Reflection on success and challenges in implementation of the Bologna Process during the past ten years and looking forward to 2020 – lessons learnt

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Croatian higher education before 2004

Problems—within the higher education system

• Very long time required to graduate – the average of 7.5 years for pre-Bologna graduates (2005-2010 Development Plan)
• Very high drop-out rate (only 33% of enrolled students graduate)
• Limited mobility
• Practically no clearly defined outcomes nor programme objectives

Problems – caused by the issues within the system as well as the higher education policies

• Employers not satisfied with students’ competences (*FurtherBologna*, 2006)
• Weak competitiveness at the European level
• Weak educational structure of the population
Education System Development Plan
2005 - 2010

• Priorities in higher education:
  • 1. Improve quality and efficiency of education.

• Objectives:
  • Establish a quality assurance system for higher education in the Republic of Croatia by 2006
  • By 2010, decrease the drop-out rate to 50% and decrease the graduation time to 6.5 years (at universities)
Scheme of studies in Croatia

Undergraduate (univ.bacc), 3-4 years 180-240 ECTS

Postgraduate university (dr.sc./dr.art.), 3 years  ECTS number regulated by university

Postgraduate professional (spec), 1-2 years

Graduate (mag./dr. profession, spec), 1-2 years 60-120 ECTS bodova

Undergraduate professional (baccalareus/bacalaurea), 3-4 years 180-240 ECTS bodova (pristup.profession) <3 god. <180 ECTS

Graduate professional (spec.profession), 1-2 years 60-120 ECTS

Min. 300 ECTS

Universities (of Applied Science) & University Colleges of Applied Sciences
Croatian Universities
Croatian Universities of Applied Sciences
Croatian University Colleges of Applied Sciences
Bologna in numbers

- 2005 3+2+3 - restructuring
- 2005 - 828 programmes accredited – undergraduate, graduate and professional – with the help of international reviewers and an IT system
- 2005 – first generation of Bologna students enrolled
- 2005-2009 - 102 doctoral and 175 postgraduate professional programmes accredited
Resourcing of higher education

• Increase over 47% in HE state budget 2004-2008 (almost 12% annual increase)
• Additional 400 million € secured in loans since 2004 for construction of new campuses in 6 cities (Zagreb, Rijeka, Split, Zadar, Osijek, Dubrovnik)
• Over 2566 (20%) new full-time equivalent positions opened 2004-2009
• Increased regional development of higher education system in cooperation with the Development and Employment Fund
New higher education institutions since 2005

• Around 30 new higher education institutions founded in the past five years

• Mostly private colleges and public universities of applied sciences,

• New universities
  – One public
  – Three private universities
Implementation difficulties

- “Formal” Bologna alignment
- Unsuitable legal framework:
  - Agency not fully independent
  - Overtly generalized criteria for establishing new higher education institutions and study programmes
  - External quality assurance procedures poorly defined
2009 Quality Assurance Act

- New, enhanced role of ASHE
- Establishment of new higher education institutions – completely changed – a system of “mentorship” introduced
- Quantitative accreditation criteria
  - Teacher/ student ratio– 1/30
  - Students/ space ratio – 1/1,26 m2
Educational structure

• Students enrolled at higher education institutions:
  – 2007/2008: 143,410 students

• Almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of high school graduate enter higher education

• In the past 15 years the number of students almost doubled
Structure of students enrolled, by disciplines

- Biomedicine and Health
- Biotechnical sciences
- Social sciences
- Humanities
- Interdisciplinary sciences
- Natural sciences
- Technical sciences
- Arts
Network of higher education institutions and study programmes in the Republic of Croatia

- Based on:
  - Regional strategic priorities and economic trends
  - National strategic priorities
  - Number of the unemployed
  - Number of high school graduates
  - Number of existing higher education institutions and study programmes
- All stakeholders involved in the development of the network
Agency for Science and Higher Education

- Established in 2005
- 2009 – redefinition of its role (Quality Assurance Act) and strengthening of its independence
- Unifies various activities related to the science and higher education system
ASHE past activities

• Initial accreditation 2005-2010:
  – 1200 study programmes
  – 30 HEIs

• Re-accreditation 2008-2010:
  – 20 HEIs
  – 20 scientific organisations

• Audit 2008
  – 3 HEIs

• Recognition of foreign higher education qualifications
  – 4062 foreign higher education qualifications
ASHE future activities: the next 5 years

- Re-accreditation of 130 HEIs and 70 scientific organisations
- Initial accreditation
- Audit of all HEIs and scientific organisations
- Recognition of higher education qualifications
- Central Applications Office– introduction of the state graduation examination
Accreditation

• Accreditation serves as a guarantee of the level of a qualification awarded by an accedited study programme which in the end results with printing national coat of arms on the diploma documents

• We can say that a higher education institution awards the national qualification to a person in the name of the state
Accreditation in higher education

USA

• Beginning of accreditation 1905 (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching)

• 1944 in law -> the state finances education only in accredited higher education institutions
Accreditation in Europe

EUROPE

Different tradition from the USA: agencies were established in mid-1980 (by state); the first is Comite National d’Evaluation (CNE) and Conseil National de l’Enseignement Superieur et de la Recherche (1985) -> no repercussions on public financing

1997 QAA (Great Britain) – independent institution financed by higher education institutions -> no repercussions on public financing
Differences in approach to accreditation

• European - regulatory approach (checking minimum requirements and inputs)

• American – evaluatory approach (evaluating the level of quality and outputs)
Accreditation in Croatia

- New Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education
- **Initial accreditation** – conformance with the minimum criteria
- **Re-accreditation** – quality grade apart from minimum criteria
Ordinance on conditions for initial accreditation and re-accreditation

Quantitative criteria:

• Teacher/student ratio
• Size of teaching space
• Coverage of courses with own teachers
Teacher/student ratio

- Ordinance: teacher/student ratio 1/30
- UNESCO data on teacher/student ratio:
  - World average 1/15.7
  - North America and Western Europe 1/13
  - Highest average Arab countries and sub-Saharan Africa 1/25.1
Quality Grade

- Institutional management
- Study programmes
- Teachers
- Students
- International activity
- Scientific activity
- Space, resources, finances
Transparency tools

- External quality assurance procedures in line with the ESG, as well as European and international best practices
- Foreign reviewers in the review panels
- Business representatives and students included in the Management Board, Accreditation Council and review panels
- An NGO representative included as a member of the Accreditation Council
- Public reports
Goals

- Integration of the Croatian science and higher education system with the European systems
- Integration with the European Higher Education Area
- Improved mobility
- Recognisability and credibility of Croatian higher education qualifications
- Access of persons with foreign higher education qualifications to the Croatian labour market
- Equitable access to higher education system
Lessons learned

- Continuing education of employees
- Bring about changes—“bottom-up initiatives”
- International good practice – but implemented in the national context ("no recipe")
- *Fair* and *equitable* treatment of all stakeholders (public, private, new or traditional higher education institutions)
- Involvement of all stakeholders in implementing changes and carrying out activities
- The Ministry clearly committed to independence of the national agency
• Thank you for your attention!