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PRESS RELEASES

An Overview of Social Protection Benefits in Croatia*

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The Institute of Public Finance published a database called *An Overview of Social Protection Benefits in Croatia*, created for the purposes of the project *Application of Microsimulation Models in the Analysis of Taxes and Social Benefits in Croatia; AMMATSBBC*. It contains selected benefits provided by central government, the cities of Zagreb, Split, Rijeka and Osijek, and the counties of Split-Dalmatia, Primorje-Gorski Kotar and Osijek-Baranja. The purpose of publishing the Benefits Overview is to emphasize the importance of regular, transparent and comprehensive reporting for a successful and effective social policy at the central and lower levels of government.

In September 2015, the Institute of Public Finance launched a research project called *Application of Microsimulation Models in the Analysis of Taxes and Social Benefits in Croatia*. One of the project's goals was to develop a microsimulation model (miCROmod) for the simulation of selected taxes and benefits at the central and lower levels of government in Croatia. As such a model requires a detailed and comprehensive overview of taxes and social benefits, an *Overview of Social Protection Benefits in Croatia* (hereinafter: *Benefits Overview*), has been created and is briefly presented below.

The *Benefits Overview* has been provided in response to a lack of a publicly available 'benefits catalogue' in the country. Information on social benefits is scattered across the websites of various institutions (ministries, public institutes, units of local and regional self-government, etc.). Within the *Synergistic Social System* project, an inventory of 130 social benefits provided at the central government level, and about 2,700 benefits paid by the counties, cities and municipalities, has been **made and analysed**. Information and figures on the benefits are also available in **ESPROSS reports** of the Croatian Bureau of Statistics, as well as in the **EUROMOD Country Report: Croatia**. The *Benefits Overview* provides well-structured and detailed information and data on selected benefits, presented separately for central government and a number of counties and cities.

The *Benefits Overview* is an Excel database where benefits are sorted according to functions (health care, disability, survivors, old age, family, unemployment, housing, social assistance and transport); each benefit is accompanied by information on: the definition of beneficiary, legislation underlying that definition, competent legislative and administrative bodies, and benefit characteristics (the allocation source and the benefit amount calculation base). Subject to data availability, the number of beneficiaries and total annual benefit amounts are also indicated.

* This article is based on a research project called **Application of Microsimulation Models in the Analysis of Taxes and Social Benefits in Croatia; AMMATSBBC**, financed by the Croatian Science Foundation (UIP-2014-09-4096). For more detailed information on the project, see **Newsletter, No. 104**.

The database contains short instructions for easy viewing of and browsing through the benefits. An accompanying *Database Description*, with a detailed description of the *Benefits Overview* is also available. Table 1 shows the numbers of benefits by group of functions for central government and the counties and cities covered by the database.

Table 1 *Benefits by group of functions*

| Function | GG | CZG | CST | CRI | COS | SDC | PGKC | OBC |
|----------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| (1) Sickness / health care | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| (2) Disability | 34 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| (3) Old age | 5 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| (4) Survivors | 17 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| (5) Family / children | 24 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| (6) Unemployment | 6 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| (7) Housing | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| (8) Social exclusion | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| (9) Transport | 0 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 102 | 15 | 15 | 10 | 13 | 3 | 1 | 4 |

Note: GG – central government, CZG – City of Zagreb, CST – City of Split, CRI – City of Rijeka, COS – City of Osijek, SDC – Split-Dalmatia County, PGKC – Primorje-Gorski Kotar County, OBC – Osijek-Baranja County.

Source: *Database Description*

Data on the number of beneficiaries and total annual benefit amounts at the central government level were taken from multiple reports published by the responsible government and administrative bodies. The problem was, however, that a lot of the data were unavailable or inadequate. For example, for some benefits, only the amounts and not the numbers of beneficiaries were specified, or vice versa. For others, there were no reports on the numbers of beneficiaries or total amounts paid.

Consequently, a brief analysis of data availability at the central government level in 2015 was conducted, showing that, out of a total of 102 benefits, no data existed on the numbers of beneficiaries for 46, and no data on the annual amounts for 49 benefits. The most exhaustive information on social benefits is provided by the Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy, which recently began publishing data on benefits for parents and adoptive parents. A detailed analysis of the availability of these data can be found in the *Database Description*.

The purpose of publishing the *Benefits Overview* is to highlight the importance of regular, transparent and comprehensive reporting for a successful and effective social policy at the central and lower levels of government.

The *Benefits Overview* is not comprehensive, but it is tailored to the needs of the aforesaid research project (the focus is mainly on cash benefits and cost subsidies granted to citizens by central government and a group of selected cities and counties). Nevertheless, the database may be useful to domestic researchers and analysts and help in compiling a complete official catalogue of social protection benefits in Croatia. With this in mind, readers are invited to visit the *Benefits Overview* and contact us with any comments or queries.