

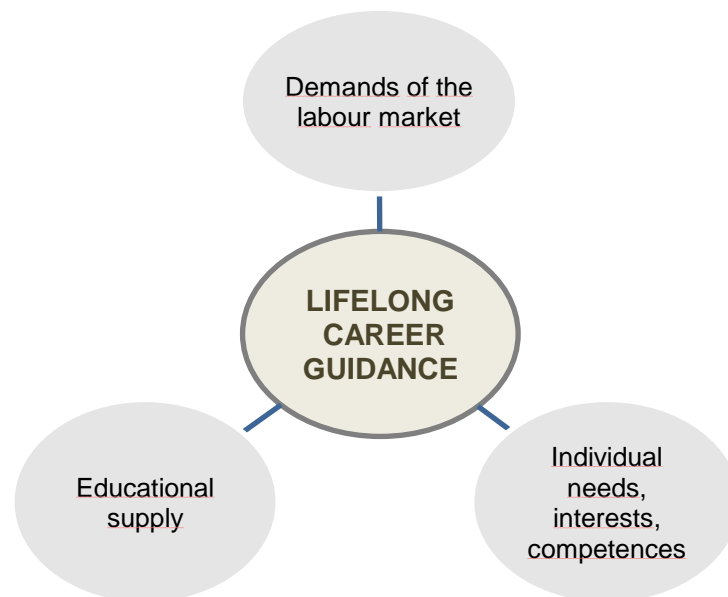
Country Report on Guidance in Group Settings in Croatia

1 Guidance in General

Croatian Employment Service (CES) has been identified by the ETF in 2005 as the main holder of systematically organised activities of information, guidance and counselling aimed at different users – from pupils and students in their finishing years of basic and secondary school to different groups of adults, the unemployed persons and job seekers, as well as the employers. Expert teams work in 22 CES Regional Offices, together with a coordination team at the CES Central Office.

Employment preparation in CES includes lifelong career guidance, learning methods and techniques of active job seeking, training for employment and professional rehabilitation. Vocational guidance is defined as a set of various professional procedures to identify the possibilities, interest and competencies of users for them to be able to make decisions on education, training and employment, and manage their own professional development (EU Council of Ministers, May 2004).

Lifelong career guidance represents an integration of demands on the labour market, planning and conducting training activities of the unemployed in order to better match user interests and competencies and labour market needs.



CES provides information and counselling **services to the unemployed** in the way that employment counsellors establish their individual career plans aiming at active job seeking and improvement of employability. Assessment of competencies of the unemployed and employed persons is conducted, which in case of larger employment barriers can involve the application of additional professional procedures for the purpose of establishing their psycho-physical status. In CES special attention is given to the career guidance of **persons with disabilities** and other hard to place as well as to vocational guidance of **students with disabilities**.

In order to tackle the problem of employing the **persons with disabilities** in a more systematic way, CES has formed its Division for Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons

with Disabilities. Employment counsellors for persons with disabilities, specialising in that area, are employed in all the Employment Service regional offices. Evaluation of working ability of an unemployed person with disability, including also psychological and medical evaluation, is done in collaboration with career guidance counsellors. In the compliance with Law on professional rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities (OG 143/02, 33/05), CES decides about forms of the rights exercise in the area of professional rehabilitation of unemployed persons with disabilities. From the aspect of the preparation for the employment and employment of unemployed persons, professional rehabilitation includes following activities: assessment of working abilities, professional informing, counselling and assessment of professional possibilities, labour market analysis, evaluation of possibilities for employment of the unemployed persons, assessment of feasibility of development and improvement of program of professional rehabilitation, vocational training and programs for improvement of working and social skills and abilities in the period prior employment.

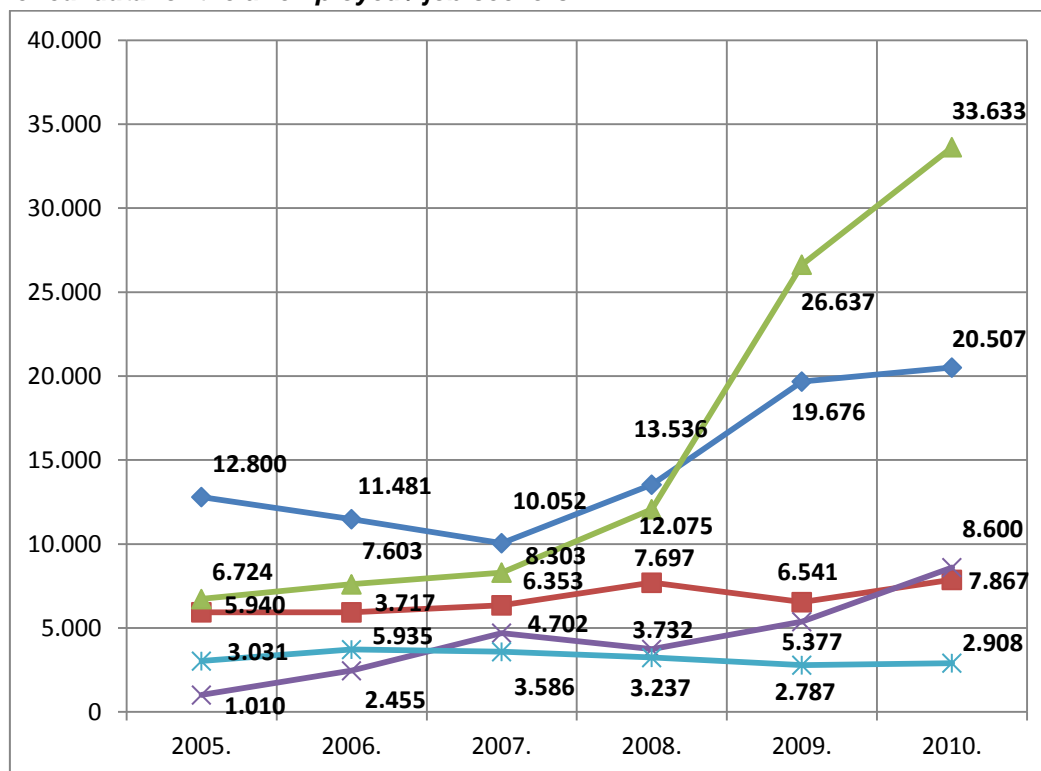
According to “**National Strategy of Equalization of Possibilities for Persons with disabilities**” from the Year 2007 till the Year 2015 Chapter 2.7 “Professional rehabilitation, employment and labour” Croatian Employment Service is responsible for the implementation of the Measure 4 “To provide access to professional orientation for persons with disabilities regardless age, education and working status.

CES also participates in the **Project of social reintegration of former addicts** who completed one of de-toxic programmes and rehabilitation in the therapeutic community or in the penalty system and drug-addicts who are treated in community based services and for longer time maintain stabile abstinence and prescribed forms of curing. Activities of CES include implementation of fostering education and employment of former addicts through activities of vocational guidance, professional mediation and co-financing of their participation in educational programs and employment as well as intensified co-operation with another responsible state bodies, institutions and civil society organisations involved in implementation of the Project of Social Reintegration of Drugs Addicts.

Educational activities for the unemployed are organised for the purpose of improving employability and matching their competencies with current and anticipated labour market needs. CES performs educational activities within the Measures of Active Employment Policy (financing and co-financing of employment and education) but also in collaboration with the units of local and regional self-government, as well as within various EU programs and funds.

Employers are most often offered the services of professional selection, assessment of a candidate's individual potentials and counselling in the field of human resources management, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises without their own human resources departments. Apart from professional selections, the Employment Service provides assistance to the companies facing difficulties and to their employees through the so-called mobile teams, helping the employees to prepare themselves for the labour market while they are still employed, etc.

Chart 1 - Career Guidance Services at the Croatian Employment Service (CES) – numerical data for the unemployed / job seekers:



- Professional informing
- Individual career counselling
- Group career counselling
- Selection for education
- Selection for employment

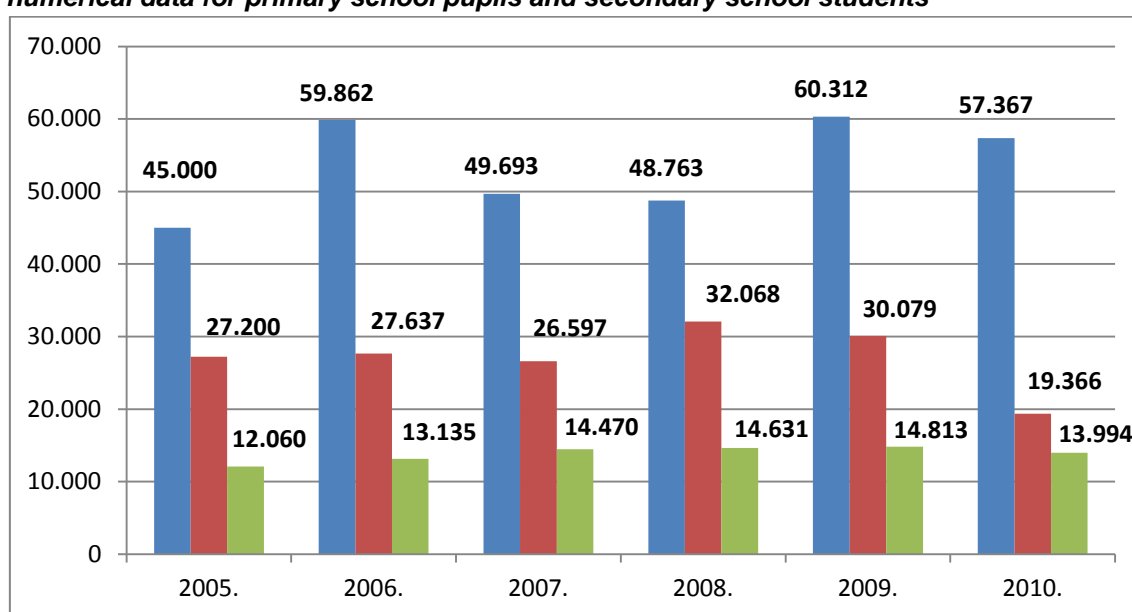
In the context of general guidance provision, there are many attempts to provide information to **pupils** in transition from primary to secondary and from secondary to higher education. These take the form of open days and career fairs in which education institutions mainly take part, supported where appropriate by employers and Crafts Chambers and of talks by former pupils and in isolated cases by parents. Career guidance of the pupils/students is conducted through joint efforts of school counsellors and career guidance counsellors of the Croatian Employment Service.

As a measure to prevent (long term) unemployment, CES is taking “**early intervention**” activities among which there is a set of vocational guidance services, such as informing and counselling, aimed at final grades basic school pupils, secondary school pupils and university students.

Particular attention is paid to the pupils/students who, according to evaluations, might have an aggravated approach to the labour market after they complete their education, i.e. to the pupils/students with development and health issues, learning disabilities and behaviour

disorders. Pursuant to the Decision on the Elements and Criteria for the Selection of Candidates Entering Secondary Schools by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, the pupils/students with major development problems are entitled to enter secondary schools directly, based on the opinion of the Division of Vocational Guidance and Education. The pupils/students with major health issues are entitled to special advantages while entering schools. The secondary schools students who achieve poor results are also referred to the expert team for career guidance. In expert opinions on the most adequate choice of further education, needs of the labour market and education opportunities are taken into account on one hand, as well as the student's individual abilities and needs on the other hand. If needed, the team evaluation is done with the possibility of psychological tests, an interview and a medical examination by a physician specialising in occupational medicine.

Chart 2 - Career Guidance Services at the Croatian Employment Service (CES) – numerical data for primary school pupils and secondary school students



- **Survey of Vocational Intentions**
- **Professional informing**
- **Professional career counselling**

In 2010 Croatian Government adopted the **Regulation on the monitoring, analysis and forecasting of labour market needs** for occupations and competences needed for planning and delivering LLCG services. The recommendations are referred to the educational institutions, local and regional stakeholders, sector councils and the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports. According to the Ministry of Education Act defining criteria for selection of candidates for secondary school entry, students with developmental difficulties are entitled to a direct admission to secondary school upon the written recommendation the professional career guidance expert team from PES. The role of a holistic approach through close networking and commitment of other stakeholders could be considered as an asset.

One of the high level key public policy initiative in Croatia is the **Croatian Qualification Framework (CROQF)** is an instrument aimed at improvement of the employability and personal

development of individuals, thus strengthening social cohesion. One of the main objectives is the development of a system for validation and recognition of competencies acquired within non-formal and informal learning. The significance of the CROQF is also reflected in improved connectedness between labour market demand and implementation of school programmes and evaluation of all learning outcomes. Currently the Act on CROQF is being drafted.

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) for pre-school education and general education is compulsory in primary and secondary schools. It includes career management skills which are encouraged through the development of vocational guidance services through operational programmes of the class education and within the contents of additional and supplementary courses and extra-curricular activities. Currently, the implementation of NCF in educational system (schools) is being made.

Once a year, the Employment Service conducts the **Survey of Vocational Intentions of Primary School Pupils and Secondary School Students**, on the basis of which the expert teams consisting of schools and the Employment Service representatives define the target groups that need specific services of career guidance. The survey results have shown that approximately 30 percent of the pupils/students require professional assistance in their choice of further education program. The pupils/students are afterwards offered information services (group, individual), self-informing through brochures, the Internet, the computer software for career guidance "Moj izbor" (My Choice) or vocational counselling services. Aggregate results of the survey indicate the trends in the pupils'/students' vocational intentions and are forwarded to stakeholders in the field of education and employment on the county and national level.

However, career guidance has still not been properly elaborated in the legislation governing education. Except for the National Framework Curriculum, it has been inadequately mentioned in the Primary and Secondary School Education Act, the Vocational Education Act and in the Adult Education Act.

Career guidance in schools is mainly of a recruitment nature and cannot be equated with careers information based on accurate labour market information. The use of ICT facilities in schools for group career guidance activities rarely occurs. In-service training has not been provided to date by the Ministry of Education or one of its agencies to school guidance practitioners to use such facilities for group guidance activities.

Certain aspects of guidance are also conducted by private agencies and non-governmental associations, mostly in connection with job placement or with the organisation of different programmes of education and vocational training, and rarely with general guidance and career counselling. Their activity in most of the cases is sporadic and situational, without systematic monitoring of the quality of the performed work.

The awareness of partnership based models of cooperation in LLCG starts to take place on national, regional and local levels. The awareness of inter-institutional cooperation is arising, including need to define the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders on national, regional and local levels. National forum of LLCG is to be established in 2012, including legislation on career guidance. Its purpose, among others, is forming a National strategy for LLCG. Some of the expected outcomes of its work are draft legislation on LLCG provision in educational and employment sectors, setting up LLCG centres and local partnerships on LLCG,

further development of ICT supported LLCG services, personnel training for LLCG counsellors, etc.

Croatia is a candidate country and transitional country. All national strategies and programmes are based upon EU programmes and strategies in the field of employment, education, social inclusion and other. It makes it easier to implement measures, make evaluation, monitoring, etc. Also, Croatia is a member of the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network since January 2011 and is participating in two working groups – Career management skills (WP1) and Co-operation and Co-ordination Mechanisms (WP2).

2 Guidance Settings: Individualised and Group

The approach to career guidance services is based on the so-called **'tiered system'**, i.e. starting from the objective that the largest number of users should be informed (through group or individual informing, self-informing, computer software "Moj izbor" (My Choice) etc.), a smaller number of users is included into group counselling and the smallest number of users undergoes the entire procedure of psychological and medical evaluation, which is the most demanding and requires the maximum of financial and human resources. The activities of informing and counselling of young, i.e. first job seekers and of secondary school leavers are continuously performed.

The most common types of services are group and individual informing, counselling, assistance in self-employment, organisation of an internal labour exchange etc., including workshops for arising career management skills.

Professional informing provides pupils/students and their parents with the information relevant for their decision-making regarding further education, i.e. planning of their further career development. Depending on the users' needs and the purpose of informing, the Croatian Employment Service annually publishes more than 30,000 different leaflets and brochures on career guidance. Through **group informing**, the users obtain the information on employment opportunities in certain trades, educational programs, financial support and services provided by other educational/employment institutions.

The regional brochures for five Croatian regions on the possibilities of entering secondary schools are issued each year for the purpose of informing on the possibilities of secondary school education in the Republic of Croatia. The brochures contain job descriptions, information on eligibility criteria, scholarships, schools and educational programs, pupils'/students' homes, the most demanded professions and on the career guidance services provided by the Croatian Employment Service.

"Moj izbor" (My Choice) is a computer software for lifelong career guidance, used in the Employment Service regional offices, schools and other organisations. It has been developed for the users aged 13 and above: primary school pupils, secondary school students, unemployed persons, employed persons considering the change of career and all other who are interested in various job information.

Group career counselling of the unemployed/job seekers is performed for the purpose of improving the skills of active job seeking. Apart from standardised workshops for the improvement of active job seeking skills, depending on the needs of regional labour markets, the Employment Service also offers workshops for different target groups – the long-term unemployed, youth, persons with disabilities and other sensitive groups.

Individual career counselling with evaluations of working and personal abilities of the unemployed is performed with the aim of employment, education and referring to professional rehabilitation. Counselling is provided by a career guidance counsellor, most often a psychologist or some other specially educated expert for the work with certain groups of the unemployed. A physician, specialising in occupational medicine, may also be included in the counselling procedure.

The Informing and Career Counselling Centre (CIPS) is a service that has been offered by the Croatian Employment Service regional offices since 2003 to everyone who needs the information on employment opportunities, labour market situation, professions and education opportunities. The work of such Centres (CIPS's) is based on the self-help principle (with a counsellor on duty) for those who need assistance. It is possible to use the computer at the Centre to write applications and CVs and to search for vacancies. In order to improve the availability of career guidance services to all citizens of the Republic of Croatia, the establishment of such Centres has been planned outside the premises of the Croatian Employment Service.

CES has recognised the importance of development of entrepreneurial competence through the **development of career management skills** through different workshops, individual counselling and self-informing through different web portals. This group of activities is mostly intended for development of self-regulation, self-evaluation and active job searching skills. They are especially needed for citizens in the so-called transitional periods. Development of competencies to manage one's career contributes to employability and encourages social equality and inclusion.

Within the program IPA 2007-2011, the establishment of a new model of electronic counselling at the Employment Service has been planned, intended for the broadest groups of users. The new model of **e-counselling** will be available on the Internet, including the information relevant for career guidance and career development, an opportunity of self-assessment of competencies and interest, a tool helping to define job seeking goals etc.

3 National Stakeholders

Main national career guidance services are provided by the Public Employment Service – Croatian Employment Service (CES). The importance of civil and private sectors is growing, independently and in collaboration with public sectors, schools and four LLCG centres in the Universities.

Investments are usually managed through different task and work groups collaboration, commitment in different national and EU funded projects, money invested in development of different career guidance centres (for example, The Informing and Career Counselling Centre),

etc. There are many economical problems (slow progress made on privatisation, high level of state aid in the economy, etc.) all resulting in the lack of resources (financing and staff) which is impediment to investing more funds in fields such as education, employment and career guidance, research and technology.

Other relevant stakeholders are the Ministry of Economy Labour and Entrepreneurship in cooperation with the Ministry of the Science, Education and Sport, Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education, Agency for Science and Higher Education, Education and Teacher Training Agency, etc.

Croatian Employment Service in cooperation with URIHO (Institution for Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Handicapped Persons), City of Zagreb and Fund for Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities established a new model of professional rehabilitation for disabled, "Working Centre" in Zagreb in the year 2009. Role of CES in this cooperation was to assess abilities, skills, knowledge and motivation of unemployed persons with disabilities pre-selected for professional rehabilitation and to include them in the rehabilitation programme, while URIHO was the institute who implemented working and social activities in order to enhance the employability of persons with disability.

The awareness of partnership based models of cooperation in LLCG starts to take place on national, regional and local levels. The importance of the civil and private sectors is growing, independently and in collaboration with the public sector, particularly toward specific target groups. The examples are collaboration of the Employment Service with the Croatian Union of Associations of Persons with Disabilities, the NGOs Igra, Plavi telefon, etc. The presence of various web portals is also important, e.g. the Institute for the Development of Education provides up-to-date information on higher education, scholarships etc. in the Republic of Croatia and abroad.

4 Qualification and further training of guidance staff

LLCG counsellors in employment gained their competences through "**on the job training**" and **mentorships**. The training programme grants them a professional licence in LLCG. All counsellors have MA in humanity and social sciences, and are obligated to continuous professional development (in order to obtain their professional licence).

Quality Standards for the Vocational Guidance and Selection at CES secure services quality standardization and more visible and transparent CG activities to the users and public. The Quality Standards define LLCG processes, activities, flow of activities, methodology, target groups, outputs, etc.

There is **no formal education** (undergraduate or postgraduate) or training programme in career guidance, no educational institution in the field of LLCG and no systematic and unified approach to development of the professional competencies of guidance practitioners in all sectors. Such provision would contribute significantly to the development of professionalism and professional standards for guidance provision across sectors.

In the frame of work in Division for professional rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities and other hard to place various forms of education for counsellors for mediation and vocational guidance specialized in work with disabled persons in all CES regional offices were organized during the previous period. Under the IPA component IV - Human Resources Development, CES was implementing the project "Fostering effective inclusion of persons with disabilities into the labour market" (from January 2010 till March 2011). Within the project two 4-day trainings in providing better services to employers regarding employment of persons with disabilities and unemployed persons with disabilities in the process of employment was held for 40 labour market agents per training. The training programme focused on strengthening labour market agents' capacities in fostering and emphasising the advantages of employing persons with disabilities.

In their work with employers, advisers for employment use appropriate methods for the sensibilisation of employers and fostering employment of persons with disabilities. In the scope of this project, the capacities of advisers for employment were additionally strengthened through enhancing their knowledge and skills in working with employers and through the development of a manual of working methods and techniques.

A **Manual of different techniques for fostering employment of persons with disabilities** on the labour market was developed for training purposes, but also for future use by advisers. The project Labour Market Centre of the Croatian Employment Service (IPA 2007-2009), the implementation of which is currently under way, supports the establishment of a Centre with the purpose of providing trainings to the Employment Service employees and other key stakeholders on the labour market. Key competencies and quality standards for the basic and supportive business processes of the Employment Service are defined; an analysis of the counsellors' needs for trainings is conducted; capacities of trainers are developed for the implementation of permanent professional trainings of the Employment Service's employees and the employees of other organisations on the labour market.

5 Existing Networks for Career Counsellors and Trainers

Since 2011 the Republic of Croatia has been included in the **European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN)**, with the aim of equalising the lifelong career guidance policies in the field of employment and education. It is a support to the development of the system of national policies of lifelong career guidance, connecting with employment, lifelong learning and social inclusion policies, and exchange of experience and knowledge among its member countries. Based on the decisions of the two ministries responsible for education and employment, the Croatian Employment Service has been appointed the national representative and operational partner of the project on the level of the Republic of Croatia.

The **Euroguidance** network Croatia was established at the Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes, as a part of the network of centres connecting the systems of career guidance in Europe. Euroguidance promotes mobility, provides expert assistance to career guidance counsellors and to individuals, enabling them to understand better the opportunities available to all citizens of Europe.

The **International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance** (IAEVG), joined by Croatia, enables the exchange of experience among experts worldwide, through information publications and congresses.

Once a year CES organizes a meeting of all career guidance counsellors in order to improve coordination and cooperation of its counsellors on a national level. Also, **Croatian Psychologist Chamber** has a department for career guidance that monitors, studies and promotes the development in the area of CG services. In coordination with Croatian Psychologist Chamber, **Croatian Psychology Association** also provides support through expert group in the field of career guidance. Both the Chamber and the Association organize different educational activities in applied psychology - workshops, conferences, peer group meetings, etc.

This year CES has started the project "Services of the Croatian Employment Service to the Clients: Improvement of Lifelong Career Guidance and ICT Support", within Component IV of the IPA project "Development of Human Potential". The overall objective of the project is to support capacity building of the Croatian public institutions and relevant stakeholders in the field of education and employment for the implementation of career guidance. Establishment of the **National Lifelong Career Guidance Forum** has been planned within the project activities as a mechanism gathering relevant stakeholders for the purpose of more efficient development of policies, measures and activities, and better coordinated provision of services, as well as making of a draft proposal of the legislation on career guidance. The project has foreseen the establishment of seven **Information and Career Counselling Centres** outside the Employment Service, which will ensure better availability of information and services.

6 Existing Methods e.g. handbooks, databases, resources etc.

Operational Programme of Human Resources Development, Joint Memorandum on Employment Policy Priorities of the Croatia (JAP) and Joint Inclusion Memorandum of Croatia (JIM), Economic Recovery Programme of the Republic of Croatia and National Employment Incentive Plan 2011-2012 are key strategic documents that define key measures and activities that are related to LCCG in the field of education, employment and social inclusion.

The previously mentioned **Quality Standards for the Vocational Guidance and Selection at CES** secure services quality standardization and more visible and transparent CG activities to the users and public. The Quality Standards define CG processes, activities, flow of activities, methodology, target groups, outputs, etc.

Under the IPA component IV - Human Resources Development, CES was implementing the project "**Fostering effective inclusion of persons with disabilities into the labour market**" (from January 2010 till March 2011). Within the project manuals for employers, unemployed persons with disabilities and labour market agents were developed, as well as One-stop-shop (a national web portal) for provision of information and other services to unemployed persons with disabilities. Developed manuals are: a Guide for employers on selection, employment, workplace adaptation, adequate supervision and retention of persons with disabilities, a Manual for unemployed persons with disabilities on active job searching and a Manual of different techniques for fostering employment of persons with disabilities on the

labour market. Manuals were produced in two forms – as an electronic version and a printed paper version.

In the scope of the project a national web portal (so-called one-stop-shop) with the purpose of providing information and other services to unemployed persons with disabilities and employers, was designed. The portal is a part of the **Fund for Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities'** web page www.fond.hr and includes information on employment and workplace adaptation, important publications related to workplace disabilities, information on EU projects on employment of persons with disabilities.

7 Further comments

Further development of the lifelong career guidance system in the Republic of Croatia implies the formulation of a national strategy, identification of the bodies responsible for its implementation and monitoring, coordination of activities of relevant stakeholders in the field of education and employment and their capacity building, including social partners, the private and civil sectors.

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For more information on lifelong career guidance in Croatia please visit:

Croatian Employment Service www.hzz.hr

Croatian Psychologist Chamber www.psiholoska-komora.hr

Croatian Psychology Association www.psihologija.hr

Euroguidance Croatia www.euroguidance.net/?page_id=1880