

Integrity: a cornerstone value for Higher Education and Research

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The response of universities: a panel of Rectors from different countries to give their perspective on the issues

Aleksa Bjeliš - Inputs

- Central and dominant purpose and mission of universities:
students - their education (for profession) and their formation (for civic life);
- How to communicate with new-coming generations, and to understand them (their perceptions of problems, objectives, priorities, ways of thinking, ...) ?
- Usual reality:
 - ***From students' side***: Indifference towards their institution (and towards the community into which they enter), together with the initial uncertainties and unsteadiness in the pristine environment;
 - ***From elders side***: secondary attitudes (since research, professional work, and lecturing are always pressuring priorities);

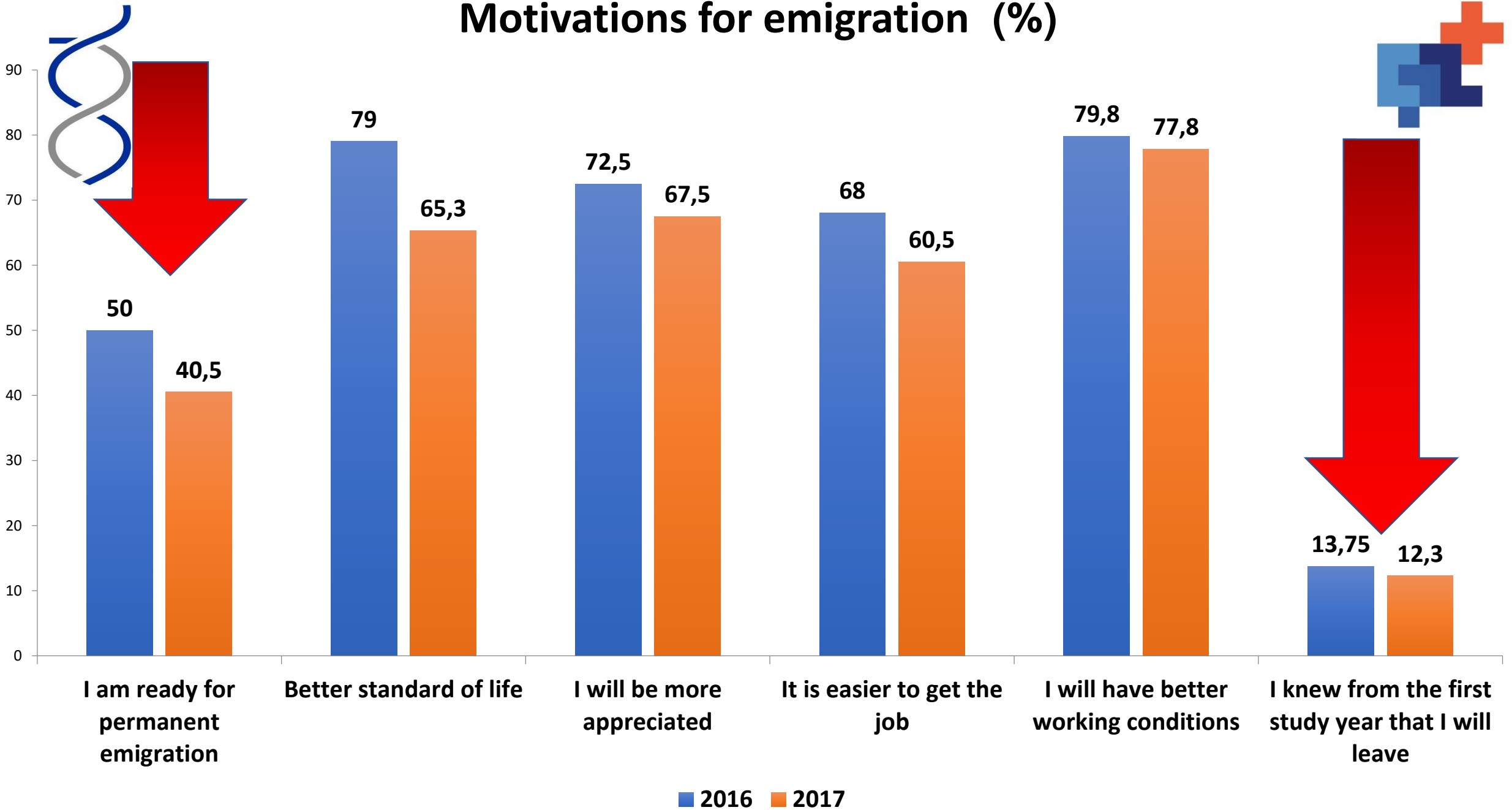
Questionnaire for students of medicine - final years*



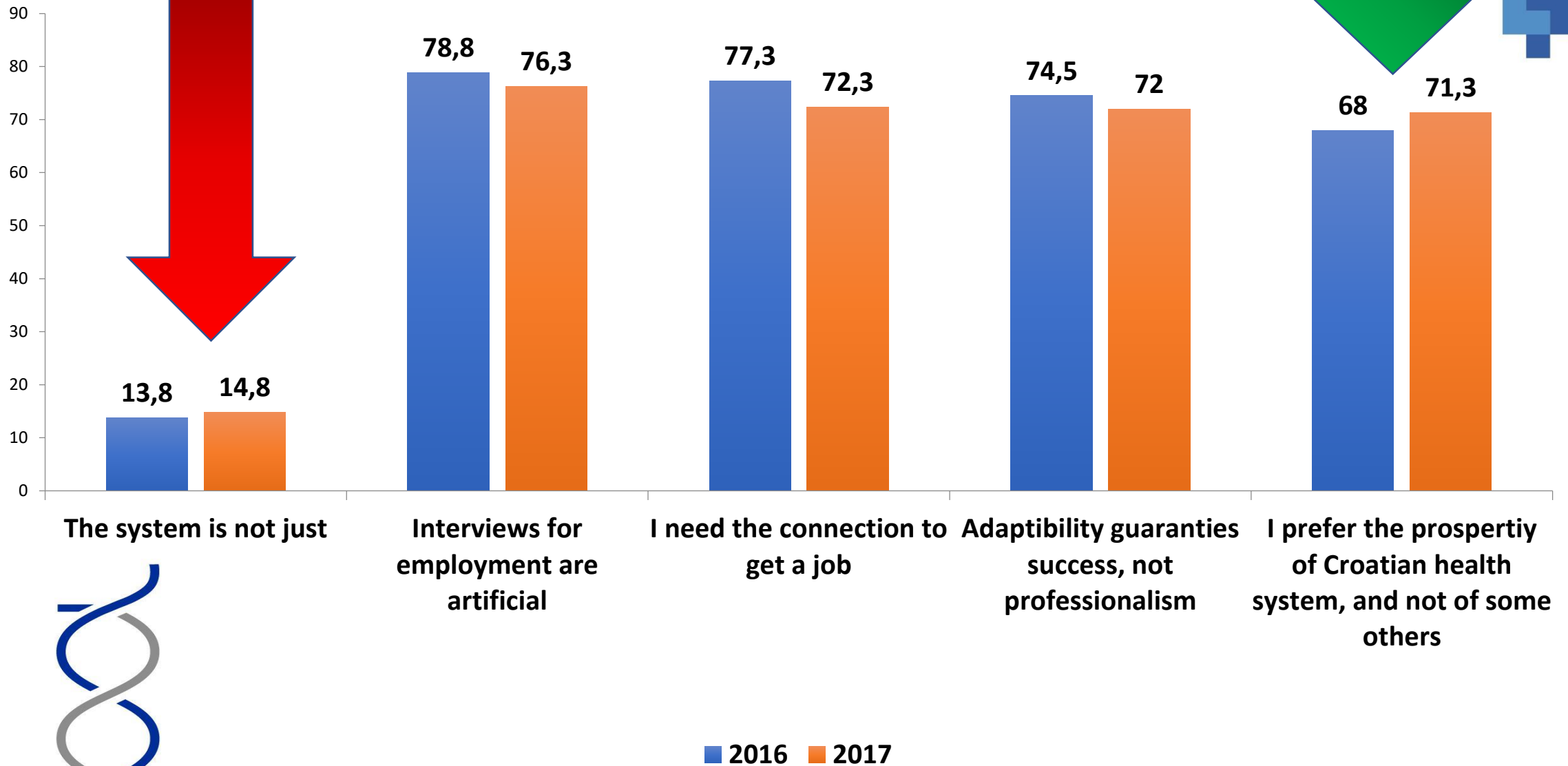
	2016.	2017.
Number of students	249	227
% of generation	90	85

*Courtesy of dr Danko Relić, University of Zagreb, Faculty of Medicine

Motivations for emigration (%)



Confidence into the system (%)





Importance of various aspects of life

Ranked from 1 to 10, 1 – most important, 10 – not important

	Aspects of life	Mean value 2017 (2016)
1.	Family life	2.76 (2.83)
2.	Good human relations	3.5 (3.97)
3.	Safe employment	4.63 (4.35)
4.	Helping other people	4.67 (4.95)
5.	Finances, earning money	5.68 (5.12)
6.	Possibility of advancement	5.83 (5.47)
7.	Pleasant job without stress	5.55 (5.90)
8.	Intellectually challenging job	6.1 (5.96)
9.	Social position	7.67 (7.70)
10.	Possibility to work privately	8.63 (8.74)



General impression:

- We have good new generations; our responsibility is to deserve and to justify their trust;
- Their answers: reflections to the situation **at the university and in the society;**

Towards general points:

- Universities and societies are strongly correlated
- Prosperous periods are common to both, crises too
- Academic integrity and social integrity – inseparable

Particularly complex:

- Disruptive times, with dramatic transitions, and unstable and hardly predictable political and social processes;

Historical heritage (20th century in particular):

- Universities were not strong enough to prevent negative political and ideological blows in their societies;
- They even were not able to preserve their integrity and remain immune to declining processes in the societies;

Recent history: transitional European countries (from 1989 on)

Basic indicators:

- 350 million inhabitants (old Europe – 420 million)

HE & Research:

- About dozen “world class universities” – one per 30 million inhabitants (old Europe: about 200 - in average one per 2 million inhabitants)
- From 2007 to 2016: 148 (2%) among 7563 grants of European Research Council (old Europe – 7415 (98%))

Etc ... : general lagging in HE & RD (in investments, and in outcomes)
– at least one order of magnitude;

Transitional societies

Infantile deceases of ascending democracies; usual manifestations:

- Search for alternative (better) history;
- Frequent and aggressive autarchic radicalisms;
- Disdain for scientific arguments and expertise prevailing in public, even among decision makers at the highest political positions;
- Professionals and experts are expected to serve, less to counsel, political authorities and their needs and interests;

Response of universities:

- Bravely engaged individuals - exceptional;
- Majorities in academic communities prefer passivity and non-engagement – exploring *academic freedom to do nothing*;
- Impossible to achieve institutional integrity without sufficient presence of individual integrities, and without a permanent practice of intellectual honesty;
- On the contrary: negative societal trends then can easily overflow university courtyards ...

Epilogue:

In delusive times, in which simple answers (to questions that do not have simple answers) become the most acceptable ...

... it is probably a time for many of us in transitional Europe (and others as well ...) to open again Karl Jaspers' *Question of ~~guilt~~ responsibility* ...

... and to be aware of his list of responsibilities, still being able to consider them *a priori*, and in the inverted order (*metaphysical/transcendental/introspective, moral, political, criminal* ...)

... in order to prevent times in which our descendants would have to confront them *a posteriori*, and in the original (Jaspers') order ...

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