

ANNUAL REPORT 2012 AND PLAN FOR 2013

INTRODUCTION

Dear readers,

it is our great pleasure to present all activities of the Centre in 2012 and briefly describe the annual plan for 2013, through this Report.

National Centre for External Evaluation of Education is a public institution established in 2006 with the goal of implementing external evaluation in the education system of the Republic of Croatia. Outlined goal came out of the need for the adjustment of the Croatian education system with education systems of the European Union member countries and within the accession of Croatia to this Union. Since education, as the basis of the society and state, represents an important component in the development of the society, the role of the Centre in the contribution to the improvement of the education quality is recognised as crucial. During the period between 2006 and 2012, the Centre realised the set task of implementation of external evaluation at all levels, from preschool and primary to secondary education.

In 2012, National Centre for External Evaluation of Education worked according to the plan and programme which anticipated numerous activities and projects. Retrospect shows that the year was successful and confirms, once again, the mission of the external evaluation implementation for improving the quality of education and education system, which was set by the establishment of the Centre.

The previous year, 2012, was full of contents, from established activities regarding preparation, organisation and conduction of the State Matura exams as well as multiannual projects such as national exams in primary and secondary schools to new projects which we presented in public. Also, several projects of national importance were finished and presented, such as *Prevalence of entrepreneurial contents in secondary schools*, as well as projects of international studies such as reading and mathematical literacy study.

National centre for external evaluation of education is recognised in the state, but also worldwide, as the institution which professionally prepares, organises and conducts all forms of examination, from national exams and the State Matura, to final exams and international studies. Also, the work of National centre includes all other projects and forms of external evaluation, and through its work, it continuously provides support for all education institutions in the self-evaluation process, using the examination results and other indicators of the work quality.

During 2012, the Centre participated in numerous international gatherings and conferences, where its work and contribution to the development of education were recognised through professional and scientific works and memberships in international organisations. As a member of AEA-Europe the Centre participated in the development of the AEA Framework of Standards for Educational Assessment, the first publication of this important European organisation. In the meeting in Brussels, within the ESLC project, the development of examination was presented through the example of the Republic of Croatia. In the international conference in Aus-

tralia, the State Matura was presented for the first time, whereas in the conference in Madrid the self-evaluation model for early childhood and preschool education institutions was commended and the Handbook will be translated to English because of the great interest.

As in previous years, during 2012, the Centre presented the work and results of the external evaluation in professional meetings of directors, teachers in primary and secondary schools as well as employees of the early childhood and preschool education institutions in the Republic of Croatia. Collaboration with schools and all employees of the education institutions is an important element of the Centre's functioning since schools are our first partners in the conduction of exams, as well as one of the main users of the results of the external evaluation. This collaboration is realised in everyday communication with schools, in professional meetings and various trainings conducted by the Centre or organised in co-operation with other agencies. Also, in 2012, the collaboration with universities was deepened and the leadership of the Centre participated in some of the meetings with universities where external evaluation and the State Matura were discussed. Rectors' conference gave us the opportunity and their trust by accepting the presentation of the State Matura and approving the presentations at all universities in the Republic of Croatia. In this way, a big step towards the recognition of the State Matura exams, as a part of the admission procedure in which all participants of the system are actively involved, has been made.

Since the presentation of the Centre's work in February 2012, successful collaboration with the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, in the field of the external evaluation of the education system, was continued. This collaboration was deepened in the autumn of 2012, when we started to address the Ministry more intensively, within set goals of the faster and better communication after the conduction of the State Matura in the school year 2011/2012.

During 2012, the Centre organised several professional meetings and conferences with a wish to present its work, collaboration with other partners and results of the exams and projects to the professional and wider public. In 2013, our intention is to continue this good practice in the presentation of the results of international studies, secondary analyses and other themes in the field of external evaluation and self-evaluation of the education institutions.

On the basis of the entrusted mission of the implementation of external evaluation, the basic tasks of the Centre, in every step of this exciting journey, is to assure quality, incite transparency and manifest objectivity as important new element of the education system. Finally, one of the main tasks of the Centre is to raise responsibility among all participants of the education system on the basis of the results of external evaluation exams. The results of exams and other examination forms are used by students and all



candidates for the State Matura as well as schools for their review of the work quality and reflection about the improvement. Results, depending on the goal of the examination, are used by universities as the admission procedure in case of the State Matura or by competent authorities in the evaluation and development of the curriculum and in the improvement of the education quality.

With these main determinants, based on the mission and development of the Centre, we functioned in 2012 as well, approaching all projects, associates and users of our services and data responsibly. With the desire to make our work represented and regularly monitored, we tried to reach every interested person with all required information. Opportune, professional, clear and unambiguous piece of information is the most important element of our work, so we use every opportunity to refer everyone to our web page, phones and electronic mail in order to provide them with answers to all their questions (www.ncvvo.hr).

At the end, I want to thank all employees of the Centre for their excellent work and inexhaustible wish and will for the improvement of the Centre's work. Also, I want to thank all external associates who complete the work of the Centre through numerous projects, as well as participants of the system who collaborate with the Centre and use results and recommendations for the improvement of the education. Finally, I want to thank all kindergartens, schools, universities and institutes individually, which make our work possible.

Jasmina Muraja

GENERAL PROVISIONS AND STRUCTURE OF THE CENTRE

National Centre for External Evaluation of Education (hereinafter referred to as „the Centre“ or „NCEEE“) is a public institution which conducts external evaluation within the education system and conducts exams based on the national standards. It is constituted on the basis of the Act on the National Centre for External Evaluation of Education (Official Gazette, No. 151/04). The Centre is organised according to this Act and the Statute of the National Centre for External Evaluation of Education. It is directed by the Governing Council. The Council is chaired by the president and it consists of six more members who are eminent scientists and professionals. Members of the Governing Council, on the basis of the public call and suggestion made by the Minister of Science, Education and Sports, are named and dismissed by the Government of the Republic of Croatia.

In 2010, the Governing Council, on the basis of its authority, named Goran Sirovatka, mag. math. the Director of the Centre and, in July 2011, Jasmina Muraja Ph.D the Deputy Director.

Membership and collaboration with international organisations

National Centre for External Evaluation of Education is a member of important international organi-

sations and these memberships allow participation in international studies as well as positioning of the Centre on the world scene in the field of the external evaluation in education.

1. Association for Educational Assessment Europe (AEA-E)
2. International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IAEEA)
3. The Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE)

I really hope that our visit to Zagreb will turn out as a good start for a fruitful collaboration between your and our institute in the near future. I am very positive about this.

Henk Moelands, PhD, Cito

Long-time collaboration with Cito examination centre from Netherlands started through bilateral collaboration in 2007 and it was continued and deepened in 2012. Representatives of the Cito visited the Centre at the beginning of the year and we started discussions about new collaboration forms, such

as training of the Centre's employees, but also the partnership work in the regional development of the exam materials.

I am glad that our project Development of final exam at the end of educational cycle is moving ahead and I am very confident that we are going to be very successful. I am very excited by the achievements in the project, and interested in seeing it go through.

Eduardo Cascallar, PhD, AGI

Also, within the project *Development of final exams at the end of education cycles*, the Centre collaborates with Assessment Group International, international institution with head office in Belgium, governed by the Director Eduardo Cascallar, Ph.D. Professor Cascallar is an expert in the field of psychometrics. He gained rich experience in the USA and Europe and he was engaged during the project as a consultant for the questions regarding standardisation and analysis of exams.

STAFF AND EXTERNAL ASSOCIATES

Systematisation of work places is determined by the *Regulation on the internal organisation of the National Centre for External Evaluation of Education*.

External associates include consumers of the products, as well as associates in the processes and providers of the external services of the NCEEE. The Centre concludes service contracts or copyright contracts with external associates, as well as contracts on the basis of the public procurement procedure.

With regard to the increasing interest of the scientific and exploration community for the data collected by the Centre during its activities related to the evaluation of education, the need for the approval of the access and use of the data has occurred and the Committee for the requests of data collected during scientific research and project activities of the Centre has been established.

Structure of employees of the Centre on 13/ 11/2012

	Number of employees	%
Sc.D.	4	7,69
Sc.M.	4	7,69
mag. spec.	3	5,77
Graduate university education	25	48,08
Graduate professional education	1	1,92
Undergraduate education	5	9,62
Secondary education	9	17,31
Primary education	1	1,92
Total	52	100,00

A SHORT HISTORY

National Center for External Evaluation of Education was established in March 2006th, and immediately organized the first National Exams in May 2006 in secondary schools, gymnasium program. The following year the Centre prepared, organized and conducted the national exams for all students from four-year high schools, and begins the other projects of external evaluation in primary and secondary schools.

Also, from the very beginning Centre provides support and assistance to schools at using the results of an external evaluation for schools self-evaluation, and through their actions, or in collaboration with other participants in the educational system, Centre organizes and manages trainings in the field of external evaluation.

2010th was conducted first state graduation exam as a exam of high risk. Until now we successfully completed three cycles.

In the period since 2006th to 2012th were started or completed numerous projects and national and international tests the results of which can and should be used to reflect the quality and improving of education.

ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS IN 2012

Every child deserves quality education

Preschool education for complete integration project started on 15 September 2011 and lasted until 30 June 2012 and its goal was to include children belonging to Roma national minority in the broader society from their early age. In the area of preschool education, in collaboration with Međimurje County and with the help of the Roma Education Fund, the Centre conducted research in preschool education institutions from that area.

After a two-year detailed preparation of instruments and development of methodology, the **Self-evaluation of early childhood and preschool education institutions** project and the Handbook of the same name were presented in November 2012. With the agreement of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, the project is being conducted since September 2012 at national level and it is intended for all early childhood and preschool education institutions whose aim is systematic and continuous work on the improvement of the work quality. The first cycle included 73 institutions.

Participation in the pilot project was a professional challenge and satisfaction, opportunity for learning, personal growth and development, additional strengthening of collaborative climate in kindergarten. We became aware of our shared goal and purpose of our shared action, our strong and weak sides and we reflected about new strategies of shared work on the improvement of the kindergarten quality

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Kindergarten ZRNO, Zagreb

Since the school year 2008/2009, the Centre is systematically conducting the **Primary school self-evaluation** project at national level. In 2012, feedback from schools on efficacy of the realisation of outlined school development plans and improvement of the work quality of school during the last two years has been collected. The analyses of collected materials started and numerous trainings within the project have been conducted. The **Secondary school self-evaluation** project started after the conduction of first national exams in 2006 and continued in the

school year 2011/2012 as well as in the school year 2012/2013. Within the project, the schools and associates of the Network for the support of the self-evaluation of schools sent *Reports on the self-evaluation of secondary schools*, i.e. *Reports on the school visits of associates of the Network* to National centre for external evaluation of education. All received reports were registered and analysed, whereas trainings and regular meetings with the associates of the Network were conducted.

All we can say for now is that this project is praiseworthy because schools have the opportunity „to admit“ to themselves how they function in all segments, so if they were honest and objective, according to their evaluation and weak sides, they can act in order to make changes.

Primary school Vjekoslav Klaić, Garačin

We believe that this project is very useful; participation in the self-evaluation project makes the school aware of the real possibilities, internal resources, it makes it activate the internal strength even more. We also find this project very important for the improvement of the work of schools; it is very important that the self-evaluation process becomes really implemented in practice of all schools, since it is their legal obligation and when it is conducted in the way the NCEE conducts it – as encouraging collaboration without the „inspection“ element, the project is realised to the mutual satisfaction of both, the schools and the associates of the Network.

Secondary school Ivan Trnski, Hrvatska Kostajnica

The **Development of final exams at the end of education cycles** project started in September 2011 and it will be conducted until May 2015. General goal of the project is to develop model for the knowledge examination at the end of education cycles. Specific goals are: to develop model and procedures of testing according to the contemporary approaches to the knowledge examination as well as to examine and evaluate the levels of knowledge in the following school subjects among eight grade students: Croatian language, English language, History and Physics. The exams will be adjusted to the content of the Curriculum, whereas examination will be conducted on the sample of schools/eight grade students. With regard to the fact that the examinations will be conducted in February/March, exams will not contain the contents from the second semester. Constituent part of this project relates to the **Development of item bank** whose goal is to create application and basis system for the support of the entire process of the knowledge examination as a primary activity, as well as specific projects of the Centre.

National exams question educational achievements and their goal is to evaluate and develop the curriculum in order to improve the education. The **National assessment in Mathematics for eight grade students**



in primary schools project, which lasts from 2011 to 2014, is a comprehensive project whose goal is not only to encompass temporary levels of knowledge, skills and abilities of the students in the field of Mathematics at the end of primary education, but also to determine potential problems related to the acquisition of knowledge and competences in Mathematics during the primary education. Also, national exams are conducted in vocational health schools. The goal of the **National assessment in Health care** is to evaluate students' knowledge and abilities in narrowly defined programmes and it indicates advantages and disadvantages of questioned areas.

The **Prevalence of entrepreneurial contents in secondary schools** project started in September 2011, in collaboration with the Education group „Zrinski“, and continued through the active research in 2012. General goal of the project is to determine the prevalence of entrepreneurial contents in secondary school programmes in the Republic of Croatia in order to systematically implement the learning of entrepreneurship as one of the basic educational competences. Project is finished in this phase and the results were presented at the conference *Prevalence of entrepreneurial contents in secondary schools* held in the Centre on November 6, 2012, whereas the report of the same name has been published in collaboration with Education group „Zrinski“.

In October 2012, by the participation in the development of materials for the initial examination, the Centre becomes active participant of the **External evaluation of experimental conduction of civic education curriculum** project in 12 primary and secondary schools in the school years 2012/2013 and 2013/2014. Also, according to the decision of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, in 2012, the Centre became responsible for the external evaluation of experimental programme of Health education and in October 2012 it started to work on the development of this project.

In September 2012, for the needs of the **development of the state qualifying/licensing exam**, the collaboration between the Ministry of Public Administration (Professional workgroup for the state qualifying/licensing exam) and the Centre was established. The established collaboration is related to the trainings which the Centre can conduct in the field of the development of the exams and exam items.



Development and Improvement of the exam materials

The goal of the **Writing study: development of objective criteria for the assessment of written work from Croatian language** project is to establish and confirm the universal model for the objective assessment of written work from Croatian language which can be applied to assessment of different forms of written work as a supplement to other assessment criteria. Also, the Centre conducts the project **Development of the conceptual framework for the Croatian language examination in primary and secondary schools** whose goal is to develop a document which defines general goals of Croatian language testing in four education cycles described in NCF with regards to four language activities: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Besides Croatian language, the Centre also analyses other subjects among which, for 2012, we need to point out the Geography exam. Through qualitative and quantitative analysis of content and subject characteristics of the Geography exam, the conditions within the creation of guidelines for the improvement of the design procedure and the quality of new exam materials, as well as suggestions for teachers regarding the teaching practice (related to the teaching processes) are realised. This is the reason why the **Secondary analyses of contents and results of Geography State Matura exam 2010 – 2012** are being conducted.

IPA projects

The Centre is included in the project **Improving the quality of in-service teacher training system**. Project started on May 2, 2012 and it will be conducted until the end of April 2014. The project partner is Education and teacher training agency. National centre for external evaluation of education submitted project proposal to IPA within the Component IV – Human Resources Development. The name of the project is **Development of national qualification standard for teachers as a basis for the implementation of the system for the teacher licensing**.

International studies

In collaboration with International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IAEEA) and with the support of the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, the Centre participates in several international studies. In 2011, the conduction phase of the **Progress in International Reading Literacy Study – PIRLS 2011** project has successfully finished and during 2012 activities related to the making of the report named **PIRLS 2011 Report on reading achievements** have been conducted. Also, in 2011, the conduction phase of the **Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study – TIMSS 2011** project has successfully finished and during 2012 activities related to the making of two reports have been conducted: **TIMSS 2011 Report on mathematics achievements** and **TIMSS 2011 Report on science achievements**. Besides these projects, the Centre participates in the **ICILS 2013** project whose goal is to collect internationally comparable indicators of students' computer and information skills and knowledge, as well as contextual factors which contribute to the development of computer and information literacy of students and in 2012 the field trial has been conducted.

In 2011, the **European Survey on Language Competences – ESLS 2011** project has finished and during 2012 activities related to the making of the report named **First European Survey on Language Competences** have been conducted. This is the first conduction of such international study and the results of this

project were presented to public on press conference in June 2012.

The Centre also participates in the **Programme for the International Student Assessment, PISA** – the comprehensive international evaluation of knowledge and skills among 15-year-old students, whose goal is to determine the students' level of preparation for entering the adult world as well as for the continuation of education or inclusion in the process of work. During 2012 the main assessment within the PISA project has been conducted and the results are expected in December 2013. Finally, the Centre participates in **TALIS** – the international study which accentuates teachers. The field trial was conducted during 2012.

The State Matura

The school year 2011/2012 was a third year of the State Matura conduction which includes a two-year preparation of exam materials and organisation in all conduction segments. Report on preparation, organisation and conduction of the State Matura in 2011/2012, which contains detailed description of the exam preparation and conduction course, is available on the webpage of the Centre and in October 2012 its print edition was delivered to the competent Ministry and The Education, Science and Culture Committee of the Croatian Parliament. During preparation, organisation and conduction of the State Matura exams, in dealing with activities related to the monitoring of the entire process and coordination of information support and communication with candidates, the Centre worked together with external associates: FEEC, ASHE /CAO, KING, CARNET, with continuous support from MoSES.

The Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, as a competent body for monitoring and evaluation of the quality of the State Matura conduction, since the beginning of development and implementation of the State Matura, continuously and efficiently collaborates with National centre for external evaluation of education. Previous collaboration experience leaves no room for doubt in the continuation of such collaboration and this results in the satisfaction of all students, their parents, school principals and teachers.

Monika Vričko, M.A., MoSES

By the end of 2012 reviewed exams for 28 subjects, which will be taken within the State Matura in the school year 2012/2013, were submitted. Professional review of all exams, after methodological and psychometric review made by the employees of the Centre, was conducted by the university professors and other experts and associates. The professional review was followed by the language editing and, in January 2013, by the further procedure including graphic design, proof reading and, finally, exam printing. Also, applying for the State Matura exams for the year 2012/2013 started and first seminars with exam coordinators were held, with continuous support and communication with schools, candidates and all interested individuals.

I would like to thank all those persons from NCEEE who continuously helped me during these six years. I have to say that the State Matura project is the best move within the education system since our country declared independence. Finally all students in the state take the same exams, have the same conditions and I can finally claim that a student coming from my small school has the same possibilities for enrolling in any university as the students coming from urban areas.

Damir Šurjak,
exam coordinator, Secondary school Hvar,
branch Jelsa

Training of employees and external associates of the Centre

National centre for external evaluation of education continuously conducts trainings of its employees and external associates in the state and abroad, through the projects of the Centre and in collaboration with scientific, education and other related institutions.

The Centre organises trainings for assessors, authors of the items, associates of the Network for the support, exam coordinators, quality teams, members of professional workgroups as well as members of the committees and all this for the purpose of the improvement of the quality of work.



Themes of the lectures and workshops prepared and held by the employees of the Centre:

- External evaluation and self-evaluation
- National centre for external evaluation of education – role and tasks
- Role and significance of external evaluation in the education system of the Republic of Croatia
- Development of external evaluation and self-evaluation in secondary schools
- State Matura, preparation, organisation and conduction
- External evaluation in the function of the improvement of work quality in schools
- Conduction of external evaluation in primary schools in the school year 2012/2013
- Self-evaluation of secondary schools in the school year 2011/2012
- CREDA analysis and School development plan
- Guidelines for completing the form Report on the self-evaluation of schools

- Self-evaluation of early childhood and preschool education institutions
- Positive experiences of the associates of the Network for support of the self-evaluation of schools
- Creating school support model for different situations
- Characteristics of different item types applied in schools
- Principles for the creation of objective item types
- Qualitative and metric analysis of the external evaluation
- Significance of the content analysis and results of external evaluation
- Writing assessment and Guided reading
- Education outcomes and evaluation elements in teaching process
- What other countries have done on the basis of the PISA results and we have not
- Teacher agreement in evaluation of cognitive levels of Mathematics items
- Methodology and results – awareness and attitudes of secondary school students about entrepreneurial contents

Professional meetings and conferences organised by the Centre in 2012

- Discussion on basic features of Croatian language in teaching and improvement of the exam materials for the school subject Croatian language, 20/06/2012
- Analysis of content and results of the State Matura exam in Mathematics 2010 – 2012, 4/10/2012
- Final conference of the project „Prevalence of entrepreneurial contents in secondary schools“, 6/11/2012
- Conference „International studies“, PIRLS, ESLS, TIMSS-Mathematics, TIMSS-Science 18/12/2012



STATE MATURA MATERIALS IN 2012

- Exam catalogue 2012/2013 – www.ncvvo.hr
- Guidebook for students 2012/2013 – www.ncvvo.hr
- Brochure – applying for the State Matura exams and applying for universities – www.ncvvo.hr
- Regulation on State Matura exams (MSES)
- Report on preparation, organisation and conduction of the State Matura 2011/2012 – www.ncvvo.hr
- Statistical and psychometric report – www.ncvvo.hr
- Presentation: the State Matura exams 2011/2012 – www.ncvvo.hr
- Analysis of the answers in the State Matura exams – www.ncvvo.hr

PUBLICATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES IN 2012

- ESLS – First European Survey on Language Competences, final report
- PIRLS 2011 – Report on reading achievements
- TIMSS 2011 – Report on mathematics achievements
- TIMSS 2011 – Report on science achievements
- Handbook for self-evaluation of early childhood and preschool education institutions
- Perception of entrepreneurial career among secondary school students in the Republic of Croatia; I. Elezović, V. Tafr, M. Sertić, Novi Sad, Srbija
- Analysis and categorisation of writing mistakes among students with dyslexia at the end of the secondary school; S. Fulgosi, S. Horvatić, Zagreb
- Analysis of the Biology test solvability according to the concepts and levels of knowledge with examination and assessment adjustment; S. Horvatić, Zagreb
- Relation between success and structure of the State Matura candidates for the Geography exam in 2010 and enrolled students in 2010 in study programmes in the Department of Geography, Faculty of Science, University of Zagreb; B. Vranković, R. Vuk, Z. Žitnik, Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina

- Which cognitive level do knowledge test really measure? Comparison of students, teachers and test makers perspective; N. Čurković, Vancouver, Canada
- Information ecology surrounding educational institutions: Possibilities of developing knowledge intrapreneurship climate; I. Elezović, J. Muraja, Dubrovnik
- Differences in educational achievement of students in geography on external evaluation exam in the Republic of Croatia as indicator of marginalization; B. Vranković, Dubrovnik
- Using focus groups as tool in evaluating new educational programs; I. Elezović, N. Čurković, Lund, Sweden
- Education for education in Croatia; J. Muraja, Dead Sea, Jordan
- European Survey on Language Competences in the Croatian Context; J. Buljan Culej, Bruxelles, Belgium
- A self-assessment model for preschool educational institution; S. Antulić, Opatija
- The importance of school quality assurance teams in the self-evaluation process; S. Antulić, T. Crnobrnja Miljković, Madrid, Spain
- Challenges and implication of State Matura in Croatia; J. Muraja, Sydney, Australia
- Introduction of external evaluation of education in Croatia; J. Muraja, Perth, Australia



ANNUAL PLAN 2013

PREPARATION, ORGANISATION AND CONDUCTION OF THE STATE MATURA

National centre for external evaluation of education conducts external evaluation activities in the Croatian education system as well as exam conduction activities based on the national standards, including the State Matura. The school year 2012/2013 is the fourth year of the State Matura conduction which includes a two-year preparation of exam materials and organisation in all conduction segments.

In accordance with determined procedures, professional coordinators in collaboration with members of professional workgroups conduct the training of assessors. The training of assessors, for all State Matura subjects, will be conducted from April to June 2013. The training and the conduction of the exams are followed by the two-phase assessment procedure and determination of the passing scores before the announcement of the results.

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT

Secondary schools – Health care

This is the third conduction cycle of the **Health care in secondary schools** national exam. Committee for the development of exam materials make preparations for the conduction of the exam which will be held on April 30, 2013.

Preparations include:

- review, language editing and proof reading of exam questions
- selection of new questions and those from the last year which will be tested again
- conduction logistics and communication with schools in which the exam will be conducted.

Interpretation of results and report on the conducted exam will be carried out during September and October.

Primary schools – Mathematics (3rd cycle)

National assessment in primary schools – Mathematics, lasting from 2011 to 2014 (NE-PS-MATH-2011-2014), is a comprehensive project whose goal is to encompass temporary levels of knowledge, skills and abilities of the students in the field of Mathematics at the end of primary education and also to determine potential problems related to the acquisition of knowledge and competences in Mathematics during the primary education.

Results gained by the realisation of this project will provide objective insight into the situation related to the teaching of Mathematics in Croatian primary schools. Data acquired from their quality and comprehensive analysis will significantly contribute to the understanding, improvement and development of the general compulsory and, especially, Mathematics education system.

FINAL EXAMS

Development of final exams at the end of education cycles

Development of final exams at the end of education cycles is a project which started in September 2011 and which will be conducted until May 2015.

Goals of the project are:

- to develop model for the knowledge examination at the end of education cycles
- to develop model and procedures of testing

according to the contemporary approaches to the knowledge examination

- to examine and evaluate the levels of knowledge in the following school subjects among eight grade students: Croatian language, English language, History and Physics.

The field trial will be held between March 4 and 8, 2013. It will include 600 primary schools from the entire country and it will be conducted on a sample of eight grade students.

Development of item bank

The goal of the project is to create application and basis system for the support of the entire process of the knowledge examination as a primary activity and specific projects of the Centre, as well as creating system for the permanent storage, search and management of the items.

In order to create quality system, the project is organised in phases and in the end it is planned to integrate it into the unique system for the management of specific projects of the Centre.

INTERNATIONAL STUDIES IN EDUCATION

IEA/ International project - PIRLS 2016 (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study)

After the participation in the PIRLS 2011 project and very good result of the Croatian students, Croatia will participate in the PIRLS 2016 project, whose fourth cycle starts in February. The continuation of the participation in the following cycle of the project enables monitoring of trends and evaluation of the improvement of student reading achievements and trends in home and school climates which influence the learning of reading.

IEA/ International project - TIMSS 2015 (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study)

After the participation in the TIMSS 2011 project, Croatia will participate in the TIMSS 2015 project as well. The continuation of the participation in the following cycle of the project enables monitoring of trends in Mathematics and Science achievements of students, as well as trends in home and school climates which influence the learning of Mathematics and Science.

IEA/ICILS

The goal of the ICILS 2013 study is to collect internationally comparable indicators of student computer and information skills and knowledge, as well as contextual factors which contribute to the development of computer and information literacy of students. The goal of the ICILS 2013 study is to examine outcomes of the student computer and information literacy in participating countries, collect data about education policies and practices related to the development of the computer and information literacy, professional knowledge of teachers and school digital resources in participating countries.

International project - ESLC (European Survey on Language Competences)

The ESLC study was started in order to provide participating countries with comparable data about foreign language competences as well as an insight

into the good language learning practices. ESLC is a study which should provide information about language learning, teaching methods and curriculums.

After informing broader public about results of the mentioned international projects, the conduction of secondary analyses for all three projects continues and estimated time for printing national reports is the end of the year.

OECD/PISA

The Centre participates in *The Programme for the International Student Assessment*, PISA in 2013 as well. It is the most comprehensive international evaluation of knowledge and skills among 15-year-old students, whose goal is to determine the students' level of preparation for entering the adult world as well as for the continuation of education or inclusion in the process of work.

OECD/TALIS

The goal of the TALIS 2013 study is to collect internationally comparable indicators of teacher profession in order to develop the policy which would make teacher profession more appealing and efficient. The goal of the TALIS 2013 study is to compare education systems of participating countries by collecting data about teachers from fifth to eighth grade of primary school with a focus on education and professional training of teachers, evaluation of teacher work and feedback on evaluation, school climate, school management, teachers' beliefs and teaching methods.

SELF-EVALUATION OF EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Primary school self-evaluation

National centre for external evaluation of education conducts this project systematically since the school year 2008/2009. The continuation of the project conduction is planned for 2013 in the form of support for primary schools in the self-evaluation process.

The conduction of analyses and professional training of school quality teams should be followed by the preparation of Report on the conduction of the self-evaluation process in primary schools.

Secondary school self-evaluation

Self-evaluation of secondary schools is the project which continued with its realisation in the school year 2012/2013 as well. Schools can conduct the self-evaluation individually or with the support of associates of the Network for the support of the self-evaluation of schools.

Training and exchange of experiences among associates of the Network and all schools included in the project were planned for 2013, as well as making of Report on the project conducted in the school year 2012/2013.

Self-evaluation of early childhood and preschool education institutions

The goal of *Self-evaluation of early childhood and preschool education institutions* project, that National centre for external evaluation of education started to conduct in the school year 2012/2013, is a systematic monitoring and improvement of the work quality in kindergartens, independent of establisher, as well as in primary schools within which the early



childhood and preschool education programme is being conducted.

After the conduction of analyses and activities of all three conduction cycles, the preparation of Report on the conduction of the self-evaluation process in the early childhood and preschool education institutions is planned.

Development of licensing model on the basis of teacher competences

National centre for external evaluation of education established Committee for the development of the document named *Model for teacher licensing system based on national qualification standard for teachers* which should contain scientific-theoretical foundation based on the analysis of documents from the field of teacher standard and licensing system.

End users in the project are primary and secondary school teachers and students of the faculties of teacher education.

The conduction of the licensing system based on the defined qualification standard should contribute to the competitiveness of teachers in the labour market in Croatia and member countries of the European Union.

EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAMMES

Civic education

External evaluation of experimental conduction of the Civic education curriculum is conducted in twelve primary and secondary schools in the school year 2012/2013 and 2013/2014.

Health education

The goal of this project is to conduct independent and professional external evaluation of experimental conduction of the Health education curriculum, as well as examination of attitudes and behaviours through accompanying questionnaires for teachers and parents.

Pre-testing of the Health education exam items will be conducted in primary and secondary schools during 2013 and the initial examination, which will be held in September 2013, will be followed by statistical and psychometric analyses of the initial examination results.

Development of standardised Croatian language test for children who do not have knowledge of Croatian language or their knowledge is insufficient

The test is intended for the evaluation of knowledge of Croatian language with the enrolment in the first grade of primary school for children who do not have knowledge of Croatian language or their knowledge is insufficient. Experts in the field of Croatian language as a second language, with the guidance of Department for quality assurance in education, will work on the development of standardised Croatian language test.

IMPROVEMENT OF EXAM MATERIALS

Qualitative analysis of Geography State Matura exam 2010, 2011 and 2012

The goal of this project is to make the overview of the discipline of Geography which will serve as a starting point in the analyses of Curriculums, but also to gain better insight into the realised educational achievements of students which were examined by the State Matura exam in the optional subject Geography 2010, 2011 and 2012.

Writing study: Development of objective criteria for the assessment of written work from Croatian language

The goal of this project is to establish and confirm the universal model for the objective assessment of written work from Croatian language which can be applied to assessment of different forms of written work as a supplement to other assessment criteria.

Development and improvement of exam catalogues and exam materials

From its beginning, National centre for external evaluation of education continuously conducts scientific research whose goal is to develop and improve exam catalogues and exam materials. Experts in the Centre, together with external associates, work on the development of exam catalogues and exams on the basis of research and experience gained in actual practice. In 2013, changes in the exam catalogues for the State Matura in several subjects will be introduced and they will later reflect in the smaller changes of structure and content of the exam as well as in the assessment form.

Secondary analyses of the results of international projects

During 2013, national analysis of ESLC, PIRLS 2011 and TIMSS 2011 results will be conducted. On the basis of the qualitative analysis of the exam and achieved results, the Centre plans to make suggestion of elements for the improvement of the teaching quality of the examined subjects and to professionally train educators in order to improve methodical approach. Also, the analysis will include testing of the significance of differences between particular variables and it will show how statistically significant are the results related to the socioeconomic indicators.

DEVELOPMENT OF EXAMINATION STANDARD

Conceptual framework for the Croatian language examination

The goal of this project is to create Conceptual framework for the Croatian language examination in primary and secondary schools. The development of this document is based on the official curriculum for Croatian language in primary and secondary school, National Curriculum Framework (NCF) and scientific knowledge which is important for the content of Croatian language. Document is divided into four units according to the four education cycles which are determined by the NCF. Each cycle contains goals in four language activities: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Text of the document which is created by the Committee is referred to the public discussion of all participants of the education system.

COLLABORATION WITH THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Development of the state qualifying/licensing exam

In September 2012, for the needs of the development of the state qualifying/licensing exam, the collaboration between the Ministry of Public Administration (Professional workgroup for the state qualifying/licensing exam) and the Centre was established. The established collaboration is related to the trainings which the Centre can conduct in the field of the development of the exams and exam items.

PARTICIPATION IN OTHER PROJECTS

Improving the quality of in-service teacher training system

National centre for external evaluation of education is included in the project *Improving the quality of in-service teacher training system* (IPA project, Component IV – Human Resources Development). Project is conducted by a consortium led by SPAN Consultants in partnership with CIEP and WUS Austria. The project partner is Education and teacher training agency (ETTA).

EDUCATION

Training of employees and external associates of the Centre

National centre for external evaluation of education continuously conducts trainings of its employees and external associates in the state and abroad, through the projects of the Centre and in collaboration with scientific, education and other related institutions.

The Centre:

- conducts advisory work in schools – assists schools in the self-evaluation and development based on the results of standardised testing
- organises seminars for teachers in the field of education evaluation and assessment of student progress
- organises seminars for external associates of the Centre during the process of preparation and conduction of exams (commissions specialised for certain subjects, exam coordinators, assessors, authors of the items, etc.).

PRODUCTION AND PUBLISHING PROJECTS

Development and print of the support and assistance materials for students and all candidates for the State Matura exams, for particular subjects, is planned for 2013. Also, the publishing of handbooks for the support in the work of members of professional workgroups and authors of the exam items, teachers and other participants of the education process is planned. Finally, during the development of the projects which the Centre conducts, final reports and monographs, with important and valuable information about the project and the examination results, will be printed.

DATA PROTECTION

Information coming from the activities of the National centre for external evaluation of education, related to the preparation and conduction of exams, national exams and the State Matura exams, as well as information related to the preparation and conduction of international studies - PISA, PIRLS, TIMSS, TALIS, ICILS and ESCL, according to the *Act on the National Centre for External Evaluation of Education* (Official Gazette, No. 151/04) is considered a trade secret.

All new employees and external associates who will collaborate with the Centre in 2013 will sign a non-disclosure statement.

Education is a human right with immense power to transform. On its foundation rest the cornerstones of freedom, democracy and sustainable human development.

K. Annan

FINAL WORDS

Our doors are open to all the questions, concerns and comments and most utterly for collaboration in the field of external evaluation and quality assurance in education and Croatian educational system.

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