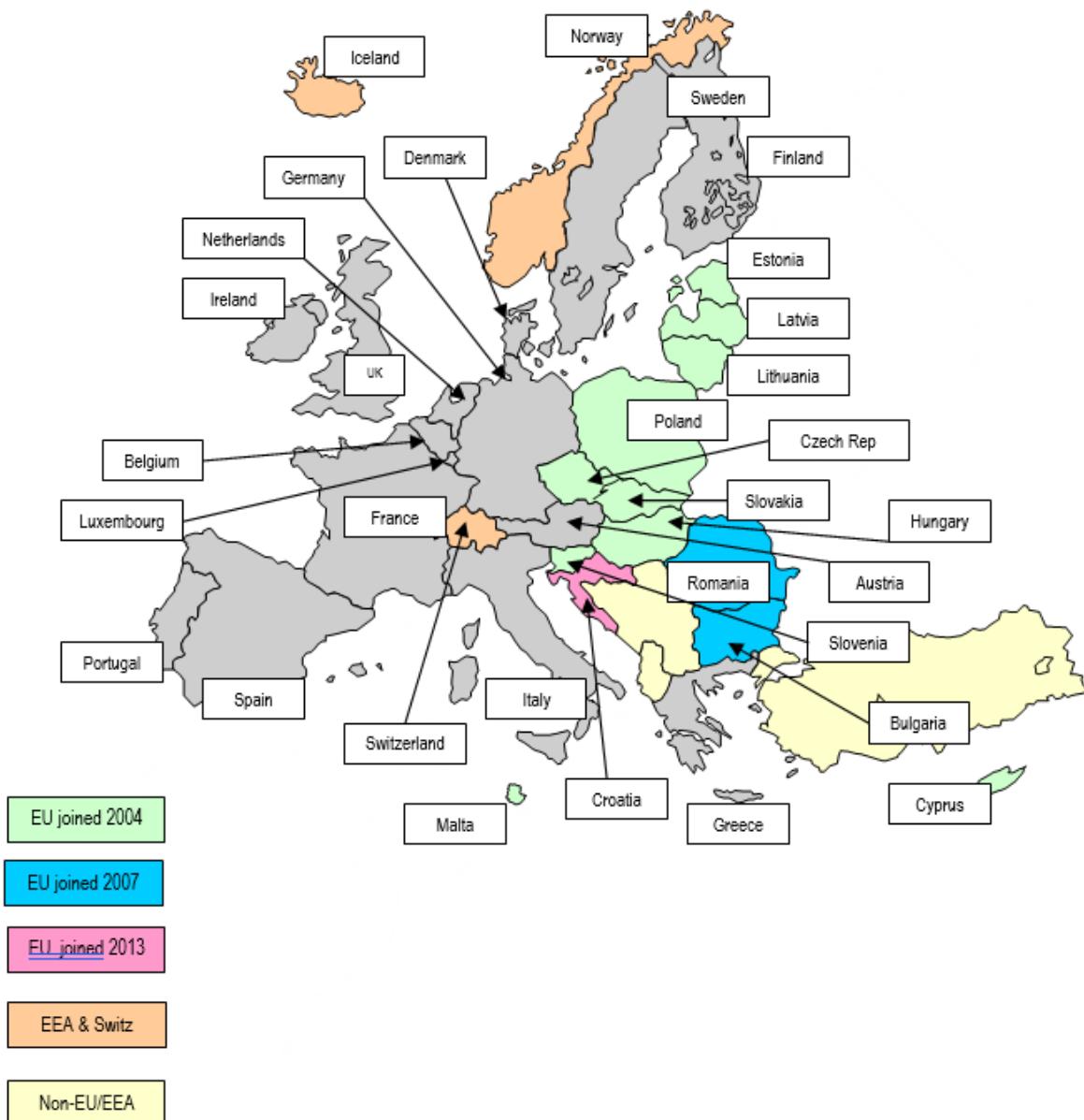


**Council of European Dentists**

# **MANUAL OF DENTAL PRACTICE 2026**

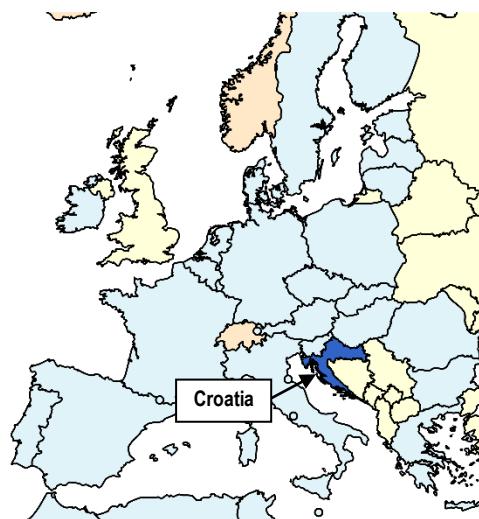
**Croatia**

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2026





## Croatia



Date of last revision: 02 February 2026

In the EU/EEA since	2013
Population (2024)	3 861 967
GDP PPP per capita (2024)	€30 493
Currency	Euro (€) (EUR) since 1 January 2023
Official language(s)	Croatian

Healthcare is funded through two channels, mainly “mandatory health insurance contributions” paid by everyone receiving any kind of wage, compensation or pension, and state budget revenues from general taxation. Voluntary complementary health insurance also covers co-payments.

Number of dentists (registered)	5 591
(Active) dentist to population ratio (per 100 000 inhabitants)	144.7
Members of Dental Association	Varies

Members of the Croatian Dental Chamber include dental practitioners, technicians, assistants and hygienists. The use of specialists is widespread, but development of dental assistants and technicians has been consistent over the past few years. Continuing education for dentists is mandatory.

## Government and healthcare in Croatia

The Republic of Croatia was established in 1991. Croatia is a member of the European Union, the Eurozone, the Schengen Area, NATO, the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the OSCE, the World Trade Organization, a founding member of the Union for the Mediterranean, and is currently in the process of joining the OECD.

Croatia is located in South-eastern Europe, bordering the Adriatic Sea (and Italy), between Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, Hungary, Montenegro and Serbia. The land area is 56,594 sq km. The capital is Zagreb.

The political system is a parliamentary democracy. The chief of state is the President, and the head of government is the Prime Minister. The Inner Cabinet is composed of the Council of Ministers, named by the prime minister and approved by the parliamentary Assembly. There is a unicameral Assembly or Hrvatski Sabor (151 seats; members elected from party lists by popular vote to serve four-year terms).

The President is elected by popular vote for a five-year term (eligible for a second term); the leader of the majority party or the leader of the majority coalition is usually appointed Prime Minister by the President and then approved by the Assembly. Administratively Croatia is split into 21 counties (zupanije, zupanija - singular) among which is a capital - city (grad).

The basic health insurance scheme (called *obvezno*, translated as “obligatory”) providing health insurance coverage to all citizens is implemented by the Croatian Health Insurance Fund (CHIF) and regulated by the Compulsory Health Insurance Act. The system is composed of an umbrella of primary and basic health care services free of charge and available to all citizens,

including primary health care, specialist-consultative health care, hospital health care, radiology, laboratory and dental services. Covered dental services encompass almost all basic dental procedures including restorative, endodontic, basic periodontal, oral surgery, oral diseases, emergency dental care, specified orthodontics up to 18 years old and some prosthodontics.

Healthcare under the public scheme is funded through general taxation and additional “health insurance contribution” paid by everyone receiving any kind of wage, compensation or pension.

Significant changes in the CHIF’s structure of revenue can be noted from the start of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, with decrease in revenues from mandatory contributions from 81.9% in 2019 to 74.2% in 2020 and simultaneously increase in state budget contributions from 9.6% to 13.3% in 2020<sup>1</sup>.

Voluntary health insurance made up 5%, compulsory health schemes made up 86%, and out-of-pocket payments (OPP) made up 9% of total health expenditure in Croatia in 2021.

Dental care expenses amounted to 28% of all out-of-pocket payments recorded in Croatia in 2021<sup>2</sup>.

	Year	Source
% GDP spent on all healthcare	10.9	2023 OECD
% of this spent by government	77.60	2021 OECD
% of dental care costs covered by public insurance	55	2023 OECD

<sup>1</sup> Croatian Health Insurance Fund (CHIF, 2021), European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies : [9789289059060-eng.pdf \(who.int\)](https://www.who.int/health-topics/croatia-country-health-profile-2023)

<sup>2</sup> OECD Health Statistics 2023, in European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies : [Croatia: Country Health Profile 2023 | European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies \(who.int\)](https://www.who.int/health-topics/croatia-country-health-profile-2023)

## Education, Training and Registration

### Undergraduate Education and Training

In Croatia, there are currently four dental faculties located in Zagreb, Rijeka, Split and Osijek.

To enter dental school, students must complete secondary school education in Croatia (ca. age 18). Following secondary school and before applying to college, students are required to pass national state graduations ("Državna matura"). These consist of written exams in chemistry, biology, physics and mathematics. The admission process for dental faculties is based on the validation of psychomotor learning tests, obtained secondary school grades as well as an oral examination.

Year of data	2022
Number of publicly funded schools	4
Student intake	160
Number of graduates a year	144
Gender balance (% of female students)	71 %
Duration of studies (years)	6

The oldest dental school is in Zagreb, which was founded in 1962; the school in Rijeka was founded 1973, while the dental faculty of Split was founded in 2006. The University of Osijek was inaugurated in 2017.

Quality assurance for dental schools is provided by the Ministry of Education.

Programs taught in English are also available at several dental universities, including the University of Zagreb, and the University of Rijeka since 2020.

### Qualification and Vocational Training

#### Primary dental qualification

Dental students complete a six-year university programme in dental medicine. This primary degree awards the title of Doctor of Dental Medicine (DMD: doktor dentalne medicine (dr. med. dent.)), after which authorisation is granted to apply for a licence at the Croatian Dental Chamber (CDC).

#### Vocational Training (VT)

Vocational training is part of 6<sup>th</sup> Year on the Faculty which includes practical work under the supervision of qualified dental practitioners.

### Registration

To register in Croatia, a Doctor of Dental Medicine must have a recognised degree or diploma awarded by one of the four Croatian dental faculties. After graduating, the Croatian Dental Chamber delivers the licence to practice.

The Croatian Dental Chamber is also responsible for setting regulated standards for services and for monitoring the quality of dental care. Only then a dentist is licensed to work independently. There is no registration fee at the CDC, a yearly membership fee however exists, amounting to 95,56€.

Dentists who have qualified from outside of Croatia do not need to undertake vocational training if they are from EU countries.

Dentists from countries outside the EU/EEA need to pass written exam, as a confirmation of their qualifications.

#### Language Requirements

There is a formal need to understand and speak the Croatian language to a European C1 level to register.

### Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Continuing education is mandatory, and the rules are set in the law of health protection. 10 points must be obtained every year over a period of 6 years. The licence remains valid for 6 years, after which period renewal must be requested.

CPD is organised and accredited by the Croatian Dental Chamber (CDC) (deciding the number of courses and standards). Courses are given by higher education dental institutions, postgraduate education organisations, and the CDC.

CPD may take the form of case presentations, clinical hands-on courses, conferences, congresses, symposiums, lectures, seminars, web-based learning and video case presentations, and cover clinical and professional activities as well as interdisciplinary health activities such as principles of integrated care and OneHealth.

### Specialist Training Requirements

Specialist training is organised by the dental schools of Zagreb, Rijeka and Osijek. Training lasts for 4 years (for oral surgery) and 3 years (for all other specialisations) and includes University examinations and written specialist theses.

Specialist education leads also to a degree, for example: "Specialist in Endodontics", delivered by the Ministry of Health. There is training in 8 main specialties:

- Pedodontics
- Endodontics and Restorative dentistry
- Oral surgery
- Oral medicine
- Orthodontics
- Periodontics
- Prosthodontics

There is also a medical specialty of Oral Maxillo-facial surgery.

Licenses for dental specialists are issued by the Croatian Dental Chamber.

## Workforce

### Dentists

Year of data	2024
Total Registered	5 437
In active practice	5 591
(Active) dentist to population ratio (per 100 000 inhabitants)	144.7
Percentage female	68%
Qualified overseas (approximately)	200
*Active dentists only	

There is an increase in workforce as demand rises. However, the dentist unemployment rate is reported by the Chamber as "high" (133 unemployed and registered at the Croatian employment service in July 2022).

Approximately 200 overseas qualified dentists have been registered in Croatia since 2013.

#### *Movement of dentists across borders*

A slight unbalanced movement of dentists can be observed in Croatia with an average departure of 5 dentists and an average influx of 10 dentists.

### Specialists

A patient has the right to go to a specialist but has to be referred by his contracted dentist. Patients can also go without referral, but then this is fully private, and the patient has to pay for the service.

Year of data	2022
Orthodontics	100
Oral surgery	120
Endodontics & restorative	NA
Pedodontics	30
Periodontics	40
Prosthodontics	120
Oral medicine	30
* Registered professionals	

### Auxiliaries

Year of data	2022
Hygienists	58
Dental technicians	2123
Dental Chairside assistants	1696

The use of dental auxiliaries in Croatia includes dental technicians and dental chairside assistants, and to a much more limited extent hygienists.

### Dental Technicians

Dental technicians train for 4 years in respective secondary dental schools (6 schools in Croatia), and they receive a diploma

on qualification for dental technicians. All dental technicians have to undertake one-year of vocational training after secondary school, after which they have to pass a state examination of the Ministry of Health, in order to obtain a licence and authorisation to practice through the Croatian Dental Chamber.

Continuing dental education is mandatory for dental technicians. 10 points must be obtained every year over a period of 6 years. The licence is valid for 6 years, after which the renewal of the licence must be requested.

Dental technicians are authorised to practice independently in commercial laboratories or laboratories within the national health service institutions, or in laboratories part of private polyclinics.

### Dental Assistants

Since 2009, dental chairside assistants are officially recognised and practice under the direction and supervision of a Doctor of Dental Medicine and are increasingly present alongside dental practitioners in Croatia.

Dental chairside assistants, similarly to dental technicians, have to complete 4 years of study in secondary vocational schools. They also must carry out mandatory vocational training following the completion of their studies and undergo state examinations. They are officially registered by the Croatian Dental Chamber.

Continuing dental education is mandatory for dental assistants. 10 points must be obtained every year over a period of 6 years. The licence is valid for 6 years, after which the renewal of the licence must be requested.

Dental assistants work according to the instructions and necessarily under supervision of a Doctor of Dental Medicine.

### Dental Hygienists

Dental hygienists remain a limited but growing practice in Croatia. Two Universities offer higher education in dental hygiene (Osijek and Rijeka), over the course of 3 years. A Bachelor of Dental Hygiene is obtained after the completion of the 3 years.

Continuing dental education is mandatory for dental assistants. 10 points must be obtained every year over a period of 6 years. The licence is valid for 6 years, after which the renewal of the licence must be requested.

Dental hygienists are authorised to plan, educate, inform and carry-out independently sanitary protection procedures of the oral cavity.

## Other Useful Information

<b>Main national associations and Information Centre:</b>	
<p><b>Hrvatska Komora Dentalne Medicine (HKDM)</b>  <b>Croatian Dental Chamber</b></p> <p>Kurelčeva 3/II, 10000 Zagreb  Tel: +385 1 4886 710  Fax: +385 1 4816 540  Website: <a href="http://www.hkdm.hr">www.hkdm.hr</a>  E-mail: <a href="mailto:hkdm@hkdm.hr">hkdm@hkdm.hr</a></p>	<p><b>Specialist associations and societies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Croatian Society of Periodontology</li> <li>• Croatian Society for Dental Implantology</li> <li>• Croatian Endodontic Society</li> <li>• Croatian Orthodontic Society</li> <li>• Croatian Society for Oral Medicine and Pathology</li> <li>• Croatian Society of Pedodontics</li> <li>• Croatian Society for Pediatric and Preventive Dentistry</li> <li>• Croatian Society for Dental Prosthetics</li> <li>• Croatian Society for Oral Surgery</li> </ul>
<p><b>Publications:</b></p> <p><b>Vjesnik dentalne medicine</b> – for dental practitioners  <b>Dental Design</b> – for dental technicians  <b>Smile</b> – for patients  <b>Dentalni Assistant</b>: for dental assistants</p>	<p><b>Other official organisations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Croatian Medical Association</li> <li>• Croatian Christian Society of dental medicine</li> <li>• Croatian Dental Society</li> <li>• Croatian Association for multidisciplinary cooperation in dental medicine</li> <li>• Croatian Association of Forensic Dentists</li> <li>• Croatian Society of Orthodontists of the Croatian Medical Association</li> <li>• Croatian Society for Minimal Intervention Dental Medicine of the Croatian Medical Association</li> </ul>

## Competent authority

<b>Ministry of Health</b>
Ksaver 200 2, 10 000 Zagreb
Tel: +385 1 4607 555
Tel: +385 1 4677 005
Tel: +385 1 4698 300
Tel: +385 1 6169 111
Web : <a href="http://www.zdravlje.hr">http://www.zdravlje.hr</a>

## Dental Schools:

<b>Zagreb</b>	<b>Rijeka</b>
<p>University of Zagreb  Stomatološki fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu  Gundulićeva 5, 10000 Zagreb Hrvatska  Tel: +385 1 480 2111  Fax: +385 1 4807 367  Email: <a href="mailto:dekanat@sfzg.hr">dekanat@sfzg.hr</a>  Web: <a href="https://www.sfzg.unizg.hr/en">https://www.sfzg.unizg.hr/en</a></p> <p>Student intake 2023-2024: 90  English study programme student intake: 20</p>	<p>University of Rijeka, Faculty of Dental Medicine  Sveučilište u Rijeci, Fakultet dentalne medicine  Krešimirova 40/42, 51 000 Rijeka  Tel Secretary: +385 51 559 200  Tel Student Affairs: +385 51 559 202  Email student affairs: <a href="mailto:studentska@fdmri.uniri.hr">studentska@fdmri.uniri.hr</a>  Website Croatian Study: <a href="https://fdmri.uniri.hr/">https://fdmri.uniri.hr/</a>  Website English Study: <a href="https://fdmri.uniri.hr/en/">https://fdmri.uniri.hr/en/</a></p> <p>Number of students: 30</p>

Split	Osijek
<p>University of Split, Faculty of Medicine Medicinski fakultet - Studij dentalne medicine Sveučilišta u Splitu Šoltanska 2, 21000 Split Tel: + 385 21 557 800 Tel Student Office: +385 21 557 918 Email: <a href="mailto:office@mefst.hr">office@mefst.hr</a> Website: <a href="https://mefst.unist.hr/">https://mefst.unist.hr/</a></p> <p>Student intake 2023: 30</p>	<p>Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek Faculty of Dental Medicine and Health Crkvena 21, 31000 Osijek, Croatia Tel: +385 31 399 600 <a href="mailto:info@fdmz.hr">info@fdmz.hr</a> <a href="http://www.fdmz.hr">www.fdmz.hr</a></p> <p>Student intake: 25</p>