

Agency for Science and Higher Education 5th Anniversary Conference
“How to Make Croatian Higher Education Competitive?”

Croatian Higher Education: Current State of Play and Future Expectations

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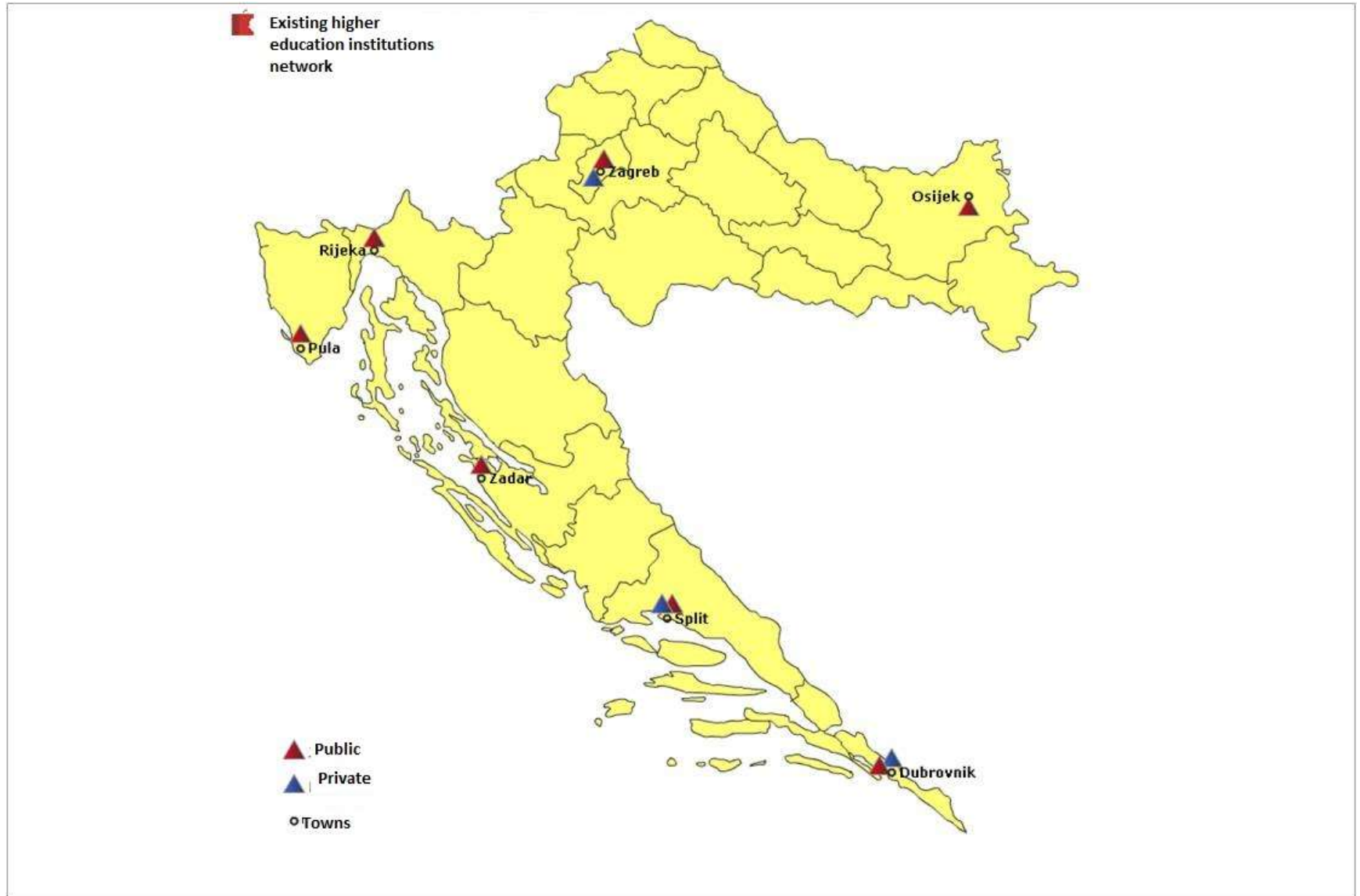
Higher Education Institutions in Croatia

Number of **HEIs***:

- 122 (90 public / 32 private)
- 10 universities (7 public / 3 private)
- 67 university components
- 15 polytechnics (13 public, 2 private)
- 30 colleges (27 private, 3 public)

* Source: ASHE

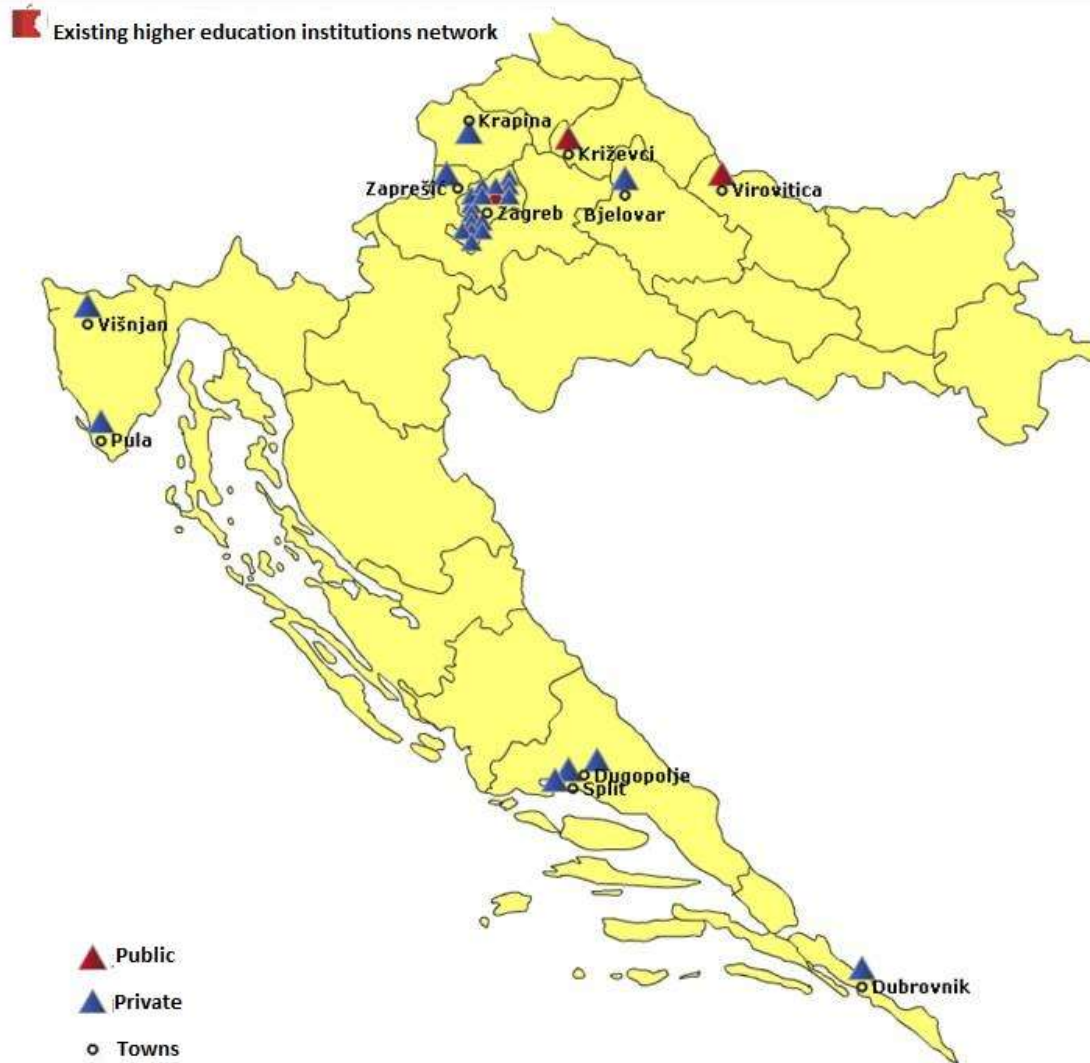
Croatian Universities



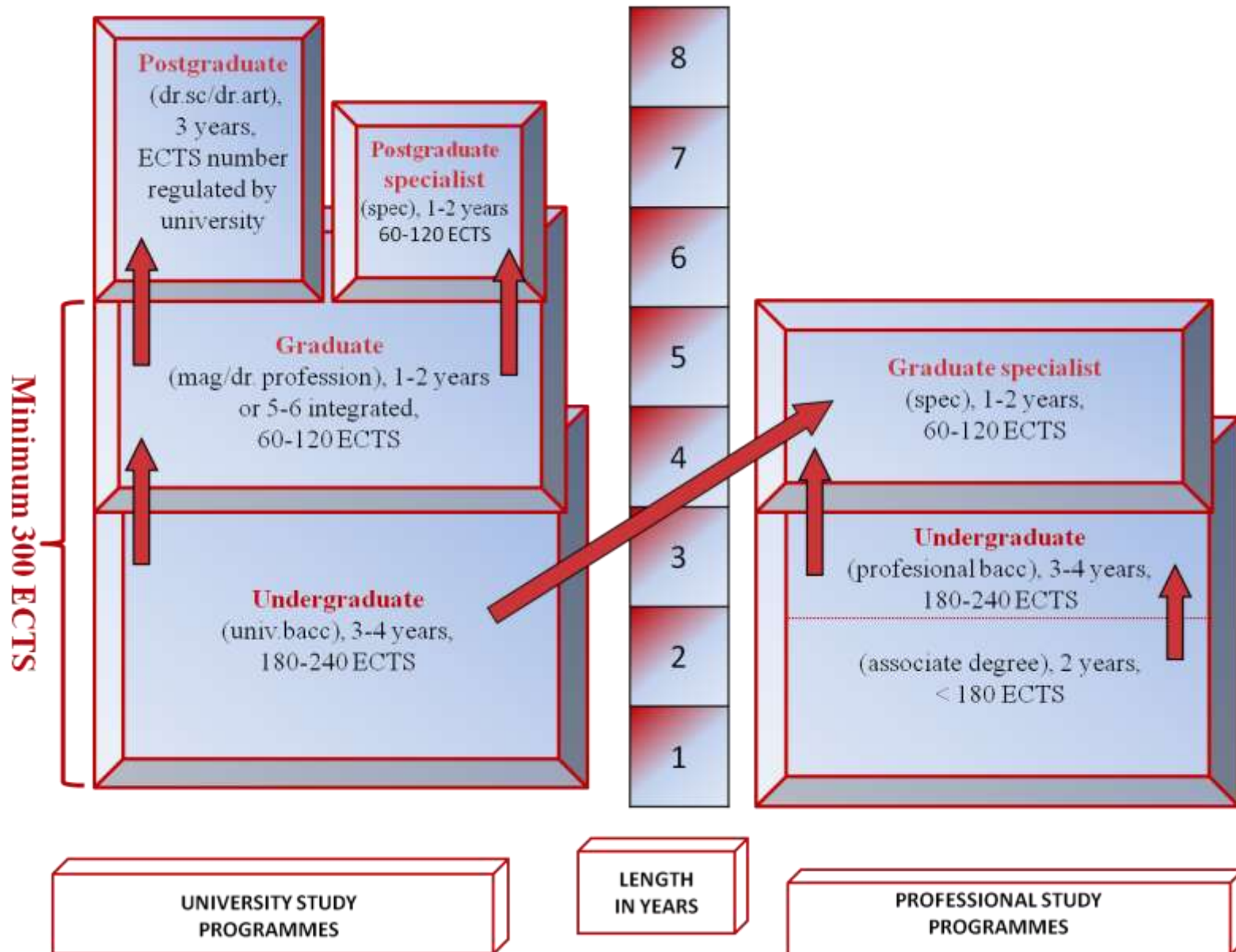
Croatian Polytechnics



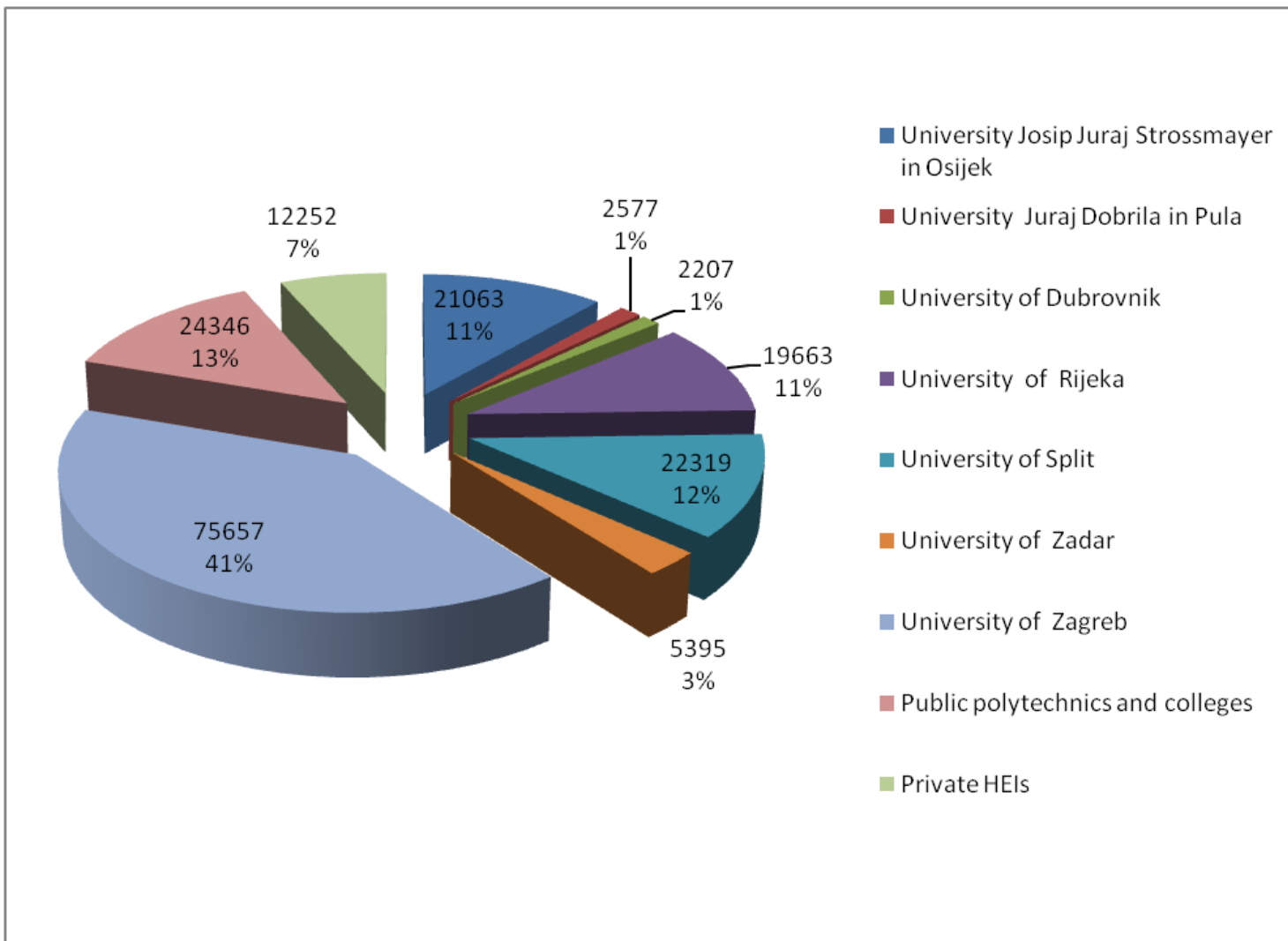
Croatian Colleges



Scheme of studies in Croatia

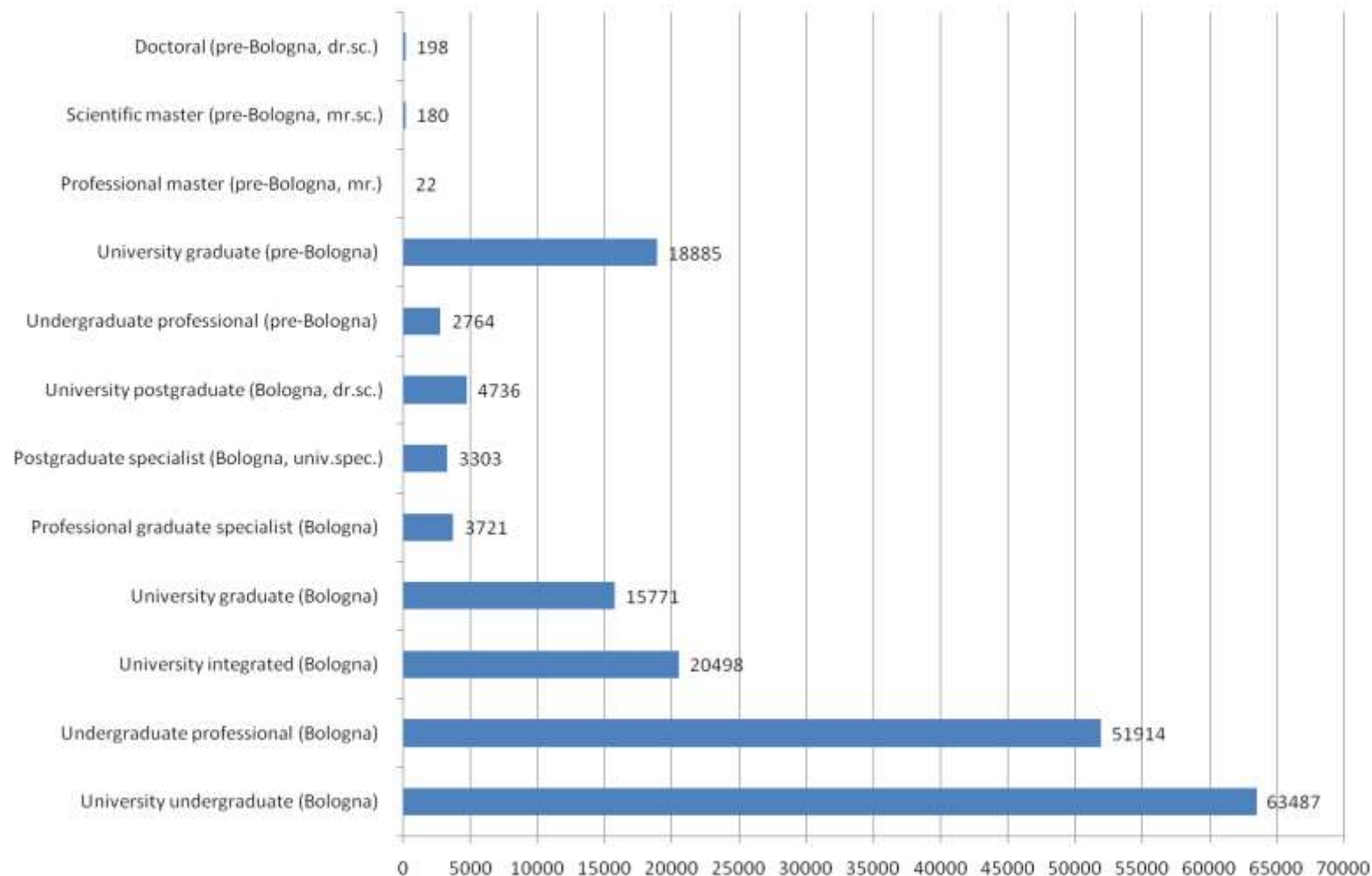


Number of students by HEIs



Source: Agency for Science and Higher Education and Ministry of Science, Education and Sports

Number of students by study programme type



Source: Agency for Science and Higher Education and Ministry of Science, Education and Sports

Study programmes

Number of **study programmes**: 1272*

- *Undergraduate*: 351 university, 178 professional
- *Graduate*: 370 university, 45 integrated university, 47 professional
- *Postgraduate*: 178 postgraduate specialist, 103 doctoral

* Source: ASHE

Croatian HE- issues (I)

Problems within the Higher Education System

- Very long time required to graduate – the average of 7,5 years for pre-Bologna graduates (2005-2010 Development Plan) -
- Very high drop-out rate (only 33% of enrolled students graduate)
- Limited mobility
- Practically no clearly defined outcomes nor programme objectives
- Universities – among the most autonomus in Europe (EUA study, 2009) – establish enrolment quotas, tuition fees
- Universities not fully integrated
- Numerous doctoral programmes – fragmented, not fully reformed

Croatian HE- issues (II)

Problems caused by the issues within the system as well as the higher education policies

- Employers not satisfied with students' competences (*Further Bologna, 2006*)
- Weak competitiveness at the European level
- Weak educational structure of the population
- Insufficient strategic planning – bottom up (from the university level) as well as top-down (from the government level) - Education Sector Development Plan 2005-**2010** and Science & Technology Policy of the Republic of Croatia 2006-**2010**

In between Bologna and Lisbon

- Croatia - candidate for EU accession
- Lisbon strategy - not obligatory for candidates - voluntary adoption of good practice...but
- Bologna - a condition for EU accession
- By using Bologna process as a means of reaching the Lisbon agenda, the EC sends a wrongful message about its stance towards higher education
- Commercializing HE - observing it only through the lens of economic growth and employability
- If indeed the EC continues to actively participate in Bologna process (today: EHEA), it should strive to de-politicize and de-economize its actions towards education
- True goals of Bologna declaration need to be strived for: education needs to be internationalized, and intellectualized; however hard that task sometimes might seem

Challenges emphasized by crisis

- Fragmentation of universities, insufficiently strong central university management
- Few universities have comprehensive development strategies
- Budgetary funding system based on inputs only
- Data collection and analysis insufficiently developed at both national and institutional level
- Accountability for higher education institutions' own income need to be strengthened
- Weak links with the labor market and the business community

Goals

- Integration of the Croatian science and higher education system with the European systems
- Integration with the European Higher Education Area
- Improved mobility
- Improved quality
- Recognisability and credibility of Croatian higher education qualifications
- Access of persons with foreign higher education qualifications to the Croatian labour market
- Equitable access to higher education system

New legislative framework (I)

- New Quality Assurance Act (2009): self-accreditation of study programmes – a challenge in improving accountability
- 3 new acts – currently in **public discussion**
- **Higher Education Act:**
 - equalizing professional and university undergraduates
 - reintroducing Scientific master (due to over-proliferation of doctoral courses)
 - admission instead of tuition fees

New legislative framework (II)

- **Act on Universities:**
 - new governance structure – larger powers of the state
 - financing connected to quality indicators
 - possible restructuring of universities
- **Act on Science:**
 - state financing decreased and dependent on quality indicators
 - focus on services to the state and commercial services
 - de-centralization of appointing staff + introduction of a pyramidal structure

Future expectations (I)

Time required to graduate shortened and drop-out rate decreased by:

- Bologna reform – already successful at some HEIs – student-centred education
- Improved student services and student support mechanisms - require additional funding

Future expectations (II)

Mobility increased by:

- Joining the EU LLL Programme (2011)
- Improved recognition of study periods spent abroad and improved academic recognition of foreign qualifications (task of the universities)
- Mobility as a precondition for academic employment

Future expectations (III)

- Definition of learning outcomes - development of the **Croatian Qualifications Framework**
- Improved links with the labor market: employers' participate in defining the necessary competences
- Improved recognizability among the employers **and** at the European level
- Development of the **Network of Croatian HEIs**
 - HE better suited to needs of the local economies; geographical decentralization