

**National Strategy  
of Equalization of Possibilities  
for Persons with Disabilities  
from the Year 2007  
till the Year 2015**

Government of the Republic of Croatia  
Commission of the Government of the Republic of Croatia  
for Persons with Disabilities  
Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity

Zagreb, 2007.





**GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC  
OF CROATIA**

On the basis of the Article 30, Subsection 3. of the Law on the Government of the Republic of Croatia (Official Gazette No. 101/98, 15/2000, 117/2001, 199/2003 and 30/2004), the Government of the Republic of Croatia, on its session held on 5 June 2007, adopted

**THE CONCLUSION**

1. The National Strategy of Equalization of Possibilities for Persons with Disabilities from the Year 2007 till the Year 2015 is adopted in the form of the text which makes part of this Conclusion.
2. This Conclusion and the National Strategy of Equalization of Possibilities for Persons with Disabilities from the Year 2007 till the Year 2015, will be published in the Official Gazette.

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SECRETARY

Jagoda Premužić

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## I.1. General

Fundamental commitment of the Republic of Croatia to implement active policy of human rights stems from the adoption of key international documents and contemporary standards in this area and is reflected in their incorporation into the national legal framework and practical implementation. It is particularly important to take care of the protection of vulnerable social groups like disabled persons and children with developmental difficulties.

In accordance with the existing legislation and previous implementation and results of the National Strategy for the Unique Policy for the Disabled Persons from the Year 2003 till the Year 2006, Government of the Republic of Croatia is issuing a new document – the **National Strategy of Equalization of Possibilities for Persons with Disabilities from the Year 2007 till the Year 2015** (hereafter: the National Strategy) with the goal of advancing and strengthening protection of persons with disabilities and children with developmental difficulties. Creation of a comprehensive domestic legal framework presumes continual monitoring of developments in international standards, so as to provide the highest level of contemporary protection to persons with disabilities, provide them access to all rights and their realization free of discrimination. The task of the National Strategy is to harmonize all action policies in the area of protection of persons with disabilities with the standards achieved on the global level, and all the trends striving to open and make all areas of life and activities accessible to persons with disabilities.

Therefore, in the Republic of Croatia the policy for persons with disabilities is based on contemporary international standards, including the fundamental principles of human rights, such as the principle of non-discrimination, the principle of interdependence and indivisibility of all human rights, making it imperative to achieve **accessibility of all civil, political, social, cultural and economic rights** to persons with disabilities.

In that sense, the cooperation with **associations of persons with disabilities** as part of the partnership between the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the civil society, contributes to the social mainstreaming of integration of persons with disabilities.

## I.2. International framework

International legal instruments ratified by the Republic of Croatia<sup>1</sup> are part of the internal legal order of the Republic of Croatia, and are in legislative sense above the law. Croatian courts are also directly applying international agreements, namely by ruling on the basis of the Constitution and the Law, and the international agreements of which the Republic of Croatia is state-party

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<sup>1</sup> Article 140 of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia (“Official Gazette” No. 56/90, 135/97, 8/98 – revised text, 113/00, 124/00 – revised text, change of the Constitution 28/01)

and which are part of the domestic legal system.<sup>2</sup> Following this contemporary constitutional determination, in addition to a comprehensive acknowledgment and promotion of the basic principle in this area – the principle of non-discrimination, the Republic of Croatia has a wide foundation for harmonizing its legislation in the area of protection of persons with disabilities, and their further development, especially when the actual application in court practice is concerned.

The Republic of Croatia has already demonstrated its affiliation to the circle of democratic countries recognizing the principles of democracy, legal state and the rule of the law, and the respect of human rights by having monitored and adopted the international regulations. In relation to the area of particular interest to persons with disabilities, the Republic of Croatia has incorporated in its legal system the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and became the state-party of: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, Convention on the Rights of the Child, and their additional protocols.

## 1.2.1. United Nations

**The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities<sup>3</sup>** is the result of continual and effective activity of persons with disabilities in their communities, but also of their activities on global level, particularly concerning the recognition and equalization of the needs of this widely present social group. In this sense, particularly important was the international meeting of persons with disabilities in Japan, in 2002, where, in the presence of representatives of 109 states, Sapporo Declaration was adopted, which firmly demanded the adoption of the United Nations Convention and active participation of persons with disabilities in its preparation.

The purpose of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is stated in Article 1, which is to “promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities and to promote respect for their inherent dignity”. Thematic areas of the Convention are reflected in the basic principles, such as: non-discrimination, participation and inclusion in society, respect of differences, equal possibilities, accessibility, equality between men and women, and respect of children with developmental difficulties. Along with the Convention, a **Facultative Protocol** was adopted instituting a system of individual complaints for persons whose rights were breached by the state parties according to the Convention.

The Republic of Croatia was, following the support provided to the negotiations and the drafting of the Convention,<sup>4</sup> one of the first twenty state parties that signed the Convention on

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<sup>2</sup> Article 5 of the Courts Act (“Official Gazette” No. 150/05)

<sup>3</sup> Adopted with the Facultative Protocol on the General Assembly of the United Nations, 13 December 2006

<sup>4</sup> Croatian delegation actively participated in the drafting of the Convention, providing proposals – for example, article 25. Health and Article 27. Work and Employment, as well as the Preamble enriched with the paragraph „s“ turning the atten-



30 March 2007. Therefore, the existing legal framework and support that the Convention enjoys among persons with disabilities, present a further incentive and an obligation of the Republic of Croatia to incorporate the Convention into the Croatian legislation and everyday practice, and the need to become part of the conscience of all individuals as a common good.

## 1.2.2. Council of Europe

The key document directing the activities of European countries in this field in the next ten years is the **the Council of Europe Action Plan to Promote the Rights and Full Participation of People with Disabilities in Society: Improving the Quality of Life of People with Disabilities in Europe 2006 - 2015**<sup>5</sup>. It contains guidelines for improvement of all basic areas of interest for persons with disabilities, on the principles of non-discrimination, equal possibilities, and inclusion of persons with disabilities in social and decision-making processes. The Republic of Croatia is committed to incorporating these guidelines in the National Strategy, thus contributing to the integration of European standards in its legislation and practice.

The Republic of Croatia has ratified the **Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of the Council of Europe**<sup>6</sup> and all present protocols – instruments guaranteeing civil and political rights of individuals, which are the foundation on which the European Court of Human Rights is functioning as a mechanism for their protection. The Convention prohibits all forms of discrimination,<sup>7</sup> which implies persons with disabilities as well.

**Protocol No. 12**<sup>8</sup> to the Convention of which the Republic of Croatia is state-party, is particularly important, as it includes a provision on general prohibition of discrimination and enables persons with disabilities in state-parties to resolve disputes at the European Court of Human Rights.

The Republic of Croatia is state-party of the **European Social Charter**,<sup>9</sup> Article 15 of which states that every person with disability has the right to professional education, and social and professional rehabilitation, regardless of the origin and nature of disability, while at the same time

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tion to particular vulnerability of persons with disabilities in armed conflicts and natural disasters.

<sup>5</sup> The Council of Europe Action Plan to Promote the Rights and Full Participation of People with Disabilities: Improving the Quality of Life of People with Disabilities in Europe 2006 - 2015, adopted at the 961<sup>st</sup> session of the Committee of Ministers on 5 April 2006

<sup>6</sup> On 5 November 1997, the Republic of Croatia ratified the Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, Convention and the Protocols 1, 4, 7 and 11 („Official Gazette – International Agreements“, No. 18/97, 6/99 – revised text, 8/99 – alteration)

<sup>7</sup> Article 14 of the Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, under the title “Prohibition of discrimination”

<sup>8</sup> On 3 February 2003, Republic of Croatia ratified Protocol No. 12 to the Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (“Official Gazette – International Agreements”, No. 14/02)

<sup>9</sup> On 26 February 2003, Republic of Croatia ratified the European Social Charter (“The Official Gazette – International Agreements”, No. 15/02), and in 2007 will sign the Revised European Charter

obligating the state-parties to undertake adequate measures in order to accomplish these rights.

### I.2.3. European Union

The Republic of Croatia is a candidate country for membership in the European Union and has the obligation to adapt its legislation to the *acquis communautaire* of the European Union, which also covers the area of persons with disabilities, particularly the prohibition of all forms of discrimination thereof.

Article 1 of the **Amsterdam Treaty**<sup>10</sup> introduces the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms as one of common principles underlying the establishment of the European Union, whereas Article 5 (5) provides for measures on the part of the European Union with the aim of eliminating discrimination on different basis, where disability is explicitly stated.

**The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union**<sup>11</sup> presents a European Union document warranting political and civil rights. Although it is not legally binding until the proclamation of the Constitution of the European Union, its strengths lie in the principles it proclaims, and it is supported by all democratic systems of European states. The Charter protects the dignity of a person, prohibits discrimination, explicitly stating disability,<sup>12</sup> and demands inclusion of persons with disabilities in community life.<sup>13</sup>

With the aim of strengthening activities in the area of interest to persons with disabilities, during the European Year of Persons with Disabilities (2003), at the European Congress on Disability in 2002, a **Madrid Declaration** was issued proclaiming the rights of persons with disabilities as full, integrated and non-discriminated citizens with equal access to all social wealth.

Other **numerous legal sources of the European Union** contributing to further harmonization of national legislation in the area of special interest to persons with disabilities are:

- Council Recommendation of 4 June 1998 on a parking card for persons with disabilities 98/376/EC;
- Council Resolution of 17 June 1999 on equal employment opportunities for people with disabilities (1999/C 186/02);
- Council Resolution of 15 July 2003 on promoting the employment and social integration of people with disabilities (2003/C 175/01);
- Council Resolution of 6 February 2003 - Accessibility improving the integration of people with disabilities into the knowledge based society (2003/C 39/03);
- Council Resolution of 5 May 2003 on equal opportunities for pupils and students with disabilities in education and training (2003/C 134/04);
- Council Resolution of 6 May 2003 on accessibility of cultural infrastructure and cultural activities for people with disabilities.

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<sup>10</sup> Amsterdam Treaty (1997) came into force in May 1999

<sup>11</sup> Signed and proclaimed at the meeting of the Council of Europe in Nice on 7 December 2000

<sup>12</sup> Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union

<sup>13</sup> Article 26 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union

## 1.3. National framework

**The Constitution of the Republic of Croatia**<sup>14</sup> presents a fundamental legal framework for regulation of relationships in all areas concerning human rights, and elimination of discrimination. Article 3 proclaims the principle of equality as the highest value of the constitutional order and the foundation for the interpretation of the Constitution, while the provision of Article 14 guarantees rights and freedoms, regardless of any form of discrimination. All above is fully applicable to the area of persons with disabilities, while the said provision represents the closest link of this category with the Constitution in the Article 57, which vouches special care of the state for the protection of persons with disabilities and their inclusion in life. The rights of children with developmental difficulties are additionally protected by the Article 63 stating their right to special care, education and welfare.

Furthermore, with numerous laws elaborating the constitutional provisions with the goal of implementing special protection, an additional incentive to **the progress in the area of protection of disabled persons was provided by the Program of the Government of the Republic of Croatia in the mandate 2003-2007**. The Program is socially directed and resides on the principles of social justice and sustainable care for all, in addition to the need to respect the dignity and equality, and ensuring equal opportunities for all citizens. The Program strengthens the position of the individual with the aim of achieving successful personal development and position in the society.

With the aim of comprehensive action in the area of promotion and protection of rights of persons with disabilities, in 1997, the **Commission of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Disabled Persons** was founded as an advisory and expert body of the Government with the task to offer proposals, opinions and expert elaborations to the Government of the Republic of Croatia concerning the position, protection and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities and their families, and conduct activities for their benefit. The composition of the Commission reflects the dialogue the Government of the Republic of Croatia has instituted with the civil society, so that in the total of 21 members of the Commission, 11 are representatives of civil society, 6 are persons with disabilities and 10 are representatives of state administration and scientific institutions.

In 2001, the **Law on Croatian Register of Persons with Disabilities**<sup>15</sup> was adopted determining the manner of gathering and processing information, along with the protection of privacy of persons with disabilities, whose management was entrusted to the Croatian Institute for Public Health.

Marking **the European Year of Persons with Disabilities** in 2003 in Croatia contributed to the shift in public awareness raising, and further strengthening of media culture is expected, notably with the implementation of measures of the National Strategy.

On 16 January 2003, **the National Strategy of Coherent Policy for the Disabled from the Year 2003 till the Year 2006** was adopted, representing a step forward towards a systematic policy in this area, and which included the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities of the United Nations.

<sup>14</sup> "Official Gazette" No. 41/01, 55/01

<sup>15</sup> „Official Gazette" No. 64/01

On 1 April 2005, Croatian Parliament adopted the **Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons**<sup>16</sup> founded on the highest principles of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, affirming the right of all citizens to equally participate in all segments of society and enjoy their legal and constitutional rights without difficulty.

The practice of introducing international standards in national documents is continuing with **this National Strategy, founded on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Council of Europe Action Plan**. The new National Strategy resides on an established framework and experiences from the previous National Strategy, but it has searched for new solutions to ensure a comprehensive approach in all areas of interest to persons with disabilities, such as: family, life in community, upbringing and education, health protection, social welfare and pension insurance, habitation, mobility and accessibility, professional rehabilitation, employment and labor, legal protection violence and abuse protection, informing, communication and awareness raising, participation in cultural life, participation in political and public life, research and development, recreation, leasure and sport, associations of persons with disabilities in civil society, and international cooperation.

Improvement of mobility of persons with disabilities in air traffic is founded on the Multilateral Agreement on European Common Aviation Area (ECAA) – ECAC Document 30, Part I and the EC Regulation 1107/2006 concerning the rights of persons with reduced mobility.

The aim of the National Strategy is to achieve sensitivity and adapt the Croatian society to necessary changes in favor of equalization of possibilities of persons with disabilities, i.e. create conditions for their active inclusion and equal participation in society, for respect of their inherent dignity and acknowledging of their particular interests, and for prevention of all forms of discrimination and strengthening of all forms of social solidarity.

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<sup>16</sup> „Official Gazette” No. 47/05

# 2. AREAS OF ACTIVITIES

## 2.1. Family

### INTRODUCTION

Acknowledging family as the highest social value, through its programs and establishment of the Ministry competent for family, the Government of the Republic of Croatia made significant progress in creation of institutional and other requirements for successful dealing with family and professional challenges of contemporary family.

The role of the state is to encourage full participation of persons with disabilities in family life, promote their right to personal integrity and continually improve the legislation for the purpose of preventing discrimination of children with developmental difficulties and adults with disabilities. With the goal of comprehensive care for this population, and following the desire to integrate the rights of children with developmental difficulties and adults with disabilities in general legislation of the Republic of Croatia, the Government of the Republic of Croatia issued a series of national level documents fully incorporating these rights. These are: National Population Policy<sup>17</sup>, National Policy for Promotion of Gender Equality,<sup>18</sup> National Plan of Activities for the Rights and Interests of Children from the Year 2006 until the Year 2012,<sup>19</sup> National Strategy of Protection against Family Violence for the Period from the Year 2005 till the Year 2007<sup>20</sup> and the Rules of Procedure in Cases of Family Violence.<sup>21</sup>

The policy for persons with disabilities always puts the focus on the active approach, implying the endeavor of persons with disabilities to control their own lives as much and whenever possible, including the activities for their rehabilitation. The realization of such policy requires the development of user, i.e. disabled person friendly services, promoting their autonomy. The focus is on professional and social evaluation, i.e. the abilities instead of limitations of persons with disabilities. In other words, we have set up a rehabilitation - integration model of approach to persons with disabilities, while subsidiary compensation, by its nature passive, is set aside.

Long-term success is achieved through efficient partnership of civil and state sector, and

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<sup>17</sup> Issued by the Government of the Republic of Croatia on 28 September 2006, adopted by the Croatian Parliament on 24 November 2006

<sup>18</sup> Issued by the Government of the Republic of Croatia on 14 September 2006, adopted by the Croatian Parliament on 13 November 2006

<sup>19</sup> Adopted by the Government of the Republic of Croatia on 22 March 2006

<sup>20</sup> Adopted by the Government of the Republic of Croatia on 9 December 2004

<sup>21</sup> Adopted by the Government of the Republic of Croatia on 15 September 2005, while on 7 September 2006, the Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted amendments to the Rules of Procedure in Cases of Family Violence.

persons with disabilities and their families.

During its life cycle, every family undergoes a series of changes, however, they are more specific in families of persons with disabilities. One of the greatest changes for the family is to face the child's diagnosis and the diagnosis of an adult member of the family.

Raising a child with developmental difficulties puts additional strain on the family. Due to specific needs of a child with developmental difficulties and needs of other children in the family, parents require professional help and support and from every member of the family to make its own contribution.

Desiring to offer support at the very beginning of facing the problems in families with children with developmental difficulties and adult disabled persons, the Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity opened Counseling Centers for Children, Youth, Marriage and Family all over Croatia, featuring counseling programs for parents with children with developmental difficulties, children and adults with disabilities. These centers are being transformed into Family Centers where every family can ask for and obtain help needed in its particular period of life.

In order to fully satisfy the needs of families of persons with disabilities in reconciliation of family and professional obligations and organizing activities for children in their spare time, the need was stressed for strengthening non-institutional forms of care, particularly in towns and rural communities. That is the only way to prevent institutionalization of children with developmental difficulties and adult disabled persons and to provide quality family life.

Conducted scientific research on parenting, family upbringing, parents' attitudes towards children, education in school and education for parenting refer to the need to develop and implement empirically founded and up-to-date approaches to family and its role in the upbringing and education of children, particularly children with developmental difficulties.

The project "*Developmental integration programs for early intervention and the implementation of pilot project of early intervention in family*" financially supported by the Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity, which included a research on parents' engagement, revealed that parents were overburdened, especially mothers, with everyday activities concerning the child with developmental difficulties, pointing to the need for cooperation of professionals and families so as to establish the best system of everyday care for the child, i.e. the system best suited to a particular family. Furthermore, in the course of implementation and evaluation of the developmental integration program, it seemed necessary to identify all the particularities of a child, but at the same time use all the available potentials, both of the child and other members of the family. The necessity to offer continual support to family through direct professional help in the family and through inclusion of family members in counseling centers was also identified, as well as the need to educate parents and professionals working with children with neurological-developmental difficulties.

With the goal of achieving a unique approach, encompassing various aspects of informing, counseling, diagnostics, education, psycho-education and therapy of children caring for parents with disabilities, the Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity financially supports the project "*Program of systematic psycho-social support for children caring for parents with disabilities*".

In order to improve the quality of life of persons with most difficult forms and degrees of

disability and ensure the independence of community life, the Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity, in cooperation with associations of persons with disabilities, in May 2006 started to implement the *Pilot-project of personal assistant*, which in 2006 included 25 associations, 78 users and personal assistants in 14 counties. The implementation of the Project is continuing in 2007 with an even greater number of associations, 49 of them, and 176 users and personal assistants from 17 counties. The goals of the implementation of this project are:

- **ensuring adequate fulfillment of the needs** of persons with most severe forms and degrees of disabilities for the purpose of independent living,
- **establishing criteria for the selection of users** of the services of personal assistant,
- **establishing criteria for the selection of personal assistants,**
- **analyzing the needs** of persons with most severe forms and degrees of disability,
- **determining the number of such persons,**
- **determining the amount of necessary funds** for the introduction of the institute of personal assistant in the legislation, and
- **creating foundations for a draft of legislation.**

## **GOALS**

- to improve non-institutional forms of support
- to raise and educate children with developmental difficulties and young people with disabilities for the roles of partners and family members
- to strengthen the awareness of the need to respect the right to privacy of persons with disabilities and their families
- to develop awareness about the need for lifelong education for the role of a competent parent
- to ensure the accessibility of information to children with developmental difficulties, adult persons with disabilities and their families
- to improve all forms of social and family-legal protection of children with developmental difficulties and their parents
- to establish a network of psycho-social support to children caring about parents with disabilities
- to strengthen social awareness of family values and importance of quality family life for the development of a child with difficulties

## **MEASURES**

***1. To organize continually activities through interdepartmental cooperation with the aim of promoting family values and raising public awareness***

Carrier: Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity

Co-carriers: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, Agency for Education, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with

programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities, independent professionals

Activities:

1. to celebrate appropriately the International Family Day – May 15th
2. to conduct education and organize expert meetings for the promotion of family values
3. to print brochures, flyers and billboards for promotion of family values

Timeframe:

ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. celebrated International Family Day – May 15th
2. number of organized educational courses and round tables
3. number of printed flyers, brochures and billboards

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

***2. To provide independent life planning for persons with disabilities and members of their families to the greatest extent possible***

Carrier: Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity

Co-carriers: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Croatian Institute for Public Health, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities,

Activities:

1. to conduct a research on the territory of the Republic of Croatia with the aim of assessing the situation and needs of families of persons with disabilities
2. to organize educational seminars for persons with disabilities and their families with the aim of strengthening disabled persons to assume responsibility and to plan their life as independently as possible, and strengthening all members of the family to achieve the right to personal integrity

Timeframe:

1. year 2007
2. ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. results of research as a starting point for the planning of further measures
2. number of organized seminars

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

***3. To ensure privacy of persons with disabilities and their families***

Carrier: Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity

Co-carriers: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, Ministry of Justice, Office for Human Rights of the Government of the Republic of Croatia,



associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities, independent experts

Activities:

1. to draft special regulations in order to prevent intervention in personal life or attack on privacy, and protect the dignity and reputation of the person with disability (regardless of the place of residence or life arrangements, correspondence or other types of communication)
2. to conduct promotional campaigns with the goal of achieving respect of the right to privacy of persons with disabilities, through print and electronic media and billboards

Timeframe:

1. year 2008
2. ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. special regulations drafted
2. promotional campaigns conducted

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

**4. To prepare children with developmental difficulties and young people with disabilities for the roles of partners, parents and family members**

Carrier: Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity

Co-carriers: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to provide access to information concerning reproduction and family planning, according to the age and type of disability of this population (to provide necessary didactic and informative materials, etc.)
2. to organize lectures concerning reproduction and family planning

Timeframe:

ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. printed materials distributed
2. number of organized lectures

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

**5. To provide various forms of quality non-institutional support to persons with disabilities and members of their families in order to enable the freedom of choice**

Carrier: Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity

Co-carriers: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of Finance, Croatian Institute for Public

Health, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit for persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to conduct the evaluation of the pilot-project of the institute of personal assistant for persons with most severe forms and degrees of disability
2. to conduct research to establish the number of persons with most severe forms and degrees of disability
3. to plan resources for the implementation of the institute of personal assistant for persons with most severe forms and degrees of disability
4. to draft a regulation regarding the institute of personal assistant for persons with most severe forms and degrees of disability
5. to establish counseling centers for families with children with developmental difficulties and persons with disabilities in Family Centers in counties and subsidiaries of Family Centers in cities and municipalities in accordance with the needs of particular communities
6. to strengthen the development and raise the scope and quality of informative, educational, counseling and servicing activities and programs intended for families, parents and children with developmental difficulties and adults with disabilities in local communities in cooperation with associations of disabled persons and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities.
7. to conduct a program of systematic psycho-social support to children caring about parents with disabilities
8. to establish a network of systematic psycho-social support to children caring about parents with disabilities on the territory of the Republic of Croatia

Timeframe:

1. - 2. year 2007
3. - 4. year 2008
5. - 8. ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. evaluation of the pilot-project conducted
2. the number of persons with most severe forms and degrees of disability determined
3. resources for the implementation of the institute of personal assistant planned
4. special regulation drafted
5. the number of founded counseling centers
6. the number of supported programs
7. the number of children included in the program
8. the network of systematic psycho-social support to children caring about parents with disabilities on the territory of the Republic of Croatia established

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget. Funding in the amount of 15,000,000.00 HRK for the implementation of the institute of personal assistant will be additionally allocated from the State Budget on a yearly basis.

## **6. To conduct education and inform parents of children with developmental difficulties, as well as parents with disabilities and members of their families**

Carrier: Ministry of Science, Education and Sports

Co-carriers: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity, Agency for Education, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities, independent experts

### Activities:

1. to organize educational programs (lectures, workshops, panels, parenting schools, etc.) intended for parents of children with developmental difficulties, parents with disabilities and professional personnel (gynaecological wards, maternity wards, pediatric wards, preschools, schools, etc.)
2. to create informative and educational materials for persons with disabilities and members of their families (brochures, flyers, billboards, etc.)
3. to print a brochure "Parents and rights of children with developmental difficulties" with the aim to inform parents of the rights of children with developmental difficulties providing for them a list of institutions, and civil society organizations, offering various programs and services for parents and children
4. to create a website for professionals and parents (with lists of institutions and organizations of civil society offering services to parents regarding the care and education of children with developmental difficulties and adults with disabilities, with links to useful websites, documents, etc.)

### Timeframe:

1. - 2. ongoing
3. - 4. year 2008

### Implementation indicators:

1. the number of organized programs; number of participants of programs
2. the number of printed flyers and brochures
3. brochure "Parents and rights of children with developmental difficulties" printed
4. website created

### Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

## **2.2. Life in community**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The social model of approach to persons with disabilities is gaining strength in the Republic of Croatia, presenting a significant shift from the medical model, and the obligation was made to create conditions that will enable persons with disabilities to realize their right to choose and to lead

quality lives, which is at the same time a prerequisite for their independent living. In other words, an environment of accessible buildings, public areas, transportation, services, communication, etc. is being created. All of this implies education, activities and campaigns for awareness raising of all members of the society. We should also point out the harmonization of the terminology adopted by the international association of persons with disabilities, confirmed by the Sheraton Declaration from 2003, according to which the term – persons with disabilities is used for adult persons, and – children with developmental difficulties for children.

The Republic of Croatia has provided legal prerequisites for promotion and respect of human rights of persons with disabilities, their inclusion and creation of equal possibilities for life in community. In order to improve inclusion of children with developmental difficulties and persons with disabilities in the field of education, further activities are to be undertaken so as to, for example, eliminate all architectural barriers, harmonize programs, introduce insufficient didactic aids and additionally educate the staff. In the field of employment, beside physical obstacles, the greatest problem are prejudices about persons with disabilities and their capabilities and work abilities, enhanced by the discord between the existing educational processes and needs of the labor market. In the field of medical care, there is a need to intensify the resolution of the problem of health institutions accessibility, where a severe problem appears due to inaccessibility of certain diagnostic and therapeutic services, and the current standards for necessary physical therapy and rehabilitation, along with inadequate training of medical personnel about the needs of persons with disabilities and adequate care for them. Non-institutional health care in rural communities will demand special investments in the future so that these communities would be able to provide adequate quality of life to persons with disabilities. In order to fully include them in the community life, they need to obtain equal approach to services, including better accessibility to orthopedic aids, contemporary technologies and universal design.

Non-institutional forms of care are acquiring an increasingly important role in the frame of providing services through institutional and non-institutional forms of care in homes for various categories of users, help centers and house calls, foster families and organized supported habitation in smaller housing communities, although it still not possible to talk about a comprehensive approach encompassing all persons with such needs, which would require a higher level of education and approach to quick and accessible information about the achievement of particular rights from the social welfare system. It is necessary to additionally develop a network of mobile expert help services in the community where a person with disability lives, which should provide support to every person to the extent that would allow these persons to stay and successfully and actively cooperate in the local community, lead better quality lives and exercise their right to self-determination and choice. With this aim the Republic of Croatia initiated a reform of the system of social welfare and benefits. For the purpose of quality care for persons with disabilities, cooperation with civil society organizations is extremely important, and the government has instituted a successful partnership on the realization of defined program activities.

So as to improve institutional and non-institutional care for persons with disabilities, it is very important to harmonize activities of different departments and equalize the realization of rights through various systems, deriving from the problems identified in the field, for example, the manner of disability level rating, equalizing benefits, ensuring accessibility to competent offices, information, etc. In addition to the permanent role of existing social welfare centers, additional

support to families, and persons with disabilities and children with developmental difficulties will be provided by Family Centers that are being established in counties on the territory of the Republic of Croatia.

Significant support to inclusion of persons with most severe forms and degrees of disability in the community is the **institute of personal assistant**, which provides more independent planning and inclusion in life of community to this population.

## **GOALS**

- to provide as independent as possible planning of life and life in community for persons with disabilities
- to provide an opportunity for persons with disabilities to choose the place where and with whom they are going to live, on equal terms with others, so that they are not forced to live in any way imposed upon them
- to ensure a wide array of quality support on the level of community so as to provide persons with disabilities with freedom of choice and ensure adequate quality of life in the community

## **MEASURES**

### ***1. To ensure coordinated approach to provision of quality support services in the community***

Carrier: Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity

Co-carriers: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, units of local and regional self-administration, Office for Associations of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, scientific and professional institutions, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to conduct an analysis of the state of inclusion of persons with disabilities into community life
2. to strengthen associations of persons with disabilities on local level
3. to initiate actions to enable active participation of persons with disabilities in local community

Timeframe:

1. years 2007/2008
2. - 3. ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. expert foundation drafted with indicators of inclusion
2. educated civil society organizations' leaders
3. the number of actions and persons with disabilities included in activities on local level

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget, out of incomes from

games of chance, and budgets of units of local and regional self-administration.

## **2. To ensure quality services in the community and alternative forms of habitation facilitating the shift from institutional living towards life in the community**

Carrier: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare

Co-carriers: Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity, units of local and regional self-administration, Office for Association of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, scientific and expert institutions, civil society organizations

### Activities:

1. to plan resources to conduct the process of deinstitutionalization
2. to encourage orientation of local communities to the process of deinstitutionalization in the sense of ensuring non-institutional forms of care
3. to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the process of deinstitutionalization

### Timeframe:

ongoing

### Implementation indicators:

1. resources for the process of deinstitutionalization secured
2. local communities included in the process of deinstitutionalization in the sense of providing non-institutional forms of care
3. the number of deinstitutionalized persons and reports about the quality of life in community

### Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and budgets of units of local and regional self-administration within their regular activities.

## **3. To provide additional services and other capacities with the goal of supporting family**

Carrier: Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity

Co-carriers: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, units of local and regional self-administration, Office for Associations of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, scientific and professional institutions, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

### Activities:

1. to encourage the establishment of more daycare centers, clubs and short-term centers
2. to encourage work of groups for self-expression which are offering adequate therapies
3. to encourage work of self-representation groups

### Timeframe:

ongoing

### Implementation indicators:

1. the number of established daycare centers, clubs and short-term centers
2. the number of groups for self-expression which are offering adequate therapies
3. the number of self-representation groups

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and budgets of units of local and regional self-administration within their regular activities.

**4. Education of public services employees with the aim of achieving better inclusion of persons with disabilities in community life**

Carrier: Commission of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Disabled Persons

Co-carriers: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, units of local and regional self-administration, Office for Association of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, Office for Gender Equality of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, Office for Human Rights of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, scientific and expert institutions, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activity:

- I. to organize education of public service employees

Timeframe:

ongoing

Implementation indicator:

- I. the number of educated public services employees

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and budgets of units of local and regional self-administration within their regular activities.

## 2.3. Upbringing and education

### INTRODUCTION

Quality education is one of the priorities of numerous international and national documents referring to activities of the state regarding children and youth.

This National Strategy, coordinated with the Education and Upbringing System Development Plan 2005 - 2010 of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, and the National Plan of Activities for the Rights and Interests of Children from the Year 2006 until the Year 2012, and relevant international documents, determine measures and activities intended to pursue the policy laid down in the educational system, and new policies that would ensure rights of children with developmental difficulties and persons with disabilities and improve and equalize the quality of the comprehensive system on the national level.

Education is comprehensive, it refers to all periods of our lives, from preschool to professional education and training, and lifelong learning. Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, in cooperation with co-carriers of measures (agencies, faculties, research institutes, representatives

of the governmental and non-governmental sector, social and other partners, Committee for the National Curriculum and Pedagogical Standard, media, etc.) determines and develops contents and forms of work contributing to the inclusion of persons with disabilities into the world of education and labor. In order to prevent social stratification and exclusion of individuals and groups, measures are being undertaken to ensure equal access to educational institutions in the whole of Republic of Croatia.

As far as students with developmental difficulties<sup>22</sup> are concerned, there is a general effort to make the educational system accessible to all, and to improve advanced training of teachers and professors with the aim to realize the principle *School for all*.

In 2005, Ministry of Science, Education and Sports has, in cooperation with representatives of the civil sector, initiated the project "A network of schools without architectural barriers" in order to assess the situation and needs for adaptation of school premises to severely motorically impaired students. For the first time in Croatia this ensured the conditions for making a school network plan according to criteria of accessibility (ramp, toilet facilities, elevator, moving line). The ultimate goal of the project is to adapt spaces in schools so that severely motorically impaired children can attend primary school in a friendly community.

New primary school program and curriculum, adopted in 2006, anticipates flexible contents and manner of work in favor of integrated education of students with developmental difficulties. Currently, there are 146,469 children in the system of preschool education, 2,816 of which are children with developmental difficulties, while in the system of primary education there are 385,535 pupils, 11,943 of which are children with developmental difficulties.

The development of occupational education based on competencies also strengthens the possibilities of professional and personal development of persons with disabilities, with the goal of increasing their employability.

In conformity with primary and secondary education legislation for children who cannot, due to their medical condition, attend classes at school, it is anticipated to organize "classes at home" given by teacher from the pupil's school, with less hours than in regular program. In school year 2005/2006, classes at home were organized for 65 pupils of primary and 3 pupils of secondary schools.

For pupils on long-term hospital stay, there are "classes in hospital". This form of education is conducted by primary schools closest to hospitals where these pupils are being treated.

In accordance with the Republic of Croatia development strategy as the society based on knowledge, Ministry of Science, Education and Sports drafted a Proposal of the National Program of Measures for Obligatory Secondary Education, thus contributing to professional and personal development of persons with disabilities.

Introduction of the Croatian National Educational Standard in primary schools, state secondary school final examination and Bologna process at universities, introduction of external evaluation of education, extension of obligatory eight-year primary education to obligatory secondary education, organization of the adult education system, adaptation of science and technology to European standards, establishment of new institutions and bodies to implement

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<sup>22</sup> Croatian National Educational Standard and Primary School Program and Curriculum, the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports in 2006 introduced the term „pupils with special educational needs“ in accordance with social-educational approach to children with developmental difficulties.



determined developmental goals, new legislative framework and revisions of existing legislation, reveal integrity and premeditation of changes in educational and science systems.

Ministry of Science, Education and Sports will continually organize and support round tables, counseling, expert meetings and advanced trainings in order to familiarize the general public with educational strategies and rights of persons with disabilities.

Regarding the harmonization of legislation of the Republic of Croatia with the European Union *acquis communautaire*, it is important to stress that the negotiations on chapter 26. Education and Culture were closed on 11 December 2006, at the meeting of European Union ministers, as the negotiations identified a high level of compatibility of the Croatian educational system with those of European countries.

## **GOALS**

- to provide non-discriminative legislation
- to develop a comprehensive educational system that can meet various needs of its attendants in their vicinity
- to provide accessibility of regular educational system on all levels
- to provide support to pupils integrated in regular education with cooperation of specialized institutions
- to provide education founded on individualized educational planning and flexible organizational models
- to provide continual professional development of educational personnel on all levels in order to acquire competences for work with children with developmental difficulties and persons with disabilities
- to provide contents in study programs contributing to competences of tutoring and teaching staff for work with children with developmental difficulties and persons with disabilities
- to provide planning of education and training of children with developmental difficulties and persons with disabilities in conformity with their abilities and demands of the labor market
- to develop partnership between educational institutions and families, local community, civil sector and labor market

## **MEASURES**

***1. To improve the legislative framework regarding educational inclusion of children and pupils with developmental difficulties and adults with disabilities, guaranteeing the right to equal possibilities with regard to competences***

Carrier: Ministry of Science, Education and Sports

Co-carriers: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity, Croatian Employment Institute, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to draw up and adopt a law on obligatory education, to draft a rulebook
2. to draw up implementation regulations for inclusion of children with developmental difficulties and persons with disabilities
3. to draw up and adopt a pedagogical standard

Timeframe:

year 2007 and ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. the law adopted and code books issued
2. the number of adopted implementation regulations
3. pedagogical standard drafted and adopted

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

**2. To draw up Croatian National Educational Standard for all levels of education with the aim of developing a comprehensive educational system for children and students with developmental difficulties**

Carrier: Ministry of Science, Education and Sports

Co-carriers: Committee for National Curriculum, Agency for Education and Training, Agency for Occupational Education

Activities:

1. to draft a Framework of the National Curriculum
2. to draft educational standards for preschool education and training
3. to draft educational standards for secondary schools

Timeframe:

1.- 2. year 2007

3. year 2008

Implementation indicators:

1. the Framework of the National Curriculum drafted
2. educational standards drafted
3. educational standards for secondary schools drafted

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

**3. To provide lifelong learning for persons with disabilities with the aim to facilitate the transition between phases of education and education and employment**

Carrier: Ministry of Science, Education and Sports

Co-carriers: Agency for Adult Education, Agency for Education and Training, Agency for Occupational Education, Croatian Employment Institute, National Examination and Assessment Center, units of local and regional self-administration, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to draft a qualification framework of appropriate employments for persons with particular forms and degrees of disabilities acknowledging the demands of the labor market
2. to develop evaluation of non-formal and informal learning
3. to encourage research on competences of young people with disabilities after primary and secondary education and compare them with competences required on the labor market
4. to provide lifelong professional informing and counseling of persons with disabilities

Timeframe:

ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. the number of prepared new jobs' programs
2. the number of licenses acknowledging competences acquired through informal and non-formal forms of learning
3. the quantity of conducted research and application of research results to improve practice
4. the number of newly established services for professional informing and counseling, the number of users of the above services (annual reports)

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and budgets of units of local and regional self-administration within their regular activities.

***4. To provide study programs and continual professional development of educational personnel on all levels in order to acquire competences for work with children with developmental difficulties and persons with disabilities***

Carrier: Ministry of Science, Education and Sports

Co-carriers: Agency for Adult Education, Agency for Education and Training, Agency for Occupational Education, National Examination and Assessment Center, universities with teaching studies, educational institutions, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to conduct studies about contents concerning the fulfillment of educational needs of children with developmental difficulties and persons with disabilities
2. to determine competencies the educational staff needs to acquire in order to work with children with developmental difficulties and persons with disabilities
3. to determine programs for professional training
4. to work out modules for expert training
5. to create permits for expert training
6. to organize courses of sign language and Braille, and other specific forms of communication used by persons with disabilities

Timeframe:

ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. the number of studies about contents concerning the fulfillment of educational needs of children with developmental difficulties and persons with disabilities
2. determined competencies which educational staff needs to acquire in order to work with children with developmental difficulties and persons with disabilities
3. determined programs for expert training and number and type of conducted expert training in accordance with the needs
4. the modules of expert training worked out
5. the number of employees with permits
6. the number of courses of sign language and Braille, and other specific forms of communication used by persons with disabilities, number of participants and number of students that finished the course

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

***5. To support cooperation between governmental bodies and units of local and regional self-administration in order to ensure equal access to preschool education and education on all levels, with particular stress on improving the condition in smaller communities (rural areas, islands, highlands, and demographically endangered and war afflicted areas)***

Carrier: Ministry of Science, Education and Sports

Co-carriers: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity, Ministry of the Sea, Tourism, Traffic and Development, Agency for Education and Training, Agency for Occupational Education, units of local and regional self-administration, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to ensure a network of educational institutions, pupil and student homes without architectural barriers
2. to implement architectural adaptation of primary and secondary schools from this network
3. to provide gradually adequate transportation for pupils with developmental difficulties by renewing the passenger fleet on existing destinations and introducing ships with modern technology
4. to provide accessibility of higher learning institutions and faculties to students with disabilities

Timeframe:

ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. the network of educational institutions, pupil and student homes without architectural barriers provided
2. the number of adapted primary and secondary schools from the network
3. the number of pupils with secured transportation

4. the number of higher learning institutions and faculties accessible to students with disabilities

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and budgets of units of local and regional self-administration within their regular activities.

**6. To provide infrastructural support to pupils with developmental difficulties**

Carrier: Ministry of Science, Education and Sports

Co-carriers: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Agency for Adult Education, Agency for Education and Training, Agency for Occupational Education, National Examination and Assessment Center, educational institutions, units of local and regional self-administration, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to organize a network of educational institutions on regional level (referral centers) with the aim of providing expert support by employees of special institutions to employees of the regular school system
2. to establish mobile expert teams
3. to provide assistants in education and educational interpreters
4. to print schoolbooks, manuals and workbooks in Braille letters and enlarged black print for pupils with visual impairments, and for other pupils who have difficulties with acquiring information and learning difficulties, pupils with developmental difficulties and students with disabilities

Timeframe:

1. year 2009
2. - 4. ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. the number of referral centers, the number and types of provided support, the number of pupils included
2. the number of mobile expert teams and number of included users
3. the number of class assistants; the number of class assistants with knowledge of Braille; the number of class assistants with knowledge of sign language and other forms of communication pupils use; the number of pupils included, the number of schools included
4. the number of adapted books, manuals and workbooks

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and budgets of local and regional government units within their regular activities.

## **7. To include children with developmental difficulties and adults with disabilities in decision-making processes concerning their lives**

Carrier: Ministry of Science, Education and Sports

Co-carriers: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity, Croatian Employment Institute, units of local and regional self-administration, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities, Croatian Journalists' Association, the media

Activities:

1. to provide the acquirement of skills to advocate and self-advocate interests of children with developmental difficulties and adult disabled persons
2. to enable pupils to provide peer assistance
3. to encourage organized action of persons with disabilities to advocate, promote the needs and represent interests of persons with disabilities

Timeframe:

ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. the number of conducted trainings for advocacy and self-advocacy; the number of trained users for representation and self-representation
2. the number of conducted trainings for provision of peer assistance; the number of pupils trained to provide peer assistance
3. the number of held self-representing meetings of persons with disabilities

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and budgets of local and regional government units within their regular activities.

## **2.4. Health protection**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Persons with disabilities have the right to enjoy the highest possible medical standards without discrimination, on the grounds of their disability. Republic of Croatia is undertaking appropriate measures so as to provide persons with disabilities access to medical services and rehabilitation services within health care, taking account of their gender, and in particular: to provide persons with disabilities with the same scope, quality and standard of available medical and rehabilitation services free of charge, same as provided to as other citizens, including services referring to sexual and reproductive health, health programs covering all population; it strives to provide medical and rehabilitation services focused on the needs of persons with disabilities precisely because of their disability, including the prevention of disability, early identification and intervention and, when necessary, services intended to prevent deterioration of disability and limit, to the greatest possible extent, its consequences, including services focused on children

and older people; it strives to ensure that medical services are provided in the vicinity of the communities these people live in, including rural areas; it demands from the medical staff to provide persons with disabilities same quality of protection as provided to others, including the one based on informed consent, among other things, by raising the awareness of human rights, dignity, independence and needs of persons with disabilities through education and promotion of ethical standards in all areas of health care; it prohibits discrimination of persons with disabilities in medical and life insurance issues, when such insurance is permitted by health regulation, and ensures that insurance is provided under fair and reasonable conditions; and it prevents all forms of deprivation of health care or medical services on the grounds of disability.

During the implementation of activities from the the National Strategy of Coherent Policy for the Disabled from the Year 2003 till the Year 2006, in accordance with the Health Care Act,<sup>23</sup> a Plan and Program of Measures of Health Protection<sup>24</sup> for a three-year period was issued, and a model of continual work and priority contents for programs of systematic education on the level of primary health protection was drafted on the basis of which a series of educational courses was organized in cooperation with associations and experts from this field. The harmonization of the Rulebook on Conditions. and Manner of Exercising Rights to Orthopaedic and Other Aids<sup>25</sup> is continually conducted. For the purpose of drafting the *“Proposal for monitoring children with neurological risks”* in primary health protection, an assessment of the situation was conducted, the results of which were the basis for the drafting of documentation for the follow-up of the pilot-project. Architectural barriers are systematically being eliminated from the health protection system and functional aids introduced so as to ensure accessibility to persons with disabilities.

## GOALS

- to provide fulfillment of medical needs of persons with disabilities, acknowledging their particularities regardless of gender, age, origin, form or degree of disability, equal access to health protection services, approach to available specialized services and full inclusion in decision-making about personal care
- to include the needs of persons with disabilities in informative brochures for medical education and public health campaigns
- to ensure that no person with disability is discriminated in access to medical services
- to ensure that persons with disabilities are consulted or, when this is not possible due to the form, nature or degree of disability, their representative, guardian or advocate, to the greatest extent possible regarding the issues of evaluation, structuring and implementation of health care, medical interventions or treatments for the person
- to act in the direction of accessibility of public and private health facilities and capacities in order to ensure well-equipped and competent medical services, including mental health, psychological support, non-hospital and hospital treatment to satisfy the needs of persons with disabilities

<sup>23</sup> “Official Gazette”, No. 85/06 and 105/06

<sup>24</sup> “Official Gazette”, No. 126/06

<sup>25</sup> “Official Gazette”, No. 25/05, 41/05, 88/05, 125/05, 155/05, 24/06, 36/06 and 46/06

- to ensure equal access to medical services to women with disabilities, including prenatal, gynaecological counseling and treatment and counseling regarding family planning
- to ensure respect for specific aspects of genders in health care of persons with disabilities
- to ensure systematic informing about individual medical needs or services, in a form comprehensible to persons with disabilities
- to ensure information about disabilities, regardless of whether it occurs before or after birth, after illness or accident, and conduct it in such manner to guarantee respect for persons with disabilities and their families, with the aim of providing clear, comprehensive information and support
- to ensure access to health education and public health campaigns, among other things, through informing and counseling persons with disabilities
- to educate medical staff in order to develop disability awareness so as to equip them with knowledge and methods to be able to satisfy concrete needs of persons with disabilities
- to recognize the need for early intervention and establish efficient measures of detection, diagnose determination and treatment of disability in early phases, and to develop efficient guidelines for measures for early detection and intervention

## **MEASURES**

### ***1. To provide better health care for children with developmental difficulties and persons with disabilities***

Carrier: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare

Co-carriers: Croatian Institute for Health Insurance, Croatian Institute for Public Health, competent professional chambers

Activity:

1. to adopt a program of health protection measures in conformity with the Health Protection Act

Timeframe:

1. in conformity with the Health Protection Act

Implementation indicator:

1. the program of health protection measures adopted

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

### ***2. To conduct continually preventive programs with the aim of promoting health and preventing disability and severe health problems***

Carrier: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare

Co-carriers: Croatian Institute for Public Health, Croatian Institute for Health Insurance, professional societies of the Croatian Medical Association, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit for persons with disabilities



Activities:

1. to draft a plan for monitoring prevention programs
2. to monitor the implementation of preventive programs
3. to draft medical algorithms for monitoring children with developmental difficulties

Timeframe:

1. end of the year 2007
2. - 3. ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. monitoring plan adopted
2. the report on monitoring of prevention programs
3. the number of drafted algorithms

Required funds:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

**3. To harmonize continually the Rulebook on Conditions. and Manner of Exercising Rights to Orthopaedic and Other Aids with contemporary achievements of technical and medical sciences, and experiences of persons with disabilities**

Carrier: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare

Co-carriers: Croatian Institute for Public Health, professional societies of the Croatian Medical Association, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to monitor the implementation of the Rulebook on Conditions. and Manner of Exercising Rights to Orthopaedic and Other Aids
2. to harmonize the Rulebook on Orthopaedic and Other Aids according to established needs

Timeframe:

1. year 2007 and ongoing
2. ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. the reports on realization
2. the reports on realization

Required funding:

The funding will be provided from the State Budget within the follow-up of initiated activities.

**4. To educate medical staff about special illnesses and conditions of persons with disabilities**

Carrier: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare

Co-carriers: Croatian Institute for Public Health, professional societies of the Croatian Medical Association, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activity:

1. to conduct educational programs

Timeframe:

ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. the number of conducted educational courses

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

**5. To monitor information about undertaken measures of health protection of children with neurological risks and implement them**

Carrier: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare

Co-carriers: Croatian Institute for Public Health, Croatian Institute for Health Insurance, units of local and regional self-administration, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to conduct a pilot-project of monitoring children with neurological risks
2. to draft the final proposal for monitoring of children with neurological risks on the grounds of results of the pilot-project with a plan of technical implementation
3. to draft regulation for implementation of monitoring of children with neurological risks
4. to conduct educational program for medical personnel
5. to initiate program implementation plan in the regular system
6. to monitor implementation

Timeframe:

1. March 2008
2. July 2008
3. October 2008
4. beginning of the year 2009
5. mid 2009
6. ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. pilot-project of monitoring children with neurological risks conducted
2. final proposal drafted
3. regulation drafted
4. the number of educational courses held
5. beginning date of the implementation
6. annual reports

Required funding:

The funding will be provided from the State Budget within the follow-up of initiated activities.

**6. To provide accessibility and information support to sight and hearing impaired persons in medical institutions**

Carrier: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare

Co-carriers: units of local and regional self-administration

Activities:

1. to determine priorities for removing architectural barriers on a yearly basis
2. to provide information support to sight and hearing impaired persons in health institutions

Timeframe:

ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. the number of health facilities free of architectural barriers
2. the number of medical institutions providing information support to sight and hearing impaired persons

Required funding:

The funding will be provided from the State Budget and units of local and regional self-administration budgets within their regular activities.

**7. To equip medical facilities and rehabilitation centers with necessary functional aids**

Carrier: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare

Co-carriers: units of local and regional self-administration

Activities:

1. to determine priorities for provision of medical equipment on yearly basis

Timeframe:

ongoing

Implementation indicator:

1. the number of medical facilities and rehabilitation centers equipped with necessary functional and antidecubital aids

Required funding:

The funding will be provided from the State Budget and units of local and regional self-administration budgets within their regular activities.

**8. To consider the existing system of health protection measures and rehabilitation of children with developmental difficulties being raised and educated in regular, special educational institutions and social welfare facilities, and draw up a program of adequate measures**

Carrier: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare

Co-carriers: Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, Croatian Institute for Public Health, Croatian Institute for Health Insurance, competent professional chambers, professional societies of the Croatian Medical Association, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit for persons with disabilities

#### Activities:

1. to conduct an analysis of the existing system of health protection measures and rehabilitation of children with developmental difficulties being raised and educated in regular, special educational institutions and social welfare facilities, and draw up a program of adequate measures
2. to draft a proposal of measures for the improvement of the system

#### Timeframe:

1. April 2008
2. end of the year 2008

#### Implementation indicators:

1. conducted analysis of the existing system
2. a proposal of measures for the improvement of the system drafted

#### Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

## **2.5. Social welfare and pension insurance**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Social welfare, which is a constitutive part of the social protection system, is focusing on the care and inclusion of socially endangered citizens, i.e. socially vulnerable groups, in society and therefore its role in the fight against poverty and social exclusion is indisputable.

Social welfare system is based on the principle of subsidiarity, i.e. the responsibility of individual and family for their own social security, and the role of the state is to provide help, with the aim of preventing, alleviating and eliminating social risks. Beneficiaries, rights and conditions of their realization, and other issues relevant for this field, are defined by the Social Welfare Act.<sup>26</sup> Relatively frequent changes of this regulation are a result of efforts to stretch the available funds to satisfy ever more complex and numerous needs of users, and to harmonize the system of social welfare with the total of initiated reforms and changes in the area of social policy.

We can talk about two categories of beneficiaries of social welfare. The first are those considered poor due to the lack of their own income or these incomes are lower than the agreed census, in other words, insufficient to cover the basic needs of life. The second is the category that uses social welfare for the purpose of satisfying specific needs, arising mostly from disability, old age, psychic illness, addiction, etc.

The system of social welfare offers a wide array of rights that can, in principle, be divided to financial supports and services.

The amount of financial support is determined as a percentage of the base rate defined by the Government of the Republic of Croatia in the Social Welfare Act.

Social welfare is realized through a network of social welfare centers, social welfare

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<sup>26</sup> "Official Gazette", No. 73/97, 27/01, 59/01, 82/01, 103/03 and 33/06

homes, and centers for help and care.

In Croatia, there are 80 social welfare centers operating on the state level, with 25 subsidiaries, performing over 146 various activities (public competences in the social welfare field, family-legal and criminal-legal protection, etc.)

Social welfare homes are providing housing services, day stay, food and clothing, personal hygiene services, health care, education and training, work activities, psycho-social rehabilitation, leisure time activities, etc. In Croatia, there are 69<sup>27</sup> state homes with a total of 8,503 users and 135 homes of other founders<sup>28</sup> (other domestic and foreign legal and natural persons) with 15,275 users. Out of the total number of homes, 26 are homes for persons with physical and mental disabilities the founder of which is the Republic of Croatia (3,072 users), and 15 thereof are homes of other founders (1,299 users).

Centers for help and care, operating exclusively on local and regional level, provide food preparation services, and provide help with home chores, personal hygiene and other needs.

Services offered through non-institutional and institutional forms of care in homes for various types of users, centers for help and care at home, foster families and organized housing, are acquiring an increasingly important role in recent years.

It is necessary to ensure that persons with disabilities, regardless of the cause and circumstances of their disability, are adequately informed, and provided with quick and accessible information about the realization of particular rights available in the social welfare system. In doing so it is also important to pay attention to vulnerable groups within this population – girls and women with disabilities, persons with severe disabilities, persons living in rural areas, older persons with disabilities, poor persons with disabilities, parents with disabilities, parents of children with developmental difficulties, etc.

In order to satisfy the optimal living needs of persons with disabilities in local community, in form of material support and ensuring conditions for independent life or life with a support of adequate services, it is necessary to encourage inclusion of various subjects in the community, strengthen the concept of self-help and strengthen the users, widen the humanitarian network, reinforce services and increase responsibility. In doing so, the stress should be put on the need to develop non-institutional approaches in local communities, for example, organize services in the place of residence or home of a person with disability. The emphasis is put on the right of choice of a person with disability, i.e. to choose a way of life according to personal criteria and value system.

There is also an evident need to establish a network of professional support services, which should provide support to every person to the extent that would allow the person to stay and actively participate in the local community.

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<sup>27</sup> Within the total of 69 state homes, 14 homes are for children without adequate parental care, 11 are for children and youth with behavioral disorders, 26 are for children and adults with physical and mental impairments and 18 are for adults with psychical illnesses.

<sup>28</sup> Within the total of 135 state homes, 4 homes are for children without adequate parental care, 15 are for children and youth with behavioral disorders, 62 are for older and helpless persons, 4 are for adults with psychical illnesses, 2 are for alcohol and drug addicts and 2 are for children and adults - victims of family violence. Due to the fact that in 2002 the competence to establish homes for older and helpless persons was transferred to local and regional governments, today there are 46 county homes for older and helpless persons, categorized according to the quality of service they provide.

For the purpose of development of care for persons with disabilities, the help that civil society organizations can provide in the field of social welfare is extremely significant. Social welfare will continue to rely on cooperation with non-governmental, non-profit sector and private initiatives. This widens the circle of service providers and provides users with more choices and services better adapted to their needs.

Project of development of the social welfare system will encompass individual rights of persons with disabilities, achieve greater participation of units of local and regional self-administration, more systematically encourage and provide financial support to non-governmental organizations and humanitarian associations, achieve better targeting of financial benefits, acknowledging characteristics of particular areas due to traditions and way of life, and needs and interests of users, ensure better quality social services in and out of institutions, promote better awareness of social rights, change attitudes and make the public sensitive to the needs of persons with disabilities.

Conformity of action and interconnectivity of series of segments in the social protection system, both in institutional and non-institutional forms of care, are necessary prerequisites for the improvement of care for persons with disabilities. System of support to persons with disabilities should be focused on the acquisition and improvement of their skills in order to enable them to fully participate in the community.

Persons with disabilities have to be included in the planning, creation and implementation of the policy for persons with disabilities.

The Pension Insurance Act,<sup>29</sup> which came into force on 1 January 1999, initiated a pension reform that reduced particular rights of disabled workers, intensified the definition of disability and ensured the right to disability pension due to general and professional incapacity for work, the right to professional rehabilitation, and the right to financial compensation for a physical disability that is a consequence of injury at work and professional illness.

The rights of earlier users of these rights on the basis of the remaining working ability, immediate danger of disability and changed working ability, were transferred (according to the Article 174 of the Pension Insurance Act) to disability pension due to professional incapacity with permanent financial support.

With the pension reform the consequences of injury at work or professional illness were thoroughly elaborated within the right to disability pension, the right to professional rehabilitation and the rights arising from physical injury within the framework of the existing pension insurance.<sup>30</sup>

Professional rehabilitation of persons with disabilities is provided through the system of pension insurance for persons disabled at work and through the system of social care for other persons with disabilities. Each system regulates the manner for realizing particular rights. For the sake of transparency and more successful implementation of the system of professional rehabilitation in the state, it is necessary to harmonize the rights and predict ways of inclusion of the II. pillar of insurance in the process of professional rehabilitation.

Provisions of the Pension Insurance Act and the Obligatory and Voluntary Pension Funds

<sup>29</sup> Pension Insurance Act, "Official Gazette" No. 102/98, 127/00, 95/01, 109/01, 147/02, 117/03, 30/04, 177/04, 92/05

<sup>30</sup> Act on the List of Physical Disabilities, "Official Gazette" No. 162/98; Act on the List of Professional Illnesses, "Official Gazette" No. 162/98; Directive about Medical Expert Evaluation in Pension Insurance, "Official Gazette" No. 52/99, 145/99, 24/00, 52/00

Act<sup>31</sup> regulate the rights to old-age pension, premature old-age pension, disability pension and family pension, whereas investment in the II. pillar of pension insurance does not provide for the rights of beneficiaries according to the remaining working ability.

Having chosen family pension (conditions for applying are the same as for family pension in the I. pillar), a person with disability cannot realize rights according to remaining working ability such as the right to professional rehabilitation or employment, because this choice is automatically depriving him/her of the right to employment.

## **GOALS**

- to provide for all persons with disabilities equal access to social support (social services and benefits)
- to provide prerequisites for adequate living standard of persons with disabilities
- to improve the rights of persons with disabilities in the pension insurance system
- to provide prerequisites for the revision of existing regulations concerning pension insurance and the way of financing
- to provide special valorization of injury at work and professional illness in the insurance system
- to extend rights of persons with disabilities with regard to cause of disability in the pension insurance system
- to introduce a system of special insurance from professional risks
- to harmonize regulations about professional rehabilitation in all systems in which it is implemented
- to provide additional funding for the purpose of creating conditions for employment of persons with disabilities

## **MEASURES**

### ***1. To draw up a legislative foundation for the introduction of a new right into the social welfare system – “care in family”***

Carrier: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare

Activities:

1. to draw up an evaluation of potential users of the right to “care in family”
2. to draft regulations

Timeframe:

year to 2007

Implementation indicators:

1. the number of potential users
2. the regulations adopted

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

<sup>31</sup> Act on Obligatory and Voluntary Pension Funds, “Official Gazette” No. 49/99, 63/00, 103/03, 177/04

## **2. To redefine and uniform the system of social services and benefits**

Carrier: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare

Co-carriers: Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity, Ministry of Economy, Labor and Entrepreneurship, Croatian Institute for Health Insurance, Croatian Institute for Pension Insurance, Croatian Employment Institute, scientific and expert institutions, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit for persons with disabilities

Activity:

1. to draft regulations in accordance with the Strategy on Social Benefits Reform<sup>32</sup>

Timeframe:

- year 2007

Implementation indicator:

1. the regulations adopted

Required funding:

The funding will be provided from the State Budget and units of local and regional self-administration budgets within their regular activities.

## **3. To raise the quality of expert work in social welfare institutions**

Carrier: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare

Co-carriers: scientific and expert institutions, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit for persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to draft a plan for implementation of the program of psycho-social rehabilitation in social welfare homes
2. to conduct and evaluate programs of psycho-social rehabilitation
3. to draft an annual plan of expert and educational meetings for employees of social welfare institutions
4. to implement expert and educational meetings for employees of social welfare institutions

Timeframe:

1. year 2007
2. - 4. ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. the implementation plan for psycho-social rehabilitation drafted

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<sup>32</sup> At the session held on 12 April 2007, the Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted the Strategy on Social Benefits Reform, facilitating access to social rights. The reform of social benefits was approached with the basic aim to limit and control monetary social benefits, and to arrange more properly the allocation of available funds within the GDP, while at the same time increasing the portion of funds allocated for social aid, based on the income and/or assets test, i.e. means-test. The Strategy is aimed at better coordination and exchange of information among various parts of the social security system so as to avoid the unjust accumulation of rights or multiple exclusion of particular categories of potential beneficiaries. Basic goals of the reform are: a decrease of the total number of social benefits, better targeting of social benefits, faster and better access to social benefits, and standardization of social benefits.



2. the programs conducted and evaluated
3. the annual plan of expert and educational meetings for employees of social welfare institutions drafted
4. the number of held expert and educational meetings for employees of social welfare institutions

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

**4. To ensure participation of persons with disabilities and/or their legal representatives in the drafting of regulations and other documents concerning the social welfare system**

Carrier: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare

Activity:

1. to ensure participation of persons with disabilities and/or their legal representatives as representatives of associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit for persons with disabilities, in the drafting of regulation and other documents concerning the social welfare system

Timeframe:

ongoing

Implementation indicator:

1. the number of adopted regulations and other documents in the making of which actively participated persons with disabilities and their legal representatives; the number of included persons with disabilities and their legal representatives

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

**5. To develop a system of mobile support services in local communities**

Carrier: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare

Activity:

1. to develop mobile support services in accordance with the Project of the Social Welfare System Development<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> With the goal of modernizing the social welfare system and harmonizing it with the criteria and standards of the European Union, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare started to realize the project of system development, for which purpose, in June 2005, Republic of Croatia signed a contract with the World Bank about a loan in the amount of 31 million Euro. Another contract concerning a donation from the Swedish Agency for International Development was signed in February 2006 for the amount of 2 million USD. The project is attempting to establish a new, more rational and more effective system focused on socially most endangered citizens, i.e. socially vulnerable groups. This implies further decentralization and transfer of authority to local and regional governments so that services become more efficient and more accessible to citizens, it also implies more systematic stimulation and provision of financial support to non-governmental organizations and humanitarian associations, better targeting of financial benefits, acknowledging characteristics of particular areas due to traditions and way of life, and needs and interests of users, better quality social services in and out of institutions, greater awareness of social rights, and computerization of the system. The project is conducted by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare in cooperation with competent institutions, and consists of three components referring to the improvement of the offer of social services with the development of social programs, to the strengthening of the information and managing

Timeframe:

ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. to increase the number of users of non-institutional forms of care services

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

**6. To develop the system of informing and education of persons with disabilities and their parents**

Carrier: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare

Co-carriers: Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity, Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, units of local and regional self-administration, scientific and expert institutions, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities, the media

Activities:

1. to inform the persons with disabilities about conditions and manner of realizing their rights in the social welfare system
2. to ensure financial support in order to improve knowledge and skills of persons with disabilities and their parents with projects and programs of associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Timeframe:

ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. the accessibility of information to persons with disabilities and their parents
2. the amount of allocated financial support for programs and projects of associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit for persons with disabilities and the number of conducted educational programs

Required funding:

The funding will be provided from the State Budget and units of local and regional self-administration budgets within their regular activities.

**7. To draw up expert and analytical foundation for the possibilities of improving rights arising from disability, and to propose adoption of relevant regulations**

Carrier: Ministry of Economy, Labor and Entrepreneurship

Co-carriers: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity, Croatian Institute for Pension Insurance, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

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system in order to support the new model of organization based on the "one stop shop" principle, and to the improvement of infrastructure in social welfare institutions, which would contribute to better quality of life of their beneficiaries.

Activities:

1. to draw up expert and analytical foundation for the possibilities of improving rights arising from disability
2. to draft proposals of funding models
3. to draft regulations for improving the rights arising from disability
4. to draw up expert and analytical foundation for the revision and amendment of regulations on professional rehabilitation in the pension insurance system
5. to draft regulations about professional rehabilitation in the pension insurance system
6. to draft a coherent list of all disabilities for all categories of persons with disabilities, regardless of the manner and cause of disability
7. to draft legal bases
8. to establish a unique body for expert evaluation
9. to propose and ensure funding

Timeframe:

1. July 2008
2. - 4. December 2008
5. - 6. July 2009
7. - 9. December 2007

Implementation indicators:

1. expert and analytical foundation for the possibilities of improving rights arising from disability created
2. the proposals of funding models drafted
3. the regulations for improving the rights arising from disability drafted
4. expert and analytical foundation for the revision and amendment of regulations on professional rehabilitation in the pension insurance system drafted
5. the regulations about professional rehabilitation in the pension insurance system drafted
6. the coherent list of all disabilities for all categories of persons with disabilities created, regardless of the manner and cause of disability
7. the legal base created
8. the unique body for expert evaluation established
9. the funding proposed and ensured

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

**8. To propose additional measures to improve implementation of professional rehabilitation**

Carrier: Ministry of Economy, Labor and Entrepreneurship

Co-carriers: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity, Croatian Institute for Pension Insurance, Croatian Employment Institute

Activities:

1. to harmonize regulations on professional rehabilitation
2. to draft and adopt regulations on a model of financing professional rehabilitation

Timeframe:

July 2008

Implementation indicators:

1. harmonized regulations on professional rehabilitation
2. drafted and adopted regulations on the model of financing professional rehabilitation

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

## 2.6. Habitation, mobility and accessibility

### INTRODUCTION

Habitation, mobility and accessibility are the rudimentary preconditions for physically challenged individuals to lead normal lives and be included into society. In the Republic of Croatia this is regulated by the following regulations: for accessibility – Construction Act,<sup>34</sup> Regulations for Ensuring Accessibility to Buildings for Physically Disabled Persons or Persons with Decreased Mobility,<sup>35</sup> Protection and Rescue Act<sup>36</sup> (in the area of electronic services to the deaf), while mobility is covered by – Road Traffic Safety Act,<sup>37</sup> Road Transportation Act,<sup>38</sup> Privileges in Domestic Passenger Traffic Act,<sup>39</sup> Railway Traffic Safety Act,<sup>40</sup> Accessibility Sign Ordinance,<sup>41</sup> Act on Mobility of a Blind Person Aided by a Guide Dog<sup>42</sup> and numerous other regulations.

There is a need to develop standards for all of the above areas. Due to good quality regulations linked to adapting buildings, there has been substantial progress, particularly due to the Project of solving accessibility issues in buildings for persons with physical disabilities. This Project was the foundation for the adapting of public buildings in 26 cities in the Republic of Croatia between 2004-2006.

<sup>34</sup> „Official Gazette” No. 175/03 and 100/04

<sup>35</sup> „Official Gazette” No. 151/05

<sup>36</sup> „Official Gazette” No. 174/04

<sup>37</sup> „Official Gazette” No. 105/04

<sup>38</sup> „Official Gazette” No. 178/04, 48/05, 151/05 and 111/06

<sup>39</sup> „Official Gazette” No. 97/00

<sup>40</sup> „Official Gazette” No. 40/07

<sup>41</sup> „Official Gazette” No. 16/05, 66/05, 15/06, 112/06

<sup>42</sup> „Official Gazette” No. 131/98

Major progress has been made due to the good cooperation between the state and non-governmental organizations in the area of disabled accessibility. For example, it is not possible to construct a single road without lowered curb; numerous intersections have got installed sonic traffic light signalization; coarse surfaces are being put in place for blind persons, as well as sonic and visual aids in public transportation vehicles; facilitated transportation for blind users of guide dogs in public transportation vehicles and public buildings. As far as transportation is concerned, there are a number of areas where considerable progress has been achieved (specially adapted vans, low-floor streetcars and busses), however, there are many areas that have yet to introduce those types of transportation vehicles. Special attention will have to be given to establishing intercity bus routes with specially adapted vehicles. Public transportation on all lines should be accessible, vehicles should be accessible and in all vehicles a posted and accessible schedule should be provided as well as clear and accessible information at all terminals and in all vehicles.

As transportation is a rudimentary precondition for attaining equal opportunities, it is planned to have it improved in accordance with European standards with the aim of rendering the entire transportation chain accessible to all persons with disabilities. The same principles should be respected when creating accessible traffic infrastructure.

When considering the diversity of people and in order to facilitate equal opportunities in the economy, constructed surroundings, communication, services, culture, tourism, sports, etc., during the implementation of this Strategy one of the most important tasks will be the promotion of the Universal Design. Universal Design describes the shaping of products, surroundings, programs and services in a way that they can be used by all people to the fullest extent without the need of any adapting or special shaping. Universal Design will not exclude auxiliary equipment for certain groups of people with disabilities in cases when necessary. This will simplify life for everybody by rendering constructed surroundings more accessible, usable and understandable. It should be pointed out that residential facilities need to be enhanced for the use of disabled persons, as well.

An important role for this will be played by units of local and regional self-administration, as they will have to pay special attention to the social position of people with physical disabilities and focus on providing efficient residential facilities for them.

## **GOALS**

- to establish gradually surroundings accessible to persons with disabilities by using the Universal Design principle, thus avoiding the creation of new obstacles
- to facilitate accessibility to transportation for all persons with disabilities
- to develop educational programs in connection with the application of Universal Design
- to provide access to information and communication with all persons with disabilities
- to facilitate the use of modern technologies
- to establish a system of assistance in solving accommodation issues to persons that are physically disabled due to an accident or sudden illness

### ***1. To provide accessibility to buildings for persons with disabilities and persons with limited mobility***

Carrier: Ministry of Environmental Protection, Physical Planning and Construction

Co-carriers: Commission of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Persons with Disabilities, units of local and regional self-administration, owners and other rights' holders of those buildings, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to supervise the facilitation of accessibility to all newly built residential and residential/commercial buildings, public and commercial buildings such as: retail buildings, catering and/or tourism buildings, postal and/or telecommunications buildings, buildings for monetary and other financial services, administrative and other public buildings, healthcare and social welfare rehabilitation buildings, buildings frequented by persons with disabilities, education buildings, cultural use buildings, traffic buildings, sports and recreation buildings, entertainment buildings, religious buildings, incarceration facilities, public use spaces and surfaces, buildings meant for other uses – by establishing professional workgroups by the Commission of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Persons with Disabilities and commissions at the level of units of local and regional self-administration
2. to determine the situation and needs for adapting existing buildings in order to facilitate accessibility based on annual operative plans
3. to provide the adapting of existing buildings for use by persons with disabilities and limited mobility
4. to supervise the facilitation of accessibility elements to provide independent living conditions for persons with disabilities.

Timeframe:

ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. the number of interventions to new buildings that needed to be rendered accessible
2. established situation and needs for adapting existing buildings
3. the number of existing buildings already accessible
4. the number of existing buildings rendered accessible for the independent living of persons with disabilities and the number of interventions that were needed

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and the budgets of local and regional government units within their regular activities.

## **2. To provide accessibility in public traffic**

Carrier: Ministry of the Sea, Tourism, Traffic and Development

Co-carriers: units of local and regional self-administration, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to provide stops and platforms, parking spaces, public pedestrian surfaces, traffic lights, pedestrian crossings, pedestrian islands and intersections adapted for use by persons with disabilities and limited mobility
2. to provide accessibility to public transportation vehicles for persons with disabilities: on

all intercity lines where it has not been done so far, to introduce adapted busses, adapted railway cars, railway stations to be equipped with elevating platforms for embarkation/debarkation of persons in wheelchairs, in city public transportation there must be adapted vehicles for persons with disabilities, to facilitate accessibility to ships and airplanes, to ensure adapted taxi transportation for persons with disabilities.

3. appropriate information should be made available to the public concerning intercity trains and railway stations equipped to transport persons in wheelchairs.

Timeframe:

ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. the number of equipped stations and platforms, parking spaces, public pedestrian surfaces, traffic lights, pedestrian crossings, pedestrian islands and intersections adapted for persons with disabilities
2. the number of public transportation vehicles accessible to persons with disabilities: on intercity lines, the number of newly adapted busses, adapted railway cars, the number of railway stations equipped with elevating platforms for embarkation/debarkation of persons in wheelchairs, the number of provided vehicles adapted for persons with disabilities in city public transportation, the number of accessible ships and airplanes, the number of accessible taxi vehicles adapted for persons with disabilities
3. appropriate information made available to the public concerning intercity trains and railway stations equipped to transfer persons in wheelchairs

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and the budgets of local and regional government units within their regular activities; funding will be provided for transportation companies which adapt their vehicles for transport of persons with disabilities, and for financial benefits (co-financing, tax exemptions, etc.).

**3. To provide the use of support technologies in order to improve the mobility of persons with disabilities**

Carrier: Ministry of the Sea, Tourism, Traffic and Development

Co-carriers: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, units of local and regional self-administration

Activities:

1. to change and/or pass new regulations geared toward improving personal mobility by applying modern technological aids and new technologies

Timeframe:

by the year 2010

Implementation indicator:

1. changed and/or passed new regulations geared toward improving personal mobility by applying modern technological aids and new technologies

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and the budgets of local and regional government units within their regular activities.

#### **4. To provide a special budgetary position to specify planned and spent funds for removing architectural and other obstacles**

Carrier: central bodies of the state administration

Co-carriers: units of local and regional self-administration

Activities:

1. to provide a special budgetary position in all state administration bodies and units of local and regional self-administration to plan and express spent funds for removing architectural and other obstacles, while considering the introduction of the Universal Design

Timeframe:

by the year 2008

Implementation indicator:

1. provided special budgetary position for planning and expressing spent funds for the removal of architectural and other obstacles, while considering the introduction of the Universal Design

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and the budgets of local and regional government units within their regular activities.

#### **5. To stimulate Universal Design Development**

Carrier: Ministry of Science, Education and Sports

Co-carriers: Ministry of Economy, Labor and Entrepreneurship, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of the Sea, Tourism, Traffic and Development, Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity, Ministry of Interior, Croatian Chamber of Commerce, Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts, units of local and regional self-administration, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to stimulate the introduction of Universal Design into the curricula of all construction related professions
2. to educate stakeholders on accessibility issues faced by physically disabled persons
3. to establish a fund for Universal Design to provide needed funding for its development and application
4. to stimulate the application of Universal Design

Timeframe:

1.- 2. by the year 2008

3. by the year 2009

4. ongoing from the year 2009 on

Implementation indicators:

1. the basics of Universal Design introduced in the curricula of all construction related professions
2. the number of completed education courses for stakeholders concerning accessibility



- issues faced by physically disabled persons
3. established fund for Universal Design to secure needed funding for its development and application
  4. Universal Design applied

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and the budgets of local and regional government units within their regular activities.

**\*Note:** Universal Design concerns the shaping of products, surroundings, programs and services in a way that renders them useable by all people to their fullest capacities, without the necessity to adapt or reshape them. Universal Design will not exclude auxiliary aids for certain groups of persons with disabilities in cases when necessary.

**6. To provide various types of assistance in the field of communications to persons with disabilities to facilitate access to public facilities and areas open to the public**

Carrier: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare

Co-carriers: Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of the Sea, Tourism, Traffic and Development, Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Economy, Labor Entrepreneurship, units of local and regional self-administration, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit for persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to develop systems of communication with the deaf and deaf-blind persons for public performances and events
2. to provide personal assistants for persons with the most severe kind and level of disability, to provide communicators for deaf, deaf-blind and blind persons, including guides, readers, and interpreters for sign language along with other forms of communication used by physically disabled persons to facilitate access to public facilities and areas open to the public and the appropriate monitoring of relevant events at above specified locations

Timeframe:

by the year 2009

Implementation indicators:

1. developed system of communication with deaf and deaf-blind persons for public performances and events
2. provided personal assistants for persons with the most severe kind and level of disability, as well as provided communicators for deaf, deaf-blind and blind persons, including guides, readers, and interpreters for sign language along with other forms of communication used by physically disabled persons

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and the budgets of units of local and regional self-administration within their regular activities.

## **7. To improve computer literacy of persons with disabilities**

Carrier: Ministry of Science, Education and Sports

Co-carriers: Central State Office for e-Croatia, units of local and regional self-administration, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to promote accessibility to new information and communications technologies and systems
2. to educate persons with disabilities for using modern information systems

Timeframe:

ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. provided access to new information and communication technologies and systems
2. the number of educated persons with disabilities for the use of modern information systems

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and the budgets of local and regional government units within their regular activities.

## 2.7. Professional rehabilitation, employment and labor

### INTRODUCTION

Professional rehabilitation represents just one of the aspects of the complete rehabilitation process consisting of legal, biological, economical, medical, sociological, psychological, educational and technological aspects, as well.<sup>43</sup> Even though it primarily refers to the professional aspect in rehabilitation, professional rehabilitation does not set as its only goal the training of a person with disabilities for a specific job, but is more complex and it includes the working and social integration of a person and his/her broader social integration, too. The professional rehabilitation system consists of three consecutive components: professional orientation, training for productive work and employment.

The right to work and employment of persons with disabilities is one of the fundamental human rights and preventing the realization of that right represents their violation and discrimination. But, looking from the aspect of employing persons with disabilities, it is necessary to take measures at an early stage for ensuring their competitiveness at the labor market, when special attention should be paid to discovering and developing their intellectual and working potential. On the other hand, disability does not necessarily have to be present from the earliest age, but it can appear later in an individual's life and is very often a consequence of work and circumstances during the working life.

Globally, the society can benefit from the work of persons with disabilities and the biggest benefit is, of course, economic profitability. There is not a country that rich to give up means (material contribution) earned from the work of persons with disabilities. The goal is that they themselves become creators and not the sole beneficiaries of State Budget means.<sup>44</sup> In addition, their work reduces social welfare and other expenditures which, in case of their unemployment, ensure their existence and also enable meeting their specific needs.

Persons with disabilities also have numerous benefits from their own work. For instance, employed persons with disabilities have a better picture of themselves and more self-respect in comparison to the unemployed ones. They are more socially active and, in general, they can adjust themselves more easily to changes and are more competent in the everyday private life, they are economically more superior, employed persons with disabilities are less sickly than unemployed ones, etc.

One of the biggest obstacles for employing persons with disabilities is the society's negative attitude based on stereotypes and prejudices about the lower working potential of persons with disabilities. However, it is proven that the best means for eliminating the above mentioned stereotypes and prejudices is their work. That is witnessed by results of certain

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<sup>43</sup> Rački, J., 1997, Theory of Professional Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities, Faculty of Special Education and Rehabilitation, University of Zagreb, Zagreb

<sup>44</sup> Rački, J., 1997, Theory of Professional Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities, Faculty of Special Education and Rehabilitation, University of Zagreb, Zagreb

researches stating that employers mention as a reason for employing persons with disabilities the previous experiences they had with employed persons with disabilities.

Improving the position of persons with disabilities on the labor market depends on an entire range of factors contributing to the final goal – their employment. To achieve that goal, it is vital to connect educational, medical activities and activities of civil societies and institutions acting on the labor market.

The employment and work of persons with disabilities depend on the employers, but also on persons with disabilities and their willingness and persistence to use educational and job training opportunities.

The state has the role to provide education and other forms of job training to persons with disabilities, to equip the workplace with necessary aids, when necessary to make use of assistant services, to materially stimulate their employment and to oblige employers to employ them to an acceptable extent. The contribution of experts matters as well, however, for the improvement of the existing situation it is vital to harmonize activities of various systems, institutions, organizations and individuals acting on the labor market.

Passing the Act on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities<sup>45</sup> represents a huge step towards solving the issue of employing persons with disabilities. The mentioned Act foresaw and realized the foundation of a Fund for Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities with the basic task to achieve the fundamental goal of the Act – to stimulate the employment of persons with disabilities on the open labor market.

Yet, to improve and speed up the employment of persons with disabilities, it is necessary, above all, to determine the effects of the implementation of the previous employment and work policy for persons with disabilities, followed by making additional co-financing programs and models for employers and by devising measures of positive discrimination for employing individual, still hard-to-employ groups of persons with disabilities. It is also vital to constantly work on raising both the awareness level of the need to employ persons with disabilities and the understanding of their working and social values.

## GOALS

- to implement a non-discriminatory policy in the area of work and social integration of persons with disabilities, i.e. to promote active participation of persons with disabilities in the area of professional rehabilitation, employment and work
- to encourage acquiring knowledge, skills and habits necessary for employment and retaining the job
- to encourage the employment of persons with disabilities on the open labor market by applying all positive measures
- to provide employment in protected conditions
- to provide supported employment
- to encourage alternative working forms
- to encourage inclusion in the work of job centers

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<sup>45</sup> „Official Gazette“, No. 143/02, 33/05

## MEASURES

### ***1. To conduct an evaluation of the applied existing legislation and actual policy in the area of rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities by an independent body***

Carrier: Ministry of Economy, Labor and Entrepreneurship

Co-carriers: Fund for Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity, Croatian Pension Insurance Institute, Croatian Employment Institute, Croatian Employers' Association, Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Human Rights, rehabilitation institutions, scientific institutions, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities,

Activities:

1. to conduct an applicability analysis of the provisions of the Act on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities and relevant regulations, as well as an analysis of their harmonization with the existing legislation related to education, health protection, social welfare and pension insurance, labor legislation and the European Union legislation.
2. to provide a proposal of the amendments to the Act on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities and relevant regulations
3. consistent application of the Act on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities and relevant regulations, periodical informing of the public and potential beneficiaries

Timeframe:

1. December 2007
2. June 2008
3. ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. identified problems in applying the Act on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities and relevant regulations
2. prepared and passed proposal on the amendments to the Act on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities and relevant regulations
3. increased rate of employability and of employment of persons with disabilities

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget and from special contributions from the Fund for Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities.

## **2. To ensure mechanisms for protection against discrimination in the area of employment and work of persons with disabilities**

Carrier: Ministry of Economy, Labor and Entrepreneurship

Co-carrier: Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, Croatian Institute for Public Health, Croatian Pension Insurance Institute, Croatian Employment Institute, Fund for Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities, Croatian Employers' Association, Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Gender Equality, Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Human Rights, scientific institutions, units of local and regional self-administration, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

### Activities:

1. to conduct an analysis of the implementation of Article 10 of the Act on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities
2. to conduct a research on discrimination in the area of employment and work of persons with disabilities
3. to create a development plan for the Strategy for the Prevention of Identified Forms of Discriminatory Conduct during Employment Procedures and Work of Persons with Disabilities pursuant to national documents and documents of the European Union
4. to conduct a media campaign on the need to prevent discrimination during employment procedures and work of persons with disabilities
5. to inform the public about the need to ensure mechanisms for preventing double discrimination of particular groups of persons with disabilities (e.g., women with disabilities, persons with combined difficulties, etc.)
6. to conduct systematic educations of persons with disabilities, employers, public service employees on forms of discrimination in the area of employment and work and on the manner of preventing discrimination through the implementation of the Strategy for the Prevention of Identified Forms of Discriminatory Conduct during Employment Procedures and Work of Persons with Disabilities
7. to determine the effects of the devised Strategy, conducted media campaign and education on preventing discrimination during employment procedures and work of persons with disabilities

### Timeframe:

1. December 2007
2. - 3. December 2008
4. - 6. ongoing
7. periodically: December 2009, December 2012, December 2015

### Implementation indicators:

1. determined number of employed persons with disabilities pursuant to Article 10 of the Act on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities
2. determined degree of exposure to discrimination and forms of discriminatory conduct during Employment Procedures and Work of Persons with Disabilities

3. created development plan for the Strategy for the Prevention of Identified Forms of Discriminatory Conduct during Employment Procedures and Work of Persons with Disabilities
4. the number of persons included in education, round tables, workshops, etc. on the need to prevent discrimination during employment procedures, the number of issued publications referring to that topic, the number of broadcasted informative programs
5. the quantity of published material, broadcasted informative programs, TV and radio programs on the need to prevent discrimination while employing (with necessary emphasis on double discrimination of particular groups of persons with disabilities) and the goals of the Strategy for the Prevention of Identified Forms of Discriminatory Conduct during Employment Procedures and Work of Persons with Disabilities
6. the number of persons included in education, round tables, workshops, etc. on the prevention of discrimination during employment procedures and work of persons with disabilities
7. determined degree of exposure to discrimination and forms of discriminatory conduct during employment procedures and work of persons with disabilities

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and budgets of units of local and regional self-administration within their regular activities. and from special contributions of the Fund for Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities.

**3. To establish regional professional rehabilitation centers**

Carrier: Ministry of Economy, Labor and Entrepreneurship

Co-carrier: Fund for Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, Croatian Pension Insurance Institute, Croatian Employment Institute, institutions for the rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, professional rehabilitation and employment, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to establish and provide legislative structure for regional professional rehabilitation centers
2. to conduct various stages of professional rehabilitation

Timeframe:

1. December 2008
2. year 2009 and ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. established regional professional rehabilitation centers
2. increased employment rate and other forms of labor engagement of persons with disabilities

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget and from special contributions of the Fund for Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities.

#### **4. To provide access to professional orientation for persons with disabilities regardless of age, education and working status**

Carrier: Croatian Employment Institute and Ministry of Science, Education and Sports

Co-carriers: Ministry of Economy, Labor and Entrepreneurship, Fund for Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities, Agency for Vocational Education, Agency for Adult Education, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, regional professional rehabilitation centers, Faculty of Special Education and Rehabilitation, Croatian Employers' Association, Croatian Pension Insurance Institute, Croatian Institute for Public Health, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities, institutions for the rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, professional rehabilitation and employment

Activities:

1. to identify persons with disabilities having the need for professional orientation by taking into account their age, education and working status
2. to establish services for professional orientation within the educational system
3. to educate professional orientation counselors for counseling of persons with disabilities
4. networking of professional orientation services and regional professional rehabilitation centers

Timeframe:

1. ongoing
2. December 2009
- 3.- 4. December 2010

Implementation indicators:

1. the number of persons with disabilities identified and forwarded to professional orientation
2. established services for professional orientation of pupils within the educational system
3. the number of experts from various systems included in education
4. the number of persons included in professional rehabilitation

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget and from special contributions of the Fund for Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities.

#### **5. To make employers sensible for employment of persons with disabilities and to encourage them to employ persons with disabilities**

Carrier: Ministry of Economy, Labor and Entrepreneurship

Co-carriers: Fund for Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities, Croatian Employment Institute, Croatian Employers' Association, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities, media

Activity:

1. to inform employers about opportunities for employing persons with disabilities



Timeframe:

ongoing

Implementation indicator:

1. the quantity of published material, broadcasted informative TV and radio programs and informative meetings
2. increased rate of employing and employment rate of persons with disabilities

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget and from special contributions of the Fund for Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities.

**6. To provide efficient measures for encouraging self-employment, appropriate forms of employment and retaining jobs for persons with disabilities at all levels**

Carrier Ministry of Economy, Labor and Entrepreneurship

Co-carrier: Fund for Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities, Croatian Employment Institute, units of local and regional self-administration, Croatian Employers' Association, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activity:

1. to create and conduct measures for encouraging self-employment, appropriate forms of employment and retaining jobs at all levels

Timeframe:

ongoing

Implementation indicator:

1. increase of the self-employment rate, rate of employing and employment rate of persons with disabilities

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and budgets of units of local and regional self-administration within their regular activities and from special contributions from the Fund for Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities.

**7. To determine the employment models for persons with disabilities who are unable to find a job without support at the open labor market (agencies, cooperatives, workshops of associations of persons with disabilities, working assistant) and ensure employment support measures**

Carrier: Ministry of Economy, Labor and Entrepreneurship

Co-carriers: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity, Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, Fund for Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities, Croatian Employment Institute, scientific institutions, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to conduct an analysis of the existing situation in the area of supported employment
2. to elaborate supported employment models
3. to introduce the institute of working assistant
4. to inform the broader public about supported employment models

Timeframe:

1. December 2008
2. June 2009
3. December 2009
4. ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. determined situation in the area of supported employment
2. elaborated models of supported employment
3. introduced institute of working assistant
4. the number of persons included in information about supported employment models, the quantity of published materials, broadcasted radio and TV program about supported employment models

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget and from special contributions from the Fund for Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities.

**8. To encourage allocation of state financial incentives to business entities employing persons with disabilities**

Carrier Ministry of Economy, Labor and Entrepreneurship

Co-carriers: Fund for Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities, Croatian Chamber of Economy, Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts, Croatian Employers' Association, units of local and regional self-administration, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to create a model for allocating state financial incentives to business entities employing persons with disabilities
2. to apply a model for allocating state financial incentives to business entities employing persons with disabilities
3. constant monitoring and annual reports on the results of allocating state financial incentives to business entities employing persons with disabilities

Timeframe:

1. 2008
- 2.- 3. ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. created model for allocating state financial incentives to business entities employing persons with disabilities

2. increased share of allocated state financial incentives to business entities employing persons with disabilities
3. rate of employing and employment rate of persons with disabilities

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and budgets of units of local and regional self-administration within their regular activities and from special contributions of the Fund for Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities.

## **2.8. Legal protection and violence and abuse protection**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In accordance with the non-discriminatory principle promoted by all fundamental international documents regarding the field of human rights, and the equality principle, which became a reality with the General Declaration on Human Rights, the Republic of Croatia has also decided to guarantee these principles in the area of protection of persons with disability by the Constitution (Article 3 and Article 14) and to implement them in practice through legislation. Special attention should be paid to women with disability and children with developmental difficulties because of their possibly increased vulnerability in the social environment.

The Article 14 of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia guarantees equality before the law, Article 26 warrants equality before the court and bodies with public authorities whereas Article 27 ensures legal assistance. However, due to particularities related to persons with disabilities, which refer to reaching their legal capacity, the need to respect positive regulations is pointed out, so that persons with disabilities can better exercise the rights belonging to them. In addition, in order to provide the accessibility to the justice system to persons with disabilities, it is necessary to remove all obstacles to ensure the preconditions for the realization of equal opportunities for exercising that right. Therefore, the position of each country on the global scale, which measures the contribution in the area of human rights, depends on the quality and quantity of additional protection provided to persons with disabilities in order to achieve equality with other citizens.

Articles 22, 24 and 25 of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, as well as the existing international standards, ensure the protection of personal freedoms and integrity of citizens, which should be applied to persons with disabilities to a full extent and through the appropriate legislation. Various measures protect those rights, and they range from a total prohibition of misusing the disability fact as a basis for deprivation of freedom, to ensuring equal human rights for persons with disabilities and maximal adjustment for imprisoned disabled persons.

The international standard seeks an equal approach to the right to acquire and change citizenship for persons with disabilities in the same way as it is regulated for all citizens. The withdrawal of citizenship or possible deprivation of any right in this segment based on disability is totally prohibited. The equal standard referring to the right to have a name, citizenship and

knowledge of who their parents are, applies to all children, without any discrimination, including children with developmental difficulties.

The vulnerability faced by persons with disabilities to a greater or smaller extent, makes them suitable for abuse and one of its results is that certain social groups are more frequently subject to violence, which increases the danger of multiple victimisation (for instance, a woman, member of a national minority who is at the same time a person with severe disability). Primarily, this particularly delicate segment requires education and raising the awareness level about the need to respect human rights and the importance of preventing and protecting persons with disabilities from all forms of violence and the implementation of non-discriminatory policy, too. Through inter-departmental collaboration, in addition to the preventive system, an efficient protection system should be established to suppress successfully all forms of violence against persons with disabilities, to adequately punish perpetrators, and to successfully rehabilitate into society persons with disabilities, victims of violence, on an equal basis. In doing so, the civil society, particularly associations of persons with disabilities as the key support factor, have extreme importance.

The basic human right to live is universal, but also national achievement of all democratic systems. It is additionally guaranteed by the Croatian Constitution through the non-existence of the institute of capital punishment (Article 21) and therefore this right is equally applicable to all citizens, including persons with disabilities and children with developmental difficulties. Due to the Homeland War experience, the Republic of Croatia advocates within international frameworks to strengthen this principle in armed conflicts or natural disasters, i.e. to take all necessary measures to protect persons with disabilities under such circumstances.

Article 23 of the Constitution prohibits abuse, as well as being subject to medical or scientific experiments without free consent. By means of international standards the protection policy for persons with disabilities is elaborated in detail in this area, which in addition to prevention, requires both raising the awareness level in order to reduce risks from abuse and paying special attention to victims, especially in the case of vulnerable groups – women and children.

The Republic of Croatia has recently considerably increased the legal framework for protection against violence for all citizens, and its primary intention is a better protection of victims and this includes the following: Act on Protection against Family Violence (2003),<sup>46</sup> amendments to the Criminal Code (2006)<sup>47</sup> considerably increasing punishments for criminal offences against marriage, family and young persons, sexual freedom and sexual morality and regulating hate crimes; the National Strategy of Protection against Family Violence for the Period from the Year 2005 till the Year 2007 (2004)<sup>48</sup> with a range of measures in this area; the Rules of Procedure in Cases of Family Violence (2005) based on regulations on family violence protection and the Strategy, with a range of detailed measures for the procedures of competent bodies, as well containing forms, content and manner of their cooperation in order to detect and suppress violence and to provide assistance and protection to victims of any form of family violence, which was adopted by the

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<sup>46</sup> "Official Gazette", No. 116/03

<sup>47</sup> "Official Gazette", No. 110/97, 27/98, 50/00, 129/00, 51/01, 111/03, 190/03, 105/04, 84/05 and 71/06

<sup>48</sup> "Official Gazette", No. 182/04, adopted by the Government of the Republic of Croatia

Government of the Republic of Croatia; amendments to the Family Act (2006),<sup>49</sup> amendments to the Protocol (2006); and the National Plan of Activities for the Rights and Interests of Children from the Year 2006 until the Year 2012 (2006) paying special attention to children with developmental difficulties and abused and neglected children.

## GOALS

- to provide an efficient access to the legal system for persons with disabilities on equal basis with other persons
- to provide protection to persons with disabilities and promotion of realizing human rights and fundamental freedoms on equal basis with other persons
- to establish efficient protection against all forms of violence and abuse

## MEASURES

***1. To revise the existing regulations to prevent discrimination of persons with disabilities with special emphasis on disabled women and children with developmental difficulties (labor legislation, Act on Bills of Exchange, Act on Check, Theatre Act)***

Carrier Ministry of Justice

Co-carriers: Ministry of Economy, Labor and Entrepreneurship, Ministry of Finances, Ministry of Culture, Central State Office for Public Administration, Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Gender Equality, Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Human Rights, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to conduct an analysis of existing legal regulations
2. to establish working groups for making amendments to regulations
3. to create and adopt amendments to regulations

Timeframe:

1. - 2. year 2007
3. year 2008 and ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. conducted analysis of existing legal regulations
2. established working groups for creation of amendments to regulations
3. created and adopted amendments to regulations

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

***2. To organize targeted education and training of police and judicial employees in order to adjust the witnessing process and other court procedures, i.e. to equalize the rights of persons with disabilities to access the aforementioned processes and procedures***

<sup>49</sup> "Official Gazette", No. 116/03, 17/04 and 136/04

Carriers: Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Internal Affairs

Activities:

1. to conduct an analysis of the existing situation and to determine the needs for the implementation of targeted education
2. to design programs for targeted education and training of police and judicial employees
3. to conduct constantly targeted education and training of police and judicial employees

Timeframe:

1. year 2007
2. year 2008
3. year 2008 and ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. conducted analysis of the existing situation and determined needs for the implementation of targeted education
2. designed programs for targeted education and training of police and judicial employees
3. the number and quality of programs for targeted education of police and judicial employees
4. the number of police and judicial officers participating in v education programs

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

### **3. To introduce the institute of the Ombudsman for Persons with Disabilities**

Carrier Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity

Activity:

1. to pass the Act on the Ombudsman for Persons with Disabilities

Timeframe:

1. year 2007.

Implementation indicator:

1. Passed Act on the Ombudsman for Persons with Disabilities

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget

### **4. To provide appropriate professional legal assistance to persons with disabilities at all levels**

Carrier: Ministry of Justice

Co-carriers: associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities, units of local and regional self-administration

Activity:

1. to pass Free Legal Assistance Act
2. to ensure the right to counseling to persons with disabilities at all levels through associations

of persons with disabilities, seminars or individual counseling

Timeframe:

1. year 2007
2. ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. passed Free Legal Assistance Act
2. the number of held seminars

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and budgets of units of local and regional self-administration within their regular activities.

**5. To make the appropriate architectural adaptations for persons with disabilities in facilities for freedom deprived persons**

Carrier: Ministry of Justice

Co-carrier: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare

Activities:

1. to conduct an analysis of the existing situation and determine the needs for ensuring accessibility in facilities for freedom deprived persons
2. to create an adaptation plan and determine the amount and sources of required financial means
3. to conduct the adaptation to ensure accessibility in facilities for freedom deprived persons

Timeframe:

1. - 2. years 2007/2008
3. year 2009 and ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. conducted analysis of the existing situation and determined needs for accessibility in facilities for freedom deprived persons
2. created adaptation plan and determined amount and sources of necessary financial means
3. the number of adjusted and accessible facilities for freedom deprived persons

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

**6. To organize a campaign for promoting the “informed consent” principle in medical researches conducted on persons with disabilities**

Carrier: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare

Co-carriers: Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Human Rights, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities, units of local and regional self-administration

Activities:

1. to create a campaign
2. to create promotional campaign material (flyers, posters)
3. to conduct the campaign constantly

Timeframe:

1. year 2007
2. year 2008
3. year 2008 and ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. created campaign
2. created promotional campaign material
3. the number of distributed flyers and exhibited posters
4. the effects and evaluation of the conducted campaign

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

**7. To organize seminars to strengthen persons with disabilities for the fight against all forms of violence**

Carrier: Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity

Co-carriers: Ministry of Economy, Labor and Entrepreneurship, Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Gender Equality, Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Human Rights, units of local and regional self-administration, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to conduct an analysis of the existing situation and determine the needs of persons with disabilities
2. to design seminar programs
3. to conduct seminars constantly

Timeframe:

1. year 2007
2. year 2008
3. year 2008 and ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. conducted analysis of the existing situation and determined needs
2. designed seminar programs
3. the number and quality of held seminars
4. the number of persons with disabilities – seminar participants
5. satisfaction and evaluation of persons with disabilities – seminar participants

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and budgets of units of local and regional self-administration within their regular activities.



**8. To provide accessibility to information on violence protection for persons with disabilities through electronic and printed media**

Carrier: Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity

Co-carriers: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of Justice, Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Gender Equality, Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Human Rights

Activities:

1. to design websites
2. to update and maintain the websites regularly
3. to design and print flyers, posters and publications
4. to distribute flyers, posters and publications to beneficiaries

Timeframe:

1. year 2008
2. ongoing
3. year 2008 and ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. the number of designed websites
2. quality of information and their accessibility to persons with disabilities
3. satisfaction of persons with disabilities with the quality and number of designed websites
4. quality and number of flyers, posters and publications
5. satisfaction of persons with disabilities with the quality of printed material

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

**9. To provide appropriate support for employment of persons with disabilities - victims of violence**

Carrier: Ministry of Economy, Labor and Entrepreneurship

Co-carriers: Croatian Employment Institute, Fund for Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to conduct an analysis of the results of the National Employment Action Plan regarding persons with disabilities, on a yearly basis
2. to create employment plan for persons with disabilities – victims of violence
3. to organize and hold seminars to inform the public on the number of employed persons with disabilities
4. to establish a female network for fighting against violence over disabled women

Timeframe:

ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. conducted analysis of the results of the National Employment Action Plan regarding persons with disabilities, on a yearly basis
2. created employment plan for persons with disabilities – victims of violence
3. the number of employed persons with disabilities – victims of violence – per year
4. the number and quality of held seminars
5. established female network for fighting against violence over disabled women

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget and from special contributions from the Fund for Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities.

***10. To raise the awareness level of employees in care facilities for persons with disabilities and children with developmental difficulties about the prohibition of abuse and violence***

Carrier: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare

Co-carriers: Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to conduct an analysis of the existing situation
2. to design an additional professional training program for employees working in facilities taking care of persons with disabilities and children with developmental difficulties
3. to conduct the education of employees on the prohibition of abuse of persons with disabilities and children with developmental difficulties

Timeframe:

1. - 2. year 2008
3. year 2009 and ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. conducted analysis of the existing situation
2. designed additional professional training programs for employees working in facilities taking care of persons with disabilities and children with developmental difficulties
3. quality of conducted educational programs
4. the number of participants of educational programs
5. satisfaction of participants of educational programs
6. effects of conducted educational programs

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

***11. To eliminate the stereotypes about impairments of persons with disabilities and children with developmental difficulties as a possible cause of violence over them, and to fight against their stigmatization***

Carrier: Ministry of Science, Education and Sports

Co-carriers: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity, units of local and regional self-administration, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities, media

Activities:

1. to organize various activities (workshops, playrooms, public discussions, counseling) to eliminate stereotypes about impairments as possible cause of violence against persons with disabilities and children with developmental difficulties
2. to conduct workshops and children playrooms, public discussions and counseling for adults

Timeframe:

ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. the number and quality of organized and held workshops and children playrooms, public discussions and counseling for adults
2. the number of children and adult participants
3. satisfaction of participants
4. effects of conducted activities

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and budgets of units of local and regional self-administration within their regular activities.

## **2.9. Informing, communicating and raising the awareness level**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The fundamental principle of the Council of Europe Action Plan to Promote the Rights and Full Participation of Persons with Disability in Society is the improvement of the quality of life of persons with disabilities in Europe 2006-2015. The society's responsibility is to provide to its citizens an active support to a healthy way of life, safer surrounding, adequate health care, rehabilitation and support in the community, in order to reduce the consequences of disability as much as possible.

Taking into account the needs of persons with disabilities, each member country is obliged to take appropriate measures which should ensure and guarantee them accessibility to information and communication. In particular, it obliges those sending information to enable their reception and to forward information to persons with disabilities at the same level of quality and quantity as to other society members, and by doing so, to take into account the particularity of their needs.

Discriminatory and stigmatizing forms of conduct, which directly or indirectly create obstruction or prevention of the participation of persons with disabilities in society, should be resisted. Appropriate measures are necessary to initiate communication to the public about

objective knowledge on disability and its consequences, the manner and desired quality of meeting the needs of persons with disabilities, and about subjective difficulties persons with disabilities are having as a consequence of the negative attitude and misunderstanding of the environment. All the countries shall, therefore, focus their activities towards changing the negative attitudes towards persons with disabilities and encourage the consideration of actual disability issues in the media. For that very reason, the National Strategy dedicates a special area to the needs of persons with disabilities in order to pinpoint and make precise the adequate strategies for the development of informing, communicating, and to raise the awareness level so that persons with disabilities could independently control the conditions of their life to the greatest possible extent and whenever possible.

A prerequisite for such an active approach within the framework of the rehabilitation-integration model is the accessibility of information through the appropriate communication system. But despite the increasing speed of technology development and design of various communication aids, it will be necessary to improve accessibility to information and communication for many persons with disabilities.

The Croatian Health Institute has two Internet pages [www.zdravlje.hr](http://www.zdravlje.hr) and [www.hcjz.hr](http://www.hcjz.hr) which represent a potential space for electronic communication between persons with disabilities, physicians and persons with disabilities, an area for promoting healthy ways of life and publishing public studies.

The inclusion of persons with disabilities into all means of electronic communication, Internet, videophones, etc. is extremely important since for many of them using new aids may represent a new form of the quality of mutual interaction, starting and managing business, informing and realizing their rights, participating in decision-making and, in general, a larger independence in everyday life. Persons with disabilities need to have access to those communication systems they can use (e.g. telephone transmitters, textual and video communication systems); as far as the development and design of new communication and information systems is concerned, persons with disabilities should be consulted. In the daily practice, it would enable the application of European standards on using inclusive new technologies for a full participation of persons with disabilities.

## GOALS

- to provide accessibility of receiving and transmitting information in accordance with the particularities of needs and possibilities of persons with disabilities
- to improve independence in communication and informing of persons with disabilities, and thus independence and quality of life in general
- to provide the awareness level in society which will enable persons with disabilities to exercise their rights and to participate in the everyday life of the community as full, active members of society

## MEASURES

### ***1. To enable free search, reception and forwarding of information according to the personal***

### ***choice of an individual – person with disability – on equal basis with other society members***

Carrier: Central State Office for e-Croatia

Co-carriers: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity, Ministry of Economy, Labor and Entrepreneurship, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integrations, scientific and professional institutions, units of local and regional self-administration, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to make accessible official information to persons with disabilities in acceptable forms and technologies, depending on the possibilities of communication of an individual – a person with disability
2. to conduct a research in order to identify the existing situation (which communication ways and means are used by persons with disabilities, e.g. sign language, Braille letters, interpreters, etc.) and evaluation of educational and informational needs for using new IT and communication technologies
3. to conduct the education of persons with disabilities on using new and existing available IT and communication technologies and to ensure accessibility of the entire educational materials for persons with disabilities and their harmonization with existing accessibility standards
4. to create appropriate evaluation of the accessibility of both receiving and transmitting information and the quality communication of persons with disabilities based on the previously identified situation and the post-education situation
5. to create appropriate evaluation and monitor the quality of life of persons with disabilities included in educational programs on using IT and communication technologies
6. to provide electronic voting at elections and receiving documents via Internet forms

Timeframe:

1. ongoing
2. years 2007/2008
3. ongoing
4. once a year
5. once a year
6. year 2007

Implementation indicators:

1. - 5. accessibility of official information to all persons with disabilities in accordance with the individual possibilities of communication of the individuals – persons with disabilities
6. provided electronic voting at elections and receiving documents via Internet forms

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and budgets of units of local and regional self-administration within their regular activities.

## **2. To use new technologies for improving independence and quality of life of persons with disabilities**

Carrier: Central State Office for e-Croatia

Co-carriers: Ministry of the Sea, Tourism, Transport and Development, Croatian Telecommunications Agency, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Croatian Pension Insurance Institute, Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity, Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Gender Equality, Ministry of Economy, Labor and Entrepreneurship, Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Human Rights, units of local and regional self-administration, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to make communication systems more accessible to persons with disabilities by means of new technologies
2. to encourage public services and public bodies to inform and communicate in a form acceptable to persons with disabilities
3. to encourage private bodies to inform and communicate in a form acceptable to persons with disabilities
4. to stimulate affordability of prices while developing, designing and distributing support, information and communication technologies
5. constant education of all employees in public facilities in order to understand the needs and to provide better services to persons with disabilities

Timeframe:

ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. - 5. evaluation of the level of accessibility of communication and IT systems as well as the affordability of these systems for persons with disabilities

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and budgets of units of local and regional self-administration within their regular activities.

## **3. To strengthen the awareness that persons with disabilities can themselves represent their interests best, to raise the awareness level on disability and rights of persons with disabilities by improving attitudes towards persons with disabilities as active and full members of society**

Carrier: Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity

Co-carriers: Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, units of local and regional self-administration, associations of persons with disabilities, associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to promote a positive image of persons with disabilities
2. to make the public acquainted with best practices in the area of work, education, culture, housing, etc. by means of public information

3. to encourage media to introduce and broadcast regular general and specialized informative programs which would show both actual difficulties and the success in conducting National Strategy measures
4. to encourage persons with disabilities and their associations towards public promotion in cooperation with the media

Timeframe:

ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. - 4. regular and frequent presence of persons with disabilities in means of public information

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and budgets of units of local and regional self-administration within their regular activities.

**4. To raise public awareness on the rights of persons with disabilities by a series of various activities contributing to general tolerance for diversity in society**

Carrier: Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity

Co-carriers: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, units of local and regional self-administration, Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Human Rights, associations of persons with disabilities, associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to adopt a coherent non-discriminatory terminology in all public appearances and printed material
2. to use adequate educational methods and contents at all educational levels from preschool to higher education institutions, to make children and young persons acquainted with knowledge, information and experiences of how disability develops, on disability in general, as well as on persons with disabilities
3. to organize professional seminars for all carriers participating in the implementation of the aforementioned measures for interdepartmental coordination and better informing
4. to print appropriate handbooks in order to inform the public on conditions and manners for realizing the rights of persons with disabilities in various systems
5. to create public activities for marking the days related to the promotion of human rights and improving the position of persons with disabilities

Timeframe:

ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. regular and frequent use of non-discriminatory terminology related to persons with disabilities
2. the number of conducted education, seminars, public discussions, etc.
3. the number of conducted professional seminars
4. the number of published handbooks

5. marked days related to the promotion of human rights and improvement of the position of persons with disabilities

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and budgets of units of local and regional self-administration within their regular activities.

## 2.10. Participation in cultural life

### INTRODUCTION

Full equality and equal opportunities for persons with disabilities imply their right to be fully included in society, and their participation in the cultural life, too.

The sources of life problems of persons with disabilities are not solely related to the medical conditions, but also to discrimination and limitations experienced due to the organization and structures of the social environment and its attitudes. To achieve the desired independence, persons with disabilities have to lead a full life as much as possible in interaction with other members of society.

Despite positive shifts in the past couple of years, owing to determination of the Republic of Croatia directed towards the protection of persons with disabilities and their inclusion into social life, persons with disabilities still face obstacles for a full inclusion in the social, professional, economical, educational and cultural area. But, even though they are faced with limitations and tradition of unequal treatment, they undoubtedly possess creative capabilities which they can establish themselves in public on an equal basis together with others.

In order to provide that persons with disabilities can participate in cultural activities on an equal basis, the state tries to ensure conditions in which persons with disabilities can express their creative, artistic and intellectual capabilities.

The stimulation of persons with disabilities' activities ranges from raising the public awareness level on both diversities and values of their cultural activities, and supporting the full independence in the artistic and creative expression, to ensuring financial support for all forms of persons with disabilities' cultural activities. By means of this, the intention is to achieve the full realization of the right to participate in all aspects of cultural life and it is fully supported by state administration bodies that are directly participating in activities promoting creativity of persons with disabilities. In order to be fully included in society, persons with disabilities and their associations should have equal possibilities for developing creative and intellectual capabilities. Since each artistic field carries in itself an unlimited space for expression, the participation of persons with disabilities in the cultural life of the broader social community is necessary to affirm the overall creation and contribution of cultural activities which include an equal approach to all areas in which persons with disabilities also exercise their own artistic rights.

In that sense, various cultural activities ranging from manifestations to program activities of associations which are an integrative part of public needs in culture of the Republic of Croatia, should be encouraged. Examples of such activities are reflected in the constant support to projects



and activities of the Association of Physically Disabled – “Festival of Equal Opportunities”, Zagreb, Theatre Company of the Blind and the Visually Impaired “New Life” – “International Theatre Festival of the Blind and Visually Impaired BIT”, Zagreb, guest shows in Croatia and France at the festival „Ouvres et Réalisations des Personnes Handicapées d’Expression Européenne“- individual dramatic shows, Association of Theatre, Visual Arts and Deaf Culture “Palm” – individual dramatic shows in sign language, guest shows in Croatia, participation at the Congress in Berlin; Croatian Association of Deaf-Blind Persons “Touch” – individual dramatic shows in sign language, guest shows in Croatia, as well as of other associations of persons with disabilities.

## **GOALS**

- to adjust legal regulations in order to conduct more efficiently the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the cultural life and activities
- to enable the development and establishment of creative possibilities of persons with disabilities and enable their equal inclusion into the cultural life together with other participants
- to provide for persons with disabilities the acquisition of the status of freelance artists and to make profit from their artistic work
- to cover systematically, through media, the work and achievement of persons with disabilities in culture
- to provide access to cultural institutions (museums, galleries, theatres, cinemas, concert halls, etc.) for persons with disabilities and monitor their programs by using modern technical facilities
- to provide access and/or professional information, i.e. experience of cultural heritage for persons with disabilities: of historical buildings, sites, works of arts, traditional material and immaterial heritage
- to encourage the participation of sponsors and donors when conducting programs and manifestations of persons with disabilities associations

## **MEASURES**

### ***1. Constant stimulation and support to projects establishing creative and artistic possibilities of persons with disabilities***

Carrier: Ministry of Culture

Co-carriers: Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, Ministry of Family, Veterans’ Affairs and Intergeneration Solidarity, Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Associations, units of local and regional self-administration, associations of persons with disabilities, associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activity:

1. to finance and co-finance projects, associations and institutions which on an amateur and professional level establish creative and artistic possibilities of persons with disabilities

Timeframe:

ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. the number of co-financed projects, associations and institutions

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and budgets of units of local and regional self-administration within their regular activities.

**2. To ensure the participation of theatre and other artistic soloist and groups of persons with disabilities in regular cultural manifestations (festivals, cultural gatherings and other cultural manifestations) under equal conditions**

Carrier: Ministry of Culture

Co-carriers: Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, units of local and regional self-administration, Cultural Centers, Open Universities, associations of persons with disabilities, associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to adjust criteria and ensure conditions for enrolling persons with disabilities in artistic academies, i.e. alternative educational programs, e.g. regular artistic workshops and others
2. to make amendments to the Ordinance on the Selection and Identification of Public Needs in Culture,<sup>50</sup> adding new criteria for evaluating cultural and artistic programs which refer to ensuring access, respectively, inclusion of persons with disabilities into programs of public needs in culture

Timeframe:

1. ongoing
2. year 2008

Implementation indicators:

1. the number of persons with disabilities enrolled in artistic academies and other educational programs (seminars, courses, workshops, etc.)
2. amended Ordinance on the Selection and Identification of Public Needs in Culture

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and budgets of units of local and regional self-administration within their regular activities.

**3. To stimulate networking and inclusion of persons with disabilities in cultural projects on international, national and local level**

Carrier: Ministry of Culture

Co-carriers: units of local and regional self-administration, cultural professional associations, associations of persons with disabilities, associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

<sup>50</sup> "Official Gazette", No. 7/01, 60/01, 135/06

Activities:

1. inclusion of persons with disabilities in cultural projects on international, national and local level
2. to encourage organizers of cultural manifestations to include shows and participation of performers with disabilities

Timeframe:

ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. – 2. the number of included persons with disabilities in cultural manifestations

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and budgets of units of local and regional self-administration within their regular activities.

**4. To make the public sensible to artistic work of persons with disabilities**

Carrier: Ministry of Culture

Co-carriers: Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, Cultural Centers, Open Universities, units of local and regional self-administration, associations of persons with disabilities, associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activity:

1. to create thematically existing manifestations and promotional activities to make the public acquainted with artistic activities and possibilities of persons with disabilities (creative workshops, artistic and educational projects, etc.)

Timeframe:

ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. the number of conducted workshops, artistic and educational projects, etc. to make the public sensible to artistic work of persons with disabilities

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and budgets of units of local and regional self-administration within their regular activities.

**5. To encourage and establish cooperation with potential sponsors and donors (firms, companies, private entrepreneurs, banks and other social and business subjects)**

Carrier: Ministry of Finances

Co-carriers: Croatian Chamber of Economy, Association of Craftsmen, units of local and regional self-administration, sponsors and donors, associations of persons with disabilities, associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to include persons with disabilities in the evaluation and selection of programs financed by sponsors and donors

Timeframe:

year 2010 and ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. the number of included sponsors and donors

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and budgets of units of local and regional self-administration within their regular activities.

**6. To amend regulations in order to ensure equal opportunities for persons with disabilities in culture**

Carrier: Ministry of Culture

Co-carriers: Ministry of the Sea, Tourism, Transport and Development, units of local and regional self-administration, associations of persons with disabilities, associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to make a list of priorities for adjusting the access to cultural institutions and to the architectural heritage, that is, to keep a priority list on a yearly basis for each budget period
2. to ensure the standard prescribed by law when adjusting the access to cultural institutions and cultural goods, that is, when removing architectural obstacles and setting tactile signalization
3. to publish a catalogue of good practices in order to promote access to culture and heritage and to gather all relevant information, similar publications in EU countries being the model
4. to equip museum exhibitions with modern means of communication, so that the information on the exhibition and/or museum is accessible to persons with sensory difficulties
5. to print in Braille letters the schedules and programs of cultural events; to ensure audio description of theatre and cinema shows for blind persons
6. to subtitle short and feature-length films of domestic production financed by the Ministry of Culture, and to subtitle theatre shows by means of displays; to provide appropriate places for hearing-impaired persons who follow the musical and film programs with the aid of hearing devices, to provide adjusted cinema projections for blind persons
7. to finance a magazine dealing with the culture of persons with disabilities, i.e. to make visible the artistic scope of persons with disabilities in already existing cultural publications

Timeframe:

1. year 2007 and ongoing
2. ongoing
3. year 2010 and ongoing
4. ongoing
5. year 2010 and ongoing
6. year 2011 and ongoing

7. year 2008 and ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. the number of proposed adjustment projects on the Priority List of the Ministry of Culture
2. the number of realized projects of adjusted cultural institutions and cultural goods
3. published catalogue issued by the Ministry of Culture
4. the number of museum exhibitions equipped with means of communication for persons with sensory difficulties
5. the number of schedules and programs of cultural events published in Braille letters
6. the number of realized subtitles and adjusted projections
7. issuing of a magazine

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and budgets of units of local and regional self-administration within their regular activities.

## 2. 11. Participation in political and public life

### INTRODUCTION

Creating the opportunities for all citizens to participate actively in political life is a prerequisite of democracy. Inclusion of persons with disabilities in political life does not imply giving special privileges to a vulnerable group of people, but it should be a sign of political equality of all citizens. Political equality should be achieved through realization of the right to vote, opportunity to take part in political debates, starting and forming civilian initiatives as well as facilitating participation in the work of representatives' bodies. The preconditions for such inclusion should be realized on all levels. For that reason the appropriate resources and activities should be planned in order to overcome both institutional and social barriers. By involving persons with disabilities and their associations we avoid patronizing in inclusion of this group in political and public life of the community.

According to the Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons,<sup>51</sup> persons with disabilities have all rights and freedoms deriving from the Constitution, and discrimination of persons with disabilities is any form of their isolation, segregation or limitation, through which their human rights and fundamental freedoms are violated. Discrimination of persons with disabilities is manifested in failing to take measures to remove barriers in the environment and in the general public attitude or in creating new barriers which aggravate access to the services and full participation of persons with disabilities in activities in civilian, cultural, economic, political and social life. Through this Declaration the Croatian Parliament made a commitment that the Republic of Croatia will take necessary measures to promote human rights and non-discrimination of persons with disabilities as well as remove psychosocial, educational, family-related, cultural, social, vocational, financial and architectural barriers for full integration and participation of persons with disabilities in the social,

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<sup>51</sup> Passed by the Croatian Parliament on April 1, 2005

economic, cultural and political life under the same conditions. It is crucial to provide persons with disabilities with equal opportunities, so that they can be personally active in political life and in this way participate in the creation of the political goals and allocation of funds.

By establishing partnership between the state and non-governmental organizations persons with disabilities have become visible citizens, who stand up for their rights and demand equal opportunities to participate in making decisions on important issues of the public politics, which is accomplished by public campaigns, trainings and education programs which are carried out on the national and local level. The legal framework in the Republic of Croatia ensures the realization of their rights, but in this area there is space for further improvements.

Apart from institutional changes and legal presumptions for the change of the environment in which persons with disabilities are active, it is also important to develop a participative political culture where special attention is paid to persons with disabilities.

## GOALS

- to create preconditions for the environment in which persons with disabilities will be able to participate in political life as equal citizens
- to promote participation of persons with disabilities in all forms of public life and in all processes of political decision making on the local, regional, national and international level
- to include persons with disabilities and non-governmental organizations of persons with disabilities in the preparation of public political measures addressing the issues of persons with disabilities
- to promote the participation of persons with disabilities in the work of political parties
- to increase the number of persons with disabilities in representatives' bodies of the units of local and regional self-administration as well as on the national level
- to promote the participation of women with disabilities and young persons with disabilities in political life on all levels

## MEASURES

***1. To ensure technical support or other kinds of assistance so that all persons with disabilities have access to basic documents which are significant for the political participation on the local, regional or national level***

Carrier: Central State Office for Public Administration

Co-carriers: units of local and regional self-administration

Activities:

1. to conduct an analysis of accessibility of documents for all persons with disabilities, as well as the equipment available on all levels of political activity (*scanners, printers in Braille, etc.*)
2. to increase the level of accessibility and provide all necessary equipment

Timeframe:

ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. conducted analysis of accessibility of documents and equipment
2. increased level of accessibility of documents and provided equipment

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and budgets of units of local and regional self-administration within their regular activities.

**2. To conduct research of the attitude of the members of all representatives' bodies towards political implications of disability and inclusion of persons with disabilities with various types of impairment in political life**

Carrier: Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity

Co-carriers: scientific institutions

Activities:

1. to prepare the research outline
2. to conduct the research on a representative sample across Croatia
3. to present the research results

Timeframe:

year 2008

Implementations indicators:

1. conducted research
2. presented research results

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

**3. To monitor equal participation of persons with disabilities in realization of the right to vote**

Carrier: Central State Office for Public Administration

Co-carriers: associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to conduct an analysis of the election legislation
2. to propose amendments to the election legislation
3. to enable persons with disabilities to equally participate in electoral activities
4. to ensure conditions for electronic voting

Timeframe:

1. - 2. years 2007/2008
3. ongoing
4. year 2008

Implementation indicators:

1. conducted analysis of the election legislation
2. proposed amendments to the election legislation
3. realized equal opportunities for persons with disabilities to participate in electoral activities
4. provided opportunity to vote electronically during the next general elections

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

**4. To inform the representatives of the legislative and executive state administration, state officials and civil servants, as well as the broader public, about the basic principles and ways of including persons with disabilities in political and public life of the community**

Carrier: Central State Office for Public Administration

Co-carriers: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity, units of local and regional self-administration, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to organize seminars, counseling, public discussions and workshops
2. to publish informative materials (booklets, flyers, etc.)

Timeframe:

ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. the number of organized seminars, counseling, public discussions and workshops
2. published informative materials (booklets, flyers, etc.)

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and budgets of units of local and regional self-administration within their regular activities.

**5. To conduct campaign for promoting the UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

Carrier: Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity

Co-carriers: associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to publish the UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities and adapt it to all groups of persons with disabilities
2. to distribute the UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Timeframe:

year 2007



Implementation indicators:

1. published UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities and adapted to all groups of persons with disabilities
2. distributed UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

**6. To conduct research of the public presentation of persons with disabilities through their associations and unions of associations and suggest effective and equitable presentation of their interests and needs**

Carrier: Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Associations

Co-carriers: National Foundation for Development of Civil Society, Croatian Legal Centre, Croatian Politological Society, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to conduct an analysis of the public presentation of persons with disabilities
2. to suggest ways of improving the public presentation of persons with disabilities in creating public policies

Timeframe:

year 2008

Implementation indicators:

1. conducted analysis of the public presentation of persons with disabilities
2. suggested ways of improving the public presentation of persons with disabilities in creating public policies

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

**7. To promote the participation of women with disabilities and young persons with disabilities in public and political activities on all levels**

Carrier: Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Human Rights

Co-carriers: Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Gender Equality, National Foundation for Development of Civil Society, units of local and regional self-administration, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to conduct an analysis of the inclusion of women and young persons with disabilities in public and political life
2. to suggest ways of increasing the participation of women and young persons with disabilities in public and political life
3. to inform and make the public sensible for activities of women and young persons with disabilities (round table meetings, public discussions, workshops)

Timeframe:

1. - 2. year 2008
3. year 2009

Implementation indicators:

1. conducted analysis of the inclusion of women and young persons with disabilities in public and political life
2. suggested ways of increasing the participation of women and young persons with disabilities in public and political life
3. the number of organized round table meetings, public discussions, workshops

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and budgets of units of local and regional self-administration within their regular activities.

**8. To ensure additional formal and informal education of persons with disabilities in order to strengthen their participation in public and political life**

Carrier: Ministry of Science, Education and Sports

Co-carriers: National Foundation for Development of Civil Society, Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Associations, scientific institutions, units of local and regional self-administration, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to organize seminars, round tables, public discussions

Timeframe:

ongoing

Implementation indicator:

1. the number of organized seminars, round tables, public discussions

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and budgets of units of local and regional self-administration within their regular activities.

## 2.12. Research and development

According to the UN assessments published on their official websites in 2006 the issue of disability is more widespread than usually thought: in every country at least one out of ten citizens is a person with disability.<sup>52</sup> According to the 2001 Census Croatia has the same indicators. According to the 2001 Census of Population, Households and Dwellings there were 429,421 persons with disabilities or 9.7% of the total population (4,437,460), 245,897 men or 11.5% of the total male population and 183,524 women or 8% of the total female population. In most cases disability is caused by illness – 197,410 persons; less number of persons with disabilities belongs to disabled workers - 109,104 persons; there are persons with disabilities whose disability is caused

<sup>52</sup> <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/diswpa01.htm>

by the Homeland War and its consequences – 45,763 persons; persons born with disabilities – 25,186 persons; persons with other causes of disability – 20,309 persons; persons whose disability is caused by a traffic accident – 18,411 persons, and persons whose disability is caused by World War II and its consequences. Data of physical mobility of persons with disabilities indicate that 85,220 persons have a permanent disability, therefore they move using a walking stick, crutches or a walker; 7,201 persons use wheelchair, whereas 12,488 persons are permanently immobile. The above-mentioned Census is based on the Law on the 2001 Census of Population, Households and Dwellings<sup>53</sup>.

The data from the Census give us a broader picture of persons with disabilities, but it was actually the moment when the Law on Croatian Register of Persons with Disabilities<sup>54</sup> came into effect, when more particular data about the number, type, level and seriousness of disability have become known. The Law on Croatian Register regulates the way of gathering, analyzing and protecting the confidentiality of individual data on persons with disabilities. Having relevant data on disability at disposal is a prerequisite for planning preventive measures and launching a program for persons with disabilities. One of the goals of the development of health level of the population is the extension of life expectancy, i.e. extension of life expectancy without illness and disability. The Register is kept in the Croatian Institute for Public Health, which was established in 2002.

According to the above-mentioned Law, disability is a permanent limitation, decrease or loss of capability (which is caused by a health damage) to carry out physical or mental activities appropriate to the age of a person and which is related to skills, in the form of the complex activities and behaviour, which are generally accepted as important factors of every day life. This definition is implemented in the 2001 Census, but the data was collected on grounds of the statement, without access to medical or any other documents on disability.

Currently the database of the Register comprises data of 404,000 persons. In order to complete the database, it is necessary to enter about 120,000 findings and opinions of the first instance institutions for evaluation of the social welfare centres.

The data of the type of physical and/or mental impairment is submitted to the Register by the general practitioner, the doctor of school medicine and the doctor of the specialist health care who examined and/or has treated the disabled person, and competent state administration bodies as well as the Croatian Pension Insurance Institute.

The data of the type of the physical and/or mental impairment are entered in the Register from the forms stipulated by the Ordinance on the Form for submitting Data to the Croatian Register of Persons with Disabilities<sup>55</sup>. The data of the deceased persons for the Republic of Croatia are entered into the Register from the database of the State Institute for Statistics.

The Croatian Register of Persons with Disabilities consists of the general and special part.

The general part of the Register includes general personal data: the name, sex, personal identity number, place of birth, permanent residence, temporary residence, educational

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<sup>53</sup> „Official Gazette“ No. 64/00

<sup>54</sup> „Official Gazette“ No. 64/01

<sup>55</sup> „Official Gazette“ No. 07/02

background, vocation, work place and marital status.

The special part of the Register includes data of the type of physical and mental impairments which are: vision impairment, hearing impairment, speech and language impairment, impairments of locomotory system, impairments of the central nervous system, impairments of the peripheral nervous system, impairments of other organs and organic systems (respiratory system, circulatory system, digestive system, endocrine system, integument and subintegument tissue and uro-genital system), mental retardation, autism, emotional disturbances, and multiple disabilities. The information system of the Register has been set up and it meets all the functional requirements and ensures the flexibility in compiling reports. The number and the data from the submitted individual reports by September 30, 2007 are displayed in Table 3 (see Appendices).

In order to complete the data base of persons with disabilities it is necessary to collect data from more sources. Such a way of collecting data implies certain technical difficulties. The data from the system of the social welfare, education and health care are submitted in paper version which makes the work of the Register significantly more difficult. Data from the paper media require copying into special masks for entering data records. Data in electronic form (Croatian Pension Insurance Institute and Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity) are entered into database, which significantly facilitates saving, controlling and processing of the data. The control is necessary due to inappropriate use of the International Classification of Diseases 10 (ICD 10) and a series of other inconsistencies which occur in the process of issuing official decisions which are submitted by the competent services. In most cases the data of persons with disabilities do not include an ID number. This makes the procedure of unambiguous linking of persons significantly more difficult. A procedure for unambiguous linking of persons without data of ID number is stipulated in the Register. The lack of ID number is connected also with linking of the existing database of the deceased, because it is only feasible if ID number is used.

## GOALS

- to promote the development of the policies and standards based on facts, advancement of research and use of research results
- to harmonize the methodology of gathering statistical data, on the national and international level, in order to get valid and comparable information
- to use and support available researches and data in a multidisciplinary way in order to advance and promote the participation of persons with disabilities in all segments of social life, and to use regional, national and international researches to improve the quality of their life.

## MEASURES

### ***1. To improve statistical and information strategies for the development of the policies and standards related to persons with disabilities***

Carrier: Croatian National Institute for Public Health

Co-carriers: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare; Ministry of Science, Education and Sports; Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity; Croatian Pension Insurance

Institute, Croatian Institute for Health Insurance and Croatian Employment Institute, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to redefine the parameters related to persons with disabilities in the electronic message from the primary health care
2. to provide conditions for gathering data in electronic form from the field of social welfare, education and specialist health care
3. to link the Register of Persons with Disabilities with the database of the Croatian Institute for Health Insurance, Croatian Employment Institute and database of the associations of persons with disabilities; the above-mentioned databases are not defined by the Law on Croatian Register of Persons with Disabilities, but they include information about persons with disabilities
4. to verify the basic documentation which is a source of data about persons with disabilities
5. to reassess the effectiveness and availability of the existing database by means of various queries on persons with disabilities

Timeframe:

1. year 2008
2. - 3. from the year 2008 till the year 2010
4. - 5. ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. increased number of persons with disabilities in the Croatian register of Persons with Disabilities, with comprehensive data from the Article 18 of the Law on the Croatian Register of Persons with Disabilities

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

## **2. To improve the classification of disability**

Carrier: Croatian National Institute for Public Health

Co-carriers: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare; Ministry of Science, Education and Sports; Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity; Croatian Pension Insurance Institute, Croatian Institute for Health Insurance and Croatian Employment Institute, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to publish the translation of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) of the World Health Organization
2. to publish and introduce a coherent classification of disability causes as a national standard for disability
3. to introduce the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) into the information systems which include data of persons with disabilities

4. to conduct education on the implementation of the ICF

Timeframe:

1. year 2008
2. year 2010
3. year 2012
4. ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. published translation of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) of the World Health Organization
2. increased number of persons with disabilities in the Croatian Register of Persons with Disabilities, with comprehensive data of the diagnoses of the disability causes
3. increased number of persons with disabilities in the Croatian register of Persons with Disabilities with comprehensive data of their functioning
4. the number of meetings and participants on educational meetings on the use of the ICF

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

**3. To encourage the conduct of research studies and close cooperation of the competent bodies in order to ensure accessibility to the comprehensive data for the purpose of achieving a higher level of knowledge about persons with disabilities as well as issuing policies and programs which are related to disability, based on valid information**

Carrier: Croatian National Institute for Public Health

Co-carriers: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare; Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity; Croatian Pension Insurance Institute, Croatian Institute for Health Insurance, scientific institutions and Croatian Employment Institute, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to organize and conduct research studies in all areas of disability on the regional and national level, and to participate in the international researches
2. to publish the studies in the relevant international and national specialist and scientific magazines
3. to organize meetings related to persons with disabilities on the international, national and regional level
4. to improve the personnel structure of the Croatian Register of Persons with Disabilities
5. to introduce "Persons with disabilities" course on scientific and specialist postgraduate studies (on the Medical School and Educational-rehabilitation Faculty as well as on other faculties)

Timeframe:

1. - 3. ongoing
4. year 2007

Implementation indicators:

1. the number of research studies on persons with disabilities
2. the number of specialist and scientific works published in the relevant international and national specialist and scientific magazines
3. the number of meetings related to persons with disabilities on the international, national and regional level
4. improved personnel structure of the Croatian Register of Persons with Disabilities
5. introduced "Persons with disabilities" course on scientific and specialist postgraduate studies (on the Medical School and Educational-rehabilitation Faculty as well as on other faculties)

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

**4. To improve the accessibility of data from the Croatian National Institute for Public Health to persons with disabilities**

Carrier: Croatian National Institute for Public Health

Co-carriers: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare; Croatian Institute for Health Insurance, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities, Expert associations of the Croatian Medical Association

Activities:

1. to upgrade the websites of the Croatian National Institute for Public Health<sup>56</sup> as potential communication space for persons with disabilities

Timeframe:

year 2007

Implementation indicator:

1. good accessibility to websites to all persons with disabilities; increased number of expert and scientific contents related to persons with disabilities

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

**5. To provide comprehensive data of persons with disabilities, their frequency and distribution on the national, regional and local level**

Carrier: Croatian National Institute for Public Health

Co-carrier: State Institute for Statistics

Activity:

1. to include the query on persons with disabilities into the 2011 Census in line with the Guidelines of the UN/ECE<sup>57</sup> on the censuses around the year 2010, and integrate these

<sup>56</sup> [www.zdravlje.hr](http://www.zdravlje.hr) and [www.hzjz.hr](http://www.hzjz.hr)

<sup>57</sup> *United Nations Economic Commission for Europe*

data with those from the Croatian Register

Timeframe:

year 2012

Implementation indicator:

I. display of data, from the Census, of persons with disabilities according to demographic, educational and socio-economic indicators downwards to the level of the smallest administrative units and the Croatian Register

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the budget of the Croatian National Institute for Public Health and of the Census.

## 2.13. Recreation, leisure and sport

### INTRODUCTION

Fast development of technology and science, as well as their implementation in every day life and work, do not lead only to numerous positive, but also to significant negative changes in relation to physical and mental health. The need to move is decreasing, and this very need is considered to be one of the fundamental biological needs which is spontaneously satisfied through carrying day-to-day life activities. New ways of living and work, with a lot of commodities, lead to disturbance of the biological and socio-psychological balance of the contemporary man.

Kinesiologic activities are important for both physical and mental health as well as psychosocial development of each individual. Therefore, it is not surprising that some authors consider kinesiologic activities as social values, as the determinants of the social progress and outcome of the social development.

Recreation, leisure and sports improve the general status of the bodies of children with developmental difficulties and persons with disabilities on daily basis, as well as their self-realization and their inclusion in the community.

It is of great significance to organize and conduct sport and leisure activities in order to stimulate and promote sport, especially sport activities which are organized for children with developmental difficulties, young people and college students with disabilities as well as persons with disabilities. Furthermore, the activities of the national sports associations, the Croatian Olympic Committee, the Croatian Paralympic Committee and Croatian Sports Association of Deaf Persons are not only significant but are considered public needs on the national level according to the Law on Sports.<sup>58</sup>

Sport activities and programs for children with developmental difficulties and persons with disabilities, which are significant for the units of local and regional self-administration, are considered public needs in the field of sports, for which required funding is allocated from the budgets of the units of local and regional self-administration.

The Law on Sports stipulates that the Croatian Parliament is to create a network of sports

<sup>58</sup> „Official Gazette“, No. 71/06



facilities by which the plan of building, renovation, maintenance and management of sports facilities will be established. The Croatian Parliament is to do so on the proposal of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, in line with the previous opinion of the National Council of Sports, bodies of the units of local and regional self-administration and the City of Zagreb, and the relevant sports associations.

The analysis conducted by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports showed that it was necessary to adapt sports facilities to the needs of children with developmental difficulties and persons with disabilities, in terms of both physical planning (exterior and interior design) and equipment.

The survey on extra-curricular sports activities was conducted in educational institutions for children and young people with developmental difficulties. On the basis of survey results guidelines were drawn up with the purpose of including as many children and young people with developmental difficulties as possible into extra-curricular and other sports activities.

Apart from the need to develop criteria for conducting extra-curricular sports activities of children and young people with developmental difficulties which will be based on the particularities of their respective disabilities, the survey results indicate the need to set up a system of competitions for children with developmental difficulties and young people with disabilities.

## **GOALS**

- to provide equal opportunities for persons with disabilities to participate in recreational and sports activities as well as leisure
- to provide disabled people with appropriate instructions, education and means needed to participate in recreational and sports activities and leisure
- to provide access to sports, recreational and tourist facilities as well as sanitary facilities
- to provide equal access for children with developmental difficulties to participation in games and leisure, including these activities within the educational system

## **MEASURES**

### ***1. To issue the Ordinance on Sports Competitions of Children with Developmental Difficulties and Persons with Disabilities***

Carrier: Ministry of Science, Education and Sport

Co-carriers: Croatian Paralympic Committee, Croatian Sports Association of Deaf Persons, Croatian Olympic Board, scientific institutions, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to establish a commission
2. to draw up a draft proposal of the Ordinance (commission)
3. to conduct a public discussion
4. to adopt and officially publish the Ordinance

Timeframe:

1. - 4. December 2007

Implementation indicators:

1. established commission
2. drawn up draft proposal of the Ordinance (commission)
3. public discussion conducted
4. adopted and officially published Ordinance

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

***2. To draw up, conduct and follow up the programs of extra-curricular sports and other activities which will improve the inclusion of children and young people with developmental difficulties***

Carrier: Ministry of Science, Education and Sports

Co-carriers: Croatian Paralympic Committee, Croatian Sports Association of Deaf Persons, scientific institutions, civil society organizations

Activities:

1. to conduct an analysis of the current situation
2. to draw up a proposal of a program
3. to assess the programs (commission)
4. to train the teachers, coaches and heads of associations
5. to monitor the implementation

Timeframe:

1. year 2007
2. - 5. 2008 and ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. conducted analysis of the current situation
2. the number of new programs
3. the number of programs in progress
4. the number of children and young people with developmental difficulties included into extra-curricular sports and other activities
5. the number of qualified teachers, coaches and heads of associations

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and budgets of the units of local and regional self-administration, and from the budget of the Croatian Paralympic Committee, Croatian Sports Association of Deaf Persons, and the Croatian Olympic Committee.

***3. To organize sports competitions for children with developmental difficulties and persons with disabilities on the local, regional and national level, as well as encourage their participation on the international level***

Carrier: Ministry of Science, Education and Sports

Co-carriers: Croatian Paralympic Committee, Croatian Sports Association of Deaf Persons, Croatian Olympic Committee, units of local and regional self-administration, civil society organizations

Activity:

1. to organize competitions

Timeframe:

ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. the number of organized competitions on all levels

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and budgets of units of local and regional self-administration and from the budget of the Croatian Paralympic Committee, Croatian Deaf Sports Association and the Croatian Olympic Committee.

#### ***4. To remove architectural barriers and adapt sports facilities (indoor and outdoor) as well as adapt equipment to children with developmental difficulties and persons with disabilities***

Carrier: Ministry of Science, Education and Sports

Co-carriers: units of local and regional self-administration, Croatian Paralympic Committee, Croatian Sports Association of Deaf Persons, civil society organizations

Activities:

1. to conduct an analysis of the current situation
2. to determine priorities
3. to draw up project documentation
4. to obtain permissions
5. to remove architectural barriers and adapt the facilities (the annual increase by 5% in each county)
6. to equip sports facilities (the annual increase by 5% in each county)

Timeframe:

ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. - 6. the number of facilities fully adapted and equipped to meet the needs of children with developmental difficulties and persons with disabilities

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and budgets of units of local and regional self-administration within their regular activities.

**5. To remove architectural barriers and adapt school facilities and equipment with the purpose of providing extra-curricular activities (sports and other) to children with developmental difficulties**

Carrier: Ministry of Science, Education and Sports

Co-carriers: units of local and regional self-administration, Croatian Paralympic Committee, Croatian Deaf Sports Association, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to conduct an analysis of the current situation in all counties
2. to determine priorities
3. to draw up project documentation
4. to obtain permissions
5. to remove architectural barriers and adapt school facilities and equipment

Timeframe:

1. year 2007
2. year 2008
3. year 2009
4. - 5. from the year 2009 to the year 2015

Implementation indicators:

1. - 5. the number of facilities fully adapted and equipped to meet the needs of children with developmental difficulties and persons with disabilities

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and budgets of units of local and regional self-administration within their regular activities.

**6. To build and equip “didactic parks (playgrounds)” and/or educational walking (mountain climbing) pathways in every county for children with developmental difficulties and disabled persons**

Carriers: units of local and regional self-administration

Co-carriers: associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to conduct an analysis and to draw up a plan
2. to draw up project documentation
3. to obtain permissions
4. to equip at least one “didactic park (playground)” in each county and/or educational walking (mountain climbing) pathways in every county for children with developmental difficulties and disabled persons

Timeframe:

1. year 2007
2. year 2008
3. year 2009
4. from the year 2009 and on

Implementation indicators:

1. - 4. the number of “didactic parks (playgrounds)” which are built and equipped in each county and/or educational walking (mountain climbing) pathways for children with developmental difficulties and disabled persons

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and budgets of units of local and regional self-administration within their regular activities.

***7. To adapt, arrange and build public beaches as well as tourist and catering establishments in line with the needs of children with developmental difficulties and persons with disabilities***

Carriers: units of local and regional self-administration

Co-carriers: Ministry of Sea, Tourism, Transport and Development, Croatian National Tourist Board, business subjects which have concessions on public beaches and tourist and catering establishments, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to conduct an analysis and to draw up a plan
2. to draw up project documentation
3. to obtain permissions
4. to build, arrange and adapt at least 15 public beaches and tourist and catering establishments
5. to compile and publish booklets for the purpose of informing the public

Timeframe:

ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. - 4. the number of beaches and tourist and catering establishments which are built, arranged and adapted
5. the number of compiled, published and distributed booklets

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and budgets of units of local and regional self-administration within their regular activities.

## 2.14. Associations of persons with disabilities in civil society

### INTRODUCTION

Civil society has been very early recognized as a potential subject of the active inclusion of persons with disabilities in the social life. By organizing themselves into associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities, unions of associations and networks, both formal and informal, persons with disabilities contributed actively to the establishment of democratic processes of our society. Where the society used its institutional mechanisms, at a possibly slower rate, to create a perception of an improved living standard and offering a possibility for active inclusion of persons with disabilities, the organizations of civil society contributed to the creation of a positive image of persons with disabilities and their needs in the public, thus promoting their inclusion in the life of the community. In this context it is necessary to further stimulate and create a positive environment for the development of voluntary work, which is one of the fundamental values and one of the main features of the work of civil society organizations.

The Government of the Republic of Croatia recognizes non-governmental, non-profitable organizations of persons with disabilities as competent and qualified partners in the development of policies, and develops partnership relations with them in the decision-making process in order to protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities in the most appropriate way. In line with the implementation of international documents, including the UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in the process of adopting national documents the Government of the Republic of Croatia respects the principles of non-discrimination, full and effective participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities into society, the principle of equal opportunities, accessibility, gender equality, evolving capacities of children with developmental difficulties and the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities.

Equal opportunities imply equal access to education, participation in the cultural life, access to medical and social services, as well as employment, which are at the same time major prerequisites for the social inclusion, participation and independence of persons with disabilities. It is also necessary to point out special categories of persons with disabilities because of a greater risk of exclusion from society, and these are: women and girls with disabilities, persons with the most severe type and level of impairment, children with developmental difficulties and young people with disabilities, elderly people with disabilities and persons with disabilities from minority communities and immigrant communities, to which the Strategy pays special attention.

At the time when the Strategy was adopted the Register of Associations in the Republic of Croatia included 315 associations of persons with disabilities. The number itself proves the efforts of persons with disabilities who are focused on making a personal effort in order to improve their living conditions, as well as their willingness to make a full contribution to the overall prosperity of the community where they live and work within the limits of their remaining capacity for work. It is of great importance to mention a significant contribution which the associations of persons with

disabilities have given to the preparation and development of the Strategy.

## **GOALS**

- to raise gradually public awareness of the significance of the associations of persons with disabilities
- to stimulate activities of women with disabilities
- to stimulate the integration of persons with disabilities
- to provide systematically required funding to associations of persons with disabilities enabling their work with the purpose of advancing the quality of life of the most vulnerable groups
- to establish appropriate institutional mechanisms with the purpose of achieving more effective cooperation among the bodies of the state and local government and organizations of the civil society, with the main goal of diminishing social exclusion

## **MEASURES**

### ***1. To raise gradually public awareness of the significance of the associations of persons with disabilities***

Carrier: Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Associations

Co-carriers: National Foundation for Development of Civil Society, Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, units of local and regional self-administration, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to develop partnership between the governmental and public administration and associations of persons with disabilities on all levels
2. to conduct systematic researches on the current situation and position of persons with disabilities
3. to encourage the inclusion of the media

Timeframe:

year 2007 and ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. advanced partnership among the governmental and public administration and associations of persons with disabilities on all levels
2. the number of researches on the current situation and position of persons with disabilities
3. inclusion of the media

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and budgets of units of local and regional self-administration within their regular activities.

## **2. To stimulate active participation of women with disabilities**

Carrier: Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Gender Equality

Co-carriers: Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity; Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Associations, National Foundation for Development of Civil Society, units of local and regional self-administration, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities and other civil society organizations

Activities:

1. to draw up and implement gender-sensible programs aimed at removing stereotypes (especially in areas of special state interest) through county/local committees for gender equality
2. to ensure a systematic financial support to programs for active inclusion of women, especially on the local level, in order to reduce the risk of social exclusion

Timeframe:

year 2007 and ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. the number of programs
2. the number of financially supported programs

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and budgets of units of local and regional self-administration within their regular activities.

## **3. To stimulate employment of persons with disabilities through programs of their associations**

Carrier: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare

Co-carriers: Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Associations, National Foundation for Development of Civil Society, Croatian Chamber of Economy, Croatian Employment Agency, units of local and regional self-administration, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to conduct education of all stakeholders in the employment of persons with disabilities
2. to provide the financial support to programs of associations of persons with disabilities aimed at employment

Timeframe:

ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. the number of conducted educational activities
2. the number of programs with financial support

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and budgets of units of local and regional self-administration within their regular activities.



#### **4. To provide systematic financial support to persons with disabilities, enabling their activities with the aim of advancing the quality of life for persons with disabilities**

Carriers: Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Associations

Co-carriers: National Foundation for Development of Civil Society, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of Family Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economy, Labor and Entrepreneurship, Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Social Partnership, units of local and regional government, associations of persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to conduct an analysis of the existing regulations
2. to propose amendments to the regulations that will oblige units of local and regional self-government to provide financial support to associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities
3. to develop a model of systematic financial support to basic activities of the Union of Associations of Persons with Disabilities from the State Budget
4. to develop models of systematic financial support to associations of persons with disabilities through sponsorships and donations

Timeframe:

1. year 2007
2. - 3. year 2008 and ongoing
4. year 2008

Implementation indicators:

1. conducted analysis of the existing regulations
2. proposed amendments to the regulations that will oblige units of local and regional self-administration to provide financial support to associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities
3. developed model of systematic financial support to basic activities of the Union of Associations of Persons with Disabilities from the State Budget
4. developed models of systematic financial support to basic activities of associations of persons with disabilities through sponsorships and donations

Required funding:

Funding will be provided from the State Budget and budgets of units of local and regional self-administration within their regular activities.

#### **5. To stimulate and develop the cooperation among the associations of persons with disabilities and other organizations of civil society**

Carrier: Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Associations

Co-carriers: National Foundation for Development of Civil Society, associations of persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to develop cooperation among the organizations of civil society and associations of

- persons with disabilities
- 2. to provide sustainability and continuity of work of the Union of the Associations of Persons with Disabilities

Timeframe:

ongoing

Implementation indicators:

- 1. active cooperation among the organizations of civil society and associations of persons with disabilities
- 2. provided continuous work of the Union of the Associations of Persons with Disabilities

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

**6. To conduct education of the heads of the associations of persons with disabilities**

Carrier: Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Associations

Co-carriers: National Foundation for Development of Civil Society, associations of persons with disabilities, associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities and other civil society organizations

Activities:

- 1. to develop programs for education of the heads of the associations
- 2. to hold educational seminars and workshops for the heads of the associations

Timeframe:

- 1. year 2007
- 2. ongoing

Implementation indicators:

- 1. developed programs for education of the heads of the associations
- 2. the number of educational seminars and workshops held for the heads of the associations

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

**7. To ensure equal opportunities within the organizations of civil society in order to be in line with international documents**

Carrier: Commission of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Persons with Disabilities

Co-carriers: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Associations, National Foundation for Development of Civil Society, Ministry of Family Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity, Central State Office for Public Administration, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

- 1. to conduct an analysis of the existing national regulations in comparison to international documents in terms of the principles of equal opportunities

2. propose amendments to regulations

Timeframe:

1. year 2008
2. year 2009 and ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. conducted analysis of the existing national regulations in comparison to international documents in terms of the principles of equal opportunities
2. to proposed amendments to regulations

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

## 2.15. International cooperation

### INTRODUCTION

Taking into consideration the needs of persons with disabilities as one of the most endangered and vulnerable social groups as well as their 10% ratio in the population, it is necessary to pay special attention to taking actions on the international level, establishing contacts and developing all forms of the international cooperation.

The development and expansion of the international cooperation, as well as globalization of the contemporary world, are the processes that deeply penetrate the area of special interest for the people with disabilities, giving them also the opportunity to actively contribute to the international activities on the part of the states as well as on the part of the associations of persons with disabilities and persons with disabilities themselves. In this matter the direct exchange of experiences among persons with disabilities is extremely valuable, as well as accomplishments in the national practice, with the purpose of creating general welfare, solidarity and practical benefit for persons with disabilities.

Through activities on the international level and active policy within the framework of adopting international documents addressing the issues of persons with disabilities, the Republic of Croatia strives to keep pace with other European countries. The process of harmonizing the Croatian legislation with the European Union *acquis communautaire* as well as an active participation in the implementation of the Council of Europe Action Plan to Promote the Rights and Full Participation of Persons with Disabilities in Society – Improvement of the Quality of Life of Persons with Disabilities in Europe 2006 - 2015 is also a contributory factor to this effort. Along with ensuring the above-mentioned dynamics it will also be necessary to make additional efforts in the field of a better presentation of experiences and achievements, active participation of Croatian experts in the international cooperation, and in improvement of informing persons with disabilities in the Republic of Croatia on the current situation and ways of protecting the rights of persons with disabilities in the world.

## GOALS

- to stimulate cooperation among the state administration bodies and civil society organizations on the international level with the purpose of implementation of international documents addressing the issues of persons with disabilities
- to conduct the international cooperation, including the international development programs, ensuring the accessibility to persons with disabilities
- to facilitate the international exchange of information, experiences, educational programs and best practices among persons with disabilities
- to report on the respect of human rights of persons with disabilities, in compliance with the UN Convention on Rights of persons with disabilities and Council of Europe Action Plan to Promote the Rights and Full Participation of Persons with Disabilities in Society: Improvement of the Quality of Life of Persons with Disabilities in Europe 2006 - 2015

## MEASURES

### ***1. To monitor the harmonization of the laws in force with the adopted international documents and ensure their accessibility in adapted formats***

Carrier: Commission of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Persons with Disabilities

Co-carriers: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity; Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration

Activities:

1. to monitor the harmonization of the laws in force with the adopted international documents
2. to propose amendments to particular laws

Timeframe:

ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. implemented amendments

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

### ***2. To make lists and translations of all international documents addressing the issues of persons with disabilities***

Carrier: Commission of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Persons with Disabilities

Co-carriers: Ministry of Family Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration

Activities:

1. to make lists and translations of international documents, and to identify the needs i.e. the appropriate circulation in order to ensure the accessibility to blind and blind-deaf

- persons
2. to publish in black print, in Braille, in enlarged print and in audio version according to the identified needs i.e. the appropriate circulation
  3. to distribute evenly according to the expressed needs

Timeframe:

ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. lists and translations of international documents, and identified needs i.e. the appropriate circulation for the purpose of ensuring the accessibility to blind and blind-deaf persons
2. published documents in black print, in Braille, in enlarged print and in audio version according to the identified needs i.e. the appropriate circulation
3. an equitable distribution according to the expressed needs

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

**3. To submit reports on the implementation of commitments in line with international documents**

Carrier: Ministry of Family Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity

Co-carriers: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship, Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of the Sea, Tourism, Transport and Development, Ministry of Culture, Ministry for Environmental Protection, Physical Planning and Construction, Ministry of Finance, Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Gender Equality

Activities:

1. to establish inter-ministerial work groups for issuing reports according to UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Council of Europe Action Plan to Promote the Rights and Full Participation of Persons with Disabilities in Society – Improvement of the Quality of Life of Persons with Disabilities in Europe 2006 - 2015 and the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
2. to issue reports

Timeframe:

according to accepted commitments

Implementation indicators:

1. established inter-ministerial work groups for issuing reports according to UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Council of Europe Action Plan to Promote the Rights and Full Participation of Persons with Disabilities in Society – Improvement of the Quality of Life of Persons with Disabilities in Europe 2006 - 2015 and the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
2. issued reports

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

#### **4. To submit reports to the Council of Europe on the status of human rights of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Croatia**

Carrier: Ministry of Family Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity

Co-carriers: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integrations, Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Human Rights

Activities:

1. to monitor the work of the Council of Europe by actively participating in working bodies
2. to monitor European legislative on human rights of persons with disabilities, and to submit reports on that issue to competent bodies and associations of persons with disabilities
3. to submit reports to the Council of Europe on the advancement of human rights of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Croatia

Timeframe:

ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. regular participation in working bodies of the Council of Europe
2. ensured regular submission of reports on European legislation on human rights of persons with disabilities to competent bodies and associations of persons with disabilities
3. provided regular submission of reports to the Council of Europe on the advancement of human rights of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Croatia

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

#### **5. To stimulate and support the international cooperation among the associations of persons with disabilities**

Carrier: Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Associations

Co-carriers: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of Family Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity, Commission of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Persons with Disabilities, associations of persons with disabilities and associations dealing with programs providing benefit to persons with disabilities

Activities:

1. to plan required funding for stimulating and supporting the international cooperation among the associations of persons with disabilities

Timeframe:

ongoing

Implementation indicators:

1. provided required funding for stimulating and supporting the international cooperation among the associations of persons with disabilities

Required funding:

Funding will be provided within regular activities from the State Budget.

### 3. FINAL PROVISIONS

1. The Commission of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Persons with Disabilities is obliged to monitor the implementation of the existing regulations addressing the issues of persons with disabilities and to propose measures to the Government of the Republic of Croatia for the purpose of advancing the work of bodies whose scope of work involves activities in favour of the protection of persons with disabilities and realization of their rights; to discuss and express its opinion on the draft laws and regulations which are of vital interest for the improvement of the life of persons with disabilities and their families, as well as to propose amendments to laws and other regulations addressing the issues of persons with disabilities; to study, monitor and propose measures in relation to the international acts, especially the acts of the Council of Europe and European Union, in the field of the status, protection and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, and to express its opinion in the adoption procedures and passing these acts; to gather information on activities for persons with disabilities which are organized by the government bodies, institutions, religious communities, associations and other organizational forms, and to propose measures for a more effective implementation of these acts; to gather information and study experiences of other countries in the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities as well as to harmonize and monitor the implementation of the National Strategy for Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities from the Year 2007 till the Year 2015, and to propose an effective implementation of the planned measures and activities.
2. The Ministry of Family Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity and the Commission of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Persons with Disabilities are designated coordinators for the implementation of the National Strategy for Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities from the Year 2007 till the Year 2015.
3. The state administration bodies on the national and local and regional level are obliged to implement measures from the National Strategy for Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities from the Year 2007 till the Year 2015 for the purpose of advancement of the status of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Croatia.
4. Units of local and regional self-administration are obliged to develop strategies/programs for the purpose of equalizing opportunities for persons with disabilities.
5. All state administration bodies on the national and local and regional level are obliged to appoint coordinators for the implementation of the measures of the National Strategy within 3 (three) months after the adoption.
6. Upon the adoption of the National Strategy all line Ministries are obliged to inform entities and institutions in their domain on the act and purpose of its adoption as well as ensure its accessibility and undertake all necessary measures for the consistent implementation of the Strategy.
7. All bodies entrusted with the implementation of measures of the National Strategy are

obliged to issue regulations for the implementation of measures in their domain and publish them on their websites.

8. All bodies entrusted with the implementation of measures of the National Strategy shall submit report to the Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity about the implementation of measures within their competency every year no later than 31 January.
9. Every year by 1 April the Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity shall submit a report to the Government of the Republic of Croatia about the implementation of measures defined in the National Strategy.
10. All bodies entrusted with the implementation of measures of the National Strategy are obliged to include them in their annual plans and earmark resources for their implementation from the State Budget every year.
11. The Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity shall publish the printed version of the National Strategy within 6 (six) months of its adoption, in black, in Braille letters or in audio version and on its websites, in cooperation with the Commission of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Persons with disabilities.
12. In case of changes in the structure of state administration bodies which are the carriers of the measures, the Ministry responsible for family shall change the carriers of measures within 3 (three) months.
13. The National Strategy for Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities from the Year 2007 till the Year 2015 shall be published in the Official Gazette.



## 4. APPENDICES

**Table 1**  
**REVIEW OF THE NUMBER OF USERS AND THE NUMBER OF INTEGRATED USERS**  
**IN THE REGULAR SYSTEM**

<b>INSTITUTIONS</b>	<b>Number of users</b>	<b>Number (%) of users in the regular system</b>
PRESCHOOL INSTITUTIONS	150,734	2,179 (1.45%)
REGULAR PRIMARY SCHOOLS (2004/2005)	392,963	9,133 (2.32%)
REGULAR SECONDARY SCHOOLS (2006/2007)	187,695	2,766 (1.47 %)
INSTITUTIONS OF HIGER EDUCATION (2005/2006)	160,098	210 (0.13%)
<b>TOTAL</b>		

Source: Ministry of Science, Education and Sports

**Table 2**  
**PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES CATEGORIZED ACCORDING TO THE CAUSE OF DISABILITY, SEX AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, 2001 CENSUS**

	Sex	Total	Physical mobility of persons with disabilities			
			Fully mobile	Permanently limited mobility with the aid of a cane, crutches or a walking frame	Permanently limited mobility with the aid of a wheelchair	Permanently immobile
THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA	total	429,421	324,512	85,220	7,201	12,488
	male	245,897	198,528	38,928	3,768	4,673
	female	183,524	125,984	46,292	3,433	7,815

Cause of disability						
Since birth	total	25,186	19,378	3,428	956	1,424
	male	13,335	10,609	1,527	503	696
	female	11,851	8,769	1,901	453	728
World War II and its consequences	total	13,238	8,900	4,030	116	192
	male	10,556	7,229	3,099	84	144
	female	2,682	1,671	931	32	48
Croatian Homeland War and its consequences	total	45,763	41,193	4,046	357	167
	male	42,913	38,873	3,597	320	123
	female	2,850	2,320	449	37	44
Labor-disabled	total	109,104	94,988	13,179	425	512
	male	71,310	61,784	8,857	326	343
	female	37,794	33,204	4,322	99	169
Illness	total	197,410	132,066	51,913	4,387	9,044
	male	84,155	61,667	17,733	1,897	2,858
	female	113,255	70,399	34,180	2,490	6,186
Traffic accident	total	18,411	13,768	3,943	413	287
	male	12,143	9,248	2,413	292	190
	female	6,268	4,520	1,530	121	97
Other causes	total	20,309	14,219	4,681	547	862
	male	11,485	9,118	1,702	346	319
	female	8,824	5,101	2,979	201	543

Source: State Institute for Statistics, Census of Population, Households and Dwellings, 31st March 2001

**Table 3**  
**THE NUMBER OF RECEIVED FINDINGS ON PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>I. FINDING AND OPINION OF THE FIRST AND THE SECOND INSTANCE INSTITUTION FROM SOCIAL WELFARE</b>	
I.1. Social welfare centres – the first instance institution for evaluation	154,093
I.2. Ministry of Health and Social Welfare - the second instance institution for evaluation	1,247
<b>Total</b>	<b>155,340</b>

<b>2.</b>	<b>DISABILITY FORM – HEALTH CARE</b>	
2.1.	School medicine	1,523
2.2.	Primary health care (general medicine and health care of nursing children and pre-school children)	4,317
2.3.	Specialist health care	208
2.4.	Special institutions	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>6,050</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>DECISIONS ON THE RIGHTS OF WAR DISABLED VETERANS AND WAR DISABLED CIVILIANS</b>	
3.1.	State administration offices, Social activities departments - first instance institution for evaluation	11,585
3.2.	The City of Zagreb, City Office for Health Care, Labor, Social Protection and Veterans – first instance institution for evaluation - Zagreb	1,405
3.3.	Ministry of Health and Social Welfare – second instance institution for evaluation	16,615
3.4.	Decision of the Administrative Court	79
	<b>Total</b>	<b>29,684</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>DECISIONS ON THE FORMS OF UPBRINGING AND EDUCATION OF PUPILS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DIFFICULTIES</b>	
4.1.	State administration offices, Social activities departments - first instance institution for evaluation	10,619
4.2.	City Office for Education and Sports – Zagreb – first instance institution for evaluation	2,752
4.3.	Ministry of Science, Education and Sports – second instance institution for evaluation	26
4.4.	Decision of the Administrative Court	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>13,397</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>MINISTRY OF FAMILY, VETERANS' AFFAIRS AND INTERGENERATIONAL SOLIDARITY</b> (computer database)	<b>43,965</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>CROATIAN PENSION INSURANCE INSTITUTE</b> (computer database)	<b>441,254</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>DECISIONS ON ACCESSIBILITY SIGN</b>	
7.1.	State administration offices, department for economy	11,226
	<b>TOTAL (1+2+3+4+5+6+7)</b>	<b>700,916</b>

Source: Croatian Register of Persons with Disabilities  
Status on: December 21, 2006

