



Conclusions of the 19th International Symposium on Quality
Plitvice Lakes, Croatia, 21st 23rd March 2018

19th International Symposium on Quality organized by the Croatian Society of Quality Managers (the HDMK) was held from 21 to 23 March 2018 in Plitvice Lakes. The Symposium was co-organized by: 1) MSECQI – Middle and South East European Countries Quality Initiative; 2) Herzen State Pedagogical University, Faculty of Management, St. Petersburg, Rusija; 3) Department of Production Engineering and Safety, Faculty of Management Czestochowa, University of Technology, Czestochowa, Poljska; 4) University North, Varaždin – Koprivnica, Croatia and 5) Polytechnic “Nikola Tesla”, Gospić, Croatia.

The Symposium was held under the working title:
„QUALITY AS A CONCEPT OF DEVELOPMENT“

The Symposium patrons: Ministry of Economy, Entrepreneurship and Crafts, Ministry of Environment and Energy, Croatian Chamber of Economy, Croatian Accreditation Agency, State Office for Metrology, Croatian Business Council for Sustainable Development, Lika – Senj County, Zagreb County Tourist Board, Faculty of Economics and Business Zagreb (Postgraduate specialist university study programme Quality management). Media patrons: Privredni vjesnik, Zagreb; Kvalitet & izvrsnost, Beograd; Ličke novine, Gospić; Portal Kvalitet, Beograd; Portal inDirektno, Gospić; scientific magazine Production Engineering Archives, Poland. Donors and sponsors: BDO Savjetovanje d.o.o., Gradska plinara Zagreb d.o.o., Croatian Chamber of Economy; Oskar – Centar za razvoj i kvalitetu, Zagreb; Oskar Edukos, Zagreb; University North, Varaždin – Koprivnica; Zagreb County Tourist Board; TÜV Croatia d.o.o.; University College Algebra, Zagreb; Zračna luka Zagreb, d.o.o.

The Symposium was attended by around 100 participants from Croatia and abroad, as follows: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czechia, Finland, Kosovo, Macedonia, Germany, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Serbia and Croatia. Students and professors of several universities, faculties and polytechnics also participated in the symposium. Within the Symposium a panel was organized under the title Quality as a Concept of Development, with panellists from four countries and participants from seven countries. A meeting of the Steering Committee of the MSECQI took place, an association consisting of fifteen institutions and organizations from eight countries. A book written by Krešimir Buntak, Matija Kovačić and Tijan Šebestijan was promoted, the title of the book is: „8D metoda – Sustavno rješavanje reklamacija“ (8D Method – Systematic Solution of Complaints); it was issued in Croatia in 2018.

The Symposium Proceedings accompanying the Symposium (as a book and a CD) contains 43 scientific and professional papers prepared by authors from 12 countries. After presentations of the papers and held discussions, the HDMK Steering Committee formulated the following symposium conclusions:

1. The majority of papers relate to the following thematic areas: *Process management in theory and practice, Quality in education and sports, Quality as a concept of development and Quality in auditing.*





2. According to the research conducted by the World Economic Forum every year, in the period 2004 - 2017 Croatia is on the average at the 70th place on the global competitiveness scale, out of 132 - 144 countries of the world. In the last five years it stagnates between the 74th and 77th place.
3. Croatia also stagnates as concerns the standard of its citizens in relation to the EU-28 average. GDP per capita in Croatia in the period from 2005 to 2016, expressed as a percentage of the EU-28 average, ranges between 55% and 63%, and in 2016 it has not yet reach the level of 2008, the year preceding the economic crisis. In 2016, according to the mentioned indicator, out of EU-28 states only Rumania and Bulgaria take a worse position, but they record a significant growth in 2016 in comparison to 2005 (Rumania index 1.66; Bulgaria 1.32; Croatia 1.9) and in comparison to 2008 (Rumania index 1.18; Bulgaria 1.14; Croatia 0.95)
4. The main limiting factors to competitiveness of Croatian economy, according to the World Economic Forum are: 1) inefficient state bureaucracy; 2) political instability; 3) tax regulations; 4) high tax rates; 5) corruption; 6) lack of capacities for innovation.
5. Improvement measures should be taken in the following directions: 1) creation of a new value system in society to be based on: work, knowledge, integrity, competition, quality, business ethics, social responsibility, excellence, democracy; 2) giving up political clientelism as a dominant form of political acting; 3) quality of public administration as a service to economy and population; 5) quality of the institutional framework in the areas of taxes and labour, but also in other spheres; 6) converting human potential to human capital, and 6) ensuring resources for development and application of innovations in all areas of activity.
6. Competitiveness of economy is a complex phenomenon conditioned by many factors which can be divided in accordance with the definition of the state as “a political community” and as “a management system“. In order to contribute to increase of competitiveness it is not enough to understand “the state” only as a political community, but also as a management system.
7. Croatia lacks general development strategy from which sector strategies and strategies at local administration and regional self-government levels would result, as well as strategies of economic operators and other organizations.
8. The reforms started (tax, education reform) and the announced ones (reform of public administration through the project of quality system implementation in public administration and adoption of an institutional framework for preparing, and the preparing a general development strategy of Croatia) can be considered positive from the viewpoint of ensuring assumptions for increase of competitiveness.
9. Instituting and continually improving quality of education is one of the most important goals of modern education. In higher education institutions it is no longer sufficient to conduct researches about the quality of the teaching process as one of the fundamental processes. Processes are only one of structural elements of management systems, and it is therefore necessary to look into the quality of higher education institutions as of management systems.





10. Various concepts for the purpose of development of Croatian economy have been proposed: demographic renewal, attracting tourists from far countries, regionalization, public administration reform, environmental protection, curricular reform, strengthening security and intelligence community, etc. However, a common concept is lacking, the one that would present a unique direction towards increase of economic competitiveness. The Symposium participants offer quality as a concept of development.
11. Quality can be a concept of development. It is not a state, but a process. Successfulness depends on changing awareness and on creating a new value system for society.
12. Quality as a concept of development can ensure a better position for Croatia in the international economic and political spectrum in a relatively short period. It is a concept that can mobilize all potentials of the society.
13. In Croatia there are examples of companies, even in the majority ownership of the Republic of Croatia listed as companies of strategic and special interest, in which top management decide not to conduct surveillance audits and recertification of already implemented and certified quality management systems under ISO 9001, by reason of alleged savings. Such decisions are detrimental and demonstrate incompetence of these managements, both concerning quality and management in general, and to some extent they can be a product of disorderly situation in the market of management systems consulting and certification services.
14. Management systems auditing (quality, environment, risks, anticorruption, social responsibility and other management systems) should be based on the rules of the IAF – International Accreditation Forum and conducted in such a way as to ensure that the auditing process provides added value for the organization.
15. Increase of economic competitiveness by accepting quality as a concept of development on the path to excellence, is the most effective measure of implementing demographic renewal policy.

The framework for drawing up these conclusions was presented to the participants of the 19th International Symposium on Quality in Plitvice Lakes at the symposium closing on 23 March 2018, and the conclusions were adopted by the HDMK Steering Committee at its 6th meeting held on 27 March 2018 in Zagreb.

In Zagreb, 27 March 2018

HDMK Steering Committee

Doc. dr. sc. Miroslav Drljača
President

