



**Overview of achievements of the Republic of Croatia in the fulfilment of Millennium
Development Goals during the period from 2006 to 2010**

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration
September 2010**

List of state administrative bodies and institutes which contributed to the making of the Document Overview of achievements of the Republic of Croatia in the fulfilment of MDGs during the period from 2006 to 2010

- Office for Human Rights, Government of the Republic of Croatia
- Office for Gender Equality, Government of the Republic of Croatia
- Office for Cooperation with NGOs, Government of the Republic of Croatia

- Central Office for Development Strategy and Coordination of EU Funds
- Central State Administrative Office for e-Croatia

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration (**coordinator**)
- Ministry of Finance
- Ministry of the Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship
- Ministry of Science, Education and Sports
- Ministry of Culture
- Ministry of the Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity
- Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
- Ministry of Environmental Protection, Physical Planning and Construction
- Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development
- Ministry of Regional Development, Forestry and Water Management

- Central Bureau of Statistics
- Croatian Employment Institute

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background information

In September 2000, world leaders from 189 member countries¹ of the United Nations adopted the Millennium Declaration. This represented a political UN document for addressing the challenges of the 21st century. In particular the Millennium Declaration established goals for particular areas of concern for all members and the international community as whole as well as recommended action activities geared toward their achievement by 2015.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) offer a broad framework of action, which enables countries to plan their economic, social, ecological and other areas of development. The MDGs do not aim to encompass or represent all segments of development of a society. Rather they should be regarded as criteria for the achievement of global goals tailored to regional and specific national circumstances and needs.

With just five years before the internationally agreed deadline, 2010 represents a critical juncture in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals globally. Finding themselves at the midpoint of this ambitious agenda, world leaders and relevant heads of international community, are presented with an ideal opportunity to examine successes and obstacles to date towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, as well as to identify further concrete steps necessary for the accelerating their progress. This was the ultimate objective of the United Nations High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDG Summit) convened at the UN Headquarters in New York from 20th to 22nd September 2010.

The Summit has been held in light of the fact that a large number of countries, especially countries in transition and developing countries, have suffered negative consequences as a result of the global financial and economic crises of 2008 and 2009. These crises which rapidly spread through a highly globalised and interconnected world economy, brought about a decrease in GDP and an economic downturn, the slow down and a decrease of GDP. In circumstances when it is no longer easy to secure resources through either domestic or foreign investment, the risk of lagging behind in infrastructure, social, health, educational or any other projects has become very high. The impact of this on society's development can be long term.

1.2. MDGs Implementation in the Republic of Croatia in relation to its EU accession process

The first National Millennium Development Goals Report drafted in July 2004, was the result of joint efforts by State administration bodies of the Republic of Croatia and NGOs, under the coordination of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration and in intensive cooperation with the UN Development Programme (UNDP) Croatia office. The report was officially submitted to the UN in September of the same year. This was followed the first

¹ UN Member countries at the time of adoption of Declaration

National Progress Report on Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in the Republic of Croatia covering the period between August 2004 to December 2005.

For the Republic of Croatia purposes, eight national goals and thirty-one Targets have been identified, corresponding to the country's specific circumstances and development conditions.

National ownership of development strategies, as well as the corresponding capacities of national institutions to invest and implement MDG-related activities is fundamental for the progress in achieving the MDGs. This applies to both securing adequate financial resources for specific projects from the national budget, as well as, for ensuring conducive conditions for effective management of development projects. In such progress national resources should be included as much as it is possibly viable.

The European parliament declared 2010 as the *European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion*, directing activities towards raising awareness on poverty and social exclusion among government institutions, civil society and the general public. Inequality driven by differences in income, gender, age and social exclusion, can also slow down progress of the MDGs. Therefore it is necessary to give these issues particular attention. During the past several years in the Republic of Croatia, there has been a noticeable trend of increased financing of activities in this field. Furthermore, through signing the *Joint Memorandum of Social Inclusion (JIM)* with the European Commission, Croatia has identified the main challenges and priorities in its fight against poverty and social exclusion (Chapter 8). Since broad consensus on these priorities has been achieved amongst the major stakeholders of Croatian society, in agreement with the European Commission, Croatia assumed responsibility for implementation of established goals therein. Upon signing the JIM the Republic of Croatia adopted two national implementation plans on social inclusion (2007-2008 and 2009-2010) which serve as roadmaps for implementation of measures adopted as priorities pursuant to the JIM. The implementation plans respond to ensure the need of continuous adaptation of measures to new circumstances.”

The ultimate objective of eradication of poverty underpins all development programmes implemented within under the MDGs framework, while the underlying factors necessary for development are economic growth, good governance and quality national policies. Moreover, the main strategic document of the Republic of Croatia “*The Strategic Framework for Development 2006-2013*”, from which all future sectoral strategies are drawn. Defines the main strategic goal for the 2006-2013 period as: *growth and employment in a competitive market economy which is functional in an European social state of the 21st century*. By focusing on activities that strengthen social inclusion, civil society organizations, these significantly contribute towards the eradication of poverty, especially within the most excluded sectors of society.

As a country which has made the transition from a development aid recipient country to a donor country, as well as like other EU member states, Croatia adopted the EU support plan for the achievement of the MDGs. Moreover Croatia has taken assumed a more active approach in donating development aid, since signing Millennium Declaration which, among other things, stresses the importance of international cooperation and global partnership for the successful fulfilment of the Millennium agenda as a whole.

It is important to note that, for the implementation of projects and other programmes which contribute to the achievement of Millennium Development Goals, civil society organizations utilized significant funds from national and public sources, as well as European assistance. In

Croatia, a large number of development-focused projects are financed from EU funds, in line with the *National Development Strategy of the Republic of Croatia*.

1.3. Characteristics of Millennium Development Goals

Evaluation of certain MDGS in their individually is difficult. The Millennium Development Goals do not represent individual and separate goals with respective Targets, but a multidimensional set of goals which in large are mutually complimenting. Several current practical examples demonstrate the degree to which achievement of the MDGs is an interdependent and contingent process.

Through implementation of projects pursuant to MDG 1: “Eradicate relative poverty”, which aim to promote the development of Areas of Special State Concern in Croatia (in accordance with the Croatia’s *Strategy for Regional Development of the Republic of Croatia*). Under this strategy, four development programmes are planned to be carried out: the *Program for demographic growth*, the *Program for strengthening educational capacities*, the *Program for attracting of investors to assisted areas*, and the *Program for the development of regional clusters within assisted areas*. Furthermore, projects related to building and reconstructing of municipal and social infrastructure, as well as their efficient maintenance and management, will create prerequisites for the development of all segments of socio-economic growth, improving the quality of living standards for the local population, as well as, strengthening the competitiveness of individual regions within the country.

The multidisciplinary characteristics of the MDGs is also apparent in the autonomous women’s house project, “*Women's Shelter and Counselling Centre – providing and strengthening services and support for women and children survivors of domestic violence*”, which was financed in part from the EU CARDS 2004 Fund. The aim of the project was to improve access to social services for female domestic violence victims. This is directly linked to MDG 3 on gender equality and empowering women. Indeed, the national Target aims at preventing all forms of violence against women. The project offers essential services designed to meet the specific needs of female victims of domestic violence. It further serves to empower these women to enable them to deal with legal and property matters. Implementation of this project further advances achievement of MDG 1 related to poverty reduction and elimination, by combating the challenge of social exclusion. Not only have women benefited from this project, it is also providing important protection for children against domestic violence. Consequently this is a pertinent contribution towards achieving MDG 4 which aims to reduce child mortality, where this is caused by domestic violence.

An example project being conducted in furtherance of MDG 7 – “*Ensure environmental sustainability*” is demonstrating that, the sustainable management of forests and sustainable utilisation of wood and non-wood products, enables not only forestry-related economic development (e.g. wood processing industry, tourism, hunting), but it also fosters the development of other activities (e.g. energy, transport services, pharmaceuticals), notably in Croatia’s rural regions.

Moreover, the United Nations declared 2010 as an International Year of Biodiversity with the theme “Biodiversity for Development”. Moreover the U.N. General Assembly held the first High-level plenary meeting dedicated to this issue in September 2010. Biodiversity is recognised as the ultimate source of numerous goods – from food and medicine to building materials, while ecosystems secure irreplaceable living conditions through the provision of air, clean water, soil regeneration, pollination and climate regulation, to name a few.

1.4. Overview of achievements in the Republic of Croatia 2010

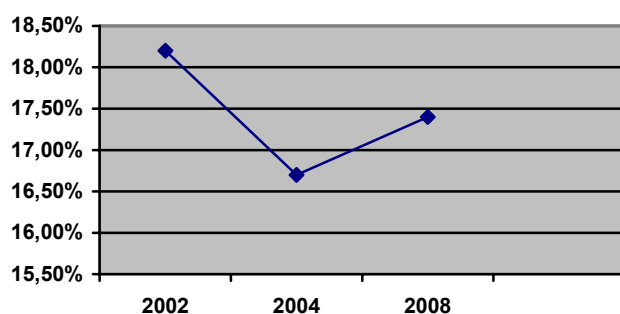
Fully cognizant of the benefits of monitoring current conditions and trends in national activities focused towards development, as well as of concurrent preparations for the High-level plenary meeting on Millennium Development Goals in New York, relevant ministries² and government offices collected information on progress accomplished since the last official report on the progress and achievement of MDGs. This covered the period from August 2004 until December 2005. This document offered a summary overview of actions taken during that period, as well as actions planned for the future. The document further clearly identified challenges that were being faced in implementation of the MDGs, and offered recommendations and examples of good practice within the MDGs framework, by way of a roadmap to proceed forward.

2. MDGs OVERVIEW

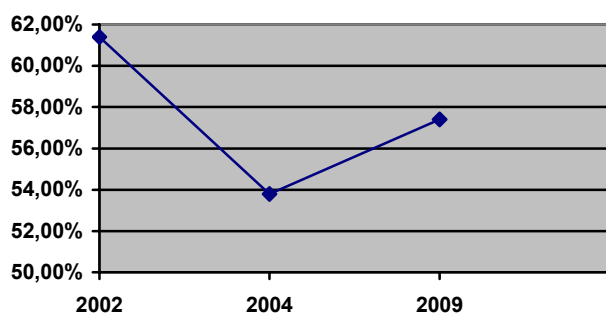
2.1. Millennium Development Goal 1: Eradicate relative poverty

Target 1: In the period between 2001 and 2015 reduce by half the number of people living in relative poverty

Indicator 1a: At-risk-of-poverty rate (according to the Household Budget Survey)



Indicator 1b: The percentage of the long-term unemployed persons aged 15 to 74 (people unemployed for 12 months or more, as a proportion of the total unemployed, according to the Labour Force Survey)



Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, Labour Force Survey, 2009

² See the list of state administration bodies that contributed to this document

Current situation:

In 2009, the Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted **the National Employment Promotion Plan for 2009 and 2010** with the implementation measures following the priorities of the employment policy established in the revised Lisbon Strategy on Growth and Jobs. The revised Strategy stresses the importance of “learning economy” and innovation for the creation of new jobs and establishment of the EU as a desirable investment destination. It also underlines the importance of life-long learning, training and education of adults, as an investment in human capital which would enhance growth in both employment and productivity. The National Employment Promotion Plan establishes basic principles of the national employment policy, defines implementation tasks for the authorized bodies of the state administration and public institutions and promotes their cooperation. Key priorities that the Republic of Croatia intends to realize through this Plan are: increase the participation rate of women of primary age group (25 - 49), as well as older people and youth, solution of the long-term unemployment problem, reduction of the skills’ disproportion in the labour market, workers’ and companies’ adjustability improvement, increase of investments in human resources through better education and skills, good management and administrative capacity building.

Interventions in the sense of motivation, education and employment’s co-financing are oriented towards: primary age women of lower and inadequate education, unemployed persons (50+) and employed ones threatened by job loss, the young people that lost touch with the secondary school system, the youth without work experience, the long-term unemployed. A special emphasis should be put on disabled persons, victims of family violence, single parents, Croatian war veterans and treated addicts. Integral part of the Plan is also a *National Programme for Romani*, which includes measures for employment, as well as co-financing of employment for Romani national minority.

In 2009, a new cycle of active employment measures began in Croatia, based on the **Joint Assessment of the Employment Policy Priorities**³ that the Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted in 2008.

The JAP provides an analysis of economy and the labour market, as well as Croatian employment policies, identifying employment challenges and priorities for action. This document presents an agreed set of employment policy goals, which are necessary to further the transformation of the Croatian labour market and the preparation for the process of accession to the EU, especially by adjusting the employment system. Priorities for action identified in the JAP are: attract and keep more people in employment, increase labour supply and modernize social protection systems, improve adaptability of workers and enterprises, increase investment in human capital through better education and skills, as well as, by promoting the principles of good governance, include the social partners in the implementation of the JAP.

With the Amendments to the Social Welfare Act adopted in 2007, as the crucial document regulating the system of social benefits and social welfare, based on the principle of subsidiarity, the financial status of all beneficiary groups has been improved, the administration reduced and new rights introduced (the right to the status of nursing parent, nursing as professional help in the family etc.). The relatively frequent amendments to this regulation result from the efforts to meet the needs of the beneficiaries, which are becoming

³ *Joint Assessment of the Employment Policy Priorities of the Republic of Croatia – JAP*

more complex and numerous, with the available resources and to harmonize the social welfare system with the overall reforms and changes initiated in the field of social politics.

With the Government Decision adopted on 1 November 2008, the base for exercising the right to social welfare was increased from HRK 400.00 to HRK 500.00.

At the same time, in strengthening institutional capacities of civil society organisations active in the field of social welfare, as well as in financing their programmes and projects in the period from 2006 to 2010, efforts have been made to strengthen and encourage civil society organisations to develop social infrastructure in the local community, in order to ensure higher accessibility of social services to socially vulnerable groups and the development of alternative services, as well as an increase in the number of service providers, as a supplement to the services provided by government institutions.

According to the information from a series of reports published by the Croatian Government's Office for Cooperation with NGOs regarding financial support given for projects and programmes handled by civil society organisations, in 2007 23,561,963 EUR were used from public funds towards the achievement of Millennium Development Goal "Eradicate Relative Poverty", while 29,802,866 EUR and 26,852,212 EUR were used in 2008 and 2009 respectively. Furthermore, 17 projects of civil society organisations, totalling 2,912,306 EUR, were financed through CARDS 2003 projects providing technical assistance, CARDS 2003/2004 grant scheme "Good Governance and the Rule of Law", CARDS 2004 "Social Services Delivery by the Non-profit Sector", and PHARE 2006 grant scheme "Enabling the Civil Society Sector for Active Contribution in the Pre-accession Process".

In the programme period 2007-2011, within the framework of the priority related to reinforcing social inclusion of people at a disadvantage and of the measures related to supporting access to employment of disadvantaged groups and the development of social services to improve employment opportunities, the following projects are being implemented: Establishing Support in Social Integration and Employment of Disadvantaged and Marginalised Groups, Women in the Labour Market and Fostering Effective Inclusion of the Persons with Disabilities into the Labour Market. The following projects are being prepared: Improving Labour Market Access of Disadvantaged Groups, Broadening the Network of Social Services in the Community and Support to the Social Welfare Sector in the Process of Further Deinstitutionalisation of Social Services.

The Republic of Croatia, as a candidate country for the EU membership, is a beneficiary of pre-accession EU programmes. In this capacity, Croatia utilizes funds for all components of **pre-accession IPA Programme**⁴, including the component Human Resources Development, which grants 69,98 mil EUR for the period 2007-2011. IPA finances projects in accordance with the Operational Programme related to the afore mentioned component, specifically: improvement of accession to employment and sustainable inclusion in the labour market, social inclusion, strengthening and integration into the labour market of the groups in unfavourable position, promotion of human resources and employability, as well as technical assistance.

In order to include persons with disabilities on the open labour market, **projects financed by the EU funds** (IPA, "PROGRESS" – EU's employment and social solidarity programme) are being implemented. Other activities are based on the **National Employment Promotion Plan and a National Implementation Plan on Social Inclusion**. Furthermore, in 2002 the Fund

⁴ *Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance*

for Professional rehabilitation and Employing Disabled Persons was established. The Fund pays out regular and special incentives for employing disabled persons – in 2009 5,5 ME was paid for incentives to the employers. Furthermore, through **four CARDS and one PHARE** program, in the period from 2004 to 2009 (total value 49.5 mil EUR), projects for realization of the goal 1 were financed. The projects were directed towards sustainable development and towards supporting the war affected areas, encouragement of socio-economic cohesion and towards business and touristic infrastructure development. For example: procurement of equipment for vocational secondary schools, polytechnics and universities, reconstruction of secondary schools infrastructure, construction of building for children with special needs, reconstruction of nursing centre, construction/reconstruction and equipping of business zones, incubators and centres, construction of touristic centres and gyms, revitalization of natural assets aiming at increasing of tourism, construction of basic local infrastructure (water supply), demining, education of the population with the aim of their involvement in economic activities, etc. All above mentioned programs were successfully completed, and the Directorate for Integrated Regional Development has continued with implementation of activities directly referring to employment stimulation and increase in competitiveness.

Also, through the National IPA programme for 2010, component “Help in transition and strengthening of institutions”, a project worth 4,0 mil EUR is planned for demining in the areas of Vukovarsko-srijemska and Osječko-baranjska county. Implementation of this project will also contribute to the economic recovery in the areas devastated by war, as well as for the fulfilment of this goal.

The **Act on Regional Development** was adopted in the end of 2009, and the Regulations on implementation under the same Act are in the process of adoption. The **Strategy of Regional Development** is also in the process of adoption, **and by the end of 2010, the new Act on Assisted Areas is to be adopted.** Institutional systems and measures that will evenly contribute to the development of all areas in the Republic of Croatia are planned by this legislation. Also, it will contribute to promotion of demographic and economic process, the return of the pre-war population and permanent housing, so that the problems within the Areas of Special State Concern are addressed and seeking to be solved in the comprehensive manner.

Challenges and Recommendations:

Major challenge on the Croatian labour market is considerably lower rate of employment in comparison to the EU countries average. From 2001 till 2008 significant employment increase and unemployment reduction was recorded, largely due to the economic growth. However, in 2009, rate of unemployment was 6,1% higher than in 2005, which was caused by the deep recession, i.e. employment reduction, especially in processing industry, construction and trade.

Although the unemployment rate refers to all age, gender and education groups of the able-bodied population, a special attention is to be paid to women of primary age group, especially the ones having low or inadequate qualifications, young without work experience and older people in general. Since Croatia, in comparison to the EU, has significantly lower share of highly educated workers in total number of the employed, it is of key importance that Croatia includes more people in the higher education and raises the level of education among population of all age groups. Also, in order to provide work experience to the young and in that way enable them to find a job much easier, it is necessary to better adjust their education to labour market requirements, as well as to adjust education system as a response to new

requirements of the labour market. This would enable overcoming of current problem of disproportion between offer and demand for certain educational profiles and skills in many sectors.

Furthermore, it is necessary to more efficiently solve employment problems of national minorities, as well as persons with disabilities. Special attention should be given to the status of Croatian war veterans from the Homeland War. In addition, reduction of significant regional differences, a more progressive development of outlying regions, a decrease in employment differences, unemployment, average salaries and production per capita, as well as the level of education among the population should be specially addressed.

Example of good practice:

One of the problems that the Croatian labour market faces are significant regional differences which result from slow development of some outlying regions, and especially areas that have suffered significant war damages. The measure which contributes to the fulfilment of the first MDG is the implementation of the Program of Social and Economic Recovery (CSERP). The value of the Program is 60 mil EUR and it is being implemented in 13 Croatian counties in the Areas of Special State Concern (ASSC). Out of the total value of the Program, the 35 mil EUR is a loan resource from the World Bank, while the 25 mil EUR are provided from the national budget resources. The aim of the Program for the Social and Economic Recovery is to increase social cohesion and enable economic recovery in the Areas of Special State Concern, namely through 4 components:

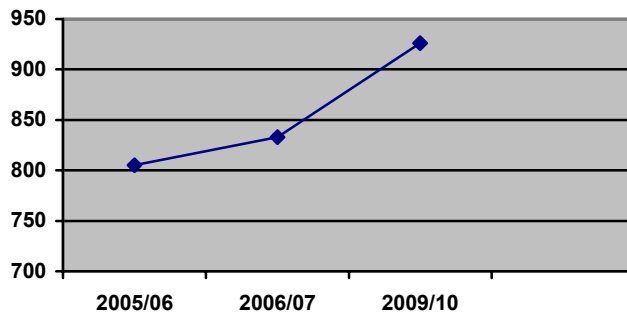
1. Community Investment Component (38 mil EUR) – has three sub - components:
 - Social Inclusion (7 mil EUR),
 - Small Community Infrastructure (7 mil EUR),
 - Economic Revitalization (24 mil EUR)
2. Demining (17 mil EUR)
3. Institutional development (2 mil EUR)
4. Project management (3 mil EUR)

CSERP with its sub-projects directly influenced the lives of 80.000 people, which represents direct support for the 12% of population that lives in the ASSC. Estimates suggest that the continuation of the Programme will increase this rate to 20%. The following criteria support this estimate: number of direct beneficiaries and a number of newly employed, as well as the fact that the help to the local community through the implementation of this Programme has already exceeded the proposed objectives of the Programme. Continuation of CSERP implementation will not only enable sustainability, but also, with the increase of the number of beneficiaries, improve the standard of living for population in ASSC and move it more closely to the Croatian average.

2.2. Millennium Development Goal 2: Guaranteed education for all

Target 1: Harmonisation of education with the European Community – the Bologna process

Indicator 1d: The reform of the curriculum in accordance with the needs of modern society and the economic development of Croatia – Number of courses harmonised with the Bologna Declaration



Current situation:

By adopting the **Education Sector Development Plan 2005 - 2010** as its fundamental document for the development of the education sector, Croatia embarked on the process of creating and developing a knowledge society, and initiated changes at all levels of the education system. Furthermore, with the aim of developing “schools tailored to pupils,” the Croatian National Education Standard (CNES) was developed, as the basis for changes in teaching methodology in primary education (ISCED1 and ISCED2). As part of the CNES project, in 2005/2006 forty nine primary schools implemented the Experimental Primary School Curriculum, which promoted teaching methods based on research, project work and active pupil participation. Since the school year 2006/2007, all primary schools have implemented the new Primary School Curriculum, which was developed after the monitoring and evaluation of the Experimental Curriculum. The implementation details of the guidelines for the development of the education system are defined by the **National Curriculum Framework**.

In 2008, the adoption of the **Primary and Secondary Education Act** created the preconditions for the transition to a curriculum-based approach to education, i.e. the adoption of the National Curriculum Framework for all levels of education, from preschool education to secondary school. The National Curriculum Framework, which is currently in the process of adoption, will be the basis for the design of the school curriculum. **National Educational Standards for Primary and Secondary Education** have also been adopted.

The work towards meeting **Target 1: Harmonisation of education with the European Community – the Bologna process**, started at the legislative level, with the adoption of the Science and Higher Education Act, which reformed the higher education system according to the principles of the Bologna Declaration. The implementation of new university and specialist study programmes began in the academic year 2005/2006, shortly after the new programmes were designed. The ECTS system was implemented the same year.

In 2009, the Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education was adopted. The Act increased the autonomy of universities, by allowing them to accredit new study programmes following the prescribed process of internal evaluation. The Act also defined the conditions and criteria for internal and external evaluation of higher education institutions and their study programmes.

With regard to **Target 2: Successful inclusion into work, the economy and modern knowledge-based technology**⁵, it is important to emphasize the special attention given to specialist vocational education and training, supported by the **Vocational Education and Training Act** and the **Strategy for the Development of Vocational Education and Training 2008 – 2013**. The Strategy recognized the importance of broad knowledge, skills and competences, which lead to greater career flexibility and employability and **allow workers to respond to rapid changes in the labour market and technological developments through continuous education and learning**. In view of that, the Strategy defined five key goals for the reform of vocational education and training: developing qualifications based on competences and learning outcomes, continuous harmonisation of education with the needs of the labour market, developing a system of vocational education and training which promotes lifelong learning and mobility, defining the roles of teachers in the system based on learning outcomes, and establishing a quality assurance system.

In addition, funds from the Croatian State Budget were allocated to support projects and programmes implemented by civil society organizations which contributed toward the achievement of this MDG through public funds amounted to 6,214,311 EUR in 2007, 7,902,004 EUR in 2008 and 6,768,924 EUR in 2009. Furthermore, another 109,443 EUR were used for a project aimed at helping in the achievement of the same goal through the PHARE 2006 “Enabling the Civil Society Sector for Active Contribution in the Pre-accession Process” grant scheme.

Specialised courses organised at institutions of higher education give students an appropriate level of knowledge and skills to pursue professions, and allow them to join the labour market. This way, in-service training becomes an important form of professional development. In addition, pursuant to the Science and Higher Education Act, institutions of higher education may establish various vocational training programmes in view of the concept of lifelong learning. Such a programme is not considered to be a university course within the meaning of this Act, but, irrespective of this, the institution of higher education issues a special certificate to the learner after the termination of the vocational training programme.

Furthermore, legislation which ensures greater access to education for children and youth with special needs has been improved through the design of 51 programmes for low-skilled qualifications, the provision of lifelong professional orientation and development, and the allocation of teaching assistants for children with special needs. Employees in the education system continuously undergo training for working with children with special needs. Children with impaired sight received free textbooks, and a network of primary and secondary schools without architectural barriers was developed according to the principle of regional equity. Funds are allocated from the State Budget for these activities annually.

The education system also provides greater access for children and pupils with special needs by developing more concrete positive legislation and enrolment policies, enhancing infrastructure, and promoting project work and curricular changes.

⁵ The Ministry of Science, Education and Sports has recommended that **this Target be renamed “Acquisition of competences for successful inclusion in the labour market and lifelong learning, with special emphasis on using modern technology.”** If understood this way, the Target would allow greater insight into the reform efforts of the system.

For example, in order to allow for the acquisition of low-skilled qualifications, new vocational study programmes were developed and adopted. The enrolment policies and criteria for the 51 new programmes ensure greater access to the right to education according to special needs and abilities. Projects funded by IPA pre-accession assistance strengthen institutional capacities (of kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, higher education institutions) for quality support to users with special needs, teaching assistants are being phased into classes, and integration capacities are being strengthened. Subject to demand, special classes can be set up in regular primary schools, and sometimes in specialised institutions. Pupils with special needs have the right to subsidized transportation to school. Teacher education and training continues.

Upcoming legislation will strengthen the role of expert teams and other forms of support to pupils, parents, teachers and specialists for a higher-quality integration of all students with special needs.

In the school year 2008/2009, all primary school pupils received free textbooks. In the school year 2009/2010, free textbooks were provided for blind pupils and pupils with impaired sight, families with several children, children of deceased, imprisoned or missing Croatian veterans, disabled war veterans and their children, as well as veterans in education themselves, on the condition that the income per household member did not exceed approximately 275 EUR (double the census amount, i.e. two times 30 per cent of the budget baseline). Assistance for textbooks and other school material was also allocated to families entitled to permanent assistance and primary and secondary school children in foster care.

Along the same principles, pursuant to the Act on Areas of Special State Concern, in the school year 2008/2009 local self-government units received funds for the free transport of 3rd and 4th grade secondary school pupils living in areas of special state care. This included 151 units of local self-government in 20 counties.

In the area of **infrastructure**, within the Croatian Regional Development Operational Programme CEB – V Reconstruction and Construction of Schools in Areas of Special State Care and EIB – II Integral Development of Local Communities, new kindergartens, schools and school sports halls are under construction. The CEB and EIB programmes have a portfolio of about 290 such projects. So far, a total of 207 subprojects, or 72%, have been realized.

Through the project *Preparatory measures for the Lifelong Learning Programme and the Youth in Action Programme* within Component I of IPA 2007, and its continuation within Component I of IPA 2009, the national Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes continues to prepare its staff and potential users for the implementation of these programmes, and finances participation in pilot activities.

Challenges and recommendations:

Quality assurance in the Croatian system of higher education is regulated by the Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education. The Act defines a series of procedures for external evaluation and quality assurance for Croatian higher education institutions. These procedures do not only oblige all higher education institutions in Croatia to monitor their quality and develop continuously, but also ensure that all Croatian higher education institutions meet the minimum quality criteria, which provides equity for students.

In the next five years, the Agency will evaluate all higher education institutions in accordance with criteria developed by renowned European and American experts in cooperation with the institutions themselves. Students are guaranteed participation in all quality assurance procedures, starting from quality assurance units in faculties and universities up to expert committees which give opinions on the work of a higher education institution and bodies which make accreditation decisions on the basis of those opinions. The decisions will be made public, allowing students access to information on which to base their selection of study programmes.

The Act should improve the work of Croatian higher education institutions, increase their accountability to citizens and enhance the quality of education provided to students. The Act should also contribute to the recognisability of Croatian higher education institutions and qualifications abroad, which would lead to strengthened international connections and greater student and teacher mobility, as well as the equitable inclusion of students in the international labour market.

Example of good practice:

Croatia – Knowledge Society // e-Islands Project

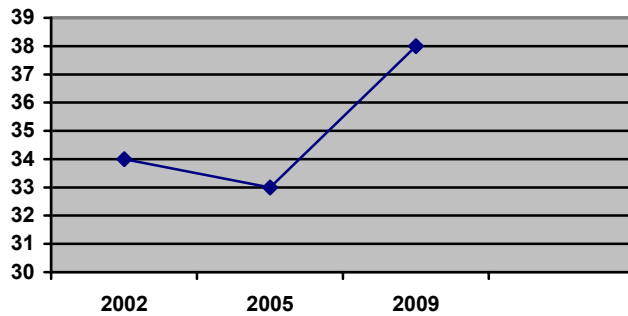
Through the STUDOM project, in cooperation with e-Croatia, all students living in student accommodation are provided with free high-speed internet access. In addition to internet access, the service allows students to register for exams and access their faculties' and universities' e-learning sites as well as international databases. Another innovation is the e-student book, or the "smart card" – the first such project in this part of the world. The e-student book serves as a full replacement for the classical student book: it will be used for registering students' attendance in lectures, for access to libraries, etc. It will also contribute to student mobility, one of the main purposes of the Bologna process. The newly-established Centre for Online Databases, the Voyager system, includes all libraries in the Croatian system of education and science, and connects 29 classrooms in 15 Croatian cities through a video-conferencing system. From the perspective of IT infrastructure, Croatia has become a knowledge society. In addition, with the introduction of State Graduation Examinations and the construction of the National IT System for Applying to Higher Education Institutions, starting with 2010 the Croatian education system has a fully electronic and transparent method for applying and enrolling to higher education institutions.

It should also be noted that Croatia has developed the project e-Islands, which allows distance teaching in regional schools in islands with small populations by connecting these schools with schools in larger cities on the mainland. The e-Islands project was designed with the aim of improving and enhancing the education process in islands to allow the residents of remote islands with small populations to stay there permanently. This system transmits image, tone and educational contents in real time. So far, 21 island schools have been benefiting from it.

2.3. Millennium Development Goal 3: Gender equality and empowerment of women

Target 2: Increase the participation of women in the political decision-making process

Indicator 2a: The number of women in the Croatian Parliament



Current Situation:

As part of the activities under Target 1: “Introduction of gender sensitive education into curricula and programmes”, work is being done on improving the legislative framework. Thus, the *Primary and Secondary School Textbooks Act* of 2006 prescribes that, among other things, a textbook must also meet ethical requirements, and that any textbook which is inadequate in terms of human and minority rights, fundamental freedoms, gender relations, and education for a democratic society shall not be approved. In February 2010, a new *Primary and Secondary School Textbooks Act*, which prescribes a new Textbook Standard to be drawn up within a determined legal period, was adopted.

The proposal of the **National Framework Curriculum** also stresses the importance for schools of a non-discriminatory approach in their curricula, and respect for diversity and tolerance within the school and social community.

In addition, a new “Gender Equality” educational module has been proposed as part of the professional training of educational staff based on the new **National Programme of Education for Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship**. The National Programme brings together the previously acquired experience in implementing such education in our system, and the experiences of other countries. The Programme includes the following components: education for human rights; education for democratic citizenship, identity and intercultural education; education for peace and non-violent conflict resolution; education for sustainable development; education for preventing prejudice and discrimination; humanitarian law research, etc.

Based on the obligations arising from the implementation of the **National Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality 2006-2010**, the task force has also drawn up a **Programme of Professional Development and Training in the Area of Gender Equality** for the teaching profession. The Programme is being delivered by way of pilot seminars for elementary school teachers.

Various universities also include courses dealing with gender issues in their curricula,⁶ while colleges develop their own programmes of study at the first, second and third educational level. The National Council for Higher Education adopted a **Recommendation** in 2008, stating that the National Council for Higher Education supports the introduction of gender sensitive education at the level of higher education, and thus recommends the introduction and development of a new course dealing with “women's studies”, and encourages institutions of higher education to develop a proposal for a “women's studies” programme of study.

Activities are being carried out in the Republic of Croatia to increase the participation of women in the process of political decision making. A woman has been leading the Croatian government since 2009. One of the five deputy prime ministers is also a woman. One of the 16 ministries is headed by a woman. If we include the government secretary, the total participation of women in the government amounts to 20%.⁷ Furthermore, 38 out of 153 seats in the Croatian parliament are held by women, which accounts for 25% of the total, showing a moderate upward trend compared to 2005 (32 MPs – 21.1%).

At the last local elections in 2009, out of a total of 47,339 persons on the candidate lists, there were 11,594 women (24.5%) and 35,745 men (75.5%). In comparison with the data from the local elections in 2005, it may be concluded that the total participation of women on the lists for representative bodies at all levels has significantly grown: the number of women candidates has increased from 19% to 24.5%.

According to the **Gender Equality Act**, when proposing candidate lists for the election of members of local self-government representative bodies, proposers must comply with the gender equality principle and take care that there is balanced representation of women and men on the electoral lists. A representation of one gender in the bodies of political and public decision-making lower than 40% is considered to be a significant imbalance in favour of the other gender.

The economic crisis has also left trace on the indicators of Target 3: “Strengthening women economically”: the unemployment rate of women decreased from 11.1% in 2007 to 10% in 2008, but grew to 10.3% in 2009. Nevertheless, the participation of women in self-employment increased from 37.8% in 2007 to 38.4% in 2008, and to 38.7% in 2009. In 2010, the government adopted the **Women's Entrepreneurship Development Strategy 2010 – 2013**. Drawing up the Strategy arose from the obligation to implement the National Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality 2006 – 2010, and its goal is to increase the number of female entrepreneurs and create the conditions to involve a larger number of women in the labour market and reduce their rate of unemployment.

In addition, with regard to the issue of empowering women economically, and for the purpose of helping families, especially single-parent families, the possibility of organising extended day school programmes for children in elementary schools was introduced in 2008, as was the Croatian National Educational Standard for the elementary school system. Working parents, especially single mothers, can in this way strike a better balance between their working and

⁶ The Psychology of Gender and Sexuality; Domestic Violence and Abuse; Sexual and Gender Identities; Gender Textuality; Body and Subject; Sexual Choice and Culture; Women and Education; Bioethics and Women's Issues; Literature and Philosophy; Gender Sociology; Feminist Theories and Movements; Gender, Women's Movements and Society; Gender and Social Work; Social Work and Domestic Violence; Introduction to Gender Studies; Feminist Theories; Gender Equality and the Media, etc.

⁷ The participation of women in the government (ministers) amounted to 31% (4 ministers) in 2005.

family lives. Besides, continuous financial support has been provided for projects of civil society organisations aimed at empowering families, including single-parent families.

The problem of domestic violence has also been continuously tackled in the wider context of family relations. Indeed, the suppression of violence against women is a component of the **National Strategy for Protection against Family Violence for the period 2008 to 2010**, which the Croatian government adopted in 2007 with a view to strengthening the existing and creating a new legal, educational, social and institutional system of protection for victims of domestic violence. Measures are directed at the training of experts working in this field, the development of psychosocial treatment for the perpetrators of violence, the analysis and implementation of laws, the development of shelters and support for victims of domestic violence, improving the status of victims in proceedings, and raising public awareness of this issue. Special attention in the National Strategy has been given to women with disabilities who are victims of domestic violence, and their special needs are always taken into account when implementing measures for their protection.

In conformity with the measures included in the National Strategy, the competent government bodies have organised various training programmes, lectures, forums and round-table discussions. The training organised by the Judicial Academy in the last three years has involved 375 judicial officials and employees. The Police Academy has also organised various courses and seminars for about 1,000 police officers, and Police School students attend lectures in the field of criminal law which deal with the criminal offences of violence against women through the Secondary School Education Programme.

Since 2005, great progress has been achieved in **fighting domestic violence** and in enhancing **criminal law protection for the victims of family violence and trafficking in human beings**. Thus, the new **Criminal Procedure Act** (December 2008) introduced for the first time in the Croatian legal system the victim as participant in court proceedings with special rights (psychological and expert assistance, participation in proceedings as the injured party, the right to a counsellor, the right to compensation of tangible and intangible damage funded from the state budget, etc.). In the period since the last Report of 2005, the number of counselling centres and shelters for victims of domestic violence has increased. According to the data of December 2009, assistance to victims of domestic violence by way of psychological counselling was offered by 37, and accommodation services by 19 legal entities or civil society organisations, social welfare institutions, or religious institutions.

Financial support from the public funds of the Republic of Croatia to projects proposed by civil society organisations (CSOs) has also helped to improve this situation. In the period from 2004 to 2008, a total of 84 projects directed towards the protection of, and assistance to, victims of domestic violence were implemented by using this type of financial support. According to the information of the Croatian Government's Office for Cooperation with NGOs overall support measures in that field totaled 143,804 euros in 2007, 403,528 euros in 2008 and 344,709 euros in 2009. There is a marked trend of increased fund allocations for gender equality issues and for awareness raising in the domain of trafficking in human beings and assistance to victims, and especially for improving the status of women with disabilities (funds have quadrupled since 2007) and women victims of violence (the number of projects has tripled since 2004).

Regarding **Target 7 – “Harmonisation of private and professional life”**, it has to be stressed that the *Act on Maternity and Parental Benefits* has been in force since the beginning of 2009, which, among other things, promotes the inclusion of fathers in the life of the family,

and the balanced presence of both parents in the labour market. While in 2005 the place of fathers in the total number of beneficiaries of maternity and parental benefits amounted to approximately 1%, in 2009 it amounted to approximately 2%, and a further increase of the use of these benefits by fathers is expected.

From 2006 to 2008, by using funds from the State Budget and with the financial support of the World Bank, a total of 71 new kindergartens were equipped in 2008 in the communities of those municipalities and towns which up to then had had no organised programmes for children of preschool age.

Reduction of all forms of discrimination is one of the political criteria the Republic of Croatia must fulfil in the EU accession period. It is for that reason that EU funds directed through civil society organisation but also the Office for Human Rights or the Office of the Ombudsman and the Office for Gender Equality, aim to increase awareness regarding equality and preventing people trafficking. A total of six projects at an overall amount of 295,709 EUR have been financed from EU sources, such as the CARDS 2003/2004 *Good Governance and Rule of Law* and the PHARE 2006 *Enabling the Civil Society Sector for Active Contribution in the Pre-accession Process* grant schemes, with PHARE projects being nationally co-financed.

Challenges and recommendations:

Although improvement in gender sensitive statistics is evident, it is necessary to continue working on raising the awareness of state administration bodies and especially of the private sector related to the need to gender-disaggregate all data. It is necessary to point out that exercising the right to equal opportunities and the right to the same quality of services for women and men does not imply what is called a “neutral approach”, but involves aligning services to the specific features of the different needs of women or men. This especially concerns the field of labour and employment and the field of social protection and the fight against poverty. Women members of national minorities, elderly women living alone, and women living in rural areas are particularly vulnerable groups on whom precise statistical data must be kept.

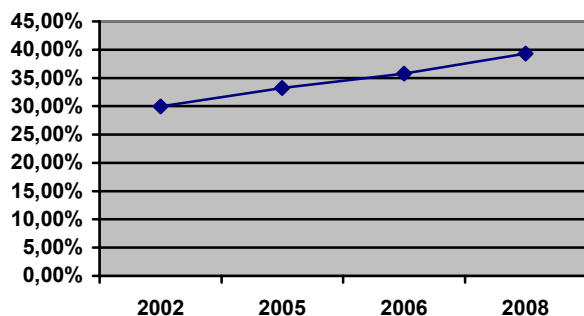
Example of good practice:

Enhancing institutional mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality at local levels through training, work coordination, networking and legally regulated financial support is an example of the successful approach in promoting gender equality. Furthermore, the legal obligation of all state administration bodies to draw up action plans for the promotion and establishment of gender equality and to appoint gender equality coordinators has also proved to be a suitable way to bring about change in this area.

2.4. Millennium Development Goal 4: Reduce newborn and child mortality

Target 2: Improve antenatal care

Indicator 2c: Time of the first antenatal examination (the optimum time for the first check is up to the 8th week of pregnancy)



Current situation:

In 2007 – 2008, Croatian maternity hospitals, according to childbirth registers, marked an increase in the number of children. The **perinatal mortality rate decreased**, while the causes of infant death in Croatia are no different than the causes of infant death in developed countries.

The share of uncontrolled and insufficiently controlled pregnancies has for many years been below 5% (in 2008, there were 3.2% of completely uncontrolled and 1.5% of insufficiently controlled pregnant women with 1-2 examinations during pregnancy). Health education about family planning and reproductive health, especially of schoolchildren and adolescents, as well as pregnant women, is of critical importance for the mitigation of this issue.

Target 2 – „**Improvement of antenatal care**” is implemented through primary healthcare provided to each health insured woman. The average number of examinations per pregnant woman in observed period was increased from 6 to 8 examinations. Pursuant to **Health Protection Measures Programme**, the ideal number of examinations is 10 clinical and 3 ultrasound examinations per pregnant woman. More than 65% of pregnant women had more than 9 examinations during pregnancy.

There is a sufficient number of **multi-practical visiting nurses**. According to the regulation on norms and standards of obligatory health care rights, one visiting nurse should cover 5,100 inhabitants, and that requirement is generally fulfilled. The Health Protection Measures Programme determines the standard number of visits to a pregnant women (1), new mother (2), newborn (2), and during the post-neonatal period (1). The attained number of visits to a new mother (3.4), newborn (3.9), pregnant woman (0.55), and post-neonatal period infant (1.8) testify to even **above standard** results.

It should be pointed out that data and indicators on forms for reporting childbirth and reporting perinatal death **have been fully aligned with requirements for international reporting and recommendations of the International Federation of Gynaecology and Obstetrics (FIGO) and the World Health Organisation.**

In line with the figures from the Croatian Government's Office for Cooperation with NGOs, amounts used for projects and programmes by civil society organisations from national sources in achieving the MDG 4, "Reducing infant and child mortality", was 1,781,596 EUR in 2007, 582,326 EUR in 2008 and 2,029,113 EUR in 2009. Within the scope of the **CARDS 2004 grant scheme "Social Services Delivery by the Non-profit Sector"** two projects, totalling 515,257 EUR, were financed with an aim of contributing towards MDG 4.

Challenges and recommendations:

Communication improvement, especially the exchange of information within primary health services (gynaecologist and in-house medical service), would help reach a larger number of insufficiently controlled pregnant women.

With the aim of further improving the outcome of newborns in the categories of very low birth weight and extreme pre-term, it is necessary to increase the number of beds in high-level institutions for transported mothers, by reorganizing the number of beds within and between hospitals, and accordingly increase the number of infant beds.

Categorisation of hospitals is underway, and regional organisation of perinatal healthcare would be an integral part of this project. As a part of the „transport to your home“ activity, it was proposed to prepare the transport organisation for entire county according to the recommendations of the profession and to define staff, equipment and financial resources required for plan realisation after proposed organisation.

Example of good practice:

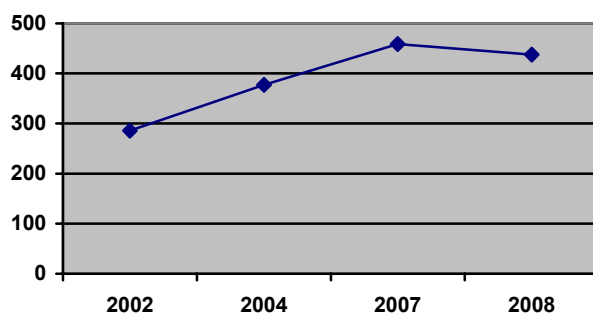
"Baby-Friendly Maternity Hospitals" Programme

There are 30 maternity hospitals in Croatia today, 15 of which carry the title "Baby-Friendly Maternity Hospital". However, it should be emphasized that all maternity hospitals have joined the program and have made significant steps in promoting breastfeeding and in the further humanization of conditions in Croatian maternity hospitals. Since the aforementioned program underlines the role of the community and breastfeeding support groups, it should be stressed that starting from 16 groups in 2006, there are now 101 groups, lead by visiting nurses and 5 groups from the civil society associations in 19 Croatian counties. When compared to 2008, 23 new breastfeeding support groups lead by visiting nurses were established in 2009 and, for the first time, such groups were organised in 7 counties. In December 2009, the total of 105 groups were active (100 groups organised by visiting nurses and 5 by NGO groups).

2.5. Millennium Development Goal 5: Improve maternal health

Target 2: Maintain and improve reproductive health

Indicator 2a: Percentage of women covered by preventive examinations within health care (per 1,000 women in the age group 15 to 49).



Current situation:

In Croatia, indicators of the **Target 1 „Maintaining maternal mortality at a low level“** have been low for years, and they come down exclusively to exceptions. Maternal deaths include all women who died during pregnancy, childbirth or 42 days after childbirth, regardless of whether the cause of death is connected with the pregnancy or delivery. Croatia has been following the recommendations of the World Health Organisation and the International Federation of Gynaecology and Obstetrics from the 10th revision of the International Classification of Illnesses, and includes direct and indirect causes of maternal deaths. In the last ten years, more than 30% of women who died in pregnancy, childbirth or during puerperium died from reasons that are indirectly related to the birth (various chronic and malign diseases).

All women in the Republic of Croatia are entitled to free delivery in a healthcare institution, regardless of whether they have health insurance; more than 99.9% of deliveries take place at a healthcare institution, with rare exceptions, such as giving birth at home or on the way to the maternity hospital.

Considering that the maternal mortality rate in Croatia is low, it is necessary to take into consideration the effects of other causes of mortality which, as a consequence, decrease the possibility of childbirth. The share of women of fertile age who died out of the total number of women who died is low (approximately 3% of all women who died), and the rate is somewhat above 70/100,000 women of fertile age. The most common causes of mortality are tumours, then injuries and circulatory system diseases. Hence, healthcare's attention should be focused on prevention of these causes of ailments and mortality. Certain preventive measures are conducted through national screening programmes (for breast cancer) and others are available to every woman through healthcare system measures from obligatory insurance.

Target 2: „Maintaining and improving reproductive health“ is implemented through training courses on family planning and reproduction health preservation, defined by the **School Children and Youth Health Protection Measures Programme**. Activities also include the establishment of a counselling body (at least one in every county) for youth and women, a standardized national programme, as well as pregnancy courses.

Activities in **Target 3: „Further decrease in the number of terminated pregnancies, particularly in adolescents“** have been implemented through the aforementioned measure and through a youth counselling body within activities aimed at school children and student health protection. In addition to individual counselling, there are also lectures on sexuality, family planning and reproductive health in higher grades of primary school and in secondary school.

The implementation of cervical cancer prevention measures has been ensured through primary medical care. On the individual level, preventive examinations of insured persons over the age of 50 have been carried out aimed at detecting certain risks of these diseases and further diagnosis and treatment of persons with risk factors and ill persons.

The order of the main causes of death of population in Croatia, according to individual diagnostic entities has not changed in the last five years. The most common cause of death is ischemic heart disease (20%), followed by cerebrovascular diseases (15%), heart failure (6%), bronchial and lung cancer (5%) and, finally, colorectal cancer (4%). Represented among the ten most common causes of death from digestive diseases are chronic liver disease, fibrosis and cirrhosis. The most prominent in the respiratory disease group are bronchitis, emphysema and asthma.

Funds used by civil society organizations from national sources to contribute to the achievement of MDG 5, Improving maternal health, were 14,600 Euros in 2007 and 51,683 Euros in 2009. Furthermore, 456,733 Euros was made available through CRADS 2004 grant scheme “Social Services Delivery by the Non-profit Sector”, which financed 2 projects implemented by civil society organizations.

Challenges and recommendations:

At the moment, maternal mortality is kept at a low level owing to the existing mechanisms of antenatal, natal and postnatal care defined by protection standards, i.e. Programme of Health Protection Measures. Prevention programmes and **programmes aimed at a reduction in the number of deaths caused by injuries** still have not been developed on the national level, and there are a few programmes aimed at prevention of specific causes of death (e.g. traffic accidents). Therefore, it is necessary to develop a multidisciplinary approach regarding such programmes, bearing in mind the specific cause of death. In addition, **prevention of and suppressing of certain most common causes of death of fertile age women** has been carried out through different health education methods (lectures and actions organised on the occasion of World Heart Day, specific educational programmes in local communities).

Example of good practice:

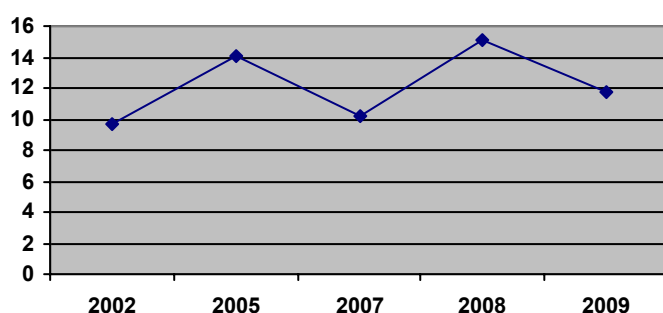
National Programme for Early Breast Cancer Detection envisaged in the **2006 – 2012 National Health Care Strategy** has been implemented for three years and the number of women examined annually has been gradually increasing (in 2008, 57% came to the examination after receiving an invitation). It is expected that the results of these screenings will have an influence on reducing the occurrence of advanced breast cancer types and subsequent women’s mortality. Owing to the screenings, in the past three years, 1,400 cases of breast cancer were detected and confirmed. Annual breast cancer incidence is

approximately 2,500/100,000 women, out of which 800 – 900 die (approximately 40/100,000 per year). Further prevention of breast cancer, through the system of obligatory health insurance, includes the procurement of a sufficient number of mammogram machines and their local distribution according to needs.

2.6. Millennium Development Goal No. 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and other diseases

Target 1: Maintain HIV/AIDS infection in the Republic of Croatia at the current level;

Indicator 1a: Rate of incidence of HIV infection per mil inhabitants



Current situation:

Reporting HIV and AIDS cases is obligatory in Croatia. According to the data from HIV/AIDS Register of Epidemiology Service with the Croatian Public Health Institute, from 1985 to the end of 2009, there were 792 persons in total who were diagnosed with HIV, and 301 of them have developed AIDS. **In Croatia in the last 10 years, there has been 15 persons with AIDS registered on average**, which makes Croatia a country with a low level of AIDS prevalence (number of new patients suffering from AIDS per year amounts to less than 4 per one mil of the population), owing to intense, continuous and systematic measures.

The Croatian National Programme for HIV/AIDS Prevention has been in applicable since 1993 and is based on the *AIDS Prevention and Suppression Programme in Croatia* that was drawn up in 1986. Having in mind the new findings in the strategy of HIV/AIDS prevention and on the basis of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS enacted by the UN General Assembly in June 2001, currently in effect is the National Programme for the period 2005 – 2010. National HIV/AIDS prevention programme includes primary, secondary and tertiary preventions.

Specific objectives of the AIDS Prevention National Programme are:

- Reinforcement of national strengths for monitoring the infection, epidemiological situation analysis and risky behaviour monitoring, development and application of efficient HIV prevention programmes and the implementation and evaluation of such programmes
- Increase in the number of voluntary counselling and testing in order to provide timely counselling and prevention of illness advancement
- Provision of optimal care to persons infected with HIV, development of preventive activity for persons infected with HIV and fight against their stigmatisation and

discrimination

- Application of standard protection measures with the aim of minimising the risk of HIV transfer and other blood-transferable diseases

It is important to point out that, since the last Report, there has been significant achievement in the Target 1 (Maintaining the present level of HIV/AIDS infection in Croatia), in a sense that the percentage of education of youth has dramatically increased (Indicator 1b - 38% in 2005 to 97% in 2009). In addition, 100% accomplishment was achieved in terms of involvement of population of drug addicts with HIV in some type of health protection (in 2005 – 71%, Indicator 1c). Also, the introduction of new legal regulations related to HIV positive persons were established, Law on Elimination of Discrimination (Indicator 1d).

In relation to **Target 2: “Decrease the level of prevalence of tuberculosis”**, it should be noted that its prevalence has been gradually decreasing and the incidence rate in 2009 amounted to 19 per 100,000 of the population. **Age distribution of persons suffering from tuberculosis in Croatia corresponds to age distribution in the developed countries**, with the highest mortality recorded in the oldest age group.

Instruction on Tuberculosis Prevention and Suppression for 2010 defines measures for suppression and prevention of tuberculosis that consist of prevention, detection, diagnose and treatment of tuberculosis patients, records on persons at risk, persons with illness and persons treated, evaluation of the implemented measures and implementation control. We expect that the favourable trend will continue through the application of the aforementioned measures, resulting in the reduction of tuberculosis prevalence in the Republic of Croatia.

For the achievement of the MDG 6, combating HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases 1,130,308 EUR were used by civil society organisations (CSOs) from national sources in 2007, while 2,117,000 and 1,468,331 EUR were used in 2008 and 2009 respectively.

Challenges and recommendations:

The objective is to further decrease the number of persons infected with tuberculosis in Croatia by systematic and persistent complex measures defined in the National Programme, and to provide the necessary treatment and care to tuberculosis patients. In relation to that, it should be pointed out that the high number of vaccinated children that has been maintained throughout the period is the reason why disseminated types of tuberculosis in children and tuberculosis meningitis have been quite rare. The continuation of prevention programmes, especially early detection of the infection source and the treatment of the infected, are expected to contribute to a further decrease in the number of the infected. It is necessary to continue with the activities outlined in the National HIV/AIDS prevention programme which includes primary, secondary and tertiary preventions, as well as to reinforce national strengths for monitoring the infection, epidemiological situation analysis and risky behaviour monitoring.

Example of good practice:

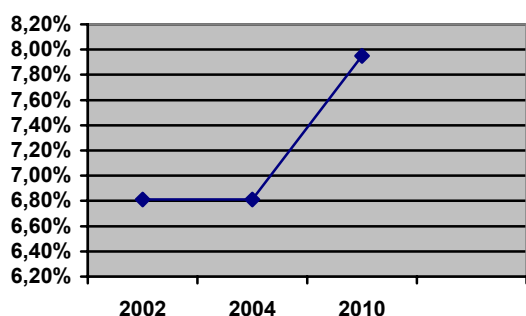
Careful monitoring of the HIV infection movements in the world by Croatian epidemiologists, as well as the adoption of the programme for the prevention of HIV infection were initiated in Croatia even before the first case of the disease was recorded. In implementing the programme, we have managed to keep the spreading of the HIV infection at a low level (the incidence rate of 11.78 HIV infected persons per mil inhabitants in 2009), despite all favourable preconditions for the entrance and spreading of HIV infection in Croatia (open borders, developed tourism etc.). Efforts to prevent the outburst of HIV infection in Croatia, as well as measures for maintaining a low spread of the infection are being implemented even today, and judging by the data provided by the National HIV/AIDS Register maintained at the Epidemiology Service of the Croatian National Institute of Public Health, with a high level of success. It should also be mentioned that Highly Active AntiRetroviral Treatment is secured for AIDS patients and the costs are covered by the Croatian Institute for Health Insurance, making the treatment free for the patients.

A further example of good practice is the establishment of Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) Centres at the Institutes of Public Health. The total of ten centres has been established across Croatia during the implementation of the “Scaling up the HIV/AIDS Response in Croatia” project, financed by the Global Fund to Fight TB, AIDS and Malaria. The duration of the Project was from 2003 to 2006, when the Global Fund’s grant was ended. Today, in 2010, these centres are still operating, providing free and anonymous testing and counselling services to their users, owing to secured funding from the Croatian National Budget.

2.7. Millennium development goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

Target 1: Integration of sustainable development principles into national policy and programmes and halt the loss of „environmental resources“

Indicator 1d: Proportion of protected parts of nature in the total surface of state territory



Current situation:

Principles of Sustainable Development are defined by the **Environmental Protection Act** which states that in the adoption of strategies, plans, programmes and regulations and in their implementation, the Croatian Parliament, the Government of the Republic of Croatia, counties, cities and municipalities shall, each within the scope of their competence, promote sustainable development. The Act has specifically prescribed that the **requirements of environmental protection have to be observed in preparation and implementation of activities in all areas of economic and social development.**

Also, adoption of the national **Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Republic of Croatia** in 2009 has provided a strong support to the integration of the sustainable development principle in the national policy. The main goal of this Strategy, designed for a ten year period, is to direct economic and social development towards environmental protection in the long-term.

In 2008 Croatian Parliament adopted new **Strategy and Action Plan for the Protection of Biological and Landscape Diversity of the Republic of Croatia (NBSAP)**. The NBSAP defines long term objectives and guidelines for the conservation of biological, landscape and geological diversity. Priorities defined by the NBSAP are related to the process of EU Accession, which, in the field of nature protection, implies alignment of the national legislation with relevant EU directives and regulations, as well as proclamation of European ecological network NATURA 2000.⁸

Additional protected areas have been defined in the period from 2004 to 2010, which increased the percentage of protected areas of nature within the national territory, including the areas under preventive protection (from 6,81% to 7,95% - reference: Ministry of Culture Register of Protected Areas, March 2010). **Proclamation of new protected areas** and the establishment of visitor centres in protected areas (National Parks/Nature Parks), as well as the drafting of remaining management plans for National and Nature Parks is still ongoing. So far, Management plans have been drafted and adopted for **4 National Parks and 3 Nature Parks**, while, by the end of 2010, plans for the remaining parks will be adopted. By the end of 2011 Croatia plans to **complete management plans for marine protected parks within the framework of international MedPAN South Project** (“Development of network of Mediterranean sea and coastal protected areas through the promotion of establishment and management of protected areas in Mediterranean within the national jurisdiction of third countries”).

In 2007, **Regulation on Proclamation of the Ecological Network** was adopted. Ecological Network is defined as a system of interconnected or spatially close ecologically important areas having a balanced biogeographical spread, thus significantly contributing to the preservation of the natural balance and biodiversity. Ecological Network reflects the richness of Croatian biodiversity and as such, it encompasses 47% of land and 39% of marine territory of the Republic of Croatia, including two corridors: the corridor for sea turtles and the corridor Palagruža-Lastovo-Pelješac (important bird migration area).

Due to its specific geographical position on the dividing line between several biogeographic regions and due to its characteristic ecological, climate and geomorphological conditions, Croatia is one of the richest European countries in terms of biodiversity. The great diversity of land, marine and underground habitats has resulted in a wealth of species and subspecies, including a significant number of endemics. The number of known species in Croatia is around 38,000, though the estimated number is far higher (50,000 to over 100,000).

Furthermore, in order to establish effective and unified mechanism for systematically data collection and data processing, Final draft of the National List of Indicators was prepared in 2009. The List contains 18 biodiversity indicators⁹, taking into account indicators defined by

⁸ Data Base with information on localities prescribed by the Directive on habitats and Directive on birds

⁹ Since the existing indicators for the protection of nature in MDG 7 (Indicator 1c. Protected parts of nature and Indicator 1d. Proportion of protected parts of nature in the total state territory) have been defined before the drafting of the National list of indicators, **the necessity has arisen to modify them in order to encompass Ecological Network as a network of areas which significantly contribute to the protection of natural balance and biological diversity**. In this way, a framework of the protection of nature in form of protected areas would have been enlarged to the form of ecological network area which is significant on both national and international levels.

the Convention on Biological Diversity and the European Commission (SEBI 2010—Streamlining the European Biodiversity Indicators), but also taking into consideration special needs of our country.

The contribution of civil society organizations from national sources in achieving the MDG 7, was 452,237 EUR in 2007, 393,727 EUR in 2008 and 614,912 EUR in 2009. Furthermore, the contribution in achieving the MDG 7 from EU funds was very significant. A total of 12 projects, worth 1,234,738 EUR, were financed through CARDS 2003/2004 “Good Governance and the Rule of Law”, CARDS 2004 “Grants to Civil Society Organizations Active in the Field of Environment and Sustainable Development“, and PHARE 2006 “Enabling the Civil Society Sector for Active Contribution in the Pre-accession Process” grant schemes.

In regards to **Target 2: “Reduce the number of population without adequate water supply and drainage”**, in comparison to 2005, there has been an increase in the proportion of the population connected to the public drainage system (2005 - 76%; 2008 - 80%), as well as an increase in the proportion of population connected to the public drainage system with adequate purification of waste waters (2005 - 15%; 2008 - 27%).

Water Management Strategy, as a long-term planning document, determines vision, mission, goals and tasks of the state policy on water management. Strategy defines legislative, organizational, financial, technical, scientific-exploratory and informatical frameworks of action for water management in the current situation related to Croatian accession process to the EU. Furthermore, the Strategy defines strategic commitments and directives for the development of water management based on the current condition of water sector, development needs, economic possibilities, international obligations, as well as needs for the protection and upgrading of water conditions and water-dependant ecosystems. Strategic goals are systemised according to the basic water-management activities of public interest: protection from floods and other adverse effects of water, public water supply and protection of water.

In 2010, pursuant to the Water Act, a new classification for valuation of ecologic and chemical status surface and underground waters is to be introduced. Condition of surface waters will be measured on the basis of ecological and chemical criteria, while quantitative and chemical criteria will be applied to underground waters.

Coastal water quality data has been monitored over many years on river estuaries, on public drainage systems and industrial drainages. The goal of testing is monitoring of the impact of pollution from the land, detecting the possible changes caused by natural processes of anthropogenic impacts, and providing a base for planning and taking measures to reduce pollution. Furthermore, systematic monitoring of coastal waters in the area of middle and southern Adriatic, in relation to ecological and chemical criteria, is being carried on.

In the 2004 – 2008 period, the ecological status of the largest part of the aquatorium of the Republic of Croatia can be appraised with the highest rating, i.e. very good. All data is continuously updated and form a part of the national “Data base on the state of marine environment, aquaculture and fisheries indicators” which is available to the public through the Internet. Furthermore, measures for the management of sea bathing are implemented in accordance with the Regulation on sea bathing water quality, as well as the Bathing Sea Water Monitoring Programme. Gathered information are being summed up and processed in a separate Data base. The Croatian Environment Agency collects, integrates and processes this environmental data and maintains the Environmental Information System Programme. This

data is made available through the specially designated web site.

In addition to numerous scientific projects of smaller scope, there are two significant national projects through which the status, changes in and pollution of the coastal sea are continuously being monitored: „Project Jadran“ (Systematic exploration of the Adriatic Sea as a basis for sustainable development) and the „Adriatic project“ the aim of which is reconstruction and expansion of the public drainage system and reconstruction and expansion of the existing waste water treatment plants and submarine outfall.

Indicator 1: Forest and forestland surface

Forests and other wooded land encompass almost half of the land territory, 2 688 687 ha or 47,5% (Forest Management Plan of the Republic of Croatia, 2006 - 2015). State forests are managed by in a “close to nature” practice with a goal of natural regeneration and in accordance with the sustainable management principles. Thanks to these practices, public enterprise “Hrvatske šume” renewed in 2007 a group FSC certificate, for a period of 5 years, which assures that forest management, under their authority, is maintained by imperative ecological, social and economic standards.

The Forest Extension Service, founded in 2007, with manifold activities especially in preparing forest management programmes for private forest owners, is facilitating to advance sustainable forest managing on 22% of private forests and to promote forest management in order to achieve sustainability.

In the national framework, sustainable forest management is regulated through law and other subordinate regulations, as well as through other corresponding documents (for example, National Forestry Policy and Strategy, Act on Forests, etc.) While the principal operative instrument of the Croatian forestry is **Forest Management Plan 2006-2015** which defines operative plans for sustainable management of Croatian forest resources.

Goals of sustainable forest management, through prism of economic policy, are represented by forest functions of general benefit such as - protection of soil from water and wind erosion, purification of water through percolation through forest soil and the supply of underground streams and water sources with drinking water, creation of favourable influence on the climate and agricultural activities, purification of polluted air, preservation of biological diversity of the genofond, species, ecosystems and landscapes, mitigation of the atmospheric «greenhouse effect» by carbon sequestration and oxygen enrichment of the environment etc. Sustainable forest management of wood and non-wood products allows an economic development in activities primarily reliant on forestry (wood industry, tourism, hunting, etc.) and encouraging development in the other activities, notably in rural regions in the Republic of Croatia (energetic, transport, pharmacy, etc.).

In relation to sustainable forest management, first National Inventory of Forests (CRONFI) will be completed and published by the end of 2010. This will be a unique data base about the state of and changes of conditions of forest ecosystems on the national level. Establishment of such independent system of information on forest resources on the national level regarding forest measurement inventory will ensure strategic and quality forest planning and management on the sustainable principles, as an optimal data exchange with international data bases too (UN, EU, MCPFE, WTO).

It should also be pointed out that during the last 5 years, the Republic of Croatia has been investing extra funds for the prevention and forest fire-fighting (Croatia has enhanced air fire-fighting fleet, vehicles and engineering).

Target 3: Improve waste management and reduce the quantity of waste in the Republic of Croatia

The Waste Management Strategy of the Republic of Croatia (2005) defines the basic waste management goals and measures, measures for hazardous waste management and guidelines for the re-use and disposal of waste. The Waste Management Plan of the Republic of Croatia (2007 – 2015) elaborates goals in the following way:

- establishment of an integrated waste management system,
- remediation and closing of existing landfills,
- remediation of "hot spots", locations in the environment which are highly burdened with waste,
- development and establishment of regional and county centres for waste management, with pre-treatment of waste before final disposal or landfilling, and
- complete computerisation of the waste management system.

In the period between 2006 and 2009 regulations governing the management of special categories of waste have entered into force. Thereby, waste management regulations of the Republic of Croatia have been fully aligned with the relevant provisions of the EU acquis. On the basis of the adopted regulations the systems for management of special waste categories were established in line with the „polluter pays“ principle. Furthermore, in order to inform the public and raise awareness of the necessity for the separate waste collection, public campaigns are being carried out through media outlets.

Pursuant to the Waste Management Plan, locations were selected for the construction of regional and county waste management centres, the designs for which are under preparation. Concurrently with the planning of centre construction, the Environmental Protection and Energy Efficiency Fund, in cooperation with local self-government units, is carrying out the remediation of 299 official municipal waste landfills as well as dumps (illegal landfills) and „hot spots“.

By April 2010, with funds provided by the Environmental Protection and Energy Efficiency Fund and local self-government units, a total of 83 municipal waste landfills and 609 dumps were remediated. With regard to the remediation of „hot spots“, the implementation of the PHARE 2006 project „Development of Hazardous Waste Management System, including the identification and management of ‘hot spot sites‘“ (2009-2010) is underway with the goal of investigating and finding possible solutions for their remediation. Project of development of the waste management information system is part of the national Environmental protection information system programme.

Challenges and recommendations:

Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Republic of Croatia identifies eight key challenges on which action is needed to transform and direct the Republic of Croatia towards the sustainable development: 1. encouraging population growth in the Republic of Croatia; 2. environment and natural resources; 3. promoting sustainable production and consumption; 4. ensuring social and territorial cohesion and justice; 5. ensuring energy independence and increasing the efficiency of energy use; 6. strengthening public health; 7. interconnectedness of the Republic of Croatia; 8. protection of the Adriatic Sea, coastal area and islands. Several Action Plans which should define activities and measures that have to be taken, institutions in charge of them, implementation deadlines and indicators of implementation are in the making. Several Action Plans which should define activities and measures that have to be taken,

institutions in charge of them, implementation deadlines and indicators of implementation are also being drafted; the Action Plan for Sustainable Consumption and Production, the Action Plan for the Protection of the Adriatic Sea, Coastal Area and Islands and the Action Plan for Environment and Natural Resources. The subject of Education for Sustainable Development, which is a requirement for the successful implementation of the Strategy, represents a special challenge. Therefore, development of the Action Plan for Education for Sustainable Development in cooperation with the relevant Ministry in charge of Education has been planned in order to determine the guidelines for the educational programme in accordance with the Strategy for Sustainable Development.

Another challenge is the fulfilment of waste management goals, in particular on the establishment of an integrated waste management system including the construction of regional and county waste management centres by the end of 2018. A number of activities will be focused towards reduction of waste disposal, which shall be achieved through implementation of the following measures:

- separation of waste at the point of its generation
- separation and recovery of construction waste
- composting and treatment of biodegradable waste
- construction of a mechanical-biological treatment plant (MBT)
- separation of packaging waste and other special categories of waste.

Moreover, the Republic of Croatia is considering the possibility of realising the certain objectives in order to reduce gaseous effluents emitted into the environment resulting from the disposal of waste containing a high share of biodegradable components.

As for the issue of **biodiversity**, comprehensive biodiversity list is not completed yet. State Institute for Nature Protection (SINP), as expert institution for nature conservation in Croatia, is working **on establishment and implementation of inventarisation of all components of biological diversity**, which has resulted in **publication of IUCN Red Lists** of fungi, animal and plants species and IUCN Red Books for some taxonomy groups of flora and fauna. SINP is also responsible for establishment of effective monitoring which is one of the preconditions for further development of Nature Protection Information System. Related to the fulfilment of nature protection EU *acquis* obligations the preparation of the proposal of European ecological network NATURA 2000 and adoption of Regulation on proclamation of ecological important sites NATURA 2000 network is foreseen by the EU Accession date. Drafting of management plans will ensure the preservation of national ecological network, as well as ecological network EU NATURA 2000.

Example of good practice:

“*Project Jadran*”¹⁰ is a national program for continuous monitoring of the Adriatic Sea which is, due to its comprehensive approach, important in the long-term context. Program, originally designed in 1997, provides necessary scientific support for the establishment of national strategy for the protection of environment and sustainable development of the Croatian part of the Adriatic Sea and coastal area on the basis of ecosystem approach. Primary goal of the Project is to establish special prerequisites for the solution of constrains which were identified as obstacles to sustainable development of the Croatian Adriatic area. The primary goal

¹⁰ „Project Adriatic Sea”

should also encompass questions of regional and global importance wherever they represent international obligation of the Republic of Croatia (for example – issues related to the Barcelona convention, biodiversity or Agreements of climate change, EU Directives on sea strategy and Framework directive on waters). Results of the Project are being incorporated into national Data base with information and indicators of the condition of sea environment, mariculture and fishery (they are integral part of the Environmental protection information system). This makes the results of direct use to the policy creators and managers of coastal areas. In that sense, monitoring of the changes in environment and monitoring of the degree of coherence with national legal requirements are of the high priority. It is also expected, that the Project will produce information necessary for the improvement of national regulations related to the protection of sea environment.

In line with those premises, Project is divided into four major groups, each consisting of several sub-projects with defined goals:

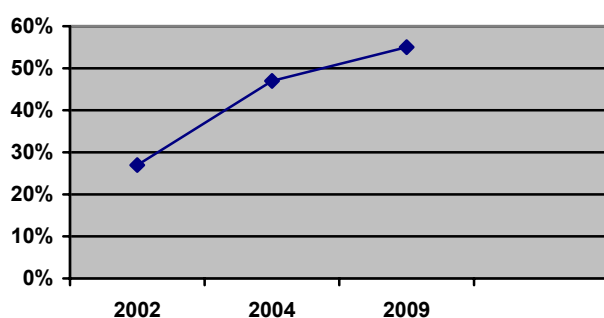
1. Impact of industrial activity on Croatian coastal waters
2. Management of biological assets and protection of biodiversity
3. Unusual occurrences which endanger the health of population, tourism and fisheries
4. Development of technologies and instruments necessary for monitoring, utilization and protection of Adriatic Sea

Contents of the Project, as well as its specific goals and implementation are being reviewed annually, and improved, if necessary. Project, envisioned in this way, constitutes the basis for the future research of sea in Croatia. Today, after 10 years, “*Project Jadran*” has grown from monitoring project into monitoring system similar to meteorology, beginning of which is such actions as putting into function first Croatian oceanographic buoys.

2.8. Millennium Development Goal 8: Global partnership for development

Target 2 - In cooperation with the private sector, collect data on the advantages brought by new technology, in particular information and communication technology

Indicator 2c: Number of households with a personal computer



Current situation:

The Republic of Croatia has established an appropriate institutional and legislative framework for global development cooperation. From 2006 until 2009 operated the *Interdepartmental*

Working Group for the assessment of the situation and the necessity of developing the development aid policy, and in 2009 the decision was made to establish the *Interdepartmental Working Group on development cooperation and humanitarian aid abroad*. The MFAEI also established the Department for International Development Cooperation. The regulatory framework was set up by the Law on development cooperation and humanitarian aid abroad and the National Strategy for Development Cooperation of the Republic of Croatia (NSDC) for the period from 2009 to 2014.

In accordance with the National Strategy, the Republic of Croatia has committed itself to take into account the development needs of least developed countries and thus contribute to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Moreover, the Law on development cooperation and humanitarian aid abroad also highlights, among other objectives in the field of development cooperation and humanitarian aid abroad of the Republic of Croatia, the goal of promoting sustainable economic, social and environmental development. The Republic of Croatia is implementing international development cooperation policy in accordance with the principles of the European Union and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Millennium Development Goals of the UN.

On the basis of NSDC, **the Implementation Programme** was elaborated according to the programmes and projects of state administration bodies and other public institutions. The Republic of Croatia in 2009 allocated more than 18,5 mil Euros within the framework of ODA. Also, the Republic of Croatia was giving voluntary contributions within the UN system, to international organizations and peacekeeping missions, including training and development projects, as well as contributions to civil society organizations. The official bilateral aid in 2009 was 93,95% of the total development aid, while multilateral contributions amounted 6,05%. The total support measures for projects and programmes of civil society organisations aiming to help in the achievement of MDG 8, Global Partnership, were 584,278 EUR in 2007, 35,184 EUR in 2008 and 542,000 EUR in 2009 according to the statistics of the Croatian Government's Office for Cooperation with NGOs.

Croatia continuously provides development assistance to **Bosnia and Herzegovina** in order to finance educational, cultural, scientific and health programs and projects of Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the construction of the hospital in the towns of Mostar and Orašje, the procurement of medical equipment, the cost of visiting professors from Zagreb University, and the allocation of building material for the construction of houses for returnees.

As part of development assistance to **Afghanistan**, with the aim of supporting the development of civil society, particularly in helping the Afghan Government to increase the efficiency of public administration, Croatia has over the years funded a number of projects to achieve these objectives. Thus, for example, in 2007 participation costs were covered for one diplomat, who attended the three-month course entitled "Economic Diplomacy" at the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration. Also, the study visit was organized for three representatives of the Afghan Council for Women's Affairs (Nursery Director, Deputy director of the Institute of Child Health and representative of the Ministry of Health) in 2006, for the purpose of getting familiar with Croatia's experience in the field of women and children's rights, gender equality and efforts to strengthen the presence of women in public life, and to establish a foundation for future cooperation.

In terms of building infrastructure, the Republic of Croatia has funded the construction of primary health care unit valued at \$237,000. The project was implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the construction of the Health Centre "Zhar Shakh" enabled the necessary health care for 23,000 people from 35 surrounding

villages. This provided the concrete conditions for further socio-economic development in this province of Afghanistan, raising the level of health security of the population.

Furthermore, financial support is given to the project of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP): "*Enhancing Legal & Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow*" (ELECT) in Afghanistan, intended for financing the cost of preparation of the elections that were held in 2009 with the aim of conducting a successful and legitimate elections, with the participation of all Afghan ethnic groups and with support of the international community. In 2008 and 2009 \$50,000 was allocated to the programme "*Food for Education*" of the World Food Programme (WFP), as a contribution to financing the cost of feeding children in schools in Afghanistan, which promotes general social development by supporting education of a large number of children.

The financial support was given also for the implementation of small development projects in Afghanistan, there are specifically two projects: buying school equipment and stationery and the project of ensuring alternative sources of income (purchasing hives for beekeeping women's cooperatives in the amount of \$3,000). Commitments in respect of these amounts are consistent with so-called "*comprehensive approach*", which Croatia, as well as other participating countries, applied for their participation in peacekeeping operations, which essentially means that the military and police involvement in these operations should be accompanied with humanitarian and development assistance and other elements of the civilian component.

It should be emphasized that Croatia supports the achievement of the development policy objectives through which is given control to disadvantaged people in Third World countries over their own development, by helping them to overcome the causes of their vulnerability.

In the School of Public Health „Andrija Štampar“ in Zagreb, which acts as a Collaborative Centre of the World Health Organization (WHO) for Capacity Building in HIV/AIDS surveillance, the course entitled "*Designing Protocols for Population-Based and Clinic-Based HIV Surveillance Surveys*" was held in 2009 (November 16-20), funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Croatia through the official development assistance. The course was designed for participants from **sub-Saharan Africa**. 8 candidates from 6 countries attended the course, lasting 5 days, which provided an intensive training for professionals in writing of protocols as an important starting point in HIV/AIDS surveillance. Within the framework of development assistance, the MFAEI is cooperating with the Centre since 2007. Through its Scholarship Fund, this Centre provides education in the field of epidemiological HIV/AIDS surveillance, in mastering new techniques and finding solutions in infectious diseases prevention and control, as well as technical assistance to countries in Eastern Europe, Africa and Middle East in which HIV/AIDS represents significant health, and economic problem.

Information and Communication Technology

Millennium development goal "Global cooperation for development" also includes the use of new technologies which are necessary in the development of society based on knowledge and society in which everyone has the equal right of access to information. Croatia has noted advancement in the fulfilment of the **Target 2: "In collaboration with the private sector, gathering information about the advantages of new technologies, particularly in the field of information technology and communications"**.

According to a research of the World Economic Forum (WEF)¹¹ on Information Technology conducted in 2010, Croatia based on its ICT competitiveness placed 51st among 133 world countries that account for 98% of the total world GDP.

Among the 133 countries included in the study, Croatia placed 56th in the segment of the market-related, political, regulatory and infrastructural environment, and 63rd according to the criterion of its readiness to use ICT. In terms of the use of new technologies at all levels - individual, business-related and public, Croatia ranks 43rd.

As far as the online availability of public services is concerned, Croatia moved up from the 82nd to the 40th position. Significant progress has been made in e-participation, where Croatia climbed from the 70th to the 25th position. E-participation index assesses the quality, relevance, usefulness and willingness of government websites in providing online information and participatory tools and services intended for the public.

For the purpose of monitoring the progress of availability and quality of e-services, the European Union has defined 12 key e-services for its citizens and 8 for business entities. According to a study of the European Commission on the availability of public services over the internet¹², Croatia ranked 30th in terms of the presence and 31st in terms of the complexity of e-services among 31 countries entailed in the research. The research has shown that e-services for business entities in Croatia are more developed in terms of their accessibility and development than those designed for citizens. The study particularly emphasizes the website *Moja uprava*¹³, where according to the indicators of the user-orientation level of the website we have achieved 100% (average in EU27 is 71,5%). It also emphasises the results in the implementation of **the One-Stop-Shop approach, where Croatia has realised 80% compared to 81.6% average in EU27, in which the website *Moja uprava* plays an important role in interlinking the data of state administration organs and offering a unique approach to e-administration services in Croatia.** In conclusion, the study acknowledged that Croatia was making up for a relatively late start of the development of e-government and recognized notable progress and increased availability of user-oriented e-services.

The strategic framework for the development of Croatia in the period between 2006 and 2013 recognized productive use of ICT as the foundation of development and transformation of the Croatian society into a knowledge-based society. **This document was the basis for adoption of the following three interrelated key sector strategies: the Strategy for the Development of Broadband Internet Access in the Republic of Croatia Until 2008, the Strategy for the development of Electronic Business in Republic of Croatia for the period 2007 - 2010 and the Strategy for the development of Electronic Government in the Republic of Croatia for the period 2009 – 2012.** High-quality implementation of these strategies is essential for overcoming of the identified deficiencies. Creation of the strategy for the development of broadband internet access and electronic business for the upcoming period is therefore already in progress.

The Strategy for the development of Electronic Government in the Republic of Croatia for the period 2009 – 2012 was adopted by the Croatian Government in January of 2009.

¹¹ <http://www.weforum.org/documents/GITR10/index.html>

¹² „eGovernment Benchmark Survey 2009 Smarter, Faster, Better eGovernment, Benchmark 8th Measurement”

¹³ „*My Government Portal*“

The activities listed in the **Action Plan** refer to the development of the entire system of electronic government, which will allow interconnection between the existing and new systems of state administration organs. In its further development, electronic government in Croatia will take into account all previous achievements and solutions that are in any way present in state administration and it will try to adapt them so that in a year or two year's time it would result in a functional and networked ICT-assisted administration.

After the adoption of the Strategy, members of a Working Group entailing the representatives of public, academic and private sectors identified the projects which are considered priorities (Croatian Framework for Interoperability, e-Office, Central Authentication and Authorisation System, The System for Management of Knowledge, Projects and ICT resources), which will enable the establishment of the electronic networked administration system, with the support of existing systems of state administration organs and common infrastructure which is already established in the form of state administration computer network – *HITRONet*, the central administration website *My Government portal – Moja uprava*, system for the exchange of information about personal identification number (OIB).

Challenges and recommendations:

Research World Economic Forum (WEF) revealed the weakness of the Croatian ICT competitiveness on which Croatia has to concentrate in the future. Particular emphasis should be put on the fact that Croatia ranks only 102nd in terms of the level of technology absorption in companies, where it is necessary to define priority measures and activities, especially within the new **E-Business Development Strategy** whose development is in progress.

In the field of e-Government results so far suggest that it is necessary to strengthen the information and communication technologies usage within the state administration and its communication with citizens and the business sector. Furthermore, it is necessary to establish a framework and aims of new and existing activities of e-Government, with emphasis on the users' satisfaction, rationalization of administrative procedures and modern electronic services, which will be achieved with the planned implementation of the Strategy for the development of electronic administration for 2009-2012.

The European Commission has put forward the expectations that the **Republic of Croatia should reach the level of spending on development assistance** which European Union envisaged for the new Member States: 0.17% of GDP until 2010 and 0.33% of GDP until 2015. The MFAEI, in its capacity of the coordinator for the area of development cooperation and humanitarian aid, has the obligation to submit periodic reports to the European Commission regarding development aid provided by the Republic of Croatia, within the framework of the Negotiation Chapter 30 External Relations.

Example of good practice:

Within the context of **development assistance of the Republic of Croatia to Africa**, activities of UNICEF's Office in Croatia should be noted, in the framework of which the contribution is granted in 2008 and 2009 for the project "**Schools for Africa**". During 2009, 191 schools and about 60,000 children were involved in the project implementation and activities were aimed at helping children in Rwanda. Specifically, the Project was intended for building and renovating schools and sanitary facilities, ensuring safe drinking water and

providing schoolbooks for children without parental care and those who live in particularly difficult living conditions. Since the beginning of this project in 2008, about 109,000 EUR was collected. Also, the MFAEI paid approx. 16,000 EUR on bank account of the UNICEF's Office in Zagreb for the project "Schools for Africa", through official development assistance secured by the state budget funds in 2009. In 2008 and 2009 more than 234,000 EUR has been collected. It should be noted that this project has also an educational role for Croatian children in deepening the understanding of conditions in which live their peers in Africa and developing a sense of solidarity through fund raising. This is the only project of the UNICEF Office in Croatia that has no character of crisis aid but exclusively represents development assistance.