

National Tripartite Event Croatia 2024 – Report

Country: Croatia

Place: University of Zagreb, [Ulica Radoslava Cimermana](#) 88 (Aula room)

Date: 19 April 2024 (event held during the second day of the SRCE DEI conference 2024. “DEI” stands for “E-Infrastructure Days”)

Format: In-person

National Organiser: University of Zagreb Computing Centre (SRCE)

Executive summary (already published as short article on EOSC-A website)

Croatia’s second National Tripartite Event took place during the third day of the 2024 edition of the “Days of e-Infrastructure” (DEI) conference at the University of Zagreb. Like the rest of the conference, the NTE was organised by SRCE as Mandated Organisation of the Republic of Croatia in the EOSC Association. The event gathered around 30 attendees on site, plus others online.

After a short welcome by organiser **Slaven Mihaljevic** from SRCE, the NTE was opened by **Ivan Maric** (SRCE), who provided a summary of the current situation of Open Science in the country from the point of view of the Croatian National Open Science Cloud Initiative HR-OOZ. Since the first NTE event last year, HR-OOZ has established its organisational and governance structure, developed the technical components to enable long-term sustainability, put the onboarding process in place, and created the service catalogue. **Hrvoe Mestric** from the Ministry of Science and Education followed with a description of the steps taken from Croatian lawmakers to develop policies to introduce and establish Open Science and the FAIR principles in the Croatian education and research system. Highlights of the achievements include the joining of OECD by Croatia and related to it the preparation of the national guidelines for Open Science.

New policies do not happen *in vacuo*: the European Commission (as executive body of the European Union) has been instrumental in developing EU-wide policies to *push* Open Science among Member States, as addressed by EC staff member **Yannis Rodopoulos**. The many questions after the last talk of the first session on the current developments around the idea of organising EOSC as “federation of nodes”, as introduced by the Commission in 2023, given by **Bob Jones** (member of the Board of Directors of the EOSC Association), reflected the raising interest in the Croatian community on the future of Open Science in the country and the rest of the continent. A key takeaway is that the Association must channel the voice of the scientific community to define the next steps of the conception and start of the EOSC Federation.

In the second part of the event, representatives of key institutions in Croatia described the situation and progress of different aspects of Open Science in the country. This session offered an excellent overview of the many initiatives to make FAIR data and more generally Open Science a reality in the country: **Dejana Carić** from Croatia’s Science Foundation (HRZZ) showed the improvements introduced in recent funding programmes; **Jana Krišković Baždarić** from the University of Rijeka shared results of the Full Open Science pilot project of the Young Universities for the Future of Europe (YUFE) network in the promotion of FAIR principles and Open Science practices among research groups; **Dragica Šalamon** from the University of Zagreb Faculty of Agriculture described the how the University learnt from other academic institutions thanks to a Twinning project to improve the Open Research Data skills of its staff.

These local perspectives were completed by the talk of **Miro Pušnik** from the Central Technical Library (CTK) at the University of Ljubljana, who described the successful experience of neighbour country Slovenia through the SPOZNAJ project, co-funded by the



Government and the EU, to support the Implementation of Open Science Principles in Slovenia. Slovenia provided the audience with an example of how the reform of national laws instigated by the signature of ERA Action 1 on Open Science and the implementation of EOSC has been translated into policies under which national research performing organisations operate. The necessary transformation is facilitated by the data experts hired so far (expected to remain at the institutions when [the implementation project](#) ends) and a “Data Professionals Training Program”.

1. Overview

A summary of the complete SRCE DEI conference is available at SRCE site¹ (quite extensive). The event gathered over 400 participants from the scientific and higher education system, public administration, economy, including representatives from organisations outside Croatia interested in the status and progress of infrastructures for the scientific community.

Croatia’s National Tripartite Event was organised by EOSC Association Mandated Organisation SRCE (University of Zagreb Computing Centre).

In the first part of the NTE, the perspectives on the development of EOSC from the point of view of Croatian actors were presented. There were presentations by members of the EOSC Tripartite Governance (European Commission, EOSC Association, EOSC Steering Board) and by a representative of the Croatian Ministry of Science and Education (MoSE). These talks highlighted the progress of the Croatian Open Science Initiative (HR-00Z), the support (and leadership) provided by the European Commission, and the strong engagement by the Association with the community.

After the break, the event narrowed the focus on the skills and competences required for Open Science (including a mention of the pilot project [“Full Open Science \(FOS\)”](#) from the [YUFE European University Alliance](#)) and their relation to EOSC and the view from the Croatian National Science Foundation ([HRZZ](#)). The European Competence Framework for Researchers. The examples placed by the [SPOZNAJ](#) project in Slovenia and the experience in the University of Zagreb on building capacity on open data.

2. Main highlights

Ivan Maric, Croatian representative at the EOSC Steering Board, discussed mostly what is happening in Croatia, rather than topics specific to EOSC. The main advances in Croatia since the last NTE are the further development of the national open science initiative HR-00Z, and the preparation of a National Plan for Open Science. The EOSC Association, represented by Bob Jones, is strongly involved in the progress of the EOSC Federation, leading the writing of the EOSC Federation Handbook, and engaging the community with a wide variety of activities.

Croatia is now mandating that as much “digital scientific information” as possible be published in Open Access. Croatia’s Science Foundation (HRZZ) as main research funder has prepared a guide for publication of research results in Open Access, including archival in repositories.

¹ <https://www.srce.unizg.hr/en/news/srce-dei-2024-conference-held/989>

3. Tripartite collaboration

Ivan Marić, head of SRCE and Croatian representative at EOSC Steering Board, focused on the advances made since the 2023 NTE, which include the establishment of organisational and governance structures in Croatia's Open Science initiative (HR-00Z), the implementation of technical components that can help with the long-term sustainability (by providing tools and services that are demanded by the community), the start of a service catalogue, and the preparation of the National Plan for Open Science, now under revision by the Government. He further mentioned the funding programme from the Ministry of Science and Education to incentivise the adoption of Open Science. Also, some plans for the future.

Hrove Mestric from the Ministry of Science and Education highlighted the Ministry's long experience with all things related to Open Science, dating back since at least 1997, and remarked that Croatia has consistently worked on the policy side to make it a success in the country. (More about the Government's actions in section 4 below).

Yannis Rodopoulos (European Commission, DG RTD, Legal department) remembered EC's role in keeping the "policy momentum" and stressed the importance of understanding EOSC as a process with specific goals, conceived in a very different way than a project. The effect of the Letta report on the design of the European Research Area including EOSC will also be explored. On the policy side, Skills4EOSC is yet another tool to develop policies, especially those related to skills & training). At the moment (April 2024) there are many unknown details about the EOSC Federation, but it is expected that it will be possible to remove uncertainties within the next year.

Bob Jones (EOSC-A BoD) described how EOSC-A is engaging with its members as a representative group in the European scientific landscape to discuss on the concept and design of the EOSC Federation and accompanying EOSC Nodes. This has been achieved by way of communication workshops, a dedicated session at the 2023 EOSC Symposium, or a position paper (published in November 2023). The Association is now leading the writing of EOSC Federation Handbook following a co-creation process, under the mandate from the EOSC Tripartite Governance (in particular, the Tripartite Group). He also listed the benefits for organisations interested in becoming an EOSC Node, including increased visibility, better access to cross-domain resources, the use of common (pooled) services, more training opportunities, and (potentially) assistance with financial support. Many details need still to be worked out—the answers to many questions are currently not known. This should be partially solved in the coming months and furthermore during 2025 and beyond.

4. Government level contributions

Hrove Mestric (MoSE) provided an overview from the policy side. The long-term experience in Open Science topics in the Ministry is focused on encouraging researchers to adopt Open Science practices. This is supported from the Government by several actions of national and European scope, e.g.

- Croatia is securing access to OECD;
- The Croatian Government is using funds from the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) to boost research capabilities;
- ERA Action 1 about EOSC has been signed;
- Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education (Oct 2022), "one of basic principles for scientific activity" in Croatia, prescribes obligation to deposit thesis in national repositories;

- The recently finished Science and Technology Foresight Project (CroRIS) was designed to develop the national CRIS system. The project included patents to encourage researchers to do applied research.
- National Infrastructure Development Roadmap of Croatia (2023-27) promotes the FAIR principles.
- The Government is signing agreements with research performing organisations regarding funding. The Research Institutes (e.g. Ruđer Bošković Institute) started the process in December 2023, now to be followed by universities.
- National Guidelines for Open Science are currently being finalised by a Working group within HR-OOZ. This seems to be part of the requirements of joining OECD.

Dejana Caric (Croatian Science Foundation, HRZZ, main funding agency in the country): HRZZ currently funds around 600 projects. Data Management Plans have been introduced as a requisite to receive funding since 2022. HRZZ has prepared guides for publication or research results in Open Access, including archiving in repositories. Croatian researchers have received from HRZZ the mandate to publish in Open Access much “digital scientific info” as possible.

5. Relevant quotes

Yanis Rodopoulos (EC): “It should never be forgotten that EOSC is a process with specific goals, and *definitely* not a project.”

Hrove Mestric (MoSE): “The Ministry of Science and Education has a long-term experience in all things Open Science. We started already in 1997 working on related topics, and have been encouraging researchers to adopt Open Science practices since then.

Bob Jones (EOSC-A): “It is very good for the future of Open Science and EOSC that the European Commission has put the ‘seed in the ground’ with the procurement of the EOSC EU Node. It will not answer all questions, and more sides have to be involved, but it is a start in the right direction”.

Dragica Šalamon (University of Zagreb): “It is easy talking to decision makers about Open Science, because most of them are already convinced of the need to adopt Open Science practices. It is more difficult though when they have to actually implement things and make operational changes. Since funding programmes end in 2026, it may be possible to get many interested in adopting Open Science because the funding may depend on them complying with the principles stated in the funding conditions”.

6. Future plans and actions

WG & findings, National Data Infrastructure project that includes sustainability, strategy, domain-specific and distributed inst support for researchers; Data Curation Centre network; removing burden from researchers; discussion of Croatian candidates to create an EOSC Node, looking to involve all of the scientific community.

7. Use cases or practices

Jana Krišković Baždarić (University of Rijeka) reported on the development of skills through the YUFE pilot project “Full Open Science: Full Open Science (FOS)”, aimed at promoting the “cultural change” among researchers needed for the successful widespread adoption of Open Science. 30 teams were selected at the start of the project, and were informed about the benefits (e.g. extra support) if they agree (and commit) to adopt Open Science (including Open

Access) practices. In the end, the five teams that fulfilled criteria received support in their journey towards Open Science practices, and were showcased as role models or ambassadors for other groups at the University. The future evolution of the initiative is however unknown.

Dragica Salamon (University of Zagreb) described how the University recognised the need to build capacity on Open Data among researchers. They found that despite the wealth of initiatives at national and international level promoting Open Science practices, there is not really any obligation among researchers or educators to go open. Another important finding is that there is not too much information available on cost-benefit analysis of adopting Open Science practices. The University started working in this area via a Twinning project.

8. Main indicators

8.1 Indicators organisation event

Official name of the event: SRCE DEI 2024

Starting Date: 19 April 2024

Thematic profile: The Croatian NTE took place during the “e-infrastructure days” organised by EOSC-A Mandated Organisation SRCE. The second part of the event focused on the skills and competences required for the adoption of Open Science practices among researchers. Acquisition of new Open Science-related competences and skills is needed to be able to make the most of the opportunities opened by EOSC.

Target audience:

8.2 Profile of participants

Total number of participants: 30

In-person: 30

Virtual (online): N/A

Gender (%): Male: 43% Female: 57% Other: N/A

8.3 Type of participants affiliation

Research Performing Organisations: 19

Research Funding Organisations: 2

Service providing Organisations: 4

Libraries: 3

Public administration: 0

Others: 2

8.4 Sectors

Mostly research, education and public, and few companies (also from the education sector)

8.5 EU HE INFRAEOSC projects, dataspace or other partnerships participation

- OpenAIRE NOAD (Ruđer Bošković Institute)
- COhort cOmmunity Research and Development Infrastructure Network for Access Throughout EuropeOpenAIRE Advance – COORDINATE (Institute of Social Sciences Ivo Pilar and CROSSDA)

- Piloting open and responsible Activities and Trainings Towards the Enhancement of Researchers Networks - PATTERN (Ruđer Bošković Institute)
- Open Science Plan-Track-Assess Pathways – OSTrails (Ruđer Bošković Institute)
- YUFE Full Open Science (FOS) (University of Rijeka)
- EOSC-Beyond (SRCE)
- CRAFT-OA (SRCE, University of Zadar)

9. Programme and List of organisations that participated at the National Tripartite Event

PROGRAMME

| Session 1: Perspectives on EOSC development | | |
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| | Speakers | Title/topic |
| 10:00 – 10:15 | Ivan Marić <i>University Computing Centre SRCE</i> | Introduction & welcome, state of play in Croatia |
| 10:15 – 10:30 | Ministry of Science and Education of Croatia | TBC |
| 10:30 – 10:50 | Yannis Rodopoulos <i>Directorate General for Research and Innovation (DG RTD), European Commission</i> | The role of the European Commission in the development of EOSC: State of play and challenges ahead |
| 10:50 – 11:10 | Bob Jones (online) <i>EOSC Association</i> | TBD |
| 11:10 – 11:30 | Discussion | |
| 11:30 – 12:00 | Coffee break | |
| Session 2: Skills and Competences for Open Science and EOSC | | |
| | Speakers | Title/topic |
| 12:00 – 12:15 | Dario Capezzuto (online) <i>Directorate General for Research and Innovation (DG RTD), European Commission</i> | ResearchComp: The European Competence Framework for Researchers |
| 12:15 – 12:30 | Dejana Carić | HRZZ's Position on Open Science - Step Forward |
| 12:30 – 12:45 | Jana Krišković Baždarić <i>University Library Rijeka</i> | Skills development through YUFE pilot project "Full Open Science (FOS)" |
| 12:45 – 13:00 | Miro Pušnik <i>Central Technical Library at the University of Ljubljana</i> | Project "Support for the Implementation of Open Science Principles in Slovenia" (SPOZNAJ) |
| 13:00 – 13:15 | Dragica Šalamon <i>University of Zagreb Faculty of Agriculture</i> | Data literacy and open data: experience from building capacity on open data research at the University of Zagreb |
| 13:15 – 13:30 | Discussion | |
| 13:30 – 14:30 | Lunch Break | |

Working language: English
 Moderator: Slaven Mihaljević, SRCE
 YouTube stream: TBC