted a [Rulebook on Quality Standards of Social Services](#) (OG 143/14) in 2014, which stipulates Standard 14: volunteer work, student trainees and interns. Seven quality indicators are listed: 1) the service provider has a written policy and clear guidelines for volunteer work in accordance with the legal regulations; 2) the service provider has a written policy and clear guidelines for student and internship practices; 3) volunteers, students trainees and interns pass an introductory and orientation program; 4) volunteers, student trainees and interns receive a written instruction in which are clearly mentioned their duties, rights and

responsibilities, and persons to whom they are responsible for their activities; 5) the activities and work of each volunteer, student and intern are monitored, supervised and evaluated by an expert person or mentor; 6) volunteers, students and interns are introduced to the vision/mission of the service provider and the code of conduct; 7) volunteers, students and interns work in safe and comfortable working conditions, without abuse or intimidation.

According to Article 32 of the Act on Volunteering, the organizer of volunteering shall develop quality standards that ensure preparation and reporting, provide personal guidance and support, supervision and mentoring throughout the entire volunteering process as well as clear evaluation and monitoring systems, preferably through the development of a quality assurance system.

The [Croatian Volunteer Centres Network](#) established the [Quality standards for the volunteer centre](#) in Croatia while using [Croatian Network of Volunteer Centres' Assessment Form for the Level of Meeting the Quality Standards](#). Volunteer Centres that apply these standards can apply for full membership in the Croatian Network of Volunteer Centres. The minimum standards that Local Volunteer Centres (LVCs) have to meet include: promoting the value of volunteering, exchange of information on offer and demand for volunteer work and citizen education on volunteering. Regional Volunteer Centres (RVCs) must meet LVC standards and further implement education on volunteer management, inform and advise, support LVCs, advocate and represent and conduct volunteering research.

In 2015, the Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted the [Regulation on the criteria, benchmarks and procedures for financing and contracting of programs and projects for the common good](#). The Regulation lays down the basic prerequisites and standards of acting that must be provided by financial resources providers from public sources, as well as the basic and additional conditions that organizations must fulfil when implementing programs and projects financed from public sources. The Regulation is in line with the existing positive practice as well as the procedures applied in contracting and implementing EU funded projects.

Target groups

Official documents do not identify specific target groups of young people whose participation in volunteering activities is particularly encouraged. However, the [Act on Volunteering](#) speaks of inclusive volunteering (more details under 2.4). Also, the [National Strategy for the Creation of an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development from 2012 to 2016](#) specifies the measure 15.2. Capacity building for the development of inclusive volunteering programme for which the implementing body since 2013 is the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth and co-implementing partner is the Croatian Network of Volunteer Centres. One of the goals is to increase the number of persons at risk of social exclusion involved in volunteering programs of civil society organizations and public institutions. However, the implementation of this [measure](#) is still in progress.

2.5 Youth volunteering at national level

National Programme for Youth Volunteering

The National Youth Volunteering Program as a comprehensive program meant for specific youth population and volunteering, while being organized, supervised and funded by the state in Croatia, does not exist.

However, there is established volunteer support system supported by the [MDFYSP](#) as a holder thereof. In 2012, the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth by way of a public call signed a cooperation agreement with four Regional Volunteer Centres (RVCs) and 4 Local Volunteer Centres (LVCs) as a pilot program whereby it provided co-financing and support to volunteer centres as a core unit of infrastructure for the development of

volunteering in Croatia. The amount of 700,000.00 Kuna was allocated for this purpose from the state budget.

There is no official statistics that accompanies the participation of specifically young people in projects funded by the Ministry. A general statistics on volunteering is followed on the basis of annual reports submitted to the Ministry by volunteer organizers.

Funding

In 2013, the [National Foundation for Civil Society Development](#) announced a tender in the area of volunteering for the European Union funds for the first time. Under the IPA Component IV "Human Resources Development", is the Priority Axis 5: Strengthening the role of civil society for better governance, and measure 5.2 Strengthening the Role of Civil Society Organizations for Socio-Economic Growth and Democracy Development, was published a call for proposals for grant scheme called "Supporting Contribution of CSOs Active in the Field of Volunteering to Strengthening of Economic and Social Cohesion", aimed at promoting and empowering inclusive volunteering in civil society. The competition was defined by the [Government of the RC Office for Cooperation with NGOs](#) in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth. It was allocated HRK 6.5 million for nine projects of civil society organizations. The activities of contracted projects are aimed at building the capacities of civil society organizations for the development of quality and sustainable volunteering programs and increasing the level of public awareness on the importance of volunteering for social and economic development in the RC.

Means for funding in the field of volunteering are secured by the way of state budget funds tender, while volunteer organizers, as well as volunteer centres, provide funds to a larger extent from various sources (most often from international funding sources). The Ministry of Social Policy and Youth co-finances the work of volunteer centres, so in 2013 and 2014, the work of volunteer centres was co-financed with an amount of HRK 780,000.00 per year (HRK 195,000 for each volunteer centre at the regional level). In 2012, the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth started co-financing projects of local volunteer centres and in 2014, HRK 999,940.00 was allocated for co-financing 12 projects of local volunteer centres. In 2015, the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth continues to co-operate with four regional volunteer centres and co-financing selected projects for a total of 18 local volunteer centres. For co-financing one-year project of local volunteer centres in 2015 and the first year of implementation of the three-year programs of regional volunteer centres for the period from 2015 to 2018, funds were provided in the total amount of HRK 3,124,785.00. ([Annual Work Report for 2015 of the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth](#)). In 2016, the [Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy](#) allocated HRK 1,850,000.00 to finance one-year local volunteer centre projects in 2016. Funds were allocated to 15 civil society organizations. In 2017, the [Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy](#) funded one-year projects of local volunteer centres ([call for applications for one-year local volunteer centre projects in 2017](#)) with HRK 2 million, which is 7.5% more than in 2016.

In 2017, the [Government of the Republic of Croatia Office for Cooperation with NGOs](#) awarded HRK 35 million in grants under the call "Support to the volunteering organizers for the improvement of volunteer management and the implementation of volunteering programs". This Call is implemented within the European Social Fund, i.e. the Operational Programme Efficient Human Resources 2014-2020, Priority Axis 4, Specific Goal 11.ii.1. "Developing capacities of civil society organisations, especially NGOs and social partners, and enhancing civil and social dialogue for better governance".

Characteristics of youth volunteering

There are no statistics related only to the characteristics of young volunteers. However, in 2016, according to the [Comparative Statistics on Volunteering of MDFYSP for 2015 and 2016](#), total of 48,731 persons volunteered, which is 7% less than in 2015. Volunteer distribution in terms of age on the part of the younger population - volunteers aged

between 15 and 30 make up 52% of the total number of volunteers, which is 7% less than in 2015. Volunteer distribution in terms of age on the part of the younger population - volunteers aged between 15 and 30 make up 52% of the total number of volunteers.

Table: Number of volunteers, volunteering hours and volunteer organizers in the period 2010 - 2016

	2010.	2011.	2012.	2013.	2014.	2015.	2016.
Total number of volunteers	13 922	16 018	19 422	29 235	45 955	52 208	48 731
Total number of volunteer hours	725 680	1 050 791	1 222 583	1 652 965	2 597 121	2 943 902	3 332 984
Total number of volunteer organisers	206	345	446	671	1032	1 367	1 217

The table shows that the total number of volunteers from 2010 to 2015 almost tripled, until 2016, when it comes down slightly compared to 2015. In the six-year period, the total number of volunteering hours is on a steady rise, moreover in 2016, volunteers dedicate 4.5 times more hours of work compared to 2010. Positive trends also include the total number of volunteer organizers, which is six times more than in 2016 compared to 2010.

According to the data of [MDFYSP](#), in Croatia, volunteers are mostly Croatian citizens, while the share of foreigners in the total number of volunteers is about 2%. During the year, there were only 880 foreign volunteers reported, which is 41% less than in 2014. New data show an increase in volunteering for foreigners compared to the previous period, so in 2016, the number of foreign volunteers reported is 1,212, which is 38% more than in 2015. Women are more likely to be volunteers (more than 60%), while men participate on average with less than 40%. According to the same data, the largest share of volunteering is carried out in associations (83%), then in institutions (11%), then non-profit (4%). The fewest volunteers are present in state bodies, units of local and regional self-government, religious communities, foundations and tourist communities (2%).

Support to young volunteers

The [Act on Volunteering](#) does not consider some cash payments to volunteers to be a cash award or property benefit. Among the aforementioned payments, these are pocket money payments to volunteers but only for travel related to volunteer work. Volunteer has the right to reimbursement of the costs incurred for carrying out volunteer work (e.g. purchase of special clothing or equipment for volunteering, payment of travel, accommodation, meals, etc.) and such fees are not considered as a cash award or property gain. Also, a volunteer has the right to receive benefits under the EU program and international programs related to the funding of volunteering programs.

Quality Assurance

The [MDFYSP](#), the body responsible for the monitoring of implementation of the [Act on Volunteering](#) once a year [invites](#) all associations, institutions, foundations, other non-profit legal entities, state bodies, and local and regional self-government units that were organisers of volunteering to submit report on organized volunteering via the web applications. The report contains general information on the organizer of volunteering, information on organized volunteering during the reporting period, information on the

type of activity/service in which the volunteers were involved in the reporting period. Also, the MDFYSP make a [list of volunteer organisers](#).

Beneficiaries of support by the MDFYSP (Local Volunteer Centres and Regional Volunteer Centres) are obliged to submit a descriptive and financial report twice a year (once in 6 months). In a written report, volunteer organizers should describe project achievements and outcomes in the reporting period, co-operation with partners, project providers and their obligations, how the organization's capacities have been strengthened and how the project's performance is valued.

Programmes/Projects Monitoring Service of the MDFYSP analyses reports on the implementation of programs and projects, among others, and those related to volunteering. Their responsibility is to establish a system of financial control and spending funds in line with their specific purpose. Also, related to volunteering in cooperation with the Directorate for Social Policy, Strategy and Youth, it advises and monitors the volunteer organizers in the field. So, in 2015, 156 volunteer organizers received advisory assistance in the implementation of approved projects and programs ([Annual Work Report for 2015 of the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth](#)).

2.6 Cross-border mobility programmes

EU programmes

According to information provided by the [Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes](#) that administers the European Volunteer Service (EVS), from 2014 to 2017, 344 EVS volunteers stayed in Croatia (incoming volunteers) from 34 countries (66 from Spain, 38 from Portugal, 36 from France, 31 from Italy, 20 from Latvia, 17 from Turkey, 16 from Poland, 14 from Bulgaria, 13 from Lithuania and 10 from Germany).

There were 86 volunteers from Croatia abroad (outgoing EVS volunteers - 14 volunteered in Spain, 12 in Bulgaria, 9 in Slovenia, 5 in Holland, 4 in Poland, Georgia, Germany and Malta, and 3 in Italy and Malta). Data include only EVS volunteers, who submitted the final reports in the mentioned period, and they did not include on-going projects or those that received financial support but the project has not started yet. The Agency monitors the participation of end-users in the Erasmus + program (including EVS) through the EU Survey, the RAY Standard Survey as well as by the EU program monitoring tools such as the Mobility Dashboard, Mobility Tool, etc.

In the period from 2009 to 2013, the above-mentioned surveys were not conducted, and detailed information on participants in the activities was not available.

Other Programmes

No

Legal framework applying to foreign volunteers

In the period from 2009 to 2013, the above-mentioned surveys were not conducted, and detailed information on participants in the activities was not available.

[The Aliens Act](#) (OG 130/11, 74/13) regulates volunteering as a special regulation referring to the [Act on Volunteering](#) (OG 58/07, 22/13) as a general rule when regulating the principle of volunteering trans-nationality. The principle of volunteering trans-nationality is defined in Article 17 of the [Act on Volunteering](#), and items relating to the regulation of volunteering of foreigners in the RC are as follows: foreigners and persons recognized asylum status may volunteer in the RC in accordance with the provisions of

the [Act on Volunteering](#), [the Aliens Act](#) (OG 130/11, 74/13), the Asylum Act^[2] and other regulations of the RC and assumed international legal obligations. [Foreigners](#) may volunteer in the RC by regulating their stay in accordance with the provisions of the [Aliens Act](#). A contract on volunteering concluded by a volunteer/foreigner in writing and in accordance with the [Act on Volunteering](#) shall be considered as evidence of the justification of a temporary stay.

According to the [Act on Volunteering](#), the organizers of volunteering who uses services of a volunteer/foreigner must have signed a written contract on volunteering with a volunteer/foreigner. The organizers of volunteering who conclude a contract on volunteering with a volunteer/foreigner are obliged to respect the rights and obligations arising from volunteer and volunteer organizers relations regulated by the [Act on Volunteering](#).

According to the [Aliens Act](#) (OG 74/13), up to 90 days in the calendar year based on a work registration certificate, the aliens may work in the organization of Croatian associations or institutions, come to perform volunteering work in work camps and similar working programs. Also, on the same manner may be engaged volunteers to work in non-profit associations and institutions in the RC in accordance with special regulations, i.e. based on international volunteer exchange and cooperation programs. For these volunteers, the permit for stay and work outside the annual quota can be issued if they are between 18 and 65 years of age and a contract on volunteering has been concluded. The organization in which an alien volunteers must take full responsibility for the alien at the time of volunteering, including the costs of subsistence, accommodation, nutrition, health insurance and return costs.

According to the same law, based on a work registration certificate, the alien/volunteer who volunteer within the framework of the Community Programmes, the Lifelong Learning Program and the Youth in Action Program and other international programs and other programs and initiatives implemented by the body competent for education and science and bodies under which jurisdiction is volunteering.

In RC, volunteer work is classified as a regular work. Volunteers coming from EU member states do not need work permits to volunteer anywhere in the EU, but on the basis of reciprocity, restrictions on access to the RC labour market apply to volunteers from certain EU Member States, and they need residence and work permits to be able to volunteer in RC.

The residence and work permit must be requested for volunteers/foreigners coming from Slovenia, Austria, Malta, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and third countries in the period from 1 July 2015 to 1 July 2018. The list is available on the [Ministry of Labour and Pension System web pages](#).

Visa is a permit for entry and stay of a volunteer/foreigner for up to three months in the RC territory. It is issued for one, two or more entries for the purposes of transit, tourist, business, private or other travel. On the basis of visa, a volunteer, an alien cannot volunteer in the RC and the volunteer/foreigner is obliged to submit an application for a work registration certificate or a temporary residence permit application and an application for issuance of stay and work permit, depending on the duration of the volunteer engagement. Aliens and persons recognized as asylum seekers may volunteer in the RC in accordance with the provisions of the [Act on Volunteering](#) (OG 58/07, 22/13), the [Aliens Act](#) (OG 130/11, 74/13) and other regulations of the RC and assumed international obligations.

Pursuant to the [Law on Confirmation of the Memorandum of Understanding between the European Union and the RC on the Participation of the RC in the Youth in Action Program and the Lifelong Learning Action Program \(2007-2013\)](#) (OG 4/11), participants in the

⁽²⁾ The Law on Volunteering, Art. 17 mentioned the Asylum Act, which was in force until 1 July 2015, and after it was adopted a new [Act on International and Temporary Protection](#) (Official Gazette 70/15).

Youth in Action Program are obliged to pay contributions whereby foreign nationals regulate mandatory health insurance in Croatia. For the purpose of their temporary residence in the territory of the RC, the right to health insurance is exercised on the basis of policies concluded between the European Commission and the insurance company for certain program actions, and for this category of aliens, the proof of health insurance do not need to be attached to the application for a stay and work permit.

2.7 Raising awareness about youth volunteering opportunities

Information providers

Institutions as information providers at national level on various aspects of volunteering are the [Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy](#) and the [Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes](#).

Contact Points for getting information on volunteering:

[Croatian volunteer centres' Network web portal](#) (consolidate regional and local volunteer centres)

[European Youth Portal](#)

Key initiatives

Competent ministry marks 5th December, the International Volunteer Day by awarding the State Award on Volunteering from 2007, according to the [Rules on State Awards for Volunteering](#). The State Award on Volunteering is the upmost recognition that the Republic of Croatia assigns to volunteering, contributing to the promotion of volunteering and other volunteering activities. It is awarded to the natural (volunteer and volunteer coordinator) and legal persons (volunteer organizer). The Last State Award for 2015 was awarded in April 2016.

[Annual Work Report for 2015 of the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth](#) states that its personnel promoted volunteering through participation in round tables, conferences, other professional gatherings and in media appearances, and promoted certificates of competences acquired through volunteering (at professional conferences, media performances and written and oral responses to volunteer inquiries and volunteer organizers sent to the Department within the Ministry responsible for volunteering).

[National Foundation for Civil Society Development annually](#), so it did in 2017, presents [Award "Heart print" – for children and youth volunteering development](#). Prizes are awarded to elementary schools for innovative volunteering initiatives by students and secondary schools for innovative models of youth involvement in volunteering activities.

[Government of the Republic of Croatia Office for Cooperation with NGOs](#) and [Croatian Public Relations Association](#), in cooperation with the [Croatian Volunteer Centres Network](#) presents award ["Communication support to organizations' socially useful programmes"](#) in 2016. Based on this award, two associations will receive expert support in the implementation of the program to increase the visibility of the activities of NGOs acting for the common good and to promote socially responsible entrepreneurship. Associations can apply for support in the organization of a public campaign promoting volunteering aimed at high school students and/or organizing a public campaign to promote volunteering directed at students.

2.8 Skills recognition

Policy Framework

According to the [Act on Volunteering](#) of 2013, upon the request of volunteer, the volunteer organizer is obliged to issue a Certificate of Competences Acquired through Volunteering if it is a long-term volunteering. The Competent Body ([MDFYSP](#)), in consultation with the [National Committee for the Development of Volunteerism](#), adopts

framework criteria for the recognition of competences, skills and experience gained through volunteering, whereby it defines the framework content of the Certificate of Competences gained through volunteering. The framework criteria and the framework content of the certificate are published on the website of the competent authority of the [Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy](#). For the sake of easier understanding and filling, a [Guide for Filling in the Certificate of Competences Acquired through Volunteering](#), including an example of a completed Certificate, has been prepared.

[Croatian Qualification Framework Act](#) (OG 22/13, 41/16) defines the objectives of the Croatian Qualifications Framework (CQF), among which is mentioned building of a system of recognition and evaluation of informal and informal learning. However, a rulebook has not been produced yet to regulate the area of recognition and evaluation of informal and informal knowledge and skills as an integral part of the CQF (Balković, 2016). Additionally, CQF does not have most of the bodies to deal with the approval of certain elements of occupation and qualifications - sectoral councils, detailed descriptions of occupations and qualifications (standards) and complete implementation instructions and formal rules that would make this system useful to qualification system users and other stakeholders and fully applicable (Balkovic, 2016). Part of the system of qualifications that has not yet been conceived and for which the legal basis does not exist is the one that supports the recognition and evaluation of informal and informal learning (Balković, 2016).

Existing arrangements

Although there is a possibility of obtaining a Certificate of Competences Acquired through Volunteering that organisers of volunteering issue to volunteer after long-term volunteering, there is currently no ordinance to regulate the area of recognition and evaluation of the outcomes of informal and informal learning, so that in reality there are no standardized mechanisms for recognition and evaluation of volunteer work, especially youth work.

Recognition and evaluation of volunteering of pupils and students is realized through a volunteer booklet as a form of volunteering certificate describing the name of the volunteer organizer, the number of volunteer hours and volunteering time and the type of specific activities. It is filled by the volunteer organizer, who is obliged to issue a certificate to the volunteer at the end of volunteering, and it is therefore certified by his/her stamp. The booklet may also include education related to the volunteer's education.

Higher education institutions in the Republic of Croatia issue a diploma supplement in Croatian and English at the end of Bologna studies for all students free of charge. Further studies, scholarships and acknowledgments, as well as the extra-curricular activities of the student may be included in the diploma supplement. Extracurricular activities are those which contain the category that include volunteering activities. In addition to explaining the effects of student's work on qualification, this whole part allows a higher education institution to recognize additional work and success of a student during a study. If information is added herein that are not an integral part of the study program (e.g. student cooperative's work, student's presentation, awards or a success in a study not issued by a qualifying higher education institution), the higher education institution is obliged to provide all students with equal information for this part ([Diploma Supplement: Instructions, Regulations and Examples, 2008](#)).

The practice of enrolling extracurricular activities in the diploma supplement is only just starting at the Croatian higher education institutions, and it is not yet implemented both systematically or equally (Kotlar and Čulum, 2014). In other words, universities are left to independently evaluate the volunteer work of students in the sense of awarding ECTS credits - there is no developed unique system for evaluating students both between universities and between components within a particular university.

It should be noted that the diploma supplement issued under the Croatian higher education system does not bear the designation of Europass, which is the only difference between the Croatian version of the document and the original which was developed by the European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO ([Europass](#)) as part of the Europass initiative.

Since 2010, each year a competition is being announced and a rector's award for a volunteer of the year is awarded at the universities in Croatia.

[Youthpass](#) as a tool of the European Commission to plan, monitor, evaluate and recognize the recognition of non-formal learning outcomes in projects co-financed under the Erasmus + program: Youth in Action, placing policies into practice and vice versa.

2.9 Current debates and reforms

Although, as quoted by the Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy, the [Final Proposal of the National Programme for the Development of Volunteering for the period 2016-2019 with Final Proposal of the Operative Implementation Plan of National Programme for the Development of Volunteering for the period 2016-2019](#) was drafted, the National Program and the Operational Plan have not been adopted yet or made available to the public. It should be noted that these documents were publicly electronically advised during 2015, which covered the period 2015-2018 and not 2016 - 2019: [Draft Proposal of the National Programme for the Development of Volunteering for the period 2015-2018 with Draft Proposal of the Operative Implementation Plan of National Programme for the development of volunteering for the period 2015-2018.](#)

In the event that volunteer activity is carried out in direct contact with some of the vulnerable social groups, additional information on the volunteer must be attached to the contract. According to the [Act on Volunteering](#), it is necessary to obtain an extract from criminal or misdemeanour records. The extract from the criminal record serves as proof that the volunteer has not committed a criminal offense against life and body, against sexual freedom and sexual maturity, and against marriage, family and youth. Likewise, the extract from the criminal records is a guarantee that a volunteer does not pursue a security measure of compulsory psychiatric treatment or treatment of addiction or measures of prohibition of performing a vocation, activity or duty in connection with the volunteering s/he wishes to perform. The excerpt from the misdemeanour record is evidence that the volunteer has not been subjected to the misdemeanour sanction prescribed by the [Act on Protection against Family Violence](#). Given that this is a very strict regime for the issuance of such certificates and confidentiality of personal data prescribed by the [Criminal Code](#) and the rules on criminal or misdemeanour records, current regulations do not allow the majority of volunteer organizers to obtain information required by the [Act on Volunteering](#), which in practice prevents the proper application of that Act.

[Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy](#), at the proposal of the [National Committee for the Development of Volunteerism](#) presents a State Award for Volunteering. The State Award for Volunteering for 2016 was not presented. Also, there are no [official minutes of the National Committee for the Development of Volunteerism's meetings](#) for the whole of 2016 and the first half of 2017. The term of office of the members of the National Committee is 2 years, and the mandate expired in autumn 2016, since new members have not been nominated. In other words, one year backward, it can be said that the development of volunteering in terms of support at the institutional level is slowed down.

There is still a lack of legal basis for recognizing the qualifications gained through volunteering or recognition and evaluation of informal and informal learning.

Most of the documents actually deal with volunteering in general, a very small proportion of them being specifically targeted at young people who are engaged in volunteering activities.

3. Employment & Entrepreneurship

Croatia is one of countries with highest youth unemployment rates in Europe which has been the main social challenge for a long time alongside precarious work and the increasing number of young people who opted for (long) lasting leave abroad.

[The Ministry of Labour and Pension System](#) (MLPS) carries out administrative and coordinating tasks related to employment programmes. The main partner of MLPS in the implementation of policies for employment and entrepreneurship at the level of the Government of the Republic of Croatia is the [Ministry of Economy, Entrepreneurship and Crafts](#) (MEEC).

3.1 General context

Labour market situation in the country

Youth employment

The activity rate of Croatian youth is among the lowest in Europe, and in 2015, it was [50.8%](#) for young people aged 15-29. According to [research results on a national representative sample of 2,000 young people in 2013](#) out of 508 young employees covered by the survey, the largest share of young people (38.0%) was employed in a small private enterprise or craft. Employment in a large private enterprise (26.5%) is almost equal to working in the public sector (23.7%). Employment in a family or a private company or craft is at modest levels and together includes less than tenth of youth. Regarding the type of contract signed by young people, half of all young people are employed on indefinite period full-time contracts (49.8%) and 41.7% on definite period full-time contracts, while only a modest part of them is employed for a certain (4.6%) or indefinite (2.8%) reduced working hours (i.e. part-time jobs). The average number of working hours indicates almost half of the young people (46.9%) who are doing average hours (40 hours a week), one third of them (33.5%) is working above the average and up to 50 hours a week, while those working more than 50 hours is 9.1%, and youth who work less than average is 11.4%. The earnings of young people are largely below the national average; 14.2% of young people receive monthly wages below 14.2%, 28.9% receive between HRK 2.501 and 3.500, 21.8% of them receive HRK 3.501-4.500, 17.1% of them receive HRK 4.501-5.400, and only 18.1% have wages around the national average.

Youth unemployment

Croatia holds the top position in Europe for youth unemployment at the time of writing this work, which has been the main social challenge for a long time alongside precarious work and the increasing number of young people who opted for (long) lasting leave abroad. Total unemployment of young people aged 15-29 in 2016 was 24.4%, while unemployment broken down into age subgroups was 52.0% for young people aged 15-19, 25.3% for young people aged 20-24, 18.8% for 25-29 years old, and in the subgroup of 20-29 years unemployment was [21.4%](#). There are 42.4% of young people with low education, 32.1% of upper secondary school and [20.9%](#) of young people with a diploma. There are 15.3% long-term unemployed young people aged 15-29, while the EU average is [5.9%](#). The share of youth outside the education system, training and the labour market (NEET) is also relatively high and in 2016 it was [16.9%](#) for the 15-29 age group.

The results of the [aforementioned research](#) show that in the group of unemployed 62.9% of young people are supported by parents during the unemployment, 38.4% occasionally perform various jobs, 12.6% are supported by their employed spouse, 10.5% receive [cash benefits from the Croatian Employment Service](#), 1.8% receive assistance from humanitarian organizations, and 0.8% have another source of unemployment support.

3.2 Administration and Governance

Governance

Public actors

Ministries

The [Ministry of Labour and Pension System](#) (MLPS) carries out administrative and coordinating tasks related to employment programmes, and the [Labour Inspectorate](#) is also located within the Ministry. MLPS coordinates employment policies as regulated by the [Guidelines for the Development and Implementation of Active Employment Policy in the Republic of Croatia for the period 2015 – 2017](#), approved by the [Government of the Republic of Croatia](#).

The main partner of MLPS in the implementation of policies for employment and entrepreneurship at the level of the Government of the Republic of Croatia is the [Ministry of Economy, Entrepreneurship and Crafts \(MEEC\)](#). MEEC carries out administrative and other activities related to small and medium-sized entrepreneurship, crafts, cooperatives, promotion of exports and foreign investments, and the promotion of competitiveness in the field of small and medium-sized entrepreneurship. MEEC also operates in the field of international co-operation in crafts and small and medium-sized entrepreneurship.

Agencies

The [Croatian Employment Service](#) (CES) is the main agency in the field of employment, which keeps the database of unemployed persons and provides incentives for the employment of unemployed persons on the basis of [annual programme](#), and upon consultation with a working group involving representatives of social partners and relevant civil society organizations (in 2017 it was the [Institute for Professional Development of Youth](#)).

Labour market stakeholders include the following institutions and organizations:

[REGOS – Central Registry of Insured Persons that maintains a database of all persons who have a pension insurance.](#)

[Croatian Pension Insurance Institute \(CPII\)](#) that enables the exercise of rights arising from pension insurance

[Agency for Securing Employees Claims in the event of Employer's Bankruptcy](#)

[Institute for Expert Evaluation, Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of People with Disabilities](#)

[Institute for Occupational Safety Improvement.](#)

Local and regional level

Communication at the local and regional level is mainly carried out via the [administrative departments of economic affairs in counties](#), branches of the above listed agencies and [regional development agencies](#).

CES is a leading partner in [local partnerships for employment](#), which complement national policy with initiatives geared towards regional labour markets. Local partners are stakeholders from the public, private and civil sector, and the purpose of partnership is to elaborate and develop institutional framework for human resources development at county level (based on partnership) and strengthen the capacities of local stakeholders for the development and implementation of labour market policies.

Labour unions

Three major national [trade unions](#) in Croatia are mentioned below:

[Union of Autonomous Trade Unions of Croatia](#)

[Independent Trade Unions of Croatia](#)

[The Association of Croatian Unions](#)

Schools and universities

[Primary schools](#)

[Secondary schools](#)

[Universities and polytechnics](#)

[The Adult Education Institution](#)

Croatian bureau of statistics

[Croatian Bureau of Statistics](#) keeps the national database in the area of employment and entrepreneurship.

Research institutes

[The Economic Institute](#), [The Institute for Social Research in Zagreb](#), [The Institute of Social Science "Ivo Pilar"](#) and [The Institute of Public Finance](#) are the leading institutions in the area of research of employment and entrepreneurship.

Public consultations

Cooperation with civil society organizations takes place as needed, and/or according to the invitation to the individual organization, depending on the area and based on the Code of Practice on Consultation with the Interested Public in Procedures of Adopting Laws, Other Regulations and Acts.

Non-public actors

There are 121 [temporary employment Agencies](#) operating in Croatia.

Consultation with youth

In the area of youth policy, the [Croatian Youth Network](#) (CYN), is an alliance of 63 youth and for-youth non-governmental associations acting as a national umbrella organization for young people and is a member of the [European Youth Forum](#). CYN is involved in decision-making processes on youth policies in Croatia by consultations and counselling.

Cross-sectorial cooperation

3.3 Skills Forecasting

Forecasting system(s)

[The Survey on Employers](#) is a survey of employers' labour force needs for certain occupations, which is carried out once a year by the [Croatian Employment Service](#) (CES) in cooperation with the Croatian Chamber of Economy, [Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts](#) and [Croatian Employers' Association](#) for the purpose of more successful labour market performance and matching supply and labour demand in Croatia.

The questionnaire of the Survey on Employers is supplemented with the [Survey on the Occupational Standard](#) conducted by CES with the support of [The Ministry of Labour and Pension System](#) (MLPS). The survey is conducted through an online survey (Lime Survey system) and employers and experts are expected to provide data on: key jobs needed to work in a certain profession in a particular organization; the knowledge and skills needed to carry out key tasks; the necessary level of key competences for lifelong learning, generic skills and psychomotor skills; the necessary education for work in the profession and the characteristics of the workplace and the characteristics of the organization.

At this time, there is no evaluation either of the Quality Assurance System of the Survey of Employers or the Survey on the Occupational Standard.

Skills development

Findings of the [Survey on Employers](#) and the [Survey on the Occupational Standard](#) are also used as information in the development of the Recommendations for Educational Enrolment Policy and the identification of [occupational standard](#) in the [Croatian Qualification Framework - CROQF](#). Also, in accordance with the [Strategy for Lifelong Learning Career Guidance in the Republic of Croatia 2016 - 2020](#), the wider public will, through the MLPS web site which is under construction, get insights into the trends in employment and unemployment of all occupations in the labour market, and the number of enrolled students and students in educational programmes.

The results of these surveys i.e. the Survey of Employers and the Survey on the Occupational Standards were not used in the organization of non-formal or informal learning at the time of writing of this report.

3.4 Career Guidance and Counselling

Career guidance and counselling services

The objective of the [Strategy for Lifelong Learning Career Guidance in the Republic of Croatia 2016 - 2020](#) is to identify the priorities, measures and activities in setting up a lifelong learning guidance system and provide a basis for enabling citizens to have access to quality professional guidance services to develop their lifelong career in accordance with their abilities, interests, personality traits and job market demands.

Professional guidance is provided through the legislative work involving the [Ministry of Science, Education and Sports](#) and the [Ministry of Labour and Pension System](#).

The main provider of vocational guidance is the [Croatian Employment Service](#) (CES), and other institutions conducting professional guidance are:

1. [Primary and secondary](#) schools;
2. [Adult education institutions](#);
3. [Universities and polytechnics](#);
4. [Croatian Employers' Association](#);
5. [Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts](#);
6. [Agencies for vocational education and training and adult education](#);
7. [Agency for Science and Higher Education](#);
8. [Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes](#).

CES provides professional orientation to [pupils of final grades of primary school and secondary school students](#), including professional information and professional counselling, and it is implemented in collaboration with schools and parents through a [Survey of Professional Choices for Primary and Secondary School Students](#). Information on education, relevant areas for occupational choice and employment is organized for [students](#).

Professional orientation through the [lifelong career guidance centres](#) is also available to other users who wish to participate in formal education or retraining system or want to change their profession, and [professional rehabilitation](#) programmes are also being implemented.

In Croatia, there is no system of non-formal and informal professional orientation that is in some way co-ordinated or funded by the public bodies.

Funding

The amount of HRK 1,200,000.00 is foreseen for professional orientation under the supervision of the [Croatian Employment Service](#) at the annual level. The costs include the procurement of psychological measuring instruments, the development of new instruments and methods of assessment and counselling, including e-guidance,

professional training, etc. Special funds are provided for professional rehabilitation procedures for people with disabilities.

Quality assurance

At the time of writing this report, there was no quality assurance system and evaluation of professional guidance system in Croatia. However, the Croatian Employment Service submits annual reports on its work to the Croatian Parliament.

3.5 Traineeships and Apprenticeships

Official guidelines on traineeships and apprenticeships

Vocational education and traineeships

The general framework for vocational education is the [Law on Vocational Education](#), and the main mechanism for vocational training is [vocational education for bound craft programmes](#), which consists of an expert-theoretical part and practical teaching and exercises. Education lasts for three years, and practical work in at least one part of the programme and is compulsory for all participants, as prescribed by the [Crafts Act](#) (OG 143/13).

The [Apprenticeship Contract](#) is concluded by the craftsman and the student and/or his parent or guardian. The contract governs mutual rights, obligations and responsibilities between craftsmen and students during the course of apprenticeship programmes: the beginning and duration of apprenticeship, the student's working time at the workshop or at the work site, the duration and schedule of the student's leave, the material allowance for the duration of the apprenticeship and the obligations of craftsmen regarding the implementation of curriculum.

As a rule, the programme participants receive a cash award for the workshop that is paid each month in accordance with the provisions of the [Apprenticeship Contract](#), which is an integral part of the [By-law on the Minimum Requirements for Apprenticeship Contract](#).

The main social partner in the implementation of the apprenticeship programme is the [Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts](#), and in some programmes the [Croatian Employers' Association](#) is also included. In the regular education system at the secondary school level, the Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts conducts licensing of crafts and legal entities for the implementation of practical teaching and training.

The unemployed and traineeships

Apart from attending regular vocational education, the main beneficiaries of the vocational training programme are unemployed persons, who undergo a re-qualification programme within the [Croatian Employment Service](#). The Croatian Employment Service also conducts [Subsidies for employment](#) with the aim of encouraging further education of newly employed or employed persons with the aim of preserving jobs and introducing new technologies and production programmes and raising competitiveness. This institution also makes available [on-the-job training](#), aiming to enable unemployed persons to acquire the knowledge and skills required to perform jobs in the same workplace.

Apprenticeships

The above-mentioned models of engagement in vocational training are not linked to the implementation of the [Youth Guarantee](#) (YG) in Croatia, but its implementation has expanded a package of measures aimed at introducing young people into work. Croatia began the implementation of the Youth Guarantee in 2013, by upgrading the then packet of measures called [Young and Creative](#). New [Plan for the Youth Guarantee Implementation 2017-2018](#) was adopted in June 2017. The main component of the Youth Guarantee – [occupational training without commencing employment](#) is on-the-job advancement at the employer's lasting for 12 or 24 months, covering health and

retirement insurance and travel expenses by the employer, and salaries in the amount of HRK 2,620.80 covered by the [Croatian Employment Service](#). This measure may be used by unemployed persons up to 30 years of age who have no more than 12 months of internships for whom they have been educated and reported to CES for 30 days. The acquired qualifications are recognized at the level of formal education through the ECVET system.

Promoting traineeships and apprenticeships

The apprenticeship programme is being promoted by appropriate TV spots before the end of the academic year, and through individual discussions with students during professional counselling.

The [Ministry of Labour and Pension System](#) (MLPS) has started with regular promotional campaigns of the [YG](#) on the entire territory of Croatia on 28 November 2014. The campaign is mostly directed at employers, and young people are most often involved through organized events that young people are referred to by their teachers. Campaign flow can be tracked on a [twitter](#) profile.

With regard to the involvement of youth organizations in designing and evaluating the YG, the [Croatian Youth Network](#) is an active member of the Council for the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan, but the Council's decisions are not binding and they are not brought for all YG implementation components.

Recognition of learning outcomes

Qualifications acquired through education are recognized at the level of formal education through the [ECVET system](#), while vocational training is evaluated only through the acquired work experience.

Funding

By 2018, Croatia will receive a total of €144 million for programmes under the Youth Guarantee, out of which about €66 million will come from European funds – Youth Employment Initiative, just as much from the funds that will be allocated through the European Social Fund, and 11.5 million will be the result of national co-financing.

Quality assurance

Quality assurance of traineeships

VET institutions are required to carry out self-evaluation in cooperation with the [Agency for vocational education and training and adult education](#), and external evaluation in cooperation with the [National Centre for External Evaluation of Education](#). The quality assurance system links and harmonizes the self-evaluation and external evaluation of educational institutions, whereat external evaluation uses self-evaluation and development plans of the institution as the starting point for evaluation.

Quality assurance of programmes under Youth Guarantee

In the year 2016, [the Evaluation of participant, mentor and employer experiences of the Occupational training without commencing employment](#) coordinated by the [Croatian Employment Service](#), and conducted by the [Ipsos Puls](#) Agency, with the help of experts from the [Institute of Public Finance](#) was undertaken. Three questionnaires were administered in the survey: for young people (N = 537), employers (N = 458) and mentors (N = 375) were. The objectives of the study were:

1. to determine the quality of the content of the vocational training;
2. to examine familiarity with the objectives of vocational training;
3. to evaluate the quality of the implementation of the vocational training programme;
4. to examine experiences related to the adoption of programmes (knowledge transfer, adoption of professional competencies);

5. to determine the familiarity/knowledge of the contents and objectives of the vocational training programme by the user;
6. to evaluate the satisfaction with the aspects of defining and implementing the vocational training programme;
7. to examine the expectations of participation in the measure in the area of competence acquisition;
8. to examine the circumstances of entry/decision on entry into the measure;
9. to determine the expected objectives of applying vocational training programmes in the context of occupation/profession;
10. to identify the factors of favourable outcomes;
11. to examine the attitudes of competences achieved after exiting the measure and assess the fulfilment of the expectations of vocational training.

[Evaluation of the Youth Employment Initiative under the Operational Programme Efficient Human Resources 2014-2020 \(OPEHR\)](#) (2015) was coordinated by the [Ministry of Labour and Pension System](#) (MLPS) and conducted by the [ECORYS Croatia](#). The overall objective of the evaluation was to evaluate the impact of planned activities in the context of the sustainable integration of the NEET1 young people into the labour market. The evaluation indicators are linked to the degree of relevance and justification, consistency and internal coherence, effectiveness, external coherence and effectiveness. The interviews with the users of vocational training have also been conducted as part of the evaluation.

[Evaluation of occupational training implementation](#) was conducted by the [Croatian Youth Network](#) 2016. This evaluation, along with the numerical indicators of implementation and characteristics of the beneficiaries, included the assessment of the effect on employment (12 months employment after expiry of the measure) and the structural and financial aspects of the YG implementation.

3.6 Integration of Young People in the Labour Market

Youth employment measures

[Act on Employment Mediation and Unemployment Rights](#) in Article 34 stipulates that the Government of the Republic of Croatia designates the action plans for employment, and the Minister of Labour and Pension system governs the committee responsible for these policies.

[Active labour market measures](#) are within the jurisdiction of the Croatian Employment Service, which besides the [vocational training](#) under the [Youth Guarantee](#) also covers another three programmes that facilitate the inclusion of youth into the labour market:

1. [Public works](#) based on socially useful work initiated by the local community or civil society organizations;
2. [Employment subsidies](#) involving the co-financing of up to 50% costs of the annual gross II wage, or 75% for persons with disabilities;
3. Measure "[permanent seasonal worker](#)" aimed to financially support workers who are employed only during the season, and the second part of the year they are not employed. Employer is financed with 100% of the expense of extended insurance for the first 3 months, and in the next period lasting for no more than 3 months 50% of the extended insurance.

The [Croatian Employment Service](#) offers supporting measures for youth via the [youth centres](#), where job recruitment specialists are trained for effective communication with young people, group work and workshops for young people. Youth centres offer counselling and support in job search; active job seeking workshops; employment mediation; access to computers and portals to database of vacancies; publishing of the curriculum vitae on the portal called "job market" [BurzaRada]; thematic lectures on important topics related to employment and information on active employment policies.

Flexicurity measures focusing on young people

Regulations enabling labour market flexibility are introduced by the [Labour Act](#) of 2014 (OG 93/2014), whereat young workers are not specifically targeted by the legislative framework. However, young workers are the ones who use the most flexible forms of employment, mostly through the [Agency for Temporary Employment](#).

Security provisions for young employees and young job-seekers

Measures that facilitate an inter-employment period or mobility between employments are ensured through the [Youth Guarantee](#) and imply obtaining a quality offer within 4 months of leaving or ending education, or entering unemployment, regardless of whether a person is registered with CES or not.

[Pre-qualification within the](#) Croatian Employment Service and access to [lifelong career guidance centres](#) are the main mechanisms that facilitate job finding for young people. These centres, in addition to information on potential employment and employment programmes, offer the possibility to use [tools for self-informing](#) and [assessment of competencies](#), [educational opportunities](#), [the labour market](#) trends. The centres also provide individual and group information, presentations and workshops.

Reconciliation of private and working life for young people

[Parental leave](#) is the main tool for facilitating the reconciliation of private and working life of young people. Parental leave can be used up to 12 months after the birth of the child for the first and second child and up to the third year of the child's life for the third child.

Part-time work is provided to parents of children with developmental difficulties. Outside this framework, part-time work is seldom used and depends on the agreement between the employer and the employee.

Working from home as a flexible form of engagement also depends on the agreement between the employer and the employee and is used only to a lesser extent.

There are no incentives or measures for the inclusion and retention of young women in the labour market.

Funding of existing schemes/initiatives

Financing of the employment measures come either from the national budget or through European programmes, such as the European Social Fund. The main body responsible for administering the financing of employment measures is [The Ministry of Labour and Pension System](#), and the main provider through which the money is allocated to the beneficiaries of the measure is the je [Croatian Employment Service](#).

For the year 2017, HRK 1.5 billion is foreseen for employment measures, of which 650 million will come from the European Social Fund.

Quality assurance

Mechanisms and indicators used to measure the quality of employment programmes relate to the number of beneficiaries by certain characteristics (age, gender, profession, educational status, work experience, type and size of company, and the like). Based on the above mentioned characteristics, monthly and annual statistics are produced, which are monitored through the [Croatian Employment Service](#) (CES) publication. If necessary, the CES, on the basis of the implementation of measures, adjusts the conditions for the implementation of measures in a particular year.

[The Council for the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan](#) was established to monitor the implementation of the [Youth Guarantee](#) measures. The Council adopts [annual reports on the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan](#), based on which it provides recommendations for further implementation. The number of beneficiaries included in a particular YG measure, the moment of entry/exit from the measure, as well as the situation upon exiting the individual measure (whether the person has returned to unemployment or

remained in the labour market/education). There are also [Annual Reports on the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan Implementation](#).

The Croatian Employment Service contracted the [Evaluation of participant, mentor and employer experiences of the measure "the Occupational training without commencing employment"](#), which was conducted by [The Institute of Public Finance](#) in 2016.

The [External Evaluation of Active Labour-Market Policy Measures 2010-2013](#) was conducted in 2015 and, based on evaluation results presented in 2016, employment measures are redefined for the period 2017-2018.

3.7 Cross-Border Mobility in Employment, Entrepreneurship and Vocational Opportunities

Programmes and schemes for cross-border mobility

The main mechanism for encouraging the employment abroad is the [EURES network](#), whereat the [Croatian Employment Service](#) was a partner in implementing [Your first EURES Job 4.0](#) from 2015 to 2017. From 2013 to 2017 the CES took part in the project [The Job of my Life – MobiPro EU](#), funded by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Mobility programmes for young entrepreneurs are available through the [EU Erasmus Programme for Young Entrepreneurs in Croatia](#). The [Croatian Chamber of Economy](#) is listed as a contact point that has had active projects (3 projects) so far. [Web page containing information for the Croatian Programme](#) was under development at the time of writing this report.

Legal framework

After Croatia joining the European Union, citizens of the European Union can freely get employed without obtaining work permits. However, according to the principle of reciprocity, the Republic of Croatia has introduced measures of employment restrictions for all countries which have introduced restrictions for Croatian citizens in transitional period (until 1 July 2018), which included for Austria; Malta; Netherlands; Slovenia and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

With regard to incoming mobility, there are no tax incentives for employed foreigners in Croatia.

Employment of third-country nationals is possible only through [annual quota for the employment](#). If a person is a third-country national, s/he can only work in the Republic of Croatia for those jobs for which he or she has been granted a residence and work permit, and only to an employer with whom he or she has a working relationship and/or concluded employment contract.

The web page of the [Croatian Employment Service](#) provides basic information on the employment of foreigners, regulated by the [Ministry of Interior](#).

The conditions of entry, movement and residence, as well as the work of foreigners, the conditions of work and rights (health and pension insurance) of foreign workers in the Republic of Croatia are prescribed by [the Asylum Act](#), [The Aliens Act](#), and [The Act amending the Act on Croatian Citizenship](#).

3.8 Development of Entrepreneurship Competence

Policy Framework

Croatia currently has no active learning strategy for entrepreneurship, but only the [Strategy for Entrepreneurial Learning 2010-2014](#), which parts are still being applied

according to information from the [Ministry of Education and Science](#). At the time of writing this report, there was no plan to work on the new strategy.

The Action Plan for the period 2010-2014 contained 10 measures:

1. develop a positive attitude and sensitize the public about entrepreneurship;
2. increase the interest in training for entrepreneurship;
3. introduce entrepreneurial learning and training in all development policies and programmes;
4. introduce entrepreneurship as one of the key competences in all educational curricula;
5. increase the capacity of educational institutions for the introduction of education for entrepreneurship;
6. increase the competences of educators, teachers and trainers for entrepreneurship education;
7. strengthen cooperation and networking of educational institutions, scientific-research and business entities on programmes;
8. develop additional entrepreneurship programmes and contents of professional entrepreneurial competencies in formal and non-formal education and teaching;
9. develop the entrepreneurial competence of all employees;
10. increase the number of successful small businesses.

Formal learning

Education for entrepreneurship is addressed in the [National Framework Curriculum](#) adopted in 2010. The National Framework Curriculum determines entrepreneurial learning as a cross-curricular theme in primary and secondary education but there is still no curriculum developed to implement this component. Several schools have recognized the need to develop entrepreneurial attitudes of students and independently developed learning for entrepreneurship through faculty teaching.

Learning for entrepreneurship is supported by [the South East European Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning](#), whose main goal is to establish strategic cooperation between the eight Western Balkan countries and Turkey, and which headquarter is in Zagreb.

Non-formal and informal learning

There are no non-formal and informal learning programmes for entrepreneurship in Croatia that are coordinated by public institutions or financed from public resources.

Educators support in entrepreneurship education

There is no current entrepreneurial learning strategy or curriculum that would support the introduction of entrepreneurial learning in the education system, and there is no support system for teachers engaged in entrepreneurship teaching in Croatia.

3.9 Start-up Funding for Young Entrepreneurs

Access to information

The main channels of support and informing young entrepreneurs are [34 entrepreneurial incubators](#) and [52 development agencies](#) run by the [Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Crafts](#). Entrepreneurial incubators and development agencies offer support in the form of:

1. consulting services;
2. education for start-up entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs in the stage of growth and development;
3. subsidized rental of business premises;
4. the use of common infrastructure that facilitates the start of operations;
5. subsidized rental of equipment.

Access to capital

Beside [entrepreneurial incubators](#) and [development agencies](#), financial resources for young entrepreneurs are ensured by:

1. [Croatian Agency for SMEs, Innovations and Investments \(HAMAG-BICRO\)](#) through [Financial instruments: guarantees](#) and loans ([programme EU Beginner](#)), [grants](#) and [innovation programmes Eureka](#).
2. [The Croatian Bank for Reconstruction and Development](#), through the [Entrepreneur Starter Programme for beginners entrepreneurs](#), [Youth Entrepreneurship](#), [micro-crediting with the EU support](#) and [Free Zones](#), established by local and regional self-government units with an aim to enable businesses to operate at much more favourable conditions.

[The Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Crafts](#) through the programme E-impuls, which is the result of Croatia's participation in European and Structural Funds, and helps micro and small enterprises to start up and expand their operations.

3.10 Promotion of Entrepreneurship Culture

Special events and activities

In Croatia, promotion of entrepreneurship takes place through the organization of international, regional and local trade fairs of entrepreneurs and craftsmen. Their organization is under the jurisdiction of the [Croatian Employers' Association](#) and [Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts](#). Moreover, public institutions, such as some ministries and agencies, are involved through patronage.

There are no public events and activities aimed at strengthening the entrepreneurial culture of youth, organized by government or financed from public resources.

The development of social entrepreneurship in Croatia is supported by the [Strategy for Development of Social Entrepreneurship in the Republic of Croatia 2015-2020](#), whose specific objectives are:

1. establishment and improvement of the legislative and institutional framework for the development of social entrepreneurship;
2. establishment of financial framework for the effective performance of social entrepreneurs;
3. promoting the importance and role of social entrepreneurship through all forms of education;
4. ensuring the visibility of the role and possibilities of social entrepreneurship in the Republic of Croatia and informing the general public about themes related to social entrepreneurship issues.

Networks and partnerships

At the time of writing this report, the [Startup Factory Zagreb – programme which encourage development of smart city solutions](#) was the only networking and partnership promotion programme facilitated and funded by public institutions. Through this programme, [Development Agency Zagreb](#) in cooperation with ICT companies Croatian Telecom, IBM and SmartIS facilitates networking of development teams and startups.

3.11 Current Debates and Reforms

External quality assurance of employment measures

In 2017, [The Ministry of Labour and Pension System](#) (MLPS) will set up a working group to monitor employment measures, among which the representatives of social partners and civil society organizations will be appointed.

4. Social Inclusion

According to the [The Strategy for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in the Republic of Croatia \(2014-2020\)](#) young people are recognized as one for four groups at the highest risk, together with the the elderly and pensioners, the unemployed and people with disabilities.

Modern problems, such as the high percentage of youth unemployment in the Republic of Croatia and the prolongation of parent-dependent time, lead to the increasing number of young people who are at risk of social exclusion according to the categories of education, housing, employment, poverty and health care.

In Croatia, the [Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy \(MDFYSP\)](#) is a responsible state authority for combating social exclusion.

4.1 General context

Main challenges to social inclusion

[The Strategy for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in the Republic of Croatia \(2014-2020\)](#) sets out four groups at the highest risk: children and young people, the elderly and pensioners, the unemployed and people with disabilities.

The causes of poverty and social exclusion are usually multidimensional, and risk categories often overlap. Nowadays, there is a large number of young people who are at risk of social exclusion, which do not necessarily fall into the existing classification of minority groups (young Roma, young people with disabilities, young people without adequate parental care etc.).

Modern problems, such as the high percentage of youth unemployment in the Republic of Croatia and the prolongation of parent-dependent time, lead to the increasing number of young people who are at risk of social exclusion according to the categories of education, housing, employment, poverty and health care.

Due to the large differences in the characteristics of young people at risk of social exclusion, engagement of a number of support systems is needed. It is therefore important to coordinate the action of all stakeholders at different levels of society and in different areas, especially in the areas of employment and education, and transition from education to employment where the highest risks occur.

When it comes to youth unemployment, there have been positive changes in the period from 2013 to 2015 that continued in 2016, but the unemployment rate remains among the highest in the EU. In addition to the statistics on youth unemployment, the research entitled "Needs, Problems and Potentials of Youth in Croatia", published in January 2015, indicates that young people themselves experience unemployment as the biggest problem for their group. Unemployment directly influences the ability to become independent, plan for the future, build one's own skills and capabilities, and enrich one's own education.

Furthermore, Croatia has one of the highest rates of poverty and social exclusion in the EU at 29.3% in 2014, for young people aged 15-29 (EUROSTAT).

Main concepts

[The Strategy for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in the Republic of Croatia \(2014-2020\)](#) emphasises differentiation between poverty and social exclusion.

The term poverty is mostly defined as a lack of material or financial assets. The term social exclusion represents a wider meaning that needs to be understood as a relatively permanent, multiply conditioned and multidimensional deprivation of an individual. Social exclusion involves more than a shortage of money or material goods, and in addition to the economic it includes social, cultural, political and other dimensions. It means that

anti-exclusion policies presume a better access to institutions and other mechanisms of social integration.

[The Strategy for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in the Republic of Croatia \(2014-2020\)](#) refers to the definition of the European Commission that defines social exclusion as a process that pushes individuals to the margins of society and prevents them from fully participating in society, by virtue of their poverty, a lack of basic competences, chance for lifelong learning or due to discrimination. It is affected by a series of different and interconnected factors, such as regional inequality, unemployment, poor professional or social skills, low income, bad housing conditions, belonging to a minority group, etc. It includes the inability of the individual to access public services, to participate in community life and to function in society with a feeling of personal dignity.

4.2 Administration and governance

Governance

[Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy \(MDFYSP\)](#) is competent for the youth policy and social policy.

The Ministry performs administrative and professional tasks related to improving and promoting the quality of life of youth and building a complete, comprehensive and cross-sectorial youth policy. The aforementioned scope includes: proposing and implementing strategic documents, laws, other acts, programs and projects in the field of youth policy and monitoring and evaluation thereof, especially in the area of involvement of young people as partners in the processes of participation in decision-making, informal education, leisure and youth culture, volunteering and participating in the development of civil society, promoting political participation and protecting human rights, information, mobility and the provision of quality and regular support to the organized youth sector and its activities. The Ministry develops measures and programs aimed at preventing social exclusion of young people and providing the basis for a complete, creative and dignified life in their youthful times.

The Ministry also carries out administrative and professional affairs related to care of persons and families who do not have enough resources to meet basic needs or are in need of assistance to overcome the causes of social vulnerability.

Pursuant to the [Law on Local and Regional Self-Government](#), municipalities, towns and counties are independent in deciding on affairs from their self-governing sphere of competence. At regional and local levels, municipalities and counties establish administrative departments or services to carry out activities within their scope, including, among others, activities in the field of social services, education, social welfare, etc.

Cross-sectorial cooperation

A number of stakeholders are participating in the preparation of [the Strategy for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in the Republic of Croatia \(2014-2020\)](#) as well as in the implementation thereof: government and public administration bodies, local and regional self-government units, representatives of educational and scientific institutions and civil society organisations and social partners.

Crucial to the fight against poverty and social exclusion is the coordination of the competent government, public and local authorities, and the cooperation of the government, public and civic actors, and the involvement of citizens. In this context, the Strategy highlights the importance of finding new solutions based on guaranteed rights and the promotion of solidarity and social participation. It is important to attain a higher level of solidarity and make efforts to build new social capital. The said requires public activities directed to a greater extent to persons with existential difficulties and aimed at relieving them from seeking out protection mechanisms on their own, which, due to insufficient familiarity of the beneficiaries with the social welfare system and their rights,

often results in unexercised rights and a consequent inability to come out of poverty and exclusion.

Therefore, the strategy implementation programmes also build in measures which strengthen cross-sectorial connections within the solidarity policy that support initiatives of civil society organisations and the involvement of citizens and promote the development of participation of poor and socially deprived persons in the implementation and monitoring of public policy. Namely, besides the contribution of civil society organisations which are active in their work with socially deprived citizens, the voice of persons facing existential difficulties is equally important.

Considering that poverty and social exclusion are multidimensional categories, more strategic areas are foreseen for their combat and prevention. For each strategic area, the [Implementation Programme of the Strategy](#) defines measures that are already being implemented or planned to be implemented, the main and specific objectives, designated/co-designated competent authorities, the target groups, the means of monitoring the implementation, the implementation deadlines and funding sources, and implementation costs. All relevant stakeholders are involved that can contribute to the achievement of conditions for reduction of poverty and social exclusion.

Designated competent authorities for each strategic area are:

1. education and lifelong learning (Ministry of Science, Education and Sports);
2. employment and access to employment (Ministry of Labour and the Pension System);
3. housing and availability of energy (Ministry of Construction and Physical Planning);
4. access to social benefits and services ([Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy](#));
5. access to healthcare system (Ministry of Health);
6. care for elderly (designated authority: Ministry of Labour and the Pension System);
7. financial independence and fight against indebtedness (Ministry of Finance) and
8. balanced regional development (Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds)

In order to implement the measures of the [National Youth Programme for the Period from 2014 to 2017](#), in the area of social protection and inclusion, different designated competent authorities have been appointed (Ministry for Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy, Ministry of Science and Education, Ministry of Labour and Pension System, Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds, Ministry of Health, Office for Cooperation with NGOs of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, Office for Human Rights and National Minorities' Rights of the Government of the Republic of Croatia). Co-designated competent authorities are also appointed for the implementation of measures (Croatian Employment Service, Croatian Bureau of Statistics, National Foundation for Civil Society Development, academic community and civil society organizations).

4.3 Strategy for the social inclusion of young people

Existence of a National Strategy on social inclusion

In Croatia, there is no strategy for social inclusion of young people as a separate strategic document focused solely on the social inclusion of young people.

The basic document in the field of social inclusion is the Strategy for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in the Republic of Croatia (2014-2020), wherein young people are listed as one of the groups at the highest risk of poverty and social exclusion.

Furthermore, one of the chapters of the [National Youth Programme for the Period from 2014 to 2017](#), contains measures in relation to the Social Protection and Inclusion of Youth.

Scope and contents

The purpose of the Strategy for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in the Republic of Croatia (2014-2020) is to achieve, by a common approach of various stakeholders, that the minimum living standard is ensured for the most endangered population and that conditions are ensured for the prevention of new poverty and social exclusion occurrences.

Goals of the Strategy are related to eliminating poverty among children, active integration of vulnerable groups into society and the labour market, ensuring appropriate housing for all; preventing and eliminating causes of discrimination against vulnerable groups; preventing financial exclusion and overindebtedness; ensuring Roma inclusion; and other goals specific for particular strategic areas.

Strategic program activities are focused on the following three priorities and primary objectives:

1. Ensuring conditions for a successful fight against poverty and social exclusion and for reducing inequalities in the society.

Activities under this priority focus on reducing the number of persons at risk of poverty and increasing the adequacy of social benefits in the social welfare system. Also, the emphasis is on the uniform availability of educational, health care, social welfare and other services, the availability of housing, the reduction of regional differences and the prevention of indebtedness and financial dependence. The goals are also related to increasing the share of population with completed tertiary education, reducing the rate of unemployment and insufficient participation on the labour market, reducing the share of early school drop-outs by 2020.

2. Ensuring the conditions for the prevention of formation of new categories of the poor, as well as reducing the number of poor and socially excluded persons.

Activities under this priority are aimed at ensuring the conditions for providing high-quality and accessible services for children from the earliest age/preschool services, extracurricular activities, primary and secondary-school education, and incentives for higher education and lifelong learning, as well as ensuring high-quality and accessible social services for all citizens (social welfare, health care, education). Furthermore, the emphasis is on creating opportunities for raising the employment rate of working-age persons and increasing the employability of disadvantaged groups. This priority also includes the housing policy development (ensuring affordable apartments for the youth and the socially endangered, protecting the real estate in which a person lives...) and homelessness prevention. It is pointed out to developing innovative programmes in all fields (social innovation), as well as developing new work skills and greater use of EU funds.

3. Establishing a coordinated system of support for groups at risk of poverty and social exclusion, as well as a monitoring and evaluation system.

Activities under this priority focus on establishing coordination and cooperation at all levels for the purpose of harmonizing policies and establishing a data collection and exchange system. It also emphasizes ensuring high-quality analysis and research for the purpose of enabling the monitoring and evaluation of implementation measures to serve as a foundation for the adoption of strategic decisions and further policy-making in this area.

National Youth Programme for the Period from 2014 to 2017 highlights that a number of young people who are at risk of social exclusion put demands on great engagement of social welfare centres and other support systems for different groups of young people.

Social welfare centres play a key role when it comes to young people at risk of social exclusion, given the public powers vested in providers of preventive services and family support services. More recently, social welfare centres increasingly turn to the creation

and development of collaborative relationships with other providers of services, civil society organizations and other educational and health institutions and social welfare institutions to better secure the network of social services aimed at protection of children and family support. This puts great challenges ahead of the social welfare centres because of the scarcity of capacity for such a shift in access to service provision. The civil society organizations appear as more important providers of preventive services and support services for youth at risk of social exclusion.

Bearing in mind the aforementioned trends, the National Youth Programme stresses the need to identify risk categories of social exclusion of young people and continuously monitor the number and structure of youth in these categories and improve the work of the existing support system for young people at risk of social exclusion.

The National Youth Programme for the Period from 2014 to 2017 in the chapter on Social Protection and Inclusion includes the following goals and measures:

Goal 3.1. Establish and identify and systematically use risk categories concerning the social exclusion of youth for collecting data on youth

MEASURE 3.1.1. Determining the risk categories of social exclusion of young people

Goal 3.2: Make key youth policy stakeholders in the systems of education, employment, health care and social welfare sensitive and more efficient in meeting the needs of various categories of youth at the risk of social exclusion

MEASURE 3.2.1. Strengthening capacities of key youth policy stakeholders to identify needs and ensure adequate support for all categories of young people at risk of social exclusion

Goal 3.3. Improve the system of support to youth at the risk of social exclusion

MEASURE 3.3.1. Improving the capacity of service providers for youth at risk of social exclusion and developing evaluation criteria

MEASURE 3.3.2. More intensive involvement of civil society organizations in the system of social service providers and support for young people at risk of social exclusion

MEASURE 3.3.3. Development of support systems for young people at risk of social exclusion as part of compulsory education

Responsible authority

The Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy is responsible for the Strategy for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in the Republic of Croatia (2014-2020) and the National Youth Programme for the period 2014-2020.

The Ministry has an obligation to produce an annual report on the implementation of measures from these strategies and submit them to the Government of the Republic of Croatia for adoption.

Data on the implementation of measures for 2015 are available in: [the Report on the Implementation of Measures for 2015 of the Implementation Plan of the Strategy for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in the Republic of Croatia and the Report on the Implementation of the National Youth Programme for the Period from 2014 to 2017 for the year 2015.](#)

Reports for 2016 are not yet available.

Revisions/Updates

4.4 Inclusive programmes for young people

Programmes specific for vulnerable young people

In the area of youth policy, the programs are intended for the general population of young people and the emphasis is on inclusion. The [Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy](#) provides incentives for civil society organizations and local and regional self-government units to implement projects and programs at local level and create conditions that will contribute to meeting the needs of young people and raising the quality of their lives.

The Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy, based on the National Youth Programme for the Period from 2014 to 2017, publishes [calls for proposals for youth-oriented projects and programmes for financial support available from a portion of the games of chance revenues and State Budget](#).

In the context of social inclusion, the Call points out that the benefits of project funding are realised by: organizations that include volunteers in their work; which intends to employ at least one young unemployed person for the implementation of the project of the appropriate profession and/or volunteer experience in a specific area; which encourage the development of multiculturalism, tolerance, gender and sexual equality, human rights, non-violent conflict resolution and youth participation in decision-making; which report a project of new initiatives in communities with fewer opportunities such as areas of special state concern, islands, rural and less urban environments with a lower development index; which include young people from socially marginalized groups, young people in war-affected areas, rural areas, islands and small places, and young members of national minorities.

Priority areas of the Call are based on measures from the National Youth Programme for the period 2014-2017, as well as the Ministry's obligations stemming from the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan, and they are defined separately in each annual call.

When defining priorities of a Call, the Ministry recognized that young people who are leaving education early face numerous employment barriers and it is of utmost importance to offer them ways to return to the formal education system. Also, initiatives for non-formal education can help young people to get qualified for employment. With focus on creativity and innovation, civil society organizations play an important role in providing support to young people at the local level. In addition, in line with the Council recommendation on Establishing a Youth Guarantee, a Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan was created and adopted which contains reforms and measures implemented in close partnership of various stakeholders. A significant part of the measure refers to working with people in NEET status. Measures aimed at supporting youth work will also strengthen youth organizations and organizations for youth to work with young people and support the development of programs and support projects for their peers, with a special emphasis on hard-to-reach and vulnerable groups.

In view of the above, based on [calls for proposals for youth-oriented projects and programmes for financial support available from a portion of the games of chance revenues and State Budget](#) of the Republic of Croatia for 2015, one of the priority areas was "Youth Work with Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)". According to submitted and evaluated programs, 7 programs were approved for this area for which financial support was provided. It is about three-year programs funded from the state budget.

Funding

Based on the National Youth Programme for the period 2014-2017, the Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy annually conducts public [calls for proposals for youth-oriented projects and programmes for financial support available from a portion of the games of chance revenues and State Budget](#). In 2015, a call for three-year program financing for specific priorities was implemented.

The annual amount for calls differs depending on current financial obligations under previously agreed programs and defined priorities. In 2015, for example, the total amount for calls for all priorities amounted HRK 7,392,000.00. For the priority area "Youth Work with Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)", in accordance with the submitted and evaluated programs, the agreed funds amounted to HRK 795,000.00 (annually) for 7 programs. This is a three-year program financed from the state budget, and contracted each year in the same amount.

The call for the European Social Fund entitled "Support for Youth-Oriented Programs" was first published in 2017. The deadline for submitting project proposals was 11 September 2017. The main objective of the Operational Program the Efficient Human Resources is to contribute to employment growth and strengthening of social cohesion in Croatia. The Operational Program has devised investments in four key areas: employment and labour market, social inclusion, education and lifelong learning, and support to public administration. Activities funded from the European Social Fund help people to improve their skills and integrate more easily into the labour market, addressing the fight against poverty and social exclusion and improving the efficiency of public administration.

The call "Support for youth-oriented programs" is being implemented within the so-called Priority Axis 2.

Social Inclusion, Specific Goal 9.i.1: Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability.

Total grants within this call amount to HRK 12,000,000 (85%:15% ratio of EU and national funding).

In addition to youth-oriented calls, the Ministry also announced a [Call for project proposals oriented towards social exclusion reduction and prevention and social inclusion and integration of socially vulnerable groups for 2017](#). The call is aimed at non-profit organizations targeting work with socially sensitive, vulnerable and marginalized groups, people with approved international protection, former prisoners, and those targeting work with older people and homeless people. Youth organizations and organizations for youth may also apply for financial support for projects contributing to social inclusion if they act according to the priority areas of this Call.

Total planned value of the Call is HRK 8,600,000.00, while for the priority area 1. Projects aimed at reducing the social exclusion of particularly vulnerable and marginalized groups, the planned value is HRK 4,000,000.00.

Quality assurance

Applicants whose projects were approved are obliged to submit a narrative and financial report to the Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy, in accordance with the provisions of the financial support agreement.

4.5 Initiatives promoting social inclusion and raising awareness

Intercultural awareness

In 2016, the [Office for Human Rights and National Minorities' Rights of the Government of the Republic of Croatia](#) together with the Informal Roma Youth Initiative organised a series of activities to mark the international campaign of the Council of Europe "Dosta!" on breaking down the barriers caused by prejudices and stereotypes about Roma. The campaign has been regularly conducted as of 2011 as an essential component of that contractual framework for breaking down prejudices as well as strengthening capacities of young Roma.

The Office for Human Rights and National Minorities' Rights is also implementing the [project National Roma Platform "Living Equality"](#). The aim of the project is to encourage the implementation of the National Roma Inclusion Strategy at the local and regional

level for the period 2013-2020. The intention thereby is to improve co-operation and coordinate the work of implementing partners and other stakeholders whose activities are aimed at involving and improving the socio-economic position of Roma in Croatia. Under this project, the Office organized a seminar and a two-day discussion with young Roma in order to identify their needs, as well as their participation in policy making for Roma.

Young people's rights

There are no specific initiatives targeting young people's rights as such.

Key initiatives to safeguard democracy and prevent radicalisation leading to violent extremism

At the national level, no initiative was established that would be directed solely to the prevention of radicalization leading to the violent extremism of young people.

However, the fight against racism and discrimination, the promotion of active citizenship and the diversity of opinions, convictions, beliefs and lifestyles, fight against all forms of inequality, strengthening of critical thinking and the sense of initiative and engagement are backed up by non-formal learning and youth work.

The Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy, based on the National Youth Programme for the period 2014-2017, publishes [calls for proposals for youth-oriented projects and programmes for financial support available from a portion of the games of chance revenues and State Budget](#). Funding benefits, inter alia, include projects which encourage the development of multiculturalism, tolerance, gender and sexual equality, human rights, non-violent conflict resolution and youth participation in decision-making.

The Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy publishes a [Call for project proposals in the field of prevention of violence against and among the children and young people](#). The mentioned Call is meant for funding projects in the following priority areas:

- A Prevention of violence among young people (non-violent conflict resolution among youth, education on the acceptance of diversity among youth and others)
- B Prevention of violence in partnership relationships among young people.
- C Prevention of electronic violence against and between children and young people (projects aimed at protecting children from the dangers of using computers, the Internet and other means of distance communication, prevention of violence on social networks with an emphasis on prevention of hate speech, etc.)
- D Prevention of violence against children (prevention of emotional, physical and sexual violence against children, prevention of child neglect and corporal punishment)
- E Prevention of violence among children (support for non-violent conflict resolution among children, education on accepting differences among children and others)

4.6 Access to quality services

Housing

There is no housing policy focused solely on young people in the Republic of Croatia. However, young people can use some of the measures to address housing issues.

[Act on State-Subsidised Housing Construction](#) adopted in 2001 and the latest amendments were adopted in 2015.

Based on the mentioned Act, it was adopted a Programme of State-Subsidised Housing Construction (POS) with the aim of enabling citizens to solve their housing issues under terms significantly more favourable than those on the market.

The right to buy a flat from POS Programme is available to all citizens of the Republic of Croatia, and the advantage is given to persons who first-time obtain real estate and have not properly solved housing issue. This means that they do not own a housing space that is adequately equipped with communal infrastructure (water, sewage) and does not meet the hygienic-technical conditions for a healthy housing, which is about 35 square meters of usable area for one person, or for every other person about another ten square meters.

Amendments to the Act allowed the lease of flats which are built according to POS scheme with the possibility of buying off for the citizens of the Republic of Croatia to solve their housing needs.

[Act on Housing Loan Subsidies](#) was adopted in June 2017.

This Act regulates the subsidization of housing loans for the purpose of encouraging demographic renewal of society, urban regeneration of settlements and the reduction of emigration of young families and assistance to citizens. Citizens get loans from credit institutions to buy a flat or house and/or for the construction of a house in order to solve their housing issues, and loan subsidies may be requested by a public notice published by the Agency for Transactions and Mediation in Immovable Property

Loan subsidies are secured in the state budget of the Republic of Croatia.

Subsidizing loans for the purchase of a flat or house, and/or the construction of a house, for the purpose of solving one's own housing issue is granted under the conditions and in the manner prescribed by the Act. Subsidies may be granted to a citizen who is a resident in the area of the Republic of Croatia who qualifies for a housing loan established by a credit institution which, and who is not older than 45 years at the time of submitting an application. The basic requirement is that the applicant or his/her spouse or partner, a life partner or an informal life partner, owns no flat or house or owns only one flat or house that he/she is selling it for the purchase of a larger flat or house and/or house construction due to solving need of one's own housing.

The Act provides for additional subsidies if, for example, the applicant or a member of a family is a person with disabilities and if the family increases in the anticipated term of subsidization by the birth or adoption of the child.

In the context of education, the Ministry of Science and Education is responsible for the system of [pupils' boarding homes](#) and [students' dormitories](#).

Student's dormitories are educational institutions at the level of secondary education, which, as a part of their education, provide accommodation and meals for students while attending secondary education.

Students' dormitories annually publish a contest for admission of pupils into dormitory in which they publicly announce the number of vacancies and conditions for admission to the dormitory for the next school year.

If more students applies than a number of available places, the student's dormitory makes selection according to the established points. Individual family, health and social circumstances allow students to achieve more points. For example, a higher score is achieved by a student living with one or both parents with long-term illness, a student who lives with a long-term unemployed both parents, a student living with a single parent or a social welfare user.

[Ordinance on conditions and manner of exercising rights of full-time students to subsidized housing](#) provides for the right to subsidized accommodation in students' dormitories, pupils' boarding homes and subsidized accommodation of students staying with private landlords.

Accommodation in students' dormitories is awarded on the basis of a public tender. A public call for tenders for student accommodation and a public tender for the granting of housing subsidy is issued by student centres for each new academic year.

The point-based system comprises of points on the basis of the average grade and academy performance with additional points based on socio-economic status. For example, additional points are assigned to a student whose one parent is deceased, missing or unknown, student who has a sibling of preschool age or in full-time education, a student who has a sibling with developmental disabilities due to which the sibling does not participate in full-time education, conditioned by living in a common household, a student who is a child of divorced parents living in a single-parent household with only one parent, a student who has one or both parents with a 100% disability, a student with disability in 6th -10th category (10%-50% of bodily harm), students whose common household is a beneficiary of minimum income allowance (permanent support for compliance with social security regulations) and students with low monthly income per member of the common household.

The right to direct accommodation is granted to students whose both parents are deceased, missing or unknown, students who were placed in social care centres or foster homes until the age of 18, students with disabilities (50% of disability or more).

Social services

A social services system that would focus solely on young people was not established. Young people can exercise their rights under the general social welfare system.

According to the [Social Welfare Act](#), social welfare is an organized activity of public interest for the Republic of Croatia. The aim is to provide assistance to socially deprived persons, as well as persons in unfavourable personal or domestic circumstances, which include prevention, promotion of changes, assistance in fulfilment of basic living needs and support to individuals, families and groups for the purpose of improvement of the quality of life and empowerment of beneficiaries in independent fulfilment of basic living needs and their active inclusion in the society.

Rights in the social welfare system under this Act are: guaranteed minimum social assistance benefit, housing allowance, fuel allowance, personal needs allowance for a residential care beneficiary, one-time assistance, education-related allowances, personal disability allowance, assistance and care allowance, parent caregiver status or caregiver status, job-seeker benefit, social services and benefits for energy buyers at risk.

Social welfare users are:

- single persons or living in a household who do not have enough resources to meet basic living needs;
- an orphan or without appropriate parental care, young adults, child victims of domestic, peer or other violence, child victim of trafficking, children with disabilities, children and young adults with behavioural problems, an unaccompanied minor who is outside his/her place of residence without parental supervision or other adult responsible for his/her care, and a child who is a foreign citizen found in the territory of the Republic of Croatia without parental supervision or other adult responsible for his/her care;
- a pregnant woman or parent of a child younger than one year without family support and appropriate living conditions;
- a family whose professional or other support is needed due to disturbed relationships or other unfavourable circumstances;
- a disabled adult who is not able to meet the basic living needs;
- an adult victim of domestic or other violence and a victim of human trafficking;
- a person who, due to age or helplessness, cannot independently care about basic living needs;
- a person dependent on alcohol, drugs, gambling and other forms of addiction;
- homeless;
- other persons fulfilling the conditions prescribed by this Law.

In the context of social inclusion, an important process implemented by the Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy is [Deinstitutionalisation and transformation](#)

[of homes for children and young people](#). Children and young people placed in homes for children and young people without adequate parental care and homes for children and young people with behavioural problems (so-called accommodation as a form of institutional care) are provided with different forms of accommodation and care (non-institutional care) and their inclusion in community life. Also, the placement of children and young people without adequate parental care and children and young people with behavioural problems are prevented from placement in homes by providing non-institutional services and community support services (out-of-institutional care).

Parallel to deinstitutionalisation, the process of transformation of homes is carried out. Homes and other legal entities performing social welfare activities in the Republic of Croatia are encouraged to provide those non-institutional social services that are in line with the needs of community users and become "homes transformed into community service providers in all counties according to the needs of users".

The main goal is to empower children's families, provide support in the development of parenting skills and enable the child to live in a family environment (primary, foster or adoptive family). By carrying out these processes, social, educational, cultural, material and other conditions for inclusion of users - children and young people without proper parental care and children and young people with behavioural problems in community life are created.

Health care

Everything about the youth health care is described in details in the chapter 7.

Financial services

Within the system of education of awarding state scholarships, it is within the competence of the Ministry of Science and Education. One of the scholarship categories refers to socioeconomic status.

Ordinance on the conditions and procedures regulating the right to state scholarships defines 3 categories of scholarships:

1. D-1 – the students who are children of the killed, deceased and missing, under the circumstances laid down in articles 6, 7 and 8 of the Act on the Protection of Disabled Civil and Military War Victims, and children of peacetime disabled military and civil war victims whose disability occurred under the circumstances specified in the mentioned articles;
2. E – students of a low socio-economic status;
3. P – students with disability and students without adequate parental care enrolled in postgraduate study programmes.

A call for the award of scholarships and grants announced by the Fund for scholarships of the Croatian Homeland War Veterans and Children of Croatian Homeland War Veterans is published by the [Ministry of Croatian Veterans](#).

The right to a scholarship during full-time secondary education, a full-time university and professional study, as well as not awarding a part of compensation for tuition costs of postgraduate studies at the higher education institutions of this Fund may, under certain conditions, be eligible for the children of the mortally wounded Croatian war veterans from the Homeland War, the children of the detained or missing Croatian war veterans, children of Croatian war veterans from the Homeland War, war volunteers from the Homeland War.

According to the [Act on "Croatia for Children Foundation"](#), whose founder is the Republic of Croatia, one of the supports of foundation relates to granting of scholarships to pupils and students during full-time schooling.

Quality assurance

There is no a particular quality assurance scheme in this field.

4.7 Youth work to foster social inclusion

Policy/legal framework

There is no separate legal document dealing solely with youth work in order to encourage social inclusion.

However, the goal of the National Youth Programme for the period 2014-2017 is to improve the activities of state administration bodies and public institutions, which, by their sphere of competence and competencies, contribute to meeting the needs of young people and raising the quality of their lives for the purpose of their optimal social integration. As one of the ways of combating unemployment and social exclusion of young people, it is certainly youth work.

In the National Youth Programme for the period 2014-2017, Goal 1.2. Create Institutional Prerequisites for Improving Youth Work, includes Measure 1.2.1. Enhancing youth work through co-operation between civil society organizations and decision-makers. This measure envisages financing for non-formal education programs with the aim of strengthening the capacity of youth organizations and organizations for youth to promote the well-being of young people, strengthening the capacity of state administration personnel by participating in non-formal education programs on youth work and developing an analysis of the possibilities for professionalization of youth work.

Main inclusive Youth-Work programmes and target groups

Concerning [calls for proposals for youth-oriented projects and programmes for financial support available from a portion of the games of chance revenues and State Budget](#), in 2015, a call for three-year program financing for specific priorities was implemented.

The annual amount for calls differs depending on current financial obligations under previously agreed programs and defined priorities. In 2015, for example, the total amount for calls for all priorities amounted HRK 7,392,000.00. For the priority area "Youth Work with Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)", in accordance with the submitted and evaluated programs, the agreed funds amounted to HRK 795,000.00 (annually) for 7 programs. This is a three-year program financed from the state budget, and contracted each year in the same amount.

These programs are about implementation of different activities. The programs are implemented at the local level, reaching the users differently - in cooperation with schools, social welfare centres, PES regional offices, etc. All activities have in common encouraging inclusion in the education system, system of training or employment. Part of the activities are aimed at empowering, educating and motivating young people at risk of social exclusion for active inclusion in the labour market (counselling, job search support, labour market research, support for tendering, submission of open applications, preparation for interviews with employers, education focused on communication and presentation skills, etc.). Some programs also include activities that are more "preventive" in terms of working with young people at risk of leaving school, etc.

Youth work providers in the field of social inclusion for young people

Youth work has a long tradition through the work of numerous youth organizations and organizations for youth, which are the main providers of youth work in the field of social inclusion.

Training and support for youth workers engaged in social inclusion programmes

No government-provided special training or support for youth workers is available in Croatia on, or related to, social inclusion.

Financial support

Please see [section 4.4.](#) for more information.

Quality assurance

Applicants whose projects are approved are obliged to submit a narrative and financial report to the Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy, in accordance with the provisions of the financial support agreement.

For programs within the priority " Youth Work with Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)", the number of young people who are engaged in the education system or training system or who have been employed are monitored upon completing their participation in program activities.

4.8 Current debates and reforms

Currently, within the Ministry for Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy there is an expert group working on better conceptualization of vulnerable groups and stronger support on their inclusion in society.

5. Participation

[Research results](#) demonstrate low level of civic and political participation among young people in Croatia therefore one of goals of Croatian government, stipulated at the [National Strategy for Young People](#) is to support youth participation. There are several opportunities for young people to engage in decision-making process, either via institutional options (such as Youth Council, youth advisory boards) or via consultations and participatory processes in decision-making.

5.1 General context

Main concepts

There are no definitions, concepts, or specific terminology regarding youth participation which might compromise the understanding of an external reader.

Institutions of representative democracy

As written in the [Constitution](#), The Republic of Croatia is a unitary, indivisible, democratic and social state. Power in the Republic of Croatia derives from the people and belongs to the people as a community of free and equal citizens. Moreover, the Republic of Croatia is formed and is developing as a sovereign and democratic state in which the equality, freedoms and rights of man and citizen are guaranteed and ensured, and their economic and cultural progress, and social welfare promoted.

Government in the Republic of Croatia is organised on the principle of the separation of powers into: legislative, executive and judicial but limited by the right to local and regional self-government. Hence, citizens are guaranteed the right to local and regional self-government. The right is to be realised through local and regional representative bodies elected in free elections and citizens are also stated to be able to directly participate in administering local affairs, through meetings, referenda and other forms of direct decision-making, in conformity with law and statute

Legislative

In Croatia, parliamentary and local elections are organized every 4 year while presidential and the European parliamentary elections are held every 5 year. According to the [Croatian constitution](#), every Croatian citizens of full age have the right to vote and be elected. The election is conducted by secret ballot, and its direct suffrage. Moreover,

Croatian constitution allows voting to all citizens who at the time of elections might not be present in Croatia.

The Croatian Parliament (Sabor) is the body of elected representatives of the people and is vested with the legislative power in the Republic of Croatia.

Croatian Parliament (sabor), according to the [Constitution](#) consists of 100-160 parliamentary seats. the [Constitutional Law on national minorities](#) allows national minorities to have at least five and not more than 8 representatives at the national parliament. Moreover, [Act on Election of Representatives to the Croatian Parliament](#) states that:

Members of the Serbian national minority shall elect three representatives to Parliament consistent to the Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities.

- Members of the Hungarian national minority shall elect one representative to Parliament.
- Members of Italian national minority shall elect one representative to Parliament.
- Members of Czech and Slovakian national minority shall together elect one representative to Parliament.
- Members of Austrian, Bulgarian, German, Polish, Roma, Romanian, Ruthenian, Russian, Turkish, Ukrainian, Vallachian and Jewish national minority shall together elect one representative to Parliament.
- Members of Albanian, Bosnian, Montenegrin, Macedonian and Slovenian national minority shall together elect one representative to Parliament.

The Croatian Parliament currently has 151 representatives.

The Croatian Parliament decides on the enactment and amendment of the Constitution, passes laws, adopts the state budget, decides on war and peace, passes acts which expresses the politics of the Croatian Parliament, decides on the strategy of national security and the strategy of Defence for the Republic of Croatia, carries out civil control of the armed forces and security services of the Republic of Croatia, calls referendums, carries out elections, appointments and relief of office in conformity with the Constitution and law, supervises the work of the Government of the Republic of Croatia and other holders of public powers responsible to the Croatian Parliament in conformity with the Constitution and law, grants amnesty for penal offences and conducts other affairs as specified by the Constitution.

Executive

1. The President of the Republic of Croatia

The President of the Republic of Croatia presents and represents the Republic of Croatia at home and abroad. The President of the Republic cares for the regular and conformed operation, and stability of state power. The President of the Republic is responsible for the defence of the independence and territorial integrity of the Republic of Croatia. The President of the Republic is elected on the basis of direct universal and equal suffrage by secret ballot for a term of five years.

Nobody can be elected President of the Republic more than two times.

2. The Government of the Republic of Croatia

The Government of the Republic of Croatia exercises executive power in conformity with the Constitution and law, with the organisation, operation and decision making regulated by the Law on the Government of the Republic of Croatia and its rule of procedures.

The Government of the Republic of Croatia: proposes laws and other acts to the Croatian Parliament, proposes the state budget and final account, implements laws and other decisions of the Croatian Parliament, passes regulations for the implementation of laws, conducts foreign and internal politics, directs and controls the work of state administration, works on the economic growth of the country, directs the activities and

expansion of public services, conducts other affairs as specified by the Constitution and law.

The Government is responsible to the Croatian Parliament.

Local self-government in Croatia

[Constitutional](#) provisions state that the units of local self-government (municipalities and towns) are "to carry out the affairs of local jurisdiction by which the needs of citizens are directly fulfilled, and in particular the affairs related to the organization of localities and housing, area and urban planning, public utilities, child care, social welfare, primary health services, education and elementary schools, culture, physical education and sports, customer protection, protection and improvement of the environment, fire protection and civil defense". Then the units of regional self-government (counties) are "to carry out the affairs of regional significance, and in particular the affairs related to education, health service, area and urban planning, economic development, traffic and traffic infrastructure and the development of networks of educational, health, social and cultural institutions

5.2 Youth participation in representative democracy

Young people as voters

According to the [Constitution](#), the citizen of the Republic of Croatia can exercise its active and passive suffrage (from the local level up to the EU-level) from the age of 18 years.

Imminent plans to lower the voting age limit

There are no plans at this time to lower the voting age limit.

Special provisions

There are no special provisions for young people in the electoral laws/rules. No legislation aims at facilitating specific groups of young people.

Turnout

There is no data collection on the youth turnout, as the State Election Commission does not record any data on youth participation in elections.

Young people as political representatives

Young people can become members of a political party from the age of 18 years, according to the [Law on political parties](#). From the age of 16 young people can become members of youth wings of political parties.

There are no quota of seats reserved for young people and there exist no special provisions to facilitate young people to stand as political candidate.

Currently at the [National Parliament](#) there are four MPs under the age of 30 (three men and one women) which is only 2,65% of the total MPs.

5.3 Youth representation bodies

Youth parliament

In Croatia, the National Youth Parliament does not exist.

Youth councils and/or youth advisory boards

Youth Council

In 2003, the Croatian government founded the Youth Council. This governmental body consists of 27 members - civil society and private sector representatives, public officials and experts (Ministry of Social Policy and Youth, Ministry of Science, Education and

Sport, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labour and Pension System, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Crafts, Ministry of Construction and Physical Planning, Ministry of Regional Development and EU funds, different governmental offices, Office for Cooperation with NGOs, Office for Human Rights and national minorities issues, Office for Gender Equality, Association of Cities of the Republic of Croatia, Association of Municipalities of the Republic of Croatia, Association of Counties of Republic of Croatia, representatives of academic and research institutions and youth civil society representatives) and has goal to supervise and develop national youth policies. According to the Decision of the Croatian government, the mandate lasts for three years and the president of the Council is a youth organizations' representative. The idea behind this Council is co-management idea of Council of Europe. The Ministry for Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy coordinates the work of the council.

Youth advisory boards

According to the [Law on Youth Advisory boards](#) (LYAB) the goal of Youth Advisory Boards Act is to enhance the participation of young people in public affairs of their interest, active engagement of young people in public life and their informed participation at the local level in Croatia, Hence, the primary role of youth advisory boards is counseling local and regional representative bodies on issues of interest to youth. The implementation of the LYAB is the responsibility of local and regional self-administration. This entity within the regional/ local representative body of local authorities is responsible for the preparation of acts and decisions of the assembly or the council relating to young people (e.g. drafting of local youth action programme).

In [2016](#), despite the legal provision, only 52% of cities, 15% of municipalities and 90% of counties formed youth advisory boards.

Higher education student union(s)

In Croatia there is a [Law on higher education student unions and other students organizations](#) which was adopted in 2007. According to the aforementioned law, higher education student union is a student representative body which protects students' interests, participates in the decision-making process within university bodies and represents students in higher education structures. All universities, universities of applied sciences must have higher education student unions which all together form [Croatian Student Council](#) (CSC).

According to the website of the [Croatian Student Council](#) (CSC), it is an umbrella organisation of all Croatian students and aiming to meet the interests of more than 200.000 students of Croatian faculties, academies, as well as professional and vocational colleges.

It was established in 1996 and is recognised by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, as the major student organisation in Croatia and it is the partner of Ministry in the fields of the reform of higher education and betterment of the student welfare, educational policies and student participation in the decision-making process. CSC became a full member of ESIB, now ESU, in 2001. Apart from that CSC is also one of the founders of the network of student unions from the South-East Europe (SEI – South-East Initiatives) and a member of MedNet – Mediterranean Network of Student Representatives.

Student representatives (members of higher education student union) are elected on student elections where every student can cast one's vote and be elected. Higher education student union is financed from the budget of the university budget.

School student union(s)

Students are encouraged on a school, city, county and national level to show their interest, to resolve problems through participating in a real school or community life with the support of teachers, parents local community authorities and national school authorities. They are legally organized through the:

Student school councils defined by the [Act on primary and secondary school education](#). According to the act, each primary and secondary school should have a student council and the representative of the student council participated in school bodies but without the decision-making rights.

- Student county councils
- Student city councils
- National student council of the Republic of Croatia

5.4 Young people's participation in policy-making

Formal Mechanisms of Consultation

There is no prescriptive mechanism for consultations with young people in Croatia apart from the structured dialogue. It serves as a platform for discussion on issues and priorities of youth policy. The National Working Group for the Structured dialogue consists out of youth representatives, representatives from the ministry in charge for young people and the national Erasmus + agency. Depending on the topic, external members can be appointed. There are various methods used for consultation with young people, for instance public consultations, national conferences, workshops, discussions, on-line questionnaires, on-line discussions etc. Depending on the topic, a researcher is contracted to analyze the results of consultation and propose a background paper for defining national priorities.

During the preparation of the National Youth Program for the period 2014-2017, the ministry responsible for youth consulted young people through:

- implementation of research on the needs, problems and potentials of young people in the Republic of Croatia (2000 young people),
- participation in working groups for the preparation of the National Youth Program for the Period from 2014 to 2017. Considering the priority areas of the Youth Strategy, 8 working groups were active. Each working group was composed of 2 representatives of state administration bodies, 2 youth representatives and 1 academic community representative,
- participation in the Commission of the National Youth Program for the Period from 2014 to 2017 tasked to draw up a draft youth strategy,
- public consultation with the interested public on the Draft Proposal of the National Youth Program for the Period from 2014 to 2017, and
- Youth Council of the Republic of Croatia, of which 7 members are elected from youth and for-youth associations. The role of the Youth Council of the Government of the Republic of Croatia was to adopt the Draft Proposal of the National Youth Program proposal for the period 2014-2017 prior to its submission to the Government of the Republic of Croatia for adoption.

Actors

The consultations during the preparation of the National Youth Program for the Period from 2014 to 2017 were attended by:

- civil society organizations (youth associations and youth foundations),
- young people,
- youth advisory boards,
- student associations,
- state administration bodies responsible for implementing measures from the document
- Ministry of Finance, and
- The Legislation Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia.

Information on the extent of youth participation

The participation in policy-making processes is not measured systematically, however:

The number of 16 young people who are representatives of youth and for-youth associations participated in the very drafting of the Proposal of the National Youth Program for the Period from 2014 to 2017.

- The outcome of online consultation with the interested public on the Draft Proposal of the National Youth Program for the Period from 2014 to 2017 over the period from 21 March 2013 to 5 April 2014 was comments submitted by a total of 7 youth and for-youth associations.

Outcomes

In drafting a Youth Strategy, young people have contributed in a process and content sense. Given that the members of the Working Group on Youth Development Strategy included young people, they have contributed to the process of developing a strategy, but also to defining the priority areas, goals and measures and activities of the various priority areas of the document.

An online consultation with the interested public on the Draft Proposal of the National Youth Program for the Period from 2014 to 2017 was published on the official website of the ministry responsible for youth. In addition to the announcement of the beginning of an Internet consultation, a comment delivery form was also published. At each comment received, the ministry responsible for youth has been made public, and it is also published in the Report on Public Consultation with the Interested Public on the Draft Proposal National Youth Program for the Period from 2014 to 2017 on the website of the ministry responsible for youth.

An online consultation with the interested public on the Draft Proposal of the National Youth Program for the Period from 2014 to 2017 was published on the official website of the ministry responsible for youth. In addition to the announcement of the beginning of an online consultation, a comment delivery form was also published. At each comment received, the ministry responsible for youth has made it public, and it is also published in the Report on Public Consultation with the Interested Public on the Draft Proposal of the National Youth Program for the Period from 2014 to 2017 on the website of the ministry responsible for youth.

Large-scale initiatives for dialogue or debate between public institutions and young people

Apart from the Structural Dialogue campaign named [Tko te pita – EU pita](#) there are no large-scale initiatives for dialogue or debate between public institutions and young people

5.5 National strategy to increase youth participation

Existence of a national strategy to increase young people's political and civil society participation

There is no specific state policy strategy to increase youth participation in political and civil society, however The National Youth Programme has one of its priorities named Active participation of young people in society and politics and in the the [National Strategy for the creation of an enabling environment for civil society development](#) 2012-2016 one of goals is to enhance civic education in Croatian schools in order to support youth participation.

Scope and contents

The current National Youth Strategy (2014-2017) consists out of seven chapters, 40 policy measures and 118 tasks for which implementation is entrusted to 17 state authority bodies.

Priority Area	Objectives
Education, professional training and life-long learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active citizenship and non-violence Youth work Competitiveness in the labour market
Employment and entrepreneurship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Labour market integration
Social protection and social inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determining the category “youth in poverty risk” Raising awareness among state authorities about different vulnerable groups Improving the support system for vulnerable youth
Health and social care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Polyvalent advisory centers Health education
Active participation of young people in social and political issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enabling environment for youth organizations Youth in the decision-making process Quality and availability of volunteer programs
Youth in the European and global context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial support for active participation Mobility and better representation in IGOs
Youth and culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater cultural content in formal education More accessible cultural content Financial support for cultural activities Sustainability and stability of places where culture can be exercised Analytical support

As seen from the table, content-wise, the National Youth Strategy follows the EU Youth Strategy, apart from the volunteering part which is encompassed at the National Strategy for volunteering (please see chapter 2)

Build upon the two previous national youth programs, this one also aims to create the conditions for the improved development and well-being of youth. Its strategic goals include:

- Improving legislation on youth;
- Defining and providing clarity to public bodies on their obligations in relation to youth;
- Including as many young people as possible in decision-making;
- Creating conditions that reduce emigration and promote a return to Croatia
- Setting out a plan for implementation and financing.

Responsible authority for the implementation of the strategy

Authority responsible for the implementation of the strategy is [Ministry for Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy](#).

In terms of other relevant stakeholders, there are carriers of the objectives who are in charge for the coordination of the specific goal and objective providers who are implementing bodies.

Carriers

Ministry for Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy

Ministry of Science and Education

Youth Council

Implementing bodies

Elementary and secondary schools, universities

Ministry of Administration

Croatian Institute of Public Health

Agency for Mobility and EU

	Programmes
Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Crafts	The Ministry of State Property
Ministry of Labour and Pension System	Agency for Teachers Training
Ministry of Health	Agency for Science and higher Education
Ministry of Culture	
Ministry of Foreign and European affairs	Governmental Office for cooperation with CSOs
Parliamentary committee for Youth Family, Culture and Sports	National Foundation for Civil Society Development
Youth advisory boards	
Local and regional governments	Croatian Employment Service

Revisions/Updates

There are no revisions nor updates of this Strategy.

5.6 Supporting youth organisations

Legal/policy framework for the functioning and development of youth organisations

In Croatia, there is no Law on youth (organizations), therefore there is no legal definition of youth organizations. Nevertheless, the National Strategy for Youth 2014-2017. distinguishes two types of organizations – youth organizations and organizations for young people. While the former category refers to civil society organizations who are led by young people (people under the age of 30 have to be in managing positions), the later categories refers to all civil society organizations which activities are partially or totally oriented on young people. [According to the Law on Associations](#). The Law elaborates on the constitutional right to the citizens' associations, defining them as all forms of free and voluntary partnership of more natural persons, or legal entities, for the purposes of protection of their benefits or promotion of human rights protection and freedom, ecological, humanitarian, informational, cultural, national, pronatalist, educational, social, vocational, sports, technical, health, scientific or other beliefs and aims, with no intention of profit-making. Young people and their active participation is mentioned in the body of the text as one of examples of working for the public good. According to the [Codebook on the content and managing CSO register of the Republic of Croatia](#), each organization has to be categorized by its form, scope, target group. Therefore, CSOs can define themselves as working with or for young people as a specific target group.

Croatia has [The National Strategy for the Creation of an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development](#) which goal is to improve the existing and to create a new legal, financial and institutional system of support for civil society development, as well as an enabling environment for the further development of civil society in the Republic of Croatia. In its creation it is mandatory to involve youth organizations' representatives.

Youth organizations participate in youth Council, as explained in the section 5.3.

Croatian government has established a Council for the Implementation of the Youth Guarantee where youth civil society organizations have their representatives.

Public financial support

At the end of each year, the Government of the Republic of Croatia drafts a proposal for the State Budget for the next year and discuss thereof at the Croatian Parliament. Once the Croatian Parliament adopts the **State Budget**, the Croatian Government can use it. The State Budget contains a line of the ministry responsible for youth of a budget item relating to the implementation of youth policy.

Other ministries responsible for the implementation of certain measures from the National Youth Program do not have special line items for the implementation of these measures, but the funds are in budgetary positions that are specific to their competence.

Financial resources for the implementation of the [National Youth Program](#) are ensured not only from the State Budget but also those provided on the basis of the **Decree on the criteria for defining beneficiaries and ways of allocation of a portion of proceeds from games of chance**. The Government of the Republic of Croatia shall adopt the Decree at the beginning of each year for the current year.

Initiatives to increase the diversity of participants

The National Youth Program for the Period from 2014 to 2017, with specific measures and activities, focuses on specific groups such as unemployed young people, young people at risk of social exclusion and youth and for-youth associations.

Table shows concrete targets for specific groups as well as responsible state administration bodies.

Specific group	Goals	Competent state administration bodies
Unemployed young people	Facilitate the integration of young people into the labour market	Ministry of Labour and Pension System Ministry of Science and Education Ministry of Economy, Entrepreneurship and Crafts
Young people at risk of social exclusion	Determine and systematically use risk of social exclusion for collecting data on youth; Make key stakeholders of youth policies, in education, employment, health and social care systems, more sensitive and more effective in meeting the needs of different categories of youth at risk of social exclusion; Improve the support system for young people at risk of social exclusion	Ministry for Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy Ministry of Science and Education Ministry of Labour and Pension System Ministry of Health Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds

5.7 “Learning to participate” through formal, non-formal and informal learning

Policy Framework

At this point, in Croatia there is no national strategy that has as its sole objective the development of the social and civic competences of Croatian youth.

The first indication of grasping the importance of adequately adapting the educational system to enable the development of youth citizenship competences emerged in 1999 with the adoption of a program under the promising name National Program of Education for Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship. The Program consisted of the following elements: (1) Education for human rights; (2) Education for democratic citizenship; (3) Intercultural education; (4) Education for peace and nonviolent conflict resolution; (5) Education for sustainable development; (6) Education for the prevention of prejudice and discrimination; (7) Exploration of humanitarian law and practices, and the like.

In 2010 with the adoption of the National Curriculum Framework citizenship education was defined as a separate educational area, it created preconditions for the development of a new citizenship education curriculum. In this process, a Curriculum for Citizenship Education was developed and the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports endorsed its

experimental implementation in the year 2012. The development of students' citizenship competences was foreseen by the Curriculum via six structural dimensions: the human rights dimension, the political, social, (inter)cultural, environmental and economic dimension.

After the pilot version of the curriculum, despite positive evaluation, an interdisciplinary and cross-curricular model which diverges from the tested one was introduced in schools. The program included none of the student and teacher suggestions from the previous experimental implementation phase, nor did it offer any new content connected to human rights, intercultural education or citizenship participation (Kekez-Kostro, Horvat, Salaj, 2017: 24).

Formal learning

For the past two decades Croatia has witnessed a public debate on the need of the introduction of civic education in schools. However, despite clearly articulated needs and a degree of political consensus, the integration of this content has been at best sporadic and dependant on motivation and good will of individual teachers and schools. Since 2014 in Croatia there is the Programme of Cross-curricular and Interdisciplinary Contents of Citizenship Education for Elementary and Secondary Schools. With the adoption of the Cross-curricular and Interdisciplinary [Civic and Citizenship Education Programme](#) "civic and citizenship education is introduced cross-curricular so that education could contribute to the full development of civic competency in students. In doing so, it acknowledges the fact that all school subjects are directly connected with the general right to education and all other special rights which are guaranteed to every child, and require the development of specific skills and values that more or less contribute to the realization of civic and citizenship education."

Numerous [studies](#), [papers](#) and [international comparisons](#), clearly state inefficiency, ineffectiveness and inadequacy of the existing programme.

Non-formal and informal learning

There are number of civil society organizations conducting various education programs intended for enchasing youth participation. Civil society organizations therefore provide educational activities, produce different didactic material and offer a platform for civic engagement practice. There are several structured programmes aimed towards young people covering different perspective of youth participation field.

In 2014 an public educational institution named Mirta was founded by the Centre for Peace Studies Centre for Peace Studies, in cooperation with partners: [Croatian Youth Network](#), [Volunteer centre Osijek](#) and [Smart Association](#) from Rijeka and Zagreb. It was founded with the aim of realizing non-formal and verified educational programs, seminars, lectures and other public events pertaining to adult education. In the initial period, the partners will cooperate with Mirta and implement the following non-formal educational programs: Peace Studies, in cooperation with the Centre for Peace Studies, Youth Studies, in cooperation with the Croatian Youth Network, Demo academy, in cooperation with Volunteer centre Osijek, as well as Teacher development in areas of peace, civic and democracy education and the Academy for NGO Management, in cooperation with Smart.

It is particularly worth mentioning the Youth Studies program which brings together 30 youth participants from Croatia between the age of 15 and 30 who represent youth organizations or show high motivation for social change. It consists out of four modules, namely youth work, youth research methodology, youth social movements and activism and the fourth one depends on the topic which is relevant in a society that year.

Apart from youth studies, there are different trainings by the GOOD initiative aimed exclusively at civic education as such. Even though their trainings do not target only young people, but parents, journalists and teachers too, their scope and content

correspond to the idea of this chapter – enhancing youth participation throughout education.

Quality assurance/quality guidelines for non-formal learning

There are no measures in this regard in the absence of a reference program or strategy.

Educators' support

Education and Teacher Training Agency organizes training for teachers in the area of citizenship education, however these are seen as unsatisfactory, according to the [study](#).

Numerous civil society organizations are also conducting training for teachers and the most famous coalition of civil society organizations focused on civic education is the [GOOD Initiative](#).

5.8 Raising political awareness among young people

Information providers / counselling structures

There are three pillars of information structure for young people in Croatia.

The first pillar focuses on [The Association of Youth Information Centers in Croatia](#). This non-profit organization is a national organization of info centers for youth and its main goal is to develop a quality system of youth information and counseling. It is a full-fledged member of Eryca. The aforementioned Association gathers regional and youth information centers.

According to the Ministry for Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy, regional info centers have to fulfill the following criteria to be considered regional info centers:

- provide services in at least three local units (municipalities, cities or counties)
- provide information and counseling services free of charge for at least 40 hours per week
- provide information on categories of National Youth Strategy
- promote Youth Guarantee
- have website and social network that contain information relevant for young people
- provide information services or point out to other information sources
- provide structured dialogue
- collect and distribute information relevant for young people
- have youth info-center manager, respond to needs in local community
- are members of [The Association of Youth Information Centers in Croatia](#)

There are four regional info centers in Croatia, namely, [Association UMKI](#) (Rijeka), [Info zona](#) (Split), [PRONI](#) (Osijek), [Zamisli](#) (Zagreb)

Local info centers have to meet following criteria:

- provide services in one or more local units
- provide information and counseling services free of charge for at least 40 hours per week
- provide information in at least three categories of National Youth program
- promote Youth Guarantee
- have website and social network that contain information relevant for young people
- provide information services or point out to other information sources
- provide structured dialogue
- collect and distribute information relevant for young people
- have youth info-center manager, respond to needs in local community
- local info center manager has to participate in activities organized by regional info centers.

There are 12 local info centers in Croatia.

The second pillar of information structure in Croatia are [Information and professional guidance centers](#) (CISOK). The main goal of these centers is to provide all information on possibilities for education and employment in Croatia and abroad. CISOK offers services of setting professional goals for young people by offering various workshops, counseling sessions, presentations, lectures and round tables. There are 11 locations of CISOK.

Within the [Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes](#), there is a [Eurodesk office](#), a network of national coordinators whose goal is to raise awareness among young people on learning mobility opportunities and encourage them to become active citizens. Eurodesk provides contents for the European Youth Portal that offers comprehensive information to young people on volunteering, work, studies, participation, culture and creative activity, health, social inclusion, global thinking and travelling. Eurodesk operates in cooperation with its multipliers (currently 17 CSOs: [ACT Grupa](#) (Čakovec), [Carpe Diem](#) (Karlovac), [CTK Rijeka](#), [Europski dom Dubrovnik](#), [Europski dom Slavonski Brod](#), [Info zona](#) (Split), [Mirovna grupa mladih Dunav](#) (Vukovar), [Mreža udruga Zagor](#) (Zabok), [PRONI Centar za socijalno podučavanje](#) (Osijek, Sisak, Vukovar), [Mladi u EU](#) (Šibenik), [UMKI](#) (Rijeka), [CINAZ](#) (Zadar), [Alfa Albona](#) (Labin), [Udruga IKS](#) (Petrinja), [Udruga Impress](#) (Darugar), [Udruga ZAMISLI](#) (Zagreb), [Udruga ZUM](#) (Pula)). The main way of communication includes Facebook page, e-mail and newsletter.

Youth-targeted information campaigns about democratic rights and democratic values

Apart from the national campaign [Say No To Hate Speech](#) which The general aim was to inform and sensitize the public, especially children and the youth, about human rights and negative effects of hate speech. Young people will have a key role in the Campaign and they will proactively work on the Internet to raise awareness of the meaning of hate speech and the consequences of such unacceptable ways of expression. Despite the campaign ending in 2015, Facebook page is still active and still reaches rather big number of young people.

Promoting the intercultural dialogue among young people

There is no youth specific activity in this field coordinated by the state.

Promoting transparent and youth-tailored public communication

There are no policy frameworks or guidelines on transparent public communication targeting young people

5.9 E-participation

In Croatia, there are no policy documents which would focus on enhancing youth e-participation. There are two mechanisms relatively connected to this issue, namely youth information centers and Eurodesk.

5.10 Current debates and reforms

In November 2017 a national expert group for the drafting of the new National Youth Program has been formed. It is expected for the new National Youth Program to be confirmed by the government in the first half of 2018.

In October 2017 a public call for the new Youth council has been announced so far results are not known.

6. Education and Training

6.1 General context

Main trends in young people's participation in education and training

Organisation of the education and training system

Main concepts

6.2 Administration and governance

Cross-sectorial cooperation

Governance

6.3 Preventing early leaving from education and training (ELET)

National strategy

Formal education: main policy measures on ELET

Addressing ELET through non-formal and informal learning and quality youth work

Cross-sector coordination and monitoring of ELET interventions

6.4 Validation of non-formal and informal learning

Arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning

Information and guidance

Quality assurance

6.5 Cross-border learning mobility

Policy framework

Main cross-border mobility programmes for students in formal education

Promoting mobility in the context of non-formal learning, and of youth work

Quality assurance

6.6 Social inclusion through education and training

Educational support

Social cohesion and equal opportunities

6.7 Skills for innovation

Innovation in formal education

Fostering innovation through non-formal and informal learning and youth work

6.8 Media literacy and safe use of new media

National strategy

Media literacy and online safety through formal education

Promoting media literacy and online safety through non-formal and informal learning

Raising awareness about the risks posed by new media

6.9 Awareness-raising about non-formal and informal learning and quality youth work

Information providers / counselling structures

Awareness raising initiatives

6.10 Current debates and reforms

7. Health and Well-Being

7.1 General context

Main trends in the health conditions of young people

Main concepts

7.2 Administration and governance

Governance

Cross-sectorial cooperation

7.3 Sport, youth fitness and physical activity

National strategy(ies)

Promoting and supporting sport and physical activity among young people

Physical education in schools

Collaboration and partnerships

7.4 Healthy lifestyles and healthy nutrition

National strategy(ies)

Encouraging healthy lifestyles and healthy nutrition for young people

Health education and healthy lifestyles education in schools

Peer-to-peer education approaches

Collaboration and partnerships

Raising awareness on healthy lifestyles and on factors affecting the health and well-being of young people

7.5 Mental health

National strategy(ies)

Improving the mental health of young people

7.6 Mechanisms of early detection and signposting of young people facing health risks

Policy framework

Stakeholders

Guidance to stakeholders

Target groups

Funding

7.7 Making health facilities more youth friendly

7.8 Current debates and reforms

8. Creativity and Culture

8.1 General context

Main trends in young people's creativity and cultural participation

Main concepts

8.2 Administration and governance

Governance

Cross-sectorial cooperation

8.3 National strategy on creativity and culture for young people

Existence of a national strategy

Scope and contents

Responsible authority for the implementation of the strategy

Revisions/updates

8.4 Promoting culture and cultural participation

Reducing obstacles to young people's access to culture

Disseminating information on cultural opportunities

Knowledge of cultural heritage amongst young people

8.5 Developing cultural and creative competences

Acquiring cultural and creative competences through education and training

Specialised training for professionals in the education, culture and youth fields

Providing quality access to creative environments

8.6 Developing entrepreneurial skills through culture

Developing entrepreneurial skills through cultural activities

Support young entrepreneurs in the cultural and creative sectors

8.7 Fostering the creative use of new technologies

New technologies in support of creativity and innovation

Facilitating access to culture through new technologies

8.8 Synergies and partnerships

Synergies between public policies and programmes

Partnerships between the culture and creative sectors, youth organisations and youth workers

8.9 Enhancing social inclusion through culture

Fostering equality and young people involvement through cultural activities

Combating discrimination and poverty through cultural activities

8.10 Current debates and reforms

9. Youth and the World

9.1 General context

Main concepts

Youth interest in global issues

9.2 Administration and governance

Governance

Cross-sectorial cooperation

9.3 Exchanges between young people and policy-makers on global issues

Global issues exchanges with policy-makers at the domestic level

Global issues exchanges with policy-makers at the international level

9.4 Raising awareness about global issues

Formal, non-formal and informal learning

Youth-targeted information campaigns on global issues

Information providers

Key initiatives

9.5 Green volunteering, production and consumption

Green volunteering

Green production and consumption

9.6 Intercontinental youth work and development cooperation

Intercontinental youth work cooperation

Development cooperation activities

9.7 Current debates and reforms

Glossary

Higher education student union - a student representative body which protects students' interests, participates in the decision-making process within university bodies and represents students in higher education structures

National Youth Strategy - documents that lists activities of state administration bodies and public institutions that, through their scope and responsibilities, contribute to meeting the needs of young people and improving the quality of their lives for the purpose of their optimal social integration

Occupational training without commencing employment - on-the-job advancement at the employer's lasting for 12 or 24 months, covering health and retirement insurance and travel expenses by the employer, and salaries in the amount of HRK 2,620.80 covered by the Croatian Employment Service. This measure may be used by unemployed persons up to 30 years of age who have no more than 12 months of internships

Permanent seasonal worker - measure aimed to financially support workers who are employed only during the season, and the second part of the year they are not employed. Employer is financed with 100% of the expense of extended insurance for the first 3 months, and in the next period lasting for no more than 3 months 50% of the extended insurance.

Poverty - lack of material or financial assets

Public work - socially useful work initiated by the local community or civil society organizations

Social exclusion - a relatively permanent, multiply conditioned and multidimensional deprivation of an individual. Social exclusion involves more than a shortage of money or material goods, and in addition to the economic it includes social, cultural, political and other dimensions. It means that anti-exclusion policies presume a better access to institutions and other mechanisms of social integration.

Student school councils - bodies that represent interests of pupils, to resolve problems through participating in a real school or community life with the support of teachers, parents local community authorities and national school authorities

Volunteering - an investment of personal time, effort, knowledge and skills out of free will with which services and activities are executed for the well-being of another person or wider public, without existence of any conditions of providing a financial reward or seeking any other material benefit for volunteering accomplished

Youth Advisory Boards - advisory bodies of local and regional self-government units that promote and advocate the rights, needs and interests of young people at local and regional level.

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