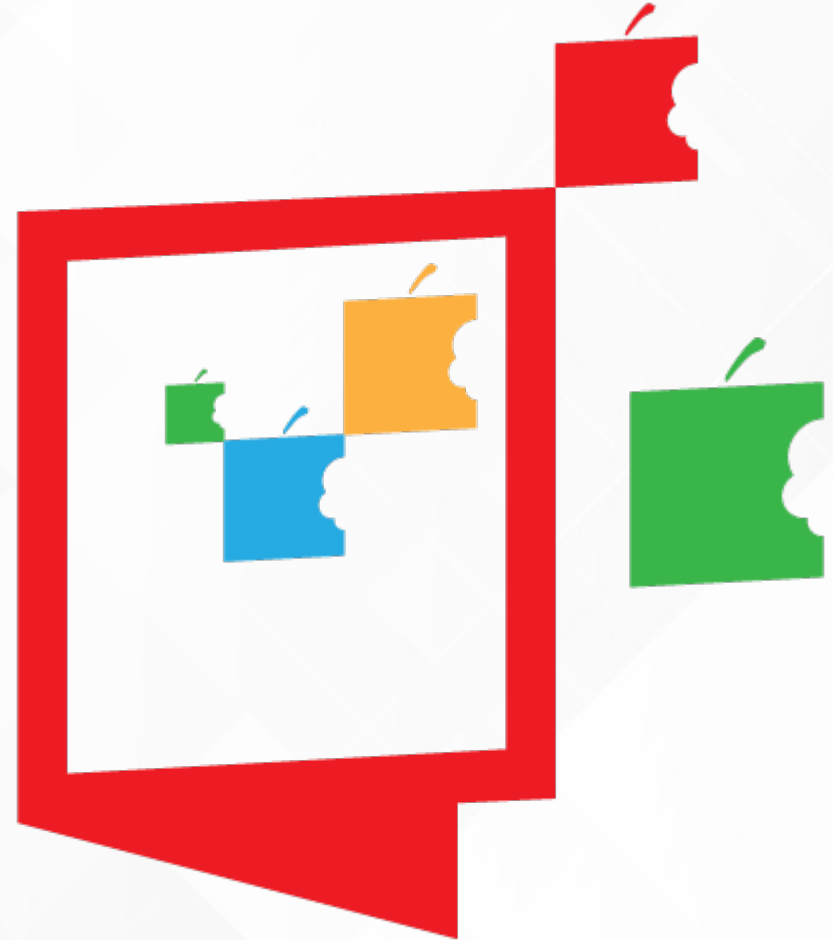


Agency for Science and Higher Education Croatia - overview

February 2018



Summary

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- New model of re-accreditation
- Re-accreditation of doctoral study programmes
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- International memberships
- International projects

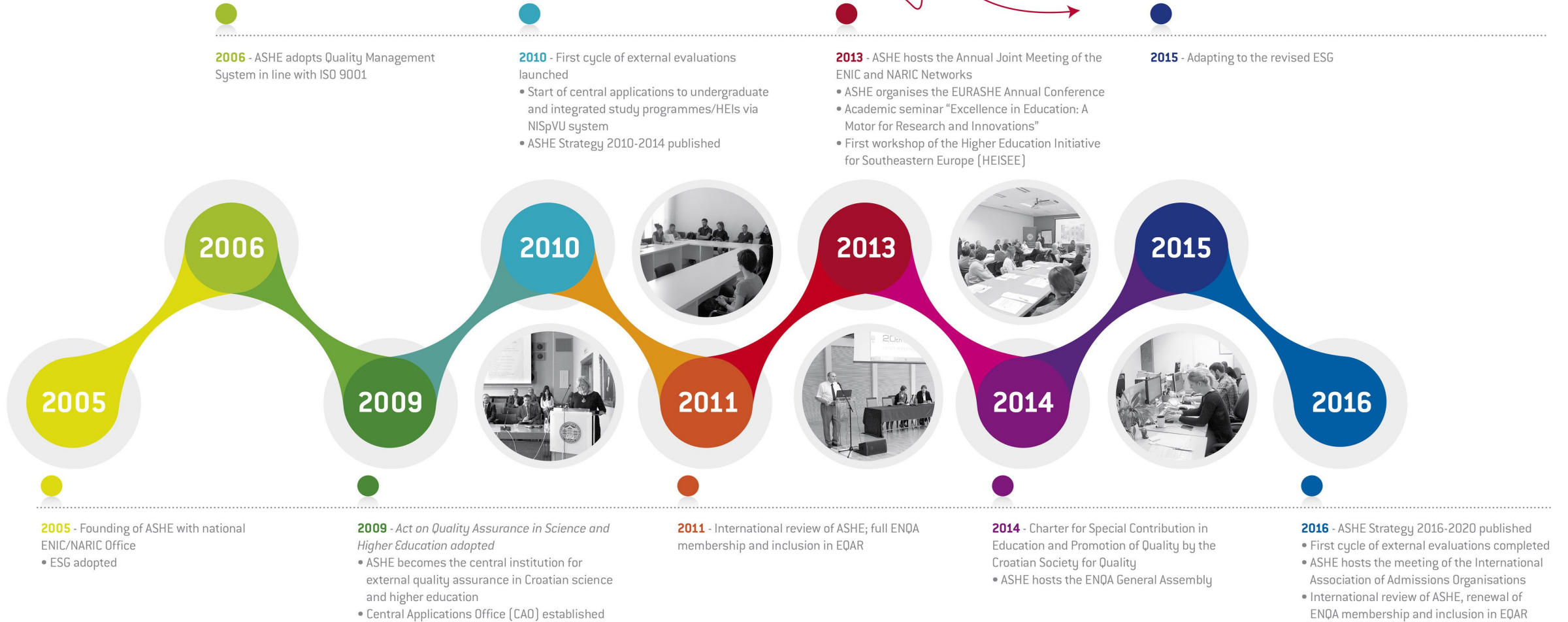


History

- ASHE was founded in 2005 by the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, in line with the Recommendation of the European parliament and of the Council on further European cooperation in quality assurance in higher education (2006/143/EC) and the European model of agencies for quality assurance in higher education, with the aim of conducting procedures of **external evaluation and improving the quality of science and higher education in Croatia**.
- The Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education adopted in 2009 enabled the Agency to achieve its **full independence** and bring its QA activities into compliance with Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).
- In accordance with this Act the Agency became the **only national body responsible for carrying out external QA activities** in higher education and science.
- 2011 – externally evaluated – ENQA/EQAR membership/full compliance with ESG
- 2016 – renewal of ENQA status
- 2017 – renewal of EQAR status



TIMELINE

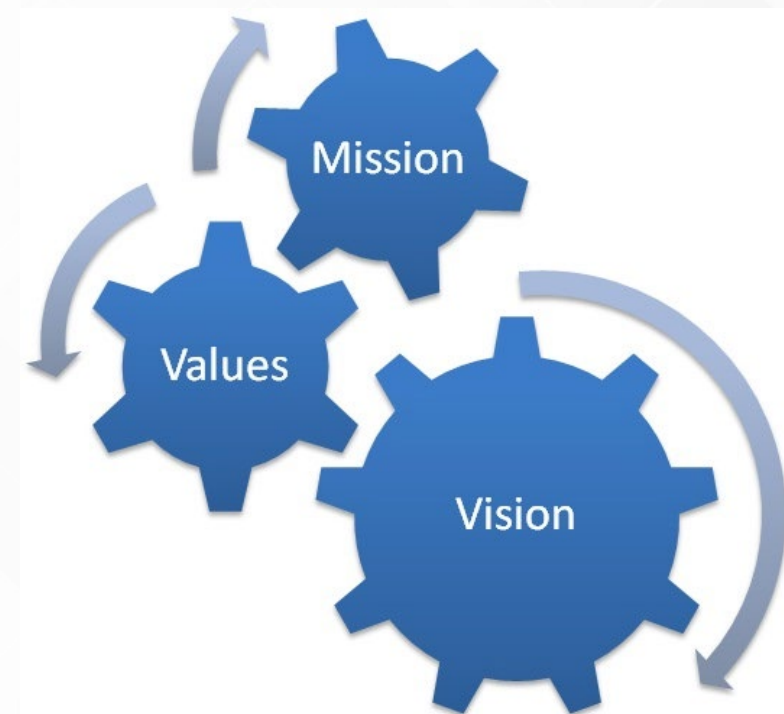


Mission

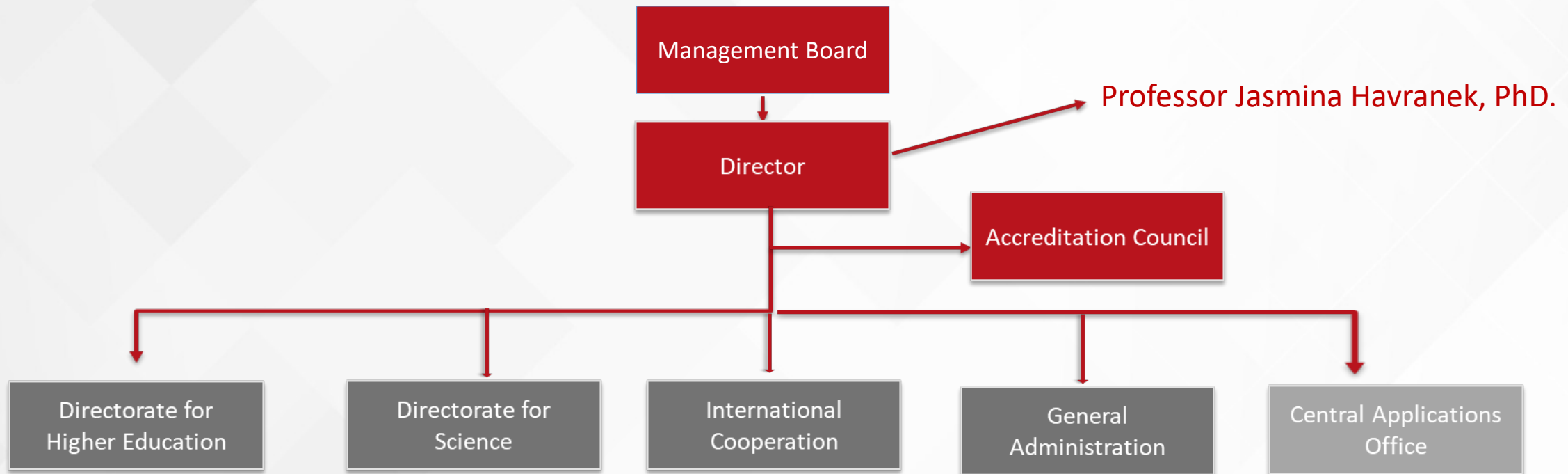
ASHE promotes the importance of quality assurance in higher education and science with the aim of continuous quality improvement of higher education institutions, scientific organisations and the overall Croatian system of science and higher education and its recognisability within the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area, while encouraging the society's sustainable development.

Vision

By actively participating in shaping trends and innovative practice in the field of quality assurance, ASHE will strive to contribute to positive changes in the European Higher Education Area.



Organizational structure



Activities

1. Quality Assurance activities in HE and Science
2. Collecting and analyzing data on the systems of science and higher education
3. National ENIC/NARIC Office
4. Central Applications Office
5. Support to various national bodies
6. International cooperation



Quality Assurance activities

1. Initial accreditation

- new HEIs and/or new study programme
- new scientific organizations established and/or financed by state
- scope: fulfillment of necessary academic criteria is checked

2. Re-accreditation

- mandatory for all public and private HEIs in five-year cycles (first cycle until 2015)
- mandatory for all scientific organizations established and/or financed by the state (until 2015)
- scope: quality assurance (accountability) and quality improvement (enhancement)

3. Audit

- voluntary for all HEIs
- scope: degree of development and efficiency of the internal QA system of HEIs

4. Thematic evaluation

- scope: equivalent evaluation subjects



Ensuring independence in carrying out procedures



- Fair and equitable treatment of all stakeholders (public, private, new or traditional HEIs)
- Public call for experts (peer reviews)
- Foreign reviewers in expert panels

The importance of (re)accreditation



- **Protecting the quality** of higher education institutions and study programmes and **verification** of higher education qualifications
- **Improving the quality** of higher education institutions and study programmes
- **Informing the general public** on the quality of higher education institutions and study programmes

Re-accreditation outcomes



- Following the re-accreditation procedure and with the previous opinion of the Accreditation Council (an expert body of the ASHE, composed of representatives of the system of higher education and science, business community and an associate member, representative of organizations of civil society), the Agency shall make an accreditation decision recommending to the minister responsible for higher education to:
 - Issue **accreditation** for continued activity or part of activity
 - **Deny accreditation** for an activity or part of activity
 - Issue a **letter of expectation** with the deadline for resolving deficiencies up to three years.
- Accreditation decision sent to the minister also contains a quality grade of a HE institution/scientific organisation containing a recommendation for quality improvement. The final report with the quality grade (also final report summary) is public.



The first re-accreditation cycle



- The first re-accreditation cycle **began in 2010** and was **completed in the first half of 2016**.
- This is the first time a comprehensive evaluation of the entire system of higher education in Croatia (131 institutions) was carried out in accordance with a single methodology and criteria, in compliance with ESG and examples of good international practice.
- Conclusions: HEIs, other stakeholders and the general public **recognise the importance of quality assurance**, with many **positive changes** having taken place at the level of institutions, programmes and the system as a whole.
- **Positive attitude** of the heads of institutions towards the evaluation procedures and the results and outcomes thereof; these changes encourage higher education institutions to improve their activities, and ASHE to continue its work.



New cycle of external evaluation procedures

- Re-accreditation of postgraduate (doctoral) study programmes
- Re-accreditation of HEIs
 - mandatory for all public and private higher education institutions
 - at the institutional level
- Evaluation of study programmes aligned with CroQF standards for the entry in the Croatian Qualifications Framework Register
 - voluntary, upon a higher education institution's request
 - at the programme level
- Audit
 - upon a HEI's request



Re-accreditation of HEIs – new model



- Modified standards for the assessment of quality of universities and university components, as well as polytechnics and colleges
- In accordance with the new model, the **goal of the next re-accreditation cycle** should be to **encourage improvements**, in accordance with the recommendations for quality improvement resulting from the first cycle



- HEI is viewed as a whole, and the quality of an institution includes the assessment of all activities of an institution
- The modified re-accreditation model enables the verification of key, generally accepted standards, and quality score, based on the report of the expert panel that has been fully aligned with the ESG



Re-accreditation of doctoral study programmes

- All doctoral study programmes (2016 – 2018)

Goals:

- Ensure that all doctoral programmes are aligned with the legal framework
- Adapt the number of enrolled students to available resources at higher education institutions, primarily with regard to the number of qualified supervisors and research projects
- Ensure that quality improvement of all doctoral programmes is comprehensive, aligned with the Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area and European University Association recommendations (as listed in [Salzburg Principles](#), their [Implementation Report](#) and [ARDE project report on quality assurance in doctoral education](#))
- Ensure that all doctoral candidates in Croatia have the opportunity to graduate on time and achieve learning outcomes at the level 8.2 of the CroQF



Other activities - National ENIC/NARIC Office

- Croatian ENIC/NARIC Office is an information centre for academic mobility and recognition of foreign higher education qualifications
- Part of the European Network of National Information Centres on recognition and mobility
- Scope of the activities:
 - activities on professional recognition of foreign higher education qualifications
 - providing information on foreign education systems
 - providing information on national education system



Other activities - Central Applications Office

- Central Applications Office is the national information centre for applications to study programmes at higher education institutions in the Republic of Croatia
- CAO is in charge of the activities related to applications to study programmes, as well as those related to the fulfilment of requirements for enrolment in higher education institutions
- Scope of the activities:
 - applications to undergraduate study programmes
 - applications to graduate study programmes
 - candidates' applications for enrolment in secondary schools



Other activities – support for strategic bodies

- ASHE provides professional and administrative support to:
 - National Council for Science, Higher Education and Technological Development
 - Council of Polytechnics and Colleges
 - 23 Scientific Field Committees for all scientific fields and areas in Croatia (Office for Scientific Field Committees)
 - seven Scientific Area Councils and seven Field Committees for Appointment to Scientific-Teaching and Teaching Grades at Polytechnics and Colleges



International context



- ASHE is actively working on the inclusion in the international system of quality assurance in higher education and science, already being its recognised and active member
- Full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the European umbrella quality assurance association, and is listed in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) - consequently, ASHE has the right to conduct quality assurance procedures not only in Croatia, but in the entire European Higher Education Area (EHEA)
- Member of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) which is a world-wide association of nearly 300 organisations active in quality assurance in higher education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), which is an association of 3,000 degree-granting colleges and universities and recognizes 60 institutional and programme accrediting organizations

International memberships

- ASHE is actively involved in the work of European and global network for advancing mobility and recognition of academic qualifications (ENIC-NARIC Network)
- ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education)
- EQAR (European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education)
- INQAAHE (International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education)
- CEENQA (Network of Central and Eastern European Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education)
- OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development)
- IMHE (OECD Programme on Institutional Management in Higher Education)
- ECA (European Consortium for Accreditation), project-oriented association of European QA agencies
- APQN (Asia-Pacific Quality Network)
- CHEA International Quality Group



International projects

- **European Social Fund:**

- SKAZVO - Improvement of quality assurance and enhancement systems in higher education

- **ERASMUS +:**

- HRMinHEI: Modernisation of Higher Education Institutions through enhancement of Human Resources Management function

- DEQAR - Database of External Quality Assurance

- MEHR - Modernisation, Education and Human Rights

- PROCSEE - Strengthening Professional Higher Education and VET in Central & South Eastern Europe

- BuildPHE - Building Professional Higher Education Capacity

- RENSA - Recognition of Non-Country Specific Awards

- FAIR - Focus on Automatic Institutional Recognition project

- **OTHER:**

- CEF eID - Ensuring Access to Croatian Public e-services within e-Citizens Platform for EU/EEA citizens





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