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I N T E R V E N T I O N

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The area of economic and social rights is very wide and complex. Therefore it is not possible to address all the rights guaranteed by the European Social Charter in such a short intervention, like this one.

The right to work is one of the most important rights guaranteed by the Charter, as well as by conventions of International Labour Organization, since the achievement of many other rights, which stem from work, is enabled through work.

Through work, skills and competencies of the employed are maintained and new ones are developed, which directly contributes to maintaining of employability of workers in the long run. Widening of social and business contacts through work directly influences the social inclusion of the employed person.

Therefore, finding solutions for the problem of unemployment, or achieving increased employment is a **key challenge** for many European states, and also for the Republic of Croatia. It is also one of the five Headline targets in Europe 2020 Strategy, which promotes a model of growth based not only on the increase of the GDP.

In the context of the prolonged economic crisis that affected the EU and the Republic of Croatia, and the need for fiscal consolidation and implementation of austerity measures, the sustainability of citizens' rights included in the Charter has become questionable in many countries. The biggest problem is a trend of increasing unemployment and loss of jobs, which directly affect the income-side of the State Budget and the future sustainability of social rights and entitlements – pension insurance, health protection and social care. Finding the most appropriate and efficient balance between the necessary austerity measures and measures for fostering growth and development is a crucial challenge for any society.

However, **investments in Active labour market policy measures** (ALMP measures) have the multiplying positive effect on the society when a person works; for example, through increase in state income from taxes and social contributions, higher expenditure on goods and services, which affect the general economic growth, while at the same time resulting in decrease of expenditures for social care benefits, and reduces the number of citizens at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

In spite of the crisis, Croatia has significantly increased the expenditure on Active labour market policy measures in the last three years. The number of beneficiaries has increased from 27.265 persons in 2011 to 44.779 persons in 2013, which is an increase of 64 percent. In the first nine (9) months of 2014 the number of beneficiaries has amounted 46.099, which is an increase of 2.9 percent in comparison to the same period in 2013.

Measures are targeted at specific groups of unemployed persons who are in unfavourable position on the labour market, as well as employed persons in risk of losing their jobs. Following groups of measures are implemented: employment incentives, self-employment incentives, support for upskilling, education of unemployed persons and occupational training without commencing employment.

Special attention is dedicated to tackling the youth unemployment. Croatia was among the first EU member states which started implementing special measures for youth in July 2013 (set of measures „Young and creative“), which are now, alongside with other measures, included in the Youth guarantee implementation plan.

Another important aspect of the Right to work is the **necessity to change the perception of work itself**. In the ever changing business conditions and environment in the modern world, there are no longer „secure“ jobs in the traditional sense.

Life-long investment in one self, through work and learning, and with activities for own career development, with readiness for changing working sector or occupation or type of job, as well as the willingness to change the of place of work, are the only pre-conditions of secure employability.

Human potentials are the most valuable resource of every country. In unfavourable demographic trends and ageing population conditions, only the economically independent persons, here we specially emphasize youth and women, can contribute to future positive developments regarding family perspective and progress in economy and society as a whole.