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Two Decades of Progress: **Transforming CROATIA's VET Landscape** – The Journey So Far and the Road Ahead

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Agency for Vocational
Education and Training
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Major VET System Changes and Reforms

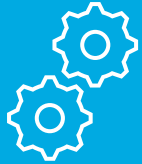


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Distinctive Features of VET in Croatia



70.5% of upper secondary students in VET



Over 80% of four-year VET graduates take matura exams



NEET rate 9.8%

Lowest rate of early school leaving in the EU
2.0%

One half of VET graduates continue directly to higher education

Employment rate of recent VET graduates 70%

Low participation in adult learning 6.4%

These features highlight Croatia's strong VET system with high participation rates and low early school leaving. However, challenges remain in adult learning and employment outcomes for VET graduates.

Institutional and Policy changes

KEY INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

A number of agencies have been established

VET Agency (2006); merged into **Agency for VET and AE** (2010) > played a crucial role in implementing reforms and modernizing the VET system

STRATEGIC & LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

Strategic Goals:

Strategic documents on the National level and 3 various VET strategies highlighted LM relevance, attractiveness, flexibility, QA, TT, etc.

Legal framework

Since the 2009 VET Act

Evolution of Croatia's VET System

Key Developments:

- Transition from rigid academic models to flexible, competency-based education.
- Increased focus on matching curricula with labour market demands.
- Focus on QA, TT, digitalisation, LLL&Skills promotion
- EU funds – supporting innovations, investments in VET and infrastructure

Data: Employment rates for VET graduates rose from 56% in 2013 to 75% in 2023.

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Major VET System Changes and Reforms



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Major VET System Changes and Reforms

Shift Towards Competency-Based Approach

In the past 20 years, Croatia has moved from a content-based to a learning outcome-based approach in VET. A fundamental shift in how programs are designed and delivered.

NQF & New Curriculum Framework

NQF and VET framework curricula were developed. A new modular, outcome-oriented VET curricula is being introduced, serving as the basis for large-scale curricula reform. This allows for more flexibility and responsiveness to LM needs.

Work-Based Learning

There has been increased emphasis on strengthening WBL, including piloting dual education models to better connect VET with the economy.

Major VET System Changes and Reforms

Quality Assurance

QA mechanisms were developed, including self-assessment for VET institutions and school-level graduate tracking systems. Systemic QA introduced in CVET/AE.

Digital Transformation

Croatia has invested heavily in ICT infrastructure for schools through the "e-Schools" project, aiming to digitally transform all schools

CVET and Adult Education

Better linking IVET and CVET. A voucher scheme introduced for AE, focusing on micro-qualifications in digital and green skills. Ongoing efforts to implement a system for RNFIL, represent a significant step towards increasing adult participation in education and training.

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EU impact



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Croatian Qualifications Framework (CROQF)

CROQF Act of 2013/2020 aligns the national qualifications system with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). It covers all education levels.

EQAVET Implementation

Croatia has worked to implement the EQAVET&(ECVET) framework. New QA tools, like provider-level graduate tracking, have been developed in line with EQAVET indicators

Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning

VNFIL is being introduced (based on Act on AE; regulations and methodology), enabling adults to gain qualifications for the LM or continue their education.

**Adoption of
European
Transparency
Tools**

Cedefop and ReferNet: Past Contributions and Future Evolution

Cedefop's Role

- Cedefop played a crucial role in Croatia's VET transformation by systematically introducing European perspectives, tools, and benchmarks into national policy-making, supporting the country's alignment with EU VET standards and facilitating evidence-based reforms.

ReferNet's Evolution

- Provided crucial national-level information for Cedefop's analyses and reports
- Evolved to support monitoring of countries' progress towards EU VET priorities

Future Cooperation

Focus on leveraging European perspectives to support ongoing VET/Skills reforms, enhancing peer learning through ReferNet, addressing emerging challenges such as digitalization and green skills, and expanding ReferNet's role in providing real-time data on national VET developments to facilitate evidence-based policy-making.

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Look forward



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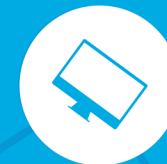
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Challenges and Ongoing Work

Despite progress, challenges remain:

- Comprehensive VET curricular reform, which is to be introduced in 2025.
- Continuous aligning education with rapidly changing labour market needs
- Increasing employer participation in VET planning and delivery
- Improving the attractiveness of VET to students
- Addressing demographic challenges and emigration
- Increasing adult participation in E&T

Thank you for your attention



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