




2009 Annual  
Report and  
2010 Work Plan



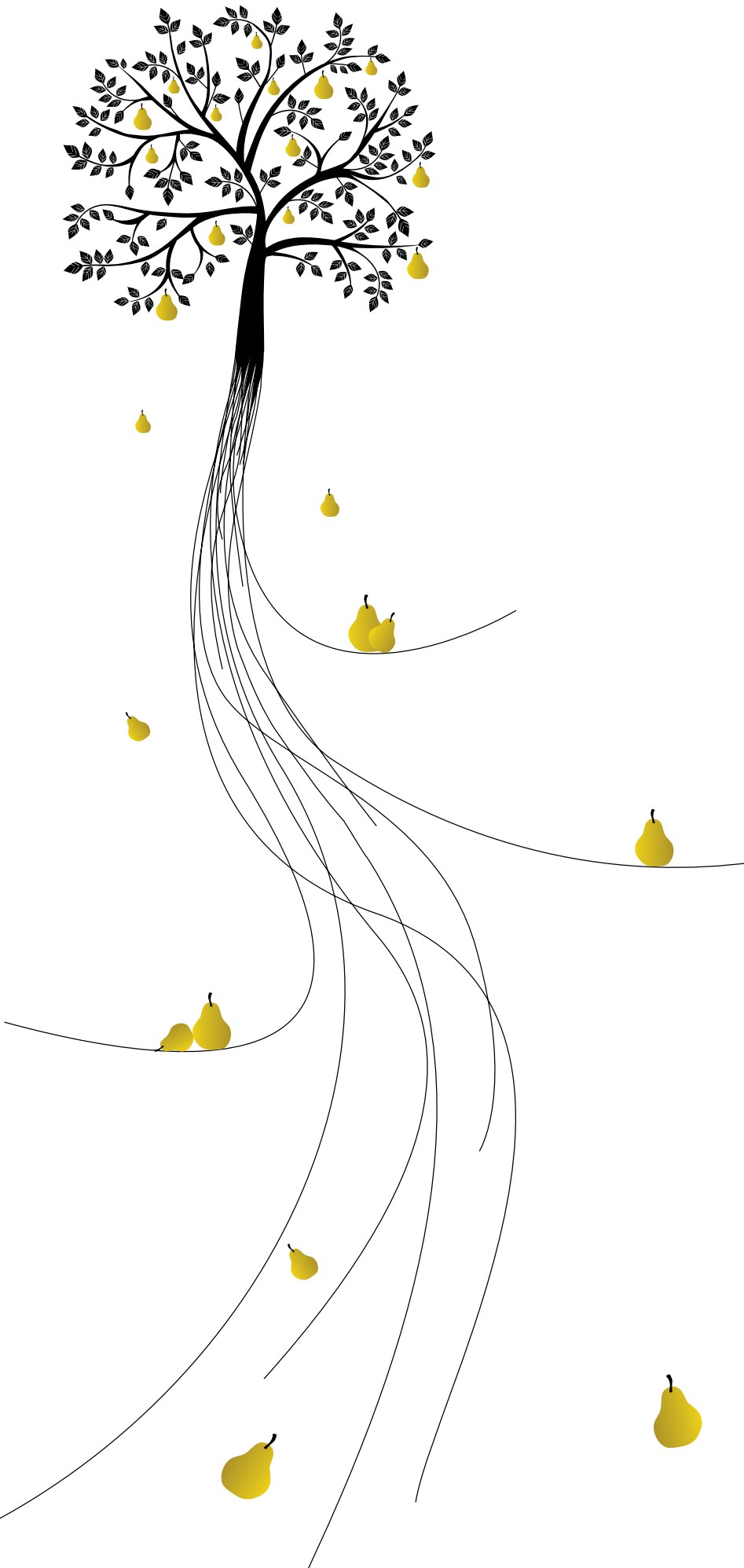
agency for science and higher education



# Third Activity Report

Agency for Science and Higher Education

March 2010



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# Introduction

Dear Readers,

the publication of the regular annual report of the Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE) is a wonderful opportunity to meet you again! You are holding the third issue of our report that aims to inform a broad range of stakeholders in science and higher education, as well as the general public, about who we are, what we do and what are the results of our work. We hope that what we have to offer on the following pages will contribute to a better understanding of higher education and science in the Republic of Croatia, as well as a better understanding of our Agency.

Last year was marked by enhancing the ASHE's role as an institution responsible for improving the quality culture in science and higher education in the Republic of Croatia.

We are especially proud of the good communication achieved with higher education institutions and scientific organisations! In Croatia there are currently 223 - 120 higher education institutions and 103 scientific organisations.

Throughout the year ASHE works with over two thousand associates from Croatia and abroad, who mainly participate in various panels and committees.

At this point ASHE has some 60 employees in all eight of its activities (we have introduced two new activities) - in comparison, similar European agencies employ 45 to 120 people on an individual activity (e.g. accreditation). Still, we are the last to complain! We believe that we are well educated for the area we work in, and that we put our knowledge to good use.

In the past year, the Central Applications Office (CAO) was established as a part of ASHE designed to serve as the national centre for processing applications for study programmes at Croatian higher education institutions and to consolidate all the procedures related to applications for study programmes. CAO was modelled after similar offices around the world and has already been recognized internationally as part of the international network of application offices. There are only fourteen offices of this kind in the world today, all with the same goal - to enable future students to enrol in programmes they choose, in an efficient and transparent manner, minimising costs and red tape. Successful implementation of such a task, closely related to the State Graduation Examination (which is one of the biggest projects in the recent history of Croatian education), will in 2010 once again present a huge challenge in which we are willing to invest all our knowledge and dedicated work.

Furthermore, ASHE established the Accreditation Council as its expert council which includes representatives of science, education and business, as well as non-profit, non-governmental organisations which have been recognised as stakeholders in science and higher education. According to the Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education, within the next five years all public and private universities and scientific organizations registered with the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports' Register of Scientific Organisations will be subject to re-accreditation, which amounts to a total of some 220 institutions. Between 40 and 50 institutions will be evaluated each year. On the basis of the re-accreditation procedures and the opinion of the Accreditation Council, ASHE will issue accreditation recommendations, the outcomes of which can be licensing for performing activities or parts of activities, refusal to grant said licenses or issuing a letter of expectations which contains a quality assessment and a list of measures for the improvement and development of the quality of a higher education institution. In addition to this, ASHE will perform initial accreditations of new study programmes and institutions. During 2009 ASHE started another major project: building the National Information System for Higher Education and Science (NISVOZ) the purpose of which is to fully support the key processes in the higher education and science systems, contain data sorted by a large number of parameters and enable access to statistical data and production of system-wide analyses.

Also, ASHE created the Browser of Study Programmes and Higher Education Institutions, available on [www.azvo.hr](http://www.azvo.hr).

Since the Browser is intended to be a one-stop-shop for anyone interested in the currently available study programmes in Croatian higher education at all levels, please allow us to present some numbers.

The Croatian higher education area includes 10 universities, 15 polytechnics and 27 colleges, out of which 3 universities, 2 polytechnics and 24 colleges are privately owned. The seven public universities include a total of 67 faculties and academies with the status of higher education institutions. Around half of the 67 faculties and academies in the country (33 to be exact), are components of the University of Zagreb. Public universities in Dubrovnik, Zadar and Pula do not have faculties, but a total of 34 university departments, out of which 22 are departments of the University of Zadar.

According to the 2009 data, a total of 1,226 study programmes are performed at all levels. Of the total number of study programmes 90% or 1,068 are performed at public universities. There are 348 undergraduate and 364 graduate study programmes, while about 4% of all programmes are integrated undergraduate and graduate study programmes. One fifth, or 259, are postgraduate study programmes, while 212 are professional and specialist graduate study programmes. It should be noted that all postgraduate study programmes are performed at public universities

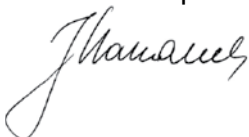


- 164 specialist and 95 doctoral programmes. Public universities performed 66 professional and one specialist graduate programme, while polytechnics and colleges performed 107 professional and 38 specialist graduate study programmes.

ASHE systematically monitors the processes of the ongoing reform in higher education and science and in the academic year 2007-08 we collected data on the number of students and the number of employees at higher education institutions in the Republic of Croatia. According to these figures, the total number of students in public universities in the Republic of Croatia was 152,780 out of which 12,780 students were at the postgraduate level, and the remaining 140,000 were undergraduate and graduate students as well as 'old students' enrolled in pre-Bologna programmes. There were 26,060 students at public polytechnics and colleges, and 8,620 students studied at private institutions. The estimated total number of students in all study programmes available in the Croatian higher education area is 187,460.

According to the ASHE data collected for the academic year 2007-08 the total number of HE teachers in the Republic of Croatia was 9,463, out of which 8,450 worked at public universities and 833 at public polytechnics. Private institutions of higher education employed a total of 180 teachers. As for science, there were 103 scientific organisations (not performing teaching activities) listed in the Register of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, 26 of them public. The total number of junior scientists in 2009 was 2,915, out of which 2,133 were at universities, 616 at scientific institutes and 166 in other institutions (Croatian Academy of Science and Arts, clinical centres, etc.)

With the purpose of achieving excellence, continued progress and development, quality lies at the core of the academic ethos and as such generates progress in the society as a whole. Through partnership and cooperation with the academic community, in 2010 ASHE continues its work on stimulating quality improvement in higher education and science in the Republic of Croatia, as a reliable partner to all relevant stakeholders. As a special priority in 2010 we should mention meeting the criteria for registering in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) and full membership in the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). In our work we will continue to promote the principles of transparency and public dialogue aimed at achieving information exchange in the best interest of the public; foster quality culture; build our reputation; and develop and uphold public trust in the standards and quality of higher education and science in the Republic of Croatia.



Professor Jasmina Havranek, PhD  
Agency for Science and Higher Education Director








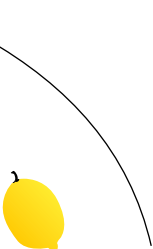
# Overview of activities in 2009

## ACT ON QUALITY ASSURANCE IN SCIENCE AND HIGHER EDUCATION



The Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education [Official Gazette 123/03, 198/03, 105/04, 174/04, 2/07 - Decision of the Constitutional Court, and 46/07] stipulated harmonisation of study programmes and courses with the principles of the Bologna Declaration, which was the first step taken by the Republic of Croatia towards its integration into the European Higher Education Area. The Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education did not fully define all the commitments the Republic of Croatia assumed upon signing the Bologna Declaration, especially when considering quality assurance and development of quality which include implementation of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, the strategic document adopted at the 2005 Ministerial Conference in Bergen.

It is important to mention that even the recent communiqué issued by the European Higher Education Ministers, in April 2009 in Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve, emphasised quality assurance and recognition of foreign higher education qualifications as the priorities in shaping the European Higher Education Area for the next decade.



External and internal quality assurance and development are at the core of future integration, as stated in the documents issued at the Ministerial Conferences which followed the Bologna Declaration. The external system of quality assurance and development includes evaluation and assessment of the quality of evaluation objects on the basis of objective and transparent criteria, while the internal system of quality assurance and development represents a system of measures and activities with which evaluation objects present their accountability for efficiency and production of quality outcomes of their educational and scientific activities.

For all the reasons mentioned, in April 2009 the Republic of Croatia adopted the Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education (OG 45/2009) which defined the processes and roles of all stakeholders in the quality assurance and development system, which are primarily the National Council for Science, the National Council for Higher Education and ASHE. The Act redefined the quality assurance and development procedures in science and higher education in the Republic of Croatia.

The Act defined the status of ASHE as an independent public institution in the Republic of Croatia responsible for external quality assurance and development in science and higher education.

According to the Act, ASHE carries out procedures of initial accreditation, re-accreditation, thematic evaluation, audit and professional recognition of higher education qualifications, provides information about conditions for enrolment into higher education institutions in the Republic of Croatia, collects information on fulfilment of conditions for enrolment of candidates into higher education institutions and collects and processes information about the systems of science, higher education and other systems inter-dependent with science and higher education.

The Act regulates:

- quality assurance and development in science and higher education via procedures of initial accreditation, re-accreditation, thematic evaluation and audit,
- status, activity and organisation of the Agency for Science and Higher Education as a public institution of the Republic of Croatia tasked with quality assurance and development in science and higher education, and
- role of other institutions in the Republic of Croatia tasked with quality assurance and development in science and higher education.

Provisions of the Act apply to public and private higher education institutions, public scientific institutes and other scientific organisations established by the Republic of Croatia, private scientific institutes and other legal entities listed on the Register of Scientific Organisations.

Since May 2009 ASHE has intensely worked on the preparation of numerous regulatory acts defining the new procedures, criteria and standards as stipulated by the new Act, as well as on internal reorganization aimed at maximizing efficiency of the implementation of the Act with the existing human and material resources.

# EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Higher education and science in the Republic of Croatia are closely related. Higher education and scientific institutions bear the primary responsibility for the quality of higher education and science.

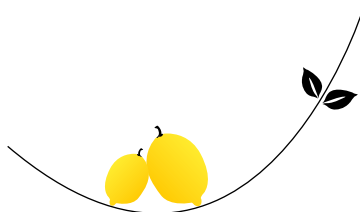
The responsibility for external quality assurance and science in the Republic of Croatia used to rest with the National Council for Science, National Council for Higher Education and ASHE. According to the new Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education ASHE became the central institution for carrying out procedures of external quality assurance in line with the role performed by equivalent European agencies. Fostering quality, upholding the existing quality level and its constant development should be a permanent commitment of all stakeholders in higher education. Each country develops its own models of evaluating quality in higher education.

In the Republic of Croatia, evaluating quality in higher education and science used to be linked with the following procedures:

- accreditation of study programmes,
- accreditation of higher education institutions,
- evaluation of higher education institutions,
- evaluation of scientific institutes and other scientific organizations,
- external assessment of the quality assurance system.

After the adoption of the Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education, external evaluation of the quality of higher education and science is carried out by ASHE via the following procedures:

- initial accreditation for carrying out a study programme,
- initial accreditation of higher education institutions,
- initial accreditation of scientific institutes and other scientific organisations,
- re-accreditation,
- thematic evaluation,
- audit.



Signing of the Bologna Declaration was the beginning of the process of reforming higher education in the Republic of Croatia. Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) were adopted by the Republic of Croatia in 2006 by the decision of the National Council for Higher Education. The Ministry of Science, Education and Sports adopted the “Plan for Development of Education in the Republic of Croatia 2005-2010” which proposed that:

- „...by 2006 the system of quality guarantees for the educational system in the Republic of Croatia is established ...“,
- „...by 2010 external evaluation of the quality of higher education programmes and institutions is performed, along with the development of quality assurance units at higher education institutions...“

## HIGHER EDUCATION

ASHE supports the development of quality of the Croatian higher education system.

In carrying out its mission ASHE cooperates with the National Council for Higher Education, the National Council for Science, the Board for Financing Scientific Activity and Higher Education, the competent ministry and other public entities and higher education institutions, trying to create partnership through direct communication or indirectly, working with the Rectors' Conference and the Council of Polytechnics and Colleges. Active cooperation with related institutions and organizations in countries of the European Union is sought for, with the aim of implementing the guidelines of the Bologna Declaration and establishing the European Higher Education Area.

In 2009 ASHE's Department for Higher Education organized **8** sessions of the National Council for Higher Education, **1** joint session of both Councils in cooperation with the Department for Science, **6** sessions of the Board for Financing Scientific Activity and Higher Education and **4** sessions of the Council of Polytechnics and Colleges in addition to **28** sessions of the scientific field committees of the Council of Polytechnics and Colleges.

Preparing the sessions included meetings with presidents of the mentioned bodies and arrangements regarding schedule;

invitations, drafting documents, tables and presentations for the sessions and writing conclusions, recommendations, decisions and communiqués adopted at the sessions.

Department for Higher Education also produced the “Report on the 2008 Activities of the National Council for Higher Education” including all annexes, tables and the text of the report. The Report has been accepted by the Croatian Parliament in October 2009.

## ACCREDITATION OF NEW STUDY PROGRAMMES

Before the enactment of the Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education in April 2009, the ASHE Department for Higher Education received a large number of requests for determining the conditions necessary for licensing new study programmes and higher education institutions.

These requests were to be met in line with the Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education, in effect prior the enactment of the Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education, which defines these procedures differently.

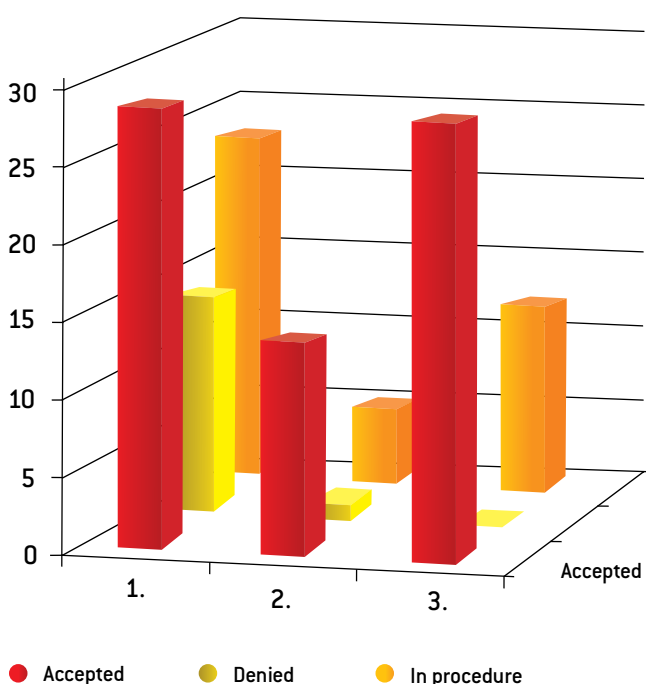
The accreditation procedure in line with the provisions of the Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education was started for 65 new first and second cycle academic and professional study programmes (out of which 29 were accredited, 13 denied accreditation, and 23 are still being evaluated), 18 third cycle study programmes (out of which 12 were accredited, 1 denied accreditation, and 5 are still being evaluated) and 42 postgraduate specialist study programmes (out of which 30 were accredited, and 12 are still being evaluated). It has to be mentioned that in 2009 ASHE cooperated with the German Accreditation Agency AQAS on accrediting a joint graduate study programme proposed by the University of Zagreb and University of Münster, which presented the first joint accreditation of a study programme in the Republic of Croatia.



Implementation of the mentioned procedures included: examining the documents delivered, assisting higher education institutions in entering data into the MOZVAG system (Support Module for Evaluation of Study Programmes), assisting members of the National Council for Higher Education in appointing reviewers, delivering documentation to reviewers and reporters, assisting reviewers with their tasks and preparing the reports, collecting the reviews and the reports, examining the documentation regarding teachers and preparing analyses of the minimum criteria for performing a study programme, necessary to establish if legal criteria were met, drafting final recommendations, collecting the data necessary to reimburse the reviewers, etc.

Special care was taken to include foreign reviewers in evaluations of new study programmes. In accordance with reviewers' suggestions, a number of proposed programmes were sent back to higher education institutions for modification. All programme descriptions, reviews, reports, as well as final recommendations of the National Council for Higher Education, were made available to authorised users via the MOZVAG database.

Chart 1: Accreditation of higher education study programmes in 2009



1. New first and second cycle academic and professional study programmes/ 65 in total
2. Third cycle study programmes/18 in total
3. Postgraduate specialist study programmes/ 42 in total

# ACCREDITATION OF NEW HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

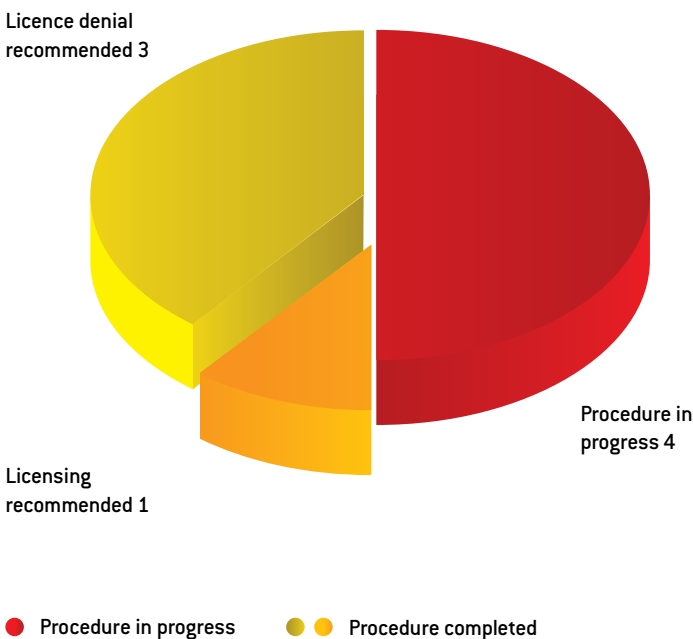
A significant portion of ASHE activities in 2009 involved procedures of establishing new higher education institutions on the basis of requests received, in line with the provisions of the Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education.

The accreditation procedure was started for 8 new higher education institutions which proposed a total of 17 new study programmes.

The procedure was completed for 4 new higher education institutions; accreditation recommendation was issued for one new higher education institution (The Media University in Split), while three new higher education institutions were denied accreditation recommendation (Health College Medinet in Zagreb, Fashion and Design College in Zagreb and Media and Communication College in Split). The procedure is still in progress for 4 new higher education institutions (Effectus College, Olimp College, Maritime College and Media College).

During the past year the Board for Financing Scientific Activity and Higher Education was included in all accreditation procedures and assessed financial feasibility of all proposals for establishing new higher education institutions and their study programmes. ASHE Department of Higher Education assisted the Board in their activities.

Chart 2: Accreditation of new higher education institutions





# EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

The most important activity of the ASHE Department for Higher Education in 2009 was the external evaluation of existing higher education institutions in line with the Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education and according to the evaluation plan and documents adopted by the National Council for Higher Education. External evaluation was carried out in line with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, which meant that representatives of students and foreign experts were included in the review panels; the higher education institutions produced self-analysis reports; 2 or 3 day long study visits to the institutions were organized for the review panel; the evaluated higher education institutions had the opportunity to comment on the review reports; the final review reports were published on the ASHE website, etc.

It is important to add that in 2009 the Department organized training for members of the review panels, introducing them to the higher education system in the Republic of Croatia and the legal framework, documents and procedures for carrying out external reviews, in order to better prepare them for the important and challenging task of performing external reviews of higher education institutions.

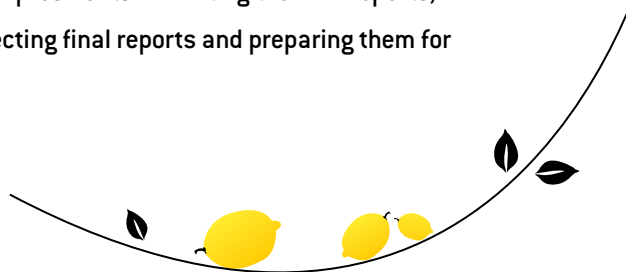
In 2009, in line with the decision of the National Council for Higher Education, ASHE carried out external evaluations of 8 higher education institutions:

- Polytechnic in Rijeka,
- Polytechnic in Požega,
- University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica,
- Karlovac University of Applied Sciences,
- University of Applied Health Studies in Zagreb,
- College for Business Management „Baltazar Adam Krčelić“ in Zaprešić,
- Business School for Tourism and Hotel Management „Utilus“ in Zagreb,

- Business College in Višnjan.

External evaluation of the mentioned polytechnics and colleges included the following activities:

- providing higher education institutions with instructions on how to complete the self-evaluation form and its associated tables,
- organising meetings with the deans of these institutions,
- collecting proposals for appointment of members of the review panels,
- collecting and examining received self-evaluation forms,
- arrangements with members of the review panels and coordination of their tasks,
- arrangement of study visits with higher education institutions and members of the review panels,
- arranging the technical details of study visits,
- participating in the study visits in a coordinating role,
- aiding the review panel presidents in drafting the final reports, coordinating and collecting final reports and preparing them for



## SYNTHESIS OF IMPLEMENTED EVALUATIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

The Department for Higher Education created a document in 2009 titled "Synthesis of Implemented Evaluations of Higher Education Institutions in 2008 and 2009". According to this document, twenty evaluations of higher education institutions were carried out in 2008 and 2009 (12 faculties, 3 colleges and 5 polytechnics) in line with the Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education, which at the time regulated the area of science and higher education.

Based on the documents for the evaluation of institutions of higher education adopted by the National Council for Higher Education, institutions of higher education created and submitted self-analyses and the expert panels appointed by the National Council for Higher Education carried out site visits. Accordingly, the document represents a synthesis of the evaluations carried out in line with the evaluation documents, self-analyses of higher

education institutions and the final reports of expert panels. It has to be noted that although the National Council for Higher Education adopted reports by expert panels which included final assessments and recommendations for improvement, the reviews and analyses included in the synthesis provide a different perspective on the institutions of higher education. Data analysed there was not subject to specific consideration during the evaluation process (because it was not required in the self-analyses), but provides insight into the state of the higher education institutions, as well as the national system since it encompasses its key points - medical and legal education, university and professional education, and public and private education. Such an overview should provide more information and guidelines to all the stakeholders in the system of science and higher education (which is one of the basic tasks of ASHE) - to competent authorities, for redefining strategies; to institutions of higher education as a critical evaluation of their work; and to students, to make them aware of the importance of their role in the system.

#### FACULTIES OF LAW

The evaluations of higher education institutions included all faculties of law in the Republic of Croatia, which are components of the universities of Zagreb, Split, Rijeka and Osijek. The data analysed showed that the general organization of these institutions varied minimally - all four faculties followed the same strategy - reaching excellence in teaching and research, which shows a clear lack of profiling at the national level, while European institutions for legal education have their missions publicly available and known to all employees.

Furthermore, the study programmes at all four faculties had the first and second cycle integrated and each of these institutions of higher education had at least one postgraduate specialist course, but only the Zagreb faculty performed a doctoral programme. In other European systems which follow the Bologna principles of organization there are no specialist postgraduate programmes. Instead, the state (since legal education is required for several regulated professions) chooses either general legal education or differentiated programmes at the master level (Master of European Law, Master of Corporative Law, etc.) while at the postgraduate level only doctoral programmes are performed.

There is variation among the faculties regarding the number of

students and teachers, and the analysed data shows that the Faculty in Zagreb stands out in this regard when compared to the faculties in Rijeka, Osijek and Split. The Zagreb Faculty of Law, according to the admission quotas provided in the self-analysis, enrolls 982 students every year and has 158 teachers, followed by the Faculty of Law in Split, with 820 students, but a considerably smaller number of teachers - 75. The other two faculties have half the number of students (up to 400) and a similar number of teachers (76 in Rijeka, 64 in Osijek).

As for the number of study programmes, the Faculty in Zagreb leads with 17, while others have 3, or 4 in Osijek. The ratio of graduates compared to the total number of students admitted varies between institutions - the lowest ratio is at the University of Split, where the proportion of graduates compared to other students is 1:3.59, followed by Zagreb's 1:12.6, then Osijek with 1:15.2 and Rijeka with 1:26.

In terms of teaching staff, all four faculties lack human resource management and a continuous and systematic pedagogical training of teachers. The average age of full professors ranges from 53 years of age (in Zagreb), up to 63 (Osijek); in Split, it is 56, while in Rijeka it is 58. Teachers are also subject to evaluation via student surveys conducted at all universities (evaluated institutions do not conduct any internal surveys themselves), but the survey results are not available to students and are almost never followed-up by improvement procedures (with the sole exception of the Faculty in Rijeka, where teachers with low scores in the surveys are required to carry out a self-evaluation).

Affirmation of an institution of higher education in the international context (which is a trend in legal education in the European Higher Education Area, despite the fact that our faculties of law devote more attention to the national legal system and local activities) also requires increased attractiveness to foreign students, teachers and researchers, which is, unfortunately, currently low at our institutions. In addition, detailed systematic analyses of statistical data are necessary to improve assessment and usage of resources, as well as the quality of strategic targeting and profiling based on an objective image of the situation, which is not carried out by any of these faculties.

## MEDICAL FACULTIES

Four Croatian universities have a school of medicine: the University of Zagreb, the University of Split, the University of Rijeka and the Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek. All four faculties perform integrated undergraduate and graduate study programmes. In addition to this, the Zagreb School of Medicine performs 32 specialist and 2 doctoral programmes, the faculty at the University of Osijek - a doctoral and a specialist programme, the faculty in Split - 3 graduate, 2 doctoral and the integrated undergraduate and graduate programme in dentistry, and the University of Rijeka performs 7 undergraduate, 4 specialist and 1 doctoral programme. When considering the data presented here, it is important to keep in mind the number of study programs performed by the faculties and the fact that the universities of Rijeka and Split also perform programmes in dentistry, while the University of Zagreb has a separate faculty of dentistry.

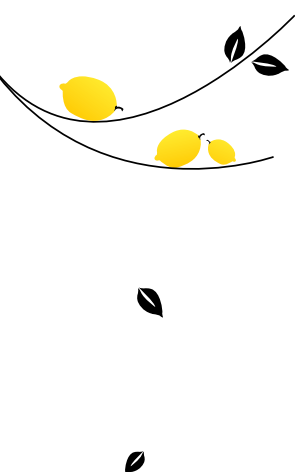
In the past three years, 753 students graduated from the Zagreb faculty; 576 from the Split faculty; 770 from the faculty in Rijeka and 167 from the faculty in Osijek. Admission quotas were as follows: 240 students in Zagreb (at the integrated and 32 specialist study programmes), 120 students in Split (three undergraduate and 2 integrated programmes), 413 in Rijeka (7 undergraduate, 2 integrated and 4 specialist programmes) and 120 students in Osijek (1 integrated, 1 professional study programme).

To enable comparisons, we will present the data on the admission quotas for the integrated undergraduate and graduate study programmes of medicine that are performed at all four faculties.

The quotas are as follows: 240 students in Zagreb, 130 in Rijeka, 75 in Split and 70 in Osijek. Only the faculty in Osijek admits part-time students who work while studying (30 out of the aforementioned quota of 70 students).

In the academic year 2006-07, the integrated medical programmes admitted 282 students in Zagreb, 135 in Rijeka, 84 in Osijek and 75 in Split. Average grades of students after completing the 2006-07 academic year were as follows: 3.42 in Zagreb, 3.62 in Osijek, 3.68 in Split and 4.037 in Rijeka.

The Zagreb faculty employs 187 teachers (regular and associate professors, assistant professors, assistants and junior scientists) and 20 part-time teachers, the faculty in Split - 131 teachers and 151 part-time teaching staff, the faculty in Rijeka - 375 full-time and 121 part-time teachers, and the faculty in Osijek - 150 full-time and



72 part-time teachers. The average age of employees is 46 in Zagreb for full-time and 50 for part-time teaching staff, in Split - 47 for full-time and 53 for part-time teachers, in Rijeka, 48 for full time and 52 for part-time staff, and in Osijek 50 for full time and 51 for part-time teaching staff.

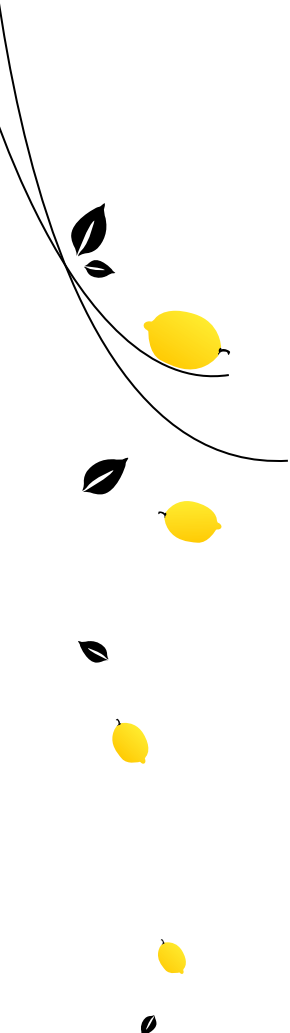
### PROFESSIONAL STUDY PROGRAMMES

The sector of professional higher education in Croatia differs considerably from those in other European countries with a binary system (university and professional programmes). The important differences are related to the ways of linking the professional programmes with the economy, which generally speaking is not bad, but the admissions policy does not consistently follow the needs of the labour market (towards which the professional programmes are oriented), since the evaluations showed that there is no systematic follow-up for graduates, and the data necessary for forming admission policies and improvements of study programmes is neither systematically collected nor analysed. Consequently, there is no strategic positioning of the evaluated polytechnics and colleges in the social context, nor detailed planning of the often very different areas of science in which study programs at a single higher education institutions are performed.

Also, a detailed analysis showed that the number of students enrolled in professional programmes is disproportionately large in relation to the number of teachers and consequently, the graduation rate was never above 40% (in some of the evaluated institutions it was less than 10%).

This is in part caused by the fact that the professional study programmes admit a portion of students from three-year secondary schools (at least 10%), which is unusual compared to the rest of Europe, but the new system of implementation of the State Graduation Examination should put an end to this. Also, it should be noted that the analyses showed that students at professional study programmes often achieve better grade average than they had in high school.

The differences can be best observed in comparison to a European system of higher education that includes professional programmes - the Austrian system, due to its geographical and cultural proximity, and the similarity of data pertaining to this segment of the Croatian educational system. The Austrian system of professional education combines 315 study programmes, which are performed at a total of



20 higher education institutions, as opposed to the Croatian system where 198 study programmes (156 undergraduate and 42 graduate specialist) are performed by 2.5 times more institutions (a total of 50) which indicates a large degree of dispersion, as well as the poor geographical and market justification of study programmes. This is in part caused by the differences in legislative regulation - in order to establish a school for professional higher learning in Austria, it is necessary to provide at least 4 study programmes (each undergraduate programme must have a consecutive programme on the second level), establish a clear management structure and demonstrate the ability to admit 1,000 students in the period of five years. In Croatia it suffices to provide institutional and teaching capacities to perform a single study programme. Often not even the institutional requirements are fully satisfied, as the analysis of the evaluated institutions showed, among other things, that there was not enough space reserved for libraries. Despite the fact that a considerable amount of textbooks for professional programmes is available on-line, both the library itself and the printed and on-line materials are essential not only in providing information but also (especially in the era of Google when any piece of information is available instantly) to provide students with insights into recent, as well as fundamental, major works on which the science which is being taught is based upon. Also, it should be noted that these institutions have higher education as their primary activity, and that they are obliged to provide their students with the academic world view and critical thinking which is surely based on, among other things, the skill to critically browse and search through library material. Thus it is the responsibility of the higher education institution to ensure a sufficient number of copies necessary for students to satisfy their intellectual curiosity and interests at least in the minimal extent.

The structure of the system with respect to the science areas in which the study programmes are performed also varies between these two countries: in Croatia, 42% of the programmes are in the social sciences (18 programmes have the word management in its title), 35% are in technical sciences, and 13% are in biomedicine and health (mainly nursing, then physiotherapy and sanitation engineering). In Austria, professional programmes are strategically focused on technical fields as generators of economic progress (43.32%), followed by social sciences and humanities which are covered by 39.46% of programmes and, finally, programmes in

health (12.17%) which are significantly more varied than in Croatia (ergo-therapy, psychotherapy, dietetics, orthopaedics, biomedical analysis, etc.) Therefore it is not surprising that overlapping and duplication of study programmes often occur - for example, there are 10 programmes in nursing in Croatia and 2 in Austria, while midwives are educated in 4 study programmes in Austria and just 1 in Croatia, etc.

The teaching staff is on average older than in other European countries when compared to European teachers working in either professional programmes or Croatian university programmes. Specific didactic qualifications are among the important prerequisites for employing teachers in professional programmes, since their duty is to provide quality skills training, as the dominant component of the learning outcomes at professional study programmes. The analysis of the evaluated institutions showed this component of teacher education is missing.

Finally, it is necessary to note two more features of professional programmes in the Republic of Croatia, which are not found anywhere else in Europe - there are no student representatives in administrative councils and information on the composition of those councils is often unavailable. In addition to this, the fact that some professional programmes are delivered at universities has been subject to much debate, and poses further questions on the binary nature of the Croatian higher education system.

The results of the analyses also point to the conclusion that one of the biggest obstacles to the analysis of the Croatian higher education system is the lack of statistical data, as well as its systematic analysis and implementation of the provided results. The data is not available on the national level, nor at the level of the higher education institutions, and if the data does exist, it is not used for self-evaluation and improvement of the institutions and the system. This is in part caused by the fact that, as these evaluations showed, there is a very low level of quality culture at institutions, which often see it as an additional burden for employees and the management, and not as a tool to improve the quality level of teaching, add value to the final qualifications and thus positively affect the competitiveness of Croatian qualifications in the European Higher Education Area and vice versa - the attractiveness of the Croatian educational system to other Europeans. Furthermore, the evaluations have shown the admission quotas to be too large, and that there are students being admitted outside



the said quotas, which ultimately does not lead to higher graduation levels, but only results in additional burden for the educational system. Finally, it is necessary to note that the Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education was adopted to improve the system, regulate the previously undefined issues as well as demonstrate to institutions of higher education the necessity of enhancing their autonomy and accountability, as well as understanding and fulfilling their important societal role.



## SCIENCE

ASHE assists scientific organisations in the Republic of Croatia in improving their activities and participates in national, regional and international activities related to science. ASHE unifies and coordinates activities of all bodies responsible for creating policies and strategies for science in the Republic of Croatia (the National Council for Science, Scientific Area Councils, Scientific Field Committees, working groups and expert commissions established by the National Council for Science, etc.) As a result of ASHE's involvement, information flow among these institutions is faster and more accurate, enabling the institutions to be better and more efficient in their work.

ASHE serves as a link between the National Council for Science and other public bodies and business organisations such as the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, Committee for Education, Science and Culture of the Croatian Parliament, National Foundation for Science, Higher Education and Technological Development, universities and its components, National Institute for Statistics, Croatian Institute for Technology, Business-Innovation Centre of Croatia, Croatian Chamber of Commerce, etc.

ASHE is also responsible for functioning of the National Council for Science. In 2009 ASHE provided expert and administrative support to the National Council for Science, which included preparing materials and collecting data for Council sessions, writing minutes, proposals, statements, decisions and conclusions related to Council tasks in appointments to scientific positions, establishing criteria

for appointments to scientific positions, appointments to scientific positions in interdisciplinary scientific fields and criteria for enrolment into the Register of Scientific Organisations, evaluation of scientific organisations, adoption of Statutes, and other items related to science. In addition to this, ASHE implemented the public call for proposals of candidates for membership in the Scientific Area Councils, Council for Arts and Scientific Field Committees, prepared the National Council for Science Annual Report and the draft proposal of the National Council for Science Annual Financial Plan.

In 2009 the Department organized 8 sessions of the National Council for Science, 19 sessions of Scientific Area Councils, 73 sessions of Scientific Field Committees and a dozen of meetings of various working groups and expert committees.

The National Council for Science held a joint session with the Senate of the Josip Juraj Strossmayer University in Osijek, which was an opportunity to visit the university campus, the Faculty of Electrical Engineering, the Faculty of Medicine, Science Office, Quality Office, Technology Transfer Office, student dorm, student restaurant and the Faculty of Agriculture building site.

The National Council for Science held one of the sessions at the Končar group, where they visited the factory of electric vehicles and the Institute for Electrical and Electronic Engineering and Information Technology, got acquainted with the production process and rode in the low-floor electric train.

The National Council for Science appointed six Scientific Area Councils and one Council for Arts (in the April of 2009 all members and presidents were newly appointed), whose work was also a responsibility of ASHE.

The task of the Scientific Area Councils is to discuss matters in the purview of the National Council for Science which are related to individual scientific areas and art disciplines. ASHE prepared session materials, invited members to sessions, organized sessions and drafted minutes, conclusions, opinions, statements etc. adopted at sessions of the Councils.

In 2009 Scientific Area Councils held 19 sessions: 4 were held by the Scientific Area Council for Natural Sciences; 3 by the Scientific Area Council for Technical Sciences; 3 by the Scientific Area Council for Biomedicine and Health; 2 by the Scientific Area Council for Social Sciences; 3 by the Scientific Area Council for Humanities and one by the Council for Arts.

The topics discussed included: the Statute on Scientific and Art Areas, Disciplines and Branches; Frascati classification and the corresponding table for scientific areas and fields; criteria for appointment to scientific positions, financing scientific equipment, establishing centres of excellence; financing journals, long-term and short-term priorities, network of public science institutes, etc.

Scientific Field Committees carry out a part of the procedure for appointment to scientific positions and make the final decisions on the appointments. For these tasks, the National Council for Science formed 22 Scientific Field Committees (in the April of 2009 new presidents and members were appointed to all Scientific Field Committees).

In 2009 the Scientific Field Committees carried out procedures of appointment to scientific positions in line with the provisions of the Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education (OG 123/03, 105/04, 174/04, 46/07), Decisions of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Croatia (OG 2/07), Statute on Criteria for Appointment to Scientific Positions (OG 84/05, 100/06, 138/06, 120/07) and Statute on Constitution and Activities of the Scientific Area Councils and Field Committees (OG 118/05 and 55/09).

Also, it is important to add that the Office for Field Committees participated in the events related to drafting of the new Statute on Criteria for Appointment to Scientific Positions.

Scientific Field Committees held a total of 73 sessions: Committee for the Field of Biology (4 sessions); Committee for the Field of Physics (3 sessions); Committee for the Field of Geoscience (3 sessions); Committee for the Field of Chemistry (3 sessions); Committee for the Field of Mathematics (2 sessions); Committee for the Field of Chemical Engineering, Mining, Petroleum and Geological Engineering, Metallurgy, Textile Technology and Graphic Technology (3 sessions); Committee for the Field of Mechanical Engineering, Shipbuilding, Traffic and Transport Technology, Aviation, Rocket and Space Technology (5 sessions); Committee for the Field of Electrical Engineering and Information Technology (3 sessions); Committee for the Field of Architecture, Urbanism, Geodesy and Civil Engineering (2 sessions); Committee for the Field of Fundamental Medical Sciences, Clinical Medical Sciences, Public Health and Health Protection, Dentistry and Pharmacy (5 sessions); Committee for the Field of Veterinary Medicine (2 sessions); Committee for the Field of Agricultural Sciences, Forestry, Wood Technology, Biotechnology and Food Technology (4 sessions); Committee for the Field of Economy (5 sessions); Committee for the



Field of Information and Communication Sciences (3 sessions); Committee for the Field of Pedagogy, Educational and Rehabilitation Sciences, Logopedics and Kinesiology (4 sessions); Committee for the Field of Political Science, Sociology, Social Geography and Demography, Social Work and Security and Defence (3 sessions); Committee for the Field of Law (4 sessions); Committee for the Field of Psychology (3 sessions); Committee for the Field of Philosophy and Theology (4 sessions); Committee for the Field of History, Art History, Art Science, Archaeology, Ethnology and Anthropology (3 sessions); and Committee for the Field of Dramatic Arts (theatre and media), Film Arts (film, electronic and media art of motion pictures), Music Art, Visual Art, Applied Arts, Dance Art (2 sessions). A total of 1198 items were discussed at the sessions, out of which 515 were related to appointments to the scientific position of research associate, 316 to the scientific position of senior research associate, 268 to the scientific position of research advisor and 99 to positions in arts.

ASHE is responsible for functioning of all working groups and expert committees established by the National Council for Science. In 2009, presidents of the Scientific Area Councils, the Council for Arts and Field Committees held several joint meetings related to appointments to scientific positions. ASHE organized a workshop in Zagreb for presidents of Scientific Area Councils, the Council for Arts and Field Committees in order to introduce them to the Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education, the Statute on Criteria for Appointment to Scientific Positions and the Statute on Scientific and Artistic Areas, Fields and Branches.

The expert committee of the National Council for Science organized several meetings aimed at adopting criteria for appointment to scientific positions, with special attention paid to interdisciplinary scientific positions.

ASHE also participated in drafting the Statute on the Contents of the Licence and Conditions and Procedure of Licensing Scientific Activities, the Statute on the Conditions for Re-accreditation of Scientific Organisations, and amendments to the Statute on the Constitution and Activities of Scientific Area Councils and Field Committees. The mentioned changes were necessary to organize field committees in line with the provisions of the previously adopted Statute on Scientific and Artistic Areas, Fields and Branches. In addition to this, ASHE participated in amending the Statute on Criteria for Appointment to Scientific Positions.



## AUDIT

During 2009 ASHE continued to foster development of the quality culture in the Republic of Croatia higher education area. Supporting higher education institutions and scientific organisations in establishing internal quality assurance systems, ASHE assisted them in establishing mechanisms for critical assessment of effectiveness of implemented activities, fostering and developing the system and increasing accountability towards all stakeholders in higher education and the society as a whole.

The Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education introduced a number of novelties to the system of external evaluation of the quality of higher education institutions and scientific organisations. One of the novelties is the audit, a procedure carried out by ASHE and aimed at assessing the degree of development and efficiency of internal quality assurance systems of higher education institutions and scientific organisations.

In 2009 ASHE completed the follow-up of audits at three higher education institutions which participated in the CARDS 2003 pilot project "Furtherance of the Agency for Science and Higher Education in its Quality Assurance Role and Development of the Supporting Information System". The project included the Faculty of Civil Engineering of the Josip Juraj Strossmayer University in Osijek, the University of Zagreb Faculty of Organization and Informatics in Varaždin, and the University Of Rijeka Faculty Of Engineering. The audits were carried out by foreign and Croatian audit experts. The review panels produced reports for follow-ups which were delivered to the evaluation objects and published on ASHE website. Quality assurance systems of the faculties which participated in the pilot project are mostly in the initial phase of development, with a tendency towards full development in some segments.

ASHE audit model is described in the Manual for Audit of Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Croatia, which was adopted by the Rectors' Conference on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2008.



ASHE Department for Quality Assurance produced a new amended edition of the Manual, on the basis of the results of testing of the audit model which was carried out within the pilot project, best practice examples and trends in the international and European higher education areas, and in line with novelties introduced by the Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education.

To ensure credibility, ASHE paid special attention to education and training of audit experts.

In February 2009 education of the second generation of audit experts was completed. Certificate was awarded to 36 seminar participants (23 teachers, 10 students and 3 business representatives) which, in addition to 37 participants of seminars conducted in 2006/07, adds up to a total of 73 certified audit experts. In 2009 further trainings were organized for both generations of experts.

Integral components of the education were two workshops for audit experts which took place in Zagreb, on 19<sup>th</sup> February and 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> December 2009.

In order to improve its work and facilitate data collection and analyses related to audits, ASHE cooperated with the University Computing Centre (SRCE) on establishment of a new database, which went through a testing phase and has been fully operational as of the end of 2009.

Fostering international cooperation and good practice exchange with equivalent agencies in the region, the Department for Quality Assurance presented its audit model at the following international conventions:

- "Quality Assurance in South Eastern Europe", organized by the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), presentation titled „QA Department of Agency for Science and Higher Education - External QA/Quality Culture“, Podgorica, 9<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> February 2009,
- Workshop on quality assurance in teaching, within the TEMPUS project "Geoinformational Science and Technology in Croatian Higher Education", presentation titled "An Audit Model in Croatia", University of Zagreb Faculty of Geodesy, 5<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> March 2009

Activities of ASHE include data collection and production of analyses on development and effectiveness of higher education institutions' internal quality assurance systems.

In May 2009 a questionnaire was sent to all Croatian universities in order to collect information on activities of their internal quality assurance systems. In comparison to the data collected in 2008, an increase is visible in the number of quality assurance units - from 86 in 2008 to 101 in 2009. Only four manuals for quality assurance were produced, and only two internal evaluations were carried out. The collected data shows that quality assurance units are not yet fully functional. Documentation for the systems has not been produced nor adopted, effectiveness of the systems has not been assessed, nor have the plans been created to develop them. This is partly due to the fact that before the enactment of the Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education, Croatian higher education institutions did not have a legal obligation to establish quality assurance units and systematically foster quality development. Most higher education institutions do not allocate funds for the established QA systems. There is a lack of understanding of the difference between quality management according to ISO standards and quality assurance according to the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). The data collected on the quality assurance units of universities and its components is presented in Table 1.





Table 1

Analysis of the systems of quality assurance at universities and its components in the Republic of Croatia, May 2009							
UNIVERSITY	Questionnaires sent	Questionnaires returned	Organisation of the QA system	Internal assessment implemented	Quality assurance documentation		
					Statute	Manual	Statute and manual
<b>University of Zagreb</b>	1	1	• Quality management committee • Quality management office	-	-	-	-
University units	1	-	-		-	-	-
Faculties and academies	32	27	• Committee: 11 • Panel: 16		2	-	1
<b>University in Split</b>	1	1	• Quality improvement centre	-			
University units	3	3	• Committee: 3				
Faculties and academies	12	12	• Committee: 10 • Centre and Committee: 1 • Panel: 1		2		
<b>University of Osijek</b>	1	1	• Committee for quality development and quality assurance • Office for quality development and quality assurance	-			
University units	4	4	• Committee: 1 • Panel and office: 3				
Faculties and academies	12	12	• Panel and office: 2 • Panel: 7 • Quality panel and Bologna panel: 2 • Panel and working group: 1	1 ESG	6		1
<b>University of Pula</b>	1	1	• Main Quality Committee • Central Quality Office	-	1	-	-
University units	5	5	• Committee: 5	-	-	-	-
<b>University of Zadar</b>	1	1	• Office for Quality Assurance • Panel for Quality Development • Panel for internal assessment of the quality management system	-	-	-	-
University units	24	23	• Department coordinator: 21 • Panel for quality assurance and coordinator: 1	1 ESG			1
<b>University of Rijeka</b>	1	1	• Quality committee • Quality development centre				
University units	5	2	• Quality committee: 2		2		
Faculties and academies	10	10	• Quality committee: 9 • Committee and office: 1		3		1
<b>University of Dubrovnik</b>	1	1	• Quality panel		-		-
University units	7	-	-		-	-	-

With the aim of fostering quality culture at polytechnics and colleges, ASHE initiated development of quality assurance units at those institutions. A seminar was organized for their representatives on 30th November 2009 with 40 participants. The participants welcomed the ASHE initiative to assist them at the beginning of their work with the quality of topics, materials, cooperation and opportunities to meet colleagues from other institutions and establish dialogue. The participants expressed the necessity of involving all stakeholders in development of the quality assurance system from the very beginning, as well as the necessity of continuous cooperation in furthering the system.

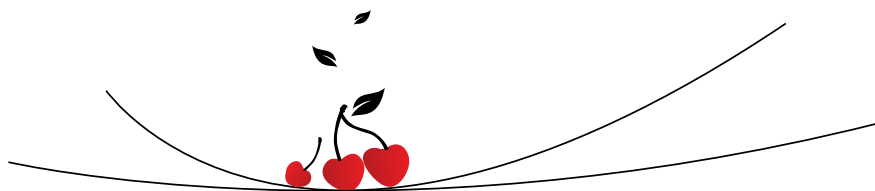
Fostering cooperation with higher education institutions, ASHE Department for Quality Assurance encourages them to establish mechanisms for monitoring quality of their study programmes and its constant development. In the period after the accreditation of university study programmes in line with the three cycles (undergraduate, graduate and doctoral) for academic programmes and two cycles for professional programmes, the need arose to develop new learning outcomes. ASHE Department for Quality Assurance participated at:

- round table „Academies of Arts in the Bologna System“ organized by the University of Osijek Art Academy, 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2009,
- presentation of the project “Systematic Approach to Learning Outcomes in Student Education”, University of Osijek, 26<sup>th</sup> January 2009,
- presentation of the project “Learning Outcomes at First and Second Cycle Study Programmes”, 5<sup>th</sup> February 2009 in Zagreb,
- Tempus project „Challenges for Professional Higher Education in Agriculture“ final conference, 6<sup>th</sup> February 2009 in Križevci,
- presentation „Learning Outcomes“ at the University of Zagreb Faculty of Agronomy, 5<sup>th</sup> May 2009,
- Tempus seminar „Learning Outcomes and the Qualifications Framework”, 12<sup>th</sup> June 2009 in Dubrovnik.

The discussions we participated in prompted us to help the teaching staff in developing learning outcomes by publishing a leaflet on learning outcomes, distributed to all Croatian higher education institutions.

After the adoption of the Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education, ASHE organized a number of seminars at all Croatian higher education institutions. The seminars provided an opportunity to present the changes in the area of higher education and science brought about by the new law, as well as the external quality assurance procedures in the purview of ASHE. Seminars were held at:

- University of Dubrovnik, 5<sup>th</sup> May 2009
- University of J. J. Strossmayer in Osijek, 11<sup>th</sup> May 2009
- University of Juraj Dobrila in Pula, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2009
- University of Rijeka, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2009
- University of Split, 17<sup>th</sup> June 2009
- University of Zadar, 13<sup>th</sup> July 2009
- University of Zagreb, 14<sup>th</sup> July 2009



In the seminar discussions the academic community expressed their satisfaction with the changes introduced by the new law. Encouraging development of the quality culture in the Croatian higher education area, ASHE hosted an international conference „Effective Change Management - Assuring Quality in Higher Education Institutions“ organized by the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) in Zagreb 23<sup>rd</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> October 2009. The conference was attended by 28 participants from the region (Bulgaria, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Kosovo and the Republic of Croatia). The conference was just one of the numerous international activities in which the Department for Quality Assurance actively participated in order to encourage international cooperation, good practice exchange, transparency and knowledge transfer in the area of quality assurance in higher education.

Other international activities to be mentioned are the 4th European Forum on Quality Assurance "Creativity and Diversity: Challenges for quality assurance beyond 2010", ENQA network workshop "Outcomes of the Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Ministerial Conference and Expectations on the Future of QA", CEE Network workshop "External Review of Agencies: Lessons Learned", UNESCO Forum on Higher Education in the Europe Region: Access, Values, Quality and Competitiveness and the 10<sup>th</sup> biannual conference of the INQAAHE network "New Approaches to Quality Assurance in the Changing World of Higher Education".



# ACCREDITATION COUNCIL

In line with the provisions of the Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education ASHE formed the Accreditation Council as an expert panel composed of representatives of scientific, higher education, business and non-governmental, non-profit organizations recognized as stakeholders in science and higher education.

Accreditation Council has eleven members appointed by the ASHE Management Board for a four year term.

The constituting session of the Council was held on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2009.

Members of the Accreditation Council are persons acquainted with international, especially European and national quality assurance systems, whose task is to systematically educate themselves on quality assurance in science and higher education.

Accreditation Council adopts the documents necessary for procedures of initial accreditation and re-accreditation of higher education institutions, study programmes and scientific organisations, thematic evaluations and audits of internal quality assurance systems of higher education institutions and scientific organisations, establishes criteria and indicators for quality assessments of evaluation objects, adopts plans for implementation of external evaluation procedures, appoints members of expert panels for implementation of external evaluation procedures, issues opinions on final expert panel reports on implemented external evaluation procedures, appoints members of complaints committees for implemented external evaluation procedures, produces annual reports on its work for the ASHE Director, proposes annual work plans for activities in its purview, appoints working bodies and organises their activities, and decides on other expert issues upon request of the Management Board and ASHE Director.

The activities and the scope of work of the Accreditation Council are described in more detail in the Rules of Procedure. In order to prevent conflicts of interest, ASHE is working on the Ethical Codex of Members of the Accreditation Council.



## ANALYTICS AND STATISTICS

Quality assurance systems, evaluation procedures and planning tasks aimed at improving quality of higher education and science at all levels all require relevant, objective indicators and analyses. Statistical overviews and analyses are vital starting points for various elaborate research projects in the area of Croatian higher education and science, as well as the bases for important evaluations and recommendations. ASHE plays a pioneering role in collecting and processing data on otherwise inadequately recorded resources of the Croatian system of higher education and science. ASHE Department of Analytics and Statistics was developed from the core team which worked on creating MOZVAG (Support Module for Evaluation of Study Programmes), a support system created in accordance with the Bologna principles. MOZVAG is an ASHE information support system. It is used in evaluation of study programmes proposed by higher education institutions in the Republic of Croatia and serves as a database of all licensed study programmes being performed. A module for audits of scientific organisations and higher education institutions in the Republic of Croatia is currently being developed. Due to time constraints in development of the database, only elementary and incomplete data was entered into MOZVAG in order to enable analyses of the degree in which conditions for performing study programmes were met. At the end of 2008 a reconstruction of MOZVAG was started in cooperation with the University Computing Centre (SRCE). In 2009 an application was added enabling changes in contents of study programmes licensed by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports. On the recommendation of the National Council for Higher Education, ASHE staff was authorised to change statuses of study programmes licensed by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports along with the Ministry staff. Detailed defining of departmental activities was carried out in the framework of the CARDS 2003 project which indicated the need to reconstruct MOZVAG by incorporating it into a wider National Information System for Higher Education and Science (NISVOZ), which would include a considerably larger number of parameters for generating analyses and statistics from the area of higher education and science. During 2009 the technical specification for NISVOZ conceptual design was completed, and at the beginning of 2010 a call



for offers was published for NISVOZ conceptual design.

In addition to this, ASHE unified data on licensed study programmes and created the browser of study programmes published on ASHE website in order to provide relevant information on accredited study programmes and higher education institutions in the Republic of Croatia. The Browser enables search according to various criteria (for example, programme type, institution, location, etc.) in order to provide as much information as possible to the users of the system. In relation to the introduction of the state graduation examination for enrolment to all Croatian higher education institutions, starting with the 2010/2011 academic year, Department for Higher Education in cooperation with the Department for Analytics and Statistics prepared a list of licensed first cycle study programmes in line with the Bologna Process (undergraduate academic and professional courses) created on the basis of issued licences and information provided by higher education institutions. The list was used as a basis for the list of study programmes in the booklet on the State Graduation Examination.



## NATIONAL INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

During the CARDS 2003 project “Furtherance of the Agency of Science and Higher Education in its Quality Assurance Role and Development of the Supporting Information System” it was concluded that MOZVAG system should be restructured into a more comprehensive National Information System of Higher Education and Science (NISVOZ) which would encompass a considerably greater number of parameters for generating analyses and statistics from the area of higher education and science.

There is a growing need for additional information in strategic decision making (up to the level of reforms and adoption of new regulations), in internal and external evaluations of higher education and science, financial policy and decision making at all levels, as well as international and national statistical reports. Higher education institutions and scientific organisations also require additional data in order to determine priorities and enable comparability with equivalent institutions.

It is necessary to establish a comprehensive national information system which would overcome the present lack of adequate data, and this will be achieved with the NISVOZ system. It would simultaneously present:

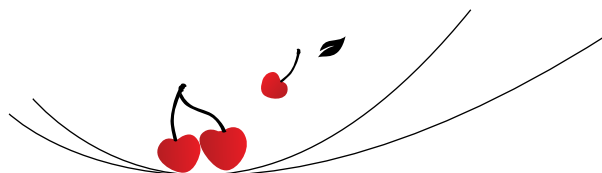
- a. information support to key business processes in the system of higher education and science,
- b. data source for international and national statistics and decision making.

Design of the NISVOZ system includes analysis of organisations, processes and information in the system of science and higher education and creation of the NISVOZ system conceptual design.

In order to fulfil the two key premises for development of adequate conceptual design, the specification of competences and profiles of the future project team was elaborated, establishing strict requirements:

- competency and comprehension of key elements important for recognising resources and quality of higher education and science in accordance with the Bologna Process;
- involvement and adaptation of existing IT resources at higher education institutions in order to avoid duplication in data delivery.

The system needs to reduce the volume of administrative work from the individual to institutional and national levels. The goal is to enter each piece of data only once, which means that NISVOZ will include the existing databases, national as well as international, and unify them.



The analyses of input data should show, among other things:

- a. resources of higher education institutions and their ability to deliver adequate level of teaching;
- b. costs of study per student according to types of study programmes - areas, fields, etc.
- c. analysis of necessary resources and investments required to improve learning outcomes;
- d. analysis of teacher to student ratio and analysis of students' work conditions and study environment;
- e. overview and analysis of student progress;
- f. analysis of any obstacles to learning, such as resources and teaching organisation, but also students' previous education institutions and their academic standards, students' social environment and influence of the labour market on study motivation.

## BROWSER OF STUDY PROGRAMMES

Browser of Study Programmes, made available to the public in July 2009 on the ASHE website, [www.azvo.hr](http://www.azvo.hr), was a result of the effort to make the list of all study programmes in the Republic of Croatia readily available in one place. It includes all study programmes licensed by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports that are currently being performed in the Republic of Croatia and can be enrolled on.

In the Republic of Croatia, 1226 study programmes were accredited by the end of 2009. According to the Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education, unlicensed study programmes are not considered to be academic or professional study programmes and upon completion of such programmes no academic or professional titles can be awarded. Organizers of such study programmes are not allowed to issue diplomas or diploma supplements. However, they are allowed to issue certificates on the completion of study programmes as long as they state that the programme is not an academic or professional study programme according to the Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education, and that it is not linked to any academic or professional title or degree.



# STATE GRADUATION EXAMINATION AND APPLICATIONS TO STUDY PROGRAMMES

In line with the provisions of the Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education, Central Applications Office (CAO) was established in ASHE as the national centre for applications to study programmes at higher education institutions in the Republic of Croatia, with the aim of unifying all tasks related to applications and enrolment on study programmes.

CAO carries out activities related to applications to study programmes and collects information on conditions for enrolment in study programmes at higher education institutions in the Republic of Croatia.

Main task of CAO is to successfully process applications of about 40.000 candidates for 122 higher education institutions in the Republic of Croatia which perform a total of around 540 undergraduate study programmes with capacities for enrolling about 38.000 students.

CAO has a number of tasks related to applications to higher education institutions, but the most important one is the efficient processing of all applications. The aim is to ensure equal access to all candidates, fasten and facilitate the application process and decrease its costs.

**CAO carries out activities related to applications to study programmes and collects information on enrolment in study programmes at higher education institutions in the Republic of Croatia.**

The application process is administered via the National Information System for Applications to Higher Education Institutions (NISpVU), the function of which is to enable candidates to apply to desired study programmes and identify the subjects from the State Graduation Examination they have to take.

The system can be accessed on [www.postani-student.hr](http://www.postani-student.hr) website which also contains the conditions for enrolment on undergraduate study programmes in relation to the State Graduation Examination. In the first half of the year CAO participated in a number of activities related to the State Graduation Examination. The activities to be mentioned are participation in establishment of the National Information System for Applications to Higher Education Institutions (NISpVU), collection of data on conditions for enrolment in study

programmes at Croatian higher education institutions and communication with higher education institutions. For this purpose, CAO asked all higher education institutions to appoint a coordinator and a deputy coordinator responsible for coordination of activities related to application and enrolment.

In order to disseminate information, CAO organized a videoconference on the new system of application to study programmes in May 2009. Participants were applications and enrolment coordinators at higher education institutions in Zagreb and 12 other Croatian cities.

The coordinators were authorized to access the system and monitor applications to study programmes and student rankings.

In addition to this, CAO organized a number of meetings in order to introduce higher education institutions to the new applications system, NISpVU, the application procedure and the role of the coordinators. Special attention was devoted to applications by candidates who graduated from high schools before 2010, or went to schools abroad.

Another important task of CAO is publishing practical guides to students in the process of applying to higher education institutions. In 2009 a leaflet was published with a step by step guide for applying to study programmes. The leaflet was printed in 50.000 copies and distributed to all Croatian high schools.

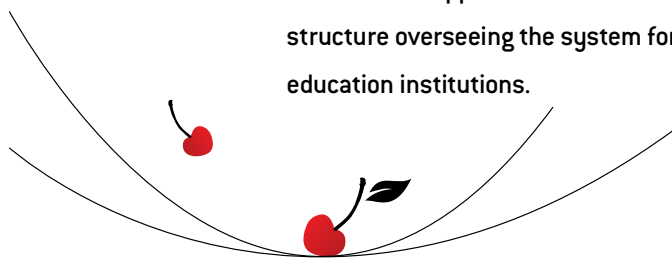
In cooperation with the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, ASHE prepared a booklet titled "State Graduation Exam 2009/2010 and Applications to Study Programmes", which was also distributed to all Croatian high schools.

In addition to this, CAO initiated international cooperation and became the twelfth member of the International Association of Admissions Organisations. ASHE representatives presented CAO as a new system of applications to higher education institutions to the British University and College Administration Service (UCAS), Dutch Studielink and Swedish applications office Ladok, and achieved fruitful cooperation with those offices.

CAO also created [www.studij.hr](http://www.studij.hr), a website which contains detailed information on the application procedure and enables comparison of different study programmes on the basis of various criteria. It is also regularly updated with latest news and important dates in the application process.

# NATIONAL INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR APPLICATIONS TO HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Creation of the National Information System for Applications to Higher Education Institutions - NISpVU - was started in 2008. NISpVU is a unique system which enables simultaneous application to the State Graduation Exam and higher education institutions. Functionalities and effectiveness of the system were determined in cooperation with a large number of stakeholders. ASHE had an important role in designing the conceptual specification of the system and defining its tasks. ASHE Central Applications Office is the central organizational structure overseeing the system for applications to higher education institutions.



## INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS

### IPA PROGRAMME

As a part of the development of the National Information System for Higher Education and Science (NISVOZ), the project titled “Development of the National Information System for Science and Higher Education” was included in the IPA programming and is now being proposed for funding. The project should receive funds from the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage of the IPA programme and its implementation should begin in 2011.

### TAIEX PROGRAMME

In April 2009 the National ENIC/NARIC Office in cooperation with the British National Information Centre (UK NARIC) implemented a project on recognition of foreign qualifications in relation to the implementation of the EC Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications. The project included lectures on the British higher education system and British experiences with implementing the Directive 2005/36/EC. The project was financed by the EU TAIEX programme.

## WORKING GROUP FOR ELIMINATION OF OBSTACLES TO ACADEMIC MOBILITY

ASHE has participated in the working group for elimination of obstacles to academic mobility, established by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports in order to prepare the Republic of Croatia for participation in the EU Lifelong Learning Programme. The working group includes representatives of higher education institutions and public authorities, and some of its objectives are connected with the issues arising in the work of the ASHE National Tempus Office.

## CROATIAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

ASHE participates in the activities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia Committee for Adoption of the Croatian Qualifications Framework (CQF) and the Operational Team in support of the Committee.

CQF is an instrument which will facilitate employability and individual personal development for establishment of social cohesion, which is of immense importance in societies in which longer life expectancy and economic and technological changes imposed the need for lifelong learning as a necessity in educational and economic policies. The importance of CQF is also reflected in improvement of links between educational programmes and the labour market, and the connected evaluation of learning outcomes. The creation and development of CQF are based on Croatian traditions and the existing education system of the Republic of Croatia, guidelines of the European Qualifications Framework, recommendations of the European Parliament and the European Council, as well as experiences of other, primarily European countries in establishing their qualifications frameworks.

The Operational Team comprises representatives of institutions responsible for education at all levels, from primary to higher education. The tasks of the Operational team are:

- preparing materials and documents for the development of CQF according to the work plan adopted by the CQF Committee,
- organization of and participation in conferences, seminars and other events according to the work plan,
- preparing proposals within the purview of their institutions, according to their responsibilities,
- presenting the results of their work at events they participate in.

According to the mentioned tasks and in line with the 5-year Plan of Activities adopted by the Committee for Adoption of the CQF at its session on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2008, the Operational Team organized six workshops in 2009, in addition to two Committee sessions.

Members of the Operational Team held a number of additional meetings for smaller groups organized around different topics and participated at numerous national and international conferences and workshops where they presented achievements in the CQF development.

The Operational Team also presented their work in a number of articles, reviews and interviews in the media and published a book titled "Croatian Qualifications Framework - Introduction to Qualifications."

## RECOGNITION OF FOREIGN HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS

ASHE National ENIC/NARIC office carries out the administrative procedure of professional recognition of foreign higher education qualifications. The office also develops directions for academic recognition of foreign higher education qualifications and recognition of study periods. In addition to professional support to recognition procedures, the National ENIC/NARIC office serves as an information centre for recognition of higher education qualifications, higher education system of the Republic of Croatia and foreign higher education systems.

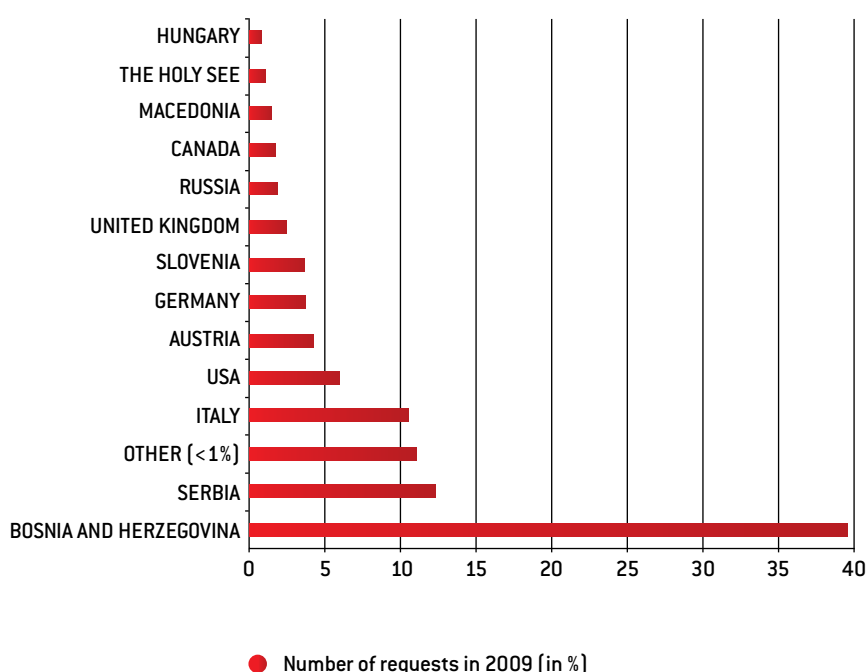
In 2009 ASHE National ENIC/NARIC office received 1354 applications for recognition of foreign higher education qualifications, 92 requests for directions for academic recognition of foreign higher education qualifications, and 20 requests for interpretations of various foreign higher education qualifications. The National ENIC/NARIC office replied to more than a thousand inquiries about recognition of higher education qualifications in the Republic of Croatia and abroad, national and foreign higher education systems, study programmes and qualifications.

Out of the total number of applicants for recognition of foreign higher education qualifications, 1163 or 86 % were citizens of the Republic of Croatia, while the remaining 14% were foreign citizens,

the majority of whom were citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who made up 5% out of the total number of applicants.

As in the previous years, most foreign higher education qualifications received in 2009 for the recognition procedure were issued in Bosnia and Herzegovina - 40% of the total number, which is an increase of 5% in comparison to the previous year.

Chart 3: Statistical overview of applications for foreign recognition of higher education qualifications received in 2009 (in %)



In order to improve the procedure of professional recognition of foreign higher education qualifications, in November 2009 the National ENIC/NARIC office started a project of upgrading the existing information system. The goal of the upgrade was to automate the production of documentation in the procedure of recognition of foreign higher education qualifications and connect, in a single information system, the data input and analysis of data obtained through higher education qualifications recognition procedures.

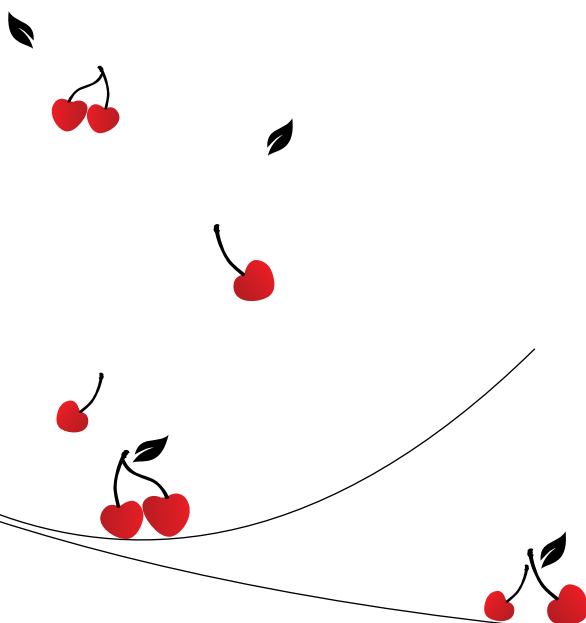
In late November 2009 the National ENIC/NARIC office presented its role in the recognition of foreign higher education qualifications and achieving mobility at the Scholarship Fair in Zagreb.

The National ENIC/NARIC office also participated in international activities related to recognition of foreign higher education qualifications, namely in the activities of the international

working group “Global Dimensions of Recognition”, which included representatives of several foreign ENIC/NARIC offices, UNESCO, European Commission and the Council of Europe.

## TEMPUS PROGRAMME

The Croatian National Tempus Office is responsible for administering and promoting the Tempus programme (Trans-European Mobility Scheme for University Studies) in the Republic of Croatia, as well as for supporting both existing and potential partners of Tempus projects. The Office plays an important role in maximising the use of funds donated by the European Commission, as well as in supporting the higher education reform in the Republic of Croatia. Activities of the National Tempus Office are defined in the agreement signed between the European Commission and the ASHE National Tempus Office. In the Republic of Croatia, under the Tempus III programme (2000 to 2006), 68 Joint European Projects and 19 Structural and Complementary Measures received funding from the European Commission. The Tempus III programme contributed to implementation of the Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education, particularly in restructuring existing and implementing new study programmes.



In the new, fourth phase of the programme (Tempus IV, 2007 - 2013), 15 national and regional Joint Projects and Structural Measures were funded.

Tempus office work plan is divided into the following categories:

1. activities related to project evaluation,
2. monitoring activities,
3. information and promotion,
4. cooperation with the European Commission,
5. cooperation with the Delegation of the European Union, the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, and the Ministry of Finance,
6. cooperation with the Higher Education Reform Experts (HERE)
7. administrative activities of the Croatian Tempus Office.

**1. Activities related to project evaluation:**

- evaluation of 23 project proposals shortlisted in the Second Call for Proposals under the Tempus IV programme.

**2. Monitoring activities:**

- organising, monitoring and reporting to the European Commission on the meetings with representatives of 15 projects that started by the end of 2007 and were implemented by Croatian higher education institutions.

**3. Information and promotion:**

- National Tempus Info day in Zagreb in February 2009 aimed at presenting the Tempus IV programme and opportunities to submit project proposals
- two local Info Days held at the universities in Rijeka and Osijek
- workshop on writing project proposals, which provided representatives of Croatian higher education institutions with the opportunity to draft and discuss their project proposals,
- participation in numerous meetings of consortia of Tempus projects, and meetings with project applicants,
- creation and updating of a detailed list of projects available on ASHE website.

**4. Cooperation with the European Commission:**

- participation in the Tempus Project Representatives Meeting held in Brussels in March 2009;
- participation in the Tempus Project Representatives Meeting held in Brussels in October 2009;
- production of the "Tempus Country Fiche", a part of the Eurydice network report on higher education in the Republic of Croatia, in cooperation with the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports.





**5. Cooperation with the Delegation of the European Union (DEA), the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, and the Ministry of Finance:**

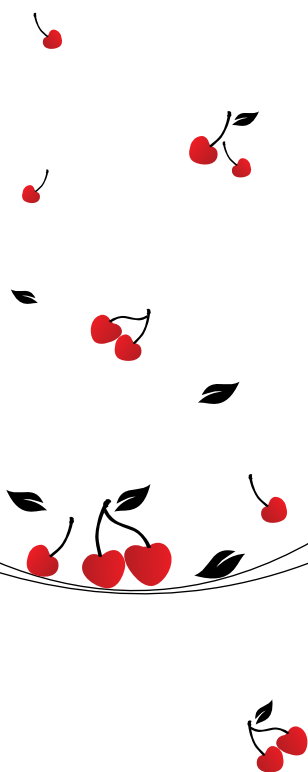
- daily cooperation in relation to Tempus project co-financing, VAT exemption, office functioning, promotional activities etc.

**6. Cooperation with the Higher Education Reform Experts (HERE):**

- participation in the events organized by the European Commission,
- organization of the seminar „Doctoral Studies Reform“ at the University of Zagreb in May 2009,
- organization of the seminar „Learning Outcomes and the Qualifications Framework“ at the University of Dubrovnik in May 2009,
- participation at the seminar „Bologna Neighbourhood“ in Vienna in July 2009,
- co-financing of the publication on “Learning Outcomes in Higher Education“.
- co-financing of the publication on Croatian Qualifications Framework.

**7. Administrative activities of the Croatian Tempus Office:**

- assembling the Office work plan and budget plan, reporting on performed activities and spent funds.



## MEMBERSHIP IN INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

ASHE is making focused efforts to join the international system of quality assurance in higher education and science, and to become its recognized and active member.

ASHE is involved in activities of European and international networks of national information centres on recognition and mobility (ENIC and NARIC networks), as well as the activities of the Tempus network of National Offices and Contact Points in other partner countries and EU member states.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2006 ASHE became a full member of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE). On 20<sup>th</sup> December 2007 ASHE became an associate member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). The associate status represents a stage of preparation for full membership in ENQA for which ASHE will shortly apply, in line with the Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education.

In April 2008, ASHE became a member of the CEE Network (Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education).

ASHE's strategy puts special emphasis on the importance of meeting the requirements necessary for registering in EQAR (The European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education), as well as becoming a full member of ENQA.

Additionally, in 2008 ASHE became a member of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development Forum on Institutional Management in Higher Education - OECD IMHE.

ASHE Central Applications Office (CAO) joined the International Association of Admissions Organisations and achieved fruitful cooperation with equivalent European offices within the network.

# INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The area of quality assurance is an indispensable segment of all the ongoing changes in science and higher education. This is demonstrated by the number of conferences, seminars and workshops being organized annually at the international level, aimed at information exchange and exchange of experience, as well as the establishment of a constructive dialogue which is to lead to further improvement of the quality assurance system in science and higher education. As a young institution positioning itself in the international context, ASHE has realized the importance of active participation in events dedicated to the topic of quality assurance, which result in valuable exchange of experiences with colleagues from all over the world.

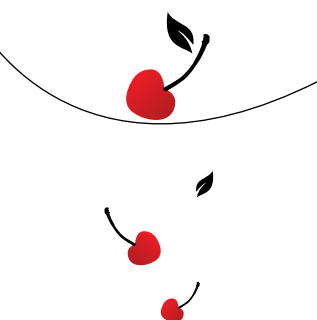
The following conferences are just some of the numerous events organized on the international level in 2009 with documents, lectures and meetings which served as an inexhaustible source of information and knowledge on the latest developments in the field of quality assurance in science and higher education.

- Conference „European Labour Market for Academic Graduates“, October 21-23, Maastricht, Netherlands,
- Conference IN FUTURA 2009, Zagreb, Croatia,
- Conference ICERI 2009, Madrid, Spain,
- Workshop „Proposal Writing and Project Implementation“, Zagreb, Croatia,
- FINHEEC and ENQA seminar „Centres of Excellence in University Education“, February 24-25, Helsinki, Finland,
- “European Forum on Research and Development Impact Assessment”, February 24-25, Prague, Czech Republic,
- International Conference „eGovernment and eGovernance“, March 11-13, Ankara, Turkey,
- European University Association Convention, March 18-21, Prague, Czech Republic,
- 53<sup>rd</sup> European Organization for Quality Congress, May 12-14, Dubrovnik and Cavtat, Croatia,
- Conference „Woman and science“, May 14-15, Prague, Czech Republic,
- Evaluation of EC Framework Program, June 18, Brussels, Belgium,
- „West Balkans Science day“, June 22, Vienna, Austria,

- Conference „The knowledge Triangle Shaping the Future of Europe“, August 31 - September 02, Göthenburg, Sweden,
- „2nd Emuny Conference on Higher Education and Research“, September 25-26, Portorož, Slovenia,
- “The Promises and Threats of Combining the Public with Private Higher Education, Are Public HE Institutions Moving in the Direction of Private Higher Education?“, November 13-14, Podčetrtek, Slovenia,
- „The Scientific and Technological Careers of Women and Men“, November 26-27, Paris, France,
- OECD and CELE conference „Higher Education Spaces and Places: for Learning, Innovation and Knowledge Exchange“, December 6-8, Riga, Latvia,
- Final workshop of the „Learning Outcomes in Interdisciplinary Study Programs“ project, January 29, Varaždin, Croatia
- ENQA network workshop „Quality Assurance in Postgraduate Education“, March 11-13, Brasov, Romania,
- EURETA conference „Free to Move: A common platform for the recognition of professional qualifications in the engineering field enabling free movement in Europe“, March 18, Brussels, Belgium,
- Ministry of Education and Sports of the Republic of Serbia and the NARIC office of Great Britain ENIC Capacity Building project seminar/workshop, March 17-20, Belgrade, Serbia,
- Meeting of the international working group „Global Dimension of Recognition“, April 3, Brussels, Belgium,
- „Lifelong Learning“ conference, May 28, Zagreb, Croatia,
- OECD conference „Higher Education at a Time of Crisis, Challenges and Opportunities“, June 28 - July 1, Copenhagen, Denmark,
- „Bologna Neighbourhood Workshop“, June 19, Vienna, Austria,
- ENQA network workshop „Internal Quality Assurance - Facing common challenges“, June 15-16, The Hague, Netherlands,
- 31st EAIR Forum "Fighting for harmony", August 23-26, Vilnius, Lithuania,
- OECD conference „Quality of teaching in higher education - OECD Programme on Institutional Management in Higher Education [IMHE]“, October 12-14, Istanbul, Turkey,
- „International QA Networks in Higher Education“ conference, October 29-30, Belgrade, Serbia,
- Coordinators' of the National Tempus Offices meeting, October 28-29, Brussels, Belgium,
- Gulbenkian Foundation conference „The Future of Bologna, 10 Years On“, September 21-22, Lisbon, Portugal,



- EURASHE seminar, LLL at PHE Institutions: „New Learners, New Approaches“, October 15-16, Bled, Slovenia,
- Regional ENIC conference of the Council of Europe and the European Commission „Strengthening of ENIC centres in Western Balkans“, November 5-6, Belgrade, Serbia,
- ELA seminar „Commercialisation and Competition in Education“, November 20-21, Antwerp, Belgium,
- Meeting of the international working group „Global Dimension of Recognition“, November 25, Brussels, Belgium,
- SRHE conference „Challenging HE: knowledge, policy and practice“, December 8-10, Newport, UK,
- Study visit/meeting on recognition of foreign higher education qualifications, December 10-12, Ljubljana, Slovenia,
- „Quality Assurance in South Eastern Europe“ seminar, February 9-11, Podgorica, Montenegro,
- Workshop „The Croatian Army and the Knowledge Society“, Croatian Military College Petar Zrinski, March 18, Zagreb, Croatia,
- Workshop on quality assurance in the teaching process within the Tempus project "Geoinformational science and technology in Croatian higher education", March 5-7, University of Zagreb - Faculty of Geodesy, Zagreb, Croatia,
- INQAAHE conference „New Approaches to Quality Assurance in the Changing World of Higher Education“, March 30 - April 2, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates,
- Conference „Quality and Development in Nordic Higher Education“, April 16-17, Reykjavik, Iceland,
- Meeting „IAU the 3<sup>rd</sup> Global Meeting of Associations of Universities (GMA III)“, April 20-22, Guadalajara, Mexico,
- UNESCO Forum on Higher Education in the Europe Region: „Access, Values, Quality and Competitiveness“, May 21-24, Bucharest, Romania,
- CEE Network Workshop “External review of Agencies: Lessons Learned”, May 29-30, Vilnius, Lithuania,
- ENQA workshop “Outcomes of the Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Ministerial Conference and Expectations on the Future of QA”, June 2-3, Brussels, Belgium,
- Seminar on External Quality Assurance, June 4-5, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina,
- ENQA seminar „Internal Quality Assurance - Facing common challenges“, June 15-16, The Hague, Netherlands,
- Conference „The Reference of Field-Specific Approaches to Quality Assurance in Higher Education“, November 2-3, Bonn, Germany,



- 4<sup>th</sup> European Forum on Quality Assurance "Creativity and Diversity: Challenges for Quality Assurance Beyond 2010", November 19-21, Copenhagen, Denmark,
- EUA conference „European Strategies for Europe's Universities“, March 18-22, Prague, Czech Republic,
- Discussion „State Graduation Examination - purpose and significance“, May 26, Rijeka, Croatia,
- Congress „EUNIS 2009“, June 22-28, Santiago de Compostela, Spain,
- EUA conference „Internationalisation of Universities in Europe“, October 8-10, Giessen, Germany,
- „3<sup>rd</sup> Congress of Croatian Archivists“, October 20-23, Osijek, Croatia,
- Central Applications Office study visit, February 4, Galway, Ireland,
- Study visits to the applications offices: University and Colleges Admission Services (UK), Ladok (Sweden), Studielink (Netherlands), Application and Information Service for Higher Education (Slovenia),
- EQUIS seminar on accreditation, November 2009, Brussels, Belgium,
- OECD meeting within the project „Higher Education in Regional and City Development“, September 2009, Paris, France,
- National Centre for External Evaluation of Education conference „Introduction of External Evaluation and Self-Evaluation of Schools in the Croatian Education System“, September 2009, Zagreb, Croatia,
- „International Visitor Program“, USA, October 2009,
- ENQA workshop on eStudy, October 7-8, Sigtuna, Sweden,
- Foreign experts' study visits to ASHE, aimed at exchange of professional experience and knowledge:
  - Larry Moneta, Vice-President for Student Affairs, Duke University - November 2009,
  - Michal Povazan, Executive Director, Academic Ranking and Rating Agency, Slovakia - December 2009,
  - Richard Winn, Associate Director, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, January 2010.

# ASHE FINANCES

ASHE was funded by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports.

ASHE revenue in 2009 was comprised of 8 accounts:

- A621153 - the National Council for Higher Education,
- A621155 - administration and general transactions,
- A621179 - the National Council for Science,
- A621182 - the National Council of Polytechnics and Colleges,
- A621186 - evaluation of scientific institutions,
- A621187 - evaluation of higher education institutions,
- K621178 - equipment,
- T621188 - Tempus Office.

Based on the financial reports, total revenue in 2009 amounted to 20.171.075 kn, consisting of:

- State budget resources for 2009 - 19.649.622 kn,
- Business revenue - 496.897 kn,
- Other revenue (interest) - 24.556 kn.

ASHE expenditure in 2009 amounted to 20.956.981 kn, consisting of business expenditure - 20.481.971 kn and expenditure for acquisition of non-financial assets - 475.010 kn.

The difference between the expenditure and state funding was covered from the ASHE business revenue and international aid.

Chart 4: ASHE expenditure in 2009

EXPENDITURE		KN
A.	Business expenditure	20.481.971
1.	Staff costs	7.997.760
1.1.	Salaries	6.747.604
1.2.	Salary contributions	1.120.681
1.3.	Other staff costs	129.475
2.	Material costs	12.462.703
2.1.	Service costs	8.579.170
2.2.	Remuneration costs	2.802.622
2.3.	Material and energy expenditure	336.762
2.4.	Other costs	744.149
3.	Financial expenditure	21.508
B.	Acquisition of non-financial assets	475.010
TOTAL (A+B)		20.956.981

# INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

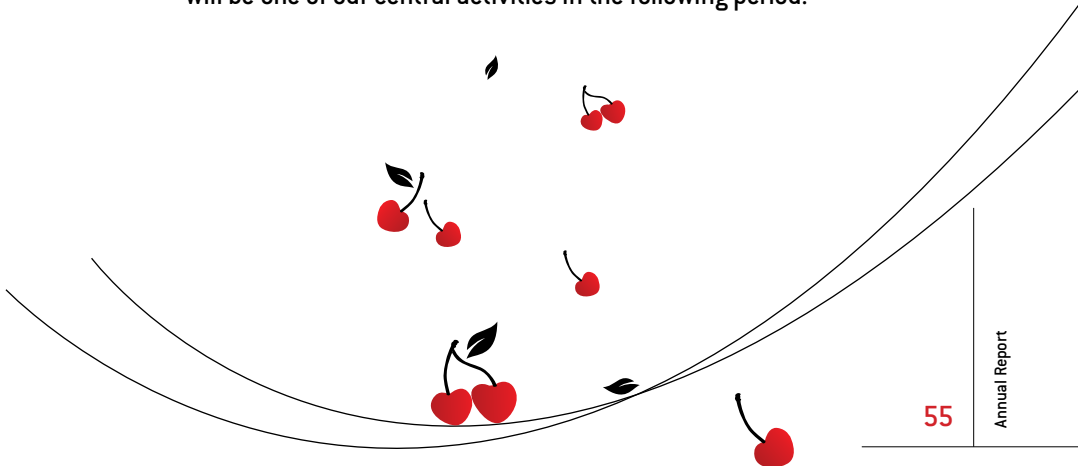
In November 2006, following the decision of the ASHE Management Board, an ISO 9001-compliant System for Quality Management (SQM) was introduced at ASHE.

In November 2008 a new edition of the ISO 9001:2008(E) standard was issued.

In 2009 the Department for Quality Assurance organized five seminars for ASHE staff in order to introduce them to the changed standards and educate staff of the newly established Central Applications Office with the ISO standards and the ASHE Internal Quality Management System.

The ASHE Internal Quality Management System was adapted to the new edition of the standard in the first half of 2009. Internal audit was carried out in June 2009, and external audit of the Internal Quality Management System was carried out by the company Det Norske Veritas (DNV) in October 2009. The external audit presented the first re-certification of ASHE and its results were presented to the ASHE Management Board and staff. The audit report stated that the ASHE Internal Quality Management System deserves the highest grade and a total of 6 items received special mention.

ASHE is one of the stakeholders in the area of higher education and its activities have to be in line with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), or, to be more precise, ESG Part III which describes assessment of the quality of agencies working in the European Higher Education Area. In order to prove credibility and position itself internationally, in addition to the quality management system in line with the ISO 9001:2008(E) standard, an external evaluation of ASHE activities has to be carried out in line with the ESG Part III. This requires extensive preparation of necessary documentation, which will be one of our central activities in the following period.





# AGENCY FOR SCIENCE AND HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE FOLLOWING PERIOD

In line with the needs of the higher education and science system, and in the light of the current economic situation in Croatia and Europe, which requires rationalisation of state and public administration operations, the Croatian Agency for Science and Higher Education sets the following goals:

1. fulfil necessary conditions for the implementation of the Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education,
2. fulfil all preconditions for application to ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) and the EQAR (European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education),
3. carry out procedures of external quality assurance in science and higher education in accordance with the Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education,
4. develop and upgrade the information systems relevant to ASHE and higher education and science,
5. disseminate quality assurance culture,
6. promote principles of transparency and justification of public trust,
7. enhance the quality of services provided by ASHE,
8. train higher education and science stakeholders,
9. provide professional support to QA units at Croatian higher education institutions,
10. coordinate establishment of national benchmarks for scientific fields,
11. improve the internal quality management model,
12. analyse and develop national quality assurance system,
13. create the conceptual design for National Information System of Higher Education and Science (NISVOZ),
14. complete the Support Module for Evaluation of Study Programmes (MOZVAG) reconstruction,
15. develop a database of evaluation experts (evaluators, auditors),
16. process applications to study programmes, and inform the public in a timely manner,
17. develop a set of suggested changes and modifications to the Act on Recognition of Foreign Education Qualifications,
18. develop a programme for planning, tracking and follow-up of activities regarding evaluation of higher education institutions and scientific organisations,
19. research and analyse international quality assurance systems,
20. further develop cooperation with equivalent agencies abroad,
21. intensify cooperation with the relevant media,
22. provide ASHE staff with further education and training.

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# AGENCY FOR SCIENCE AND HIGHER EDUCATION

## 2009 Annual Report and 2010 Work Plan

**Publisher:**

Agency for Science and Higher Education  
Donje Svetice 38/5, 10 000 Zagreb, Croatia

**Editor:**

Professor Jasmina Havranek, PhD, Director

**Layout and desing:**

Ideo dizajn

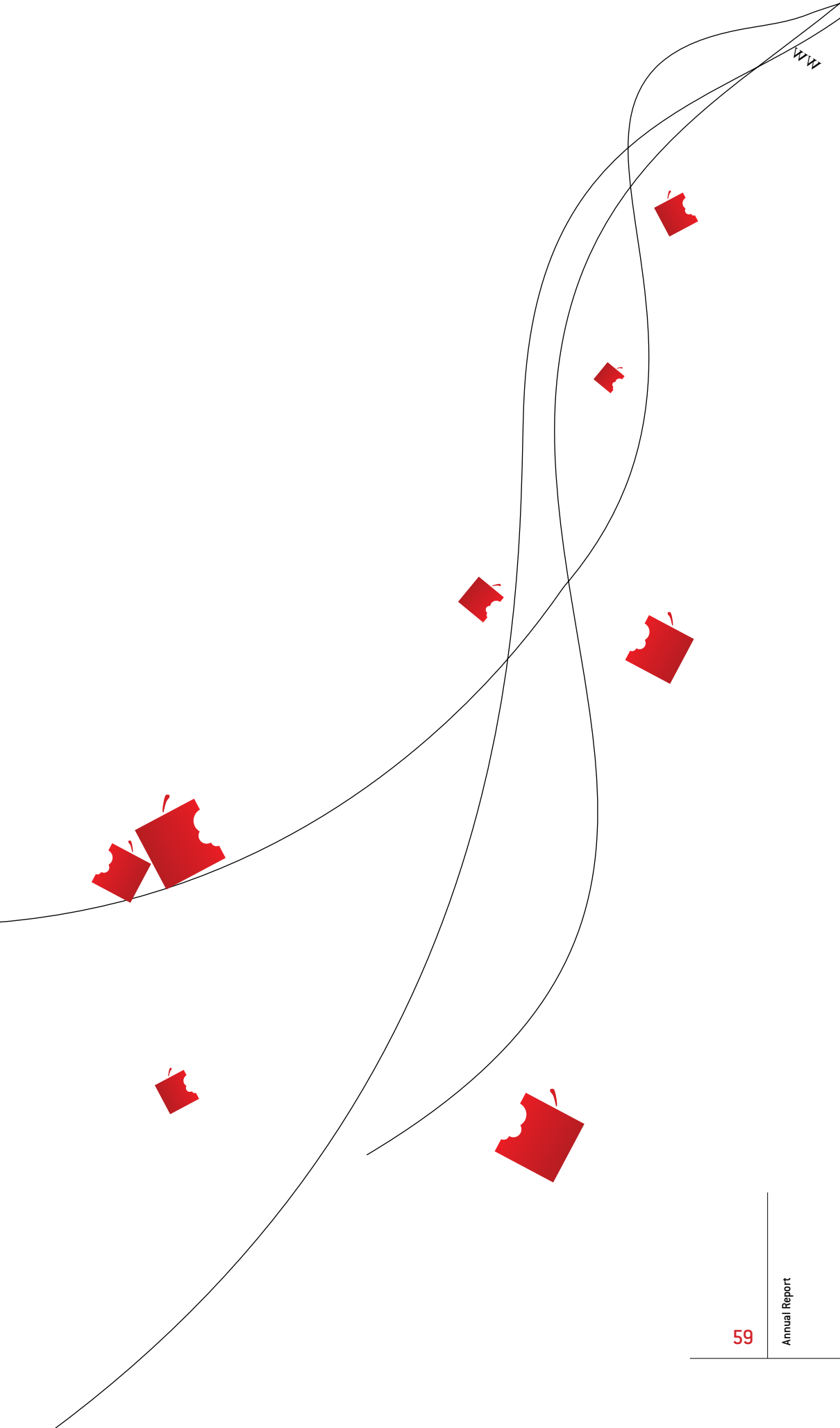
**Printing:**

Printera

**Circulation:**

600 copies





WW

