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## ADULT EDUCATION IN CROATIA AFTER 1990

### ABSTRACT

*The main goal of the paper is to explain the key elements of the three cycles of adult education policy Croatia has gone through between 1990 and 2018. The first cycle encompassed changes in the 1990s. The second began in 2000 and was marked by the process of Europeanisation as part of Croatia's path towards accession to the European Union. The third began with accession into the EU in 2013 and the passing of the Strategy of Education, Science and Technology in 2014. In each cycle adult education policy instruments, actors and goals are analysed. Similar policy goals, instruments and actors have been maintained during the last two cycles as part of the Europeanisation of Croatia's adult education policy, while the first cycle was marked by the political, ideological and institutional severing of ties from the socialist education system. The final results of these processes are not satisfactory as adult education remains marginalised and has low participation rates.*

**Keywords:** adult education, andragogy, Croatia, policy cycles

### IZOBRAŽEVANJE ODRASLIH NA HRVAŠKEM PO LETU 1990 – POVZETEK

*Osrednji namen članka je razložiti ključne elemente treh ciklov politik izobraževanja odraslih na Hrvaškem med letoma 1990 in 2018. Prvi cikel je zajemal spremembe v devetdesetih letih. Drugi se je začel leta 2000 in ga je zaznamoval proces evropeizacije na poti do članstva v Evropski uniji. Tretji se je začel z vstopom države v Evropsko unijo (2013) in sprejetjem Strategije izobraževanja, znanosti in tehnologije (2014). V vsakem ciklu so analizirani instrumenti, akterji in cilji politik izobraževanja odraslih. V zadnjih dveh ciklih se pojavljajo podobni cilji, instrumenti in akterji, ki so del evropeizacije politik izobraževanja odraslih, medtem ko je prvi cikel zaznamovalo politično, ideološko in institucijsko rezanje vezi s socialističnim izobraževalnim sistemom. Končni rezultati teh procesov niso zadovoljivi, saj je izobraževanje odraslih še vedno marginalizirano in ima majhno udeležbo.*

**Ključne besede:** izobraževanje odraslih, andragogika, Hrvaška, politični cikli

## INTRODUCTION

Changes in Croatian adult education policy after 1990 can be divided into several cycles. The first cycle encompassed the changes in the 1990s and was marked by a political, ideological and institutional severing of ties from the socialist education system. The second cycle began in 2000 and was marked by the Europeanisation of the national education policy within the process of Croatia's accession to the European Union. In this process, EU policies were implemented in the state, but it also meant the transfer of national policies onto the European level and the dynamics in which European states cooperate. The third cycle began with the accession of Croatia into the EU (2013) and with the passing of the Strategy of Education, Science and Technology (2014).

The text analyses the goals, actors and instruments of adult education policies. The goals are defined by public political documents. The basic instruments used in their implementation are divided into informing and persuasion (e.g. public campaigns, statistical overviews), binding decisions based on public authorities (laws etc.), and the financing and organisational changes in the adult education system (McDonnell and Elmore, 1987; Žiljak and Baketa, 2019). In addition to goals and instruments, an overview of actors is provided with emphasis placed on the relationship between state and non-state actors, as well as the ways in which they cooperate.

## SEVERING TIES WITH THE SOCIALIST TRADITION (1990S)

With the introduction of the multi-party system and the establishment of an independent state in the post-1990 period, there was a breakpoint in Croatia, i.e. a severing of ties with the socialist system of Yugoslavia at the time. Changes in the 1990s began within the period of leaving Yugoslavia, which was accompanied by war conflicts until 1995. After the conflicts ended, the entire territory of Croatia was reintegrated into its constitutional legal order. Croatia is among those countries where the transition of education policy can be observed as a process that began with severing ties with the old system and resumed as part of the Europeanisation and modernisation process, i.e. in support of establishing a modern, European education system that would replace the socialist system (Cerych, 1997; Birzea, 2008). The changes in Croatia differ from, for example, those in the Czech Republic, Hungary or Estonia because they started occurring in a war environment and faced difficulties in implementing the education policy in the entire state (Žiljak and Molnar, 2015).

### Goals

Key changes started in 1990 by establishing a new direction in education policy. The first Croatian President, Franjo Tuđman, defined the necessary changes in his speech in Parliament in 1990 in the following way: "The old regime leaves spiritual and material emptiness in many areas, particularly in schooling and education. We need both a return to our and to general European traditions, and a thorough turn towards the future, information

era” (Tudman, 1990). Two significant elements of change were emphasised: severing ties with the socialist system (a single party system replaced with political pluralism, socially owned property transformed into private property) and the process of Europeanisation as a return to Europe which would also mean modernisation. Such modernisation is specific since it also entailed elements of retraditionalisation, therefore, the return to European roots and joining Europe were conducted by reaffirming traditional national values.

In this period, adult education was marginalised and the key actors of its implementation (people’s universities) were presented as redundant remnants of the old socialist education system. Very few books on adult education were published. *Thélème* magazine, which began in 1991 and tried to maintain the tradition of *Andragogija* magazine (1969–1990), ceased publication in 1995. From 1993 to 1997, the National and University Library has no recorded titles containing the word ‘andragogue’ (andragogy professional) as a keyword (NSK, 2015).

### Actors

State actors were dominant in this period, and nearly all law-initiated changes were defined with by-laws in the system of adult education (regulations, instructions, etc.). Until 1994, education was under the authority of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, while adult education merely maintained marginal importance. The Institute of the School System of the Republic of Croatia was abolished in 1994 by the minister at the time. The Institute for Andragogy at the Open University was abolished in the beginning of the 1990s, and the role of the Andragogical Centre was marginalised.

Almost the only continuity on the national level was maintained by the Croatian Community of Public Open Universities that organised regular professional symposiums as well as national and international conferences. However, even this association, which has a long tradition (it was founded in 1954 as the Alliance of People’s Universities of the People’s Republic of Croatia), reduced the number of activities and members in the early 1990s (some of the biggest educational institutions at the time were not its members). Only in 1995 did it renew the traditional andragogical symposiums by organising the Summer Andragogy Academy, a symposium with international participation. To complete these gaps, the Croatian Andragogy Society was established, and started holding its first symposiums in 1996.

By 1990, adult education was, for the most part, conducted through a network of workers’ and people’s universities, educational centres within companies, vocational schools, higher education institutions and departments for adult education. Most people’s universities were renamed as open or public universities after 1990. In addition to public institutions, private organisations for adult education were also established and public institutions were privatised. In any case, there was an attempt to abandon the concept of people’s universities since they were seen as the remnants of the old regime (Matković, 2014). Key political actors wanted to end the tradition of people’s universities from the previous period. These universities (former people’s and workers’ universities) aimed

to adapt their activities to new circumstances. Some programmes characteristic of the socialist period were abandoned (for example, education for Total People's Defence and Social Self-Protection, and other political courses in self-governing socialism). However, key programmes of formal education (secondary schools and pre-qualifications) and non-formal education (foreign languages, art workshops, etc.) remained. A significant part of the programme of formal adult education was also being conducted in secondary vocational schools, while in smaller cities, open universities were considered not only as educational but also cultural centres that organised exhibitions, concerts, forums, etc. This was also confirmed by the new Public Open Universities Act in 1997, which regulated the activities, establishment and structure of an open university.

### **Instruments**

The main instruments of adult education policy at this time were legislative (laws, decisions, instructions). Severing ties with the old system included personnel and organisational changes, programme changes and activities of adult education institutions with the aim of regulating them in a new way (Mijatović, 1996; Klapan and Lavrnja, 2003).

The laws that were passed in the beginning of 1990s only initiated the process of severing ties with the socialist system and made way for future changes. There were no national education strategies, and adult education was marginalised as a less significant activity. Key decisions were made within the ruling party (Koren and Baranović, 2009). This way, state actors and the influential ruling party were given the ability of arbitrary decision making, while the decisions often depended on the momentary decision of a key actor. Experts could participate in proposals and debates, but their propositions depended on the key political filter of the ruling party. The basic aim was to clear the education system of socialist ideological content and to emphasise the role education had in strengthening the Croatian state and defending the national identity.

### **ADULT EDUCATION IN CROATIA AFTER 2000**

After the end of the war and the peaceful reintegration, the Croatian education system was operational on the entire state territory. With the departure of the first President, Franjo Tuđman, who marked the 1990s, negotiations regarding the country's entry into the EU were initiated. The second cycle of changes in adult education started in the early 2000s. These changes, marked by the process of Europeanisation, entail new key goals, changeable actors and a new understanding of adult education. Europeanisation includes the processes of "construction, diffusion, institutionalisation of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles and ways of operating" (Radaelli, 2006, p. 59). This process includes a top-down transfer of European structural proposals (eg. establishing new agencies and qualification frameworks) and new paradigms (lifelong learning and knowledge society concepts). The process also included a horizontal transfer of ideas and procedures (from country to country) in vocational education (from Germany to Croatia).

## Goals

The political framework that opened the door for new opportunities was the election of the coalition Government in 2000. In this phase Croatia initiated the process of joining the EU, and as part of the Lisbon Process, it started to accept European educational goals, which prioritise lifelong learning for citizens' employability and economic competitiveness. Everything is based on the discourse of the knowledge society in which there is only one narrative form (knowledge society in which lifelong learning successfully ensues the competitiveness of the economy). As a problem, the social dimension only occurred at the end of the decade. In this period, the strongest normative impulse to the social dimension was provided by the *Joint Memorandum* of the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the European Commission on Social Inclusion of the Republic of Croatia in 2007. In this case, the social dimension implies that vulnerable groups should be included into society, but this does not bring into question the basic idea of education as vocational preparation for the job market.

In light of these changes, Europe and the international community were used as an argument or a legitimating instrument. In 2003, the Government of the Republic of Croatia undertook a ten-year project on literacy for adults called *For a Literate Croatia – A Path to a Desirable Future* in accordance with the framework of the *United Nations Literacy Decade 2003–2012*. This programme provided a new incentive for the primary education of adults and made it free for everyone.

The first (and at the time, the only) other strategy in adult education was introduced after 2000: *The Strategy and Action Plan for Adult Education* (2004). This strategy places adult education within the context of lifelong learning. The definition of lifelong learning is associated with European documents (*A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning*, Delors' Report and the European Commission's *Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality*) and the *Declaration of Knowledge* of 2002 by the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts (HAZU), as well as the recommendations of the Government and the National Competitiveness Council of 2006. The fundamental determinant is a knowledge society that will ensure the competitiveness of the economy, competition and employability.

## Actors

Actors that steered adult education and learning in this period included the new Agency for Adult Education (founded in 2006) and ministries of the Government of the Republic of Croatia – the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, and the Ministry of Labour and Pension System. Specific issues (for example, social issues, EU programmes, regional development, etc.) certainly required the inclusion of other ministries, however, key decisions were made by the two mentioned above. Another important actor was also the Croatian Employment Service that provided financial aid (support) for the additional education or training of the unemployed. Support was deemed important but had been fluctuating from one year to another. In addition to that, the evaluation of the support assured for such education or training from 2010 to 2013 revealed that the expected effect, a

higher employability rate of newly qualified citizens, had not been achieved (HZZ, 2016). The Croatian Employment Service also assumed a significant role as the implemental body of European financial funds.

In addition to the classic state actors (the Government, ministries, bureaus), key actors in this period included institutions that proposed strategic changes of the education system. This entailed, above all, the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts (HAZU), the National Competitiveness Council (established on the principle of partnership between entrepreneurs, states, scientists) and the Chamber of Trades and Crafts (essential for master exams). Noticeable was the weaker presence and influence of experts whose narrower scope of scientific work entailed education and education policy. Adult education's scientific community did not significantly rejuvenate, and it was impoverished due to the departure of an older generation of andragogy experts. Andragogical departments at universities were also marginalised. The *Journal of the Croatian Andragogy Society* remained the only magazine on adult education that was being continuously published. In the first phase, andragogy and adult education were labelled as relics of the socialist system which should be replaced with traditional formal schools and university schooling. This approach was founded on descriptions of adult educational programmes as part of the socialist self-management system and social self-defence system. However, andragogy was no longer a disputable term, and in the period from 2003 to 2007, there were 38 texts containing the word 'andragogue' or 'andragogical', as well as 42 texts containing 'adult education' as one of the keywords (Žiljak, 2016).

Alongside the institutes and ministries, committees also started to appear, in which non-state actors participated. In 2004 the Committee of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Adult Education was appointed. In 2007 the Council for Adult Education was established as the expert and advisory body of the Government of the Republic of Croatia whose role was to monitor the status and propose measures on adult education development, provide opinions regarding the drafts of legislative and implemental regulations, and propose financing for adult education programmes covered by state budget funds. The Committee comprised of the state bodies' representatives, associations of employers and craftsmen, educators and adult education professionals, with the dominant role as the head of the Committee given to employers and entrepreneurs, while the Adult Education Agency provided administrative support.

After 2000, new vocational associations for adult education were established, and the Croatian Association of Open Universities and the Croatian Andragogy Society were no longer the sole national associations that interconnected institutions or professionals. The Association of Institutions for Adult Education was founded in 2009 and includes numerous organisations that, for the most part, conduct formal education of adults. The Association of Employers in Education was established in 2011 by the Croatian Employers' Association, and it includes important education providers. The lack of a national umbrella association, however, obstructed the negotiating possibilities of the andragogy community, as well as its influence on changes in adult education.

On the level of providing educational services, the number of implementers increased. It included open universities (private and public), primary and secondary schools conducting adult education programmes, higher education institutions, universities, educational centres in business organisations, private schools of foreign languages, driving schools, professional associations, non-governmental organisations, political parties, employers' associations, unions, education bureaus, religious institutions, foreign centres, cultural centres, libraries and museums. Specific organisations for adult education within ministries were organized, including the Diplomatic Academy, the Education Service at the Ministry of Public Administration, etc. However, a systematic coordination of their educational activities still did not exist. There was an increasing number of private organisations that participated in formal adult education alongside public institutions. According to data from the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education, there were 549 registered adult education institutions in 2015, the most numerous being secondary schools (184) and open universities (112) (ASOO, 2015).

An important role was played by foreign consultants (key experts) who transferred educational models and gave meaning to the occurring changes. For example, they transferred the competence-based model for adult education, models of quality assurance in adult education connected with the structure of adult education programmes, and the qualification framework model. They were also significant because they, in the light of depolitization, prioritised the procedures that experts proposed, and the politicians took over as neutral professional knowledge (Gunter and Mills, 2017, p. 110). Also important was the influence of experts from the ETF (European Training Foundation) and CEDEFOP (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training). The ETF was a European agency that supported reforms in vocational education and training in transition states – it provided various forms of support to adult education in Croatia.

## **Instruments**

Institutional changes in this period altered the structure of organisations that were involved in preparing and implementing the education policy. In 2002, the Institute of the School System was re-established with the Department for Adult Education, which was turned into the Education and Teacher Training Agency two years later. By establishing the Adult Education Agency in 2006, an institutional basis was created for systematic regulation of adult education within the Croatian education policy, which was strongly supported by the associations for vocational education and training. Until then, adult education had been under the authority of the Agency for Vocational Education and Training, i.e. The Institute of the School System. The tasks of the new Adult Education Agency included the following: monitoring, developing, evaluating and improving adult education, running a database and providing information (Vlada RH, 2006).

After 2008, the process of de-agencification started and is marked by the merging of certain agencies. In education, this includes the merging of the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and the Adult Education Agency. Reasons for this merger included



cost reductions, increasing work efficiency, establishing a unique system of quality education within the system of acquiring vocational competencies and insuring greater business rationalisation (MZOŠ, 2009). This also confirmed that merging was a political response to objections regarding the work of all national agencies (Musa, 2012), as well as the continuation of the trend that adult education was institutionally justified as continuous vocational education.

A stronger influence of external actors on changes in national policy started after 2000. The EU funded a number of projects in structural changes (Žiljak, 2007). Primarily, this referred to the establishment of agencies as part of the process of agencification that seized Croatia as well. The CARDS (Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation) programmes were the essential financial instrument of EU influence on policies in Southeast Europe, and from 2003 to 2009, they were deemed significant for all institutional and programme changes in vocational education and training, adult education and partly in higher education as well (CARDS 2001–2004).

The influence of projects within the IPA program (the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance) prior to joining the EU is significant as well. This included projects for strengthening the capacities of the Adult Education Agency, as well as institutions for adult education. The project for strengthening capacities provided institutions for adult education with grants of 2.2 million Euros (ASOO, 2014). Unlike the CARDS projects, which in large part focused on structural and institutional changes and technical assistance, these projects prioritised the inclusion of implementing organisations and direct users.

In terms of activities disseminating and advocating lifelong learning, an important role belongs to the Lifelong Learning Week. Started in 2002, it has been continuously implemented in the entire country from 2008 on (Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education, 2018).

## **THE EU CYCLE**

The process of Europeanisation continued with Croatia joining the EU in 2013, and there have been no significant changes regarding the definition of goals. The complementarity of Croatian and EU education goals has been essential, with the primary focus being on new employability skills. EU funds have presented a key instrument of support to changes in education.

The political framework has been marked by frequent changes in government (3 governments and 4 ministers of education from 2016 to 2018). The composition of the coalition has also altered, with one of the coalition partners from a previous government (since 2017) binding its main share in the government to education (HNS – Croatian People's Party). Unfortunately, adult education has not been considered a priority, not even in the political agreements regarding the government.



## Goals

In the field of education, the period after 2013 has been marked by the preparation and passing of the Strategy for Education, Science and Technology, the first education strategy since 1990.

According to the Strategy for Education, Science and Technology of 2014, the entire education system is based on the concept of lifelong learning, in which a significant place has been given to adult education. The strategy clearly determines the instruments that should improve the adult education system, increase citizen participation and ensure quality of education. Therefore, it anticipates the measures of professionalisation in andragogy. The entire strategy is strongly connected to the implementation of the Croatian Qualifications Framework, which influences its understanding. The essential notion is that learning outcomes need to meet the needs of the job market, which will be decided by expert councils formed according to business sectors. The social dimension and educational inclusiveness are only an extension of this basic task.

However, the implementation of the strategy left adult education behind entirely and nearly all discussions during the implementation process focused on questions regarding the primary and secondary school curriculum. An illustrative example of this was a statement released by the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts in 2015 on monitoring the implementation of the strategy, which almost exclusively referred to expert groups, the STEM area in the curriculum, etc. (HAZU, 2015). The political dimensions of the discussion regarding the points of view in the curriculum and the political party struggles overcame all attempts of discussing the greatest disadvantages of the education system, including the already low inclusion of adults into programmes of education and training. Adult education has publicly emerged as a political priority only occasionally, for instance, when EU data of the education system results was published in December (European Commission, 2017).

After 2010, the Lisbon goals have been transformed into a new programme called *Europe 2020*, in which education remains an important factor of smart and sustainable development. In adult education, the initiative of the European Commission called *New Skills for New Jobs* (2008) maintains the important goals of the Lisbon Process, which resumed after 2010 (*New Skills Agenda for Europe*, 2016). The focus on skills in adult education has remained present after 2010, which is evident in the implementation of the *Renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning* (2011). The implementation of this strategy in Croatia has mostly been associated with the multi-annual project of strengthening basic skills with a special emphasis on the change (modernisation and adaptation) of basic adult education programmes, passed in 2003 (Glasovac, Belović and Dujmović, 2013). Adult education has maintained its position within continuous vocational training, employment and strengthening of basic skills, associated with the EU goals from *Upskilling Pathways – New Opportunities for Adults* (2016). The aim is to increase literacy, numeracy and basic digital skills.

## Instruments

The basic instruments used to implement adult education policies during this period have been laws, financing and reorganisation. One of the main goals has been changing the Adult Education Act. The first draft of the text was composed in 2016, which is when discussion about it started, but even at the end of 2018, the act is still not in the process of being passed by Parliament. Other important instruments are ESF grants and the financing of Erasmus+ projects. The new programmes of adult education are developing through ESF programmes, for which the implementing institutions are the Agency for Vocational Education and Training, and the Croatian Employment Service. These programmes enable the inclusion of marginalised groups into free programmes and acquire the necessary equipment. Relatively late (after 2017), two other ministries (the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Tourism) joined this process and they have also enabled participation in non-formal adult education programmes. When it comes to the Ministry of Culture, this refers to creative workshops for young people or people in the third age. Parallel to this, funding for associations for human rights education and democratic citizenship was being reduced.

After Croatia joined the EU, the financial contribution of the European Social Fund has been crucial. This refers to the continued strengthening of the capacities of adult education institutions, with grants amounting to 4 million Euros (MZO, 2018). Most of the grants for adult education have financed the development of new formal vocational education and training programmes and their piloting. European support has enabled the introduction of the EPAL portal (Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe) as the basic platform for mutual informing and exchange of experiences in adult education. Certainly, institutions also participated in other educational projects referring to inclusive education and continuous vocational training and education. Also important is the process of internationalisation in adult education, which is being conducted via the Lifelong Learning and Erasmus+ programmes. In the official evaluation it was mentioned "Vocational schools and adult education institutions recognise progress more than other educational institutions". (Milanović Litre, Puljiz and Gašparović, 2016, p. 52).

Reorganisation is an important instrument that is connected to the de-agencification process. In 2018, the Government introduced a proposal to abolish the Agency for Vocational Education and Training (Vlada, 2018). This is part of the overall process of reducing the number of agencies, bureaus and institutes in Croatia. This action does not take into account the specificity of this agency's work, its projects that ensure EU funding, and the institutional stability it provides for the system of vocational training and education. Proposals are made without a clear, public explanation and despite the opposing opinion of the minister of education.

The future of these agencies and the stable support they provide to the adult education system depend on the political negotiations of coalition parties. With constant changes in the ministry department, this type of de-agencification does not contribute to the quality of the proposed changes.

Public campaigns and information dissemination have, for the most part, been linked to the Lifelong Learning Week. The results of the AES (Adult Education Survey) or of research conducted by the Agency for Vocational Education and Training have been failing to stimulate bigger public interest or the interest of key political actors for the field of adult education. There has also been a lack of expert and scientific discussion about these results.

### **Actors**

The Government of the Republic of Croatia, the Ministry of Science and Education and the Agency for Vocational Education and Training are still the main actors. The development of the Strategy for Education, Science and Technology (passed in 2014) was conducted by the Government and not by its ministry. In such circumstances, the crucial challenge lies in horizontal coordination, i.e. the well-coordinated action of different ministries in the field of adult education and training. Namely, the Ministry of Labour and Pension System and the Croatian Employment Service have an increasing importance in composing education policies. This resulted in a proposal that the Agency for Vocational Education and Training should join the Ministry of Labour or the Croatian Employment Service (Vlada, 2018). This connection was intensified by the implementation of the Croatian Qualifications Framework as a key reform tool, which should be passed by adult education as well. The Croatian Employment Service was one of the main financiers of adult education through the public procurement of free education for people in a disadvantaged position.

The international dimension is visible with the Adult Education Survey (2016), which had not been conducted in Croatia since 2007. The possibilities of comparative research were very poorly used and only a symbolic part of the acquired material was published (CBS, 2017). Preparations for the following PIAAC (the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies) cycle have started. So far, Croatia has not participated in this research. By participating in the adult education working group, Croatia also participates in the EU policies of adult education, while the Agency for Vocational Education and Training develops regional cooperation.

### **POLICY RESULTS**

The final results of the described policies are scarce, and Croatia remains one of the states with the lowest inclusion rates of adults in education processes in the EU (European Commission, 2017). The analysis of how successfully it is fulfilling European educational goals showed that Croatian adult education produces significantly worse results than regular education.

Alongside the implementation, at the end of this period, the evaluation of the success of the adult education system begins. In adult education, the occasional review of the success of the passed policies is encouraged by data on the low inclusion of adults in various forms of education. The participation of adults in education is greater than in the 1990s

and was slowly increasing after 2000. In the past ten years, it has been fluctuating by around 3%, which is still far from the EU prediction of 15% by the year 2020.

The results of adult education are difficult to assess since there is no systematic research, and PIAAC is still not being implemented. The Labour Force Survey (LFS) has been conducted since 1996, and the most commonly used data regards the participation of adults in some sort of education in the past four weeks. More detailed data regarding the reasons and areas of adult training and education are not publicly tracked at all and are difficult to attain. Some data is available from a survey conducted by the Agency for Vocational Education and Training in 2017, with the help of the Ipsos Plus agency (Vučić, Piljek Žiljak and Vučić, 2017). In the survey, 68.5% of the participants stated that they had taken part in some form of informal learning (reading books, learning from friends, using the Internet and other sources) in the past year. The Internet proved to be the main platform of informal learning (54.8% participants). The same survey revealed that cognitive motives (desire to learn something new) are fundamental for adults participating in education (Vučić, Piljek Žiljak and Vučić, 2017), followed by motives associated with maintaining or finding a new job. According to the results of comparative European studies (LFS, Adult Education Survey, Continuous Vocational Training Survey), Croatia is still behind most EU states in formal and especially in terms of non-formal adult education. Additionally, the least participative groups include people that require education the most and who sustain the greatest risk of social exclusion (low educated, Romani people, people with disabilities, elderly people).

The results of the Adult Education Survey (2006), the first pilot-project of the EU on adult education, went unnoticed, and in its second cycle (2011), Croatia did not participate. It re-joined the survey in 2016. Data from the Eurobarometer, Eurostat or others did not encourage any systematic discussion or policy change. There are no domestic systematic analyses of adult education from a user's perspective, i.e. there are no surveys on needs and obstacles, desires and motives or the satisfaction of the participants themselves (other than the previously mentioned research of the Agency for Vocational Education and Training). In spite of the significant amount of planned and spent resources in this period, as was the case in the previous one, adult education has for the bigger part been funded by the students themselves (in the last twenty years, over 50% of students have been paying for their own education) (Bejaković, 2015).

## CONCLUSION

The changes in adult education over the past twenty-eight years have been significantly marked by the severing of ties with the old education system and the implementation of the Europeanisation process. Adult education has changed within three cycles of education policy.

The first cycle occurred in the 1990s. In this period, the aim of education policies was to sever ties with the socialist educational model and its ideological contents and re-affirm

the national identity and traditional values. The changes in adult education were not conducted based on systematic programme definitions or by passing strategic documents. Within this implementation of education, personnel were changing, programmes were being adapted, and the names of institutions, as well as users, were also changing. The conjunction of modernisation and retraditionalisation was at work in the adult education system. Working on education policy entailed key state actors and the influence of the governing party, with the smaller influence of NGOs and European actors.

The second or the Europeanisation cycle was marked by the preparation process for entry into the EU and the dominant engagement with European initiatives after 2000. Croatia's educational arena was full of transferred European models as an expression of the appropriate Europeanised education policy. The concept of lifelong learning was accepted as the basis of future activities in the field of adult education. State and non-state actors as well as EU actors were influential during this period. The number and the actors themselves changed significantly during the first decade of the 21st century – along with the state structure and the process of agencification, the influence of the EU, NGOs, new adult education associations, the increasing number of private education providers and academic organisations was also important. The main national instruments of change in adult education were the Strategy and Action Plan for Adult Education, the Adult Education Act and the introduction of a national qualifications framework. All of them relied on European documents and educational goals.

The third cycle began with Croatia joining the EU and Parliament passing the Strategy for Education, Science and Technology. For the most part, the goals are still related to strengthening skills and increasing employability. The instruments are the authority (laws), funding (support to students and institutions), organisation (de-agencification) and information dissemination (EPALE, Lifelong Learning Week). Conclusively, there have been no significant changes in comparison to the previous cycle.

The path that was embarked upon in the period after 2000 has determined the direction of further changes towards the end of this period. The goals have not changed substantially, the instruments have been expanded since 2013, the number and influence of actors has changed but not enough to influence the increase of the importance and the efficacy of adult education. In the last period, education policy has been at the centre of political discussion, but adult education has not been a part of it, while the insufficient inclusion of adults in education remains unchanged.

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