

# CROATIAN NATIONAL REPORT ON MIGRATION, SUSTAINABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION

## Activity 1.1.1: Audit on migration, sustainability and development education

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## Contents

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>1. Introduction.....</b>   | <b>3</b>  |
| 1.1 Rationale behind .....  | 3         |
| 1.2 Aims and objectives.....  | 3         |
| 1.3 Available data and recourses .....  | 3         |
| 1.4 Limitations.....  | 4         |
| <b>2. Literature review.....</b>  | <b>4</b>  |
| 2.1 Public opinion polls .....  | 4         |
| 2.2 Media response.....   | 7         |
| 2.3 Research and project production.....  | 9         |
| 2.4 Case studies of good practices.....   | 10        |
| 2.5 Migration policies and sustainable development.....                                   | 12        |
| 2.6 Migration policies and international commitments.....                                 | 14        |
| <b>3. Field Research.....</b>   | <b>16</b> |
| 3.1 Introduction.....   | 16        |
| 3.2 Awareness about international migration and sustainable development.....              | 17        |
| 3.3 Link between migration and sustainable development.....                               | 17        |
| 3.4 Insecurity.....   | 19        |
| 3.5 Main factors that shape public opinion and instruments to shape public discourse..... | 20        |
| 3.6 Gaps of information and instruments to fill the gaps .....                            | 21        |
| 3.7 The role of education systems.....  | 22        |
| <b>4. Conclusions and recommendations.....</b>  | <b>23</b> |
| 4.1 National and local level recommendations for NGOs.....                                | 23        |
| 4.2 National and local level recommendations for governmental institutions .....          | 23        |
| 4.3 Local level recommendations for municipalities.....                                   | 24        |
| 4.4 National and local level recommendations for educational institutions.....            | 24        |
| 4.5 Recommendations for future research areas .....                                       | 25        |
| <b>References.....</b>  | <b>26</b> |



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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Rationale behind

Since 2013 when it became an EU member state, Croatia is experiencing large emigration and significant decrease in population. Large parts of country are depopulated and in Croatia there is a growing concern on this issue. Furthermore, Croatia is on the so called “Balkan migration route” and these two facts have a large impact on the society. In order to facilitate societal changes that Croatia is experiencing with increase of number of asylum-seekers, it is necessary to further adjust current policy framework at different levels, in order to use the full potentials of the current setting for the sustainable growth and development.

When taking into account the data on Croatian citizens’ knowledge of sustainable development issues and attitudes towards migrations, it is crucial to address this issue of media presentation of these issues. Media has a large influence on population and media monitoring results indicate large number of texts where migrants and asylum seekers are presented as numbers or as a threat. This way of reporting may have negative impact on the ways in which people are perceiving and later on treating migrants and asylum seekers. Furthermore, the additional efforts should be placed towards education on issues of inclusion, migration and sustainable development for both in-service and pre-service teachers.

## 1.2 Aims and objectives

The main aim of this report is to promote critical understanding of migration and sustainable development within the framework of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In the context of Croatia, identify potential gaps between migration as and sustainable development as well as addressing the need for development of clear SDG indicators for Croatia and the importance of raising public awareness in national context. Croatia is experiencing large emigration. Hence issues of migration are also linked with the possible change in population and readiness of stakeholders for different public institution for full inclusion of the large number of immigrants in the future.

## 1.3 Available data and resources

This report includes analysis of relevant strategies on sustainable development, law regulations and analysis of ways in which Croatian laws are adjusted to the requirements of EU legislation, used survey data collected under Eurobarometer survey and MIPEX, presented media response analysis conducted both by NGOs and group of researchers, reviewed results of relevant research studies conducted by independent researchers. The list of the resources used in this report is available under References. A field research which results are presented in the report was conducted in the form of focus group discussions.



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## 1.4 Limitations

Reviewed research studies focusing on the issues of migrations and sustainable development in Croatia are seldom. These two areas are traditionally considered as separate policy areas. This report reflects this gap and presented policy and research data is commonly focusing solely on migrations and/or on sustainable development, the interlinkages between migrations and SD and/or SDG are made in the concluding paragraphs of the chapters and subchapters of this report. The participants of the field research recognised the interconnectivity of these two areas and made significant number of references to mutual influences of migrations and sustainable development. In addition, the findings of the field research are not generalizable. We cannot argue that the opinions of the individuals involved in focus groups represent the stakeholder opinions' in their sectors entirely, nevertheless we consider their opinions to be indicative of the current tendencies.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 Public opinion polls

Different aspects of migration and development issues have been analysed by the Eurobarometer survey. This report includes data on Croatia and attitudes of Croatian citizens towards migration in general and refugees in particular, national security risks, sustainable development, environmental and climate change issues in Croatia.

#### 1) Migration in general and migrants / refugees in particular

According to Knezović and Grošinić (2017), even during the immigrant crisis (15th September 2015 – 8th March 2016), when 650 thousands of people passed through Croatia, there were actually only 22 of them who wanted to stay and seek asylum in Croatia. In negotiations with the EU, Croatia agreed to accept (1.87% of the total EU amount) of asylum-seeking migrants and it is likely that this will bring new dynamics into the system at the national level (Knezović & Grošinić, 2017). Obucina (2016) writes that in 2015, Croatian citizens participated twice in a Eurobarometer survey on immigration. In the span of half a year, the opinions of Croatian citizens changed. From spring 2015 until the end of the year, negative answers on migration rose by 10 percent. Before, 43 percent of the population had negative views on immigrants from outside the EU; in 2015 survey this has risen to 53 percent. Positive attitudes are present in 41 percent of population, which is again 4 percent lower than in the previous survey. According to Obucina (2016) this is due to the fact that more than half a million immigrants, mostly from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq passed through Croatia. According to the EU Agreement on quotas for refugees in EU member countries from September 2015, Croatia should accept up to 1,600 asylum seekers. The rise of negative attitudes toward these migrants is partly connected to fear of change in the employment market. In the same time, entrepreneurs and unions are



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reminding the public that Croatia will accept a small number of migrants, who will not endanger workplaces.

## 2) National security risks

In the survey of Europeans' attitude towards security (European Commission, 2017a) a large majority of Croatians feel secure in their immediate city and neighbourhood, but they are less convinced that the EU is a secure place to live in. Around nine in ten respondents say that their neighbourhood, their city and their country are secure places to live in (96%, 95%, and 89% respectively). It is necessary to emphasize that during the recent immigrant crisis, Croatia was only a transit destination and the huge number of immigrants were passing through the country, and the statistics and the country profile did not change significantly. Under the given circumstances, it is possible to conclude that the survey participants do not perceive Croatia as an immigrant destination country, hence it is not possible to link issues of immigration to the feeling of security/insecurity in the local environment.

A large majority of survey respondents from Croatia (European Commission, 2017a) regard terrorism, organised crime and natural and man-made disasters as key challenges to the EU security. Respondents continue to regard challenges to the internal security of the EU as important, particularly terrorism (94%) and organised crime (93%). There are mixed opinions on whether the national authorities are doing enough to tackle various security problems. Two-thirds (60%) of respondents think that enough is being done by national authorities to combat terrorism and almost half (48%) think enough is being done to fight drug trafficking. A significant majority of respondents in Croatia agree (92%) on the need to share information within the EU to better fight crime and terrorism. In addition, respondents believe that the police and other law enforcement authorities cooperate adequately to fight crime and terrorism (76%). In Croatia, a majority of respondents (73%) think that cooperation between the police and other national law enforcement authorities is adequate to fight crime and terrorism.

## 3) Sustainable development and environmental issues

The first public opinion poll towards climate change issues in Croatia was carried out by UNDP Croatia (2008). The research focus was on ways in which Croatian citizens perceive climate change as a phenomenon with important social implications. The surveyed citizens had highly positive attitude towards environmental protection, with less than 2% of respondents that considered environmental protection to be "irrelevant".

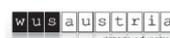
Opinion of Croatian citizens on sustainable development and environmental issues is presented in the Special Eurobarometer 468 (European Commission, 2017b). According to the gathered data, less than half of respondents from Croatia think that protecting the environment is very important to them personally. Since the last survey in 2014 there has been a significant decrease in the proportion saying it is 'very important': 40% compared with 58% in 2014. In the same time, there is an increase in number of citizens, which believe that protecting the environment is fairly important: 47% compared with 35% in 2014.



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Respondents air pollution (47%) and the growing amount of waste (41%) the most important environmental issues. Majority of respondents from Croatia (51%) believe that decisions about protecting the environment should be made by the national government. Since the last survey in 2014, there has been increase in number of respondents who choose this option (7%).

Since 2014 to 2017, it is possible to recognise a growing tendency of support for stricter legislation to tackle environmental problems. In 2017, 46% of respondents tend to agree and 40% agree that EU environmental legislation is necessary for protecting the environment in Croatia. Most of the survey participants from Croatia (86%) feel that they have a personal role to play in protecting the environment. Survey participants from Croatia believe that introducing stricter environmental legislation (31%) and introducing heavier fines for breaches of environmental legislation (30%) are the most effective ways of tackling environmental problems.

When surveyed about ways in which they in their everyday lives contribute to the environment, most of the survey participants from Croatia answered that they separated their waste for recycling (44%) and bought local products (30%). Almost half (49%) of survey participants from Croatia think that air quality in their country has deteriorated over the last ten years, while more than third (41%) say that air quality has stayed the same, and only 7% say that it has improved. Under half of Croatians (43%) think that the issue of air pollution can best be addressed at the national level. Around one third (35%) think that it is better addressed at the EU level, while 21% favour action at the regional or local level. Respondents from Croatia believe that one of the most effective ways of tackling problems of air quality would be applying stricter pollution controls on industrial and energy-production activities (36%) and introducing stricter air quality legislation (31%).

In reviewed research and public opinion pools, there are limited interlinkages between above-mentioned three issues. Attitudes of the Croatian citizens, in relation to migration in general and migrants/refugees in particular, national security risks and sustainable development and environmental issues are questioned in the recent Eurobarometer survey (European Commission, 2017c). The results of this survey for the participants from Croatia differ from the results of the same survey administered among other EU citizens. More than half of the surveyed Croatians (52%) believe that unemployment is the most important issue that Croatia is currently facing. At the same time, 25% of EU citizens recognize unemployment as important issue. In Croatia, economic situation (28%) and cost of living (27%) are also considered to be highly important issues. In EU, 16% of surveyed citizens recognize economic situation as the most important issue. Also, 17% of EU citizens recognize cost of living as the most important issue. Immigration is recognised as most important issue by only 5% of Croatian citizens (in comparison to 16% of EU citizens), terrorism by 4% of Croatian citizens (in comparison to 16% of EU citizens), and the environment, climate and energy issues by only 2% of surveyed Croatian citizens (in comparison to 10% of EU citizens). In the same time, Croatian citizens believe that terrorism (51%) and immigration (29%) are the most important issues facing the EU at the moment. It is possible to conclude that although Croatian citizens recognize terrorism and



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Euro training



immigration as important issues that EU is currently facing, they do not perceive Croatia as an environment that is significantly influenced by these issues.

Nevertheless, due to recent accession to the EU, Croatia will gradually be losing its status of entirely transit state for those attempting to reach Western Europe. It is likely that this will change the pattern of discourse about immigration and increase pressures at the state administration level to consolidate its policy in the field of migration. There is a need for awareness rising on the importance of interdisciplinary understanding of climate issues due to relation of economic insecurity and the potential for democratic support for climate change mitigation. In addition, there is a need for training for stakeholders from different public institutions on changes in policies in the field of migration and need for the further policy alignment to fundamental European values and principles in order to generate growth and use current immigration trends for sustainable development at the national level.

## 2.2 Media response

Analysis of the data from media monitoring in Croatia indicate the media response to the topics of asylum, migration and integration, 'refugee crisis', climate change, environmental issues and sustainable development, and national security threats with the focus on terrorism. The available media monitoring reports do not indicate any interlinkages between above mentioned issues.

### 1) Asylum, migration and integration

Center for Peace Studies (CMS, 2015) conducted the analysis of media response on 'asylum-seekers' on the sample of three Croatian newspapers ('Jutarnji list', 'Večernji list' and '24 hours'). According to the analysis results, there are three dominant ways of reporting. The first way of reporting presents asylum-seeking migrants as numbers, through the metaphor of waves that come and place additional burden on the state, and endanger security, health, economics, and culture of a particular country. The second way of reporting presents asylum-seeking migrants as criminals. In the reviewed media it is possible to notice dominant themes such as theft and rape assaults by asylum-seeking male migrants. The third way of reporting presents migrants as victims and this is usually done by describing them through the "warm human stories". In these stories, the migrants are presented as victims of their own cultures and countries of origin.

### 2) So called 'refugee crisis'

Jurišić, Vesnić Alujević & Bonacci (2017) analysed 12,721 articles published in eight Croatian news portals (Jutarnji.hr, Večernji.hr, 24sata.hr, Tportal.hr, Index.hr, Net.hr, Dnevnik.hr i Vijesti.rtl.hr) in the period from 15 September 2015 to 15 March 2016. All articles contained the key word "migrant" or "refugee". Two thirds of the selected articles had comments (8 822) and total 416 374 comments of 31 458 identified by the commentators were recorded. From the time the refugees entered Croatia, the number of articles on refugee crisis grew day after day, and the largest number was recorded in



October 2015, when total of 3 094 articles were published. Each portal of that month had more than 300 articles that contained keywords ("migrant" or "refugee"), and portal Index.hr had more than 600 articles. After October 2015, the number of articles began to decrease linearly, at the beginning of 2016, again briefly grew and then continued to descend linearly. In the first two months of the refugee crisis, the media relied on Croatian sources of information, and politicians have used the crisis to put their agenda through the media during the pre-election campaign. After that, this issue was no longer part of the agenda of Croatian politicians. The analysis showed that the refugee crisis was the most common topic in the analysed media in October 2015. The most prominent thematic clusters are related to the bilateral relations of the countries on the Balkan route in times of crisis (first closing the Hungarian-Serbian border as it is conditioned the redirection of refugees through Croatia, then the Serb-Croat border, and Croatian-Hungarian border), refugee camps, the number of refugees passing through them and the relationship of foreign statesmen to the refugee crisis.

### 3) Climate change, environmental issues and sustainable development

In Croatia there are seldom media analysis on the issues of climate change, environmental issues and sustainable development. According to the UNDP Croatia (2008) report, media plays an important role in educating, raising awareness, and mobilising the public to take action regarding climate change. The survey's results show that Croatian citizens primarily obtain information about climate change from television (34%), newspapers (24%) and magazines (13%).

### 4) National security threats with the focus on terrorism

Kurtić & Đukić (2013) analysed the way media were reporting on Norwegian terrorist attacks that occurred on 22 July 2011. The analysis was conducted on three online news portals from Croatia. General assumption was that global media, beside targeted dissemination of factographic information, also obtrude interpretative frames, which are under influence of not only dominant culture but, more or less, clear global economic and political interest. In the way global media were presenting information on terrorist attacks, Croatian online media remained on the level of presentation of pure information without additional questioning and possible placing the issues in the context of Croatian social environment. Felger and Lesinger (2017) provide an overview of the relations between terrorist atrocities and media coverage of the said atrocities through the analysis of media content present on Croatian Internet portals and national television in the case of terrorist abduction of a Croatian citizen Tomislav Salopek. The authors focus on both identifying elements and reasons of the media coverage of that case as well as on their impact on the public.

The presented results may serve as a guideline for the InterCap awareness raising and training. More recent and extensive media analysis studies on the media coverage of climate change, environmental and sustainable development issues should give more clear indication on the ways in which these issues are presented on internet, television, newspapers and magazines. InterCap may contribute with awareness raising and relevant



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stakeholders training on the inclusive ways of reporting on asylum-seeking migrants' importance of placing of information on terrorism in the context of Croatian social environment.

## 2.3 Research and project production

Croatian Strategy for Sustainable Development is focusing on long-term action in the following eight key areas: encouraging population growth in the Republic of Croatia, environment and natural resources, promoting sustainable production and consumption, ensuring social and territorial cohesion and justice, ensuring energy independence and increasing the efficiency of energy use, strengthening public health, interconnectedness of the Republic of Croatia, and protection of the Adriatic Sea, coastal area and islands (MEPPPC, 2011). The new Environment Action Plan of the Republic of Croatia for the period 2016 – 2024 is under development and is in line with environmental aspects of SDGs. Project for drafting of Strategy for adaptation to climate change, which includes detailed modelling of climate changes in Croatia, has started in May 2016.

In reviewed research and policy document, the term 'Sustainable Development' has been used in a variety of ways by different groups and entities. Bečić, Mulej and Švarc (2012) presents an overview of the progress in the development of indicators of sustainable development (SDI) in Croatia and Slovenia in the context of global challenges. Key challenges include: (1) comparability and aggregation variability of SDI in relation to the quality of data determined by the sustainable development policies; (2) impacts and reflections of compiled SDIs on different kinds of user needs; and (3) Social responsibility, as a contribution to, and framework of sustainability.

Knezović and Grošinić (2017) write that Croatia was obliged to implement common EU provisions and measures in the immigration policy field, maintaining autonomy in decisions on numbers of accepted immigrants and asylum-seekers and having at least limited possibility to influence the development of EU policy in this field as its newest full-fledged member state. In the context of sustainable development policy making, estimated trends of increase of number of asylum-seekers will lead toward raising the issue of quality of current policy framework at different levels, flexibility of existing institutional set-up and capacities at the national level to use the potentials of existing setting for sustainable growth and development. Botrić (2016) writes that although immigrants have a disadvantaged position on the Croatian labour market, most analysed indicators do not imply that they are in a worse position than in other European economies. Migrant integration policies related to the labour market are assessed as being relatively favourable for Croatia. Judging by the comparable indicators for the native population in Croatia, immigrants' adverse labour market outcomes seem to be more related to the unfavourable general economic situation, and particularly by the deep and long recession.

With the relation to migration, there are several research papers presenting certain aspect of migration process and related asylum procedures that are implemented in Croatia. Čapo (2015) presents analysis of certain aspects of the exceptional migration process unfolding



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in Europe from the middle of September to the beginning of November, 2015. It focuses on analysis of managing migration in Croatia through the presentation of the functioning of the reception (and transit) centre at Opatovac. The ethnographic perspective used in this research offered a complex view of responses to the events, pointing out the paradoxes in refugee reception and transit migration management in Croatia. It is established that there are constant contradictions contained in the nexus of security and humanitarian demands in the migration process management, these largely coming to the fore because of a lack of international co-operation and a firm stance and common policy on the part of the EU. In that way, the EU has contributed to the deepening of the humanitarian migration crisis, but also demonstrated its deep value crisis.

Lalić Novak (2015) writes that the European Union and other countries on the Balkan route for migrants have recorded a large increase in the number of asylum seekers. In parallel with the increased number of refugees trying to enter the territory of the EU, measures for migration management have tightened, and the right to asylum at the level of the Member States has been interpreted more and more restrictive. Search for protection from persecution has become a reason for closing borders and disabling access to territory and asylum system. However, access to asylum system is the first step in the realization of the right to asylum as guaranteed by international, European and national law. In addition to allowing access to territory and asylum system, which implies an obligation of states to accept refugees in order to confirm the need for international protection in a fair and efficient procedure, the states are obliged to respect the principle of non-refoulement. The conclusion is that the states must take into account international and European standards regarding the protection of the principle of non-refoulement, when considering the introduction of new measures to manage migration movements.

There are no sustainable development goals explicitly mentioned in the projects on displacement, asylum, migration and integration policy making. Nevertheless, several research studies focus on the disadvantaged position on the Croatian labour market, which may be directly related to the SDG on decent work and economic growth and use of the potentials of existing setting for sustainable growth and development. Also, studies discussing necessary changes in legislation that should lead toward improvement of asylum system do consider SDG issues of reduced inequalities and global partnership for goals.

## 2.4 Case studies of good practices

On the national level, in February 2013, the Croatian Parliament adopted the Migration Policy of the Republic of Croatia for the Period 2013-2015 (The Government of the Republic of Croatia, 2013), which contains a section on Integration Policy (Section 5., including 5 measures). In Croatia, the development of policies is mainly focusing on policies of border control, which has resulted in Slovenia strengthening the policing of its borders, particularly in the wake of its entry into the Schengen area and the abolition of internal borders with Austria, Italy and Hungary, while strengthening the control over its border with Croatia, now an external EU border.



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Knezović & Grošinić (2017) describe institutional setup of the support for migrants in Croatia. Ministry of Interior (Mol) which is responsible for registering foreigners and regulating their status in Croatia. The issue of foreigners and asylum seekers is under the authority of Directorate for Administrative and Inspection Affairs. The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare ensures health services and provides lodging for asylum seekers during first two years of their stay in Croatia, while Ministry of Science, Education and Sports offers Croatian language classes and provides basic educational possibilities. National Protection and Rescue Directorate is a leading organization for the protection and rescue of people, assets and environment in the Republic of Croatia. In the period of migration crisis, it provided a logistical support to the process of admission of immigrants and their accommodation. The Croatian Red Cross has a mandate to address the humanitarian concerns of migrants “living at the margins of conventional health, social and legal systems”, throughout their journey.

Kuti (2014) emphasises that when it comes to the engagement of non-state actors, there are several relevant actions and initiatives focusing on the integration of immigrants. However, they are implemented by non-migrant civil society organisations and primarily target asylum seekers, refugees and subsidiary protection beneficiaries. In Croatia, there are several civil society organisations and initiatives that were involved in work with refugees on every day basis: Are You Syrious? (AYS)<sup>1</sup>, The Center for Peace Studies (CMS)<sup>2</sup> and Initiative Welcome<sup>3</sup>. For example, the Centre for Peace Studies (CPS) is very active with respect to asylum issues in Croatia. It organises Croatian language lessons for asylum seekers, refugees and persons under subsidiary protection.

In the last decade, several educational research projects focusing on migration and socially oriented sustainable development goals were financed by EU funds were implemented in Croatia. Several Comenius 3 projects were led by the Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies and were targeting primary and secondary schools (both pupils and teachers) with the purpose of improving pupils' knowledge in the field of migration and intercultural relations. One of the partners for the Erasmus Plus project BRIGHTS, which promotes Global Citizenship Education (GCE) in formal and non-formal Educational contexts in Europe, with the help of digital storytelling (DS) techniques is Centre of Technical Culture Rijeka, Croatia. The main goal of the project is to determine training needs of European teachers and trainers in the field of Global Citizenship Education (BRIGHTS, 2017).

According to ESDN (2017) report, there is a growing awareness of the importance of sustainable development in Croatia, which resulted in a number of towns and counties that are taking the initiative on their own, joining the international initiatives and campaigns in that direction. Some other sub-national activities are organised by public administration or are result of civil society. In addition, several EU financed projects are focusing on SD and SDG. For example, HMRR (2012) was working on the IPA project Together for Sustainable Development in Croatia, with an overall objective to strengthen the voice of civil sector in

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/areyousyrious/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cms.hr/en>

<sup>3</sup> <http://welcome.cms.hr/index.php/en/>



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shaping, monitoring and evaluating sustainable development policies on local, national and international level through networking, cross-sectoral partnership and capacity building. Main objectives of the Erasmus+ project "Social Innovation & Inclusion of Sustainable Development Goals - sociSDG" coordinated by Croatian Institute for CSR – IDOP (2017) Social, are adult education, cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practice examples when it comes to nine socially-oriented SDGs. The project is focusing on the exchange of good practice examples of companies already integrating SDGs into their models by measuring their social impact and developing tools and methodology for its integration.

## 2.5 Migration policies and sustainable development

When reviewing migration policies and considering their interrelation to the sustainable development, in the context of Croatia it is necessary to separately present immigration, integration, out-migration and emigration related policies.

When reviewing immigration policies, Croatia's recent accession to the EU and developments in the wider surroundings are likely to change the pattern of discourse about immigration and increase pressures at the state administration level to consolidate its policy in the field of migration, making it reasonably aligned to fundamental European values and principles and capable of generating growth and using current immigration trends for sustainable development at the national level (Knezović & Grošinić, 2017).

It is useful to review Migrant integration policy index – MIPEX (2015) data which provides quantitative data on characteristics of particular country regarding the ways in which immigrants contribute to a country's well-being through equal access to employment and education. According to MIPEX (IMIN, 2014), all legally residing migrant children in Croatia can enrol in compulsory education. Following the recent amendments of the Law on Education in Primary and Secondary School of 07/15/2013 (National Gazette, 2013). Undocumented migrant pupils in Croatia will now have limited access to primary education. Still, they will not be able to enrol in secondary school, as in nearly all MIPEX countries, and access higher education or vocational training, as in half of the MIPEX countries. Moreover, Croatian schools are required to provide very few integration measures for migrant pupils. Migrant children can benefit from official language support in primary and secondary education, but are not provided with an opportunity to learn their mother languages. According to the MIPEX (2015) evaluation scores, migrant access to education (score 7), targeting needs (score 13), new opportunities (score 0) are critically unfavourable for integration. Slightly better results relate to implementation of intercultural education for all (score 33) which is still marked as unfavourable for migrants.

As Kuti (2014) writes, in accordance to the legislative measures adopted in Croatia in 2013, it is clear that integration is becoming a political priority to a great extent. The only official document dealing with migrant integration prior to 2013, was the Migration Policy of the Republic of Croatia for 2007-2008 (The Government of the Republic of Croatia, 2007). It prescribed 17 measures and activities with only a few pertaining to integration: e.g.



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introducing compulsory language lessons and Croatian history and culture tests in the process of acquiring Croatian citizenship or permanent residence status and “measures, by which, in order to prevent discriminatory practices and attitudes towards immigrants in the economic, social and cultural life, the right to an equal status in relation to Croatian citizens is provided, with a focus on acquiring citizenship” (The Government of the Republic of Croatia, 2007). The latter measures (together with the “development of a comprehensive analysis of the labour market situation and of multi-annual trends of supply and demand for certain professions with a proposal of appropriate measures to meet the workforce demand”) are listed among “the most important measures, which were not fully carried out or which because of their importance should be implemented continuously” in current Migration Policy (The Government of the Republic of Croatia, 2013: 2).

Out-migration is a major issue in Croatia, and according to the Strategy for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in the Republic of Croatia (The Government of the Republic of Croatia, 2014), which is aligned with the SDGs, the aim of multisector investments in deprived areas, is to ensure the reduction of regional differences, including the number of persons at risk of poverty, which is to be realised through a synergistic effect of investments focused on increasing the availability of social and municipal services, on economic measures and incentives to employment and workforce education, as well as on measures and activities in the field of housing, especially in relation to minority groups, through a number of smaller regional and local projects. One of the expected results of such integrated activities is the prevention of further outmigration of the inhabitants of these areas and stopping their resettlement in cities where they tend to join the existing groups of poor, which causes additional intensification and deepening of the issue.

When discussing and evaluating the development of migrant integration policies in Croatia it is important to take into account that traditionally Croatia was primarily an emigration country. According to the Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Republic of Croatia (MEPPPC, 2011) for a number of years Croatia had unfavourable demographic developments. This is manifested in an increase of ageing population, negative natural growth rate, migrations during the Homeland War and ageing of the active working population. According to the 2001 census, Croatia had approximately 4.44 million inhabitants, of which 56% lived in urban settlements. The birth rate in 2005 was 9.6% while the natural growth rate was negative: -2.1. According to the projections of the mean fertility rate with migrations, by 2050 the total number of inhabitants in the Republic of Croatia would be around 3.68 million, of which 80% would live in urban settlements. The age structure of the population between 1953 and 2001 has significantly changed in the negative direction. In 1953, Croatia had a progressive population age structure of the so-called pyramid type. In 1981, it took on the stagnating form of the beehive type and in 2001 transformed into a regressive type by taking on the inverse pyramid form. The younger population spontaneously and rapidly migrated from marginal and rural areas of the state, which is especially evident in highland areas and areas affected by the Homeland War. Due to the very low natural population growth and uneven population distribution, almost all Croatian counties experience unfavourable demographic processes and the distortion of the population age and gender structure. These processes are particularly manifested in the migration of younger, fertile population



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from rural, remote and economically underdeveloped areas to urban centres, which was especially noticeable in the second half of the 20th century. The main strategic objective is to prevent further decline in the natural increase of the population and negative migration trends in order to sustain the population number of the Republic of Croatia at a level higher than 4 million inhabitants by 2050, while raising the total fertility rate from the present 1.38 to 1.88 or increasing the number of new-born children from the present 42,500 to 60,000 per annum.

Although, current migration policies in Croatia are shaped in order to reach sustainable development goals, further improvements are needed. The migration policies should be adjusted to the current social moment, such as recent EU accession and ongoing out-migration, emigration, and expected increase in number of asylum-seeking migrants. Migration policies should discuss issues of population growth drive urbanization (due to out-migration and migration), ways in which urbanisation is managed, and the types of jobs and services that migrants can access.

## 2.6 Migration policies and international commitments

The *Migration Policy of the Republic of Croatia for the Period 2013-2015* document (The Government of the Republic of Croatia, 2013) is establishing the migration policy priorities of the Republic of Croatia. In addition, as part of its preparation for EU accession, Croatia harmonised The Aliens' Act (National Gazette, 30/11, 74/13, 69/17) and started a significant policy and administrative reform. This Act regulates conditions for the entry, movement, residence and work of foreigners as well as working conditions and rights of workers assigned to work in the Republic of Croatia.

According to Knezović & Grošinić (2017) development of Croatian national migration policy was a consequence of two parallel processes: 1) increased relevance of the issue of migration at regional, European and global level and 2) conditionality in the process of EU accession, with the latter obviously having a prevailing impact. The first official migration policy document was adopted in 2007 in the midst of the EU accession process. The aims and goals were set very generally and only 17 measures and activities were envisaged, relating predominantly to adoption of legislature. In the document, there was barely any visible track-record of implementation and investments in the organisational infrastructure in the period when the issue was not dominating the wider regional, European and international discourse. Again, two processes affected the dramatic change in relevance of immigration policy: 1) Croatia's accession to the EU and assumption of responsibility for implementation of EU policies in this specific field; 2) geostrategic turbulences in MENA region and their consequences in the field of migration. In other words, in a very short period Croatia turned from a candidate state dealing with migrations, as with just one of topics in the EU accession process, to an EU member state on an immigration route to the EU in a very difficult regional environment burdened with consequences of security dysfunctions in the 90s. In such set of circumstances, it was obliged to implement common EU provisions and measures in this specific field, maintaining autonomy in decisions on numbers of accepted immigrants and asylum-seekers and having at least limited possibility



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to influence the development of EU policy in this field as its newest full-fledged member state.

The international commitments of Republic of Croatia may be observed through: development cooperation programmes, projects and initiatives, external aids to reduce migration risk and implementation of global education.

Cooperation programmes such as Interreg, were implemented by Croatia and neighbouring countries. For example, Agency for Regional development of the Republic of Croatia (2014) is managing the Interreg IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Croatia-Serbia 2014-2020 is a new cooperation programme envisaged to be implemented during financial period 2014-2020. It represents continuation of successful cooperation between two countries established previous financial perspective. The overall objective of the Interreg IPA Cooperation Programme Croatia-Serbia 2014-2020 is to strengthen the social, economic and territorial development of the cross-border area through the implementation of joint projects and activities. Veneto Region (2014) is managing authority for the Interreg IPA programme Italy-Croatia 2014-2020 CBC. This programme was developed taking into consideration the policy framework on European, macro-regional, national and regional levels. The drafting process was conducted along the goals and priorities identified within multi thematic strategies.

The recommendations that may be linked to the reduction of migration risks are provided in the Meznarić and Stubbs (2012) study. According to this study, there is a need for more timely and accurate data and research; promoting circular migration; promoting a regional approach to migration from neighbouring countries; and investment in migration-loss regions, in young people and in women.

Globally interrelated challenges such as climate change, the refugee emergency, the financial crisis and security challenges, point to the urgent need of changing the dominant model in order to realize a just and sustainable world. Kovač, Buchberger and Rafajac (2014) focus on the ultimate educational policy goal focusing on enabling citizens to effectively take advantage of the global world economy. So that, there is a need for continuous improvement of education systems, the concern for improving the quality of educational services, equitable access to education and stronger incentives for efficient education. These tendencies can be found in the contents of the policy documents in Croatia and are reflecting global education policies.

Based on migration policy analysis, it is possible to conclude that there is ongoing adjustment of the Croatian migration and educational policies and relevant legislative documents to the EU standards, while taking into consideration specifics of the Croatian society. These ongoing adjustments were also part of the EU accession process and advocacy directed at decision-makers, while ensuring the inclusion of the interests of socially excluded groups in all areas of life.



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## 3. Field Research

### 3.1 Introduction

In Croatia, focus groups were held on 21 and 23 of February 2018, in the premises of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Split. The first focus group lasted about 1 hour and 20 minutes, of which a part of the interview was held for 1 hour and 6 minutes (audio recording does not include participants' introductions, project presentation and presentation ethical aspects of focus group participation: privacy protection, the right to use information and ideas discussed). The length of the audio recordings for the second focus group is 52 minutes. Prior to start of the second focus group, same as in the first group, the main elements of the project were presented and participants signed the terms of participation. The total duration of the second meeting was 1 hour and 10 minutes. The focus group were led by two researchers. In total, two focus groups had 11 participants, 5 men and 6 women. The average age of the participants was 47 years.

In the first group there were 6 interviewees/participants (city councillor, president of the city district, university teacher who is actively involved in the work of the NGO dealing with migrant population, Catholic Church priest who is actively involved in the work on issues of migration and sustainable development, the Employment Service analyst, and a member of NGO working with migrants at regional and national level) and the focus group leader.

The president of the city district and city councillor have an understanding of initiatives and decision-making procedures at the national and regional/city level, as well as the types of influence that exist when deciding on migration and sustainable development issues. The priest is a representative of one of the most influential social institutions in Croatia that shapes public opinion and mood and has an explicit attitude towards migrants and sustainable development-ecology. The Employment Service Analyst monitors the labour market trends, especially in relation to the new trend of emigration from Croatia and develops projections of possible consequences. Two NGO participants through the NGO sector have participated in work with migrant population and track the situation in the area.

In the second group there were 5 participants (elementary school principal with experience in working with migrant children, Croatian language teacher from the Centre for Lifelong Learning who worked with migrants, teaching assistant at the University with expertise in the area of health as a segment of sustainable development, university professor of sociology who teaches social ecology and other courses that cover the issues of sustainable development and education, university professor working in the area of inclusive education) and the focus group leader. All participants in the second focus group work in the field of education focusing on the issues of migration and/or sustainable development. Three focus group participants work at the University level, one in elementary school and one in the Lifelong Learning Centre.



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### 3.2 Awareness about international migration and sustainable development

When discussing the key concepts related to the issues of migration and sustainable development (Policy Coherence for Development - PCD, the Paris Agreement, Habitat III), it is possible to conclude that focus group participants share an indirect knowledge of these concepts. For example, they knew that the U.S.A. withdrew from the Paris Agreement, whose predecessor is the Kyoto Protocol. SDG is recognized as an attempt to reduce the emissions of pollutants and use of renewable energy sources through a number of small ecological interventions (wind power and solar panels).

The participants of second focus group (educational workers) knew the content of these terms, knowing even the history of the development of these documents (up to the 70s of the twentieth century), but did not associate content with their names and mentioned English abbreviations. Some, again, tried to translate the abbreviations wrongly and thought that Habitat III refers to the natural environment. One participant from the first focus group precisely defined sustainable development as a dealing with nature, in ways that current development does not restrict nor jeopardise the development of future generations. Participants in the second group were well acquainted with these terms, strategies for promotion sustainable development at the global level, and change of strategies in that process.

Participants believe that these topics appear as political themes, but only under the pressure of deadlines set by the EU or when they are in the interest of politics as a means of winning power, but not as a strategic goal at the national level in order to improve life conditions on a national level or at local community. However, all participants believe that these are topics that should be promoted and accepted not for the commitments undertaken, but for the interests of the community. These topics appear both in the media as well as in the public, but only when a concrete problem arises in the community, without continuity, and often as an opportunity to realize political power. Migration experts are dealing with these issues, again, far from the media and the public, so their expertise becomes interesting only in specific local situations that are recognised as a current threat.

### 3.3 Link between migration and sustainable development

In Croatia, this issue arises only marginally, through the media as a problem that may for example appear in coastal areas, or as a concrete environmental and civil action problem that prevents investment that endangers environmental and climate change that could force the local population into migration. One of the participants was among initiators of the public initiative for reconsideration and the pressure on all those who make decisions in a major energy project (a combined gas power plant and a hydro-power plant in a reversible system) in Croatia (Cvitković, 2017; HINA, 2017). This participant stated that it was unbelievable for such a big project that no one knows who investor is and who promotes the project. In addition, from the outset, it was obvious that this project may be detrimental



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to the environment, the population and their present existence, and there are no available economic justification.

Additionally, although the realization of this project would endanger one of the largest drinking water reservoirs in Europe, a large number of residents and a range of economic activities (such as tourism, which is one of the key economic branches in Croatia), the project passed all the necessary levels of decision-making up to the level of Ministry and received all necessary permissions without public discussion.

If there was no reaction from the citizens, the project implementation would go through and would create huge environmental damage and irreparably endanger the environment. This indicates that politics can easily find fair arguments and that at the political level there is no awareness of ecological issues (as a segment of sustainable development). Collective awareness of the problem of sustainable development and migrations that are associated with this problem is very weak. Interest groups are absolutely not interested in the problem itself, but only in the context of achieving social power.

Some participants, however, believe that awareness of the problems of sustainable development is growing, but that it is mainly linked to current environmental problems. Also, the majority of focus group participants believe that there is a delay in way our civil society functions in comparison to the Western democracies and that there is an inherited mentality under which the law is selectively respected - when it goes in favour, otherwise it is not respected.

The problem exists at level of problem recognition, but also as proactive approach in raising awareness on the issues of sustainable development in schools. While the climate change problem is recognised in Croatia in the last decade, there is a growing awareness of related issues, especially since there are particular issues that directly affect Croatian economy: agriculture, tourism, fishing and other areas affected by climate changes as invasive plants and animal species appear, and on the other hand, some species of fish are disappearing etc. There is a proactive approach to raising awareness on the issues of sustainable development and climate change in schools: the themes of environmental pollution, sustainable development and climate change are included in biology and chemistry curriculum in the 6th grade of the elementary school. Following special topics were emphasised by interviewees: the problems of the sea level lifting, the notion of carbon footprint and the problem of release of methane from the smelting of ice on the poles as pollution is potentially more damaging than the CO<sub>2</sub> generated by fossil fuel combustion. In addition, some schools implement small ecological projects such as: composting, collecting old paper and so on. These small school activities can change the consciousness deeply and permanently change the behaviours of generations that will create the future. More participants are of the opinion that inappropriate environmental behaviour should be sanctioned because it is one of the most effective behavioural interventions. The majority of the focus group participants think that sustainable development should be the key strategic project in Croatia, in the vision of the future society, but its implementation will be difficult without 'pressure' from the EU. Moreover, most participants think that this strategy should



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be regionalised by adjusting development to the specific potentials, resources and people of particular Croatian regions.

The focus group participants do see interconnection between SDG on quality education and migrations. Also, there is a clear understanding of the social inclusion issues and other socially oriented sustainable development goals. Nevertheless, due to the Croatian social context (e.g., constant emigration and high unemployment rates) more emphasis was given to the SDG on decent work and economic growth issues. It is possible to speculate that social inclusion, migrations and gender equality issues are not perceived as sustainable development goals primary importance for the Croatian society.

### 3.4 Insecurity

Migration as an element of uncertainty has a complex structure in Croatia. The primary problem for Croatia is strong emigration as hundreds of thousands of people have left Croatia. Majority of these people emigrated towards Western European countries. Participants mention that a similar phenomenon occurs in neighbouring countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia), and that this occurrence is even more severe than it is a case with Croatia. There is no agreement between focus group participants about reasons for such strong emigration waves: some participants think that the main cause is unemployment, general uncertainty and uncertainty of employment, others believe that emigration is affected by corruption and other unfavourable social relations, etc. Some of the focus group participants discuss unemployment, while media news are full of reports about search for workers for jobs that are not attractive to Croatian citizens (construction workers, chefs, waiters, maids, etc.).

According to the focus group participants, there is no fear that migrants could lessen chances of local population from getting a job, because migrants would probably take jobs that are not attractive to Croatians. There is a greater fear of aging of the population and of the labour force that will be missing in the future, and due to which the sustainability of the pension system is endangered. In Croatia, emigration is a much bigger problem than immigration, because only 20-40 asylum seekers are requested annually in Croatia. On the other hand, a large number of people leave Croatia and the large areas of Croatia are empty. Emptying these big areas of Croatia, especially the wheat fields, creates a sense of insecurity and neglect of the earth. In that sense, some think that it would be good to settle these areas in order to use the rich wheat fields. The 'Migrant Wave' that passed through Croatia initially created a sense of insecurity because citizens did not know what was going on and whether or not these people would stay in Croatia or know who those people are. Migrants were passing through the courtyards of people in poorly populated areas, people helped them though they did not know who they were and what their intentions were - most did not have identification documents and many suspected that there among migrants were people with 'bad intentions'.

The focus group participants recognize fear among Croatian citizens that all arriving migrants would stay in Croatia and outnumber the local population. There was also a fear of



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a possible loss of identity, due to the number of people that are arriving at the country, while the birth rate of local people decreases and the nation has a negative demographic growth. Although this fear decreased after a while, some uncertainty and insecurity remained. Nevertheless, in Croatia, there were no political movements against migrations as it has happened in Germany or Greece, where political parties explicitly opposed to migration. The question remains if the same political reactions would occur in Croatia, in a case that migration wave continued. In Croatia, there were attempts to collect political points on account of the migration crisis, by raising tensions and solving things without arguments. There are stories in the media about rare migrants who have stayed in Croatia, and there is a general sympathy for such people. Some interviewees believe that it would be beneficial if the abandoned and neglected areas of Croatia were inhabited by people who would like to live there, regardless of who they are and where they came from. These opinions may be directly related to the SDG on sustainable cities and communities.

Croatians have a great experience of emigration (and receiving migrants because at the time of the Homeland War in Croatia there were a large number of refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina). Croatian people recognise the feeling of arriving in another country and living there. Only 100-kilometers from Croatia is Austria where a large number of Croatians migrated – similar like Syrian people arrived in Croatia. The main issue in understanding migrants is the readiness to accept values and adapt to the new culture. Among the participants, there is no agreement on ways in which migrants should be received and placed across the country. One interviewee says that it is necessary to avoid potential ghettoization and integrate them. In the same time, others feel that this should not be done violently because everyone has the right to their culture, religion, and customs and that integration is a matter of choice and process that lasts several generations. Most of the participants believe that the main reason for the uncertainty is state administration of Croatia which is uncertain and there is an overall feeling that the state has no strategic goals for overcoming existing and anticipated situations, including migration and lack of public awareness of a sustainable development. Most of the issues are solved on the local level. According to this, migrants passing through the Croatia realize that the state here is unregulated and they choose security of the highly regulated countries of Western Europe.

It is apparent that interviews discuss about SDGs that are linked to the current social and economic situation in Croatia, which is experiencing mass economic-driven emigration. It would be beneficial if InterCap project would put more emphasis on the ways in which migration can facilitate development and improve opportunities for all, facilitate economic growth and decrease economic-driven emigration.

### 3.5 Main factors that shape public opinion and instruments to shape public discourse

The focus group participants commented that approach to the themes of sustainable development is chaotic, it seems that there is no political strategy, and that activities happen occasionally and under the pressure of deadlines set by the EU, in order to meet ad hoc requirements. Participants have the feeling that public discussions related to this topic



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are not motivated by actual attempt to recognise the needs and national well-being nor that they are based on real arguments. On the other hand, experts in this area receive media attention and are asked for advice only in some crisis situations or when that it aligned with the political interests. In any case, the real expertise related to migration and sustainable development are poorly publicly visible and available in the media. The Church as an institution that has a clear attitude on migration and sustainable development at a supranational level (numerous Pope's exhortations) is nationally reduced to the explicit instances of only one bishop, while the other are silent and unclear in expressing their opinion. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) appear to act as a catalyst at regional and national level, but sometimes they are recognised as institutions that abuse the system for financing their activities.

Nevertheless, NGOs are recognised as a positive factor by politics and society in raising awareness and education on issues of migration and sustainable development. There are several factors that encourage and shape public opinion about these phenomena, and most participants believe that a national political strategy and education on all educational levels is needed in order to direct society towards the promotion and implementation of a sustainable development system. A national political strategy should rely on professional expertise and implementation that is coordinated with all interested social institutions in order to implement education on all educational levels. All citizens should have competencies to live, communicate and work in the intercultural environment, hence as a part of InterCap project there is a need for additional awareness raising campaigns in order to reach sustainable cities and communities goal, and make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Also, the goal is to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

### 3.6 Gaps of information and instruments to fill the gaps

The Migrant Wave that passed through Croatia proved that society is insufficiently prepared for such phenomena. At the time of the emergence, after the first shock, a series of contradictory information on the situation on the ground occurred in media, dealing with the issues of the intentions of migrants and possible moves of the state. Also, it was difficult to determine whether the political moves were rational and whether governmental actions could lead to disputes with other countries such as Hungary and Slovenia, but also Austria threatening that all migrants who came to their countries through Croatia would go back to Croatia. There was also a lack of information and reception centres, and for now the public is poorly informed that a migrant centre is being built near the city, and it is not clear how many people are in it, whether they are looking for asylum or just wanting to go to other European countries. NGOs are connected at national level and carry out information campaigns and raise awareness of these phenomena.

The majority of focus group participants believe that the key education component in the long run can carry the burden of raising awareness of the phenomenon of sustainable development and the link between migration and sustainable development / climate



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change. In relation to the migration phenomenon, most schools have prepared programs for migrant children and are introduced with both legislative and learning aspects through manuals prepared by the Croatian Teacher Training Agency in 2012. Also, some schools and centres for lifelong learning already have practical experience with work with children that do not speak Croatian language or with asylum seekers of different ages. The city administration takes care about technical conditions, and the Education and Training Agency and the Ministry of Science and Education assist with the programming part. In the case of a large number of migrants, the question is whether the thing would work and whether all schools could work on such programs.

The interviewees rise important issues of timely dissemination of relevant information on migrations, migration policy and legislation change among Croatian citizens, which is necessary in order to achieve equity and responsible citizenship goals. In regards to relation of migration and sustainable development goals, the interviewees focus on the quality education and need for further work on educational policies, strategies and action plans that would ensure inclusion of migrant population.

### 3.7 The role of education systems

In Croatia there are already numerous NGOs and educational projects that promote and educate about need for sustainable development as the only correct way of thinking and acting in the future. Students do not know too much about the phenomenon of migration and sustainable development, so participants note that they should educate teachers' practitioners. In addition, migrations can be associated with social deprivation and therefore, inclusive pedagogy should be taught in all teacher education programs. Inclusive pedagogy is a part of the people's values in Croatia, but is poorly included in the study programs - although recently the situation is improving. At lower educational levels, such as schools, some teachers still think that work in inclusive environment is not their job. In pre-school education, the situation is better as young children easily accept differences. On all educational levels, there is a need for lifelong learning of teachers. Teachers at the school level and pre-school educators have a range of specializations and / or training opportunities offered by Ministry of Science and Education programs, but no one is obliged to do so, nor does Ministry of Science and Education value participation in them. The vast majority of teachers participating in the training and offered programs return with positive experiences and transfer them to other students as well as other teachers. Enthusiasm is praiseworthy, but teacher licencing would be beneficial addition.

Participants think that kindergartens are doing well on sustainable development programs as they monitor current social situations (e.g., environmental protection, inclusion of children from different cultures) and children really appreciate these activities. The media should also like these positive things to promote and present examples of how well they work in these sectors. However, it is important to know that work in elementary school for adults requires special sensitivity, as it is almost always a case with the vulnerable groups. This type of training should be implemented by particularly sensible teachers and such inclusiveness and tolerance should be raised by future generations of teachers.



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University of Split programs for teacher and preschool education have already introduced some programs that implement some of the sustainable development goals such as: quality education - ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities diverse populations, including migrants (courses: Inclusive education, Educational Policy); gender equality – theory and practice of achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls through education (courses: Sociology Education, Comparative Education). Some programs will introduce sustainable development related courses in the next two years (e.g. Philosophy and sustainable development). These courses are part of a group of courses that aim (along with ethics and others) on the development of competences for the implementation of civic education and inclusion of migrant population, which is unavoidable in promoting sustainable development.

## 4. Conclusions and recommendations

### 4.1 National and local level recommendations for NGOs

There are several relevant NGO actions and initiatives focusing on the integration of immigrants and primarily target asylum seekers, refugees and subsidiary protection beneficiaries. Nevertheless, there is an apparent lack of a link between sustainable development, SDGs and migration issues. NGOs need to actively participate in advocacy on migration policy making with the focus on sustainable development goals in order to develop initiatives that will help the public to understand that migrations are consequence of global inequalities, climate change and injustice. Sustainable development goals may serve as an instrument to contest the dominant negative public perceptions of migration and displacement. Furthermore, due to the great experience with the work with migrant population, NGOs should be part of the communities of practice, which should raise awareness to both in-service and pre-service teachers, as well as other public service workers (e.g. health workers, social workers) about work with migrant population.

### 4.2 National and local level recommendations for governmental institutions

In Croatia there is an existing institutional setup of the support for migrants. These organisations are responsible for registering foreigners and regulating their status in Croatia, ensure health services and provide lodging, offer Croatian language classes and provide basic educational possibilities, and address the humanitarian concerns of migrants. Still, there is a need for closer cooperation between different governmental institutions, need to build accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels, which should lead to further improvement of migrant policies. Teacher Training Agency should facilitate implementation of in-service training programs focusing on the issues of work with migrant population and sustainable development. Furthermore, Ministry of Science and Education should and stimulate universities to include modules on work with migrant population and sustainable



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development in programs that train people that will interact with migrant population in their future work (e.g. health workers, social workers, teachers). These modules should further expand on the variety of quality education topics (e.g., work with migrant children and their families, educational work with adults from different cultural backgrounds, teaching Croatian as a second language), gender equality (empowerment through education). In addition, it is necessary to provide both in-service and pre-service teachers with the educational materials that can support the educational process in class.

### 4.3 Local level recommendations for municipalities

On a local level, intercultural events (e.g., exhibitions, festivals), should be organised to enhance tolerance and respect towards different cultures and facilitate the migrants integration to the society. These types of activities lead towards localisation of the sustainable development goals within the context of migrant integration initiatives. Municipalities in cooperation with Teacher Training Agency should create offices to provide advice and support for schools that will be accepting migrant children. So far, schools managed to deal with the issues of education of children which are not speaking Croatian language, but this may change with the increase in number of children entering schools. The support services should focus not only on the teachers expertise in teaching Croatian as a foreign language, but also in widening cultural perspectives and adaptation of teaching methods. In addition, teacher will need support in communication with migrant families and communities which is directly aligned with the SDG on quality education.

### 4.4 National and local level recommendations for educational institutions

Both in-service and pre-service teachers need to receive adequately training in order to improve their intercultural competence and communication with migrants. The training modules should investigate issues such as poverty, social exclusion, climate change, security, migration, within the framework of SD/SDGs.

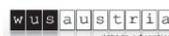
There is urgent need for a change in legislation related to education of asylum seeking migrants on secondary school and vocational school level. According to the current legislation, only elementary schools in Croatia are obligatory and state has obligation to support schooling of all children. Since secondary schools are not obligatory, there is a huge legislative gap that prevents asylum seeking migrants in obtaining secondary school diploma. This situation limits asylum-seeking migrants from full and productive employment and decent work, which is one of the main sustainable development goals. Also, problems with obtaining secondary school diploma may more significantly influence female asylum-seeking migrants, and increase gender inequality.



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## 4.5 Recommendations for future research areas

There is a need for more clear understanding of the impact of migration on the achievement of all sustainable development goals and investigating the ways in which migration can work in favour of sustainable development in Croatia. In terms of further research, it would be necessary to focus on the adjustments that educational institutions should make in order to successfully teach larger number of migrant children. In regards to the implementation of sustainable development goals in educational and other public institutions, all institutions should be measuring the social impact of SDG implementation. Also, it would be beneficial to focus on the media reporting and try to clarify potential impact that media may have on the ways in which people are perceiving and, later on, treating migrants and asylum seekers. Finally, future research on migration and sustainable development issues should move from the topics related to the potential threats of migrations, in order to consider how migration can facilitate development and improve opportunities for all.



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