National strategy(ies)

In Croatia, there are many regulations and documents covering physical activity but there is no national document that covers physical activity recommendations specifically for young people, but the WHO Physical Activity Guidelines and ACSM Physical Activity Recommendations are being followed. A new School Sport Strategy is currently being drawn up. In Croatia, sport as an activity is regulated by the Sports Act [1].

The Sports Act
The publication date of the Sports Act [1] is 28th June 2006 and it is still in effect. The issuing body is the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport. The key objectives are:

- regulation of sports and sporting activities, professional sports, sporting competitions, sport financing, supervision and other issues of relevance for sport
- defining sport that is based on the principle of volunteering
- defining the sport as equally accessible to anyone regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, social status, political or other belief
- defining sport as an activity of special significance for the Republic of Croatia.
- In the Republic of Croatia, the development of sport is promoted by the construction and maintenance of sports facilities, education and training of professional staff, scientific projects in the area of sport, economic measures, the stimulation of partnership between government and non-governmental organizations in sport and private entrepreneurship and the financing of sports by state, local and regional self-government units and the City of Zagreb.

The Action Plan for development of Cyclotourism
The Action Plan for development of Cyclotourism [2] was published in October 2015. The issuing body is the...
Ministry of Tourism. A brief description of the contents (and, if indicated, an explanation why it is considered to be one of the most important documents): In the Action Plan, cyclotourism is viewed in the widest possible sense, i.e. as a tourist bicycle trip, cycling trip, additional sports recreational bicycle riding sport event, and occasional driving. The Action Plan also takes into account the needs of domicile population using the bicycle as a means of transport and a means of recreation as well as cycling infrastructure in larger cities and their immediate vicinity. Cyclotourism is especially important for the development of continental tourism as well as the pre and post-season tourism.

The Bicycle Training Program 2016
The issuing body for The Bicycle Training Program 2016 [3] is the Ministry of Science and Education. The bicycle training program is conducted in primary schools and institutions that provide education and training for children and young people and/or the organization of free time for children and young people who are eligible for their performance. The program is primarily intended for students of the primary school fifth grade who have been chosen for it. The examination is carried out in cooperation with teachers, employees of HAK (Croatian Auto Club) or auto clubs and police officers. By adopting the program, fifth-grade students are offered the opportunity to acquire additional competencies that contribute to their safer participation in traffic, as well as the opportunity to take bicycle exams and obtain a certificate of competency for bicycle riding.

Promoting and supporting sport and physical activity among young people

The programme promoting and supporting sport and physical activity in Croatia among young people is the National Programme “Healthy Living” [4]. Through the programme component “Physical activity and health”, the goal is to promote sports and physical activity. Although walking is the most popular physical activity and its benefits exceed by far the benefits of all other activities, its prevalence is still declining. The analysis shows that fewer and fewer children walk to school; and the same trend is seen in adults, who never walk to their workplace. There is no possible obstacle to including more walking in our daily routines, if possible in a natural environment, with the goal of reducing the risk of disease and improving or maintaining health.

Activities in the community are aimed at informing and sensitizing all age groups of the population of Croatia on the positive aspects of physical activity as well as offer and start-up organised walking groups (circular), both for a single time and regular participants. This project is intended to become a part of the international project The Walk of the World and achieve future cooperation with other participating countries. The project also envisages volunteer education on criteria determining walking trails and marking them, and on ways of implementing this physical activity. This project envisaged the cooperation of the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Tourism, Croatian Tourist Board, Croatian Employers’ Association and the Faculty of Kinesiology in Zagreb.

All county public health institutes would actively participate in the implementation of this project. Following the implementation of the Walking Towards Health [5] project in all counties, the Croatian Public Health Institute will consolidate all gathered data and evaluate the project. Further cooperation will be arranged, in the sense of educating more volunteers and participants. Also, an annual calendar will be drawn up, containing regular (at least once a week) Walking Towards Health activities in all counties of the Republic of Croatia, which will be available on websites of all local tourist boards and their partners. Besides this, once a year, a date will be chosen for simultaneous walking events to take place in all counties on beforehand selected walking trails.

The basic intention of the project is an activity accessible to all citizens of Croatia, regardless of their ethnic descent, religion, sex, territorial position, minority affiliation or disability. This would provide every individual with an equal possibility for improving their health and socialising in a healthy environment with support personnel helping the integration of special needs individuals. The plan is to achieve this through single and multi-day summits and programme presentation in various environments. These programmes are also envisaged to be implemented in nature.
For this to be possible, it is necessary to adapt and clean external spaces where the programme will take place. The project anticipates activities of preparation, adaptation and walking trails development with the participation of the local community, citizens and environmental volunteering associations.

Also planned is the active cooperation and inclusion of mountaineering and sporting associations and clubs through sports meets, competitions and presentations of various sporting activities.

**Physical education in schools**

The goal of physical and health education is to satisfy biopsychosocial need for movement, to increase creative abilities and adapt to contemporary living conditions and work.

Existing national and strategic documents in the field of education in Croatia are:

- **Law on Education in Primary and Secondary Schools** [6]
  Issuing body is the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport. The Act entered in power in 2008 regulates the activities of primary and secondary education and education in public institutions. It is a unique and fundamental act that links the same activity, goals, principles, organization, the rights of the immediate holders of the educational activities (teachers and teachers) and participants of the educational process (pupils) at the level of elementary and secondary education and education. It assumes that a series of bylaws will be drafted which will ensure a deeper and more detailed elaboration of the authority and responsibility of the educational participants in all segments of the educational activity. It is innovative in the goals and principles of education, pedagogical measures, network of schools, planning and purpose of school establishment and external evaluation; encourages the integration of disadvantaged pupils into the educational system, prescribes equal access and equal conditions of education and training for children belonging to national minorities and teaching assistance to children of EU citizens.

- **Strategy for Construction and Development of the National Curriculum for Preschool, General Compulsory and Secondary School Education** [7]
  Issuing body is the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport. The Strategy was introduced in 2007. Accepting the curriculum approach implies the construction of a national curriculum and is to be preceded by efficiency evaluation of all the immediate actors in the field of education and the redefinition of education on all its levels, in order to respond to the developmental needs of the Croatian society, while bearing in mind a wider European and global context.
  Strategy for the Construction and Development of the National Curriculum for Preschool, General Compulsory and Secondary School Education (hereinafter: the Strategy) contains propositions of guidelines and ways to improve education in Croatian social context, as well as the propositions on how to ensure a quality system of education, with special emphasis on those components that relate to the creation and implementation of the national curriculum for preschool, general compulsory and secondary school education. The Strategy contains expert suggestions on how to modernize, upgrade and improve the quality of the education system. The Strategy is a developmental document open to changes and improvements depending on the needs and developmental tendencies in the education area, as well as on the various studies and evaluation results.

- **State Pedagogical Standard of Primary Education System** [8]
  Issuing body is the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport. The publication date was in 2008. The state pedagogical standard of primary education system in the Republic of Croatia establishes minimum infrastructure, financial and human resources conditions for the realization and development of activities and the same conditions for a uniform development of primary education throughout the Republic of Croatia. Thus, the conditions necessary for the realization of the teaching of Physical Education are prescribed.

- **National Curriculum Framework for Preschool Education, General Compulsory and Secondary School Education** [9]
  Issuing body is the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport. The Framework was introduced in 2010. The
Preparation of the National Curriculum Framework was set as one of the priorities of the Croatian education policy, since this document enables harmonisation and integration of all elements of the system. The National Curriculum Framework is a fundamental document that determines all the essential elements of the education system, from the pre-school level to the completion of the secondary education. The basic characteristic of the National Curriculum Framework is a transition to a system based on competence and student achievement (learning outcomes), unlike the previous (i.e., current) one, which focuses on content. Applying the National Curriculum Framework results in the harmonisation of all levels of education that precede the higher-education level (which has changed its system by introducing the Bologna process).

**Law on Higher Education** [10]
Issuing body is the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport. This Act regulates the establishment of higher education institutions, the establishment, valuation and financial support of their activities, the organization and performance of university and professional studies, and the position of students and teachers. This Act regulates the status of scientific research institutes and libraries as well as other legal entities whose activities provide for the operation of higher education systems, if they are established within higher education institutions. The Law is in power since 1996.

**Croatian Qualifications Framework** [11]
Issuing body is the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport. The Croatian Qualifications Framework is a reform instrument for regulating the system of qualifications at all levels in the Republic of Croatia through qualifications standards based on learning outcomes and following the needs of the labour market, individuals and the society. It was introduced in 2013.

**National curriculum for Preschool nurture and education** [12]
Issuing body is the Ministry of Science and Education. The National Curriculum for Early and Pre-School Education and Education is a fundamental curricular document. The document from 2014 defines all the essential curricular components that should be reflected in the overall organization and implementation of educational work in all kindergartens in the Republic of Croatia.

**Regulation on the content and duration of pre-school program** [13]
Issuing body is the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport. Pre-school program has to provide each child a year before leaving for elementary school, optimal conditions for developing and improving skills, habits and competences and acquiring knowledge and satisfying interests that will help him adapt to new living conditions, growth and development in the school environment. The primary task of pre-school program is to develop and improve the physical, emotional, social and cognitive potentials of the child also to promote the communication skills required for new forms of learning. The regulation from 2014 on the content and duration of pre-school program prescribes the content and duration of pre-school program for all children in the year preceding school leaving, as for children attending kindergartens, as well as for children and non-part time children.

**Curriculum for Primary School** [14]
Issuing body is the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport. The Curriculum was issued in 2013. The basic level of education is related to teaching students knowledge and developing those competencies that they will need to play different roles in adulthood. Educational values and goals are presented in this document for elementary school, the basic determinants for the achievement of teaching work in accordance with educational changes are presented, the forms of school and teaching work, work with gifted students and pupils with developmental disabilities, educational forms and methods of extracurricular work, education and vocational training of school and teaching staff. The role and function of the immediate participants in school and teaching work is presented, as well as expectations regarding their role in reflection and implementation of activities for overall improvement of the educational work at school and outside the school.

**Grammar Schools Curriculum** [15]
Ministry of Science and Education is the issuing institution. The Curriculum for Physical Education for Grammar Schools includes: I. Purpose and Goal; II. Program Content: 1. Basic Program, 2. Supplementary Program: Physical and Health Care Framework for pupils and students who, for health reasons, must have a special program, Physical Education, Program for students in the period of health recovery; 3. Didactical instructions.
As in other subjects, the Physical and Health Culture curriculum is an official document based on the development of kinesiological science, and defines the contents that students must adopt. Besides the abovementioned framework, the national programme promoting and supporting physical education in Croatian schools among young people is the National Programme „Living Healthy“.

Through the “Health education” programme component, the goal is to promote proper nutrition and physical activity in order to prevent overweight and obesity. Besides educating teachers and students on the basics of proper nutrition, such nutrition will be made accessible in accordance with the adopted National Guidelines for Nutrition in Primary Schools which prescribe groups of normative menus balanced depending on the nutrition and energy needs of the students as well as the season and seasonal availability of certain foods. Alongside additional education of teachers and students on the importance of physical activity for preserving health, physical activity will be stimulated by two additional programmes; through daily 10-minute exercise routines and by introducing training polygons for school children.

The fundamental goal of daily exercise is the formation of healthy life habits and implementing regular physical activity. General training exercises have a great impact on proper posture which is an important prerequisite for the wellbeing of the entire organism. These are aimed at students of the first four classes of primary schools, and they would take place in the classrooms in ten-minute intervals. Exercise intensity is tailored to the spatial constraints. Physical activity polygons have been conceived as an additional programme for implementing physical education in Croatian primary schools without the necessary material, technical or spatial conditions. The polygon is a didactic equipment set consisting of 25 elements optimised for their purpose by their composition, shape, dimension, and characteristics while also allowing easy handling and transport.

Collaboration and partnerships

Depending on individual strategic document, programme, strategy or other health system framework, the cross-institutional partnership is defined for each specific area and some programmes also envisage cooperation with the education system, social welfare system and with non-governmental organisations (NGOs). For example, the National Programme “Healthy Living” [4] proposes implementation partnerships with:

- the Ministry of Science and Education
- the Ministry of Tourism
- the Ministry of Agriculture
- the Ministry of Labour and Pension system
- the Ministry of Demographics, Family, Youth and Social Policy
- the Ministry of the Interior
- the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Energy
- the Office for Cooperation with NGOs of the Croatian Government
- the Croatian Health Insurance Fund
- medical and kinesiology faculties
- the Faculty of Food Technology and Biotechnology
- the Education and Teacher Training Agency
- the Croatian Employers Association
- the Croatian Chamber of Economy
- the Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts
- the Croatian Tourist bord
- the Croatian Food Agency
- the Union of Autonomous Trade Unions of Croatia
- the Independent Trade Unions of Croatia
- the Association of Croatian Trade Unions
- the Croatian Trade Union Association.

The programme also includes the participation of health-friendly partners:
- Kindergartens
- Primary and secondary schools
- Companies

The financing through strategic documents is defined in the content of those documents, mostly from the state budget in accordance with the department area financing, while some programmes are financed from the ESF funds, partly referring to inter-sectorial cooperation.