

Lifelong Guidance System in Croatia



euro | guidance



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Euroguidance is a European network of national resource and information centres for lifelong guidance in 34 European countries. The main objective of the network is to support the development of the European dimension in lifelong guidance, to support competence development of guidance practitioners and to provide information and communication on the European dimension of guidance. Euroguidance centre in Croatia operates as part of the Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes, Croatian National Agency for the implementation of the Erasmus+ Programme.

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Policy

In Croatia lifelong guidance, career counselling and information services are provided for all citizens who study, work, are unemployed or wish to make a career change. The services that support lifelong guidance and career development are provided by national authorities in the education and employment sectors and are free of charge.

Provision and development of lifelong guidance in Croatia is overseen by the **Ministry of Science and Education** and the **Ministry of Labour and Pension System**. These two are further supported by different authorities at national, regional and local levels, including the **Croatian Employment Service** (and its national, regional and local branches), the **Education and Teacher Training Agency**, the **Agency for Science and Higher Education**, the **Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education**, **Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes** and many others. In order to bring together relevant stakeholders from the above-mentioned sectors with the objective of developing more efficient and systematic policies, the **Forum for Lifelong Career Guidance**, a policy advisory network on lifelong guidance, was established in 2015.

A more systematic set of measures has been introduced with the national **Strategy for Lifelong Career Guidance in the Republic of Croatia for the period 2016-2020**, which represents an initial step in the establishment of quality lifelong career guidance system in Croatia, by providing a formal framework of priorities, measures and stakeholders in the education and employment sectors. The Strategy's accompanying Action Plan provides an elaborate list of activities to respond to challenges identified in the Strategy and defines stakeholders' roles, competences and responsibilities in the provision of lifelong guidance.



MINISTRY OF
SCIENCE AND
EDUCATION



At national level, lifelong guidance in the education and training sector in Croatia is indirectly regulated by the **Primary and Secondary School Education Act**, the **Vocational Education Act**, the **Croatian Qualifications Framework Act** and the **Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education**.

The **Strategy of Education, Science and Technology** aims to build a system for identifying, encouraging and developing individuals' competencies and potential and to reinforce lifelong guidance. Special emphasis is put on the need to introduce lifelong guidance at all levels of the education and training system, from pre-school education through primary and secondary education, higher education and ultimately, adult education.



VET System Development programme 2016-2020 provides a vision of vocational education and training in the 2016 – 2020 period, placing special emphasis on its quality and efficiency, making it attractive and synchronised with the needs of the labour market, while at the same time supporting lifelong guidance for pupils, students, adult learners and the unemployed, as well as acquisition of competences for personal and professional growth and lifelong learning. These objectives follow and complement the activities of the Forum for Lifelong Career Guidance, ensuring the involvement of all relevant stakeholders and a comprehensive and coordinated approach to the provision of lifelong guidance.

In addition, a **comprehensive curricular reform** “School for Life” led by the Ministry of Science and Education has been recently introduced in Croatian primary and secondary schools. The overarching objectives of the comprehensive curriculum reform are to establish a harmonised and effective education system based on comprehensive curriculum and structural changes in order to ensure that children and young persons receive more useful and meaningful education in line with their age and interests, and more relevant to everyday life - an education that will train them for modern life, the job market and ongoing education.



Services and Practice

In Croatia lifelong guidance and career counselling is delivered in the sectors of education and employment.

Within the **primary and secondary education system**, guidance services are delivered in primary and secondary schools and are mostly performed by the non-teaching staff (including school expert associates - pedagogues and psychologists, experts of education-rehabilitation profiles, librarians, principals etc.), followed by the teaching staff.

A comprehensive overview of the provision of guidance in primary and secondary education was offered in 2014, when **Euroguidance Croatia** conducted a research on the existing capacities of primary and secondary schools to implement guidance. The results of the research serve as a good indicator of the practical aspects of the provision of guidance in primary and secondary education, and were as such incorporated in the Strategy for Lifelong Career Guidance in the Republic of Croatia as one of the starting points for the definition of priorities and measures in the areas of primary and secondary education.

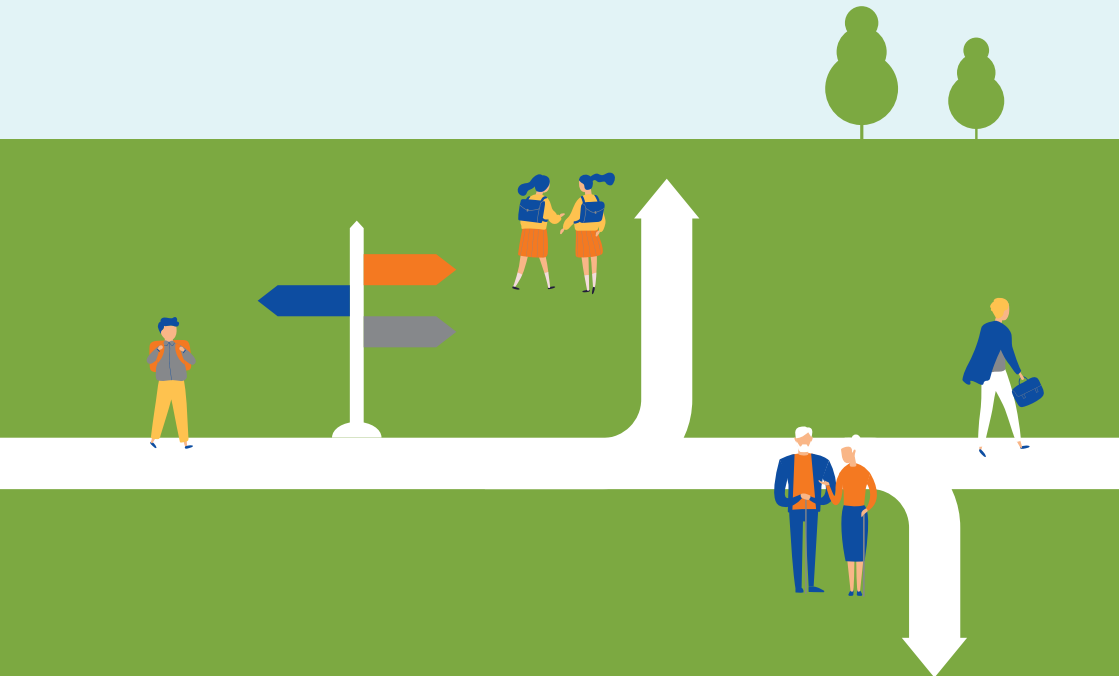


The results of the research pointed to some room for improvement.

For example, the research shows that career guidance is one of the many activities that fall within the scope of activities of expert associates and is not implemented systematically in the same manner in all schools. When researching work methods used in schools, it was established that precedence is given to group provision of information and counselling to pupils and parents regarding education opportunities. On the other hand, less attention is given to preparing pupils for job search, raising pupils' transversal and decision-making skills as well as their self-awareness.

Although a vast majority of schools implements career guidance of pupils in their two final years of compulsory education (grades 7 and 8), a need was recognised for introducing elements of career guidance in earlier stages of education, so that pupils are prepared for making career management decisions at later points in their lives.

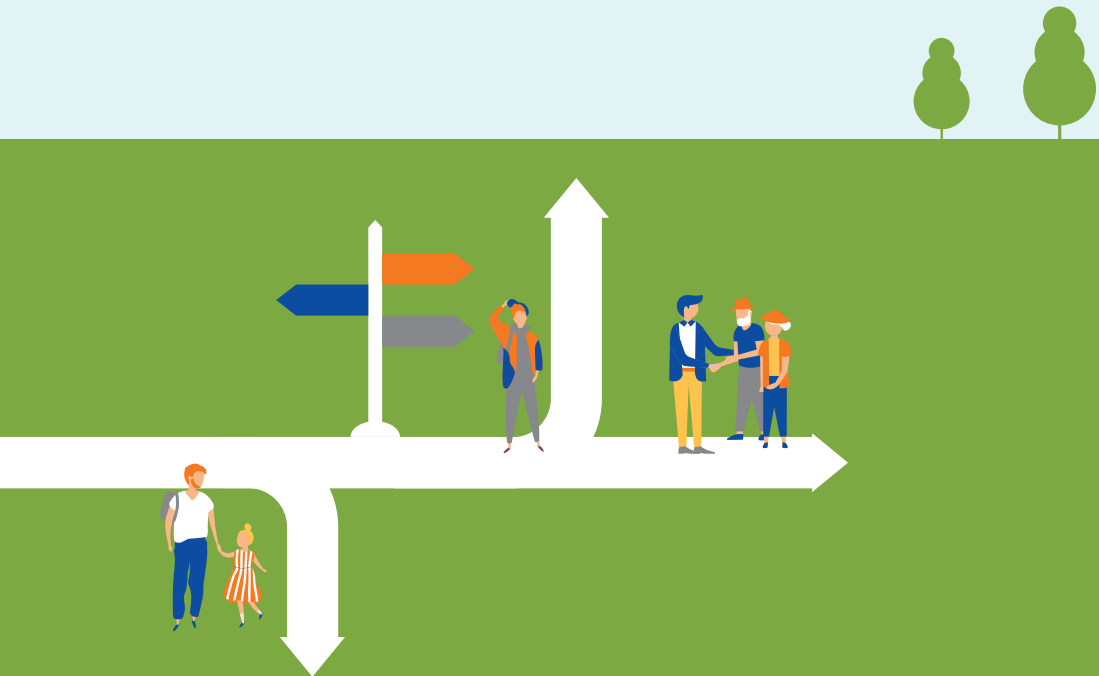
The need was identified for investing in further and continued training of school expert associates in the area of guidance, also pointing to a limited offer of seminars and expert meetings that deal with career guidance within the school system. Finally, the research noted the need for ensuring more funding for the purchase of career guidance tools (e.g. diagnostic tests) and for covering the expenses of associates' education and professional development courses.



In the **higher education system** efforts are currently being made to establish new institution based career centres in higher education institutions and/ or further develop the existing ones, which would offer psychological guidance for students, as well as information on job search and labour market trends, networking activities with the business sector and information on mobility.

In **adult education** guidance services are delivered in a number of adult education institutions, such as Public Open Universities, offering education programmes, vocational training and additional training programmes, elementary, high school and secondary school programmes.

Within the **employment sector**, guidance services are primarily offered by the national Croatian Employment Service and Lifelong Career Guidance Centres (CISOK). Guidance services are offered through online counselling, brochures, leaflets and different types of group information activities and workshops, providing advice on seeking and creating professional opportunities and improving job-search techniques. Career guidance services for the unemployed, job seekers, pupils and students are provided by specialised counsellors in career guidance, such as psychologists, pedagogues, and experts of education-rehabilitation profiles, who receive further training as career counsellors. Individual counselling services are offered to persons who need a more individualised approach, such as persons with health or learning difficulties, and those at risk of social exclusion.



Training

Croatia does not currently provide initial education for career guidance counsellors in the system of higher education (such as specific career guidance study programmes), nor does it provide a single professional development programme on this subject. Guidance counsellors in the education and employment sector hold university degrees in relevant fields (psychology, social work, pedagogy, etc.) with additional professional training leading to a professional exam in lifelong career guidance (employment sector) or a professional exam in education (education sector).



In order to provide them with opportunities for further and continued professional development and training in guidance, Euroguidance Croatia has developed a professional development programme “**Guidance and Career Counselling Seminar**”, which has now been active since 2013 and has been attended by more than 450 school psychologists, pedagogues and teachers.



Research and Development

Research and development in the field of lifelong guidance is primarily done by the following institutions:

The Croatian Employment Service - collects labour market data, labour market trends and forecasts in the employment sector

The Agency for Science and Higher Education - conducts surveys on the establishment and provision of guidance services (career centres) for students and employees of higher education institutions, the types of services provided and their developmental needs

The Institute for Social Research in Zagreb - conducts scientific research in the field of social structure and stratification, youth, space, education, science and technology, culture, religion, gender, etc.

Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences - conducts scientific research in the field of guidance and career development, develops online guidance tools and systems.



Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes/ Euroguidance Croatia conducts various research activities in the field of guidance:

1. **Possibilities and Perspectives of Initial Education in Guidance in Croatia, 2013**
2. **Research on the existing capacities of primary and secondary schools to implement career guidance, 2014** (incorporated in the national Strategy for Lifelong Career Guidance in the Republic of Croatia for the period 2016-2020)
3. **Guidance in Croatian Primary and Secondary Schools – Pupils' Perspective, 2017**

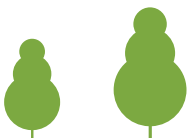
Studies and publications done by Euroguidance centre Croatia are available at www.mobilnost.hr.



Ethics

In its Strategy for Lifelong Career Guidance in the Republic of Croatia, the Forum for Lifelong Career Guidance (including all its members) outlines the following principles that underlie the provision of lifelong guidance in Croatia:

- Independence – Lifelong guidance providers respect the freedom of career choice and personal development of the citizen.
- Impartiality – Lifelong guidance provided is in accordance with the citizen's interests only, is not influenced by provider, institutional and funding interests, and does not discriminate on the basis of gender, age, ethnicity, social status, qualifications, ability, disability etc.
- Equal opportunities – Lifelong guidance enables and promotes equal opportunities for all citizens in education and work.
- Availability – All citizens have a right to access lifelong guidance services at any point in their lives.
- Accessibility – The guidance provided is accessible in a flexible and user-friendly ways such as face to face, telephone, e-mail, e-portals, in order to accommodate different citizens' needs.
- Data protection – Citizens have a right to protection and privacy of personal information they provide in the guidance process. All personal data obtained during the provision of guidance are considered professional secret and are treated as such.





Independence

Impartiality

Equal opportunities

Availability

Accessibility

Data protection