

**ANNUAL REPORT 2016 ON IMMIGRATION AND ASYLUM
IN CROATIA**

NATIONAL REPORT (PART 1)

[CONTRIBUTION TO COMMISSION AND TO EASO ANNUAL REPORTS]

The Annual Policy Report **National Report (Part 1)** has been structured as a common template. The template aims to collect information on both a) national policy developments and b) statistical data.

a) National Policy Developments

EMN NCPs are requested to provide information on key measures developed during the reporting year (2016) to implement EU policy, legislative and financial instruments, including the following:

- ✓ Key national developments in legislation, policy and practice
- ✓ Any developments resulting from actions at EU level in relation to specific policy topics.

Instructions on the content and information to be provided

Please consider the following points while responding the questionnaire provided in this document:

- ✓ Please **only** report on developments that took place during the reporting year (2016) and not on developments that took place in earlier years. You may also report on *planned national developments that will take place in 2017 to illustrate future trends*. However, please make sure that you clearly identify these as planned for 2017 rather than actual developments in 2016.
- ✓ Content should be as relevant to the topic under consideration, and as concise, as possible. (e.g. provide only one or two paragraphs for each of your responses).
- ✓ Where relevant, please describe concrete actions or measures, for example, resulting from the entry into force of new legislation. Examples are given in each of the sub-sections to ensure consistency and to facilitate your work.
- ✓ Please clearly differentiate between actions undertaken by your government or public authorities. Civil society or NGOs actions should only be described in the National Report (Part 2).
- ✓ If there has been no significant development, please explicitly state it in the relevant section.
- ✓ Please foresee the liaison and coordination with relevant national contacts including:
 1. EASO NCPs (as information requested in this template will also serve to inform EASO's Annual Report)
 2. National Contact Points on Integration (NCPIs)
 3. Frontex Risk Analysis Network (FRAN)
 4. National Rapporteurs or Equivalent Mechanisms working against Trafficking in Human Beings.

Note: No separate consultation round with the permanent representations is foreseen by the Commission. However, you should also aim to liaise with your respective Permanent Representations to the EU in submitting replies to the Commission. The European Commission will inform the Permanent Representations of this process separately.

b) Statistics

Key statistics are requested to illustrate each topic of the Commission's Annual Report on Immigration and Asylum. These are set out in the **Statistics Annex** (Annex 1). Where available, statistics will be sourced from Eurostat. Other statistics will have to be obtained directly from national sources. An Excel template will be circulated together with the Study specifications.

1. LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

1.1. Economic migration

1.1.1. *Main developments in economic migration*

Please describe any *new or planned* changes in legislation, policies and measures in the area of economic migration. This introductory question aims to collect general information on overarching developments in the area of economic migration, which is followed by specific questions below.

No relevant changes during 2016.

In 2017 Amendments to the Foreigners Act are planned regarding transposition of Seasonal Workers Directive and Intra Corporate Transfer (ICF) Directive.

1.1.2. *Facilitating admission*

Please describe any *new or planned* policies / measures to facilitate admission and access of the following categories of migrants. Please concentrate on any additional incentive mechanisms, besides those introduced through the transposition and implementation of EU legislation.

No relevant changes during 2016.

A. Highly qualified workers

Nothing to report.

B. Intra-Corporate Transferees (ICTs)

Nothing to report.

C. Seasonal Workers

In addition to 2015, the number of permits for seasonal workers has not changed. The 2016 annual quota for seasonal employment in agriculture and forestry is set at 15.

D. Migrants entrepreneurs

Nothing to report.

E. Au pairs

Nothing to report.

F. Other remunerated workers

In 2017 Amendments to the Foreigners Act are planned regarding transposition of Seasonal Workers Directive and ICF Directive.

1.1.3. *Satisfying labour market needs - admission policies*

Please describe any *new or planned* labour migration admission policies, measures or changes to the existing legislation regarding labour market and skill needs/shortages in relation to the employment of third-country nationals.

The annual quota for employment of foreigners in Croatia in 2016 has been increased from 1,730 to 3,115 permits, which includes 800 renewed licences and the issuance of 2,300 new ones.

In 2017 Amendments to the Foreigners Act are planned regarding transposition of ICT Directive and Seasonal Workers Directive.

1.1.4. Efforts to avoid ‘social dumping’¹ and labour exploitation of TCNs

Please describe any *new or planned* changes aimed at tackling labour exploitation of TCN workers staying legally and/or social dumping in your (Member) State.

No relevant changes during 2016.

1.1.5. Misuse of legal immigration channels by TCN workers

Please describe any *new or planned* policies / measures or practices to tackle misuse by economic migration of legal immigration channel.

No relevant changes during 2016.

1.2. Students and researchers

(a) Please describe any *new or planned* policies / measures or practices to facilitate greater mobility of students and researchers and towards meeting labour market needs. Please specify any incentive mechanisms for students and researchers, besides those introduced through the transposition and implementation of EU legislation.

No relevant changes during 2016.

(b) Please describe any *new or planned* policies / measures or practices to tackle misuse by TCN students and researchers of legal immigration channels.

No relevant changes during 2016.

(c) Please describe any *other new or planned* policies / measures or practices related to students and researchers.

No relevant changes during 2016.

1.3. Family reunification and family formation

(a) Please describe any *new or planned* policies/measures or practices to regulate admission on the basis of family reunification and family formation.

No relevant changes during 2016.

Amendments to the Foreigners Act regarding family reunification of third-country nationals who are family members of Croatian nationals are planned in 2017.

(b) Please describe any *new or planned* policies / measures or practices to tackle misuse of family reunification of immigration channels.

No relevant changes during 2016.

¹ **Social dumping** refers to the practice where workers from third countries are exploited as “cheap labour” in order to increase profit margins of companies with the result that there is a general lowering of wages and labour standards for the whole population

<https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/eurwork/industrial-relations-dictionary/social-dumping-0>

Amendments to the Foreigners Act regarding conditions for family reunification of third-country nationals who are family members of Croatian nationals are planned in 2017.

1.4. Information on routes to and conditions of legal migration

Please describe any *new or planned* policies/measures or practices to improve the provision of information on the routes to and conditions of legal migration for third-country nationals (information campaigns, websites, specific centres, etc.) which take place both in the Member State and/or a third country.

Nothing to report.

1.5. Guaranteeing certain rights for third-country nationals who are already legally resident on the territory

Please describe any *new or planned* policies / measures or practices to regulate and/or facilitate access to the following:

No relevant changes during 2016.

A. *Long-term residence*²

Nothing to report.

B. *Intra-EU mobility of third-country nationals between Member States*

Nothing to report.

1.6. Visa policy and Schengen governance

1.6.1. Visa Policy

Please describe any *new or planned* policies/measures or practices in relation to the implementation of the Visa Code and the Visa Information System (VIS). Specifically describe new developments in relation to biometric visas (share of visas issued which are biometric, regions covered, pilot measures and testing, cooperation between (Member) States' consulates and the set up joint consular services for visas).

Currently VIS Code has not been completely incorporate into the Foreigners Act. At the moment Croatia does not follow common rules in relation to VIS within the Schengen Acquis. Those applying for visa to travel to Croatia the requirement is to provide their biometric data (digital photograph and finger scans). During 2016 there are no new developments in relation to the biometric visa.

1.6.2. Schengen Governance

Please describe any *new or planned* developments in relation to Schengen Governance. Where relevant, please include any (planned) actions in relation to the new Schengen acquis, temporary suspension of Schengen, etc.

Croatia is preparing to become a member of a Schengen area. Schengen evaluation took place in June 2016. Evaluation identified imperfections regarding Schengen acquis appliance. For the purpose of further harmonization with Directive 2008/115/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on common standards and procedures in Member States for returning illegally staying third-country nationals, amendments to the Foreigners Act are planned in 2017.

² A long-term resident is a citizen from a country outside the EU who has been given long-term resident status. This status means that the person will have similar rights as EU citizens. (Directive 2003/109/EC)

Regarding accommodation capacities, two new reception centres for foreigners have been established in Trilj and Tovarnik in order to increase accommodation facilities available to a detention.

2. INTEGRATION

** Please note that this section includes integration of all categories of TCNs. Some specific categories are included in the questions as examples and only as prompts. If any measures refer to specific categories of migrants, please make sure to specify the categories. Also question 2.3 asks for measures for specific groups of migrants.*

2.1. Promoting integration through socio-economic participation

Please describe any new or planned policies/measures or practices to facilitate integration of migrants (including vulnerable migrants, refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection) through socio-economic participation including:

Please describe any new or planned relevant changes

A. *Measures to improve attainment in the education system*

No relevant changes during 2016.

B. *Measures to enhance migrants' language skills*

During 2016 local NGO's and international organizations ensured delivery of English and Croatian language classes aimed at providing basic language skills to migrants required for future integration to the Croatian society.

C. *Migrant access to social security, healthcare and housing*

Ordinance on Modalities and Conditions for Obtaining the Right to Accommodation for Beneficiaries of International Protection and Modalities of their Financial Participation in Accommodation Costs (Official Gazette No 03/16) regulates right to accommodation. This document was drafted by the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth at the end of 2015 following the obligations deriving from the above mentioned International and Temporary Protection Act.

Ministry of the Interior partners civil society organisations have organized and carried out initial and advanced courses in Croatian, English and German for children and adults in the Reception Centre for Asylum Seekers.

International protection applicants who have the right to stay in Croatia and who haven't secured adequate standard of living are entitled to accommodation, food, clothing in kind, allowances and reimbursement of travel expenses used for the purposes of the procedure of the approval of the international protection.

D. *Migrant integration into the labour market*

No relevant changes during 2016.

2.2. Promoting integration through civic participation: rights and obligations, achieving equal treatment and belonging

Please describe any new or planned policies/measures or practices to facilitate integration of migrants (including vulnerable migrants) through improving rights and obligations, achieving equal treatment and belonging. For instance, consider measures to increase the participation of migrant representatives (including women) in the design and implementation of integration policies; outreach programmes and work placements to build capacity within migrant organisations and

encourage support at local level; and measures to enhance democratic participation, for example, training mentors etc.

The Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities (GOHRRNM) initiated the adoption of a new strategic document related to the integration issues through IPA 2012. This project is in the implementation phase.

The project named "Quality solutions to the successful integration of refugees" Fantastic Good Institutions - FADE IN and partner organizations, out of which an integral part is the Catering Cooperative "Taste of home". Catering Cooperative is unique for its offer of African, Arabic and Middle Eastern and Asian food. All food offered is made based on the original recipes of countries which are homelands of chefs that have been granted international protection in Croatia.

Society for Psychological Assistance under the project "*Provision of psychological support to asylum seekers and foreigners under subsidiary protection*" offered counselling with interpreters in Arabic, Turkish, French and Somali language. Ministry of Interior, the Center for Peace Studies (CMS) and partner non-government organizations attempt to create a safe place for the inhabitants of the suburb Dugave to discuss a cultural diversity for reducing and eliminating any discomfort about the asylum reception center being in their neighborhood.

The Ministry of the Interior is participating in the project produced by the Croatian national television HRT called "New neighbors". It is a documentary series that has been produced under the European Broadcasting Union's multicultural groups. In 2017, seven European countries (Slovenia, Serbia, Netherlands, Norway, Belgium, Portugal, Croatia) and one Mexican television will produce a half-hour documentary about the new neighbors; those who belong to a minority group and who came into the majority environment. The series will try to explain what are the dynamics of their relationship, obstacles to the acceptance or non-acceptance and how much open or closed we are to others being different. The idea is to sensitize the public to the fact that in our neighborhood live people who had to leave their homes, who come from other cultures, do not speak the language, and very likely never thought that Croatia will become their home.

In addition to the above listed projects during the refugee crisis, refugees with knowledge of English, and in particular the Croatian language were engaged by the government, civil society organizations and international organizations as interpreters.

2.3. Promoting integration of specific groups

Please describe any *new or planned* policies/measures or practices to facilitate integration of specific groups of migrants, such as beneficiaries of international protection, labour migrants (both highly-skilled and low-skilled if there are measures in place), UAMs, family migrants etc.

In the first half of 2017 amendments to the Act on the International and Temporary Protection will be more detailed in regulation to the rights of accommodation of persons with international protection. The changes will also apply to the division of the authority responsible for insurances of accommodation to those persons and the regulation of modality of assembling and terminating of the right to accommodation.

2.4. Non-discrimination

Please describe any *new or planned* relevant activity, legal or policy development and related actors that concerned promotion, implementation and monitoring of non-discrimination policies, in particular on grounds of ethnicity, race or others that would be particularly relevant for third-country nationals. Specifically mention any measure beyond those introduced through the transposition and implementation of EU legislation.

No relevant changes during 2016.

2.5. Promoting integration at local level and cooperation, consultation and coordination of local stakeholders

a) Please describe *new or planned* relevant activities on the integration of migrants involving the active participation of local authorities and/or civil society. Measures might include activities addressing integration challenges in disadvantaged urban areas; improving multi-level cooperation between different levels of governance (e.g. national, regional, local government); granting voting rights in local elections.

b) Please describe any *new or planned* additional information on the processes for cooperation, consultation and coordination of national, regional and local authorities, including civil society, countries of origin and with EU level institutions and actors.

No relevant changes during 2016.

2.6. Awareness raising on migration in the host society

Please describe any *new or planned* policies/measures or practices aimed at raising awareness on the phenomenon of migration in the host societies / countries of destination – i.e. in the Member State (information campaigns, websites, etc.).

The Decision on granting financial support for the project “Support to integration of the third country nationals who require international protection” entered into force on 23 November 2016. Project is financed through the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund. The project highlights the importance of public awareness in the field of integration of people with international protection.

2.7. Involvement of countries of origin

Countries of origin may play a role in the integration of migrants before departure, during stay in the EU, and on return.

Please describe any *new or planned* policies/measures or practices to support integration involving countries of origin at any / all of these stages. For example, pre-departure measures may include provision of information on visas and work permits, language training, vocational training, recognition of qualifications and skills; measures during stay may include support to diaspora communities, promotion of transnational entrepreneurship, increasing trade between countries of origin and stay; measures to support return may include developing a rights-based framework for re-integration and for temporary and circular migration.

No relevant changes during 2016.

3. IRREGULAR MIGRATION AND RETURN

3.1. Enhanced border management at the external borders

In responding to each of the questions below, please wherever possible state what type of border the measure specifically affects.

3.1.1. *Border control measures: technology, equipment and infrastructure, including systems linked to EU instruments and actions to coordinate different types of border checks (e.g. such as the introduction of new IT systems, advanced passenger information systems, surveillance equipment, automated border controls and fast track lanes, etc.)*

No relevant changes during 2016.

**NB Please also highlight how the developments relate to (i) the EU entry / exit system, (ii) the EU Registered Traveller Programme, (iii) the Schengen Information System (SIS II) and (iv) European Border Surveillance System (EUROSUR).*

3.1.2. Border control measures: other activities to improve the effectiveness of controls at external borders (e.g. training and policy)

Please describe any relevant (planned) developments to ensure more effective control of the external borders, such as reinforcing border control staff, providing training, increasing overall resources, introducing action plans or protocols, etc.

Continuous measures and actions are being taken in order to preserve the favourable security situation, especially in the control of external borders of the EU, ensuring public order and fighting against crime in border areas in compliance with regulations governing the protection of data and implementation of border surveillance system at the external EU “green” border (central information system, development of application, integration of equipment, stationary systems of day/night surveillance cameras, perimeter protection systems, ground surveillance radars, etc.). Croatian border surveillance system was focusing initially on the eastern “green” borders with Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Serbia and Montenegro.

3.1.3. Preventing and combating irregular immigration by ensuring reinforced cooperation with third countries in the area of border management.

Please list any 2016 or planned agreements, and other forms of bilateral and multilateral cooperation with third countries with an objective to strengthen the operational capacity in combatting irregular migration and controlling of external borders.

Title of agreement (where relevant)	Third country (countries) with whom the cooperation exists	Description (e.g. provision of border equipment, training of border guards, etc.)

If information is available, please describe any evidence of the effectiveness of these measures

Nothing to report.

3.2. Preventing and tackling of misuse of legal migration channels

Please describe any measures introduced to prevent and tackle:

3.2.1. Irregular migration caused by visa liberalisation

- a) Please describe any measures introduced to monitor the effects of visa free regimes in your Member State.
- b) What have been the results of these monitoring activities? Describe here any key findings – especially in relation to impact on the **number unfounded asylum applications** registered in your Member State.
- c) Please describe measures taken to ensure the accelerated and swift return of persons from visa-free third countries found to be making unfounded asylum applications, to be overstaying permissions to stay or otherwise misusing legal migration channels.
- d) Please describe any evidence of the effectiveness of the measures to ensure return.

a) No relevant changes during 2016.

- b) Migration crisis and organized transportation of migrants through Croatia have affected significantly on decreasing number of asylum applicants during 2015 and consequently to very low rate of number of unfounded asylum applications so Croatia remains to be a transit country for the applicants. It is very important to highlight that most of applicants have made application for international protection during detention.
- c) No relevant changes during 2016.
- d) No relevant changes during 2016.

3.2.2. *Irregular migration caused by use of false travel documents*

Please provide *new or planned measures* to prevent and identify and/or investigate fraudulent acquisition and use of false travel documents, as well as **any available statistics** and further information on the number of cases of use of false travel document identified in your country.

The Ministry of Interior conducted intensive procurement of specialized equipment for detection of forged documents for border crossing points at the external border (through Schengen Facility Fund – SFF). FADO system was installed and police officers are well trained for its implementation. It is foreseen to ensure update of knowledge during every year.

3.2.3. *Irregular migration caused by the misuse of free movement rights by third country nationals and preventing the fraudulent acquisition and use of free movement rights by third-country nationals*

Please describe any *new* activities implemented during 2016 to monitor and analyse information on the fraud and misuse of free movement. For example, measures to ensure common validation standards at borders and domestic controls and improvement of the security of the application and issuance processes for identity/EU documentation.

No new activities have been developed in 2016.

3.3. Prevention of unsafe migration and the fight against facilitation of irregular migration ('smuggling')

3.3.1. *Prevention of unsafe migration*

Please describe any *new or planned* policies/measures or practices responding to the objective of prevention of unsafe migration (for example, through unsafe routes) from third countries of origin and transit (information campaigns, websites, projects with grass-roots NGOs or involving the diaspora, etc.).

Nothing to report.

3.3.2. *Combatting facilitation of irregular migration*

Please provide information on any *new policies, measures or relevant changes aimed at preventing and combatting facilitation of irregular migration* (for example, on cooperation measures to combat smuggling). Please distinguish between any developments related to facilitated entry and facilitated stay.

Nothing to report.

3.3.3. *Monitoring of migrant smuggling*

Please describe any challenges faced by your (Member) State in monitoring / collecting statistics on migrant smuggling? How does your (Member) State (plan to) address these issues?

Organized crime groups are increasingly supplying illegal migrants with false travel documents and thus facilitate their entry into the European Union. It is a case of mostly false or forged documents, but also the original documents used in a fraudulent way, and documents that have been obtained on false grounds. It is shown that fraudulent documents are increasingly used by tourists and business visitors. One of the major problems that police officers are facing is identification of migrants since the most of them (irregular migrants) do not possess personal documents. Often describe themselves as juveniles in order not to be prosecuted and situated in the shelter of open type, which facilitates their re-attempts leaving territory and going to destination countries of the European Union.

3.3.4. *Monitoring and identifying migration routes*

Please describe any new or planned measures to identify, monitor and aggregate information on migration routes and please explain how is this information used to develop your (Member) State's response to migratory flows?

Please describe the role of national immigration liaison officers (NLOs) in gathering this data

To successfully combat smuggling of persons is important to build a system that will be able to act proactively in the field of prevention and combating of crime, protection of victims, and prosecution of perpetrators, interdepartmental coordination and international cooperation. This approach encompasses the study of contemporary trends on the basis of what is possible in a timely manner to spot problems and directed to act with appropriate measures within police and judicial system. The Republic of Croatia does not have specialized immigrations liaison officers.

In connection with the combating trafficking in persons it is very important to actively participate in international operative actions and projects, or directly with other partners (MS and third countries) through the international police cooperation.

3.4. Main developments in the field of return and re-integration

Please describe any *new or planned* changes in legislation, policies and measures in the area of return and reintegration. This introductory question aims to collect general information on overarching developments in the area of return

Nothing to report.

3.5. Strengthening cooperation with third countries of origin and transit on return migration management

3.5.1. *Ensuring implementation of all EU readmission agreements to their full effect³*

Please report on activities undertaken to support the implementation of EU readmission agreements (implementing protocols, cooperation (including diplomatic pressure) with third countries to encourage implementation) by completing the Table and providing any additional relevant information in the box below:

EU Readmission agreement (country)	National development (i.e. implementing protocol, cooperation)	Date of agreement (if relevant)

³ Norway is invited to report on any National agreements in place.

Azerbaijan	Due to Republic of Croatia did not expect significant number of readmission procedures based on EU- Azerbaijan readmission agreement, through diplomatic channels competent authorities of two countries have exchanged information on border crossing points for implementation of provisions of the Agreement.	
Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro	The Republic of Croatia has bilateral readmission agreements with all neighbouring third countries, including implementing protocols. The everyday readmission procedures based on bilateral agreements is satisfied. Therefore, the Republic of Croatia did not initialized signing implementing protocols for EU readmission agreements.	

3.5.2. Prevention of irregular migration from third countries: (a) the Southern Mediterranean countries; (b) countries within the Eastern Partnership; (c) the Western Balkans; and (d) the Western Mediterranean and the African Atlantic coast

<p>Please describe any specific cooperation activities developed in 2016 in your Member State to prevent irregular migration in relation to the specific regions outlined above.</p> <p>During the period from 1 March to 30 June 2016, the migrant influx situation in Croatia changed significantly. From an average of 5,000 migrant arrivals a day prior 1st March 2016, the entire migrant movement came to its half on 5-6 March 2016 following a political decision to close the so-called “Balkans route.” As a consequence, several hundred migrants remained stranded in Croatia and WRTC provided as a temporary accommodation.</p> <p>(a) the Southern Mediterranean countries;</p> <p>(b) the Eastern Partnership countries;</p> <p>(c) the Western Balkans countries;</p> <p>(d) Countries in the Western Mediterranean and the African Atlantic coast.</p>
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3.6. Enhancing return migration management including cooperation among EU Member States on return practices

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS SECTION OF THE SYNTHESIS REPORT WILL CONSIST OF THE FOLLOWING

3.6.1. Summary of the EMN REG return and reintegration activities developed during 2016 (To be drafted by the EMN Service Provider)

3.6.2. Summary of the Frontex Joint Return Operations (JTOs) (To be provided by Frontex)

3.6.3. Maximising the potential of a common EU approach in the field of return, both voluntary and forced in compliance with existing EU acquis (To be drafted by COM)

3.6.4. Please describe any new or planned measures to develop swift, sustainable and effective return using a common EU approach and in particular actions relevant to:

- i. Recording entry bans in the SIS and facilitating exchange of information on entry bans;⁴
- ii. Operation of national forced return monitoring system (established in accordance with Article 8 (6) of the Return Directive⁵)
- iii. Other actions.

No relevant changes during 2016.

3.6.5. Other developments

Nothing to report.

⁴ This category of measure relates to the commitments of the Stockholm Programme specifically.

⁵ Directive 2008/115/EC

4. INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION INCLUDING ASYLUM

***NB: This Section will also be used to provide information to inform EASO's Annual Report.**

4.1. Implementation of the Common European Asylum System and related policy developments

4.1.1. *Changes in legislation, policies and practices*

Please provide information on changes in legislation, policies and practices (adopted, implemented, under preparation or pending) relating to any of the following areas:

Access to the asylum procedure

i. Access to territory (including, information on the arrival to the EU territory and operations to help asylum seekers on arrival, applications from outside the territory, where applicable, and humanitarian visas)

No relevant change in 2016.

ii. Access to the asylum procedure (including applications made at the border and in detention)

No relevant change in 2016.

iii. Registration of applications for international protection, including subsequent applications

No relevant change in 2016.

Reception of asylum applicants

iv. Reception of applicants and vulnerable groups (accommodation, financial and social support, access to labour market, access to medical care)

No relevant change in 2016.

v. Detention during the asylum procedure (practices regarding detention, grounds for detention)

No relevant change in 2016.

Asylum procedures

vi. Access to information and legal counselling / representation (including at the border and during the asylum procedure)

A set of info sheet posters (pictograms with text) were prepared in English, Arabic, Farsi, and Urdu and disseminated among migrants. Info sheets have been displayed at various community rooms and fitted into convenient exchangeable info boards. They provide useful information about services available, house rules, legal counselling, asylum-seeking procedure, prevention of violence, etc. The workshops were conducted by Croatian Law Centre (CLC), a local NGO offering free legal aid and counselling for asylum seekers and irregular migrants.

vii. Provision of interpretation

Interpretation continued to be one of the most basic needs and requirements. There is an awareness of the deficit of rare language interpreters in combination with Croatia language. International organizations, local NGO's, Ministry of Interior in order to advance its migrants and refugees communication and information sharing made an extra effort by hiring additional interpreters to cover Farsi, Urdu, Pashto, Hindi and Dari needs.

viii. Dublin procedure (incl. transfers)

No relevant change in 2016.

ix. Special procedures: border procedures, accelerated procedures, admissibility procedures, prioritised procedures.

No relevant change in 2016.

x. Safe countries of origin (measures undertaken to create, revise or implement a list of safe countries of origin)

No relevant change in 2016.

xi. Procedures at first instance (organisation of the process, interviews, evidence assessment, international protection status determination, decision making, timeframes, case management, and training)

No relevant change in 2016.

xii. Appeal/Judicial Review (organisation of the process, hearings, written procedures, timeframes, case management, training)

No relevant change in 2016.

xiii. Country of Origin Information (organisation, methodology, products, databases)

No relevant change in 2016.

Residence/entry documents granted to beneficiaries of international protection

xiv. Provision of information on rights granted to beneficiaries

The Ordinance on the forms and data collections during process of granting international and temporary protection (Official Gazette No. 85/2016) came into force in 2016.

xv. Length/duration of residence permits / visas granted to beneficiaries of international protection

No relevant change in 2016.

Measures related to vulnerable groups

xvi. Measures related to vulnerable groups e.g. unaccompanied minors (UAMs), torture and trauma survivors, victims of human trafficking, gender, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) within the asylum procedure

In order to prevent violence against children and promote respect for the rights of refugees and migrant children along the migration route in EU Member States, international organisations (IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF and Save the Children) started a project “Protecting children in the context of the refugee and migrant crisis in Europe”. Activities are foreseen in seven EU Member States: *Italy, Greece, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Hungary, Croatia, and Austria*. The result of the project is to provide unhindered access to protection to all unaccompanied children through national authorities or other stakeholders, which are presented with clear child safeguarding and child protection guidelines. The development of SOPs will result in them meeting international EU standards; clear processes will exist for transnational cooperation to guarantee that children’s rights and best interests are upheld in cross-border cases (family reunification, Dublin cases, relocation, voluntary return, missing children found in another country). Children will be informed in a child-friendly manner and in a language they understand regarding available rights, services, choices and consequences of the different options. Evidence-based advocacy and decision making are implemented based on data collected and processed by relevant organizations.

Return of rejected asylum seekers

xvii. Return of rejected asylum applicants (including forced return, voluntary return and assisted voluntary return).

No relevant change in 2016.

Relocation and resettlement

xviii. Intra-EU relocation

No relevant change in 2016.

Cooperation with Third Countries

xx. Cooperation with Third Countries and activities in the external dimension of the CEAS (including participation in capacity building activities in Third Countries, RDPPs).

No relevant change in 2016.

Other aspects of asylum policy

xxi. Other policy or legislative developments

No relevant change in 2016.

4.1.2. Institutional changes in the national asylum system

- a) Please provide information on institutional changes in the asylum field at ministry/agency/section level (incl. changes in mandate),

No relevant change in 2016.

4.1.3. Jurisprudence

- a) Please provide information on important new national jurisprudence relating to asylum (with policy implications)
- b) Please provide information on the impact of CJEU judgements on national jurisprudence and policy

Nothing to report.

4.1.4. Efficiency and Quality of the national asylum system

Please provide information on measures undertaken to safeguard or improve:

- a) Quality of the national asylum system (combatting unfounded applications, credibility assessment, age assessment, establishing identity) including information on tools and mechanisms (stating how this is measured)
- b) Efficiency of the processing of (first) applications and appeals (increasing speed, reducing costs, use of new technology) of the national asylum system,
- Please include information on effectiveness of above listed measures (where evidence exists and stating how this is measured).

During 2016 Ministry of the Interior recorded significant increased number of applications for the international protection. According to statistics it was 1113 applications for international protection and 164 unaccompanied minors.

The procedure to assess the minor's age shall be conducted where there is doubt regarding the age of an unaccompanied minor. The assessment of the minor's age is to be conducted on the basis of the information available on the minor, including the expert's opinion and the persons involved in

work with the minor. It means that priority is given to non-medical methods. Where that available information is not sufficient, a medical examination will be conducted, with the prior written consent of the minor and the guardian ad litem. The medical examination includes a physical examination, X-ray of the teeth and/or hands, with full respect for the dignity of the unaccompanied minor.

In the case of unjustified refusal of consent, the unaccompanied minor shall be deemed to be an adult applicant. The application cannot be refused exclusively on the basis of the fact that consent to perform a medical examination was not given.

It is important to emphasise that during 2016 there were 76 subsequent applications of total 1113. In case of second subsequent application applicant loses right on residence.

4.1.5. Challenges in the national asylum system

- a) Please indicate which aspects of the national asylum system have (i) proven to be particularly challenging or (ii) have been subject to criticism from third parties. Please differentiate between the different aspects in your asylum and reception system.
- b) Provide information on actions undertaken to counter these challenges.

Please only provide information additional to that presented in 4.1.1.

Please refer to the above 4.1.4. No further additions.

4.2. Cooperation with the European Asylum Support Office (EASO)

4.2.1. Participation of Member States in EASO activities

Please provide information on your (Member) State's relevant participation in EASO activities, by type of activity.

Even though Ministry of Interior has excellent cooperation with EASO during 2016 there was no particular activity related to education or workshops.

- A. Provision of staff for Asylum Support Teams
- B. Deployment of experts to provide training related activities, including regional train-the-trainer session
- C. Participation in the development of common practical tools
- D. Participation of staff in training activities organised by EASO

4.2.2. Provision of support by EASO to the Member States

Please provide information on relevant support provided by EASO to your (Member) State. Please indicate: a) type of support provided (e.g. special support, and/or emergency support) b) type of activities implemented.

Nothing to report.

4.1. Intra-EU solidarity including relocation

4.1.1. Support to national asylum systems

- a) Please provide information on support provided to (Member) States experiencing specific and disproportionate pressures on their national asylum systems. This might include support in the processing of requests for international protection, seconding staff (for the Asylum

Intervention Pool / Training Expert Pool), sending resources or equipment. Please specify if such support was provided: 1) on a bilateral basis; 2) or was organised at EU level.

b) Please describe any evidence of the results / outcomes of this support, if available.

No relevant change in 2016.

4.1.2. *Relocation*⁶

a) Please specify any action undertaken with regard to relocation activities. Please specify if relocation activities were provided: 1) on a bilateral basis; 2) or organised at EU level.

b) Please describe any evidence of the results / outcomes of this support, if available.

On 4th July 2016 four asylum seekers were relocated from Italy to Croatia, while on 22nd August 2016 ten Syrian asylum seekers were taken from Greece in accordance with activities "to implement the European Union Council decision establishing provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy and of Greece. All asylum seekers have been accommodated in Zagreb in the Interior Ministry Reception Centre. All applicants from the relocation program were granted international protection. On 3rd October 2016 five international protection seekers, citizens of Eritrea, has been relocated from Italy. The process of granting international protection is still in the process.

4.2. Enhancing the external dimension including resettlement

4.2.1. *Resettlement*⁷

**Please note that this question focuses on national resettlement programmes, such as those implemented by UNHCR, whilst the question on resettlement in 4.1.1. focuses on EU joint resettlement programmes*

Please describe 2016 resettlement activities to your (Member) State, differentiating between the types of programme:

a) National resettlement programme (UNHCR)

b) National Humanitarian Admission Programme

c) Private sponsorship programme

d) Ad-hoc special programmes (e.g. national initiatives, and/or international initiatives).

If applicable, for each of the programmes described, please indicate the resettlement quota established the actual number of people resettled and from which countries. Please describe any evidence of the results / outcomes of this cooperation, if available

Nothing to report.

⁶ Relocation: the transfer of persons having a status, defined by the Geneva Convention or subsidiary protection (2004/83/EC) from the Member State which granted them international protection to another Member States where they will be granted similar protection (see EMN Glossary V2).

⁷ Resettlement: the transfer on a request from the UNHCR and based on their need for international protection, of a third-country national or stateless person from a third country to a Member State where they are permitted to reside with one of the following statuses: i. refugee status ii. a status which offers the same rights and benefits under national and EU law as refugee status (see EMN Glossary Version 2).

4.2.2. *Enhancing the capacity of third-countries of first asylum*

- a) Please describe any 2016 specific developments to equip third-countries of first asylum with the means to guarantee refugee protection and to better manage mixed migration flows including national asylum legislation and asylum policy frameworks (e.g. through Regional Protection Programmes).
- b) If evidence is available, please describe the outcomes of these developments (e.g. increased number of asylum applications processed in countries of first asylum)

Nothing to report.

5. **UNACCOMPANIED MINORS AND OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS**

5.1. **Unaccompanied minors**

Please describe any *new or planned* policies, measures or changes in relation to unaccompanied minors (UAMs) at national and international levels.

In the second half of 2016 Committee has been established in order to develop an Amendment to the Protocol on the treatment of unaccompanied children – foreign national

The new Protocol will re-determine the actors/providers of the obligations and procedures for enabling identification, assistance and protection to migrant and/or refugee children separated from their parents (unaccompanied minors), for the purpose of timely and effective protection of their rights and interests, in order to ensure the safe return, family reunification or re-integration into Croatian society.

5.2. **Other vulnerable groups**

Please describe any *new or planned* policies, measures or changes in relation to other vulnerable groups at national and international levels.

Nothing to report.

6. **ACTIONS ADDRESSING TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS**

This Section should be completed in the context of the "EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings (2012-2016)"⁸ and you should liaise with your National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings or Equivalent Mechanism (NREMs).

Please note that the scope of this section refers only to third-country national victims of trafficking.

NREMs share information with the Commission (via the informal EU Network of NREMs) on a biannual basis on developments relevant to their national legal and policy framework. This information can be used for this reporting exercise too. All information is uploaded accordingly to the EU Anti-Trafficking Website under the section of national pages.⁹

⁸ <http://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/>

⁹ <http://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/section.action;jsessionid=FlnYRm0cwWGc3ZQv58Qy1LrdG8bRRTJhj2t6dzJS6fdVQm0xZ6GP!909126266?sectionPath=National+Info+Pages>

6.1. Improving identification of and provision of information to third-country national victims of human trafficking

6.1.1. *Information on assistance and support to victims, including child victims*

Nothing to report.

6.1.2. *Evident trends at national level*

The trends for 2016 compared to previous years have changed. The Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) in its 2016 Second Evaluation Round Report on Croatia noted an increase in the number of unaccompanied minors who disappeared from reception centres for asylum seekers within days of their placement there. GRETA noted that there had been no recorded cases of victims of trafficking in human beings amongst asylum seekers, including unaccompanied minors. However, given the complexity of the phenomenon, there are solid grounds to expect that the actual numbers of victims of trafficking are indeed substantially higher.

Statistics covering period from 1st January until 30st September 2016 identified trafficking victims originated from Croatia and Thailand.

6.1.3. *Cooperation with third countries*

At the national level nothing to report.

7. MAXIMISING DEVELOPMENT IMPACT OF MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

7.1. Progress towards mainstreaming of migration in development policies

Please describe any *new or planned* relevant activity - e.g. studies, development of approaches to make migration an integral part in sectoral policies (e.g. agriculture, health, education etc.), solidarity development projects, etc. – to mainstream migration in development policies.

No new or relevant planned developments in 2016.

7.1.1. *Cooperation with partner / third countries for economic migration*

Please complete the Table below on (planned) EU level or bilateral agreements linked to labour migration (e.g. Mobility Partnerships) planned or implemented:

Nothing to report.

Type of agreement (EU or bilateral)	Status of agreement (negotiated, signed, ratified, implemented) and the date of the action	Third countries involved including Southern Mediterranean ¹⁰ and Eastern Partnership ¹¹ countries	Main purpose and rationale for the agreement (incl. relevant elements of content)	Does the agreement allow for circular migration? YES/NO
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¹⁰ Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt

¹¹ Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan

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In the framework of Mobility partnerships (and Common Agendas) please advise whether Migration and Mobility Resource Centres (MMRCs) have been / will be set up in the partner countries.

Nothing to report.

7.1.2. *Efforts to mitigate 'brain drain'*

Please describe any *new or planned* measures to mitigate brain drain. For example: awareness rising actions, development of data and indicators on this phenomena, prevention, list of countries and professions subject to brain drain.

<p>The Institute for the Development of Education organized the 12th Open Days of Scholarships and Higher Education that was held on 11th October 2016 at the National and University Library in Zagreb and on 13th October 2016 at the University of Rijeka. The focus of the open days was on presenting the scholarship program which could contribute to the return of an international scholarship and thus support the students from abroad to return home. The initiative might prevent a brain drain. For e.g. scholarship programs that are linked with a contract under which scholar is required to return to Croatia/institution were presented. On the top of that programs ensure employment of scholars upon their return.</p>

7.2. Migrants' Remittances

Please describe any *new or planned* relevant activities or developments with regard to remittances. For example measures to facilitate remittance flows or improve access to banking and financial services in developing countries.

Nothing to report.

7.3. Working with Diasporas

Please provide information on *new or planned* national policies or actions for involving diaspora groups in development initiatives and supporting diaspora groups in their efforts to enhance development in their countries of origin.

<p>In 2016 will continue implementation of the project "Crossing Borders - Scientific cooperation". The "Scientific Cooperation Programme" encourages ground-breaking scientific research by financing medium size projects conducted in cooperation between scientists from Croatia and Croatian diaspora. The objective of this project is to enable Croatian scientists to raise their scientific excellence to the next level and become more competitive and able to attract sources of international and European funding through this type of cooperation with scientists from Croatian diaspora. This programme also encourages projects that create new knowledge useful to the private sector or allow the transfer of knowledge and technology from world's leading institutions, where scientists from Croatian diaspora work, to the private sector in the Republic of Croatia, through the cooperation between Croatian scientists, scientists from Croatian diaspora and private sector. This type of support should facilitate the return of scientists from Croatian diaspora to Croatia through the networking of scientists and experts from Croatian diaspora with colleagues from Croatia. The total value of the programme which amounts to EUR 5.8 million is secured by OP Effective Human Resources 2014- 2020 funds that should be allocated to the Foundation in the form of a direct allocation of funds during 2016. The Foundation, as a focal point for the competitive funding of national research projects during 2016, plans to announce a new call for competitive research projects.</p>

The fund “Unity through Knowledge”, which was in 2014 allocated to the Foundation, is currently financing nine projects within the programme “Crossing Borders - Scientific Cooperation”. These are highly competitive scientific projects whose objective is to establish scientific cooperation between Croatian scientists and scientists from Croatian diaspora. In addition, the Government of the Republic of Croatia has in November 2015 adopted a programme which aims to encourage research and development activities in the area of climate change for the period from 2015 to 2016, which awarded additional HRK 17 million to scientific projects. This programme was designed as the first in a series of programmes that will be specifically designed to finance scientific research activities in order to facilitate challenges of climate change we are facing. It is expected that this measure will become permanent, since it uses funds that the Republic of Croatia realised by selling CO2 emission units. In line with the further restructuring of public research institutes, the Government appointed a new Committee which submit a model for the restructuring of public research institutes to the Government by the end of 2016.
