



Conclusions of the 18th International Symposium on Quality
Vodice, Croatia, 22 March to 24 March 2017

18th International Symposium on Quality organized by the Croatian Quality Managers Society (CQMS) was held from March 22nd to 24th, 2017 in Vodice. Co-organizers of the Symposium are: 1) MSEECQI – Middle and South East European Countries Quality Initiative; 2) Herzen State Pedagogical University, Faculty of Management, St. Petersburg, Russia; 3) Department of Production Engineering and Safety, Faculty of Management Czestochowa, University of Technology, Czestochowa, Poland; 4) University North, Varaždin – Koprivnica, Croatia and 5) Polytechnic in Šibenik, Šibenik, Croatia.

The Symposium was held under the working title:
„QUALITY AS A STRATEGY“

The Symposium patrons: Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection, Croatian Chamber of Economy, Croatian Accreditation Agency, State Office for Metrology, Croatian Business Council for Sustainable Development, Šibenik – Knin County, City of Vodice, Tourist Board Vodice, Zagreb County Tourist Board, Faculty of Economics and Business Zagreb (Postgraduate specialist university study programme Quality management). Media patrons: Kvalitet & izvrsnost, Belgrade; Poslovni savjetnik, Zagreb; Privredni vjesnik, Zagreb; Portal Kvalitet, Belgrade; Portal Info Vodice, Vodice. Donors and sponsors: Croatian Chamber of Economy; Croatia Air Traffic Control; Oskar – Center for Quality and Development, Zagreb; Oskar Edukos, Zagreb; University North, Varaždin – Koprivnica; Zagreb County Tourist Board; University College Algebra, Zagreb; Zagreb Airport Ltd.

The Symposium was attended by 120 participants from Croatia and abroad, as follows: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czechia, Finland, Italy, Hungary, Germany, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia and the United Kingdom. Students and faculty of the Polytechnic Šibenik also participated. Within the Symposium a Panel titled Quality as Strategy was organized, with panellists from four and participants from ten countries. A meeting of the Steering Committee of the MSEECQI took place, an association consisting of fifteen institutions and organizations from eight countries. A book was promoted, written by the authors: Renata Stasiak Betlejewska (Poland), Marek Potkány (Slovakia) and Luminita Parv (Romania), titled: „Contemporary Trends in the Innovative Production and Services Management“, published by the Croatian Quality Managers Society and Polskietowarzystwo Ekonomiczne, Oddział w Czestochowie, Poland, issued in Poland in 2016 and granted the “Book of the Year” award of the CQMS. Certificates were ceremonially handed to the new generation of EOQ managers who completed the training courses according to the harmonized scheme of the European Organization for Quality, or extended the validity of their certificates.

The Symposium Proceedings accompanying the Symposium (as a book and a CD) contains 36 scientific and professional papers prepared by authors from 11 countries. After presentations of the papers and held discussions, the HDMK Steering Committee formulated the following symposium conclusions:

1. The majority of works belong to the following thematic units: *Sustainable development management, Quality in production and construction, Quality in Health and Tourist Services and Quality as a strategy.*





2. Problems of occupational health and safety in modern world economy that result in personal suffering of workers and their families and huge costs for companies and the society as a whole can be solved by training organizations to prepare sound and not only formal risk assessment by using up-to-date methods and tools and establishing a system of proactive risk management.
3. The construction sector is one of the most important sectors of global economy. Quality of products and services in construction and its control is not only an economic aspect. At the same time it is a social context affecting not only the final price, but having an impact on future maintenance costs of structures.
4. The common goal of all interested parties in tourism should be constant investing in touristic offer, not only as concerns progress in architectural and material performance, but mostly as concerns investments in education of all participants in a tourist destination, and realization of a humane approach based on cooperation, tradition, culture and confirming identity of the destination through tourist activity.
5. Establishment and continuous improvement of education quality is one of the most important goals of modern educational system. Quality as a strategy in education should put emphasis on meeting standards and expectations of all stakeholders in the education and science system, and the society as a whole, with continuous improvement of business processes. Additional training of teachers and managements is essential for achieving this.
6. In the past twenty five years Croatia had various development concepts (strategies): 1) ownership transformation and privatization; 2) accession to Euro Atlantic integrations; 3) savings at all levels; 4) financing projects from the EU funds. These concepts (strategies) had positive, but also negative effects. The basic goal, a competitiveness increase of the Croatian economy, was not achieved. On the global competitiveness scale published by the World Economic Forum, in the period from 2004 to 2016 Croatia was at the 70th place on the average, out of 132 to 144 countries of the world.
7. Croatia lacks general development strategy, from which sector strategies at local administration and regional self-government levels would then result, as well as strategies of economic entities and other organizations. Absence of a general strategy and individual sector strategies prevents creation of synergistic effect, the result of which should be an increase of competitiveness of Croatian economy.
8. Environmental protection in Croatia deserves further research. Despite the recent war, no one in Croatia talks about waste of war. Strategic documents presenting the institutional framework of environmental protection deserve special attention and revision, in order to improve their quality and the degree of their harmonization, as well as harmonization with the EU documents, at the same time respecting particularities recognized in the Republic of Croatia.
9. Corruption index for 2015 shows that corruption has spread over the whole world. At the same time, this year people went out on the streets to protest against corruption, and in all countries they sent a clear message to the ruling ones: it is time to fight corruption. Corruption is recognized as the most dangerous form of behaviour and business operations and a generator of poverty. The standard ISO 37001:2016 – Anti-bribery management system may help in this battle, so it is recommended to the Government to pass a Regulation on mandatory establishment of anti-





bribery management system, with compulsory additional training of the management and all employees.

10. As a small country, with limited resources, Croatia cannot significantly influence global economic, political and other movements. Through membership in Euro Atlantic integration, primarily NATO and the EU, it is at the source of information, with a certain degree of security guaranteed, and through the institutions it has a corresponding influence on decision making. However, the problem of better positioning at the international level remains when it comes to production, services, political influence, market possibilities.
11. Various concepts for development of the Croatian economy are offered: demographic recovery, attracting tourists from far countries, public administration reform, environment conservation, curricular reform, strengthening security and intelligence community, etc. However, a common denominator is missing, a cohesion factor compatible with all mentioned concepts; there is no strategy that would determine a shared direction to increase of economy competitiveness. The Symposium participants propose quality as a strategy.
12. Quality as a strategy is a concept that may help Croatia to position itself better in the international economic and political scheme in a relatively short period. It is a concept that may mobilize the entire potential of the society. Each individual every day in her/his workplace, regardless of the position in the society and the degree of education, may contribute to development of quality of: products, services, business processes and management systems. Quality is a resource with economic value and it is not sufficiently utilized in Croatia.
13. Implementation of quality management principles into strategies at all levels and their realization through everyday contribution of each individual can create a significant additional value and notably improve competitiveness of the Croatian economy. In order to make it possible, quality should be accepted as a business philosophy, as everyday practical action, as a way of life.
14. Measure of success of quality as a strategy is the degree of economy competitiveness. Quality should stand before profit. Quality is a cause, and profit, GDP growth, salaries, workplaces and investments are a logical consequence.
15. Integration of quality is a concept and a paradigm to describe the orderliness level of an organization's management system. Integration of quality involves standardized quality management concepts, quality improvement and assurance, and it is developed in the form of practical organizational solutions.
16. Quality should be recognized as the critical factor of organizational strategy.
17. Quality does not cost anything because positive effects created by materialization of quality as a strategy by far exceed investments in quality.
18. For proclamation and realization of quality as a strategy at all levels in Croatia it is necessary to: 1) make a political decision and 2) involve institutions representing the highest scientific authority, such as universities and the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, as well as planned involvement of organizations having quality in their programs.





19. In Croatia there is a potential of fifty and more doctors of science competent for quality and engaged in quality and other management systems beside their basic profession. Directing their efforts to the same goal through quality as a strategy at all levels will ensure improvement of Croatia's position on the global competitiveness scale.
20. Accepting quality as a strategy is the most important structural reform, and consequently quality should find its place in curricula of formal education and lifelong learning programs.
21. Responsibility for quality is non transferrable. It is individual, binds everyone, every day, in each working place, and particularly politically engaged individuals and employees in public administration bodies.

The framework for preparation of these conclusions was presented to the participants of the 18th International Symposium on Quality in Vodice at the symposium closing on March 24th, 2017, and the conclusions were adopted by the CQMS Steering Committee at its meeting held on April 4th, 2017 in Zagreb.

Zagreb: April 4th, 2017

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