

Balance of Ten Years of Reform: Changes in the Croatian Higher Education System

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Introduction

More than a decade has passed since Croatia signed the Bologna Declaration in Prague in 2001 and ratified it in 2002. During this period of time, the Croatian higher education system has gone through numerous changes as a consequence of the Bologna process which gained further importance because of the EU accession process. The Bologna process – though started as a non-EU initiative – has become a core element of EU activities in the field of higher education, which is supported by several financial programmes. The Croatian government and legislature took several steps in order to harmonize the legal framework with the requirements of the Bologna process but the main challenges arose during its implementation at institutional level. The above mentioned support programmes and the international expertise provided by the European Union and the international community played an important role in the involvement of higher education institutions and the development of the organizational background. As a result of these circumstances, the implementation process started and more and more stakeholders got involved. As it will be described in this paper, several programmes – mainly financed by the European Union – supported this process, namely the introduction of the European Credit Transfer System, Diploma Supplement, the establishment evaluation and recognition procedures at institutional and national levels, quality assurance system, etc.

However, the full implementation of the Bologna process is still far from its conclusion. The success of the Bologna process

mainly depends on how it will be able to achieve those objectives set by itself (e.g. focus on employability, mobility of students and professors). These aspects have become increasingly important as Croatia managed to finish the accession talks and is expected to become a member of the European Union in July 2013 and thus getting into closer relation with other EU member states' systems.

First steps towards the new structure

After the ratification of the Bologna Declaration, the Croatian government's first task was to establish an appropriate legal and institutional framework for the Bologna reforms. It was also underpinned by the ratification of another international agreement, the Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region (hereafter Lisbon Convention). The new Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education – adopted in 2003 and amended in 2004 – was already compatible with the Bologna principles (Polšek 2004, 285; Orosz 2008, 70), which had to address several issues since the pre-Bologna system in Croatia differed from the Bologna structures in various aspects. Some of these differences were rooted in the former Yugoslav higher education system, as for example the fragmented university structure in which the faculties and institutes enjoyed a wide range of autonomy – including funding –, which made strategic planning and the development of multidisciplinary curricula very difficult (Haug, Tauch 2001, 59-60; Clark 2003).

Reforms of the mid-1990s did not touch this organizational arrangement. One of the main results of those reforms was the shift to a dual system by establishing a professional higher education sector alongside the universities (in Croatian: *sveučilište*). Within the new sector two types of institutions exist: polytechnics (*veleučilište*) and the schools of professional higher education (*viso-*

kaškola). Though the intention was to establish a more practice-oriented sector separate from the academic one, which is able to satisfy local and regional needs, the result was rather a mixed institutional profile since many new institutions started to work within the frame of universities or the same instructors teaching in universities taught in the new ones which also led to a decrease in quality (Polšek 2004, 288-89). The study programmes offered by these institutions were arranged in three cycles. Professional studies usually lasted for two years. University first-cycle studies were organized as long-cycle studies which lasted at least four years (up to six years for medical studies) and provided students with broad knowledge of the disciplines and opportunities for further education at the postgraduate level. Postgraduate education was organized into two cycles: the master programmes, lasting at least two years, and doctoral programmes, lasting an average of three to six years (Dujčić, Lučin 2007, 24).

The above mentioned new act was the first attempt to foster integrated university structures by prescribing integrated university status from late 2007 and by introducing lump-sum financing at university level from January 2006, which allowed the universities to make their financial decisions according to their own institutional strategies. It also prescribed united legal entity for the newly established universities (Croatia Bologna National Report 2005, 1). Concerning the dual system, in order to ensure separation between professional and university sectors the Act required that only professional higher education institutions can organize professional study programmes from the academic year of 2010/11. In addition the Act introduced the Bologna three-cycle study structures parallel to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and the Diploma Supplement (DS). The deadline provided for the implementation of this regulation at institutional level was the academic year of 2005/06. Regarding university studies, the Bologna three cycles have been organized as follows:

Undergraduate studies last three to four years and require the accomplishment of 180 to 240 ECTS credits. By the end of undergraduate studies, the bachelor's degree (baccalaureus or baccalaurea) is awarded, specifying profession. The graduates can apply for both university and professional master's graduate studies or enter the labour market.

The graduate master's study is a one-to-two-year programme requiring 60 to 120 ECTS credits. By the end of graduate master's study, the Master of Science (M.Sc.) or Master of Arts (M.A.) is awarded. Then students can qualify to take part in postgraduate programmes.

Postgraduate university studies last for three years and are not necessarily linked to the European Credit Transfer System system. Upon completion, the degree Doctor of Science (Dr. Sc.) or Doctor of Arts (Dr. Art.) is awarded. Additionally, universities may organize postgraduate specialist studies lasting one to two years, after which a specialist's degree for a particular field is awarded.

On the contrary, professional studies are divided into two cycles by the act: A *professional undergraduate study programme* can last two to three years; by its completion from 120 to 180 ECTS credits must be earned. Exceptionally, with the approval of the National Council for Higher Education, professional studies may last four years in cases when it is in compliance with internationally recognized standards; during such studies up to 240 ECTS credits must be accomplished. In case of a professional study with less than 180 ECTS credits, the corresponding professional title of these qualifications is determined by a special law, while programmes with 180 and more credits award a bachelor's degree. With this qualification one can apply for university graduate master's studies or for specialist professional graduate studies. *Specialist professional graduate studies* last one to two years; by the completion of 60 or 120 ECTS credits students can acquire the title of a specialist in a particular profession (Dujčić, Lučin 2007, 24-25;

Orosz 2008, 74-75). The three main cycles of study were fully introduced in the academic year 2005/6 and since then it has not been possible to enrol in pre-Bologna type programmes. However, the main aim of the first cycle (i.e., entrance into the labour market) did not seem to be achieved. At the same time the use of the ECTS became obligatory at higher education institutions from the academic year 2005/6. (Croatia Bologna National Report 2007, 13) The aim of the European Credit Transfer System was twofold: on the one hand it was supposed to promote mobility between different study programmes – both at national and international level – and flexible learning paths and to enable easier recognition procedures. Nevertheless, the European Credit Transfer System could not fully comply with its task since in Croatia mobility between professional and university studies remained limited. (Dujčić, Lučin [eds.], 2007). Neither has been the European Credit Transfer System linked to students' workload properly since in many institutions were resistance to change the organizational traditions of their teaching and marking system. (Lučin, Samaržija 2011, 29) As far as the Diploma Supplement was concerned, in the first phase its contents and the way it was provided to students were not regulated in detail. (Eurydice 2005, 112)

Beyond the legal framework, the act launched a development process within institutions that are integral part of the higher education reform in Croatia. The act also reconsidered the function of the already existing advisory body, the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE), which is the most important independent and professional consultative body regarding higher education reforms and development. The National Council for Higher Education has thirteen members chosen by the parliament on the basis of the government's proposal among prominent individuals in higher education and research. Furthermore, the council has two members outside the field of higher education and science. The National Council for Higher Education:

- proposes and encourages taking measures for the development of higher education;
- proposes a network scheme of public higher education institutions;
- approves the conditions of the Rectors' Conference and the Council of Polytechnics and for obtaining academic-educational, artistic-educational and educational titles;
- proposes to the minister rules on standards and criteria for the establishment and evaluation of new higher education institutions and programmes of study;
- appoints reviewers and gives its opinion on the establishment of new higher education institutions and programs of study; and
- evaluates higher education institutions and programmes of study and proposes the issuance of licenses to the minister.

According to the act, the National Council for Higher Education together with the National Council for Science (NCS) can propose the allocation of financial resources (Croatia Bologna National Report 2005, 1-2; Orosz 2008, 71). The professional and administrative support of the National Council for Higher Education and the National Council for Science is the responsibility of the Agency for Science and Higher Education. It fulfils an expert task by assessing research and higher education activities and recognizing degrees and other qualifications. It evaluates higher educational institutions, their study programmes, research programmes, and quality control and development and it provides the National Information Centre with data about mobility. It reports about its own activities to the National Council for Higher Education and the National Council for Science, which base their decisions on these reports. It is also responsible for international activities and cooperation in the field of quality assurance (ENQA) and recognition of qualifications

(ENIC). The act also prescribed for the agency to involve external - both domestic and foreign - expertise while carrying out its tasks. The above mentioned first steps were very essential for the implementation of the Bologna process in Croatia. However, it has to be noted that the centrally directed reform could not be successful without the commitment and involvement of the higher education institutions, especially when taking into account the fragmented university structures. This was already pointed out by the European University Association (EUA 2005). In this environment the international support and exchange of best practices played an important role in raising the awareness of academics and institutions' staff and students. This was one of the objectives of the Tempus Project called "Moving Ahead with the Bologna process in Croatia" (2004-2007) which managed to involve all the universities in Croatia. Another way of how universities have been able to gain more input for their own reform approaches has been the participation in international evaluation procedures of the European University Association. The first institutional self-evaluations were completed in 2000, followed by external evaluations, with the involvement of international experts and organizations such as the European University Association. (Krbec 2006, 68.) In 2005 another institutional self-evaluation took place with the participation of all Croatian universities whose results were evaluated by the European University Association during its advisory visit in May 2005.¹ The report of the EUA emphasized the need for the constant improvement of quality in education and research and that quality should be interpreted more widely. (EUA 2005, 3.)

¹ The self-evaluation reports of the universities are available on the website of the Croatian Rectors' Conference: www.unizg.hr/rz/eua/pov.htm.

Moving ahead with reforms

The above mentioned first measures and actions provided the first momentum for the Bologna process in Croatia. However, true implementation is still far away because both, institutional level implementation and development of quality assurance (QA) and its administrative support, had to be achieved. In the next part of this study the recent state of reforms are to be introduced, but it is also to be noted that because of the lack of information on the implementation at institutional level, the description cannot be considered complete.

Regulations on qualifications

Since the end of 2006 the amended regulations have guaranteed that students studying in Bologna-type structures should receive their Diploma Supplement automatically and free of charge in English and Croatian. Since most Bologna-type studies began in the academic year 2005/6, the first Diploma Supplements were issued in 2008. The students who started their studies within the framework of the newly structured training courses one year earlier were to receive this document in 2007 (Croatia Bologna National Report 2007, 12.). Since obligation only exists to issue the Diploma Supplement to the students of the three-cycle programmes, students from pre-Bologna programmes did not automatically get a diploma supplement (Croatia Bologna National Report 2009, 24).

In 2006 the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport set up a working group which prepared a proposal for the Croatian Qualification Framework (CROQF) in November and December 2006, which consulted all relevant stakeholders at three national conferences. As a result, the parliament adopted the baseline for the Croatian Qualification Framework in July 2007, which determines the glossary of terms, outlines the aims and principles of the Croatian

Qualification Framework in accordance with the guidelines in the proposals and discussions for the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area and the European Qualifications Framework as well as the credit ranges and qualifications. The eight levels and the four sublevels introduced by the proposal cover all the three cycles and they are described by means of credits and qualifications gained after the completion of studies on a certain level. The national committee, responsible for the establishment and implementation of the Croatian Qualification Framework, started to work in September 2007. The committee consists of representatives of all relevant stakeholders such as academia, employers and trade unions. After the adoption of a five-year activity plan the committee established an operational team of education experts whose task it was to prepare a description of competences and define the general learning outcomes for each level of the Croatian Qualification Framework. Later, in December 2008, the National Committee adopted the generic descriptors for all CROQF levels, and started a national consultation process, which lasted until the end of January 2009. The National Committee also set up 26 Sector Working Groups being in charge of the design of qualification standards (Croatia Bologna National Report 2009, 16). The implementation of the Croatian Qualification Framework is supposed to be completed by 2012. Unfortunately, the economic crisis has a negative impact on this process since limited resources were rather focused on other aspects of the reforms. (Lučin, Samaržija 2011, 31.)

Quality Assurance

Probably one of the most important aspects of reform in Croatia is the development of the quality assurance system which has gone through several organisational changes since its establishment. This

aspect got attention quite late although the drop-out rates at universities were quite high. The National Foundation for Science, Higher Education, and Technological Development in Croatia launched a programme for the development of the quality assurance units at universities in 2005. As a result the Universities of Osijek, Zagreb, and Rijeka established these organizational units. Within the framework of a CARDS programme the National Council for Higher Education compiled a guidebook regarding the proposed internal institutional quality assurance system in order to support the other institutions as well (Croatia Bologna National Report 2007, 9). In July 2007 National Council for Higher Education adopted a three-year evaluation plan for higher education institutions that started in 2008 with pilot projects at three different higher education institutions, which also included the evaluation of some elements of a quality assurance system. The Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE) has organized several workshops and seminars that promoted the development of quality assurance units at higher education institutions and on the basis of experiences collected during the pilot projects shared further information on this issue. Organizing internal quality assurance belongs within the area of responsibility of the higher education institutions (Croatia Bologna National Report 2009) and until now it seems that these procedures are rather considered as “writing of a formal self-assessment report for external evaluation”. (Lučin, Samaržija 2011, 36.)

The new Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Science was adopted in April 2009. It implemented the suggestions outlined by the CARDS project and aligned the Croatian quality assurance system with the ESG (Standard and Guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area). The new act also reaffirmed the central role of the Agency for Science and Higher Education which reports annually to the national councils in charge of science and higher education and determined some or-

ganizational structures for the Agency for Science and Higher Education in order to carry out its tasks. External evaluation is jointly done by the National Council for Higher Education and the Agency for Science and Higher Education. The National Council for Higher Education makes proposals for criteria and rules of accreditation, appoints experts who are to pursue evaluation, and accepts the outcome of these accreditations. Institutions and their programmes are examined at least every five years and their operational permits are extended or denied according to the outcome. If requested by the institutions, assessment can take place more often. The Quality Assurance Department of the Agency for Science and Higher Education provides help for the expert activity necessary for evaluation. Even foreign experts are usually involved in the evaluations, but the agency tries to join the international exchange of opinions in other ways as well. The Agency for Science and Higher Education has joined the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education and, after acquiring full membership of the Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEE-Network), it is also a full-member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) (Croatia Bologna National Report 2009, 11).

Higher education's relation to the labour market and the economy

Despite the full implementation of the first two cycles, the Bologna National Report in 2009 still pointed out the need for further development in curriculum reform in order to link them to learning outcomes (Croatia Bologna National Report 2009, 7) and labour market needs. In the case of the first two cycles there have been various opinions concerning the labour market value of university undergraduate studies. Many universities shared the view that only a

small portion of students would enter the labour market while most would continue their studies. Although most disciplines reconsidered their curricula in the majority of the universities surveyed, representatives of professions and employers still took part in the negotiations very rarely (Orosz 2008, 75). A number of international study papers have pointed out this defect but also the synthesis of the implemented evaluations of higher education institutions in 2008/9 found that curricula of professional study programmes do not follow the needs of the labour market (Croatia Bologna National Report 2009, 3). These views could be underlined by the fact as well that only small number of bachelor students could enter the labour market. (Lučin, Samaržija 2011, 34.)

However, this does not mean that there were no steps taken in order to enhance cooperation with labour market agents. The last Bologna Report (2009) mentioned several promising measures at national level contributing to development in this regard. As part of the TEMPUS SCM project “Furtherance of Bologna process in Croatia”, a survey was conducted in cooperation with the Croatian Chamber of Economy about the expectations of businesses towards graduates holding bachelor degrees. Based on this survey, a Bologna process handbook for employers was published at the end of 2007.

A national employability conference was held in July 2008 with over 300 participants representing all stakeholders relevant to employability of highly educated persons. The conference presented the Bologna process reforms, answered the more prominent questions identified in the Tempus project survey and presented the national-level policy changes to improve the employability of Bologna process graduates. In July 2008 a reformed national regulation was passed that aligned all civil service employment regulations with the Bologna process academic and professional qualifications. Also in July 2008 national guidelines were published for the issuance of the diploma supplement document. The guidelines

specifically built on the Bologna process the European Credit Transfer System discussions at the end of 2007 and emphasized the relevance of the description of learning outcomes for the increase in employability of graduates (Croatian Bologna National Report 2009, 15). The business sector also promoted the work of the National Committee for Croatian Qualification Framework and its Operational Team set up in April 2008. Last but not least, cooperation and stronger links between education and the labour market are included in all relevant strategic and framework documents, which underlines the increased attention towards this issue. However, as has been pointed out by an ETF study, the elaborate policy framework has not lead to systemic changes yet. (ETF 2010, 9.)

There are also attempts to build stronger connections between the research sector and the economy. Unfortunately, employers are not very much interested in researchers with PhD. (Lučin, Samaržija 2011, 34.) Until now the dominance of public universities and state-funded centres characterised the research sector which was pointed out by various reports and reviews (Bologna National Reports 2007, 2009 and OECD Thematic Review in 2007 prepared by the MSES; Orosz 2008, 81-82). The Croatian Government launched support programmes (TEST and RAZUM) in the second half of the decade in order to enhance private investment and involvement in research activities.

The Amendments to the Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education (April 2007) had introduced two significant changes as well to the system of incentives for investments from enterprises in the higher education sector. Firstly, the definition of persons and legal entities who can apply for state funding of scientific projects was broadened. Secondly, a system of tax reductions was introduced in which scientific research qualifies for a reduction of tax obligations. Both of these incentives encourage the collaboration between higher education institutions, research institutes and private enterprises. This also facilitates the commercialization of sci-

entific research and the entry of private funding into higher education (Croatia Bologna National Report 2007, 2/3). Last but not least, the efforts have to be mentioned which introduced lifelong learning into the Croatian higher education system. They are strongly related to vocational and adult education initiatives in Croatia. The Agency for Mobility and the EU Programmes were established in 2007 with a mandate of implementing the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Union (Croatia Bologna National Report 2009). Nonetheless, as Lučin and Samaržija pointed out the concept of lifelong learning was not yet properly understood and integrated into the higher education system in Croatia but rather used for generating income. (Lučin, Samaržija 2011, 33)

In Croatia one of the aims was to enhance acceptance and the recognition of non-formal and informal learning. This was managed by the Act on Adult Education of 2007, which formally introduced informal and non-formal learning into the Croatian educational system. Based on this Act, it is possible for higher education institutions to recognize informal or non-formal learning and allocate credits for such learning outcomes but still up to now it has not become a common at higher education institutions. University of Rijeka is the only university establishing regulations and processes for such purpose. (Lučin, Samaržija 2011, 33.) Last but not least, there are also attempts to foster recognition of prior learning by including it into the Croatian Qualification Framework (Croatia Bologna National Report 2009).

E-learning was supported by the TEMPUS project “Education Quality Improvement by E-learning Technology” between 2004 and 2009. The Universities of Dubrovnik, Rijeka and Zagreb prepared, discussed and adopted policy documents for the implementation and the use of e-learning. E-learning centers or e-learning support teams at each of these universities have been established and are operating (Croatia Bologna National Report 2007, 14.; website of the Tempus project: <http://eqibelt.srce.hr/>). Since then

the University of Zagreb has launched such a study programme. The development of this sector of higher education is important because the number of students involved in studies, that is, students studying while working, is increasing quickly in Croatia.

International dimensions of the reforms

One of the core elements of the Bologna process is the international mobility of students and academics. Croatia therefore adopted the Act on Recognition of Foreign Educational Qualifications in compliance with the Lisbon Convention in July 2004 and introduced a simplified procedure of recognition of foreign qualifications introduced in 2005 (Croatia Bologna Report 2007, 12-13). The ENIC/NARIC office was also established within MSES, which later became part of the Agency for Science and Higher Education as it became fully operational in December 2004. Between 2004 and 2006 2,739 requests were handed in and in most cases positive decisions were made. In cases of joint degrees a similarly flexible approach has been followed (ibid., 12-13). Nonetheless, the role of the ENIC office has changed significantly since its establishment.

After the amendment of the Act on Recognition of Foreign Educational Qualifications in 2006 the procedures of professional and academic recognition were separated. While the recognition of higher education qualifications and studies accomplished abroad remained the responsibility of higher education institutions, the decisions on requests for the purpose of employment in Croatia, called professional recognition, belong within the authority of the Agency for Science and Higher Education ENIC office. The Act required universities and other higher educational institutions to establish recognition offices by July 2007 at the latest (Act on Amendments to the Act on the Recognition of Foreign Educational

Qualifications).² Since then the universities have established these offices and developed the procedure applicable to the whole of each institution to recognize foreign qualifications and study periods. Concerning mobility, it can be said that inward and outward mobility of students and academics is not too intensive and quite balanced. (Orosz 2008, 78) The reason for this was the low interest in Croatia because of the lack of courses in general and of language courses for international students in particular as well as a missing marketing strategy. (Reichert, Tauch 2003, 37) It can be also noted that it is still not clearly recognized that mobility of researchers³ is important and necessary. (Lučin, Samaržija 2011, 35) Regarding outgoing mobility, the low level of interest was a result of financial and administrative difficulties (Croatia Bologna National Report 2007, 18-19).

Some changes can be expected now as Croatia has established its Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes and has become full participant of Lifelong Learning Programme and the Erasmus programme. Statistics show that currently mainly Croatian students use this opportunity to visit other European universities, while incoming mobility hasn't got a momentum (European Commission: Outgoing and incoming Erasmus student mobility in 2009/2010³.) In order to promote staff and student mobility the Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes got 200,000 Euros in order to launch the Programme of Bilateral Mobility in Higher Education for the academic year 2008/09. The Bologna National Report 2009 (p. 37) also mentioned that in previous years MSES funded over 4,000 months of scholarships per year for exchange and that it awarded financial assistance to postgraduate and doctoral specializations abroad. It stated that 139 scholarships of up to 5,000 Euros each were awarded in 2008. Concerning the portability of grants, the report (*ibid.*, 38-39) also drew attention to the fact that state funds

² The English version of the act is available at www.azvo.hr/Default.aspx?sec=111.

³ <http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc/stat/0910/students.pdf>, accessed 21/06/2011.

in the higher education budgeting system in Croatia were not provided to higher education institutions in the form of student grants, which could have been made portable. Nevertheless, the government provides some grants to those students studying abroad in the frame of bilateral agreements whose costs are not sufficiently covered by the partner. Portable grants are also available for third cycle students on a competitive basis.

Students' voices in the Croatian higher education reform

At the beginning of the implementation of the Bologna process in Croatia, aspects of students were not really on the agenda of the decision-makers. Nonetheless, later, as quality issues came to the front, the question of student-oriented education could not be avoided. This led to increased presence of students in university senates (the Act on Higher Education prescribes a level of 15%). Furthermore, they have been involved in part in the work of the Agency for Science and Higher Education at state level since January 2007 (Croatia Bologna National Report 2007, 5). Despite these facts, the influencing power of students has remained limited. In July 2007 the new Act on Student Councils and other Student Organizations was passed. The Act reformed the system of student representation in Croatia and allowed students a better overview of the functioning of their representatives. The new act also stipulates that all higher education institutions shall have a student ombudsman. The student ombudsman is appointed by the student representative body and has the authority to discuss student complaints with the management of the institution, to advise students on their statutory and legal rights and assist them in any disciplinary cases. Students are also involved in all phases of evaluation as full members of evaluation teams (Croatia Bologna National Report 2009).

During the last few years, Croatian students have expressed their views not only officially, but there have also been spectacular movements by means of which they tried to influence the implementation of the reforms in a certain direction. In May 2008 several thousands of students demonstrated against the ineffective implementation of the Bologna Reforms (e.g. how the three-year long first cycle had been introduced).

Conclusion

The recent overview of the Bologna process in Croatia underlined the continuous support for the reform at different levels. Alongside the ministry and other governmental agencies, higher education institutions have also got involved more actively in the reform process by participating in international projects which aimed at facilitating the implementation of the reforms. Croatia has now reached a stage where implementation shall pay particular attention to adequacy and quality issues in the reform. Initiatives and projects mentioned in this study showed that there has been a great need to develop the real content of reforms foreseen by legal documents. It will become necessary to reconsider the implementation at institutional level in order to abolish the diversified practices at institutional level which hinder the flexible learning pathways and making the best use of the Bologna process. Particular attention is to be paid to the first cycle studies and the development of their curricula, which can ensure that students have the necessary knowledge and skills to enter the labour market. The Croatian Government will not have an easy task since the economic and financial crisis has seriously impacted the labour market. Croatia shall also take into account that it will soon become a member of the European Union and, if it wants to take advantage of the EU programmes, it will need to make its higher education more attractive to foreign students from other EU member states.

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