



**Study visit by a delegation from Georgia  
to ASHE, within the project PRODIGE**

**Zagreb, Croatia, 28 May 2026**

[azvo.hr](http://azvo.hr)

# The Role of ASHE in the Digital Transformation of Higher Education

# History of AZVO/ASHE

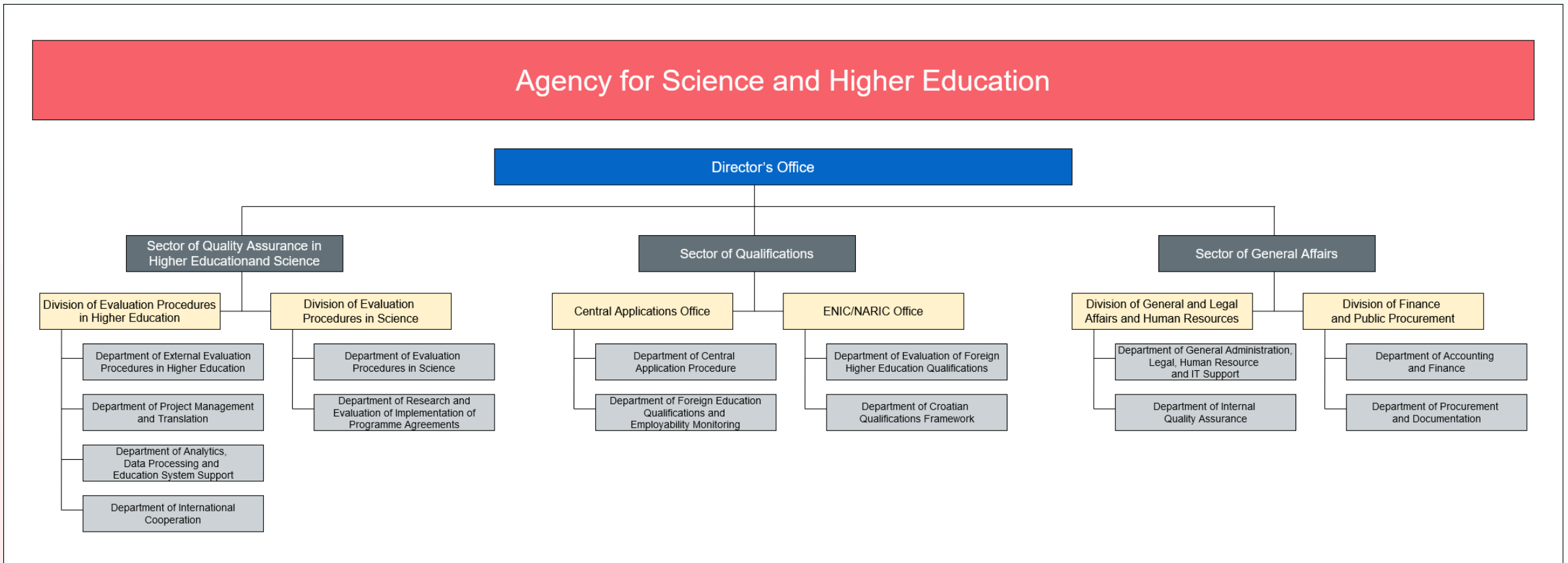
- Established in 2005 in accordance with European practice and Bologna Process.
- Member of ENQA and registered in EQAR since 2011.

## Mission

- Public, independent, internationally recognized agency that is, together with its stakeholders, **dedicated to an ongoing development of quality assurance in higher education and science**, aimed at a **continuous quality improvement of higher education institutions and scientific organisations**, and contribution to **better positioning and recognition of the Croatian higher education and science** within the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area.

# Organization structure

- Management Board, Director of the Agency, Accreditation Council, Complaints Committee and Follow-up Committee
- Currently 84 employees



# QA System in Croatia



- By signing the **Bologna Declaration**, Croatia committed to build a quality assurance system in higher education and science.
- **The Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE) was established in 2005**
  - by the **Decree of the Government of the Republic of Croatia**,
  - in accordance with the **European Council Recommendation (98/561/EC)** on European cooperation in quality assurance in higher education and the **Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council (2006/143/EC)** on further European cooperation in quality assurance in higher education, as well as the European model of agencies for external quality assurance in higher education based on implementation of the **Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG, 2005 and 2015)**.

# ENQA and EQAR full membership

- The Agency is accredited and periodically evaluated by the **European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)**, and entered in the **European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR)**.
- ASHE obtained full membership of ENQA and was included in EQAR in 2011.
- ASHE's membership in ENQA and EQAR was renewed twice – in 2017 and 2022; targeted review in September 2026.

# Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Science

- Adopted in 2022 and entered into force in 2023.
- It defines ASHE basic organizational structure, governing bodies and committees, the scope of activities, the responsibility of HEIs for internal QA and types of external QA procedures conducted by ASHE.

# QA standards in accordance with ESG

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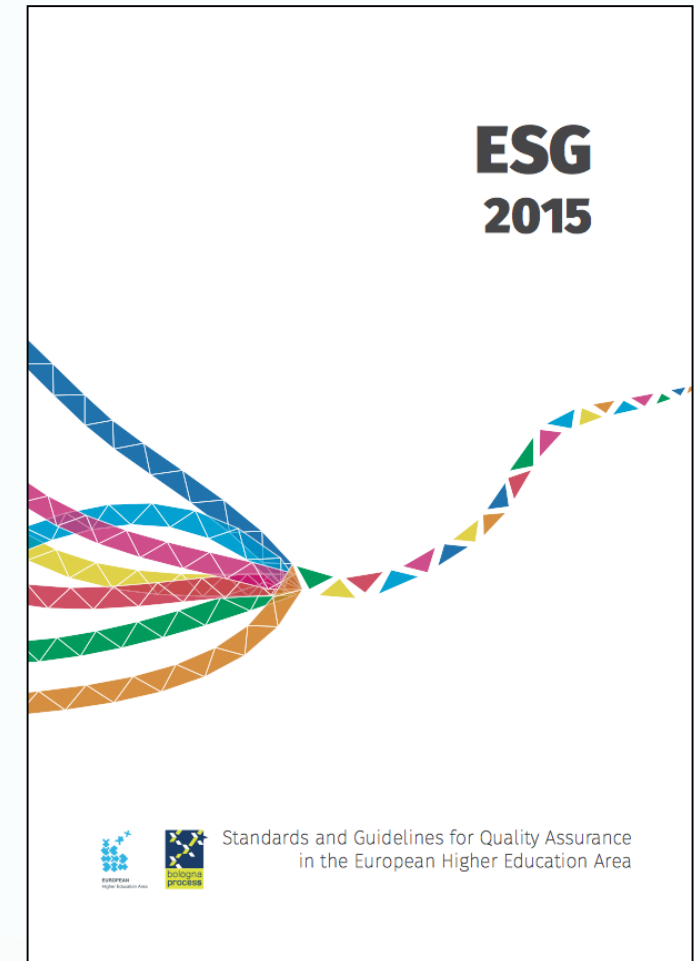
ESG I. – internal QA

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ESG II. – external QA

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ESG III. – QA agencies



# Core activities

<p>Initial accreditation</p>	<p>New higher education institutions and/or new study programmes Scope: verification of compliance with minimum criteria and quality assurance</p>
<p>Reaccreditation</p>	<p>Mandatory for all public and private higher education institutions in five-year cycles Scope: quality assurance and quality improvement</p>
<p>Thematic evaluations</p>	<p>Scope: verification, assessment and development of the quality of the organizational unit and/or study program or determination of the quality of activities of similar subjects of evaluation</p>

# European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes

- Higher education institutions conducting joint programmes jointly select an agency (must be registered in EQAR) to conduct the evaluation process.
- ASHE carries out accreditation in accordance with the European approach to quality assurance in joint studies.
- ASHE, based on the positive outcome of another EQAR-registered agency, issues a licence for joint study program.

# Evaluation procedures

- Peer-review (at least 5 expert panel members, national and international and student)
- In English
- Quantitative and qualitative data (Self-evaluation document and analytical report)
- Site visit
- Report
- Comment on the Report
- Accreditation Council
- ASHE decision
- Follow-up procedure

# Other activities

- ASHE also:
  - carries out the procedures for recognition and validation of **foreign higher education qualifications** (ENIC/NARIC),
  - collects and processes **data on the higher education system, scientific and artistic activity**,
  - provides information on the **conditions for enrolment in HEIs in Croatia**, and aggregates data on fulfilment of **requirements for enrolment** in higher education institutions,
  - performs twinning and integration activities in international associations and networks dealing with QA in the higher education system and scientific activities.

# The Role of ASHE in the Digital Transformation of Higher Education

# ASHE activities in supporting Digital Transformation in HE

- Regular ASHE activities of **initial accreditation** (all new study programmes) and **reaccreditation** (all HEIs in five years cycles).
- ASHE **educational activities** aimed at supporting HEIs in strengthening various aspects of quality.
- ASHE **research activities** (thematic analysis, surveys, publications) and **project activities** (E-Universities, AZVOK, newly applied projects).

# Reaccreditation of HEIs - quality standards

## Cover all HEIs activities:

- management and QA
- programmes
- teaching and assessment
- support to students
- resources
- research.

## Include elements related to digital transformation:

- HEI's strategy for digital transformation
- HEI's IT system that supports collecting and using data for effective management
- use of technologies to modernise teaching
- methods of teaching delivery adjusted to a diverse student population
- support to students in developing digital competences
- support to the development of teachers' competences including digital competences
- IT infrastructure
- library ITC resources and materials available in electronic forms
- application of open science principles.

Adjusted with [ESG 2015](#).

Plan to adjust them with the new ESG once adopted; [draft ESG 2027](#) version puts **more focus on digitalization and AI**.

# Initial accreditation of online study programmes - quality standards

- [Initial accreditation quality standards](#) adjusted to better cover specific characteristics of online studies and support their further development.
- Adjusted with [ESG 2015](#) and ENQA publication [Considerations for QA of E-learning provision](#).

# Elements emphasized in the standards for online studies

- E-learning is part of the HEI's strategy or strategy for digital transformation;
- Key indicators to monitor the quality of online programme delivery and its continuous enhancement (special focus on drop-out rate);
- LO must be achievable in an online environment (no difference with LO achieved by traditional studies);
- Strengthening digital competences of teachers and support to teachers working in online environment;
- Support services for successful delivery of online study programme;
- The premises, equipment and entire infrastructure for the delivery of online study programme;
- Library services and literature for the delivery of online programme;

# Elements emphasized in the standards for online studies

- Teaching methods adopted to the online environment support student centered learning and guarantee the achievement of LO;
- Teaching materials adopted to online environment (text-books and additional resources);
- Adequate support to students in online environment and guidance;
- Objective and consistent assessment of students' achievements;
- Detailed information for students that plan to enrol online study programme (including necessary requirements);
- Ensuring the quality of student practice in virtual environment, if applicable;
- Informing the public about relevance of online study programmes;
- Etc.

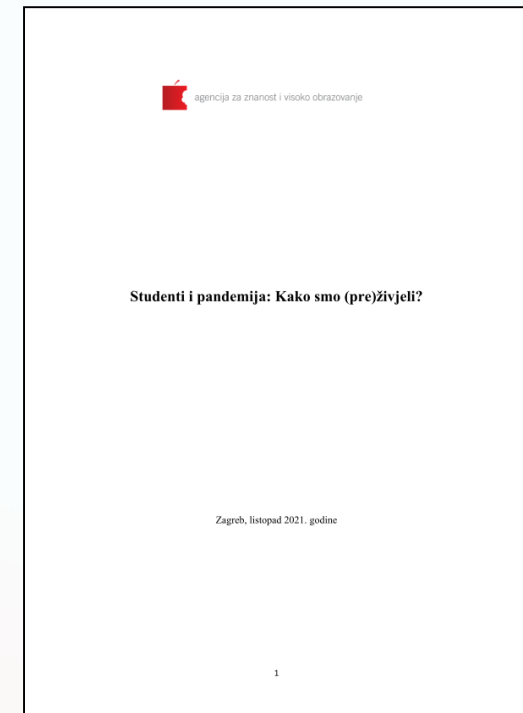
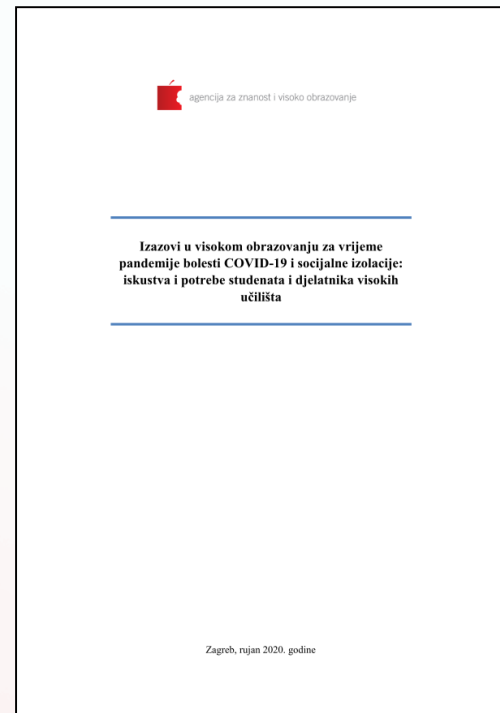
# ASHE educational activities

- Seminars and workshops for teachers, administrative staff and students with the aim to support development of various quality aspects (currently as a part of [ESF+ AZVOK project](#)); not consultancy.
- Special focus on strengthening **teachers' competencies including digital competences** and promote interactive teaching methods that encourage student-centred learning.





# ASHE research activities, thematic analysis and publications

- ASHE regularly publish and conducts thematic analyses based on the results of external QA results.
- ASHE also conducts other types of analyses focused on different topics. During the COVID time and upon its completion focus was on teachers and students experience and their **adaptation to the new modes of teaching delivery and necessary improvements.**



# Main IS in HE used in Croatia

- **ISVU** – Information System of HE institutions
- CROSBI – Croatian Scientific Bibliography  **CroRIS** Croatian Research Information System
- MOZVAG – Information System for Supporting QA Processes  **ISPIK**
- **Register of Study Programmes** and **Register of HE Institutions**
- **NISpVU** – National Information System for Applications to HE Institutions
- **DABAR** – Digital Academic Archives and Repositories
- **HRČAK** – Portal of Croatian Scientific and professional journals
- Other information systems (Croatian Science Foundation, National and University Library, different ministries etc.)

# Development and enhancement of information systems

- Establishment of the central Information System of HE Registers (**ISeVO**), development and integration with existing systems
- Establishment of the Information System for Implementation and Monitoring of Programme Contracts (**ISPIK**)
- Harmonization of existing HE systems in HE with ISeVO necessary for integration with ISPIK.

# Information System of Indicators and Quality – ISPiK

- System for collecting and calculating indicators
- Only registered users with assigned appropriate role (login with AAI identity)
- Reaccreditation Modul and Monitoring of Programme Contracts Modul
- Reaccreditation Modul supports the reaccreditation process of HE institutions and enables preparation of Analytic Supplement to the Self-Evaluation Report in the form of pdf report. Data are either entered into the Modul or retrieved from other systems (ISeVO, CroRIS, ISVU).

# Data preparation in CroRIS-u

Teachers

Capital  
equipment

Bibliography

Projects

Conferences

Journals

# Analytic supplement to Self-Evaluation Report

## ANNEX I. (EVIDENCE OF FULFILMENT OF QUANTITATIVE LEGAL REQUIREMENTS)

**Table 1a. Teacher-student ratio (must not exceed 1 : 30) at the higher education institution (Art. 12, Par. 8 and 9 of the AQAHES)**

The ratio between the total number of enrolled students and the total number of full-time teachers and those with nominal teaching titles shall not exceed 30:1. When calculating the ratio, the number of working hours of teachers who are not employed full time is added up to the number of working hours required of a full-time teacher. A complexity coefficient of 1 is used for teachers, 0.75 for senior assistants and 0.5 for assistants. A complexity coefficient of 0.5 is used for teachers with nominal teaching titles. A complexity coefficient of 1 is used for full-time students and 0.5 for part-time students.

Total number of students studying full time at all study programmes (Coefficient 1)	
Total number of students studying part time at all study programmes (Coefficient 0.5)	
<b>I. TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS:</b>	
Total number of teachers at the higher education institution (Coefficient 1)	
Total number of senior assistants at the higher education institution (Coefficient 0.75)	
Total number of assistants at the higher education institution (Coefficient 0.5)	
Total number of nominal* teachers at the higher education institution (Coefficient 0.5)	
<b>II. TOTAL NUMBER OF TEACHERS AT THE HEI:</b>	
<b>TEACHER (II.) /STUDENT (I.) RATIO</b>	

## ANNEX II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

### TABLES RELATED TO ASSESSMENT AREA II. STUDY PROGRAMMES AND LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAMMES

NOTE: These tables contain compulsory learning outcomes for a single study programme. Please add the code description for each learning outcome (LO) in the separate table below.

**Table 2.1. Learning outcomes of the study programme for the evaluated academic year**

*Study programme name (type, level, SP Register code and SP Register entry code)*

Learning outcomes* of the study programme	LO 1	LO 2	LO 3	LO 4	LO 5	LO 6	LO 7	LO 8	LO 9	...
<b>Total number of courses per learning outcome</b>										
Course 1		+						+		
Course 2			+	+		+				+
Course 3		+					+		+	
Course 4				+	+					
...	+	+	+					+		

# Analytic supplement to Self-Evaluation Report

**Table 3.4. Completion rate at the study programme**

*Study programme name (type, level, SP Register code and SP Register entry code)*

Student cohort enrolled* in one generation**	Number of students enrolled in generation	Number of graduates of the same generation	Number of still active students of the same generation***	Number of students of the same generation who have unenrolled or have lost the right to study	Average duration of studies
2013/2014					
2014/2015					
2015/2016					
....					

**Table 3.6. Employment of graduates/alumni in the past 3 calendar years**

*Study programme name (type, level, SP Register code and SP Register entry code)*

Year	Number of students who have completed the study programme	Data on unemployed persons who have completed the study programme*	
		Number	Source
N			
N-1			
N-2			

# The e-University Project

*A national initiative led by CARNET aimed at the digital transformation of public Croatian HEIs.*

**1** **Digital Teaching Infrastructure**  
Investment in modern equipment, networks, and classroom technology across campuses

**2** **Information Systems**  
Integrated platforms for student data, administration, and academic management

**3** **Digital Tools**  
Software and e-learning platforms to enable flexible and innovative teaching methods

**4** **Cybersecurity**  
Protection of institutional data, student records, and digital assets across HEIs

**5** **Digital Competencies**  
Training programmes for teaching staff, students, and administrative personnel

# AZVO as Partner in e-University

*AZVO's role is not technical*

## 01 Digital Maturity Assessment

Developing and applying a framework to evaluate the level of digital readiness across all Croatian HEIs, with developmental recommendations.

## 02 Student Digital Competency Research

Investigating how well study programmes develop digital competencies, mapped against current learning outcomes in existing curricula.

## 03 Teacher Training Programme

Co-designing a modular IKT-in-teaching programme for HEI faculty to apply digital tools in a pedagogically meaningful and effective way.

# What is a Digitally Mature Institution?

*A digitally mature institution is more than just equipment — it has six defining pillars:*

**1**

**Leadership of Digital Transformation**

**2**

**Digital Technologies in Teaching and Learning**

**3**

**Digital Technologies in Research**

**4**

**Digital Infrastructure and Support**

**5**

**Cybersecurity**

**6**

**Artificial Intelligence Readiness**

# Digitalization of ASHE QA processes

## 01 ASHE Database of Procedures

- Managing and monitoring external evaluation procedures
- Enables a systematic overview of all ongoing and completed procedures, including information on reviewers, the documentation used, and the outcomes of the evaluations
- Includes modules for monitoring operational plans, conducting risk analyses, and keeping records of employee training.

## 02 Directory of external evaluations in HE and science

The outcomes of the conducted external evaluations of all higher education institutions and research institutes in the Republic of Croatia are available to the public.

## 03 DEQAR Database

- Database of External Quality Assurance Results from activities performed by EQAR-registered quality assurance agencies
- Data from the Directory are also used to connect with the European DEQAR database, thereby contributing to the transparency of quality assurance within the European Higher Education Area

# Further development of ASHE tools (supporting QA procedures)

- As part of the **AZVOK project**, evaluation management portal is currently being developed with the aim of further digitalizing and simplifying external evaluation processes.
- This will significantly improve the efficiency and speed of conducting evaluations, as well as the availability and exchange of data among all involved stakeholders.

**Hvala**   
na pozornosti!

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