AGENCY FOR SCIENCE AND HIGHER EDUCATION – THE FIRST FIVE YEARS

Dubrovnik, October 29, 2010

Overview

- ASHE – context and organisational structure
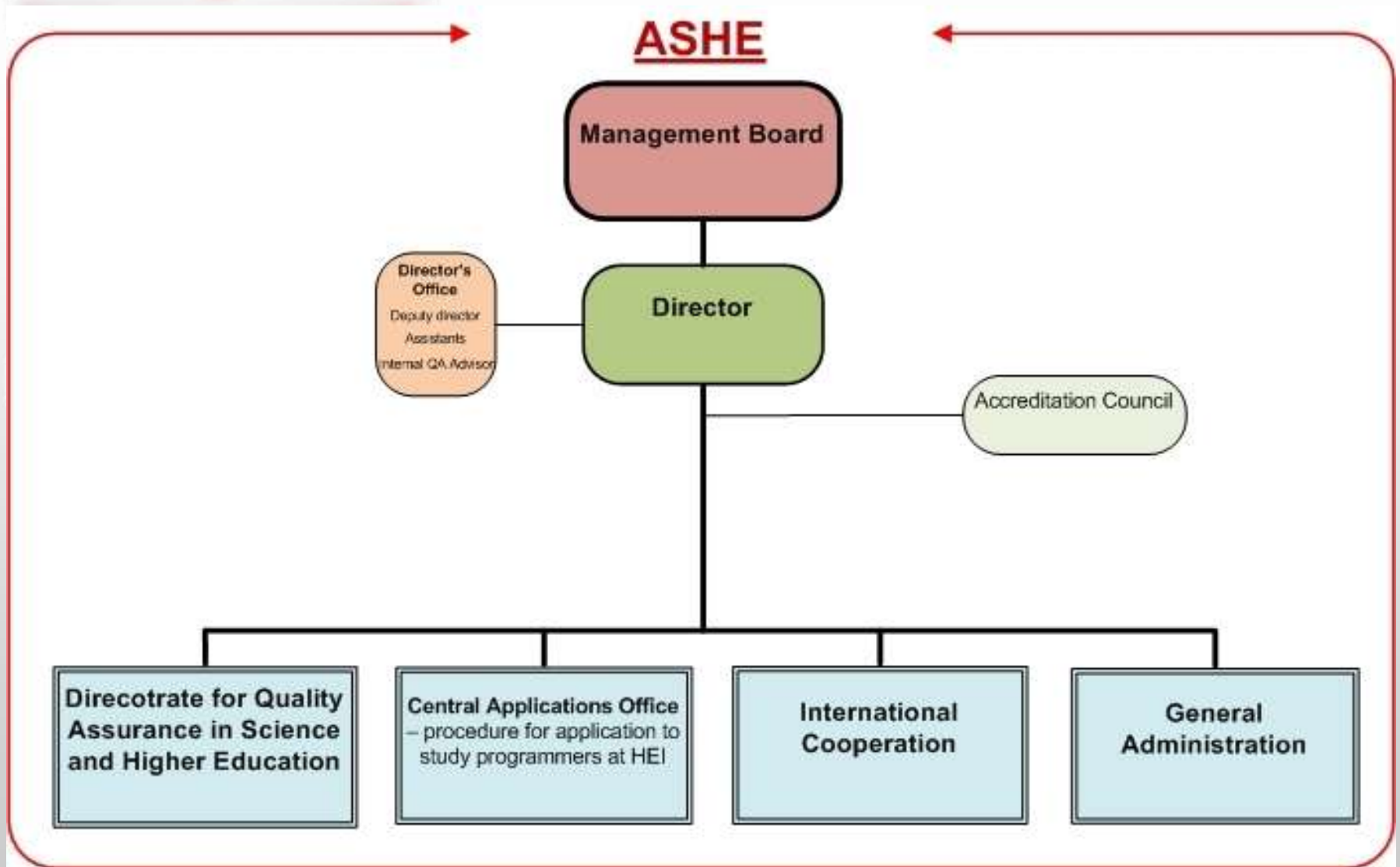- Activities
- Challenges

ASHE

- 2004 established by the Government of the Republic of Croatia on July 15

- 2005 registered at the Commercial Court in Zagreb on March 8

ASHE

Legal framework

- *Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education* (2003 with amendments added in 2004 and 2007)

- *Act on Recognition of Foreign Qualifications* (2003. with amendments added in 2004)

- *Act on QA in Science and Higher Education* (2009)

Organizational structure

ASHE

Management Board

Director's Office
Deputy director
Assistants
Internal QA Advisor

Director

Accreditation Council

Direcotrate for Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education

Central Applications Office – procedure for application to study programmers at HEI

International Cooperation

General Administration

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Activities

1. *QA Role*
2. *Collecting and analysing data on the system of Science and HE*
3. *National ENIC/NARIC office*
4. *Central Application Office*
5. *Support to work of various bodies*
6. *International cooperation*

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Activities

1. _QA Role_

2005.-2009.	ASHE	NCS/NCHE	
	carries out QA activities	issues recommendation	

2009....	ASHE	AC	NCS/NCHE
	carries out QA activities/issues recommendation	gives its opinion	strategic body in decision making

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Activities

1. *QA Role (2005. – 2009.)*

Accreditation of new study programs

Accreditation of new HEIs

Re-accreditation of existing HEIs

Accreditation of new scientific organizations

Re-accreditation of existing scientific organizations

Activities

1. *QA Role (2005. – 2009.)*

Accreditation of new study programmes

- part of Bologna transition (4-year programmes ➡ 3+2 years + ECTS)

- in 2005 ~800 study programmes accredited (mostly Bacc./Master)

- between 2005 and 2009 ~400 study programmes accredited (mostly postgraduate)

- outcome: YES/NO/CONDITIONAL (related to staff numbers only)

- paper based, peer review – 2 reviewers appointed, one usually outside Croatia

- specialised software developed due to huge workload (MOZVAG)

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Activities

1. *QA Role (2005 – 2009)*

Accreditation of new HEIs

~60 requests, half approved

- outcome: YES/NO/CONDITIONAL (related to staff numbers only)

- site visits, mostly Croatian panels of experts, no students

- reports not public

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Activities

1. _QA Role (2005. – 2009.)_

Re-accreditation of existing HEIs

- 20 HEIs

- outcome: YES/NO/LETTER OF EXPECTATION + recommendations for improvement (elements of institutional evaluation)

- self-evaluation, site visits, international experts, students obligatory

- reports published on Agency website

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Activities

1. QA Role (2005. – 2009.)

Accreditation of new scientific organizations

~40 requests, 35 approved

 - outcome: YES/NO decision

- paper based, reports not public

Activities

1. *QA Role (2005 – 2009)*

Re-accreditation of existing scientific organizations

-24 scientific organizations

- outcome: YES/NO/LETTER OF EXPECTATION + recommendations for improvement (elements of institutional evaluation)

- Self-evaluation, site visits, international experts

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Activities

1. *QA Role (2009…)*

-In April 2009 – new Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education

Changes

-**more independence** to the Agency, National Council for Higher Education oriented towards strategic issues

-**Accreditation Council** –new body within Agency, all stakeholders, makes accreditation recommendations

-**new approach to accreditation:**

-public universities self-accredit their programmes in line with the ESG

-initial accreditation similar to the British system, a new provider must enter into cooperation with an already existing HEI

-re-accreditation results affect financial incentives from state budget

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Activities

1. QA Role (2005 – 2009)

Initial accreditation

Re-accreditation

Thematic evaluation

Audit

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Activities

1. QA Role (2005 – 2009)

ASHE activities	Self - assessment	Peer review	Site visit	Publication of a report	Follow-up procedure
Reaccreditation	+	+	+	+	+
Thematic evaluation	+	+	Possible, not compulsory	+	Not formally, but a negative outcome is followed up by reaccreditation
Audit	+	+	+	+	+

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Activities

1. QA Role (2009...)

Re-accreditation

- 5 – year cycles
- All public and private HEIs + scientific organizations established and/or financed by the state
- Checking fulfilment of necessary conditions prescribed by the *Statute* + quality assessment on the basis of established criteria
- Quality assessment affects the amount of financing from the state budget
- 20 HEIs are currently being re-accredited

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Activities

1. *QA Role (2009...)*

Thematic evaluation

- Focus on a single segment of activities of a HEI or evaluation of activities of similar evaluation subjects

- Outcome: a review report with an assessment; if the assessment is negative, ASHE can launch a reaccreditation procedure

- Currently in procedure – thematic evaluation of public research institutes

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Activities

1. ## _QA Role (2009….)_

   Audit

- CARDS 2003 project "Furtherance of the Agency for Science and Higher Education in its Quality Assurance Role and Development of a Supporting Information System" in 2006/08
- ASHE developed an audit model
- Seminars for HEIs
- In-house seminars for ASHE staff
- Develop & promote quality culture
- Audit manual
- Pilot project

Activities

1. *QA Role (2009….)*

   Audit

   Impact

   - Enhancement of quality culture

   - 105 QA units at Universities/Faculties established

   - 42 QA units at polytechnics/ colleges established

   - Database of auditors

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Activities

2. Collecting and analysing data on the systems of science and higher education

NISVOZ

- To become a **central database** with all **relevant and official data** and information on Croatian higher education and scientific research

- Should provide **relevant information** for national bodies in the context of accreditation, reaccreditation and licensing of study programmes and institutions

- Should provide Croatian higher education institutions and scientific organizations with relevant information for their own quality management

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Activities

2. Collecting and analysing data on the systems of science and higher education

Directory of Study Programmes

- The aim of the Directory is to provide **information** regarding **accredited study programmes and Croatian HEIs**

- Database enables searches according to various criteria:

1. type of study programme

2. institution providing the programme

3. name of study programme

4. study field

5. location of the institution etc.

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Activities

3. National ENIC/NARIC office

- information centre for academic mobility and recognition of foreign higher education qualifications and a part of the ENIC Network, established by the Council of Europe and UNESCO.

    ENIC: European National Information Centres (on academic recognition and mobility)

    NARIC: National Academic Recognition Information Centres

- upon the accession of Croatia to the European Union, National ENIC/NARIC Office will also operate as the National contact point in the sense of the Directive 2005/36 EC on recognition of professional qualifications

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Activities

3. National ENIC/NARIC office

- Activities concerning **academic and professional recognition of foreign higher education qualifications**,

- providing information on foreign higher education systems,

- providing information on national higher education system,

- cooperation with other ENIC and NARIC centres.

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Activities

4.Central Applications Office

- formed in 2009 within the Agency for Science and Higher Education

- represents a centre for applications to all study programs

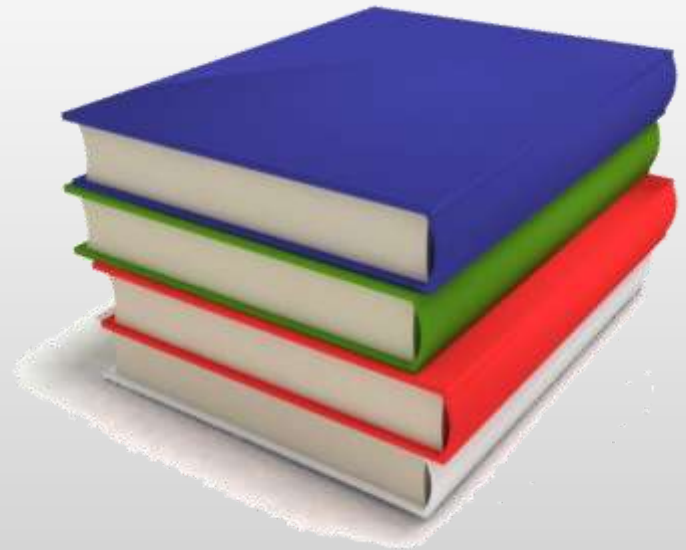- collects data on higher education institutions

Activities

4.Central Applications Office

The State Matura started in 2010 and replaced admission exams in most higher education institutions in Croatia.

Activities

4.Central Applications Office

Central Applications Office **distributes a brochure** about conditions for enrolment to study programmes for all pupils in the 4th grade of secondary school.

Activities

4.Central Applications Office

Central Applications Office **informs candidates about admissions to study programmes** via web-site, text messages and e-mail.

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Activities

4.Central Applications Office

Higher education institutions log into the system and download rankings for their study programmes.

www.postani-student.hr

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Activities

4.Central Applications Office

Goals

- to provide **a fair and equal (transparent) procedure** for all candidates
- to **decrease application costs**
- to **accelerate** and facilitate the **application process** both for candidates and higher education institutions

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Activities

5.Support to work of various bodies

- National Council for Higher Education

- National Council for Science

- Committee for Financing of HE and Science

- Ethics Committee

- Interdepartamental Working Body for Labour Market Monitoring

- 7 Scientific Field Committees

- 22 Area Councils

- 7 Area Councils of the Council of Polytechnics and Colleges

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Activities

6. International cooperation

ASHE membership in international networks

● full member of INQAAHE (International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education) since 2006

● associate status within ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) since 2007 (currently preparing for full membership)

● full member of CEEN (The Central and Easter European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education) since 2008

● member of OECD IMHE Forum (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development Forum on Institutional Management in Higher Education) since 2008

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Activities

6. International cooperation

International projects

- **CARDS 2002** - *Higher Education Mobility: Diploma Recognition Policy and Legislation*; September 2004 – March 2006
- **CARDS 2003** - *Furtherance of the Quality Assurance Agency and supporting a Management Information System in Higher Education*; September 2006 – March 2008
- **MATRA** - *Strengthening the Role of Croatian ENIC/NARIC Office* (24 Months – starting 2007)
- TEMPUS SCM
  - *Enhancing Mobility of the Croatian Academic Community*
  - *Training for EU-liaison officers in Croatian Universities: pursuing Bologna   and EU integration aims*
  - *Towards Equitable and Transparent Access to Higher Education in Croatia*
- TAIEX:
- *Study visit on recognition of higher education qualification*
- *Expert Mission on Capacity Building for Croatian Quality Assurance System Development*

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Activities

6. International cooperation

National TEMPUS Office

Responsible for administration and promotion of the EU Tempus programme in Croatia.

Tempus supports the **modernisation of higher education** in the Partner Countries of Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Western Balkans and the Mediterranean region, mainly through university cooperation projects.

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Lessons learned

- Continuing education of employees
- Bring about changes– "bottom-up initiatives"
- International good practice – but implemented in the national context ("no recipe")
- *Fair* and *equitable* treatment of all stakeholders (public, private, new or traditional higher education institutions)
- Involvement of all stakeholders in implementing changes and carrying out activities

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Challenges

- Continuing work on our tasks
- ASHE accreditation (self-evaluation)
- Positioning (International level)
- Internal quality culture (ISO+ESG)
- Capacity building

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Thank you for your attention!

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