

## CROATIA

### Extract from National Programme for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights 2008 - 2011

#### **The elderly**

The share of elderly people in the total population in the Republic of Croatia has reached 17,7%, which puts Croatia close to the EU average of 17%, with a decreasing share of persons up to the age of 14 (currently 15,2 %). The aging population – a problem faced not only by Croatia but numerous countries in Europe and throughout the world – requires continued care for the requirements of elderly citizens, taking into account their specific needs, living conditions and other relevant standards in the field of human rights.

Different projects should continuously be encouraged to improve the quality of living among elderly people through measures aimed at keeping the aged and infirm with their families, developing services and different forms of non-institutional care to meet the needs of the elderly and enabling them to take an active part in social life (education, volunteering in non-governmental organisations, etc.). Programmes and projects need to be developed to facilitate adaptation to a new way of living for persons who have just retired.

Of particular importance is the care of elderly persons, including the infirm, who live in single households and in rural areas in island communities.

Intergenerational solidarity programmes are focused on improving the quality of life for the elderly, including efforts to encourage the organisation of a network to help the aged, especially in rural areas, and raise public awareness of the need for mutual aid and neighbourly support. These programmes are to be implemented through co-operation between central governmental agencies and local and regional governments, non-governmental organisations, religious communities and humanitarian organisations.

The situation of the elderly population should also be improved by encouraging voluntary work through the organisation of activities at all generational levels, in particular, those performed by young people for the benefit of the elderly, but also vice versa. Involving the elderly population in different social activities would enable the tapping of the huge potential offered by the expertise and experience of people of that age. At the same time, all intergenerational solidarity programmes should encourage the use of the community's existing resources for improving the quality of life for elderly persons in that community. The potential of the existing infrastructure and the existing institutional forms of care should be utilised, and community-based activities of non-governmental organisations need to be fostered. At the same time, the implementation of such programmes should involve the engagement of unemployed able-bodied persons.

#### **Additional contribution**

In Croatia, in the social welfare system, elderly persons exercise the rights to cash benefits (maintenance benefit, care and assistance benefit, right to personal disability benefit) and social services in the institutional or extra-institutional form (accommodation, in-home care and assistance).

In accordance with the Social Welfare Law (Official Gazette, no. 33/12), benefits are the following:

- Maintenance benefit – is granted to a single person or a family without the means of maintenance in the amount as stipulated by the Law, who are not able to obtain them through work, income from property or otherwise. In 2011, this right was exercised by 10 559 persons aged over 65.

- Care and assistance benefit is a financial assistance granted to a person who is not able to provide for own basic living needs and is provided assistance with shopping, preparation of meals, feeding, cleaning of the apartment, dressing and personal hygiene. In 2011, this right was exercised by 44 529 persons aged over 65.

- Personal disability benefit is a financial assistance intended for persons with severe disabilities or other permanent and severe health changes, for the purpose of inclusion into the everyday life of the community. The precondition for exercising this right is that the personal disability benefit is not exercised on other grounds. In 2011, this right was exercised by 1 532 persons aged over 65.

- Accommodation for the elderly and infirm is the care outside one's own family, which is either institutional (homes and similar forms) and extra-institutional (foster family, family home, organized living or residential units community). It includes accommodation, food, clothing, personal hygiene, nursing, health care, caretaking, freetime.

Institutional accommodation services are provided by 139 homes for elderly and infirm persons. Three homes were founded by the Republic of Croatia, whereas the other homes were founded by the local (regional) government, religious communities, companies, associations and other domestic and foreign legal/physical persons). There are also 87 other legal persons providing social welfare services without having founded a home. A total of 17 536 persons are placed in these homes (2,31% of the total population of the elderly and infirm).

Extra-institutional accommodation services for elderly and infirm persons are provided by family homes and foster families through care in smaller units functioning as families. A total of 5 655 people are provided for through this form of care (0,75 % of the elderly population).

- The right to care and assistance service is granted to a person who, due to physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment or permanent health changes or old age, requires care and assistance of another person. There are 62 service providers: 29 centres for in-home care and assistance through which 1353 persons exercise their rights and 33 homes for elderly and infirm persons through which 3730 persons exercise their rights.

In addition, through programmes „*In-Home Assistance for Elderly Persons*“ and „*Day-Care and In-Home Assistance*“ various social services are provided in beneficiaries' homes and day-care centres which include: food provision, assistance with housework and personal hygiene, basic health care, mediation in the exercise of rights, company and conversation, participation in educational, sports, cultural and entertainment activities. Priority is given to single-person families, persons with serious health conditions and low economic status as well as persons at risk of social exclusion and poverty. The programmes are implemented in accordance with the Cooperation Agreement between the Ministry and units of local and regional government. The programmes, which encompass 15 500 beneficiaries in 160 local communities, are implemented by 91 service providers („*In-Home Assistance for Elderly Persons*“–58i „*Day-Care Center*“– 33).