



CEDEFOP
European Centre
for the Development
of Vocational Training



Financing adult learning

The role of public funding

20 and 21 October 2025
Thessaloniki, Greece

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Panel discussion: Lessons learned and future reflections - Croatia

Introductory statement: As we are aware, Croatia has recently piloted a voucher system and based on the gained experience explores the possibility of designing and implementing full-scale ILA.

Question: Could you please provide us with some details on your process of moving towards full-scale ILA and how would you see the future role of ILA within the broader adult learning system in Croatia?

Answer (Dario Baron, Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy): The national voucher system is seen as the first step towards the implementation of an ILA. The voucher system already covers most of the requirements from the ILA Recommendation and will be implemented with financing through RRF and ESF+ until the end of 2029. We have already set up a national portal which includes national registry. Also, career guidance for voucher beneficiaries is provided, validation system is in place, and our Labour Law includes provisions regulating paid training leave for training. Employers are obliged to provide the workers with training or upskilling related to their workplace that is financed by the employer. The time spent on the training is included in the working time and, if possible, takes place during the regular working time schedule of the worker.



By the end of 2027 it is planned to develop the roadmap for setting up the ILA system in Croatia that would fulfil all the requirements of ILA Recommendation. This will be done by transitioning from already existing voucher scheme, through establishment of working group in 1Q of 2026 that will develop national roadmap for ILA implementation in Croatia. The working group will be established by the decree of the Minister of labour, and will include representatives of all relevant ministries, institutions and social partners. For this working group we plan to use already established National forum for lifelong learning which includes representatives of all relevant stakeholders. The whole process of developing of the roadmap is one of the activities of the ESF+ financed project “Strengthening the connection between education and the labour market” that started with implementation in March 2025. It is planned that the working group will develop the roadmap by the end of 2027, so that the voucher scheme can transition into ILA scheme in the next ESF financing period.

The roadmap will include all the necessary steps for full implementation of ILA scheme, including definition of governance mechanism, target group(s), types and amounts of financial entitlements, sources of funding (both short-term and long-term), transferability of entitlements and outreach and awareness raising activities. The goal is to include all working age adult persons in the scheme, however its final scope will depend on the availability of funding. Also, options for the voucher users and employers to participate in the training costs will be defined. Related to this, our Office for Social Partnership has just developed an action plan for collective bargaining for the next year, and one of the proposed negotiating points is introduction of compensation for professional development and lifelong learning that employers would pay for their employees.

While developing the roadmap, the working group will take into consideration the results of evaluations of the voucher scheme (1st evaluation was finalized by January 2024, while the 2nd more extensive evaluation is going to take place at the beginning of 2026).

Croatia still has a low participation rate in lifelong learning (in 2024, it was 6.6% for Croatia and 13.3% for the EU). We have seen that the introduction of voucher system had a positive impact on the participation in adult learning since the participation rate was even lower before that. With introduction of ILA and proper awareness raising campaigns, this could have significant impact on adult learning participation in the future.