



Information gathering template prepared for the Global Education Monitoring Report 2021 - Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia - Inclusion and education: All means all.

Croatia

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Introduction

The template for the Profiles was a survey designed to collect information from countries in order to collect structured information to be used as the basis for the GEM Regional Report analysis work.

The survey respondents were specifically requested to not focus exclusively on children with disabilities, but include information on all of the groups considered to be vulnerable to exclusion or at risk of being marginalised, stereotyped or subject to discrimination, including for reasons such as gender, location, poverty, ethnicity, language, beliefs and religion, migration or displacement status, sexual orientation or gender identity expression.

The overall goal for the Profile was that the information provided in relation to each country identifies:

1. challenges (barriers and hinderances) and opportunities (support and ways forward) for the implementation of inclusion in education policies;
2. the ways in which countries monitor inclusion and exclusion in education (at individual and system levels);
3. challenges (barriers and hinderances) and opportunities (support and ways forward) for supporting inclusion in education created by sectors other than education and arrangements needed to co-ordinate work among government sectors, tiers of government and with other stakeholders to overcome overlapping dimensions of exclusion;
4. key policy solutions that are being implemented and key drivers of policy change.

The Profile begins with background information on the people completing the template.

The next section provides a short descriptive overview of the country's system of inclusive education.

This is followed by main sections presenting quantitative and qualitative data linked to each of the seven themes for the report:

1. laws and policies;
2. governance and finance;
3. data;
4. curricula, learning materials and assessment;
5. teachers and support personnel;
6. schools;
7. communities, parents and students.

Each section begins with a key guiding question (marked in italic text) that frames the overall information provided. This is followed by the specific questions on the main issues for the topic that should be answered.

Sections 1 and 2 focus on information relating to legislation and policies.

Section 3 focuses upon available data and the aims and procedures for data collection.

Sections 4 to 7 focus on information relating to policies and policy implementation in practice.

The information provided focuses on compulsory education (i.e. potentially -pre-primary, primary and lower secondary, and possibly upper secondary education). Only specific issues related to inclusion in early childhood education and post-compulsory education were considered when necessary.

Survey reply and respondents

The main challenges for the preparation of the profile were seen as:

- The lack of information on implementation from the national legislation to the local educational institutions.
- The lack of data and monitoring and monitoring information.

The 5 most informative sources on inclusion in education (academic papers, policy reviews, evaluation studies etc.) for the country published since 2015:

1. European Agency National Overview <https://www.european-agency.org/country-information/croatia>
2. Eurydice, https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/croatia_en
3. UNCRPD, 2015. Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Concluding observations on the initial report of Croatia, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G15/098/80/PDF/G1509880.pdf?OpenElement>
4. European Agency, Raising The Achievement Of All Learners In Inclusive Education, Country Report: Croatia <https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/agency-projects/RaisingAchievement/CountryReports/Raising%20Achievement%20Croatia%20Country%20Report.pdf>
5. European Commission, Education and Training Monitor 2019, Croatia https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/document-library-docs/et-monitor-report-2019-croatia_en.pdf

Internal, non-public or working documents used:

- European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, CROATIA UNCRPD ART 24

Country system overview

1.1. Provide a brief (maximum 1 page) narrative of the country's compulsory educational system. Specifically, provide information about:

a. the different types of schools, institutions and educational provision within the system and the age range / ISCED levels of learners they cater for

Articles 65 and 66 of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia establish the basic principles for education. According to the Constitution, primary education is free and compulsory, while secondary and higher education are available to everyone under equal conditions and in accordance with their aptitudes.

Every person has an equal right to education and training based on their abilities, needs and individual development, regardless of their socio-economic status. One of the means of successfully eliminating social exclusion is by providing equal access to education. In order to ensure equal prerequisites for horizontal and vertical mobility, all young people must be equal in accessing achievements.

The education system consists of preschool, primary, secondary, and tertiary education provided by public and private educational institutions. Preschool includes educational, healthcare, nourishment and social care programmes for children from six months to school age. Eight years of elementary education in Croatia is compulsory for all children aged six to fifteen years old. This refers to all children with permanent residence in Croatia, irrespective of their citizenship.

Compulsory education in the Croatian education system is organised as a single structure Osnovna škola which encompasses primary (ISCED 1) and lower secondary education (ISCED 2) for individuals from 6 years old to 15 years old. Last year of pre-primary education program Predškole is compulsory for all children (ISCED 0).

Single structure education is a compulsory educational level with the function of ensuring the acquisition of broad general education. The general education provides pupils with the fundamental knowledge required in life, as well as with a possibility for further education and equal educational opportunities. The inclusiveness of single structure education prevents education-based discrimination and social marginalization.

The basic level of education focuses on the knowledge and competences that are essential in performing various roles at the adult age. Basic education entails the utilization of the most effective teaching methods and educational content, continuously adjusted to the age, background knowledge and life experience of the pupils, with a view to building the basis for the development of pupils' intellectual, social, aesthetical, creative, moral, physical, and other abilities, as well as their practical skills and personality traits. In relation to the aforementioned, the purpose of acquiring broad general education is to enable pupils to understand and explore the world in which they live, understand the past and the present of the natural environment and society, how humans relate to the natural environment and society, human accomplishments, material and spiritual values and interpersonal relations.

Upper secondary education starts at the age 15 and lasts between 3 and 5 years. It includes three strands:

- 4-year generalist programmes ("gimnazija")
- 4-5-year vocational programmes ("četverogodišnji/petogodišnji strukovni program")
- 3-year vocational programmes ("trogodišnji strukovni program").

These programmes are delivered by the network of "middle schools" ("srednja škola").

Generalist programmes end with compulsory national state matura exam. Students completing 4-5 year vocational programs can also take this exam if they wish so, as it serves as the entry exam to higher education.

Since 2010, State Matura results have been the basis for entry into tertiary education institutions. The tertiary education system in Croatia is binary, meaning that prospective students can choose between two types of tertiary education studies: university and professional studies.

Basic education of disabled children and youth is carried out in special schools and basic schools in special training educational groups and class units for disabled pupils, according to programmes adjusted to their special needs. Disabled children can attend school until the age of 21.

Upper secondary education of disabled youth is provided by applying individual methods within special class units or educational institutions.

Members of national minorities are guaranteed the right to education in their language and script. In primary and secondary education segment, special care is dedicated to the possibilities for education of students of national minorities in their mother tongue. Hence a number of schools – almost fifty - provide tuition in Serbian, Italian, Czech and Hungarian languages. Just as national minority students can enrol into regular schools providing tuition in Croatian, students of Croatian nationality can enrol into schools providing tuition in some of the minority languages.

Eurydice, Croatia

b. the different authorities responsible for different types of provision etc.

The national body responsible for the education system in Croatia is the Ministry of Science and Education (MSE). The Ministry is the relevant implementation body which, through its structure, activities and capacities ensures the basic conditions for sustainable development of the human potential in the education system. As part of its regular activity, the Ministry provides all the necessary support, professionally, materially and financially, to the system users and stakeholders. The MSE' vision is to establish a globally competitive, quality, accessible and sustainable educational system, synchronized with the labour market needs, and the needs of the society as a whole. The Ministry's mission is to develop programs and projects which ensure equal access to all levels of education during entire lifetime, to develop programs, contents and strategies which contribute to the development of educated individuals with adaptable competences, to build an education system that is transparent, and based on information technology and modern research.

The Ministry realizes the aforementioned goals through coordinated and responsible consideration and through the action of all partner stakeholders in the educational activity, including the specialized institutions such as Education and Teacher Training Agency, Agency for Vocational Education and Training

and Adult Education, Agency for Science and Higher Education and the National Centre for External Evaluation of Education. The development, monitoring and assessment of education system was assigned to specialized institutions in order to professionalize system management and to clearly distribute responsibilities between the ministry, as a state body charged primarily with system development strategy, and independent institutions, whose task is to professionally and administratively support the implementation of the adopted education policies.

c. any major external support programmes provided in the past 5 years e.g. bilateral - GIZ (German Society for International Cooperation) and USAID; or multi-lateral e.g. UNICEF, European Union, ADB (Asian Development Bank).

ESF project “Support to the implementation of the curricular reform in Croatia, phase I” – European Commission to Ministry of Science and Education – through Structural Reform Support Programme. The aim of the project is to fund implementation of the “School for Life project” mostly by funding trainings for teachers, mentorship programs and purchase of equipment for schools. There is an announcement that the 2nd phase of the project will be financed starting in 2020.

The partnership between the Government of Croatia and UNICEF Croatia in 2017 addressed a number of goals established in the national child rights agenda. The 2017–2021 partnership cycle, 2017 served to set a solid start for addressing the remaining child rights challenges and equity gaps and to maximizing UNICEF Croatia's contribution to the protection and realization of child rights at home and abroad. As a partner of choice for Croatia’s domestic and international child rights agenda, UNICEF continued to support the Government in developing its policies and practices to achieve full realization of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

The strategy for education (2014) envisaged development of Regional Competences Centres for VET education. The concept of the centres involves the implementation of regular vocational education programs, professional training and lifelong learning, as well as other forms of formal and informal education; and to focus on students, adult learners, students, teachers and mentors of employers, employees and unemployed people (who will be provided with the acquisition of new competences), and students with disabilities. The funds for development of Regional Competences Centres are secured from “Cohesion funds 2014-2020” and “ESF Operational Programme Efficient Human Resources 2014-2020”. The total amount is around €135 million.

1.2. Are there specific features of the compulsory education system that impact on inclusion that should be kept in mind when reading the country response?

Area	Yes/No	Description of the feature
Early tracking of learners into a particular educational pathway	Yes	During the process of enrolment in pre-primary education programmes, children with developmental disabilities are identified through the co-operation of professionals working in kindergartens: pedagogues, psychologists, educational and

		<p>rehabilitation experts (speech and language therapists and educational rehabilitators), nurses and head teachers, together with educators and parents.</p> <p>The National framework for early screening and diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in children ages 0-7 years¹ was developed in 2017 by three leading ministries involved in Croatia's early childhood intervention (ECI) – health, education and social policy – committed to developing an overall policy framework for a more effective national ECI system in cooperation with universities, UNICEF Croatia and leading NGOs in the field.</p> <p>There is no systematic monitoring mechanism for drop-outs in all schools across the country. In their report published in 2018 ECRI recommended that the authorities should establish an effective monitoring mechanism for drop-outs at primary and secondary school level to ensure Roma children's attendance and decrease the risk of dropping out.</p>
'Double-shift' patterns to the school day (i.e. learners attend for either a morning or afternoon session)	Yes	<p>Schools primarily operate as single-shift schools. Schools can operate in two shifts and, in exceptional cases, in three shifts. The State Audit Report for 2018 on capital investments in primary and secondary schools in Croatia² states that around 50% of schools in Croatia work in two shifts and out of all schools 15 schools still work in three shifts.</p> <p>According to the aforementioned, primary schools in the Republic of Croatia differ with respect to the organisation of their activities. European Agency, country information, Croatia</p> <p>According to TALIS 2018 national report for Croatia school heads reported that almost third elementary and secondary schools in Croatia doesn't have enough spatial capacities to conduct regular classes.</p>
Grade retention	Yes	<p>When it comes to repeating a grade, the data at the end of the school year shows an increased number in comparison with the beginning of the school year. European Agency, country information, Croatia</p> <p>According to the data from the Croatian Bureau of Statistics at the beginning of the 2018/2019 school year out of the total number of students in regular education in secondary schools, there were only 1.4% of repeaters, as follows: 2.1% in the 1st grade, 1.8% in the 2nd grade, 1.0% in the 3rd grade and 0.5% in the 4th grade. In</p>

¹ http://www.autizam-zagreb.com/wp-content/uploads/Nacionalni_okvir_za_PSA.pdf

² http://www.revizija.hr/datastore/filestore/170/KAPITALNA_ULAGANJA_U_OSNOVNE_I_SREDNJE_SKOLE.pdf

		<p>primary schools there were only 0.27% of repeaters (most of them in 5th and 7th grade).</p> <p>The Amendments of the Law on Primary and Secondary Education on Education were accepted in the Croatian Parliament in July 2018. The main changes are that high school students who stop schooling for justified reasons, will be able to continue their education even after more than two years after the break. In justified cases high school students will be able to repeat the same class more than twice, with the consent of the Ministry of Education.</p>
Multiple languages of instruction	Yes	<p>In primary and secondary education segment, special care is dedicated to the possibilities for education of students of national minorities in their mother tongue.</p> <p>Hence a number of schools – almost fifty - provide tuition in Serbian, Italian, Czech and Hungarian languages. Just as national minority students can enrol into regular schools providing tuition in Croatian, students of Croatian nationality can enrol into schools providing tuition in some of the minority languages.</p> <p>Croatia has granted official status to 21 regional, minority or non-territorial languages but only few national minorities have access to 3 models of education on national minorities language (Model A, B, C). According to Školski e-rudnik, in school year 2019/2020, almost 11 000 students attend schools according to the three models. However, Model C is available in following languages Albanian, Hebrew, Czech, Hungarian, Macedonian, German, Polish, Russian, Rusyn, Slovak, Slovenian, Serbian and Ukrainian languages across 18 counties, Model A in available for the Czech, Hungarian, Serbian and Italian national minority and is attended by 4 690 students, 1085 of those in secondary schools. Model C however is the least present and available for Hungarian, Czech and Serbian minority and attended by only 93 students out of which only 10 in secondary school and only for Czech minority.</p> <p>Classes were taught by 1,568 teachers. The Science and Education Ministry met all its obligations and provided books for students in minority primary and secondary schools.</p> <p>According to TALIS 2018, 8.4% of teachers in primary schools and 3.2% of teachers in secondary schools reported that they are working in classroom with more than 10% of students whose mother tongue is not Croatian.</p> <p>All students, including newly arrived migrant students are tested at ISCED 1. There have been reported obstacles to accessing secondary education for asylum seeking children. The major</p>

		problem when accessing school is still the language barrier, but there has been progress in the last few years, and children access the educational system more easily at the moment. For example, it is obligatory to provide 70 hours of Croatian language study, which is not considered as enough number of hours.
Policies on access to compulsory education in local schools	Yes	The enrolment of children in primary school is conducted according to the plan of enrolment passed by the county state administration office responsible for education, or the city office responsible for education in case of City of Zagreb. The child enrolls in school in the respective enrolment area. The enrolment area of a primary school is the area defined on the basis of pupils' address of residence or registered address. Enrolment area for pupils with disabilities to be enrolled in adjusted education programs in regular schools is defined on the basis of the location of the closest school conducting the program. Eurydice, Croatia Migrant and refugee children are enrolled in the schools that are determined by the local authorities as those schools enrolling students with migrant background.
(others ...)		

1.3. In the country's system which groups are considered to be vulnerable to exclusion from education? Who has identified these groups as being vulnerable to exclusion?

In the context of education system inclusiveness, special care is given to the children belonging to national minorities, especially Roma children. In accordance with the values promoting a multi-ethnic and multicultural society, and the stipulations of the Constitutional law on the rights of national minorities, as well as other relevant international legal acts, contents important for the identities of national minorities in Croatia are included in primary and secondary education programmes. Within the education and culture policies basis is being established for inclusion and integration of the contents which affirm the historical contributions of national minorities and their representatives.

1.4. Please provide a brief (maximum 1 page) narrative overview of the historical development of inclusion of vulnerable groups in education in the country.

The education system in the Republic of Croatia affords all children, learners and young people – including those with developmental disabilities, members of national minorities, gifted learners and those in a disadvantaged position – inclusion in the education system at all levels, as well as further education through adult education and lifelong learning programmes. The Ministry of Science and Education, together with competent agencies, ensures the necessary programme, professional and expert aid, which enables successful inclusion for everyone in the education system in the area where they live.

[European Agency, country information, Croatia](#)

Until the adoption of the Law on Primary and Secondary Education in 2008, children with more severe developmental difficulties could be educated only in special educational institutions that are mainly located in larger

cities, county centres, which most often required separation of pupils from their families. (European Agency, UNCRPD, art. 24)

The Republic of Croatia has a regulated education system for children with developmental difficulties from an early, pre-primary age. This is important for early intervention and inclusion in the suitable pre-primary and rehabilitation programmes. This also includes professional support and spatial, pedagogical and didactic adjustment to ensure suitable education for children with developmental difficulties and improved quality of life and integration in community life after the end of schooling.

[European Agency, country information, Croatia](#)

Education for pupils with learning difficulties is carried out in regular schools with complete or partial integration, depending on the type and degree of the difficulty, following regular, individualized or special programs or, exceptionally, if the pupils need additional health or social care, in special education institutions.

The primary schools, the secondary schools, the high-school student dormitories and other public institutions carry out classes and other forms of educational activity in Croatian language and in Latin alphabet. Single structure and secondary education of the children of the members of national minorities is carried out according to the stipulations of the Act on Education in the Language and Script of National Minorities, the stipulations of the Act on Primary and Secondary Education and other legislation. Apart from classes in Croatian, primary and secondary schools can carry out classes in some of the subjects and contents in a foreign language, following an approval by the ministry responsible for education.

[Eurydice, Croatia](#)

Children who cannot follow the education process in regular education institutions, even with the help of special educational support, are included in special education institutions. The regular and specific curriculums in these institutions aim to enable pupils/students to get included into everyday life in the most regular conditions possible, in accordance with their age.

[Eurydice, Croatia](#)

The Regulation on Primary and Secondary Education of Students with Developmental Difficulties (Official Gazette, No. 24/2015) states that pupils with developmental difficulties are entitled to follow suitable education programmes and receive suitable support during their school education. Suitable programmes and support are provided in the form of programme and professional support, as well as spatial, pedagogic and didactic adjustments.

Programme support entails the implementation of a suitable education programme, which is assigned to the pupil based on their skills, abilities and needs. Suitable education programmes are as follows:

- Mainstream programmes with individualisation
- Adjusted programmes
- Special programmes
- Special training programmes for independent life and work.

Suitable education programmes can be implemented in the following places:

- Mainstream classes in mainstream schools
- Partly in mainstream classes and partly in special classes in mainstream schools (partial inclusion)
- Special classes in mainstream schools
- Special schools.

Currently, the education models for students with disabilities applied in Croatia are: (1) an individualised approach, (2) adapted upbringing and educational programs, and (3) the model of partial integration. The individualised approach in education takes into consideration differences in the capacities, needs and goals of an individual and adapts to each pupil. An adapted upbringing and education programme is defined as the one appropriate for a student with developmental difficulties and disabilities, but it generally presumes the reduction of intensity and extensity through appropriate selection of teaching content enriched with specific methods, means and tools. This adapted approach implies content and methodological adjustment of teaching content, while an individualised approach implies only methodological adjustment. Attention is directed to the possibilities and needs of the student, individualisation of upbringing and education work, and provision of additional support for students through rehabilitation programmes and the inclusion of capable teaching assistants and others.

Section 1: Laws and Policies

What is the framework of legislation, policy and guidelines for supporting the development of an inclusive education system?

1.5. Have international/UN conventions/declarations to protect the rights of groups who are potentially vulnerable to discrimination and exclusion been integrated into national and/or regional law?

Convention/declaration on	Law	Comments
Child rights (UNCRC)	Articles 65 and 66 of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia	The Republic of Croatia establish the basic principles for education. According to the Constitution, primary education is free and compulsory, while secondary and higher education are available to everyone under equal conditions and in accordance with their aptitudes. Private schools and learning institutions can be founded in conformity with the law.
Disability (UNCRPD)	Regulation on Primary and Secondary Education of Students with Developmental Difficulties (Official Gazette, No. 24/2015)	In March 2015, the Minister of Science, Education and Sports (now the Minister of Science and Education) adopted the new Regulation which replaced the two existing regulations, Regulation on Primary Education of Students with Developmental Disabilities (Official Gazette, No. 23/1991) and Regulation on Secondary School Education of Students with Developmental Disabilities and Extensive Developmental Disabilities (Official Gazette, No. 86/1992). The new Regulation is based on the principles of inclusion and an individual approach to every pupil with developmental difficulties. It ensures that differences among pupils are acknowledged and that schools and the education system are adapted to pupils' needs. The implementation of the new Regulation aims to ensure greater inclusion of pupils with developmental difficulties in the mainstream education system. This is to improve their quality of life (socialisation and training for independent life and work) and integrate them into life

		<p>in the community after a period of suitable and adjusted education.</p> <p>The Regulation states that pupils with developmental difficulties are entitled to follow suitable education programmes and receive suitable support during their school education. Suitable programmes and support are provided in the form of programme and professional support, as well as spatial, pedagogic and didactic adjustments.</p>
<p>Gender (Convention on discrimination against women CEDAW)</p>	<p>New Gender Equality Act, 2008</p>	<p>On 15 July 2008, the Croatian Parliament adopted the new Gender Equality Act, which has been aligned with the provisions of valid international standards, and with EU directives dealing with gender equality. Starting from 2003 when Croatia first adopted Gender Equality Act, legislation has been improved and institutional mechanisms formed to prevent gender discrimination. The Act prescribes the general prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of sex, marital or family status and sexual orientation. The less favourable treatment of women on the grounds of pregnancy, parenthood, and any type of guardianship is also considered as discrimination. The Act extends the area of prohibition of discrimination in the field of employment, labour, and education, and lays out the obligation to promote the raising of public awareness concerning the equality of men and women, and to keep statistics that are disaggregated by gender. In order to boost efficiency in the application of the Act, it prescribes the obligation of establishing commissions for gender equality in units of regional self-government and in the City of Zagreb, and the obligation of securing funds for their work.</p> <p>UNESCO, profile, Croatia</p>

Ethnicity or language (UN Declaration on Rights of persons belonging to National, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities)	Primary and Secondary Education Act (Official Gazette 87/08 , 86/09 , 92/10 , 105/10 , 90/11 , 5/12 , 16/12 , 86/12 , 126/12 , 94/13 , 152/14 , 07/17 , 03/18)	It ensures: The right of pupils who are non-native speakers. (A pupil with insufficient knowledge of Croatian language has the right to learn Croatian in order to start or continue education in Croatia).
Other (e.g. Rights of indigenous people)		
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNESCO)		The convention is signed in 2007
Equality	Articles 3, 14 and 65 of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia	The principle of equality is one of the greatest assets of the constitutional order of the Republic of Croatia (Article 3). In accordance with this, every individual in the Republic of Croatia, has his/her rights and freedoms regardless of race, colour of skin, gender, language, religion, political or other convictions, national or social origin, property, birth, education, social status or any other personal circumstances (Article 14). In keeping with the Constitution, education in Croatia is available to all, under equal conditions, in line with their capabilities (Article 65).

1.6. Provide an overview of general education legislation impacting on the inclusion of learners from vulnerable groups:

Name and link	Year and status (enacted, under preparation etc.)	Description of key content
Law on Pre-School Education	1997, enacted Official Gazette, 10/97 , 107/07 , 94/13 , 98/19	In accordance with the Law on Pre-School Education (1997) children with developmental difficulties have the right of priority enrolment in pre-school programmes.

<p>Law on Primary and Secondary Education</p>	<p>2008, 2009, 2010, enacted</p> <p>Official Gazette 87/08, 86/09, 92/10, 105/10, 90/11, 5/12, 16/12, 86/12, 126/12, 94/13, 152/14, 07/17, 03/18)</p>	<p>For each child enrolled in the first grade of primary school, the Law on Primary and Secondary Education (2008, 2009, 2010, 2014) prescribes mandatory determination of psychological and physical condition of a child performed by the expert commission, at whose proposition the pupil realises the right to have an appropriate programme and appropriate forms of assistance in the educational system from the beginning of his/her education.</p> <p>Article 65 and Article 99 define the rights of students at risk and students with behavioural problems to educational support and expert treatment, as well as the right of students with developmental disabilities to support from teaching assistants or professional communication mediators .</p> <p>The Act define following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to care for basic needs of all students - to develop conditions for their healthy psychological and physical development as well as social well-being - to prevent behavioural disorders in students - to care for the safety and success of every student
<p>Law on Primary and Secondary Education new Law and adoption of the National Pedagogical Standard</p>	<p>2008, 2010, enacted</p>	<p>Until the adoption of the Law on Primary and Secondary Education in 2008, children with more severe developmental difficulties could be educated only in special educational institutions that are mainly located in larger cities, county centres, which most often required separation of pupils from their families. With the new Law and adoption of the National Pedagogical Standard (2008, 2010), education of pupils in special educational institutions is only exceptional, in case when the pupil also needs additional health and social care. Accordingly, in primary and secondary schools, classes with special educational programmes are established so that, regardless of the type and degree of developmental difficulties, primary and secondary education is accessible to pupils in their original environment.</p> <p>The National Pedagogical Standard regulates:</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reduce the number of students in classes that include students with developmental difficulties - new participants in the inclusive education process, such as mobile teams, teaching assistants, sign language interpreters, et
Primary and Secondary School Education Act	2017, enacted	Provides the legal basis for adopting a regulation which will define the allocation procedure of pedagogical assistants and sign language interpreters for pupils with developmental difficulties. The regulation should also set out the necessary level of education and training, work assignments and the process of including additional staff in schools.
<u>Constitutional Act on The Rights of National Minorities</u> (Official Gazette, No. 155/02, 47/10, 80/10, 93/11)	2011, enacted	The education of ethnic minority pupils is implemented in primary schools with classes being taught in the language and the script of the minority, in accordance with the terms and the conditions and the procedures prescribed by the ministry responsible for education. Education of the ethnic minority pupils can be organized in one of three models (models described section 4.1, e).
Law on International and Temporary Protection (Official Gazette 70/2015)	Enacted, 2015	According to the Law only child applicants (i.e. under 18) are entitled to primary and secondary education. Applicants who have begun to exercise the right to secondary education are allowed to continue secondary education even after they turned 18 and children can access education within 30 days of lodging an application

1.7. Provide an overview of education policy or guidelines impacting on inclusion of learners from vulnerable groups:

Name and link	Year and status (enacted, under preparation etc.)	Description of key content
		For children who are members of the Roma national minority, inclusion in pre-primary, primary and secondary education programmes is ensured to bridge the gap caused by their socio-economic situation and to increase the possibilities for their successful inclusion during compulsory primary education. In Croatia, learners at risk of exclusion, such as Roma children, are

		<p>eligible for support without having an official decision of special educational needs.</p> <p>European Agency, country information, Croatia</p>
<p>Pravilnik o osnovnoškolskom i srednjoškolskom odgoju i obrazovanju učenika s teškoćama u razvoju</p> <p>The Regulation on Primary and Secondary Education of Students with Developmental Disabilities</p>	<p>Official Gazette 24/2015, enacted</p>	<p>Compulsory education can be provided at home in exceptional circumstances (because of health reasons). Teaching activity can be organized at home or in a health institution for students who cannot attend school because of severe motor disorders or chronic illnesses for a longer period of time. Ministry has to approve that the teaching activity is organized at home for specific students. Also, it is possible for students to write exams and the teaching activity can be organized as distance learning with the use of digital technology. Home education/distance learning and education in a health institution are defined by Regulations on primary and secondary education of students with developmental disabilities (<i>Pravilnik o osnovnoškolskom i srednjoškolskom odgoju i obrazovanju učenika s teškoćama u razvoju</i>, Official Gazette 24/2015) which refers to education of students with developmental disabilities and students with health issues. The Regulation provides for the right of students with disabilities to appropriate programmes and forms of support as well as pedagogic and didactic adaptation to the needs of students.</p> <p>Ministry of Science and Education needs to give permission to the school to organize education at home or in a health institution for students who are suffering from chronic illnesses or severe motor disorders. Home education is allowed only for the students in question and only top level authority can give permission.</p>
<p>Ordinance on teaching assistants and communication mediators</p>	<p>Enacted</p> <p>Official Gazette 102/18, 59/19, 22/20)</p>	<p>In February 2020 the Ministry of Education and Science (MSE) adopted the amendments to the Ordinance in order to regulate in more detail the procedure for recognising the student's right to support. The new regulations aims to define more clearly the obligations and deadlines for the fulfilment of the procedures but also the period for which entitlement is recognised is extended to four years, after which the procedure must be repeated. Funding for teaching assistants is also regulated - the Ordinance prescribes improvement and harmonisation of teaching assistants, the number of working hours, as the actual hourly rate will be</p>

		<p>recognised in accordance with the student's enrolment programme and all other school activities, which are an integral part of the curriculum. In addition, the founder (local self-government unit) should attach documentation on secured payroll funds for teaching assistants. The Ordinance also prescribes the qualification that should be obtained by the teaching assistant which includes the acquired qualification level 4 according to the Croatian Qualifications Framework. In doing so, the MSE decided to submit an application for entry into the Register of Occupational Standards and to develop programmes for acquisition of qualifications. Therefore, the contents of the training programme for teaching assistant will be developed shortly in order to obtain a partial qualification.</p>
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1.8. Please describe any specific plans and strategies designed to support inclusion in education (e.g. national strategy on migrant learners):

Name and link	Year and status (approved, under preparation etc.)	Description of the focus
		<p>Special pre-primary education programmes are implemented for gifted children. They include the early recognition and identification of talent, which is the task of psychologists and other professionals employed in kindergartens. A psychologist, together with other professionals from the fields of natural and social sciences, develops the special educational programme for gifted children, with the permission of the Ministry of Science and Education. Kindergarten teachers, professional associates and other kindergarten staff, as well as scientific institutions (if necessary), implement the programme. Special programmes can be in the form of projects, more demanding logical and didactic games, working on multimedia computers, playrooms for gifted children with similar intellectual abilities, etc.</p> <p>European Agency, country information, Croatia</p>
<p>National Plan for enhancement of</p>	<p>Enacted in 2019</p>	<p>The plan identifies 15 categories of disadvantaged students who have challenges to access higher education or are at a dropout risk. The plan includes policy instruments for</p>

<p><u>equity in HE 2018-2021</u></p>		<p>improved data management, quantitative indicators, instruments for improved access and increased retention, completion, and employment rates. It introduces an enhanced system of funding higher education. According to the plan the MSE secured from European Social Fund funds for 10,000 scholarships for students with low socio – economic status and students with disabilities. In addition, the MSE increased the amount of money in 2017 grants to cover part of the cost of transport for regular students with disabilities.</p>
<p>The Strategy for Lifelong Vocational Guidance and Career Development in the Republic of Croatia 2016-2020</p>	<p>Enacted in 2016</p>	<p>Aims to improve the vocational guidance system for disadvantaged students and people with disabilities.</p> <p>Measure 3.4 – to develop incentives for programs and projects that are strengthen the involvement of all groups that are at risk of exclusion from education. By 2020 the system for support and monitoring of students from marginalized groups will be developed</p>
<p>The National Strategy for Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities from 2017 to 2020</p>		<p>Strategic document which directs the implementation of the policy towards persons with disabilities in the Republic of Croatia, which in that manner acts as the implementing document of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.</p> <p>in that manner acts as the implementing document of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.</p> <p>The creation of a comprehensive domestic legal framework presupposes the continuous monitoring of the development of international standards in order to ensure the highest level of contemporary protection for persons with disabilities, acknowledgment of all rights and their exercising without discrimination. The National Strategy's task is to harmonize all policies in the area of promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities to globally attained standards, but also to all trends aimed at making all areas of life and activities open and accessible to people with disabilities, respecting the principles of universal design and reasonable accommodation.</p> <p>The main goal of the Strategy is to involve more children from vulnerable groups in the regular pre-school programs and primary and secondary education.</p>

<p>Strategy of Education, Science and Technology</p>	<p>Enacted in 2014</p>	<p>A Strategy of Education, Science and Technology was adopted in 2014, including measures of systematic support to people with disabilities, whose implementation will lead to greater accessibility and adaptation of educational programs to persons with disabilities.</p> <p>MEASURE 6.6.1. Fully fund two-year, high-quality programmes of integrated pre-school education for Roma in existing pre-school education institutions</p> <p>MEASURE 6.6.2. Establish and fully fund two-year, high-quality quality alternative programmes of pre-school education for Roma in the areas where pre-school education institutions are not accessible (in cooperation with Roma associations, primary schools, etc.)</p>
<p>National strategy for children's rights in the Republic of Croatia 2014-2020</p>	<p>Enacted in 2014</p>	<p>One of the main goal is ensuring the rights for children in vulnerable groups (children with disabilities, Roma children and children living in poverty).</p> <p>In the area of pre-school education and care (ECEC) the main strategic goals are:</p> <p>Objectives in Strategic goal 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to enhance the coverage of children from vulnerable groups through pre-school inclusive education - providing appropriately educated educators for implementation of inclusive practices <p>Objectives in strategic goal 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - development of comprehensive and accessible early intervention services for children with disabilities, including services and services to strengthen family resources in the local community - ensuring the right of a child to an individualized approach - ensuring consistent implementation of professional support measures and family support in child care for the members of the Roma minority, taking into account the principles of interculturalism and respect the cultural identity of the child and family - Prevention of discrimination (in access to services) and stigmatization of children living in poverty conditions, and the provision of conditions and

		services to improve their position and quality of life within different public policy actions.
<p>National strategy for inclusion of Roma (2013-2020)</p> <p>And</p> <p>Action plan for the implementation of the Strategy for inclusion of Roma</p>	Enacted 2013	<p>One of the main goal of the Strategy is to improve the access of Roma children to quality education. It includes early childhood education and care and primary, secondary and tertiary education. Particular emphasis is placed on the need to eliminate possible segregation in educational institutions and to prevent early school leaving of Roma students.</p> <p>The specific Objective 2 in the Strategy is to increase the inclusion of Roma children of both sexes in preschool education and raise the quality level of preschool education of Roma children as a component of early childhood learning, which helps reduce the differences in social origin and learning ability, and attempts to meet children’s developmental needs as best as possible, and introduce them to the world of conscious learning.</p> <p>The specific Objective 5 of the Strategy in the field of education is to reduce the difference between average inclusion and completion of secondary and higher education among members of the Roma minority in comparison to the average inclusion and completion of secondary and higher education at the national level in Croatia.</p> <p>The specific Objective 6 of the Strategy in the field of higher education is to increase the number of members of the Roma minority who enrol higher education by 2020. To increase the number of members of the Roma minority who complete higher education [and] continue on to graduate studies by 2020.</p> <p>It is important to mention that Action plan for the implementation of the Strategy for inclusion of Roma was developed until 2015. From 2015-2018 there was no developed Action plan and the Monitoring Committee for the implementation of the Strategy didn’t meet at all. In 2019 after lots of pressures the Action plan for 2019-2020 was developed.</p>
Action Plan for Integration (2017 – 2020)	2017	The reason for creating the measures in this Action Plan is precisely the particular vulnerability of persons who have been granted international protection, and the aim is to provide assistance and protection so they can more easily overcome their difficult situation during the refugee, humanitarian crisis that has affected not only EU member states. The aim of the plan is to ensure some fundamental

		rights guaranteed by the Aliens Act and, much more specifically, the International and Temporary Protection Act. These rights, as derived from the Acts, includes among others education and assistance with integration into society.
Strategija borbe protiv siromaštva i socijalne isključenosti u Republici Hrvatskoj (2014. – 2020.) Poverty and Social Exclusion Strategy in the Republic of Croatia (2014-2020)	2014	One of the measure is increasing the availability of education at all levels, regardless of the economic or social status of the individual.
National Plan to Combat Discrimination (2017.-2022)	2017	The Plan has 2 main goals: Goal 1. To equalize access to education for different marginalized groups (most measures are related to free books and handbooks for low SES and marginalized students, enhance number of scholarships for marginalized students etc.) Goal 2. To abolish discriminatory practices in the education system and promotion of human rights and equality through the education system Measure 1.4. Provide funds for the continuous implementation of the Croatian language courses for refugee children, asylum seekers and foreigners under subsidiary protection for inclusion in the Croatian society

1.9. Is there a definition of inclusion in education?

✓ Yes

If yes, please provide the definition and give the official source:

According to the Regulation on Primary and Secondary Education of Students with Developmental Disabilities (article 2.) the inclusion in education is broadly defined as follows:

Education of students is based on the principles of accepting diversity of students, accepting different characteristics of student development, ensuring conditions and support for maximizing the potential of each individual student, equalizing the opportunity to achieve the highest possible level of education and providing educational opportunity for students as close as possible to their place of residence.

Source: [Official Gazette, 24/2015](#)

It is important to report on the conclusion of the authors of the UNICEF study "[S onu stranu inkluzije](#)" (2018) who stated that with the exception of the National Curriculum for Early and Preschool Education (2015), most of the national documents and policies are still predominantly identifying children in vulnerable situations as children with disabilities, approaching them in terms of their limitations and impossibility. The authors are pointing out following conclusions:

- terminology used in different Acts, Rulebooks, Ordinance and Strategies and which are in relation to children in vulnerable situations, limits this group of children to children with disabilities and gifted children; while neglecting the difficulties arising from the educational, social, economic, cultural and linguistic factors, and often uses a term of special need children.
- legislative framework failed to include rights of children with special educational needs that are resulting from their social and economic status, poverty, their geographical location (e.g. remote rural areas). This also includes the rights of Roma children and children from other minorities because even if they have their own Acts on their right to education those acts do not regulate the necessary educational support for those which can be given to them only in educational institutions.

1.10. Is there a definition of vulnerable groups?

✓ Yes

If yes, please provide the definition and give the official source:

According to the Regulation on Primary and Secondary Education of Students with Developmental Disabilities students with disabilities are categorized in 3 main groups:

- students with development disabilities,
- students with learning disabilities, behavioural problems and emotional problems,
- students with disabilities conditioned by educational, social, economic, cultural and linguistic factors.

Source: Official [Gazette, 24/2015](#)

Official document „[Underrepresented and vulnerable groups in higher education of the Republic of Croatia](#)”; adopted in September 2016 by the MSE

Source:

[National plan for the enhancement of social dimension of higher education \(2019-2021\) adopted in 2019 by the MSE](#) identifies vulnerable or underrepresented groups in higher education: 1) Students without higher education background 2) Students of lower socio-economic status 3) Students with disabilities or challenges 4) Students studying outside of their domicile region 5) Students from rural areas and islands 6) Part-time students 7) Students of professional studies 8) Graduates from vocational secondary education 9) LGBT+ students 10) Roma ethnic minority 11) Children of war veterans 12) Female students in technical field, male students in humanities 13) Students with children 14) Students who work 15) Students from alternative care 16) Homeless students and those who are at risk of homelessness 17) Older students 18) Refugees and asylum seekers

1.11. Is there a definition of special educational needs?

✓ Yes

If yes, please provide the definition and give the official source:

A child (pupil/student) with special educational needs in terms of Croatian education system is any child with learning difficulties significantly exceeding those of his/her peers, calling for special educational support for the child. Similarly, any particularly gifted child, continuously achieving above-average results due to highly developed particular capabilities, personal motivation or external stimulation in one or more areas, is considered to be a pupil/student with special educational needs and, thus requiring special educational support. A gifted child, i.e. pupil/student is a child with identified above-average capability in one or more areas, having above-average intellectual or academic or creative or psycho-motoric capabilities.

Eurydice, Croatia

1.12. Please provide information on any future developments planned for inclusion in education.

Investments in pre-primary education: Croatia is currently investing nearly 120 mil EUR in investments to pre-primary education (40 mil EUR from the ESF, 70 million EUR from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and 9 million EUR from the national funds) to improve the quality, access and infrastructure of pre-primary education and care in the country. Progress is yet to be made regarding changes to the funding model that can allow for more sustainable expansion of the attainment rate.

VET SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (2016-2020) defines that Inclusion is one of the 5 main principles. The aim of the principle is to strengthen the importance of VET in reducing the risk of social exclusion of vulnerable and underrepresented groups. One of the measure in the Programme is: Measure 3.4. Incentives for programmes and projects supporting inclusion of all groups at risk from early school-leaving. The plan for 2020 includes following: to identify the underrepresented and vulnerable groups of students within the VET system, analyse the existing state of programmes and projects strengthening inclusion, improve the current unsystematic procedures of preventing early school-leaving, among other ways by determining the indicators for early recognition of risk of early school-leaving, and develop alternative curricular solutions (as well as “second chance” models) and different organizational forms of education for groups at risk of early school-leaving, which would improve the inclusion of these groups in the education system. All activities are planned for 2020.

National plan for the enhancement of social dimension of higher education (2019-2021) – some of the overarching goals of the Plan are: Increase accessibility of higher education for underrepresented and vulnerable groups and remove barriers at entry; Provide equal opportunities to all students during studying; Increase completion and employment rates of underrepresented and vulnerable groups.

1.13. Please provide information on any reports, evaluations and/or reviews of legislation and/or policy relating to inclusion in education, since 2015. This could include official and parallel reports on UNCRPD etc.

UNCRPD, 2015. Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Concluding observations on the initial report of Croatia, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G15/098/80/PDF/G1509880.pdf?OpenElement>

Education (art. 24)

35. *The Committee is concerned that a large number of persons with disabilities have not completed primary education, that less than 30 per cent have completed secondary education, and that steps to provide reasonable accommodation to students with disabilities in mainstream educational facilities are insufficient. It is also concerned that exclusionary and segregated education of persons with disabilities is not considered discriminatory.*

European Commission, Country Report Croatia 2020, {COM(2020) 150 final} stated that the ECEC participation rate for children at risk of poverty or social exclusion (from 3 years onwards) is four times lower than for children not at risk .

World bank Human Capital Index (2018) report showed that children in Croatia coming from low SES families are much less likely to have equal access to quality education in Croatia, both in terms of the number of years they will spend in school and in the quality of education they will acquire during the process.

The UNICEF report “An Unfair Start: Inequality in Children’s Education in Rich Countries” (2018) ranks 41 Member States of the EU and OECD on the extent of educational inequalities at preschool, primary and secondary school levels. It examines the link between children’s achievement and factors such as parents’ occupation, household income, and place of residence, migration background, gender, and school characteristics. Based on the level of equality in preschool education, Croatia is in 24th place (out of 41 countries). Among all the states in the report, according to the criterion that measures household income, Croatia has the highest level of inequality regarding access to preschool education: only 22% of the poorest children attend kindergarten, in comparison with three times more children from the richest households (70%). In urban settlements in Croatia, four out of five children over 3 years of age attend kindergarten, while in rural settlements only one in three children attend kindergarten.

According to research done by Ombudswomen for Children in Croatia “Participation of children in education” (2018) showed that children in rural area do not have same opportunities as children in urban areas. The same research concluded that the children in VET schools doesn’t have the same opportunities as children who are attending Gymnasium program. Students in school are emphasizing that occasionally they do not have secured some basic conditions needed for schooling like secured food, hot water and toilet paper. Also students from the low SES families disproportionally attend VET 3- and 4-year programs, which often rely on teachers with outdated knowledge and teaching skills.

1.14. What are the perceived main challenges (barriers and hindrances) and opportunities (support and ways forward) for inclusion in education in relation to laws and policies in the country?

Students with disability:

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G15/098/80/PDF/G1509880.pdf?OpenElement>

The Committee highlights that the access to inclusive education for students with disability still remains a main challenge.

36. *The Committee recommends that the State party take immediate steps to ensure that all persons with disabilities have access to inclusive quality primary, secondary and tertiary education and that reasonable accommodation is provided in mainstream education. It also recommends establishing the principle that exclusionary and segregated education is discriminatory.*

According to UNICEF Croatia children with disabilities (CWD), as well as young children at risk for developmental delays and their families, continue to face challenges in accessing multi-sectoral early childhood intervention (ECI) services, a range of coordinated services supporting the development of CWDs and empowering their families. Progress has been made towards securing the rights of children to

live in a supportive and caring family environment, however, additional strengthening of the capacities of child protection system to fully shift from institutionalisation of vulnerable children towards a continuum of services that effectively support families and prevents family separation was required. Building on the achieved progress in the area of child-friendly justice, the need to further increase the use of restorative and diversion measures was identified. Additionally, an increased support to vulnerable groups of children and their families in accessing child rights institutions was also identified as one of necessities.

According to the Ombudswoman for children Annual report for 2019 , the rights of children with disabilities were most often violated in the area of providing support by hiring teaching assistants but also delays with the implementation of an appropriate education program.

Students from Roma national minority:

Children who are members of the Roma national minority are included in a pre-primary programme. This gives good results and points to the necessity of organising pre-primary education groups for all Roma children as preparation for their inclusion in the education system, especially in areas where there are too few possibilities for organising integrated pre-primary education.

European Agency, country information, Croatia

The numbers of Roma children enrolled in preschool education is still low even though co-financing of the parental share in the economic cost of kindergarten has been secured for all members of the Roma minority. Together with co-financing of the remainder from local budgets, this facilitated kindergarten for members of the Roma minority free of charge. Local authorities are responsible for offering transport from family home to kindergarten/school for all children. In some local communities, local transport is not regular and affordable for Roma families who live in segregated areas. Roma children face discrimination not only from their peers, but also from school staff. Since educators are, very often, unaware of their own prejudices and discrimination practice, children face with unequal position in education in comparison with children from national majority. There are some local communities (like city of Zagreb) providing scholarships for Roma students in secondary schools and in higher education institutions.

The larger dropout rate is still among Roma students. The Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey, Roma (EU Agency for Fundamental Rights – FRA, Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey, Roma – Selected finding, 2016, surveyed MS: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Spain, Croatia, Hungary, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia.) found high proportions of Roma without any formal education in all age groups in Croatia (i.e. 46% amongst 45+, and 28% amongst the 25-44 years-old). However, the data also shows that participation rates in compulsory school (94%) are above average compared with other survey countries. This is also confirmed with the ECRI report on Croatia (5th monitoring cycle, published in May 2018): the number of Roma children enrolling in compulsory primary school is as high as in the general population and stands at 95% but the enrolment rate drops significantly at secondary school level and is only 35%. In their report, ECRI (ECRI Report on Croatia ,2018, Council of Europe, Strasbourg) recommended that the authorities should establish an effective monitoring mechanism for drop-outs at primary and secondary school level to ensure Roma children's attendance and decrease the risk of dropping out.

According to a [World Bank report on Croatia \(2019\)](#), Roma girls in particular are disproportionately excluded from early childhood development opportunities with 78% leaving school early, in comparison to 60% of Roma boys. Only 6% of Roma women complete secondary or higher levels of education, compared to 24% of Roma men. Croatia has the second-highest Roma NEET rate in Europe, after Spain, at 82% and 72% for women and men respectively.

Teaching assistants: Children's Ombudsman report for 2018 stated that there is still an issue with hiring of teaching assistants in ECEC institutions. Children with special educational needs (SEN) often do not have secured teaching assistants. The other issue is that those children are not able to attend ECEC program without teaching assistant. The report suggests that there is a huge need for regulation of employment of teaching assistants in ECEC which can be done only by amendments to the Act on education which should regulate both employment and financing of the teaching assistants. Also, the proposal is to define by Act the process of enrolment of SEN children in ECEC institutions but also the opportunities and obligations for ECEC teachers in their professional development for working with SEN children.

Students with special educational needs: According to TALIS 2018 Croatia, 10% of teachers work in classes with at least 10% of students with special education needs which is lower than the average of OECD countries and economies participating in TALIS (27%). In Croatia, 47% of teachers were trained to teach in mixed-ability settings as part of their formal teacher education or training, while 28% of teachers on average felt prepared to teach in such settings when they finished their studies. Furthermore, although 67% of teachers on average participated in professional development activities including teaching students with special needs in the 12 months prior to the survey, training in teaching special needs students is the professional development topic with the highest percentage of teachers reporting a high need for it – 36% in Croatia (compared to 22% across the OECD). On average, 25% of school principals report that delivery of quality instruction in their school is hindered by a shortage of teachers with competence in teaching students with special needs (compared to 32% across the OECD).

Section 2: Governance and Finance

How far are inclusive principles underpinning policies at national and local levels effectively supported by governance and financing mechanisms?

1.15. Is there formal collaboration across ministries on inclusion in education?

✓ Yes

If yes, in which areas does this take place and who is involved?

Area	Yes/No	Description: what mechanism, who is involved and how
Policy development, implementation and coordination	Yes	<p>Ministry of Education and Science is collaborating with the Ministry of demography, family and social policy on the implementation of the different strategies and policies.</p> <p><u>Council for Children</u> (the new Council is established in 2018) – members are representatives of all ministries, Agencies in the field of education, social service agencies, faculties (Teacher Education faculty, Education and rehabilitation faculty, NGO representatives and representative of National council of students). The aim of the Council is to monitor implementation of the Convention on the rights of children. One of the aims is to establish Commission for the Prevention of Behavioural disorders of children and young People.</p> <p><u>Action plan for integration (2017 – 2020)</u> - the adoption process included participation of representatives from the relevant ministries, central state-administration offices, Croatian Employment Service, Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs, civil-society organisations as well as national and international humanitarian organisations directly involved in work with refugees. However, representatives of local and regional self-governments have intensified their engagement and involvement only recently, after the launch of the process to relocate and resettle third-country protection seekers and refugees to Croatia in line with the quotas it assumed as a EU member state, and as a result of the need to develop, at the national level, an operational plan for a systematic, even and sustainable model for distributing this population across local communities all over Croatia.</p>
Identification of needs / referral for services	Yes	The Regulation on Primary and Secondary Education of Students with Developmental Disabilities (Official Gazette No.

		<p>24/15) provides for the right of students with disabilities to appropriate programmes and forms of support as well as pedagogic and didactic adaptation to the needs of students.</p> <p>Ordinance on teaching assistants and professional communication intermediaries was developed in 2015, which sets out the method of incorporating and performing teaching assistance and professional communication mediator work and the conditions that must be met. At the beginning of the school year 2019/2020 the Ministry of Education started to evaluate the real need for assistants and established a Committee in order to evaluate the need for teaching assistants.</p>
Data sharing	Yes	<p>In 2018 the Ministry of Education developed new tool for data sharing – <u>Školski e-rudnik</u> (open source data)</p> <p>The tool provides data about number of schools, students in the country and per county consisting on all relevant data including the number, gender, grades, geographical location etc. of students with disabilities and type of schools they are attending.</p>
Monitoring and evaluation	Yes	<p>In Croatia, <u>the Education and Teacher Training Agency</u> participates in the monitoring, improvement and development of education in pre-primary, primary and secondary schools. It reports on the Mapping Country Systems for Inclusive Education implementation of inclusive policy measures and regulations via its regular inspections and supervisions.</p> <p>The Government Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities is in charge for reporting and monitoring the National Roma Inclusion Strategy for the period from 2013-2020.</p> <p>Commission of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Disabled People - members are representatives of national alliances of persons with disabilities; the main task of the Commission is to monitor the implementation of the commitments undertaken in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.</p>

		<p>There is no systematic monitoring mechanism for drop-outs in all schools across the country. In their report published in 2018 ECRI recommended that the authorities should establish an effective monitoring mechanism for drop-outs at primary and secondary school level to ensure Roma children's attendance and decrease the risk of dropping out.</p>
Quality assurance and accountability	Yes	<p><u>National Center for External Evaluation of Education</u></p> <p>The quality assurance framework of the Croatian education system consists of three elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • external school evaluation; • school self-evaluation; • evaluation of educational outcomes. <p>The quality assurance system includes the internal quality assurance of schools, based on their self-evaluation and external evaluations based on objective standards and criteria, implemented by an independent agency.</p> <p>Quality assurance is the result of the evaluation of institutions (procedures, material and human resources) and educational programmes (relevance, methods of acquisition and assessment of learning outcomes, etc.).</p> <p>National Center is also responsible for implementation of State Matura. From the beginning of the State Matura exam in 2010, adaptation of the test technology was made possible, taking into account the individual needs of each individual student.</p>
(others ...)		

- *The development, monitoring and assessment of education system was assigned to specialized institutions in order to professionalize system management and to clearly distribute responsibilities between the ministry, as a state body charged primarily with system development strategy, and independent institutions, whose task is to professionally and administratively support the implementation of the adopted education policies. [Eurydice, Croatia](#)*
- The Ministry realizes its goals through coordinated and responsible consideration and through the action of all partner stakeholders in the educational activity, including the specialized institutions such as Education and Teacher Training Agency, Agency for Vocational Education and Training and

1.16. Are there shared responsibilities between central and local governments on inclusion in education?

✓ Yes

If yes, in which areas does this take place and who is involved?

Area	Yes/No	Description: who is involved and how
Policy development, implementation and coordination	Yes	<p>Local authorities (local government, regional government) have a major role in founding the elementary and secondary schools. When founding the school, they are obliged to have a positive opinion brought by the Ministry of Education. The Founder independently elects three members who will represent local/regional authorities in the School Board.</p> <p>Collaboration between Ministry of Education, local governments and NGOs in order to provide teaching assistants to students through various models of financing.</p> <p><u>National Strategy for Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities</u> envisaged supporting cooperation between the central government and local and regional governments in order to facilitate equality in access to education at all levels, with particular emphasis on improving the situation in smaller communities (rural areas, islands, mountainous etc. and to improve the legislative framework that will enhance the inclusion of children and students coming from vulnerable groups.</p>
Identification of needs / referral for services	No	<p>The teaching assistants are financed through three different sources: the European Social Fund, local self-government budget and projects developed by different associations so there is a huge need that the Ministry of education is collaborating with local authorities and Agencies responsible for the implementation of the ESF.</p>
Data sharing	Yes	<p>General data sharing on number of students from vulnerable groups, number of institutions, number of teachers, number of teaching assistants etc. Also data is shared through projects that are financing teaching assistants such as ESF projects that are run by the local authorities.</p>
Monitoring and evaluation	No	
Quality assurance and accountability	Yes	<p>Article 9 of the Act on Education in Primary and Secondary Schools (Official Gazette No. 87/2008, 86/2009, 92/2010 amend. - 105/2010, 90/2011, 5/2012, 16/2012, 86/2012 – consolidated text, 126/2012,</p>

		<p>94/2013, 152/2014) foresees the establishment of a network of school institutions and education programs.</p> <p>The Network of Schools must include:</p> <p>(1) a list of schools/institutions in which the following is carried out: regular education programs, special education for students with difficulties, regular and special programs for children with difficulties in special class departments, programs in the language and script of the national minorities, art programs, sports programs, international programs, alternative programs, extended stay or day-long classes, secondary education programs by sector fields for the programs carried out in schools;</p> <p>(2) a list of institutions spatially adapted to persons with disabilities;</p> <p>(3) a list of school institutions authorized for carrying out teacher apprenticeship;</p> <p>4) a list of school institutions named centers of excellence;</p> <p>(5) a list of student dormitories.</p> <p>The law stipulates that all institutions where education takes place are part of the Network, both those within the system of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, and those under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth, as well as the schools founded by other legal and physical persons, whereby education policy is given insight into the education possibilities at national level, i.e. it enables the development of a rational and optimal network which will meet the demands of labour market, based on the systematic monitoring and forecasting of demographic, economic and urbanism flows in the area determined by the Network</p>
(others ...)		

- Local and regional authorities (cities, counties and municipalities) who are the founders of schools.
- School Governance is defined by the Law on Primary and Secondary Education. Article 118 defines only that the school board manages the school and in other articles it defines the rules about constituting the school board, its members, principal duties etc. The School Board consists of 7 members (two representatives of teachers and expert staff, one representative of the school employees, one representative of parents and three independent members delegated by the Founder – the municipality, county, etc.)

1.17. Are non-governmental organisations and/or associations involved in governance processes?

✓ Yes

If yes, please describe their involvement:



Representatives of associations of persons with disabilities have been involved in the work of the Council for Civil Society Development, an advisory body of the Croatian Government, since its establishment in 2002.

The National Strategy for the Creation of An Enabling Environment for the Civil Society Development 2012-2016 highlights the important role of CSOs in relation to the current changes in the access to social service provision in Croatia, whereby Croatia has opted for decentralization and deinstitutionalisation of services, which the country does not have enough human resources for or there is an unequal regional coverage involving social services in local communities. Social services provided by CSOs need to be aligned with the growing complexity of user needs, the establishment of a balanced network of institutional and non-institutional forms of care (community-based social services) etc.

The Governmental Office for cooperation with NGOs defines with all state bodies sectoral analyses each year in order to define the priority areas of the competition for the purpose of granting financial resources in accordance with the competencies of the individual bodies which allocate funding to associations that are including different vulnerable groups.

1.18. Are there any accountability mechanisms to promote the inclusion of learners from vulnerable groups?

✓Yes

If yes, what is the focus of the mechanisms?

Area	Yes/No	Description of the focus/actors involved (e.g. state/non state)
Appeal process for rights violations	Yes	<p>State actors: Reporting on the violation of rights to Ombudswoman for Children in Croatia and Office of the Ombudswoman in Croatia.</p> <p>Each year both offices issue an Annual report with all rights violation appeals they received in the previous year.</p> <p><u>Annual report of the Ombudswoman for Children – 2019.</u></p> <p>For example, the main reported issues in the pre-primary education area in Croatia were impossibility of the enrolment of children with special educational needs despite the expert’s recommendations. The rights of children with disabilities in primary schools were most often violated in the area of providing support by hiring teaching assistants but also delays with the implementation of an appropriate education program.</p> <p><u>Annual report of the Office of the Ombudswoman – 2019.</u></p> <p>Non – state actors: associations in the field of inclusive education</p>

School inspection	Yes	Main role is improvement of the quality of education in the pre-university education and implementation of laws and regulations. Administrative supervision is generally the priority task, including control mechanism for violations, misinterpretations or non-application of education law. Inspection in most cases also investigates complaints from citizens about problems in these institutions. The school inspection is often seen as part of the quality assurance mechanism in education system although in most cases its role is mainly linked to the alignment of schools with the legal requirement. Sometimes their role is a combination of inspection and supervision although they are mostly seen as pure inspection with little feedback to teachers regarding their teaching
Other quality assurance processes (e.g. standards for teaching, support services etc)	Yes	Support to the students is providing by teaching assistants through different models. Since 2014 the financing of teaching assistants is mostly provided through projects funded by the European Social Fund in cooperation with different associations. Some of the associations in Croatia (like <u>IDEM association</u>) developed educational programs for teaching assistants (80 hours).
Monitoring and evaluation (e.g. data collection on attendance, participation, achievement, funding)	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministry of Education is collecting data on participation and attainment rate through <i>E-matica</i> system and publishing it through <i>Školski e-rudnik</i> tool. <p>For example, children with special education needs are significant part of the population of children in primary schools – 7, 48 % in school year 2019/2020.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Croatian Register of Persons with Disabilities registers 41,056 children with disabilities, which makes 8.3% of the total number of persons with disabilities in Croatia, which represents an increase of the number compared to the 2018. There are still more boys (63%) than girls (37%) and the highest number of children with disabilities is between the ages of 10 and 14 (46.4%).
(others ...)		

1.19. Please describe the general mechanisms for funding schools. Give details on: which institutions provide funding; what they provide; how they provide it and to whom, which mechanisms they use to allocate resources; and their respective roles and responsibilities.

Funding mechanisms	Description of who, what, to whom and how
<p>The Primary and Secondary School Education Act (Official Gazette Nos. 87/08, 86/09, 92/10, 105/10, 90/11, 5/12, 16/12, 86/12, 126/12, 94/13, 154/14 and 7/17), the state budget of the Republic of Croatia allocates funds for school institutions founded by the Republic of Croatia or local authorities.</p>	<p>In 2016 Croatian expenditure on education as a share of GDP was 4.8% which compares with the EU average of 4.7 percent. Both Croatia's share of total government expenditure in education and the EU average in 2016 were 10.2 percent and have remained stable for the last few years.</p> <p>The resources are allocated for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School employees' salaries and benefits • Construction, renovation and furnishing of school buildings • Compensation of transport costs for school employees • Professional education and training • The education of children of Croatian citizens abroad • Increased transport costs, special teaching tools and nutrition costs for children with special needs • Nutrition costs and accommodation costs for children with special needs in pupils' dormitories • The costs of expert teams in schools that provide support for working with children with special needs.
<p>State budget allocation for additional costs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-financing work with gifted children • The education of learners in the languages and scripts of national minorities (which includes printing textbooks, additional printing of translated textbooks and the preparation of new textbooks for teaching in the languages and scripts of national minorities in primary and secondary schools) • The programme for the inclusion of members of the Roma national minority (which consists of co-financing the parents' share in the accommodation costs of Roma children in pre-primary education institutions, a pre-primary programme of one year's duration before the start of primary education, and scholarships for all learners who are members of the Roma national minority in secondary and higher education) • Equipping schools with furniture and learning and computer equipment, including special computer programs • Equipping school libraries with mandatory reading materials.
<p>Funds for pedagogical assistance</p>	<p>Models for funding teaching assistants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funds secured by the local authorities (resources from local budgets) • Funds allocated to non-governmental organisations from a portion of proceeds from games of chance (the amount of the funds is set out in a

	<p>Decree on the criteria for defining beneficiaries and the allocation of a portion of proceeds from games of chance passed by the Government of the Republic of Croatia)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funds secured by a joint policy measure ‘Youth for youth – pedagogical assistants’ implemented by the Ministry of Labour and Pension System, together with the Croatian Employment Office • Decentralised funds from the European Social Fund.
Pre-primary education (ECEC) financing	<p>Financing the pre-primary education (ECEC) system is almost exclusively the responsibility of local self - government units, who bear over 99% of the public expenditure for ECEC. Total public expenditure for ECEC increased from 0.46% in 2005. to 0.61% 2016 of GDP, or from 8.1% to 10.6% of the total budget of local self-government units. According to these data , in 2015 average public expenditure per child was HRK 16,634. The decentralised financing of ECEC resulted in great regional differences in public expenditure, so the proportion of expenditure for ECEC in the budget of local self-government units in 2015 ranges from 5.7% to 14.1%, and it is considerably smaller in municipal budgets (6.9%) and in the budgets of less developed local self-government units.</p> <p>It is a requirement that children with disabilities should be included in regular kindergartens. Inclusive measures are funded exclusively by the state (approximately 100€ per month for each child with special needs and disabilities). Educational programmes for children with disabilities and for children of national minorities are organised within the framework of the National Curriculum according to their specific needs.</p> <p>Attending preschool education is free for children members of the Roma national minority.</p>

[European Agency, country information, Croatia](#)

1.20. Do schools have flexibility to use funding allocations to support the inclusion of learners from vulnerable groups?

✓ Yes

If yes, please describe the flexibility:

From the school year 2019/2020 all schools in Croatia started with the implementation of the curricular reform project called “School for Life”. According to the available ESF funding for the project the Ministry of Education published open call for schools in order to apply for purchasing equipment and different teaching and learning materials for their schools. The total budget for all schools in Croatia was 20 mil EUR. Schools could apply and decide independently what will they need most and there was some kind of flexibility in deciding what kind of equipment they will purchase.

Additionally, at the end of 2019 the Ministry of education decided to fund 23 schools and 37 educational centres that have more than 10 students enrolled in a special educational programs with additional 500 000 EUR in order for schools to buy needed equipment for their students. Schools could decide what kind

of equipment or materials they will purchase and the amount of the available funds was connected to the number of students in each school.

Sources: <https://mzo.gov.hr/vijesti/divjak-gotovo-4-milijuna-kuna-za-opremu-ustanovama-i-skolama-za-djecu-s-teskocama/3304>

1.21. Please describe the specific mechanisms for funding the inclusion of vulnerable learners and their families in education (e.g. benefits, cash transfers, scholarships). Give details on: which institutions provide funding; what they provide; how they provide it and to whom, which mechanisms they use to allocate resources; and their respective roles and responsibilities.

Funding mechanisms	Description of the who, what, to whom and how
Scholarships (national level and local governance level) Financial support for Students with disability and students from low-economic status	State scholarships, subsidies for covering the costs of student meals, subsidies for covering the costs of student accommodation in dormitories, compensation of public transport costs and different benefits during admission to higher education institutions.
Learners with special needs costs coverage	Increased transport costs, special teaching and learning aids and the cost of meals and accommodation in a boarding home incurred during the education of pupils with disabilities as well as the costs of expert teams who assist teachers who work with special needs pupils are under the jurisdiction of the state.
Scholarship program for higher education students	In 2018 the new scholarship scheme was developed by the MSE that included a scholarship for low SES students - the number of scholarship in academic year 2019/2020 increased and the number of students who will receive scholarship is 10,000. In 2019 the Ministry introduced new scholarship scheme for so called special group of students which includes following categories of students: students with disabilities, gifted students and students without parents.

1.22. Please provide information (main conclusions, reference and a link if available) on any recent reports, evaluations and/or reviews, since 2015 of funding and resourcing relating to inclusive education.

European Agency, Financing of Inclusive Education Mapping Country Systems for Inclusive Education

The report mentions several times the logistics measures (transport, financial support, learning material provision) for SEN learners and Roma learners.

Data from 2017 shows that 2,119 primary school buildings in the Republic of Croatia, 7% of buildings, have been fully adapted, and 26% of the buildings have been partially adapted. 40% of elementary school buildings have an adapted entrance to the school building. In order to allow unobstructed movement between floors, 10% of facilities with storeys have an elevator or a platform. 55% of school sports halls have barrier-free access. In accordance with the needs, the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports implemented the project "School Network without Architectural Barriers", with the aim of spatial accommodation of schools in each county for equal access to education for students with greater motor disabilities.

1.23. Overall, what are the perceived main challenges (barriers and hinderances) and opportunities (support and ways forward) for inclusion in education in relation to governance and finance issues in the country?

Pre-primary education: Croatia does not offer a guarantee of placement for children in ECEC. Not enough ECEC institutions and spots within the existing kindergartens are available to ensure adequate coverage in pre-primary programs. The situation is worse for children up to 3 years of age and in rural, less developed areas and among the Roma national minority. Access to ECEC among different counties in 2016 ranged from 6 to 40 percent for children ages 0-3 and from 24 to 83 percent for children ages 4-6. Despite an increase in the number of kindergartens and placements in recent years, according to the current rate of expansion, Croatia is unlikely to meet its national and EU2020 95% enrolment goal for 4-6-year-old. Current EU funds for expansion of access are often disbursed at the local level and are sub-optimized due to lack of coordination and a clear expansion strategy at the national level that takes regional demographic changes, as well as the needs of the most disadvantaged areas, into consideration. (Dobrotić, I., T. Matković and V. Menger, 2018. "Analysis of Accessibility, Quality, Capacity and Funding System – Early Childhood Education in Croatia." Ministry of Demographics, Family, Youth and Social Policy).

Primary and Secondary Education: The National Curriculum Framework aims to develop:

- Democracy: pluralism and democratic decision-making, including all key stakeholders in making and implementing educational policy.
- Independence of schools: a degree of freedom and independence for schools to design their own activities, programmes and projects for learners, parents, teachers and other school employees as a part of their curricula and the creation of school identity. Freedom of choice with respect to subject matter, the methods applied and the organisation of educational work in the implementation of the national curriculum.

Section 3: Data

What data on inclusion in education is available to understand if progress is being made towards equitable learning opportunities for all learners?

1.24. Please indicate if the following frameworks are in place, provide a link and give a brief description of their aims and focus:

Framework	Yes / No	Description
For monitoring and evaluating the implementation of national-level inclusion in education policy	No	There is no specific framework to implement inclusive education at regional / municipal level.
For quality assurance across all levels of the system (national, regional, school)	Yes	<p>State Matura: Since 2010 State Matura is completely adapted to students with special educational needs. Until 2018 more than 3000 students passed through adapted exams. Each year the Ministry of Education in cooperation with National Centre for External Evaluation of Education adapts Exam's technology depending on the exam type as well as the type and the level of disorder in examinee's development needs. It is necessary to prepare an individual list of exam technology adaptations for every exam and for each examinee.</p> <p>Committee for the development of the model of national testing (supported by National Center for External Evaluation of Education) developed in 2018 the document „Model of the national testing system“ which is a framework document for the fully implementation of the national testing in educational system in Croatia. The document define guidelines for policy makers and key stakeholders on how to use indicators and results of national testing in order to evaluate and improve all educational institutions in Croatia. One of the developed testing model is a national exam for enrolling students whose first language is not Croatian to the 1st grade.</p>
Providing guidance on the use of a range of different data sources for evaluation and self-review at different levels (national, regional, school)	Yes	<p>National Centre for External Evaluation of Education in the last decade published numerous guidelines for all educational levels regarding self-evaluation and self-reflection of educational institutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handbook for the Self-Evaluation of Early Childhood and Preschool Education Institutions (2013) • Handbook for implementation of self-evaluation in primary schools (2009)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handbook for implementation of self-evaluation in secondary schools (2010) <p>There are no any specific guidelines for self-evaluation the field of inclusive education and it is important to mention that all process is on voluntary basis meaning that educational institutions are not obliged to conduct self-evaluation.</p> <p>Agency for VET and Adult Education developed their model of evaluation of VET schools based on the VET Act adopted in 2009. All VET schools are obliged from 2009 to conduct self-evaluation and there is an online platform developed in order to simplify the process of reporting for schools (e-kvaliteta). However the schools are not provided with the feedback or any support from the Agency no matter of the results.</p>
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1.25. What data is collected on learners from vulnerable groups, how and why?

Data collection: General electronic data collection systems exist in education, for example *E-Matica* (for primary and secondary schools), E-enrolments (for secondary schools) and VETIS (for VET schools) and they cover both private and public schools and contain a wealth of information on students

Ministry of Education is collecting data on participation and attainment rate through *E-matica* system and publishing it through *Školski e-rudnik* tool. The tool is open source and publicly available which allows all interested to see current data on different aspects of schooling as well as number of children in vulnerable groups. Croatian education authorities have developed E-matica, an electronic database of all students in primary and secondary schools. This database contains information on the success of students at the end of each school year in relation to each subject and their overall achievement in each grade. The system is centralized so the Ministry can use the data for different reports and statistics. The student reports at the end of each school year are also printed from this system. This information is then used for the enrolment of students into higher education institutions, which is also carried out electronically.

Part of the *E-matica* is a service for parents and students called *E-dnevnik* which aims to improve the communication between the school and parents. It ensures that parents have a constant access to school data about their children. This is also linked to teacher training to help teachers to identify at risk students. The schools' responsibility is to monitor the number of classes missed by students. If the number increases, it is the responsibility of the school to make sure that pedagogues, management and other experts will become involved, together with parents. In place of existing register books for each class (containing information on each subject taught, on the achievements of each student in all subjects and their daily attendance) an electronic form of these registers was developed. It was noted that parents would benefit from having access to this information too. In the case of parents working long hours, it may be difficult for them to come to school for regular meetings. It may well reach the point, that parents are called into school when the situation regarding achievement or the behaviour of their child is already a cause for concern. Access to the e-register book for parents is optional. Parents can access the system by using the code of their child and view their grades up until the previous day, as well as their absences. Grades are always shown in the system

with one day of delay so that children have the possibility to tell parents the grade before they can see it in the system. This is intended to support trust and communication between children and parents. Teachers remain available to provide them with more information about their children.

Ministry of Education is collecting data on participation and attainment rate through *E-matica* system and publishing it through *Školski e-rudnik* tool.

There is no specific monitoring tool except monitoring the implementation of different Strategies and national plans that has measures to improve inclusion of students in schools through different models.

1.26. Please provide the available data relating to all learners in the compulsory education system and where they are enrolled for their education.

All questions can be answered using the country's own data sources as far as possible. Alternatively, the data can be provided from publicly available international sources e.g. UIS:

<http://data.uis.unesco.org/index.aspx?queryid=216> or UOE: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Main_Page

Please give a clear reference to the Source in the column provided.

In the Learners column, as far as possible:

- provide actual numbers as far as possible and not estimates.
- only use 0 when the data is zero.
- use M to indicate missing data.
- use NA to indicate the question is Not Applicable (i.e. the country does not have that type of provision).

All questions refer to ALL learners in the education system, not just those formally identified as belonging to a group that is vulnerable to exclusion.

Please provide notes to clarify any issues with the data and include a specific note on the calendar year and/or school year the data refers to.

Data on learner access to compulsory education	Learners	Notes	Source
(i) What is the <i>potential population</i> of learners for the compulsory education system in the country (i.e. how many children are in the country that should, by law, be in some form of compulsory education)?	Total: 329,035 Male: M Female: M	EASIE data covering ISCED levels 02, 1 and 2. School year 2014-2015	European Agency, data, Croatia

(ii) How many learners are enrolled in all forms of education (i.e. educational settings maintained by the ministry of education or by other authorities such as health, welfare or labour ministries)?	Total: 322,998 Male: M Female: M	EASIE data covering ISCED levels 02, 1 and 2. School year 2014-2015	European Agency, data, Croatia
(iii) How many learners are out of any form of education (who by law should be in some form of education)?	Total: M Male: M Female: M	There is no data available on learners out of any formal education.	European Agency, data, Croatia
(iv) How many learners are enrolled in mainstream schools (i.e. all learners, not just those with recognised needs or from vulnerable groups)?	Total: 320,313 Male: M Female: M	EASIE data covering ISCED levels 02, 1 and 2. School year 2014-2015	European Agency, data, Croatia
(v) How many learners are enrolled in mainstream schools and spend the majority of their time (i.e. at least 80% or 4 days of the week) in inclusive groups/classes with their peers?	Total: 319,651 Male: M Female: M	EASIE data covering ISCED levels 02, 1 and 2. School year 2014-2015	European Agency, data, Croatia
(vi) How many learners are enrolled in mainstream schools and spend the majority of their time (i.e. at least 80% or 4 days of the week) in separate, special groups/classes, away from their peers?	Total: 662 Male: M Female: M	EASIE data covering ISCED levels 02, 1 and 2. School year 2014-2015	European Agency, data, Croatia
(vii) How many learners are enrolled in totally separate, special units and/or schools, away from their peers?	Total: 1114 Male: M Female: M	EASIE data covering ISCED levels 02, 1 and 2. School year 2014-2015	European Agency, data, Croatia

CROATIA NOTE: 1571 learners (636 ISCED 1 and 935 ISCED 2) are educated in non-formal educational provision maintained by the education, health, social or justice sector

For some national data see paragraph under 2.4. Monitoring and evaluation: “For example, children with special education needs are significant part of the population of children in primary schools – 7, 48 % in school year 2019/2020.

Croatian Register of Persons with Disabilities registers 41,056 children with disabilities, which makes 8.3% of the total number of persons with disabilities in Croatia, which represents an increase of the number compared to the 2018. There are still more boys (63%) than girls (37%) and the highest number of children with disabilities is between the ages of 10 and 14 (46.4%).

1.27. Please provide information (main conclusions, reference and a link if available) on any recent reports, evaluations and/or reviews, since 2015 of data collection and monitoring for inclusion in education.

European Commission, *Education and Training Monitor 2019, Croatia*

Highlights from the report:

- Pilot implementation of curricular reform and ambitious preparations for full implementation are under way.
- Reforms are under way in vocational education and training. ↪ Participation in early childhood education and care is held back by shortages of teachers and places.
- Plans to expand the very short average instruction time could help to improve low education outcomes.

1.28. Overall, what are the perceived main challenges (barriers and hinderances) and opportunities (support and ways forward) for inclusion in education in relation to data collection issues in the country?

Challenges

The number of Roma children in primary education has risen in recent years, and the trend continues. However, at the same time, the data on the number of Roma learners who leave primary education after having repeated a grade several times indicates that the rate of primary education completion among Roma children is very low. When it comes to repeating a grade, the data at the end of the school year shows an increased number in comparison with the beginning of the school year. Within the system, data is also collected on the number of Roma learners who are offered additional help in learning Croatian and the number of learners included in after-school activities within the school.

The number of Roma children included in the secondary education system is also increasing. The National Programme for the Roma sets forth instructions for awarding certain advantages to Roma children during the process of enrolment in secondary school, which have been adopted by the Ministry of Science and Education. Although most Roma children continue their education in three-year rather than four-year programmes, the number of children enrolling in schools which offer four-year programmes is increasing. It is also evident that learners drop out of school, i.e. they leave their secondary education. The Ministry of Science and Education awards scholarships to all secondary school learners who are members of the Roma national minority.

Opportunities:

The rate of early school leaving is very low, but the overall quality of education remains a challenge. Croatia has the lowest rate of early school leaving in the EU (3.3%, compared with an EU average of 10.6%).

*Nevertheless, the gap for students with disabilities is one of the largest in the EU (14 pps, as against an EU average of 10 pps) (Grammenos, 2013). Croatia has one of the shortest compulsory primary and lower secondary schooling cycles in the EU – it lasts only 8 years. The Strategy for Education, Science and Technology identified this as an area for change, but there are infrastructure challenges, as many schools work in two or three shifts. **There is a project in cooperation with the World Bank that aims to enable change to one-shift teaching and increase the number of teaching hours/lessons.** This should help improve the results of Croatian pupils (e.g. OECD's Programme for International Skills Assessment (PISA) test, where pupils perform below the EU average in reading, science and in particular mathematics (OECD, 2016)). A national youth study shows that young people are not very satisfied with the quality of their education (Gvozdanović et al., 2019), while according to World Economic Forum indicators the quality of education in Croatia ranks 112th out of 137 (Schwab, 2017).*

European Commission, Education and Training Monitor 2019, Croatia

According to the World bank document “Croatia country partnership framework for the period 2019 – 2024”, the World bank is planning to implement a project that would focus on helping the government to increase instruction time, optimise the school network, improve assessment of learning outcomes and introduce more modern public-sector management practices, among others. Some of the planned activities include: (a) develop and introduce “whole day schools” based on international experiences (which may require infrastructure investments to address current bottlenecks associated with some double shift schools); and (b) introduce per student financing/block grants to schools, alongside more autonomy to enable schools and local authorities to make better use of their resources (and incentivize them to consolidate classes and schools, which would facilitate whole day schooling, making it more effective, thereby allowing them to improve learning). The project would be designed to leverage EU funds, as it would develop models and initiatives to be implemented over a 10-20 year horizon and, hence, require substantial additional resources mobilized from EU and other sources.

Section 4: Curricula, learning materials and assessment

To what extent are curricula, learning materials and different assessment processes and procedures adapted to the principles of inclusive education?

1.29. Curriculum

a. Does the curriculum content include and represent all learners?

✓ Yes

If yes or partially, please provide a description and available links, including to underpinning values and principles.

The National Curriculum Framework defines that every learner has a right to their highest educational development. Equality of educational opportunities is based on social equity; education and schooling cannot be a privilege of a minority, nor can they be reduced on the basis of discrimination (e.g. ethnic, gender, or others, based on social conditions).

A framework for fostering and adapting learning experiences and evaluating students with disabilities is a document defining curriculum aspects of the education of children and students with disabilities and it is a basis for the implementation of all national curricula, curriculum areas, subject curricula and curriculum of cross-curricular topics for students with special educational needs or disabilities. It also recognized 3 main groups of students: students with disabilities, students with learning difficulties and disadvantage students.

b. Does the process of curriculum development involve the participation and contribution of different stakeholders?

✓ Yes

If yes, please provide information on stakeholder involvement.

Comprehensive curriculum reform in Croatia started in 2015, guided by the 2014 Strategy for Education, Science and Technology³. After the establishment of expert working groups (the leader of the Expert Working Group for Curricular Reform and his team of 6 were appointed by the previous government, following a public call for applications⁴) and started their work in February 2015, the public procurement⁵ for almost 500 experts and teachers from schools and universities was developed and teachers and expert were selected to start the work on creating 52 curricular documents. Work on curricula began in September 2015, and first proposals were ready by the January 2016. The plan was that experimental implementation will commence in school year 2016/17 (after expert and public discussion which will lead to the changes in the presented draft documents) in at least 60 schools all over Croatia, while full implementation will start in 2017/18.⁶ National documents for seven curriculum areas (technical and informatics, physical and health, mathematical, language-communication, natural sciences, art, social and humanities) have also been developed and accompanied by 29 subject curricula. Seven curricula for cross-curricular topics were created (learning to learn, entrepreneurship, personal and social development, health, sustainable development, use of ICT and civil education). After the presentation of the 52 curricular documents⁷ the expert

³ http://www.novebojeznanja.hr/UserDocslImages/datoteke/KB_web.pdf

⁴ <http://www.kurikulum.hr/ekspertna-radna-skupina/>

⁵ <http://www.kurikulum.hr/javni-pozivi/>

⁶ <http://www.kurikulum.hr/jedinica-za-strucnu-i-administrativnu-podrsku/>

⁷ <http://www.kurikulum.hr/kurikularni-dokumenti/>

consultation process started⁸ and it was envisaged that after the expert consultation the public discussion will be opened.⁹

In May 2016, just after curricular documents were presented with lots of media coverage, political pressure, as well as the pressure from academia started. The expert working group then decided to resign from their positions, as they viewed the changes as being as political pressure¹⁰. In support of the curricular reform and the expert group, on June 1st 2016 citizens of Croatia participated in demonstrations, organized by initiative "Croatia can do better!"¹¹ involving civil society organisations and trade unions.

In mid of July 2016 the Minister established a new working group for implementation of the curricular reform and new members were appointed. Heads of the new working group are Dijana Vican from the University in Zadar and Matko Glunčić from the Faculty of Science of the University of Zagreb. After the appointment of the new members there was critique from different educational stakeholders¹² that appointment of the new working group is not in accordance with the Strategy of Education, Science and Technology, and that it is very doubtful is caretaker government and its minister is authorized to establish the new working groups. The Ministry of Science, Education and Sport opened public discussion on current curricular documents on August 1st¹³. The issue with opening the public discussion lays in the legal framework of the Croatian educational system. The law on education does not recognize the term "curriculum", because the last amendment of the Law was in 2014 when curriculum was not term that was used (term used in Croatian language is Nastavni plan i program that can be translated in English as "Course plan"). Many educational stakeholders warned both former and current Government that legal framework should be changed as soon as possible if we want to continue with the reform.

The full public e-counselling of the all curricular documents was finished in 2018 when the new Act on education was adopted and the curricular documents become a part of the Act. The e-counselling was open to all interested citizens/experts. The working group on each curricular document collected all comments and decided are there going to reject or adopt the comment. The final version of the curricular documents were published in Official Gazette in 2018.

The National Curriculum Framework is an on-going process currently being developed in Croatia.

The principles of the National Curriculum Framework

- High quality of education for all: providing material, technical, information technology, hygienic and other conditions, in order to attain the highest educational standards and boost professional standards among the implementers of educational activities.
- Equality of educational opportunities for all: every learner has a right to their highest educational development. Equality of educational opportunities is based on social equity; education and schooling cannot be a privilege of a minority, nor can they be reduced on the basis of discrimination (e.g. ethnic, gender, or others, based on social conditions).
- Compulsory quality of general education: acquiring key competences is a right and obligation of every person. It provides fundamental knowledge for life and is the basis for further learning. The compulsory quality of general education is a legally prescribed obligation to provide children with an education and to require school attendance up to a certain educational level.

⁸ <http://www.kurikulum.hr/strucna-javna-rasprava/>

⁹ Expert discussion was held from mid-March to early May and it involved 64,874 participants, with 2,759 proposals having been submitted to all curriculum documents.

¹⁰ <http://www.jutarnji.hr/vijesti/obrazovanje/ultimatum-sustaru-jokic-porucio-ministru-odbacite-zakljucke-saborskog-odbora-ili-odlazim/4069308/>

¹¹ <http://hrvatskamozebolje.org/>

¹² National Council for Education, trade unions, civil society organisations dealing with education, Special expert committee for the implementation of the Strategy for Education, Science and Technology, individual teachers etc.

¹³ <http://public.mzos.hr/Default.aspx?art=14903&sec=1933>

- Horizontal and vertical mobility: providing opportunities for learners to change the type of school they attend (horizontal mobility) and giving them the opportunity to continue education at a higher level (vertical mobility).
- The inclusion of all learners in the education system, taking into consideration the educational needs of every learner, whether adult or child, and particularly those who are exposed to marginalisation and exclusion.
- Scientific foundation: the overall education system is changing, improving and advancing at the same rate as modern scientific knowledge.
- Respect for human rights and the rights of children: true respect of every child and every adult; human dignity.
- Competence and professional ethics: educational activity implies high levels of expertise and responsibility among all implementers of educational activities.
- Democracy: pluralism and democratic decision-making, including all key stakeholders in making and implementing educational policy.
- Independence of schools: a degree of freedom and independence for schools to design their own activities, programmes and projects for learners, parents, teachers and other school employees as a part of their curricula and the creation of school identity. Freedom of choice with respect to subject matter, the methods applied and the organisation of educational work in the implementation of the national curriculum.
- Pedagogical and school pluralism: a degree of freedom and independence in creating differences in pedagogical and school work.
- European dimension of education: training for co-existence in Europe.
- Interculturalism: understanding and embracing cultural differences, in order to reduce inequality and prejudice against members of other cultures.

European Agency, Raising The Achievement Of All Learners In Inclusive Education, Country Report: Croatia

c. Is there guidance/procedures for schools to ensure that the curriculum content takes account of all learners (e.g. using flexibility to address differences due to gender, culture, religions, the ethnicities/nations living in the country, their history and culture, differences related to disability and socio-economic background, LGBT community).

✓Yes

If yes, please give a description and examples of this flexibility.

Partially through, for example cross curricular subject Civic Education where some of the vulnerable groups are presented. However, there is no mention of the rights of the LGBT groups (Lesbian, Gay, Bi Sexual and Transsexual groups).

d. If individual education plans (IEPs) are used, please describe the procedure for developing (who is involved and how), what they focus on (specific curriculum areas; cross curricular competences; support strategies etc.) and how IEPs are implemented, used across the school?

The enrolment of learners with special needs in the compulsory primary education system is based on the Regulation on the Process of Assessing the Psychophysical State of Children and Students and the Structure of Expert Committees (Official Gazette, Nos. 55/11 and 67/14). The child's psychophysical state is assessed in order to determine the most suitable programme and form of schooling, as well as the necessary support, methods and learning tools. If necessary,

the process of assessing the child's psychophysical state can be conducted later, during regular education of children in primary and secondary schools. Each learner is issued with a first-instance decision on the suitable education programme by the regional authority office or city office for education, culture and sports of the City of Zagreb. If the parent is not satisfied with the programme and form of schooling determined by the first-instance decision, they are entitled to appeal before the Ministry of Science and Education. The second-instance committee, which reviews the first-instance procedure and takes all the professional documents into consideration, consists of all the experts with extensive professional experience from the first-instance institutions. The second-instance committee can either reject or accept the parents' appeal. In case of the latter, the committee issues a new decision on the suitable education programme.

Teachers, in co-operation with the expert team and the head teacher, as well as the competent regional office, need to make sure that the issued decision on the suitable education programme is implemented.

European Agency, country information, Croatia

Special programs for children with disabilities are carried out in primary schools for the children following special education program and in primary schools with regular programs. Most pupils with disabilities are integrated into regular class departments and attend classes following the regular Teaching Plan and Programs (Official Gazette, 102/2006).

Eurydice, Croatia

Pre-primary programmes for children with special needs are implemented in kindergartens. The task of professionals in kindergartens is to work on identifying, alleviating and eliminating children's difficulties, to determine specific needs of children with developmental difficulties, to create conditions for including children in mainstream and special programmes in kindergartens, to determine the methods for working with each child in co-operation with educators, expert teams and parents, to co-operate with healthcare and social care institutions and other factors in preventing developmental difficulties.

Learners with developmental difficulties in the primary education system are educated in mainstream and special educational institutions. The enrolment process consists of a legally established procedure of assessing the child's psychophysical state in order to determine the most suitable education programme and the necessary support, methods and teaching tools during the period of compulsory education.

The education of children with developmental difficulties in mainstream schools is conducted via either complete or partial integration. The team of experts in the school suggests the type of education and the necessary additional support for a child with developmental difficulties and the regional authority office issues a decision on a suitable education programme.

Children with minor developmental difficulties are normally included in mainstream classes and they are taught according to general curricula with the help of individualised plans or curricula adjusted to their capabilities. Children with major developmental difficulties are included in special programmes in mainstream or special educational institutions (in case the children need additional health and social care). For some children with developmental difficulties in special educational institutions, as well as in some mainstream primary schools, prolonged professional treatment or educational rehabilitation is organised after class. Counselling is available for the parents or guardians of children with developmental difficulties.

European Agency, country information, Croatia

e. Are there different curricula or programmes for specific groups of learners at risk of exclusion (e.g. ethnic minorities or minority language groups)

✓Yes

Ethnic minorities:

Members of national minorities can exercise their constitutional right to education in their mother tongue and script via three basic models of education in the languages of national minorities:

Model A – all classes in the language and script of the national minority

Model B – bilingual classes (social subjects are taught in the language and script of the national minority, while science subjects are taught in Croatian)

Model C – nurturing language and culture (two to five classes a week).

Schools which provide classes in the languages and scripts of national minorities use textbooks from the home countries which are approved by the Ministry of Science and Education.

According to Školski e-rudnik in school year 2019/2020, almost 11 000 students attend schools according to the three models. However, Model C is available in all minority languages (Albanian, Hebrew, Czech, Hungarian, Macedonian, German, Polish, Russian, Rusyn, Slovak, Slovenian, Serbian and Ukrainian) across 18 counties, Model A is available for the Czech, Hungarian, Serbian and Italian national minority and is attended by 4 690 students, 1085 of those in secondary schools. Model C however is the least present and available for Hungarian, Czech and Serbian minority and attended by only 93 students out of which only 10 in secondary school and only for Czech minority.

In the pre-primary education system for children who are members of national minorities, pre-primary education in the mother tongue includes children who are members of the Czech, Hungarian, Serbian and Italian national minorities.

European Agency, country information, Croatia

Numerous studies looked into issues of separated education for national minorities (Model A) specifically for the Serb minority and its effects on both majority and minority students. Model A schools existed in former Yugoslavia as well for some minorities however, Serbs, Croats and others were educated in same schools and this somehow unnatural divide was caused by the 1990's war. 2013- M. Golubeva, A. Korbar, Network of Education Policy Centers, *Living together, learning together* report finds that separate schooling causes difference in civic enculturation among different groups and on policy level "While the general framework regulating minority education in Croatia is often described as progressive²⁹ and there has been a long tradition of minority education in the country, there is a gap between the legal framework for minority rights in education and what occurs in practice. Ethnic divisions existing in the post-conflict area of Vukovar-Srijem County do not leave parents and students with a real choice of a schooling model for minority students – in practice they almost always end up in Model A minority schools. It is true that schools alone should not be expected to cope with profound social problems associated with ethnic divisions in society, such as those experienced in Vukovar-Srijem County. Any solution projected and implemented on a school level must therefore be supported through a wider action within the community, including the actions in the area of reconciliation, dealing with history, economic growth, fight against corruption (especially in the labour market), and active participation of citizens in decision making

processes.” 2011, D. Čorkalo Biruški and D. Ajduković, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb, Schooling and social integration of the youth in Vukovar – This study presents results of the longitudinal research comparing inter-ethnic attitudes of students, parents and teachers engaged in schooling in the Croatian and Serbian languages over a 10 year period. The general conclusion is that there was a positive change in the attitudes in both groups during the 10 year period, yet that these changes are rather small. It also showed that there is space for further change in terms of social integration of children, increase of tolerance and decrease of differences between the minority and the majority relating to attitudes towards the assimilation of minorities. Yet the authors conclude that this change will not happen on its own, but that it requires planned activities towards such goal. , 2005 – Nansen Dialogue Center Osijek, Research on the quality of education in Vukovar, within the project New School – This research has been undertaken on a sample of 14.6% of parents of elementary school children in Vukovar and has shown that 71.4% of examinees is dissatisfied with separate schooling. f 2003 - Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Mission to Croatia: Minority Education in the Republic Of Croatia: A Case Study in Vukovar-Srijem County – This very detailed in-depth case study of Vukovar-Srijem County, analyzes the minority education issues that are relevant not only to this County, but also the rest of the Danube region and the Republic of Croatia as a whole. f 2003 - Baranović B., Jokić B., and Doolan, K.: Teaching history in a post-war social context – The Case of the Croatian Danube region – The research was focused on history teachers’ opinions about teaching recent history, and on the revocation of a moratorium on teaching former Yugoslavia’s recent history in Serbian minority schools in the Croatian Danube region.

In 2016, only 1% of the overall population had a non-Croatian back-ground, 61.6% of whom came from non-EU28-countries. The right to education is a constitutional right for all children staying in Croatia. According to the Law on International and Temporary Protection, only child applicants (i.e. under 18) are entitled to primary and secondary education. It is obligatory to secure language courses (consisting of 70 hours). Other than this direct work with migrant background students is not formulated in the policy documents

<http://www.edupolicy.net/portfolio-posts/living-together-learning-together-minority-education-issues-in-vukovar-srijem-and-istria-county/>

1.30.Learning materials

a. Is there autonomy for schools and teachers to select learning material/textbooks etc?

✓ Yes

If yes, please give a description.

Law on textbooks and other educational materials for primary and secondary schools states that the Ministry is in charge of textbook regulation:

(1) The ministry responsible for education (hereinafter: the Ministry) shall indicate the intention to amend the Catalogue by a public invitation stating which textbooks may be submitted.

However, the schools and teachers have access to a catalogue of existing textbook and learning materials. Each school has a budget allocated for this purpose.

b. Are there policies to ensure the availability of textbooks/materials that promote the inclusion of learners from different vulnerable groups? (e.g. resources relevant to different ethnic groups etc.)

✓ Yes

If yes, please give a description.

The Article 11 and the Article 12 of the Law on textbooks and other educational materials for primary and secondary schools ensure availability of textbooks and learning materials for national minorities.

Article 11 – translated in English

(1) Textbooks made in the language and script of a national minority or textbooks translated into the language and script of a national minority may be used in teaching in the language and script of national minorities.

Article 12 – translated in English

(1) Customized textbooks may be used in teaching disabilities or gifted students.

c. Is there guidance/procedures to help schools to make learning materials accessible for all learners? (e.g. Braille/large print for learners with visual impairment, materials in other languages).

✓ No information available

If no, please give further information:

Textbooks on Braille print are not published by the Ministry or financed through the state budget but through projects and programs funded by different donors and implemented by the civil society organisations (such as Association of blind people etc.).

d. Is ICT used to improve access to materials for vulnerable groups?

✓ No information available

TALIS 2018 national country report for Croatia (Dekanić, Sandrić, Gregurović ,2019, TALIS 2018: Učitelji, nastavnici i ravnatelji – cjeloživotni učenici: Međunarodno istraživanje učenja i poučavanja, Nacionalni centar za vanjsko vrednovanje obrazovanja, Zagreb) showed that one of the most important issues according to school heads in primary schools is connected to infrastructure: the lack of digital technologies in schools such as software, computers, tablets or interactive boards. On the other hand, school heads in secondary schools stated that the biggest issue is the lack of digital competences among teachers - especially those that can be used in teaching special educational needs students.

The project e-Schools, which is one of the biggest national projects in the field of raising digital maturity of schools, resulted in comprehensive digital content in the curriculum for primary and secondary education. However, most of the available content only covers part of the primary and secondary education curriculum, and the materials have not been adapted to students with special needs.

e. Are there specific financial and practical resources available for textbooks/materials/ICT for different vulnerable groups?

✓ Yes

If yes, please give a description.

The Ministry provides funds for the increased expenses pertaining to the photocopied specialised textbook material as well as the increased costs of the teaching material for practical classes to the following institutions: special education institutions under the competence of the Ministry of Science, Education and

Sports; upper secondary education institutions whose founder is the Republic of Croatia, or local and regional government units pursuant to the approval by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports for the provision of programmes for students with developmental disabilities and the approval for the organisation of classes for students with developmental disabilities; upper secondary education schools whose founder is the Republic of Croatia or a unit of local or regional government who provide practical classes in their school workshops for students from other schools, i.e. the institutions which they entered into a cooperation agreement with.

Eurydice, Croatia

At the end of 2019 the Ministry of education decide to fund 23 schools and 37 educational centres that have more than 10 students enrolled in a special educational programs with additional 500 000 EUR in order for schools to buy needed equipment for their students. Schools could decide what kind of equipment or materials they will purchase and the amount of the available funds was connected to the number of students in each school. Sources: <https://mzo.gov.hr/vijesti/divjak-gotovo-4-milijuna-kuna-za-opremu-ustanovama-i-skolama-za-djecu-s-teskocama/3304>

1.31. Assessment

a. Is there a national/local assessment framework that includes all learners?

✓ Yes

If yes, please give a description.

The Ordinance on methods, procedures and elements of evaluation of students in primary and secondary schools establishes the methods, procedures and elements of evaluating the educational attainment of pupils in primary and secondary schools, the rights and obligations of teachers / students, classmates and principals in the conduct of evaluation procedures during the school year, and the rights of parents / guardians (hereinafter referred to as "the parent").

Guidelines for Evaluating the Learning Process and student's achievement of outcomes in primary and secondary education – one of the main principles in evaluating should be inclusiveness. Reporting and evaluation of student's achievements should take into account individually set educational goals, outcomes and the existence of appropriate adjustments for students with special educational needs. This is also important to achieve with gifted students.

Guidelines for evaluating achievements of students with disabilities - One chapter is dedicated to Evaluation and reporting on achievements of student with disabilities and it consists of the guidelines and methods of evaluation and reporting.

b. Is there guidance for teachers on how to use curriculum-based assessment to identify all learning needs in the classroom?

✓ Yes

If yes, please give a description.

Same as above – the two documents are Guidelines for Evaluating the Learning Process and student's achievement of outcomes in primary and secondary education and Guidelines for evaluating achievements of students with disabilities.

Guidelines emphasize:

- learning processes
- making progress and improving learning
- cooperation and strengthening the responsibility of all participants in the educational process
- facilitated passing of students through the educational system
- Ensuring equal opportunities for all students.

Therefore, the Guidelines propose a close link between evaluation and the educational outcomes set out in the curricula and the collection of information on their achievement in different areas of learning and during the school year.

c. Is there guidance/procedures on providing access to tests/examinations when learners need additional support/reasonable adjustments?(e.g. adapted materials, extra time etc.)

✓Yes

If no, please give further information:

-In accordance with Article 21 of the Regulation on Taking the State Graduation Exam (Official Gazette, No. 1/13), learners with special needs who want to take the state graduation exam can do so with the help of adjusted exam technology. This is done in co-operation with the National Centre for External Evaluation in Education.

European Agency, country information, Croatia

-The instructions for conducting national Graduation Exams for examinees with special educational needs (SEN) deal with:

- the identification of examinees;
- their application;
- exam technology and adaptation of national graduation exams and national exams (exam materials and proceedings), depending on the type and the level of special educational need.

Therefore, the terms national graduation exam and national exam are used further on. Learners with SEN are not always able to demonstrate their skills in usual ways, despite the fact that they have acquired the knowledge prescribed by their study programmes. These difficulties can be avoided by exam technology adaptation that will not threaten the exam validity or put the learner in a privileged position. Adapted exam technology should be approved for those learners who have had SEN for a certain period of time or throughout their school education, and to those who have recently experienced health condition changes that require exam adaptations. Request for exam technology adaptation needs to be validated by the school principal, who then addresses the application to the NCVVO. Learners with SEN include those with:

- specific learning difficulties, language and communication difficulties: o severe difficulties with reading, writing, speaking and number manipulation, related to difficulties in symbolic language processing, such as dyslexia, dyscalculia; o speaking and language difficulties causing problems in communication, such as aphasia, dysphasia, articulation problems, etc.;

- motor and sensory difficulties: o disorder of movement and body posture, lowered/disabled function of specific body parts, missing body parts; o hearing or sight impairment;
- health difficulties: chronic diseases and conditions such as heart conditions, epilepsy, asthma, cystic fibroses, haemophilia, anaemia, diabetes, kidney conditions, eczema, rheumatic conditions, allergies, leukaemia, cancer, etc.;
- emotional difficulties and behaviour issues: o running away from home or avoiding school, academic failure, attention deficit/hyperactive disorder, adjustment disorder, anxiety; o interpersonal behaviour disorder and obstinacy, antisocial behaviour, aggressive behaviour, deviant and delinquent behaviour, psycho-genetically conditioned behavioural disorders;
- other mental health difficulties: different psychotic states, eating disorders, fears, anxiety, emotional disturbances and similar.

[European Agency, Raising The Achievement Of All Learners In Inclusive Education, Country Report: Croatia](#)

d. Are there specific arrangements and/or formal procedures to support the assessment of the specific needs of learners who need additional support in their learning? (e.g. those with disabilities)

✓ Yes

If yes, please give a description, including clear information on the focus of needs identification procedures and who is involved in the procedures (learners, parents, professionals):

-The Article 5 of the [The Ordinance on methods, procedures and elements of evaluation of students in primary and secondary schools](#) defines the evaluation framework for Students with disabilities

Evaluating students with disabilities

- (1) In the case of a student with disabilities, his / her attitude towards work and assigned tasks and educational values should be evaluated.
- (2) Ways, procedures and elements of evaluation of students with disabilities, who master individual programs and special curricula including management, teachers / teachers should take into account the difficulties and personalities of students.
- (3) Evaluation should focus on encouraging students to participate actively in teaching and extracurricular activities, develop their confidence and sense of progress in order to make good use of their preserved abilities and develop new ones.
- (4) The methods and procedures of evaluation should be in accordance with the recommendations of the expert team for each area, appropriate to the degree and type of difficulty and clear to all participants in the evaluation process.
- (5) The level of development of a student's competences should be checked in the form in which his or her difficulties are least disturbing and in which he / she can best express himself / herself. Errors caused by difficulty must be corrected, but should not affect the overall evaluation of the work, ie the evaluation. The assessment should be accompanied by a descriptive description.
- (6) If a student has severe difficulties in voice-to-speech communication, he / she may be allowed to check in writing in agreement with the school council.
- (7) If the student has severe difficulties in written communication, the student should be allowed to have an oral examination in agreement with the school council.

e. Is ICT used in the assessment of vulnerable groups?

✓Yes

If yes, please give a description.

Regulation on Taking the State Graduation Exam (Official Gazette, No. 1/13), learners with special needs who want to take the state graduation exam can do so with the help of adjusted exam technology.

[European Agency, country information, Croatia](#)

Learners who are home educated can also have access to ICT for assessments.

1.32. Please provide information (main conclusions, reference and a link if available) on any recent reports, studies, evaluations and/or reviews, since 2015 relating to issues around curricula, learning materials and assessment processes.

[European Commission, Education and Training Monitor 2019, Croatia](#) highlights that a Pilot implementation of curricular reform and ambitious preparations for full implementation are under way (see 4.5). The report is divided in 8 sections, Section 1 presents a statistical overview of the main education and training indicators. Section 2 briefly identifies the main strengths and challenges of the country's education and training system. Section 3 focuses on teachers and challenges of teaching profession. Section 4 looks at investment in education and training. Section 5 deals with policies to modernise early childhood and school education. Section 6 discusses measures to modernise higher education. Finally, section 7 covers vocational education and training, while section 8 covers adult learning.

Schreyer, I. and P. Oberhuemer. 2017. "Croatia – Key Contextual Data". In Workforce Profiles in Systems of Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe, edited by P. Oberhuemer and I. Schreyer.

www.seeepro.eu/English/Country_Reports.htm

In the report it is stated that educational programmes for children with disabilities and for children of national minorities are organised within the framework of the National Curriculum for Early Childhood and Preschool Education according to their specific needs. For children who cannot participate in the regular kindergarten programme despite additional support, five special education institutions exist across the country for groups of children with a similar disability.

1.33. Overall, what are the perceived main challenges (barriers and hinderances) and opportunities (support and ways forward) for inclusion in education in relation to curricula, learning materials and assessment processes in the country?

Challenges

The most controversies around the new Act on education in 2018 arose from the Amendments to the Act - the National Curriculum Framework, as the main document that should define Curricular Reform has not been put as a main part of the Act. It is a key curriculum document that defines the principles - all educational goals, the concept of learning and teaching, educational outcomes, cross curricular topics. Such a removal of the National Curriculum Framework actually dropped from the concept of Comprehensive Curricular Reform envisaged in 2016. Particularly problematic was that documents that were defining work with gifted students and disadvantaged students have been excluded. In 2019 the curricular documents for the work with gifted and disadvantaged students were turned into above mentioned Guidelines and it never were adopted as curricular documents. Preparation of subject curricula for the project School for Life (the new name of the curriculare reform project) started in April 2018. The

expert working groups for each subject curriculum were working on the documents. However, the expert working group for cross curricular subjects did not continue their work on the document. This was also the case for the framework documents such as Framework for Evaluation of Learning Processes and Outcomes in the Primary and Secondary Education of the Republic of Croatia, Framework for Encouraging and Adjusting Learning Experience and for Evaluation of the Achievements of Children and Students with Disabilities and the Framework for Encouraging Learning Experience and Evaluation of the Achievements of Gifted Children and Students. Above all, the key document “National Framework Curriculum” was never planned to be incorporated nor in the new Act on education, nor as a part of School for life project. All these documents were the fundamental parts of what was once called the Comprehensive Curricular Reform. As of today all these previously developed documents were never adopted nor amended to the Act on education.

Opportunities

Curricular reform is progressing.

Reformed curricula have been adopted for most subjects and cross-curricular topics and these will be implemented incrementally from 2019/2020 in all primary and secondary schools. Schools are being supplied with all necessary equipment and materials. The reform includes extensive CPD for teachers, mentoring, and learning communities to share practices on teaching methods. Following the e-Schools project, ICT was introduced as a compulsory subject in the fifth and sixth grades of primary and the first grade of general secondary schools from 2018/2019. Croatia received from the Council of the European Union a country specific recommendation to “Deliver on the education reform and improve both access to education and training at all levels and their quality and labour market relevance.” (Council of the European Union, 2019). [European Commission, Education and Training Monitor 2019, Croatia](#)

[Project E-school](#) is an opportunity to create digital materials that can be used in teaching and learning students with special educational needs.

Section 5: Teachers and support personnel

How are staff in schools prepared to accommodate students of all abilities and backgrounds, in terms of their initial training, continuing professional development and their attitudes to inclusion?

1.34. Please list type of staff, their numbers and required level of education for the position in different type of educational institutions

Type of staff	Number	Required education	Comment
Mainstream schools			
<p>Teachers</p> <p>In Croatia, there are different categories of teachers depending on the educational level at which they teach: teachers in grades 1 to 4 of primary school (class-teachers), subject teachers in grades 5 to 8 of primary school, subject teachers in secondary academic schools (gymnasium), teachers of general education subjects in secondary vocational schools, and teachers of vocational subjects in secondary vocational schools</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers in grades 1 to 4 of primary school (class-teachers) Teachers of vocational subjects in secondary schools Subject teachers (primary and secondary school) 	<p>Preschool teachers (2019): teacher-child ratio is 10.6 children per kindergarten teacher</p> <p>Primary schools (2019): The teacher/student ratio in regular education is 1:9.5; in education of disabled children and youth it was 1:1.9</p> <p>Secondary education: the student-teacher ratio in secondary education was 1:5.6 in 2018</p>	<p>Bachelor's degree / Master's degree depending on the level of teaching</p>	<p>1) All future teachers to be qualified to work in school and early childhood education and care must undergo study programmes leading to higher pedagogical education and teacher qualification in the respective level of education. Teachers working at pre-primary level are called <i>odgajatelji</i>. Those working at primary level (from grade 1-4) are called <i>učitelji razredne nastave</i> (class teachers), lower secondary level (from grade 4-8) are called <i>učitelji predmetne nastave</i> (primary school subject teachers), and those working in secondary schools are called <i>nastavnici</i> (subject specialists).</p> <p>2) Master's degree in other professional fields are required to take an extra year of study in order to obtain teaching qualifications in preparatory courses in pedagogy, psychology and teaching methods to be able to teach in vocational schools.</p>

		<p>This model implies a curriculum designed according to the integrated model of undergraduate and graduate level (5 years, 10 semesters, 300 ECTS) and it is delivered at faculties of teacher education. Students are obliged to conduct in-school placement and the minimum duration is 20 hours and are supervised by teacher (usually their status is teacher-mentor).</p> <p>3) Study programs for subject teachers are organised in two cycles – BA level (180 ECTS credits) and MA level (120 ECTS credits) at the faculties for specific academic disciplines. At the BA level, students mostly take two disciplines (academic subjects or majors), while educational studies, teaching methodologies and teaching practice are studied at the master’s level. After graduation from the teacher education faculties and 1 year induction period teachers are qualified to teach six subjects in the lower grades of elementary schools: mother tongue, science and society, mathematics, visual arts, music arts and physical education. On the average, the ratio between theoretical and practical part of the curriculum is 50 to 50 %. The school-based teaching practice has been incorporated into the regular programmes, but the number of hours for school practice has not been unified across teacher</p>
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			education faculties, ranging from 40 to 60 days
Professional staff (psychologists, pedagogues, social pedagogues, speech and other types of therapists)	<p>Preschool education: The number of professional associates (pedagogues, psychologists) in 2018 - 121.5 children per associate</p> <p>Primary education: expert associate - teacher ratio is 1:10.</p> <p>According to the <u>newly published study</u> by the association "Psychological Spring", that made analyses on the number of professional associates in all 880 elementary schools in Croatia, 97.7% of schools employs librarians, 90.6% of schools employ pedagogues but only 50.6% of schools employ education rehabilitators (speech therapists, educational rehabilitators and social</p>	Bachelor's degree / Master's degree depending on the level of teaching	<p>Each primary and secondary school has multi-disciplinary teams in schools usually composed of school psychologist, pedagogue or any other expert staff (social pedagogue, speech therapist etc.). This is defined by the Primary and Secondary Education Act.</p> <p>Professional staff: psychologists or experts in the field of special education and rehabilitation - rehabilitators, speech therapists or social pedagogues.</p> <p>Kindergartens: a lack of expert associates in all pre-primary education institutions (speech therapists, educational-rehabilitators and psychologists) and a lack of assistants for children with special educational needs (SEN). All those issues lead to delays in early recognition of development risks and early interventions for SEN children.</p> <p>Schools: Every school with sixteen or more classes must employ one full-time professional staff. The role of the professional staff is to provide professional, advisory and educational support to all teachers, teacher assistants and other participants in inclusive education.</p>

	pedagogues etc.) and only 43.3% employ psychologists		
Teacher Assistants (specify role and add rows as required)	More than 4000	Can be a person who has completed secondary education and obtained additional professional training for working with pupils with developmental disabilities.	The role of the assistant is to provide individual help to students according to the instructions of teachers or professional staff. In practice, assistants are employed if the local community is able to finance them or lately through ESF projects led by different associations.
<i>Others (please specify and add rows as required)</i>			
Special schools			
Teachers	Primary schools: <u>85 schools; 813 teachers</u> Secondary schools: <u>44 secondary schools; 623 teachers</u>	Master degree	Teachers who work with children with different disabilities are educated on the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences. Both in pre-Bologna studies (that lasted for four years) and in present ones (lasting 5 years – 3 +2) first year students can choose between three courses of study: speech pathology/therapy, social pedagogy and educational rehabilitation. After completed studies, depending on the cycle, graduate students obtain the title of master of education and rehabilitation (with an indication of the course of study). Students from other Faculties of Social Sciences

			<p>and Humanities can also continue their education at this Faculty (after completion of undergraduate studies at their faculty and taking necessary supplemental exams) in order to obtain a qualification in working with children with disabilities.</p> <p>According to the Primary and Secondary Education Act special education needs refer to: teaching pupils/students with disabilities, teaching gifted pupils/students, teaching pupils/students – members of national minorities or pupils/students with other specific demands.</p>
Professional staff (psychologists, pedagogues, social pedagogues, speech and other types of therapists)	<p>Primary schools: <u>271</u></p> <p>Secondary schools: <u>50</u></p>		Expert associates in school institutions working with pupils with SEN are pedagogues, psychologists and experts in special education and rehabilitation all having adequate education and training.
Teacher Assistants (specify role and add rows as required)	N/A		N/A
<i>Others (please specify and add rows as required)</i>			
Other institutions offering education if they exist (i.e. children’s homes, young offenders institutions etc).			
Teachers	N/A	N/A	N/A
Professional staff (psychologists, pedagogues, social pedagogues, speech and other types of therapists)	N/A	N/A	N/A

Teacher Assistants (specify role and add rows as required)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Others (please specify and add rows as required)			

1.35. Please indicate if education/training on inclusion in education is available for the following groups of professionals.

Type of staff	Yes	No	No information	If yes please state if pre- or in-service, mandatory or optional, who provides education/training and summary of content
Head teachers/School directors		No		<p>In Croatia, the Law on Primary and Secondary Education stipulates compulsory elements of training programmes for school principals. These elements include: clearly outlined objectives and competences, and training methods and met.</p> <p>There is no mandatory training for newly appointed school principals.</p> <p>Network of Education Policy Centers (NEPC) as a civil society organisation is currently implementing the EU funded project <u>“HEAD: Empowering School Principals for Inclusive School Culture”</u>, that started on December 1st 2019, aims to address the professionalization of school principals in Croatia and North Macedonia. It will focus on inclusive education, exploiting best practices from Slovenia and the Netherlands and piloting five modules of professional development in 60 schools, building their capacities in establishing inclusive school culture creating inclusive school policies and practices through participatory decision-making. In Croatia project partners are Step by Step and Forum for Freedom in Education.</p>
Teachers	Yes			<p><i>NB: For pre-service education, please cross reference your answer to question 5.4 as necessary</i></p> <p>The curriculum for prospective teachers for lower primary schools (grade 1 to 4) includes courses devoted to subject knowledge, educational sciences, teaching methodology courses and school-based practice. Although there are some variations in curricula at various teacher education faculties, approximately 40% of study time is devoted to subject knowledge, 15% to educational sciences, 35 % to teaching</p>

			<p>methodology courses and 10 % to school-based practice. The inspection of study programs shows that the focus during the first three years of study is on subject knowledge and educational sciences, while the last two years are mainly devoted to subject teaching methodologies and school practice. It has to be noted that the course on inclusive education is usually introduced in the third study year as a one-semester course. The main goal of this course is to improve students' competencies for teaching students with special educational needs and for developing an inclusive educational setting.</p> <p>According to TALIS 2018 national report for Croatia some areas of professional development are still lacking, according to teachers such as teaching in multicultural/multilingual settings and teaching students with special needs.</p>
Teacher Assistants	Yes		<p>The Ordinance on teaching assistants prescribes the qualification that should be obtained by the teaching assistant which includes the acquired qualification level 4 according to the Croatian Qualifications Framework. In doing so, the Ministry of Education decided to submit an application for entry into the Register of Occupational Standards and to develop programmes for acquisition of qualifications. Therefore, the contents of the training programme for teaching assistant will be developed shortly in order to obtain a partial qualification.</p> <p>Currently the teaching assistants are educated through different associations and local governments that are in charge for the ESF projects. The total number of hours of the current program is 80 hours.</p>
Professional Staff	X		<p>Different associates finished different faculties so there is no unique answer on the pre-service education of different expert associates.</p> <p>However, during their practice the in-service training programs professional staff is attending is mostly those organised by the Education and Teachers Training Agency or those organised by different national or international association or through participation in Erasmus+ projects but according to different analyses it can be concluded that there is a lack of trainings in the field of inclusive education.</p>
Inspectors		No	

Teacher Trainers		No		
Others (please list add rows as required)				<p>Some universities developed special study programs (1-2 years) for graduated students on the topic of inclusive education.</p> <p>The aim of the study program is to educate professionals, teachers and professional associates already working in schools and kindergartens, how to properly apply working methods and counselling to the specific difficulties of children in order to integrate them into the regular educational system.</p>

All those programs are elective and they are mostly aimed for those who would like to work in educational system (not only teachers). I have no information who are mostly attending the programs (which profession). No, they are not part of CPD but teachers who enrolls and finish can get extra points in the teacher appraisal process.

a. If you answered no to any of the above, please provide further information:

1.36. Is education and training of teachers aligned with national policy goals on inclusive education?

✓ No information available

The great proportion of informal teacher training programs is done by the local civil society organisations and teachers are more and more involved in Erasmus+ programs and projects where they can gain international experience and perspectives. There is no available data by the Agencies in charge of the in-service teacher training on the participation in the professional development trainings in Croatian schools, this is basically up to each individual teacher to decide in which area they are going to develop their competences and how often. It is general opinion among teachers that offered trainings by the relevant Agencies and their topics have not been harmonised — they are planned separately and they do not allow for the harmonisation of competences of teachers of different profiles.

There are no any criteria, for choosing a training program or sometimes school can decide on the priority topic on the school level and encourage some teachers to the certain CPD or even sometimes organize training in their school. Teachers are not obliged to participate in the current online trainings for implementation of the curricular reform. Teachers are expected to attend several programs per year but participation in professional development is not compulsory for public school teachers to remain in the profession for either primary or secondary education teachers. Teachers must undergo professional development programmes only if they want to progress in their career or if warranted by an unsatisfactory assessment. There are official recommendations for the amount of time that public school teachers should devote to professional development activities and that is five working days per year for both primary and secondary teachers.

According to many researches and studies published in the country in the last years there is a strong self-recognised need of teachers themselves to obtain new skills, competences and knowledge by means of in-service teacher training in the subjects, methods and fields of teaching relevant to educating pupils with special educational needs.

The UNICEF initiated the development of the National strategy for development of early educational interventions for children for the period 2019-2023 which would probably put in one place all important activities for supporting inclusive education as support to schools in implementing inclusion is still being provided partially and in a time-limited manner, usually for the duration of a specific project.

1.37. With respect to the main initial teacher education programmes, describe how inclusion in education is addressed in it (i.e. requirement for number of academic credits under European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), subjects and topics covered, focus etc).

The analyses of the study programs of the Teacher Training faculties in 5 cities in Croatia showed that through five years of education, future teachers have only one to two compulsory course and one elective course related to inclusive education and work characteristics for working with students with disabilities.

Table: Overview of teacher studies in the Republic of Croatia and the names of compulsory courses related to inclusive education and work with students with disabilities

CITY	COMPULSORY COURSE NAME	WEEKLY HOURS
		LECTURES-SEMINARS-EXERCISE THROUGH COURSES
Zagreb	Inclusive pedagogy	1+0+0
Rijeka	Inclusive education	3+1+1
Osijek	Pedagogy of children with special needs	2+2+0 *one-day hospitalization at the Ivan Štark Center for Education and the Association for Promoting Inclusion Osijek
Pula	Education of children with special needs	2+1+1
Zadar	Inclusive education	2+1+0
	Methodology for working with students with special needs	2+1+0

1.38. Please provide information (main conclusions, reference and a link if available) on any recent reports, evaluations and/or reviews, since 2015 relating to initial teacher education and/or professional development issues.

OECD, 2018, TALIS results, Croatia country report

Some key points:

- Appraisal systems, used to formally evaluate teachers, encourage continuous improvement of their practice by providing opportunities to acknowledge and reward teachers for their efforts. In Croatia, 4% of teachers are in schools where school principals report that their teachers are never formally appraised, which is lower than the OECD average (7%).
- For appraisal to be effective, it must lead to the right consequences. For example, consequences such as appointing a mentor to improve teaching or drafting a plan for professional development are well aligned with the formative function of appraisal. In Croatia, 99% of teachers work in schools where the elaboration of professional development or a training plan is a common occurrence after an assessment (OECD average of 90%), and 49% of teachers work in schools where the appointment of a mentor is a common occurrence after an assessment (OECD average of 71%).
- The consequences of teacher appraisal are changing over time across countries and economies but it seems that Croatia is an exception to this trend. Between 2013 and 2018, in all education systems with available data except for Croatia, Finland and France, there was a significant change in the occurrence of at least one of the consequences of teacher appraisal.

-Anamarija Žic Ralić Daniela Cvitković Agnieszka Żyta Katarzyna Ćwirynkało, 2019, The Quality of Inclusive Education from the Perspective of Teachers in Poland and Croatia <https://eera-ecer.de/ecer-programmes/conference/24/contribution/48108/>

The article reports on findings from an international research project on factors determining the quality of inclusive education in Croatia and Poland. This comparison should promote reflection about current status in implementing inclusive, quality education in Croatia and Poland, and lead to identifying the priorities for change in the process of development of high quality inclusive education. The study will show how far each country has moved forward in creating a system-wide change for overcoming barriers to education access, participation, learning processes and outcomes, and to ensure that all learners are valued and engaged equally.

Expected Outcomes

Both Polish and Croatian early education teachers gave positive estimations of inclusion quality. Teachers from both countries gave highest estimations on the scale Support monitoring, while the lowest estimations were given on the scale 'Inclusive support in school' by Polish participants and on the scale 'Resources for inclusive education' by a Croatian sample. Croatian teachers gave more positive estimation of the quality of inclusion in comparison with Polish teachers only regarding 'Inclusive support in school'. This indicator is related to access to teaching assistants, that is more available in Croatia than in Poland. Possible explanation of higher estimations of teachers in Poland on all other dimensions is that they usually receive more support from speech therapists, school pedagogues and school special pedagogues in realization of inclusive education. Many Croatian teachers from this sample and in general are not supported by special pedagogues. Research conducted in Croatia indicate that teachers do not feel competent enough to work with students with SEN (Kranjčec Mlinarić et al. 2016) and lack knowledge and skills in this area (Batarelo Kokić et al. 2009). On the contrary, higher results in a Polish sample may be associated with their generally positive attitudes towards inclusion (Ćwirynkało and Żyta 2015; Ćwirynkało and Myśliwczyk 2016), as well as higher scores in attitudes towards inclusion in comparison with Croatian teacher (Ćwirynkało et al. 2017). Based on the findings, the priorities for change in the process of development of high quality inclusive education in both countries are improvement of support available to children with SEN and their teachers as well as improvement of teacher's competences for inclusive education.

-[European Commission, Education and Training Monitor 2019, Croatia](#) detailed a focus on teachers (see 5.6).

Several Croatian studies (Bouillet and Bukvić, 2015; Domović and Vizek Vidović, 2013; Domović, 2011) concluded that teachers express low self-confidence as they perceive themselves as poorly prepared for work in inclusive classrooms, especially when they teach pupils with developmental disabilities.

Pre-primary education:

According to EC publication on Key data in ECEC (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019. Key Data on Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe – 2019 Edition. Eurydice Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union) minimum qualification levels required in ECEC (or education) to become a core practitioner in centre-based ECEC settings in Croatia is ISCED 6. A one year induction period for core practitioners and assistants entering the profession is compulsory for all. Continuous professional development for core practitioners and assistants is a professional duty meaning it is described as such in the regulations, or it is deemed compulsory but the amount of time to be spent on it is not specified.

A UNICEF study (2018), concluded that there are differences between the teacher's need to increase competences in the field of work with special education need children or children from vulnerable groups and the available professional development courses. In this regard, the analysis illustrates the need to think more systematically about the initial and continuous professional development of teachers in relation to education of children in vulnerable groups and that this strategy should be produced on the national level.

Primary and secondary education:

According to TALIS 2018 during their initial education and training, 84% of teachers were instructed on subject content, pedagogy and classroom practice and 55% of teachers report having participated in some kind of formal, or informal induction when they joined their current school. Only 5% of school leaders have completed a programme or course in school administration or training for principals (OECD average 54%), and 11% have completed an instructional leadership training programme or course (OECD average 54%), before taking up their position as principal.

Taking part in some kind of in-service training is commonplace among teachers and principals in Croatia, with 98% of teachers and 100% of principals attending at least one professional development activity in the year prior to the survey. 87% of teachers participate in seminars and conferences, while 32% of teachers participate in training based on peer learning and coaching. Teachers in Croatia appear satisfied with the training they received, as 86% report that it had a positive impact on their teaching practice, but some areas of professional development are still lacking, according to teachers such as developing advanced ICT skills, teaching in multicultural/multilingual settings and teaching students with special needs.

PISA 2018 country report Croatia showed that In Croatia, low- and high-performing students are clustered in the same schools more often than the OECD average. This finding suggests that particular attention should be paid to reducing achievement differences within schools. This can be done by enhancing the capacity of schools to individualize teaching and provide special support to students with learning disabilities. PISA 2018 also showed the socio-economic status of students on the achievement in reading literacy was below average. Moreover, Croatia is in the group of countries with the highest proportion of academically resilient students, i.e students who, despite poor socio-economic status, achieve high levels of reading literacy. This leads to the conclusion that targeted measures need to continue to be implemented to ensure that all students have the same conditions and opportunities to develop their potential (such as free textbooks, transportation, a hot meal for students with poorer socioeconomic status, etc.).

1.39. Overall, what are the perceived main challenges (barriers and hinderances) and opportunities (support and ways forward) for inclusion in education in relation to teachers and support personnel in the country?

Challenges

-Initial teacher education differs according to the levels of education. For ECEC, a bachelor's degree is needed; from primary onwards, a master's. After studies, teachers must undergo a one-year induction and take the state certification examination. The most frequently reported professional development need is in the field of ICT skills (26.2%, compared with an EU average of 16.1%) (OECD, 2019). Continuous professional development (CPD) is obligatory for primary and secondary school teachers and a requirement for career progression. In higher education, there is a tendency to downplay teaching qualifications and teacher training, since they are not a pre-condition for career advancement (Domović et al., 2018). [European Commission, Education and Training Monitor 2019, Croatia](#)

-[The UNCPD report](#) mentions (36) "teachers and other professionals receive training on inclusive education" as a recommendation from the Committee.

Opportunities

-School principal:

Measures to improve attractiveness of school principals positions are being taken. School principals are elected by school boards for a renewable five-year period and approved by the Minister of Education. They must have at least five years' teaching experience. While their role is mainly administrative, they used to receive little training in leadership or education management, but new education management training has been introduced this year. Their performance is not evaluated and does not affect their pay. The Strategy for Education, Science and Technology proposed licensing for school principals, which is included in the Education Act. [European Commission, Education and Training Monitor 2019, Croatia](#)

-Mass training of teachers in preparation for curricular reform

Curricular reform was piloted in 74 schools in 2018/2019, with a view to full implementation the following year. Due to the tight schedule, preparations for full implementation are proceeding alongside, and being informed by, the evaluation of the pilot phase (MZO, 2019a). There is an extensive programme of face-to-face and online training courses to prepare teachers and support staff to implement the new curriculum. A first round of face-to-face training covered 32 000 teachers, 26 000 in a second round and 29 000 in the third round. Supplementary online training is taking place at the same time (MZO, 2019b). Training and support materials have been developed to help teachers implement new elements such as learning outcomes, different types of assessment and the teaching of transversal themes and to make best use of the new IT equipment. Virtual classes are offered for each subject, in which teachers should participate for up to 4 hours a week. Participation is not obligatory, but many teachers are taking them. The goal is that all primary and secondary teachers should have completed training by the next school year. Online training will continue as needed after full implementation in 2019/2020.

[European Commission, Education and Training Monitor 2019, Croatia](#)

-The National Centre for External Evaluation of Education established a Committee for the development of the 'Model teacher licensing system', based on national qualification standards for teachers. It has a scientific-theoretical foundation, based on the analysis of documents from the field of teaching standards and licensing systems. End users of the project are primary and secondary school teachers and students in teacher education faculties. The production of a licensing system based on a defined qualification standard should contribute to the competitiveness in the labour market for teachers in Croatia and other member countries of the European Union.

[European Agency, Raising The Achievement Of All Learners In Inclusive Education, Country Report: Croatia](#)

A development in higher education has been introduction of the Croatian Qualifications Framework (the Croatian Qualifications Framework Act, 2013) which steers higher education institutions to systematically apply a learning outcomes approach as a basis for curriculum planning. One of the first projects was Development of national qualifications standards for teachers as a basis for the implementation of a teacher licensing system, oriented towards the development of qualification standards for teachers at the point of getting full teaching licence. The following set of learning outcomes addresses most directly various aspects of teacher intercultural competence:

- to implement in teaching modern socially relevant themes, such as sustainable development, lifelong learning, social responsibility and respect for diversity
- to analyse the characteristics of the school environment in order to provide a supportive and safe environment for all students
- to treat each student with empathy and respect, show confidence in the student's learning capabilities and establish a climate of mutual respect, collegiality and solidarity in the classroom and school
- to represent the needs, rights and responsibilities of the child in school and in the community and advocate his/her best interests
- to express themselves fluently and accurately in oral and written communication in the language of teaching and in the official language.

Although this proposal of Qualification Standards will be used after the induction period to evaluate teacher competences at the point of gaining full licence it can be assumed that it will also serve as a reference point for articulating qualification standards for initial teacher education. Indeed, some of the most recent projects at university level already take into account the results of the abovementioned project. It might be expected that the dimensions of intercultural competence will become an integral part of qualification standards for initial teacher education which will in turn affect the introduction of compulsory courses.

Section 6: Schools

How does the work of schools, school management and leadership impact on access, participation and provision of equitable opportunities for all learners?

1.40. Who is excluded from attending any form of school?

Children who cannot follow the education process in regular education institutions, even with the help of special educational support, are included in special education institutions. The regular and specific curriculums in these institutions aim to enable pupils/students to get included into everyday life in the most regular conditions possible, in accordance with their age.

Compulsory education can be provided at home in exceptional circumstances (because of health reasons). Teaching activity can be organized at home or in a health institution for students who cannot attend school because of severe motor disorders or chronic illnesses for a longer period of time.

Home education/distance learning and education in a health institution are defined by Regulations on primary and secondary education of students with developmental disabilities (Pravilnik o osnovnoškolskom i srednjoškolskom odgoju i obrazovanju učenika s teškoćama u razvoju, Official Gazette 24/2015) which refers to education of students with developmental disabilities and students with health issues.

1.41. Are there issues around the over- and under-representation of different vulnerable groups in different school settings?

✓ Yes

If yes, please give a description and provide any data/evidence that is available

The school year 2019/2020 started stressfully for many students with disabilities and special education needs because of the fact that teaching assistants did not get new contracts or extensions of their current contracts by the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education started to evaluate the real need for assistants and therefore decided to postpone the extension of the contracts for current assistants. The Ministry of Education established a Committee in order to evaluate the need for teaching assistants. The whole process lasted a couple months, meaning that many children did not have any teaching assistants during this period. Among the 800 applications that were evaluated firstly as those who does not need assistants, the committee decided that 400 were valid. The Minister of Education said that in 2019 the highest number of assistants was hired – 4,100 in 2019 and in 2018 the number was 3,000.

There are differences in reported numbers in the existing system of *E-matica* (on line register database of all students in Croatia) because it does not track those who are leaving schools because of the emigration or any other reason. The larger dropout rate is still among Roma students. Even though according to the ECRI report on Croatia (5th monitoring cycle, published in May 2018) the number of Roma children enrolling in compulsory primary school is as high as in the general population and stands at 95% but regrets that the enrolment rate drops significantly at secondary school level and is only 35% (compared to 86% among the general population). According to a UNDP Survey in 2014, only 10% of Roma children complete secondary school.

According to the study “Indicators of coverage into regular ECEC programs in Croatia” (Dobrotić, Matković, 2017) almost every third (161) city and municipality in Croatia does not have a kindergarten or nursery in their area, and 96 of them do not even have an organised preschool, which is mandatory for all children in the year before entering primary school. The study concluded that Croatia is one of the most socially disadvantaged societies in the EU.

Specifically, this means that a child of low-educated parents in Croatia does not have equal opportunities to, for example, graduate at the University.

The National Roma strategies have not been implemented fully and the situation of the Roma community remains characterised by high levels of social exclusion. School drop-out rates are still high and access to employment is alarmingly low. It is encouraging that the number of Roma students registered in primary school increased from 873 students in year 2014/2015 to 1026 in school year 2015./2016. The situation is, however, probably worse because part of the Roma do not declare themselves as Roma. Success rates at each level of education, including attainment and attendance, are not officially available with regard to Roma pupils in Croatian schools. Public official data is not disaggregated by ethnicity

1.42. Please give details on the main admissions criteria for schools.

a. Highlight any issues with the national policies.

During the process of enrolment in pre-primary education programmes, children with developmental disabilities are identified through the co-operation of professionals working in kindergartens: pedagogues, psychologists, educational and rehabilitation experts (speech and language therapists and educational rehabilitators), nurses and head teachers, together with educators and parents.

Children with minor difficulties are enrolled in mainstream programmes in mainstream kindergartens and, in some cases, children with extensive and multiple difficulties are enrolled in the same programmes if the necessary prerequisites exist.

Children with extensive difficulties are enrolled in special education groups with special programmes. If there are too few children with extensive difficulties to form a special group, such children can be integrated into mainstream groups in kindergartens, provided that special conditions are secured (a smaller number of children in the group or an additional educator/educational rehabilitator).

Children who are not in in pre-primary education must be included in a pre-primary programme one year before they start primary school.

Children with minor difficulties are enrolled in mainstream education groups. Children with extensive difficulties are enrolled in special education groups with special programmes. If there are too few children with extensive difficulties to form a special group, such children can be integrated into mainstream groups in kindergartens, provided that special conditions are ensured (a smaller number of children in the group or an additional educator/educational rehabilitator).

[European Agency, country information, Croatia](#)

Learners with developmental difficulties in the primary education system are educated in mainstream and special educational institutions. The enrolment process consists of a legally established procedure of assessing the child's psychophysical state in order to determine the most suitable education programme and the necessary support, methods and teaching tools during the period of compulsory education.

[European Agency, country information, Croatia](#)

b. Where schools set their own admissions criteria, please outline any impact on inclusion.

The education of children with developmental difficulties in mainstream schools is conducted via either complete or partial integration. The team of experts in the school suggests the type of education and the necessary additional support for a child with developmental difficulties and the regional authority office issues a decision on a suitable education programme.

Children with minor developmental difficulties are normally included in mainstream classes and they are taught according to general curricula with the help of individualised plans or curricula adjusted to their capabilities. Children with major developmental difficulties are included in special programmes in mainstream or special educational institutions (in case the children need additional health and social care). For some children with developmental difficulties in special educational institutions, as well as in some mainstream primary schools, prolonged professional treatment or educational rehabilitation is organised after class.

[European Agency, country information, Croatia](#)

1.43. Please provide information on the different forms of support that are available to learners in schools.

a. Inclusive pedagogy, personalised learning and universal design approaches

✓ Yes

If yes, please give a description.

The Regulation on Primary and Secondary Education of Students with Developmental Disabilities regulates how the rights of students with disabilities are realized through various forms program, professional support and pedagogical-didactic adjustments.

Research on inclusive pedagogies (Kranjčec Mlinarić, Žic Ralić and Lisak, 2016) showed with their research that teachers have a positive attitude towards inclusion, however, it is evident that they are have lack of sufficient and systematic support and are critical of their willingness and initial education to work with students with disabilities.

b. counselling and mentoring possibilities

✓ Yes

If yes, please give a description.

Counselling is available for the parents or guardians of children with developmental difficulties.

[European Agency, country information, Croatia](#)

c. input from specialist teachers/therapists

✓ Yes

If yes, please give a description.

Professionals in the education area who work with children with developmental difficulties include educational rehabilitators, speech and language therapists, social pedagogues, special teachers and other experts, such as kinesiotherapists, music therapists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, nurses and pedagogical assistants, including sign language interpreters. At all educational level there is a lack of professional staff such as speech and educational rehabilitators.

[European Agency, country information, Croatia](#)

d. input from learning support assistants

✓ Yes

If yes, please give a description.

Teaching assistants assist pupils during school time and in extracurricular and out-of-school activities. They provide support in communication, social inclusion, mobility, food and drink intake and toileting. Pedagogical assistants help

pupils to carry out their school tasks and should also co-operate with teachers, expert associates in school and the pupils' peers in the classroom.

[European Agency, country information, Croatia](#)

e. availability of ICT/ assistive technology

✓ Yes

If yes, please give a description.

It is possible for students to write exams and the teaching activity can be organized as distance learning with the use of digital technology.

[Eurydice, Croatia](#)

f. Please describe any other forms of support available.

Additional classes are intended for the pupils who achieve above-average results in a subject or show a particular interest for a certain subject. Remedial classes are organized for pupils who need assistance with learning. A pupil can take it temporarily, for a certain period of time when he or she needs such assistance.

[Eurydice, Croatia](#)

Programmes for Gifted learners:

Schools need to ensure that gifted children are included in educational programmes suitable for their type of talent, additional classes and other forms of work which stimulate their abilities and creativity. For gifted children in primary schools, an individualised curriculum is developed to reflect a more advanced level of reasoning and problem solving. The depth and complexity of educational materials must present an adequate challenge and an opportunity for learners' creative expression. The development of the individualised curriculum demands a suitable adjustment and differentiation of content, themes and the period necessary for acquiring the content, as well as the course of teaching and methods of work. Programmes in regular education for gifted learners include enrichment, broadening, acceleration, mentorship and competition. Programmes outside of regular education include after-school activities, workshops, summer and winter schools, clubs, camps, etc.

[European Agency, country information, Croatia](#)

Different associations and CSOs are providing support in teaching and learning to students with special educational needs and their families through different projects and programs as well as professional development training for teachers and professional staff on inclusive pedagogy and methods of work.

1.44. Please give a description of the strategies in place for practically supporting mainstream school staff teams to increase their capacity to be inclusive and to improve access, participation and achievement for all learners.

Strategy	Description of the focus
National Curriculum Framework	The NCF instructs teachers to overcome subject specialisation and to take part more or less equally in developing learners' core competences.

	<p>It requires the preparation of systematic training programmes to enable teachers, associates and principals to apply the curriculum-based approach. The NCF is also used to prepare textbooks and other teaching and educational resources. This is facilitated by cross-curricular topics, whose introduction serves to deepen topical content and boost learners' knowledge and awareness about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • health rights; • personal and social accountability; • social, cultural, economic, technological and sustainable development; • the values of learning, working, self-esteem and respect for others. <p><u>European Agency, Raising The Achievement Of All Learners In Inclusive Education, Country Report: Croatia</u></p>
<p>Strategy for Education, Science and Technology (2014.)</p>	<p>It is generally focused on the improvement of the quality assurance system in general education in Croatia. It envisages a range of preventive measures including raising quality and availability of ECEC, improving the quality and reputation of the teaching profession, improving access by being guided by the principle of equality and developing a comprehensive system of student support, counselling and early detection of problems.</p>
<p>...</p>	

1.45. Please provide information regarding school buildings and infrastructure.

On the spatial availability of pre-school programmes or network of ECEC institutions in Croatia, there is a large uneven development of the ECEC institutions network and large regional differences. The State's pedagogical standards stipulate that the distance of the kindergarten from the place of residence should be up to 1,000 meters. It is important to note here that in counties that are belonging to one of the regions from 1 to 4 development index, one kindergarten covers an area of 20.4 to 59.2 km² which is much larger area than those recommended by the State pedagogical standards.

The State Audit Report for 2018 on capital investments in Primary and Secondary schools in Croatia showed that Government and local and regional authorities do not generally solve problems in education. The network of school institutions does not correspond to the actual state-of-the-art: before the investment in individual school buildings they do not estimate the costs of use, maintenance and employees; founders (local and regional authorities) do not determine the sources of funding and are not monitoring and not analysing construction costs and deadlines. The finding of the audit states that around 50% of schools in Croatia work in two shifts and the average age of primary school's buildings is 43 and 54 for secondary school's building.

Data from 2017 shows that 2,119 primary school buildings in the Republic of Croatia, 7% of buildings, have been fully adapted, and 26% of the buildings have been partially adapted. 40% of elementary school buildings have an

adapted entrance to the school building. In order to allow unobstructed movement between floors, 10% of facilities with storeys have an elevator or a platform. 55% of school sports halls have barrier-free access. In accordance with the needs, the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports implemented the project "School Network without Architectural Barriers", with the aim of spatial accommodation of schools in each county for equal access to education for students with greater motor disabilities.

a. Are there schools that face infrastructure issues that are barriers to inclusion?

No information available

b. Are there strategies and/or initiatives to improve school buildings and infrastructure?

✓ Yes

If yes, please describe the strategies, their aim and focus.

Strategy	Description of the focus
Measure "Expanding the kindergarten network"	Even though the financing of ECEC institutions is defined under the jurisdiction of local government units, the Ministry of Demography undertook demographic measures, among which is also a measure called "Expanding the kindergarten network" in order to co-finance works and services for investment projects in kindergarten facilities, based on the Support Programme for Improving Material Conditions in Kindergartens. The Ministry of Demography also established the Directorate for Demographic Development, Family, Children and Youth with the aim to promote and coordinate systematic measures in ECEC institutions.
EU funding projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2018 the Ministry sign contracts for with 96 ECEC institutions (total value of projects - €50 million). According to the report from the Ministry 6,387 children are covered with these projects and 529 ECEC teachers and 307 professional staff are employed. • The Agency for rural development in 2018 developed the financial instrument under the Program for rural development aiming to provide funds for infrastructural development, meaning building and re-building objects that will be used for educational purpose of pre-school children in rural areas (areas with less than 5.000 inhabitants). According to the Minister of agriculture statement in October 2019 in the first phase the contract were signed for investments in 143 kindergartens and the total amount of funds invested are more than €100 million.

1.46. Please provide information (main conclusions, reference and a link if available) from any recent reports, systematic evaluations and/or reviews, since 2015 of the school system, potentially drawing on information from school inspections and / or school self-review work.

According to the web portal Gradonačelnik.hr currently in Croatia there are around 500 ECEC institutions that are in process of construction or reconstruction and many kindergartens are being renovated to reduce energy consumption. In addition to the main goal to enrol more children and achieve set EU benchmark of 95% of coverage,

a number of measures are being taken to raise the quality of pre-school education – such as the extension of working time of the kindergartens, learning a foreign languages for pre-school children, hire assistants who will work with children with special education needs. Also, they are stating that more and more local governments are reducing fees for participation and some local governments are securing completely free attendance of kindergartens for their citizens.

1.47. Overall, what are the perceived main challenges (barriers and hinderances) and opportunities (support and ways forward) for inclusion in education in relation to schools in the country?

The UNCPD committee recommends that all secondary education facilities be made accessible to persons with disabilities.

On the accessibility of the ECEC (pre-primary education) facilities, according to Ministry of Education data (source www.mzo.hr), the total number of kindergarten facilities in the Republic of Croatia is 831. Out of a total of 556 local self-government units, 76 units do not allocate funds for ECEC for children in their area and do not have kindergartens or pre-school programmes established at primary schools in their places. In Croatia, there are all together 270 units of local self-government (municipalities) that are considered as undeveloped areas. In these municipalities, 78 (almost 30%) do not have a kindergarten or pre-school programme.

Local authorities are responsible for offering transport from family home to kindergarten/school for all children. In some local communities, local transport is not regular and affordable for Roma families who lives in segregated areas.

The analysis of the current working conditions in educational institutions clearly shows that neither the current network nor the working conditions are optimal (state of the buildings, their equipment, etc.). Another problem is the fact that the working conditions are unequal, thus putting the ensuring of equal opportunities for all children at risk. There are educational institutions that are very well equipped, whereas some of them can barely operate under the current conditions. Therefore, the optimization of the educational institutions network should be one of the Government priorities in the next period. The establishment of the Regional Competences Centres will enable schools to be better equipped and to act as central points of lifelong learning in local community.

Section 7: Communities, parents and students

How far does the wider school community support learners to access and benefit from education opportunities?

1.48. Have there been any campaigns to raise awareness of inclusion in education at national or local level?

✓ Yes

If yes, please give a description.

The Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia has launched in 2020 a national campaign to encourage the inclusion of Roma in education as a key precondition for equal inclusion in all other areas of life. “Run the Wheel of Knowledge” campaign will run throughout the year and it will include television and radio ads, and billboards. The aim of the campaign is to encourage Roma parents to enrol their children in the pre-school education programs, primary and secondary school and to enhance the participation of Roma students in secondary education.

UNICEF office in Croatia campaigns:

In 2016, campaign “Assisted communication for children with disabilities”, which aims to enable children with communication disabilities to express their needs and feelings with the help of modern technology, tablets and special applications. UNICEF provided training for educators and provided equipment for 32 institutions across the country.

Program “Let's work together”, implemented by UNICEF in collaboration with the City of Sisak and City of Slavonski Brod and the association Step by Step, helped to involve the most vulnerable children from these cities in ECEC programs. It is a program that involves educators, teachers, parents and local decision makers in pursuing a common goal - to get every child the opportunity to go to the kindergarten.

Campaign “A Step Towards Inclusion” program implemented in three Croatian counties and designed to address the needs of Roma children and families.

Campaign “Kindergarten for every child” – the aim of the campaign was to raise awareness that every child has the right to go to kindergarten, but in order to exercise this right, kindergarten must be accessible, financially and locally, to families with children. There are large differences among counties in the percentage of children covered by pre-primary education in Croatia.

Association Step by Step in 2018 started innovative web site “Article 28” aiming to collect materials (policy briefs, handbooks, example of good practices, teaching materials) for helping teachers and schools in education of children with migrant background, refugees and asylum seekers.

1.49. Does legislation/policy support parental involvement in schools?

✓ Yes

If yes, please give a description.

Pursuant to the Act on Education in Primary and Secondary Schools (Official Gazette No. 87/2008, 86/2009, 92/2010, amend. - 105/2010, 90/2011, 5/2012, 16/2012, 86/2012 – consolidated text, 12620/12, 94/2013,

152/2014), each school has a parents' council. The parents of the pupils from one class department elect among themselves one representative to the parents' council. Parents' council gives opinion on the drafts of the school curriculum and the annual program, they discuss the school principal's reports on the implementation of the school curriculum and the annual program, as well as any complaints of parents related to educational activities, and it recommends measures for the improvement of educational activities. The parents' council has a representative in the school board – the key governing body of a school. The parent elected to the school board must not be employed at the school.

Eurydice, Croatia

1.50. Does legislation/policy support collaboration between schools and stakeholders in their local communities (e.g. services/employers)?

✓ Yes

If yes, please give a description.

The research results carried out during the project Capp4App implemented by Croatian Chamber for Economy have shown that the employers' interest in engaging in a vocational education system is growing in order to secure the current, and in particular the future, workforce needed for businesses. However, current economic conditions and labour market conditions limit the capacities of businesses for more active participation in the vocational education system, therefore systematic support and incentives are needed to further develop all forms of work-based learning.

Strategy for education (2014) envisaged development of Regional Competences Centres for VET education. The concept of the centres involves the implementation of regular vocational education programs, professional training and lifelong learning, as well as other forms of formal and informal education; and to focus on students, adult learners, students, teachers and mentors of employers, employees and unemployed people (who will be provided with the acquisition of new competences), persons with disabilities and students with disabilities. In the first phase of the implementation of the project there is around €150 million provided by EU funding for the implementation and the focus is on sectors such as tourism and catering, mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, information and communication technology, agriculture and health. In 2018 the 25 regional competences centres were selected. The selected schools have opportunity to invest in infrastructure so students can work with the best equipment and establish contact with employers so that, when they finish school, they will be trained for future jobs. It is still early to evaluate the impact of the centres on selected schools and local communities but it must be said that this could be an excellent project and opportunity for less developed local communities to establish centres that will be central points of lifelong learning and cooperation in the community.

The Croatian Government work program 2016-2020 foresees the introduction of dual vocational education as well as the National curricula for VET. The main goal is the introduction of dual education and development of curricula to ensure that acquired competences will match labour market needs. Experimental implementation of dual system education was announced in 2018. The dual educational system was introduced for a 3-year VET program for 4 occupations in 13 schools and for 156 students – glazier, beautician, merchant and chimney sweeper. According to the presented program the main idea is that students will spend most of the time at the employers and school curricula will put the main focus on needed vocational subjects for each program – 20% of the teaching process is dedicated to general subjects covering Croatian language and culture, foreign language, mathematics and informatics, while all other subjects are optional. Also, students will have opportunity to select elective course – religious classes or ethics.

Program for the Development of VET aims for changes in regular secondary education, as well as for achieving secondary school vocational qualification within the adult education system. Measure 3.3. of the Program states the importance of developing the system of career guidance and professional counselling. It is stated that the

implementation of these measures will be linked to the activities of the Forum for lifelong career guidance and career development (the Forum was developed in 2014 by the Ministry of Labour) and it will bring together stakeholders involved in lifelong career guidance, ensuring dialogue and coordinate the implementation of the Strategy for lifelong career guidance

1.51. Does legislation/policy support the development of learning communities in local/regional areas e.g. support for schools to work together; involvement with universities, support services to provide research evidence and development of innovative practice?

✓ No information available

The challenge for the educational system in Croatia is the promotion of evidence-based practice and encouragement of the scientific work of practitioners, in collaboration with researchers. This could have multiple effects on the quality of educational programmes, because the results of scientific work could provoke changes in everyday educational practice, as well as in policy initiatives to improve the system in Croatia.

1.52. Does legislation/policy set out a role for NGOs, DPOs, or other organisations representing vulnerable groups?

✓ Yes

If yes, please describe the role. Specify which non-governmental actors are particularly active in inclusion in education and how they operate.

Special education and support for parents of children with disabilities is provided under the programs of educational and social welfare institutions and different NGOs. Usually parents receive individual or small group support. Support usually includes seminars or educational events on topics such as improving parenting skills and teaching parents how to encourage a child in learning new skills or how to deal with behavioural problems. Support is usually informal, and the quality of support usually depends on the motivation and effort of the individual educational rehabilitator, teacher or other professional and is not systematically organized within the institution. It is also not planned or evaluated in most institutions. The support offered is often project based, which means it is not sustainable. There is no systematic education of parents across the country, education is not available to all parents

Mostly the NGOs are responsible for the implementation of projects that are hiring teaching assistants and providing training for them.

Additionally, NGOs and associations are working with Roma students and with schools attended by Roma students and their teachers in order to enhance their capacities and provide support to students.

All above mentioned strategies somehow include civil society organisation and associations in some of the activities and provide funding through different nationally and locally funded projects and programs.

One of the providers of different campaigns, programs and projects for supporting children with disabilities and children coming from vulnerable groups in cooperation with the Government and NGOs is UNICEF office in Croatia. In 2019 "Communication for Every Child" program was launched. The project involved 24 organizations from Croatia, and provided training for speech therapists, rehabilitation educators and therapists.

Each child with complex communication difficulties will be provided with a special communication application for free. 100 tablets have been provided in order to work with children.

1.53. Please provide information (main conclusions, reference and a link if available) from any recent reports, systematic evaluations and/or reviews, since 2015 of parental and wider community involvement in the work of schools.

Research "Certain aspects of parental involvement in education of children with and without specific learning difficulties" (Vrkić-Dimić, Zuckerman, Blaži-Pestić, 2016) - the objective of the presented empirical study was to investigate, analyse and compare certain aspects of the involvement of parents of children with and without learning difficulties in the education of their children. The results have shown that parental involvement statistically significantly differentiates between the two tested groups of parents: while the parents of children without learning difficulties are more regular at parent-teacher meetings, the parents of children with learning difficulties more often help their children in doing homework and in mentioned helping they averagely spend significantly more time daily. The parents of children without learning difficulties are generally more satisfied with the tested ways of cooperation and participation in educational activities, and the differences in satisfaction determined regarding the cooperation with the form-master and the amount of homework proved to be statistically significant.

According to the study "Challenges for Integration of Refugees/Asylum seekers into Croatian Society: Attitudes of Citizens and Preparedness of Local Communities" (Ajduković et al., 2019) showed that local communities mostly consider that the Ministry of Education is responsible for organizing language courses, which concerns the duration of the course (too few hours) and the lack of clarity about financing the courses. Also they are pointing out that they do not have personnel and logistics capacities for organizing the courses. Competent institutions are responsible for the organization of language courses to bodies of administration - from local, across regional to state level. Only the CSO representatives from Zagreb are more directly involved in organizing courses and some offer them in formalized form, or through volunteer engagement. With regard to inclusion in the education system, most stakeholders point out the issue of slow administration procedures and emphasize the need for additional teachers as there is a huge need for additional work with asylum seekers or refugee children. Problems related to the lack of personal documents, the question of the recognition of certificates and prior learning. In the coastal and central regions of the country, the lack of translators and teaching assistants are also pointed out as well as their dependence on the MSE in their local decision making processes.

1.54. Overall, what are the perceived main challenges (barriers and hinderances) and opportunities (support and ways forward) for inclusion in education in relation to communities, parents and students in the country?

In the past 35 years, the inclusive education of children with disabilities has been faced with many challenges, such as: negative attitudes of teachers, inadequate training for teachers, insufficient educational support to children, architectural barriers (Žic Ralić, 2012). Precisely the elimination of these barriers represents noticeable positive changes, but these changes are not equally implemented in all schools in Croatia.