



spotlight on VET

CROATIA

VET in Croatia

Governance

Vocational education and training plays a major role in Croatia. Overall responsibility lies with the Ministry of Education in cooperation with other ministries in charge of specific VET sectors, such as the Ministries of Labour and Entrepreneurship and Crafts, and other stakeholders. It is supported by the Agency for VET and Adult Education (ASOO) whose remit is to develop, organise, monitor and evaluate VET. ASOO assesses labour market demand and is responsible for occupational standards and VET qualifications; collaborating with the Education and Teacher Training Agency for the general education element, it plays a key role in designing VET curricula, which then need to be approved by the ministry. ASOO also regulates VET teacher training. Its management board is appointed by the government and includes social partner representatives.

Social partners, chambers of economy, trades and crafts, the employment service and the economic and social council are also members of the VET council. This council proposes areas for new or revised programmes and recommends measures and strategies for VET development. The VET Act set sector councils the task of analysing skill needs, identifying related VET qualifications and preparing relevant standards. Councils will increase in number and, according to the National Qualification Framework Act, they will take on new roles.

Structure and provision

Croatia's national qualifications framework (HKO/CROQF), adopted by law in 2013, is a comprehensive and learning-outcomes-based lifelong learning model. It aims to improve readability of qualifications and the wider education and training system. Supporting lifelong learning and improving labour market relevance of qualifications are also major goals. The CROQF comprises eight levels defined in terms of knowledge, skills, autonomy and responsibility; some of these include sublevels.

In initial vocational education and training, 71.5% of learners at upper secondary level participated in IVET in 2012 compared to an EU average of 51.5%. Two thirds of the learners in VET were in four-year school-based programmes, one third in three-year programmes that can be school-based or take the form of apprenticeships. Few learners were in shorter programmes.

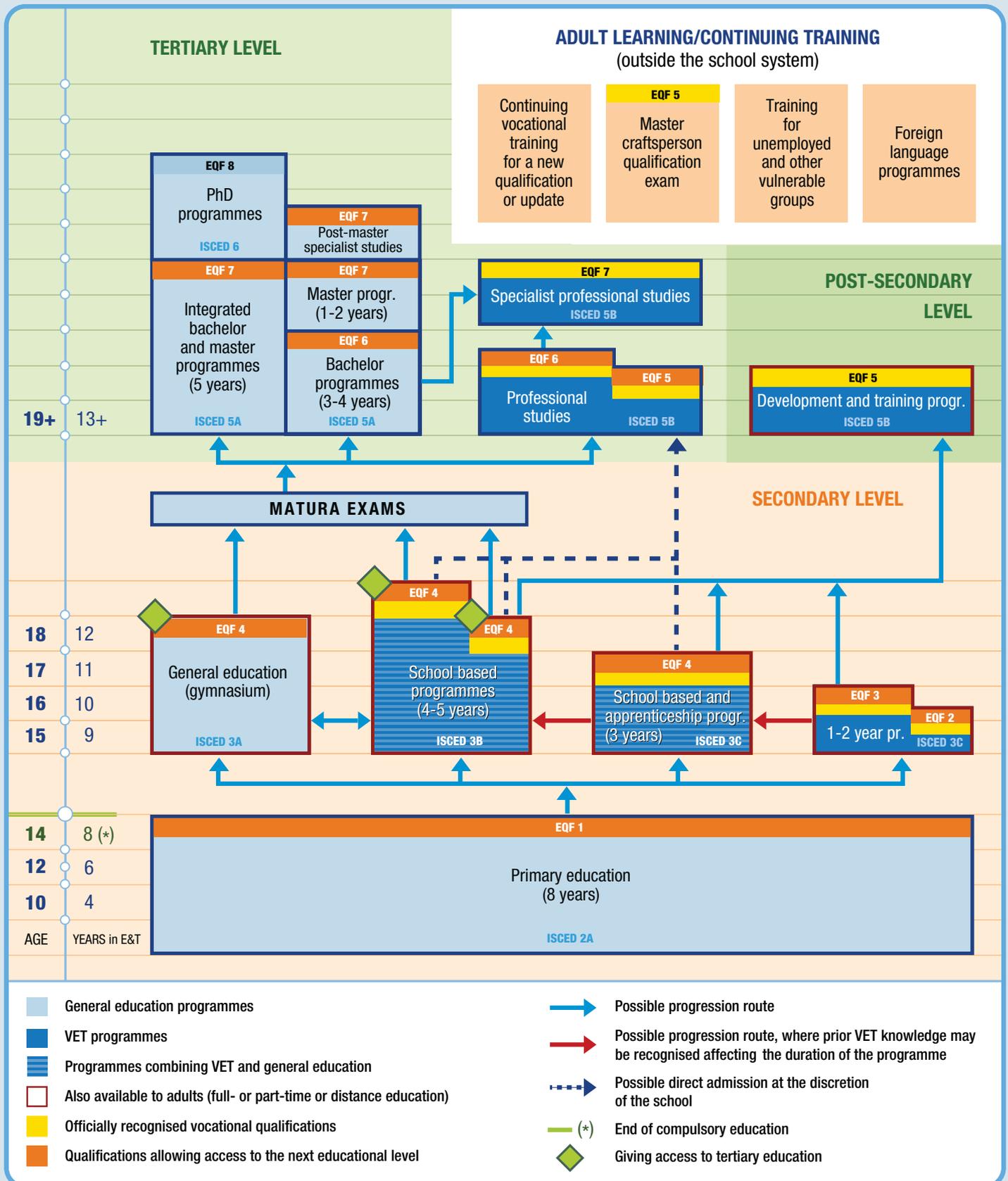
- Four-year school-based programmes (five years to be trained as nurses at ISCED 3B) provide double qualifications, i.e. they lead to qualifications at CROQF level 4.2/EQF level 4 and allow progression to tertiary education. The exam that grants tertiary level access is external in that it is administered by the national centre for external evaluation (NCVVO).
- Three-year programmes (ISCED 3C) are mainly run as apprenticeship schemes, with significant work-based training. They lead to qualifications at CROQF level 4.1/EQF level 4 and give access to the labour market.

At higher education level (ISCED 5B), VET is provided in the form of short-cycle programmes (vyseškole) and at polytechnics with focus on applied sciences. Learning in these programmes typically incorporates extensive practical work experience and leads to a qualification at CROQF and EQF levels 5 and 6. Some shorter programmes also exist.

Adult learning

Adult education and training (for people above the age of 15) covers a broad range of options, mainly in the form of short (re)training programmes. These range from basic or technical skills courses to full formal secondary education and training. Entry requirements for post-secondary adult VET programmes include relevant IVET training and/or experience in the profession for a specified number of years. Training institutions must be accredited and have their programmes approved by the Ministry of Education to be able to issue formal certificates.

VET in Croatia's education and training system



NB: Conversion from ISCED 1997 to 2011 is ongoing.
 Source: Cedefop and Croatian Ministry of Science, Education and Sports.

Distinctive features of VET

All VET programmes combine occupational and general education, to varying degrees; most include mandatory work experience. Learners from lower-level programmes can progress to higher levels at the discretion of their schools. Formal VET is free of charge for the learner, in contrast to adult education and training programmes.

VET graduates have access to master craftsman exams after a specified number of years' work experience, depending on the programme they graduated from. Social partners are mainly involved in the crafts sector and also provide advice on skill needs in cooperation with employment services.

The Strategy for education, science and technology 2020 aims to improve the skills and competences of Croatia's citizens and its economic competitiveness. A coherent strategy across all levels and types of education and training is being developed to ensure high-quality education and training that offers equal opportunities for all; VET is being discussed in this context. A key challenge will be to create stakeholder consensus and integrate the different existing strategies into a single strategy for lifelong learning in an open and participatory manner.

Challenges

Social partnership: although the institutional framework has been established, it remains a challenge to engage trades unions, business communities and local authorities more actively in developing qualifications and learning programmes including the definition of competences. In this context, the inter-sectoral education for entrepreneurship initiative and the strategy for entrepreneurial learning 2010-14, launched by the Chamber of Economy, are noteworthy. The latter introduces entrepreneurship as a key competence into all forms, types and levels of education and training.

Unemployment: while early leaving from education and training at 4.2% in 2012 is much lower than the EU average and the EU-2020 goal of maximum 10%, youth unemployment has been rising: one in four 20 to 34 year-olds was jobless in 2012 and 22% of 18 to 24 year-olds were neither in a job nor in education or training in 2012. At 57%, employment of adults aged 20 to 64 is below the EU average and its 75% target for 2020.

Adult learning/continuing training: at 2.4%, adult participation in learning is among the lowest in the EU. Encouraging participation among those with a low level of formal education and training and the unemployed is particularly difficult.

In response to these challenges, the government's development strategy for VET focuses on quality assurance, teacher and trainer competence development, and labour market relevance. Recent developments include:

- a move towards outcomes-based curricula and qualifications, supported by the Croatian qualifications system (CROQF). New qualifications are unit-based and credit-rated. The national framework curricula include acquisition of key competences and career management skills;
- design of a national strategic quality assurance framework for VET, informed by EQAVET principles and indicators;
- provision for recognition of prior learning/validation of non-formal and informal learning in the law establishing CROQF;
- a joint initiative by the Ministry of Education, ASOO and the Chambers of Economy, Trade and Crafts, to create a more robust evidence base for policy using a combination of sector and macro-economic data.



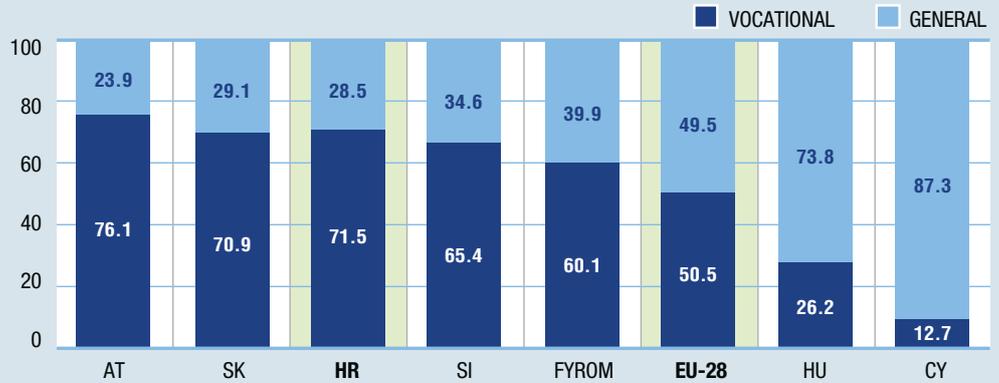
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Education and training in figures

Learners in upper secondary education enrolled in vocational and general programmes

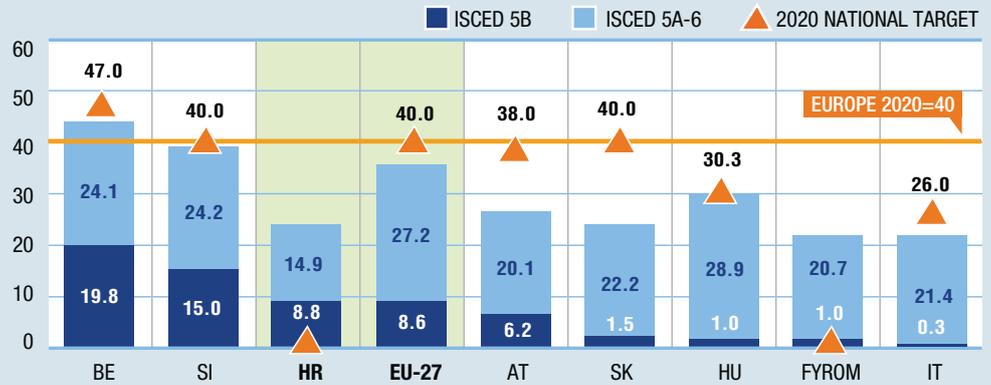
% of all students in upper secondary education, 2011



Source: Eurostat, UOE data collection on education systems, date of extraction 28.6.2013.

Tertiary education by type

% of 30-34 year-olds with tertiary education by type, 2012



NB: Target not available for Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.
Source: Cedefop calculations based on Eurostat labour force survey, date of extraction 8.7.2013.

Lifelong learning

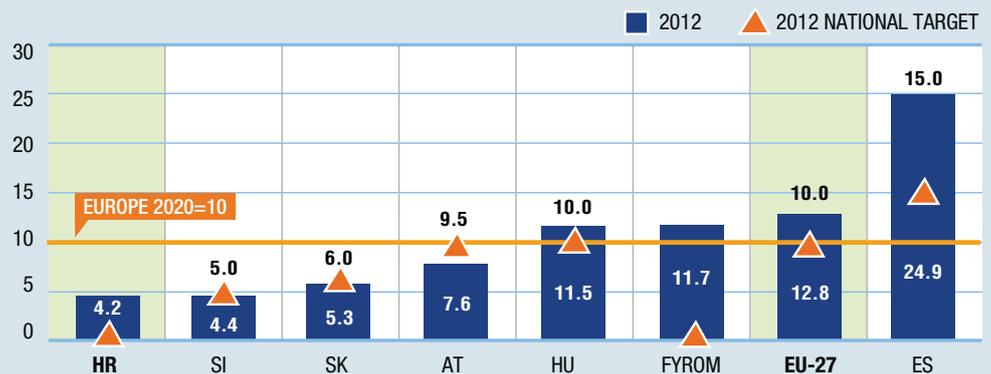
% of population aged 25-64 participating in education and training over the four weeks prior to the survey, 2012



Source: Eurostat labour force survey, date of extraction 3.7.2013.

Early leavers from education and training

% of early leavers from education and training, 2012



NB: Target not available for Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.
Source: Eurostat labour force survey, date of extraction 8.7.2013.



Further information

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www.hok.hr/eng/about_hok	Chamber of Trades and Crafts
www.asoo.hr/default.aspx?id=100	Agency for VET and Adult Education
www.azoo.hr	Education and Teacher Training Agency
www.azvo.hr/index.php/en	Agency for Science and Higher Education
www.mobilnost.hr/index_en.php?id=1	Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes
www.ncvvo.hr/drzavnatura/web/public/home	National Centre for External Evaluation of Education



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