

Poland

Overview of the Vocational Education and Training System

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Title: Poland: overview of the Vocational Education and Training System in 2006

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Abstract:

This is an overview of the VET system in Poland. Information is presented according to the following themes:

1. General policy context - framework for the knowledge society;
2. Policy development - objectives, frameworks, mechanisms, priorities;
3. Institutional framework - provision of learning opportunities;
4. Initial education and training - pathways and transition;
5. Continuing vocational education and training for adults;
6. Training VET teachers and trainers;
7. Skills and competence development and innovative pedagogy;
8. Validation of learning - recognition and mobility;
9. Guidance and counselling for learning, career and employment;
10. Financing: investment in human resources;
11. European and international dimensions: towards an open area of lifelong learning.

This overview is part of a series produced for each EU Member State (plus Norway and Iceland). Each report is prepared by Cedefop's national network member (ReferNet) and is updated on an annual basis: this one is valid for 2006. Later editions can be viewed from August 2007 at:

http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information_resources/NationalVet/ where more detailed thematic information on the VET systems of the EU can be found.

Keywords:

training system; training policy, initial training, continuing vocational training, training of trainers, skill development, vocational guidance, recognition of competences, validation of non formal learning; financing of training

Geographic term:

Poland

THEMATIC OVERVIEWS



01 - GENERAL POLICY CONTEXT - FRAMEWORK FOR THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

0101 - POLITICAL AND SOCIO-CULTURAL/ECONOMIC CONTEXT

The Republic of Poland is a multi-party republic, with a parliamentary-cabinet system of government and a traditional division into the three powers, the legislative, the executive and the judiciary, as stipulated in the Constitution adopted in 1997.

Legislative power is vested in the bicameral parliament, comprising the Sejm as the lower house and the Senate. Members of Parliament (460) are elected by the nation in free, equal, direct and proportional elections conducted by secret ballot, and the Senators – in free and direct elections conducted by secret ballot. Executive power rests with the President of the Republic of Poland who is elected by popular vote, and with the Government - the Council of Ministers, led by the Prime Minister (the President of the Council of Ministers). The Prime Minister and the ministers proposed by the Prime Minister are appointed by the President. To perform its constitutional functions, the Government needs a vote of confidence from the *Sejm*. The judiciary power is vested in independent courts.

In 1999, a 3-tier system of territorial administration was introduced, under which Poland has been divided into municipalities (*gminy*), districts (*powiaty*) and administrative regions (*województwa*). The territorial self-government units include municipalities (2 478), districts (314) and towns having a district status (65), as well as regions which are both self-governing units and units of government administration (16). At the regional level, the *wojewoda* is the government representative.

0102 - POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

POPULATION OF POLAND IN 2004

In 2004, the demographic development of Poland followed the trends observable since 1999. It is estimated that, as at 31st December 2004, Poland, a country with a territory of 312 685 km², had a population of 38 174 000, that is 17 000 less than in 2003. Altogether, in the years 2000/2004, Poland's population decreased by about 80 000. In the last 5 years the population growth rate was negative, falling from -0.02% in 2000 down to -0.04% in 2004. The main reasons for an increasing reduction in the real population figures include a significant fall in the number of births and a negative balance of international migration.

Table 1: Population balance in 2003 and 2004 (in thousands)		
YEAR	2003	2004
NATURAL INCREASE	-14	-7
LIVE BIRTHS	351	356
DEATHS	365	363
BALANCE OF PERMANENT INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION	-14	-10
IMMIGRATION	7	9
EMIGRATION	21	19
ACTUAL INCREASE	-28	-17
POPULATION AS AT 31ST DECEMBER	38.191	38.174

Source: Prepared by the author based on: GUS, *Maly rocznik statystyczny Polski 2005*, Warszawa 2005, Tab. 2(60), p. 109.

In 2004, the number of deaths was about 7 000 higher than that of births, which produced, for another consecutive year, a negative natural increase of -0.2‰ (-0.4‰ in the previous year). Nonetheless, a certain improvement could be observed as compared to 2003, both with regard to death rate figures, with a decrease of 2 000, and the number of births, with an increase of 5 000 (Table 1). Despite the fact that 2004 saw more births, and the fertility rate increased from 1.222 to 1.227 child per woman, the birth rate slump in Poland is continuing. This is probably due to the changing role and status of women in the society and adopting Western models of the family, including for example longer periods of schooling, increased economic activity of women, wide availability of contraception and starting the family only after a certain level of economic stability is reached. These trends are corroborated by the observable shift in the highest fertility of women from the 20-24 age group to 25-29 age brackets.

As regards migration, the situation is improving further, as compared with the previous years (Table 1). The number of people who left Poland for ever fell by 2 000, which produced a more favourable permanent international migration balance, with a comparable increase in the number of immigrants.

Despite the changes taking place in Poland's demographic development in the recent years, the age structure of the population in 2004 was still characterised by a relatively high share of young people, especially when compared with the age structures of many other European nations (e.g. Germany). About 33% of Poland's population are people in the 0-24 age group. It should be added at this point that since the 1990s, demographers have observed a rapid decrease in the number of children and youth, confirmed by the statistics. The category of people in the pre-working age (0-17 years of age) represented approximately 21.2% of the total population. As compared to 2003, this reduction was accompanied by an increase in the working age category (people aged 18-59/64) and in the retirement age group (60+/65+), up to a level of ca 63.5% and slightly above 15%, respectively (Table 2).

Table 2: Age structure of Poland's population in 2004 (as at 31 st December)		
AGE	%	IN THOUSAND
0-17	21.2	8 087
18-59/64*	63.5	24 240
60+/65+**	15.3	5 847
TOTAL	100	38 174

Source: Prepared by the author based on: GUS, *Maly rocznik statystyczny Polski 2005*, Warszawa 2005, Tab. 5(63), p. 113; GUS, *Podstawowe informacje o rozwoju demograficznym Polski do 2004 roku*, Warszawa 2004, URL: <http://www.stat.gov.pl/>, Tab.

* number of women in the 18-59 age group and men in the 18-64 age group

** number of women over 60 and men over 65

In 2004, the sex structure of the Polish population was characterised by a higher number of women than men. Women accounted for over 51 % of the country's total population, with 106 women per 100 men.

A comparison of the number of students in different types of schools in the academic years 2003/2004 and 2004/2005 is quite interesting (Table 3). We can see that a visible decrease in the number of pupils in primary, lower secondary, post-primary and post-secondary schools was accompanied by an increase in the number of students of post-secondary schools and higher education institutions. These fluctuations are implications of the demographic changes described above, although in the case of the latter 2 types of school they could also be caused by a wider interest in continuing the educational process or resuming education after a break. This could be a proof of a growing belief among the general public that education is an important asset. On the other hand, a drop in the number of adult learners, which was recorded for the first time in several years, could mean that in a situation of a general trend of extending the learning period for those who start school, the number of people who would like to resume schooling at the secondary level but have not done it yet, is shrinking.

Table 3: Pupils and students in school years 2003/2004 and 2004/2005 by type of school (in thousand) *		
TYPE OF SCHOOL	2003/2004	2004/2005
PRIMARY	2 855.6	2 723.7
LOWER SECONDARY (<i>GIMNAZJUM</i>)	1 681.2	1 648.7
POST-PRIMARY AND POST-LOWER SECONDARY	1 807.9	1 802.5
POST-SECONDARY	265.7	291.2
HIGHER	1 858.7	1 926.1
ADULT EDUCATION	380.9	331.9
TOTAL	8 850.0	8 724.1

* Position as at the beginning of the school/academic year.

POPULATION FORECAST UNTIL 2030

The trends in Poland's demographic development which could be observed so far are most likely to continue throughout the forecasting period, i.e. until 2030. The falling birth rate is expected to continue, due to reaching the reproductive age by the not very numerous generation born at the turn of the century. Therefore, the fertility rate will oscillate around a lower level, of 1.10-1.20 child per woman, and the natural increase in Poland will be negative. At the same time, the intensity of permanent international migration will increase, with a growth in the recorded negative balance (up to 24 000 p.a. in 2010). As a result, this will most likely lead to a depopulation of Poland by about 2 500 000 until 2030 (Table 4).

Table 4: Population forecast until 2030 (as at 31 st December; in thousand)						
AGE	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
0-17	7 835	6 811	6 296	6 070	5 784	5 325
0-24	12 342	10 680	9 511	8 727	8 189	7 672
18-59/64*	24 403	24,658	23 861	22 620	21 560	20 771
60+/65+**	5 885	6 430	7 468	8 540	9 254	9 597
TOTAL	38 123	37 899	37 626	37 229	36 598	35 693

Source: Prepared by the author based on: GUS, *Prognoza ludności Polski do 2030 roku*, Warszawa 2004,

URL: <http://www.stat.gov.pl/>;

GUS, *Maly rocznik statystyczny Polski 2005*, Warszawa 2005, Tab. 19 (77), p. 127.

* total number of women in the 18-59 age group and men in the 18-64 age group

** total number of women over 60 and men over 65

This and other phenomena, such as lowered mortality rates and increased life expectancy will be reflected in the age structure of the population. In 2030, the number of children and youth aged 0-24 in the education category will be nearly 5 000 000 lower. This will be accompanied by a progressing ageing of the Polish society, which will mean an increase of the population in the post-working age (60+/65+) and a decrease of the working-age population (18-59/64) (Table 4).

The anticipated changes in the age structure of Poland's population are likely to have far-reaching consequences for the country's educational system. The forecasted drastic reduction in the population groups comprised by school education at all levels (from the primary to the tertiary level) may lead to staff redundancies, reductions in the number of schools and limiting the training facilities and resources addressed to this group. On the other hand, however, a smaller number of pupils and students per one teacher could result in an improved quality of instruction. Also, more intense competition between educational establishments (as they will have to attract students) could lead to improved academic excellence. At the same time, it can be expected that competition for gaining access to tertiary education will be smaller, which could be seen as an incentive for going to university.

Another likely consequence of the anticipated demographic changes will be a dynamic increase in the demand for training addressed to the economically active part of the population (e.g. expanded system of training aimed at updating and upgrading the competencies and qualifications of employees). In view of such an increased economic burden of the working-age population, it will be necessary to ensure that these people remain economically active for the maximum possible period, through such measures as, for instance, continuing education. In addition to that, modifications in the profiles of education and training, owing to an increased demand for medical services triggered by a growing number of old people will be inevitable.

0103 - ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS

EDUCATION STRUCTURE

In 2002, 9.9% Poles had higher education, 3.2% - post-secondary, 28.3% - secondary, 23.2% - basic vocational, 29.8% - primary, 3.6% - incomplete primary, with no data available for 2.0% of the population. The disparities in the level of education between urban and rural areas are particularly striking. While over a half (50.6%) of urban residents have at least secondary education, only 1/4 (25.7%) of rural residents have a similar level of educational attainment.

AGE STRUCTURE BY SECTORS OF ECONOMY

In the first quarter of 2005, 16.5% of all the employed worked in agriculture; 29.2% - in industry, and 54.3% - in services. As compared to a similar period of 2004, employment in agriculture fell by 0.5%, with minimal changes in the remaining sectors¹. A gradual outflow of workers from agriculture to other sectors of the economy is in line with the tendency that could be observed in the previous years. However, the structure of the Polish economy is still characterised by a much larger share of the agricultural sector than is the case in countries with a highly developed market economy. The anticipated further labour force shifts between individual sectors will act as a stimulus for changes in the profiles of human resources training for a modern, knowledge-based economy.

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY RATIO

In 2004, the economic activity rate in Poland remained at a level of 54.7%, similarly to 2003. Traditionally, it was much lower for women than for men, and reached 47.8% and 62.3%, respectively.

It should be observed that the activity level of people with higher (78.9%) and secondary vocational (67.8%) education is much above the national average (Table 5). At the same time, less than 1/4 of the population with lower secondary and primary education show any economic activity. Interestingly, the highest activity rate among women can be observed with higher education (79.2% in the first quarter of 2003), who are nearly as active as men with a similar level of education (80.6% in the first quarter of 2003). The disparities in the level of willingness to take up employment between the 2 sexes fluctuate in line with the level of education, and are definitely the widest (more than 10% in the first quarter of 2003) in the category of people with basic vocational, lower secondary or primary education.

LEVEL OF EDUCATION	TOTAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITY RATIO
HIGHER	78.9
SECONDARY VOCATIONAL *	67.8
SECONDARY GENERAL	45.3
BASIC VOCATIONAL	68.2
LOWER SECONDARY, PRIMARY AND INCOMPLETE PRIMARY	22.7
TOTAL	54.3

Source: Prepared by the author based on: GUS, *Monitoring rynku pracy. Kwartalna informacja o rynku pracy*, Warszawa, September 2005,

URL: <http://www.stat.gov.pl>, Tab. 1, p. 3.

* including post-secondary schools

In the first quarter of 2005, 45.7% of the population aged 15 or over were economically passive, including about 53% women and 37.5% men. Among those who were economically inactive, slightly more than 1/4 quoted learning and upgrading qualifications as the main reasons for their passivity (34% of the working-age population -18-59/64).

In the light of these data, the educational attainment of individuals can be seen as an important factor stimulating their economic activity. Therefore, all activities and efforts which can encourage individuals to continue their education at a higher level, to resume learning or start continuing education seem highly desirable. Improved accessibility to educational and training centres is of particular importance (in financial terms – scholarships for children from poor families, or improved infrastructure - upgrading transport links), in addition to extending assistance programmes for carers of the

handicapped or those with small children (e.g. ensuring care for the period the carer or guardian is in training or at school).

EMPLOYMENT RATE

In 2004, the total employment rate in Poland was 44.3%. For men, it reached a level of 51% and was much higher than for women – 38.2%.

It should be noted that, similarly to the economic activity of the population, the employment figures vary depending on the level of education (Table 6), with values much above the average for those with higher (73.8%) or secondary vocational (56.8%) education. On the other hand, among the category of those who completed education at the lower secondary or primary level, the employment rate (16.8%) is visibly lower than the national average. These observations apply both to the statistics covering the total population, and the two sexes separately. At the same time, the differences between the employment figures for men and women are minimal in the case of people with higher education, and reach far over 10% in the case of people with basic vocational education. Importantly, a definite majority of people in work (over 57%) have at least secondary education.

Table 6: Employment rate for population aged 15+ by level of education (in the first quarter of 2005; in %)	
LEVEL OF EDUCATION	TOTAL EMPLOYMENT RATE
HIGHER	73.8
SECONDARY VOCATIONAL *	56.8
SECONDARY GENERAL	34.9
BASIC VOCATIONAL	53.5
LOWER SECONDARY, PRIMARY AND INCOMPLETE PRIMARY	16.8
TOTAL	44.1

Source: Prepared by the author based on: GUS, *Monitoring rynku pracy. Kwartalna informacja o rynku pracy*, Warszawa, September 2005,

URL: <http://www.stat.gov.pl>, Tab. 2, p. 6.

* including post-secondary schools

It can be concluded therefore that the level of education and acquired vocational qualifications make it considerably easier for individuals to find work. Even though a university diploma does not automatically guarantee a job, the following unemployment statistics indicate that the higher the qualifications, the lesser risk of problems on the labour market.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Unemployment remains a serious problem of the labour market in Poland. In 2005, the registered unemployment rate was still at a very high level, oscillating between 17-19%. It should be emphasized, however, that during the year it showed a falling tendency, to reach 17.3 % in October 2005, the lowest figure in 3 years. The unemployment structure in Poland is still characterised by a relatively high share of people under 25 in the total number of the unemployed, although this share fell to 22.4% in October 2005. At the same time, the unemployment rate in this age group fell from 42.2% in the second quarter of 2004 to 39.9% at the end of the second quarter of 2005. In addition, unemployment affects women rather than men. At the end of the second quarter of 2005, 19.1% women and 17.2% men were out of work (a drop by, respectively, 0.7% and 1.3% as compared to the second quarter of 2004).

OFFICIAL (REGISTERED) UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

In 2005 the total registered unemployment rate in Poland showed a slightly decreasing tendency, from a level of 19.4% in January down to 17.3% in October. Despite a visible drop, this was another consecutive year when the unemployment rate remained at such a high level. At the end of the second quarter of 2005, the unemployment rate for women was 19.1% (0.7% lower than in the second quarter of 2004), and for men – 17.2% (a drop by 1.3%), with 39.9% unemployment rate for the population under 25 (a drop by 2.3%). Although unemployment fell most sharply in the latter group, young people still (October 2005) represented over 22.4% of all the registered unemployed (as compared to 25% a year earlier). The situation of the long-term unemployed is particularly difficult; in 2004 they accounted for about a half of all the unemployed.

Analysis of the unemployment level by educational attainment points to wide disparities (Table 7). In the second quarter of 2005, the unemployment level among people with higher education (6.8%) was considerably lower than the national average. On the other hand, the population with other than higher education was much more affected by unemployment, which was particularly well visible in the unemployment rate of people who only completed lower secondary or primary education (28.2%).

Table 7: Unemployment rate and the unemployed by level of education (second quarter of 2005; in %)		
LEVEL OF EDUCATION	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE *	UNEMPLOYED **
HIGHER	6.8	5.0
SECONDARY VOCATIONAL ***	15.8	21.9
SECONDARY GENERAL	21.6	7.0
BASIC VOCATIONAL	21.7	33.8
LOWER SECONDARY, PRIMARY AND INCOMPLETE PRIMARY	28.2	32.3
TOTAL	18.1	100

Source: Prepared by the author, based on: GUS, *Monitoring rynku pracy. Kwartalna informacja o rynku pracy*, Warszawa, September 2005, URL: <http://www.stat.gov.pl/>, Tab. 3, p. 9; GUS, *Maly rocznik statystyczny 2005*, Warszawa 2005, Tab. 12(92), p. 151.

* unemployment rate according to BAEL

** the unemployed with a given education as a percentage of the total number of the unemployed, average for 2004

*** including post-secondary

It should also be noted that in 2004, 65% of all the unemployed were people with primary or basic vocational education (Table 7). The extent of this phenomenon invites the conclusion that a low level of education can be regarded as one of the reasons why people in this group have difficulties in finding work. Therefore, stepping up activities aimed to upgrade qualifications or facilitate retraining of the unemployed or those threatened with unemployment can prove an effective tool in both combating and preventing unemployment. The relationship between the quality of education and vocational qualifications and difficulties in adaptation to the labour market conditions is a strong argument in favour of upgrading the potential of competencies and qualifications of individuals on a continuous basis.

EXPENDITURES ON SCIENCE AND EDUCATION

In 2004, the aggregate public budget expenditure on science and education totalled PLN 38.4 billion (ca € 8.5 billion), including PLN 25.1 billion (ca € 5.5 billion) of subsidies for education, that is, 7% more than a year before. The share of this category of expenditure accounted for about 4.3% of Poland's GDP, and was 0.1% lower than in 2003 r. The total public allocation for science and education (budget appropriations plus expenditure from the local government budgets) in 2004 was PLN 49.5 billion (ca € 10.9 billion) (Table 8), which represented approximately 5.59% of Poland's GDP. This budget category accounted for 12.4% of the total general government expenditure in 2004.

Table 8: Expenditure on science and education in 2004 – budget execution; in million PLN (in million € at average annual market rate PLN/€*)						
LEVEL		EDUCATION SECTOR	EDUCATIONAL CARE (COUNSELLING AND OTHER FORMS)	HIGHER EDUCATION	SCIENCE	TOTAL
GMINAS	PLN	17 469.8	519.8	5.5	0.016	17 995.1
	€	3 856.5	114.7	1.2	0.003	3 972.4
POVIATS	PLN	4 504.7	1 010.6	5.8	0	5 521.1
	€	994.4	223.1	1.3	0	1 218.8
CITIES WITH THE POVIAT STATUS	PLN	10 960.6	1 081.8	9.2	0	12 051.6
	€	2 419.6	238.8	2.0	0	2 660.4
VOIVODSHIPS	PLN	484.6	78.7	18.7	1.4	583.4
	€	107.0	17.4	4.1	0.3	128.8
STATE BUDGET**	PLN	1 297.9	273.4	8 867.3	2 893.8	13 332.4
	€	286.5	60.4	1 957.5	638.8	2 943.1
TOTAL	PLN	34 717.6	2 964.3	8 906.5	2.895.2	49 483.6
	€	7 663.9	654.4	1 966.1	639.1	10 923.53

Source: prepared by the author based on: Rada Ministrów, *Sprawozdanie z wykonania budżetu państwa za okres od 1.I do 31.XII 2004 roku. Informacja o wykonaniu budżetów jednostek samorządu terytorialnego*, T. 2, Warszawa 2005, URL: http://www.mf.gov.pl/files/finanse_samorzadow/sprawozdania_budzetowe/2005/sprawozdanie2004.pdf, s. 39-40, s. 74-75, s. 109-110, s. 143-144; Rada Ministrów, *Sprawozdanie z wykonania budżetu państwa za rok 2004. Omówienie*, T. 1, URL: <http://www.mf.gov.pl/index.php?wysw=2&sql=2&dzial=36>, s. 131; Narodowy Bank Polski, <http://www.nbp.pl/kursy/archiwum/internet.xls>.

* according to the rate of the National Bank of Poland, 1 € = 4,53 PLN

** excluding the subsidies for education, incorporated in the expenditures of local governments.

¹ GUS, *Kwartalna informacja o aktywności ekonomicznej ludności: I kwartał 2005*, Warszawa, June 2005,

URL: <http://www.stat.gov.pl>, Tab. 5.

0104 - EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF POPULATION

According to Eurostat data, 82% of Poland's population aged 25-64 have at least ISCED-3 level of education (i.e. 19% above the EU average). For Poland, this refers to all people who finished their education at least at the basic vocational level. However, a more detailed analysis shows that about 33% of this group are people who did not move beyond the basic vocational education level. The data from the National Census indicates that 1 in 4 Poles had basic vocational education, and 1 in 3 – secondary or post-secondary education. 1 in 5 Poles aged 18-64 has the lowest level of education, but this falls to 9.7% of those aged between 25-34 (national census data).

According to Eurostat, 1 in 7 Poles had university education (from national census data 18.6% for those aged between 25-34). Eurostat data indicates that in 2003, the percentage of people aged 18-24 who had at least lower secondary education and did not continue their education beyond the compulsory level was 6.3%, 1.3% less than in December 2002. Compared to other EU countries, Poland has a low share of school dropouts.

According to Eurostat, the share of students attending vocational schools at upper secondary level (64%) was much higher than the share of students attending general secondary schools (*licea*), which was 36%. These figures include students participating in basic vocational training which does not lead to a secondary certificate – *matura*). Taking these students out leads to a balance of 52% attending secondary vocational schools (technical schools and equivalent) and 48% in general secondary schools. Either way, Poland is one of the few countries where more than 50% of students attend vocational schools at the upper secondary level.

According to Eurostat, costs of training account for a mere 0.8% of labour costs in enterprises, which places Poland, along with Lithuania and Greece, in a group of countries with the lowest share of training costs in enterprises' labour costs – under 1%.

02 - POLICY DEVELOPMENT - OBJECTIVES, FRAMEWORKS, MECHANISMS, PRIORITIES

0201 - OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

The objectives of governmental policy in the field of vocational education and training (VET) are consistent with both the changes in the whole education system that have been gradually introduced since 1989, and the on-going 1998 education system reform. These reforms aim: to increase the number of people with secondary and higher education; to enhance equal opportunities to all levels of education; to develop schools' educational role.

Since 2000, VET reform has been linked to various EU initiatives (e.g. the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning - 2000, The Copenhagen Declaration – 2002 and the Lisbon Objectives). In the light of these, Polish policy development has focused upon:

- improving access to continuing vocational education and training (CVET);
- improving the quality of CVET;
- increasing cooperation and partnership;
- increasing investments in human resources;

- creating information resources in CVET and the development of counselling services;
- raising awareness of the role and importance of CVET.

The objectives indicated in the reform documents are being implemented through changes to the school system, reconstructing VET (to include more elements of general education) curriculum change and changes in teaching methods in all types of schools.

The issues concerning vocational education and training are included in the range of actions foreseen in the National Development Plan (*Narodowy Plan Rozwoju – NPR*) [NPR](#) for the years 2007/2013, which comprises, among the others, Sectoral Operational Programme - Development of Human Resources (*Sektorowy Program Operacyjny-Rozwój Zasobów Ludzkich – SPO RZL*). www.mein.gov.pl The Ministry of Education and Science together with social partners worked out a programme project for the years 2007/2013 “ Education and Competence”, which is focused on competence development of adults in the field of foreign languages, ICT technologies and entrepreneurship.

The changes in the school structure, begun in 1999, first covered primary and lower secondary schools, and since 2002, upper secondary general schools and vocational schools (post-secondary non-tertiary schools will be covered from 2005). VET for young people is available after compulsory education (lasting 9 years – 6 in a primary school and 3 in lower secondary). Other measures addressed to meet VET objectives and priorities include popularising the idea of lifelong learning through enhancing co-operation with employers, widening available educational offers, developing non-public schools and establishments, integrating workplace and school-based education to give a second chance to people wanting to acquire, complete, upgrade or change their qualifications.

Due to labour market requirements, increase of enterprise competitiveness and demand for higher qualifications young people lost interest in basic vocational education and became more interested in schools leading to upper secondary education (especially general) and in consequence to higher education. The enrolment rates prove this phenomenon – in the school years 1990/1991 and 2004/2005 the enrolment rate in basic vocational schooling decreased from 34% to 12% and in secondary general education increased from 18.6% to 42.3%. Also in higher education the enrolment rate increased from 9.8% to 36.8%. In consequence, nowadays, a shortage of people with basic and secondary vocational education is noted on the labour market. This information should be a clear sign for the educational authorities to undertake some steps to rise young people’s interest in vocational education through improvement of its quality also by changing the contents and teaching methods and not only by the system of external examinations. The problems of negative selection for vocational schools was stressed in the “Strategy for Education Development for the years 2007/2013”. <http://www.men.waw.pl/>

A new system of external examinations and tests (after primary school, after lower secondary school and for an upper secondary general school leaving certificate) and qualifications introduced in 2004 are aimed at improving education quality. For CVET, the accreditation system for workplace providers introduced in December 2003, is meant to ensure the quality of education promised and delivered.

In connection with building an information society and the Polish accession to the EU, in January 2004, the Minister of National Education and Sport appointed the Council for Information and Media Education. The Council is an advisory body, proposing activities and giving opinions in issues concerning IT and media education. www.menis.gov.pl

03 - INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK - PROVISION OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

0301 - ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

The management and administration of the education system, including the VET system, has a 4-level structure resulting from the administrative division of the country.

The educational policy is formulated and implemented centrally at the level of the Ministry of Education and Sport. The Minister of Education and Sport, by means of regulations and detailed arrangements, creates a legal framework for functioning of all educational establishments, including vocational education and training. The Minister of Education and Sport co-operates with other branch ministers supervising vocational schools.

The Minister of Education and Sport accepts the curricula and approves the textbooks that can be used in both general and vocational education.

Furthermore, the Minister of Education and Sport partly supervises the operation of school superintendents (*kurators*).

The regional authorities (*województwa*) mainly play a co-ordinating role; they supervise the implementation of the national policy and provide pedagogical supervision. The representative of the educational authority at this level is a school superintendent (*kurator*), who is appointed by the head of the regional government (*wojewoda*). The regional authorities also run schools and educational establishments of regional significance, including schools for medical staff and social workers, public establishments for teacher training and development, as well as teachers' libraries. The body running a school or an educational establishment supervises the financial and administrative aspects of its activity i.e. budget realisation, property management, as well as issues relating to organisation of school/educational institution's work.

The district authorities (*powiaty*) and their heads (*starosta*) are in charge of managing upper secondary education (including vocational education), post-secondary schools and special schools (primary and secondary), sports schools and schools of sports mastery, practical and continuing education centres, psychological and pedagogical centres.

In Poland, the local level is the municipality (*gmina*). All kindergartens, primary schools and lower secondary schools (*gymnasium*) are run by local governments.

At the level of a school or an educational establishment, the headmaster, elected in a competition for a 5-year period, is the person responsible for management. He chooses curricula realised in the school, provides pedagogical supervision, hires and dismisses personnel.

0302 - LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The right to education and the freedom of teaching in Poland are safeguarded by the Constitution of the Republic of Poland. It obliges the public authorities to ensure that citizens have general and equal access to education.

The basic legislative act which regulates the functioning of the education system, including vocational education and continuing education, for youths and adults is the Education System Act of 7th September 1991, with further amendments of 1995, 1998, 2001 and 2002. The amendments to the Act stipulate changes regarding :the schooling

obligation and compulsory education; the new education system; the establishment and management of public schools and educational institutions by territorial self-government bodies of different levels; the pedagogical supervision; the external examination system; the registration of non-public schools and educational institutions; the financing of public and non-public schools and educational institutions; procedures for defining the classification of occupations covered by the system of vocational education.

The 1998 amendments to the Act introduced changes to the education system, consisting in establishments of new types of schools and modification of term of education at particular levels of the system. According to the assumptions of the educational reform, the following types of schools were introduced:

- 6-year primary school;
- 3-year lower secondary school (a *gymnasium*);
- Post-gymnasium schools:
 - 3-year profiled lyceum, that enables obtaining a secondary school graduation certificate (*matura*);
 - 2-year basic vocational school, that ends with vocational exam and gives the opportunity to continue education in 2-year supplementary upper-secondary general school (*lyceum*) or supplementary upper-secondary technical school.
- 2-year supplementary lyceum, that enables vocational school leavers obtaining a secondary school graduation certificate (*matura*);
- Post-lyceum school, that gives opportunity to acquire vocational education and may end with vocational certificate.

The 2003 amendment to the Act introduced the accreditation of institutions of continuing education and teacher training. It also enables the adults who do not attend any schools to acquire a certificate on the basis of exams carried out by the Central Examination Commission (*Centralna Komisja Egzaminacyjna*). Furthermore the amendment defines more strictly the organisational framework for continuing education and specifies types of schools and establishments entitled to provide this kind of education. In order to improve practical training, the amendment allows to conclude agreements with employers' organisations, economic self-governments and NGOs regarding organisation of practical training for vocational school pupils.

SECONDARY LEGISLATION

Most legal decisions regarding VET are made through ordinances by the Minister for National Education and Sport. In 2003/2004, approximately a dozen such ordinances were made covering issues such as: standards for examinations leading to vocational qualifications; types, organisation and operation of public continuing education establishments (i.e. Continuing Education Centres, Practical Training Centres, further training and upgrading centres); curricula for particular vocations; general vocational education profiles, etc.

THE LAW ON HIGHER EDUCATION

On 1st September 2005 a new act *The Law on Higher Education* was introduced in Poland replacing functioning so far 2 separate acts of 1990 and of 1997 with 1 uniform law.

The new act *The Law on Higher Education* refers to the whole higher education – public and non-public, academic and vocational. The act legitimizes multi-level structure of studies. Higher education institutions provide first and second level studies as well as 5-6 year uniform master studies. The act defines also what makes a HEI eligible to provide doctor studies.

Some regulations regarding the relationship between a higher education institution and its environment should be especially noted. First-level study programme, leading to a vocational title of a *licencjat* or an engineer, has to include vocational placement regardless the type of its provider. Moreover, organization and course of study are to enable transfer and recognition of results achieved by students in different HEIs, including the ones achieved abroad.

The questions of training of the unemployed and other job seekers and the question of vocational guidance and counselling are regulated by the Act on Promoting Employment and Labour Market Institutions of 20th April, 2004 as well as numerous ordinances of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy and the Minister of National Education and Sport.

0303 - ROLE OF SOCIAL PARTNERS

The institutional framework necessary for social dialogue in Poland was created in the early 1990s. Initially, however, the prime interest of the social partners was focused on social and economic issues. Recently their involvement in VET-related matters has been increasing due to employers' need to improve the quality of their products and services as well as a requirement to increase worker labour market mobility.

The main institutional platform for social partners' involvement in VET at national level is the Tripartite Commission on Socio-Economic Issues (*Komisja Trójstronna ds. Społeczno-Gospodarczych*) established by resolution of the Council of Ministers of 15th February 1994. The Tripartite Commission is composed of representatives of public administration, employers (e.g. Business Centre Club, Confederation of Polish Employers, Polish Confederation of Private Employers, Association of Polish Crafts and the National Chamber of Commerce), the largest trade unions (NSZZ Solidarnosc, OPZZ and Trade Unions' Forum) as well as some sectoral trade unions. All these organisations function in 2 capacities in the VET field: both as consultative bodies and as initiators of legal measures.

Another body for social dialogue at national level is the Central Employment Board (*Naczelna Rada Zatrudnienia*) which fulfils an advisory role to the Minister of Labour. It consists of representatives of public administration, employers' organisations, trade unions and representatives of territorial self-governments. It is consulted on, amongst

other things, issues concerning training for unemployed people, programmes promoting employment, planning and use of the Labour Fund (state purpose fund).

Furthermore, social partners participate in task forces of the Education Committee in the Polish Parliament as well as for the Ministry of National Education and Sport in regard to the reform of the VET system. They also participate in agreements with the Ministry, for example, in 2002 the Ministry was looking for social partners willing to sign agreements to improve the quality of vocational education, particularly practical education, and to broaden its technical base by taking advantage of enterprise capacities. Between 2002/2004, the Minister signed agreements with 10 partners, some of which had had years of collaboration whereas for others it was a first step.

At regional and district levels, regional and district employment boards take actions to achieve full employment in the region, evaluate the management of the Labour Fund, submit applications and give opinions concerning VET. A relatively new consultation structure for VET issues are regional commissions for social dialogue, established on the basis of the Act of 6th July, 2001. They consist of representatives of regional administration, employers' organisations, trade unions and representatives of regional self-government, sometimes the representatives of district self-governments are also invited to the meetings. The commissions meet at least once every 3 months and discuss social and economic matters crucial for the region, including questions of education organisation and financing.

At the level of enterprises, social partner involvement in VET is mostly through either the organisation of practical training or vocational placements for vocational school pupils on the basis of agreements concluded between employers and particular schools or organising vocational training under the apprenticeship scheme (see section 0404).

04 - INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

0401 - BACKGROUND TO THE IVET SYSTEM AND DIAGRAM

[The education system in Poland](#)

There are two types of obligation in Poland - a school obligation and an education obligation. Schooling becomes obligatory during the calendar year of a child's 6th birthday and remains mandatory until the child turns 16, but the education obligation lasts until the completion of the age of 18. This means that children must remain in the school system until their 16th birthday, and after that they may leave the school system but they are obliged to continue their education until they turn 18. For the vast majority of students, the school obligation entails first attending a primary school and then a lower secondary school (*gimnazjum*). After graduation from a lower secondary school, the compulsory education is fulfilled by attending a public or non-public upper secondary school or by non-formal education. The lower secondary school graduates start their education in upper secondary general education or vocational schools at the age of 16. Education in those schools lasts between 2 to 6 years depending on the type of school. Most vocational pupils finish their education in the school system at the age of 19 or 20.

The school year 2004/2005 was the following year of the educational reform. The vertical permeability of the school system allows one to continue education in schools leading to a maturity examination and upper secondary school-leaving certificate (*matura*) or in basic vocational schools leading to vocational qualifications only. However, basic vocational school leavers may go on with their education in supplementary upper secondary technical schools or supplementary general schools that can award an upper secondary school-leaving certificate (*matura*). This certificate opens the way to higher

education, including higher vocational studies awarding the vocational title of a *licencjat* (First professional title conferred on students who have obtained the qualification at the end of first-cycle university education in the field of human or natural sciences, economics, physical education, tourism or certain paramedical fields. Source: *European Glossary on Education. Volume 1. Examinations, Qualifications and Titles. Eurydice 2004*) or an engineer. Graduates from higher vocational studies are entitled to continue their education at 2-year supplementary Master's programmes. The school system also ensures horizontal permeability albeit mostly in one direction – from general schools to vocational schools or from schools for youths to schools for adults.

Vocational education and training in school and out-of-school forms is provided by public and non-public schools, higher education institutions, continuing education institutions, practical training centres and other establishments offering out-of-school education.

In the education system the following types of upper secondary schools provide initial vocational education and training:

- 3-year profiled general secondary school (*liceum profilowane*)- providing general education and offering tuition in individual general vocational profiles, leading to secondary school-leaving certificate (*matura*);
- 4-year technical secondary school- awarding a vocational qualification diploma. Furthermore secondary school-leaving certificate (*matura*) can be obtained after completion of the fourth grade of the school;
- 3-year supplementary technical secondary school – awarding a vocational qualification diploma, leading up to a *matura*, for basic vocational school leavers ;
- 2-3 year basic vocational school - awarding a vocational qualification diploma;
- 2,5 year post-secondary schools- awarding a vocational qualification diploma, for graduates from general secondary schools (starting their operation in 2005);
- 3-year special schools preparing for work for pupils mentally or physically handicapped – awarding a certificate confirming preparation for work.

The reason for the different forms of upper secondary schooling lies in the different educational objectives of particular types of schools. General secondary schools (*licea ogólnokształcące*) prepare their students for obtaining an upper secondary school-leaving certificate after passing a *matura* exam and, further on, for pursuing their education in higher-education institutions; therefore, they are a part of an “academic pathway of education”. In contrast, the rest of upper secondary schools, apart from general education preparation, are focused on providing vocational qualifications or general vocational preparation. That is why their curricula are different and their educational process includes practical training in particular vocations. Furthermore, the duration of education is different – 3 years in the case of a general secondary school but 4 years for secondary technical schools.

Whether in secondary technical schools, basic vocational schools or post-secondary schools, vocational education is provided in vocations included in “The Classification of

Vocations for Vocational Schooling”, which is consistent with the classification worked out for labour market needs.

In the 2004/2005 school year, there were 7 456 upper secondary vocational schools for youths including 485 special needs schools. 75% of the 3 476 post-secondary schools are for adults. According to the Central Statistical Office, 24.6% of 2005 *gimnazjum* leavers continued education in general secondary schools, 24.6% - in secondary technical schools, 14.6% - in profiled general secondary schools, 14.8% - in basic vocational schools.

0402 - IVET AT LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL

IVET at the lower secondary level is limited to only 1.35% of the total lower secondary population. Lower secondary schools (*gimnazjum*) with work preparation classes are addressed to pupils who, after a year's instruction in the *gimnazjum* and reaching the age of 15 do not seem to be able to complete the school in the prescribed period. Such pupils are delayed owing to learning problems and truancy. Most usually, such pupils are also members of the Voluntary Labour Corps (OHP), the mission of which is to educate and edify through work.

Pupils are admitted to such classes by the school headmaster, following a resolution of the teachers' board, with the consent of the parents and upon consultation with a doctor or a counselling centre.

In the work preparation classes, general education is based on the relevant core curriculum, to the extent and in forms corresponding to the pupils' abilities and needs. The special preparation for work curriculum is developed by the teacher on the basis of selected learning contents included in the core curriculum for a given occupation. Preparation for performing a given work can be provided in or outside the school, on the basis of an agreement concluded by the school headmaster with such entities as schools offering vocational education, continuing education centres, or employers. Typically, pupils are in the 15–17 age brackets.

The curriculum in those classes comprises 94 teaching hours a week in the entire cycle of education, of which 15% is devoted to vocational education or training in a workplace in the case of participants of Voluntary Labour Corps

The school does not award a vocational title. Those who completed such a preparation training do not have any vocational qualifications save for preliminary skills needed for performing a given job. They are awarded *gimnazjum* leaving certificates with an annotation that they attended this particular class and completed such a preparation training based on the core curriculum for a specific occupation. The marks in the preparation for performing a given work subjects are shown both on all *gimnazjum* certificates, including the leaving certificate.

In the 2004/2005 school year, there were 92 lower secondary schools with work preparation classes, attended by 24 600 000 pupils, including 10 200 000 girls.

0403 - IVET AT UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION (SCHOOL-BASED AND ALTERNANCE)

The basic criterion for admittance to all schools at the upper secondary level is completion of a *gimnazjum*. Other criteria depend on the type of school and are usually comprised in the school statute. They may take into account the number of points obtained at the final *gimnazjum* exam, a pupil's marks in Polish and three other compulsory subjects and his special achievements. In the case of supplementary upper

secondary schools (general secondary school or technical vocational school), the admittance criteria may also include the results of an entrance exam or an interview.

The profiled general secondary school (*liceum profilowane*) is a new type of school and a new educational pathway implemented as a result of the 1999 educational reform. This type of school, besides general education, provides education in general vocational profiles. Education in a *liceum profilowane* starts at the age of 16 and lasts 3 years. The 15 profiles of general vocational education correspond to the categories of activities listed in the Polish Classification of Activities – PKD. The most popular profiles chosen by pupils are: administration- 27.3% of pupils, information management –25.9% and service –14.5%.

The core curriculum defines the number of teaching hours for general and vocational subjects. The education in a profile amounts to 13% of all teaching hours.

The leavers from *liceum profilowane* may be able to continue their education in new post-secondary schools, which will start in 2005. Moreover, obtaining an upper secondary school-leaving certificate (*matura*) leavers can access higher education institutions, including higher vocational schools.

In the 2004/2005 school year, 1 655 profiled general secondary schools, attended by 234 900 000 pupils, functioned in the school system.

Technical secondary schools (*technikum*) enable the acquisition of both an upper secondary school-leaving certificate (*matura*) and vocational qualifications to the level of technician. Pupils start their education in technical secondary schools at the age of 16 and finish in 4 years. In the 2004/2005 school year, there were 2 254 technical secondary schools for *gimnazjum* leavers and 768 supplementary technical schools for basic vocational school leavers. There were 418 800 000 pupils in both types of those schools.

The most popular vocations offered by technical secondary schools are: accountant, mechanic, electronics specialist, and salesperson.

After completion of the school, graduates may take an external exam confirming their vocational qualifications. The exam is based on nationwide examination requirement standards. Obtaining a secondary school-leaving certificate (*matura*) in their 4th year opens the door for graduates to higher education institutions.

The supplementary technical secondary school (*technikum uzupełniające*) for basic vocational school leavers is a 3-year secondary vocational school with a follow-up curriculum to that of the basic vocational school. Its goal is to bring the pupils' education up to the intermediate level and prepare them for the examination confirming their vocational qualifications and for the *matura* exam. At completion, pupils are awarded the *technikum* leaving certificate, provided they have received no fail marks at the end of the final year.

The only vocational school at the upper secondary level that awards a vocational qualification diploma but does not lead to a *matura* is the basic vocational school (*zasadnicza szkoła zawodowa*), which confers the qualifications of a skilled worker. Education in this type of school starts at the age of 16 and lasts 2 or 3 years, depending on the vocation. The duration of education for particular vocations is indicated in "The Classification of Vocations for Vocational Schooling" (*klasyfikacja zawodów szkolnych*). The most popular vocations in the 2-year schools are: a shop-assistant, a cook and a gardener, and in 3-year schools: an automobile mechanic, a hairdresser and a baker.

In the 2004/2005 school year, 1 844 basic vocational schools functioned in the school system, educating 239 200 000 pupils.

3-year special needs schools (*szkola specjalna*) offering preparation for performing a given job are foreseen mostly for mentally disabled pupils and for pupils with complex disabilities who completed lower secondary school. Their curricula and organisation of education are adapted to the needs and capabilities of disabled pupils. At completion, pupils receive certificates confirming their preparedness performing a given work, but do not have full vocational qualifications.

The proportions between general education (general subjects –e.g. Polish language and one foreign language in basic vocational schools and 2 foreign languages in secondary technical schools, history, introduction to sociology, mathematics, physics, chemistry, etc.) and vocational education (including theoretical and practical vocational subjects) are specified in general teaching plans relevant for the given type of school which at the same time serve as a basis for organising education in the given types of schools. The general teaching plans are prepared by the minister of education. In the case of technical secondary schools vocational subjects consume 36% of all hours envisaged for learning in the entire cycle of education. In basic vocational schools vocational subjects consume 53% of all hours envisaged for education.

The Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 11th December 1992 on organising and financing practical vocational training, the rights and obligations of establishments which provide such training and on students who participate in the practical vocational training with all subsequent amendments is the legal basis for organising and financing practical vocational training. At the moment intensive efforts are being made to update and amend the above mentioned regulation.

Practical vocational training is organised in the form of practical training classes at school or vocational placements. Practical training classes are aimed at the acquiring vocational skills necessary for a particular vocational career. They may be carried out in school workshops and laboratories, school farms, continuing education centres or practical training centres. In basic vocational schools practical training consumes around 50% of all hours envisaged for vocational subjects. In technical secondary schools this proportion varies from 10% to 38%.

Around 20% (data from 2001) of pupils attending basic vocational schools (at the worker level) receive their practical vocational training in craftsmen' workshops. There are no collective and comprehensive data showing what percentage of pupils (of basic and secondary vocational schools) obtain their practical vocational training in enterprises and in school workshops, and what percentage in practical training centres and continuing education centres. However, it can be stated that employers (apart from craftsmen) are not interested in training the pupils and that the percentage of pupils who receive their practical vocational training in an employer's company is fairly small. Since 2002 the ministry of education - in co-operation with other ministries - has initiated activities designed to change those proportions. So far the Ministry of National Education and Sport has concluded agreements with ten social partners aimed at establishment of a network of companies which will offer practical training for pupils and teachers and will support schools' technical base.

Vocational placements lasting 4 weeks is organised once or twice in the education cycle.

Because vocational placements are meant to deepen pupils' vocational knowledge and skills and to teach them how to apply the knowledge and skills in real work conditions, they take place in enterprises and individual farms.

In school forms of education the number of hours of practical vocational training cannot exceed 6 hours daily for pupils up to 16 years old and 8 hours for pupils over 16 regardless the type of school .

The scope of knowledge and skills acquired by pupils during practical instruction and vocational placements as well as the number of hours are defined by curricula for particular vocations.

According to Eurostat data, the share of students attending vocational schools at the upper secondary level in 2003 was a bit higher (54%) than the share of students attending general secondary schools (*licea*), which was 46%. It should be noted that as in Table 9, this group also included students attending basic vocational schools which do not lead to secondary school-leaving certificate (*matura*) (see Table 9). The figures place Poland in a group of countries where more than 50% of students are attending vocational schools at the upper secondary level. Other new member states which had a share in excess of 50% included Slovakia, Slovenia and the Czech Republic. These countries, including Poland, have a long tradition of vocational education, which was especially developed in communist times. However, nowadays more and more young people intends to gain tertiary level education so they chose rather general than vocational upper secondary schools. That is why the difference in percentage of students in vocational and general upper secondary education is decreasing (8% more in vocational schools than in general ones in 2003, over 14% a year before).

Table 9: Full time students in upper secondary education by programme orientation, 2003¹					
	TOTAL	VOCATIONAL PROGRAMMES		GENERAL AND PRE-VOCATIONAL PROGRAMMES	
		TOTAL	%	TOTAL	%
EUROPEAN UNION 25	18 700 379	8 689 700	46	10 010 679	54
AUSTRIA	364 844	265 161	73	99 683	27
BELGIUM	514 370	287 454	56	226 916	44
FLEMISH SPEAKING COMMUNITY	276 425	168 926	61	107 499	39
FRENCH/GERMAN SPEAKING COMMUNITY	235 076	117 443	50	117 633	50
CYPRUS	31 151	4 278	14	26 873	86
CZECH REPUBLIC	490 189	388 862	79	101 327	21
DENMARK	222 003	118 329	53	103 674	47
ESTONIA	51 617	16 544	32	35 073	68
FINLAND	302 688	178 044	59	124 644	41
FRANCE	2 583 587	1 457 240	56	1 126 347	44
GERMANY	2 758 024	1 729 839	63	1 028 185	37

GREECE	364 270	134 099	37	230 171	63
HUNGARY	463 289	64 084	14	399 205	86
ICELAND	16 257	5 777	36	10 480	64
IRELAND	144 213	-	-	144 213	100
ITALY	2 690 469	698 717	26	1 991 752	74
LATVIA	86 295	36 945	43	49 350	57
LITHUANIA	100 992	29 341	29	71 651	71
LUXEMBOURG	17 874	11 558	65	6 316	35
MALTA	8 164	1 495	18	6 669	82
NETHERLANDS	593 901	410 268	69	183 633	31
NORWAY	199 377	120 662	61	78 715	39
POLAND	1 816 741	977 090	54	839 651	46
PORTUGAL	298 857	87 365	29	211 492	71
SLOVAKIA	280 416	210 861	75	69 555	25
SLOVENIA	102 247	64 697	63	37 550	37
SPAIN	957 740	304 032	32	653 708	68
SWEDEN	371 616	186 659	50	184 957	50
UNITED KINGDOM	3 086 333	1 026 738	33	2 059 595	67

Source: Eurostat, UOE; NewCronos, release date 29/06/2005

¹ ISCED 97, level 3

0404 - APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

In the Polish education system, apprenticeship training is regarded as a special type of vocational education and training. The main condition for participation in this type of training is completion of a lower secondary school – *gimnazjum* and being at least 16 years of age. However, in special situations, the law allows for some exceptions to this rule.

Apprenticeship can take either of the following 2 forms:

- as occupational training, aimed to prepare young trainees (under the age of 18) for work as apprentice or skilled workers; it comprises practical vocational training at the employer's and theoretical training; The pupils can choose the form of theoretical training – it can take place in the school system or in out-of-school form. Most pupils (88%) complete their theoretical education in basic vocational schools, and the rest, coming mostly from rural areas and small towns or training in occupations not listed in the "school classification", in out-of-school forms.

- as training to perform a specific job, covering only selected work activities comprised by training for a specific occupation. Training to perform a specific job is limited to a small group of youths who, because of different reasons, did not complete lower secondary school and are at least 15 years of age. After finishing training to perform a specific job the juvenile workers can continue their vocational education in the form of occupational training and the duration of the first is included in to duration of the latter.

In the case of apprenticeship training aimed at acquiring a diploma of skilled worker or an apprentice, theoretical education in the school system or in out-of-school forms respects core curricula for particular vocations. Vocational education in this form takes between 24 and 36 months. The level of education provided in this type of apprenticeship training corresponds to vocational education at the level of a basic vocational school. Youths combining theoretical education in the school system with practical training in an enterprise have a status of a trainee juvenile worker. Regardless the form of theoretical education the apprenticeship training finishes with the apprentice exam organised by the chamber of crafts.

In the case of apprenticeship training aimed at preparation for performing a specific job, the employer defines curriculum taking into account existing core curricula. Such training takes 3 to 6 months. After completing training to perform a specific job and passing a test a trainee receives a certificate stating acquisition of particular skills in a particular occupation. The certificate is issued by the enterprise where the training had place.

The apprenticeship training in Poland is organised in small and medium enterprises, mainly in handicrafts. The employers are usually members of a guild or a chamber of handicrafts. A particular chamber of handicrafts or appointed guild supervises the apprenticeship training of juvenile workers. According to data provided by the Polish Association of Crafts, in the 2003/2004 school year, in 34 500 enterprises, 85 000 juvenile workers were participating in apprenticeship training. Vocational training in the crafts is offered in 101 occupations listed in the Classification of Occupations for Vocational Schooling and in non-school occupations covered by the classification of occupations and specialities for the labour market. The most common occupations were: an automobile mechanic, a hairdresser, a carpenter and a baker.

Agreements between apprentices and employers can be time bound or open-ended. Where the apprentice is attending theoretical training at school, then the terms of the agreement must be concluded before the start of the school year. If other forms of theoretical training are pursued, then the agreement can be concluded at any time. The agreement always sets out the theoretical education to be followed by the apprentice.

0405 - OTHER YOUTH PROGRAMMES AND ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS

In recognition that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are disadvantaged on the labour market, the Voluntary Labour Corps (OHP) was established. The Corps is a state organisation (under the Ministry of Labour) with a series of education centres. The centres provide a range of training, further training and employment opportunities and work in cooperation with district governments.

The Voluntary Labour Corps are targeted at youths at the age of between 15 and 18, who have completed the primary school and who are: going through difficult material, family or personal circumstances; experiencing difficulties at school, school dropouts; from dysfunctional, broken or jobless families; from orphanages.

Units of the Voluntary Labour Corps accept youth coming on their own accord and those recommended by school pedagogues or pedagogical and psychological counselling centres, court-appointed social workers, the police and/or other social services functioning in the young people's community.

Youths who face especially difficult circumstances are guaranteed free accommodations and board. Students learn in 3 kinds of places: Labour Corps, Training and Guidance Centres and Education and Guidance Centres.

During 2 or 3 years these young people have a chance to complete their education, work and gain vocational qualifications. Learning at the OHP may take place either in the school system at:

- a lower secondary schools (*gimnazja*) with work preparation classes;
- a lower secondary schools for adults;
- basic vocational schools upon successful completion of a *gimnazjum*;
- basic vocational schools for adults upon successful completion of a *gimnazjum*;
- or at:
- craft-oriented vocational courses.

Regardless of the type of vocational training, practical instruction will occur in workplaces or companies involved in trades that do business within the catchment area of the particular labour corps.

Very often young people combine their education with work in the alternance or apprenticeship forms.

Within the nation-wide network created by the OHP, there are currently 16 regional divisions, 201 branches of the labour corps, 26 centres for training and guidance, 1 European Centre for Education and Guidance, 9 centres for education and guidance, 49 centres for youth education and labour, 32 vocational training centres, 49 youth labour offices, plus another 68 branches of them, 113 labour clubs and 36 training farms. As of September 2004, OHP resources include 49 Mobile Vocational Information Centres (MCIZ) and a Main Methodology Centre for Vocational Information, located at the OHP headquarters.

In 2004 the Voluntary Labour Corps organised education and work for 31 525 young people, including 8 033 girls.

0406 - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT POST-SECONDARY (NON TERTIARY) LEVEL

In the 2004/2005 school year there were 3 476 post-secondary schools educating 291 200 people. A significant part of post secondary schools - 75% are schools for adults providing education for 65.8% of all post-secondary school students.

Entry criteria for some post-lyceum schools are completion of upper secondary school, and to others, an upper secondary school-leaving certificate (*matura*). Students usually

start their education in post-secondary schools aged 19–21 years, but every 6th student is over 25.

The education in post-secondary schools takes up to 2.5 years. The duration of training for individual occupations is determined in the Classification of Occupations for Vocational Schooling and depends on earlier training, either in a profiled secondary school preparing for a given occupation or in another school offering full secondary education.

A post-secondary school provides vocational education according to a curriculum from the list of curricula approved by the Minister of Education for the school use or in accordance with the procedures works out own curriculum. A curriculum developed by a teacher must be approved for the use in the particular school after the acceptance of the regional educational superintendent. Classes devoted to vocational training can be conducted in other organizational entities, such as: higher education institutions, Continuing Education Centres (CKUs), Practical Training Centres (CKPs), employers' companies and in agricultural farms, after fulfilling conditions necessary for proper provision of vocational education and preparing students for exam confirming their vocational qualifications and for work.

Post-secondary school leavers acquire qualifications of technician or skilled worker, which they may confirm through an external vocational exam. The vocational profiles these types of schools offer include: technical sciences, economics and commerce, administration, general services, medical and social services, agriculture, culture and arts. Every 3rd student graduates from IT or economics and commerce profiles.

0407 - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT TERTIARY LEVEL

Students typically start tertiary education aged 19 (after upper-secondary general schools and profiled lycea), 20 (after technical secondary schools) or 21-22 (after supplementary technical secondary schools). Entry criteria to tertiary education is passing the matriculation exam (a final general education exam at the end of an upper secondary school) and obtaining upper secondary school-leaving certificate (*matura*). Tertiary education providers can decide on other admittance criteria, which may include entrance exams, interviews or the grades achieved at the end of upper-secondary school.

VET at the tertiary level is provided by 2 types of teacher colleges and higher education institutions.

Graduates from foreign language teacher colleges obtain qualifications entitling them to teach a foreign language in primary, lower and upper secondary schools. The other type of teacher colleges prepare teachers for kindergartens, primary schools and other educational establishments. The education in teacher colleges takes 3 years.

In the 2004/2005 school year there were 22 400 people who acquired qualifications in 103 teacher colleges, of which 60% attended foreign language teacher colleges.

In 2005 important changes were introduced in the higher education as a result of a new legislative act "The Law on Higher Education". The act legitimized 3-level system of studies, and the higher education institutions, depending on their competence, may be academic or vocational. Both types are entitled to provide first and second level studies as well as uniform master studies, however, vocational ones are not eligible to offer doctoral studies. First level studies - 4-year engineer programmes or 3-year *licencjat* programmes are focused on preparing graduates for a particular profession. The essential element of these programmes is 15 weeks of practical training. The graduates

from *licencjat* and engineer studies are entitled to continue education at supplementary 2 or 2.5- year Master's courses.

All higher education institutions offering *licencjat* or *engineer* studies are obliged to include teaching standards for particular strands and level of education in their curricula. The standards indicate subjects of general education, basic subjects and vocational subjects. Subjects of general education are mandatory for all directions of education and should comprise 15-20% of all teaching hours. General education subjects include foreign languages, physical education and some electives.

In the case of engineer programmes, FEANI (Federation Europeenne d'Associations Nationales d'Ingenieurs) accreditation criteria are recommended. According to them, non-technical subjects should take up about 10% of all teaching hours, basic subjects – 35% and technical subjects – 55% of instructional time.

In the 2004/2005 academic year, higher vocational schools established by the act of 1998 were still functioning in the system. In 181 state and private higher vocational schools 207 100 students (10.8% of all students) were educated. The graduates of higher vocational schools constituted 45% of all higher education institutions' graduates, just like in the previous year.

05 - CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS

0501 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The legal definition of continuing education in Poland is presented in The Education System Act of 7th September 1991, (*Dziennik Ustaw* of 2004, No. 256, item. 2 572 with further amendments.) in article 3, section 17. It declares that continuing education is “education in schools for adults, as well as gaining and supplementing general knowledge, vocational skills and qualifications in the out-of-school forms by people past the period of compulsory education”. According to this definition, continuing education in Poland is not identical with the continuing education concept as defined in the European Union where it is treated as a “lifelong process” (lifelong learning).

Organisation, implementation and forms of continuing education are defined by article 68a of the Education System Act:

- Continuing education is organised and carried out by:
- schools for adults
- institutions of continuing education, practical training centres, further training centres.
- Continuing education can be carried out on regular daily basis, as extramural or distance learning.

Continuing education is carried out in the form of school and out-of-school education and the institutions of continuing education can be both public and non-public (private). This means that, apart from the above mentioned institutions, continuing education is provided by such institutions and organisations as: workplaces, labour offices, vocational and sectoral organisations of employers and employees, trade unions and farmer organisations, churches and religious organisations, associations, foundations and other voluntary organisations, scientific institutions, local self-governments and central institutions.

An educational institution offering training for the unemployed and job seekers can get an order financed from public resources, after it has been registered in the Register of Training Institutions, run by the Regional Labour Office competent for the seat of the training institution. The Register of Training Institutions is run pursuant to the Regulation of the Minister of Economy and Labour of 27th October 2004 concerning registration of training institutions (*Dziennik Ustaw* No. 236, item. 2 365).

In Polish law, despite permanent changes, the status of continuing education is imprecise which leads to many definition-related misunderstandings and blurred responsibilities for its co-ordination. The Education System Act treats the issue of continuing education marginally. On the other hand, the Act on Promoting Employment and Labour Market Institutions solved the problem of continuing education of the unemployed and job seekers to a considerable extent, however, it does not exhaust the entire problem of continuing education.

TARGET GROUPS

Continuing education in Poland refers to two categories of people: those who, for different reasons, dropped out from the school course of education but want to return to it as adults and to people who want to develop their vocational qualifications as well as their outside-job interests. In both cases only the adults who complied with compulsory education are embraced by the continuing education system. According to the regulations in force compulsory education of a child starts at the beginning of the school year in the calendar year when the child becomes 6 years old and lasts until the child completes lower secondary school but not longer than the child's 18th birthday. After completing lower secondary education (*gimnazjum*), school compulsory education must be continued up to the 18th birthday and this duty is fulfilled by attending a public or non-public secondary school or forms of out-of-school education.

LIFELONG LEARNING

The year 2003 was a turning point for continuing education in Poland. It was the year preceding Poland's joining the European Union. In that year the Ministry of National Education and Sport, being aware of the significance of continuing education in facilitating continuing development of citizens and building the knowledge-based economy, which will be able to meet the challenges of globalization and competition, developed a document entitled "Development Strategy for Continuing Education until 2010" which was accepted by the Council of Ministers on 8th July 2003. The "Development Strategy for Continuing Education until 2010" specifies the strategic objective of continuing education development and lifelong learning. It is "giving support and direction to personal development, stimulating human innovativeness and creativity". Implementation of the objective will help "increase competitiveness, improve work organization and build foundations for the knowledge-based society".

In order to attain this strategic objective, 6 priorities corresponding to the European area of lifelong learning have been identified:

1. Broader access to continuing education;
2. Improved quality of continuing education;
3. Collaboration and partnership;
4. Increased investment in Human Resources;
5. Developing awareness of the role of continuing education;

6. Facilitating access to reliable information, advisory services and counselling.

Within each priority, key tasks have been identified as well as the bodies responsible for their execution (ministers, self-government units, associations, non-governmental organizations) and implementation time-table.

Moreover, The National Reform Programme for the years 2005/2008 envisages development of the “Lifelong Learning Strategy”, which will cover a much broader context of continuing education than that included in the definition of the Education System Act.

ACCESS TO LEARNING

The Polish government is aware that training using advanced technology can greatly contribute to the achievement of ambitious objectives specified in the Educational Development Strategy until 2010 in Poland. On-line education is particularly interesting in this respect. However, from the historical point of view, distance learning has not played a significant role in Poland. Unfortunately, there is no data concerning the number of people who benefited from the offer of distance learning. Neither, is there reliable statistics concerning delivery of e-Learning courses. E-Learning in Poland is just undergoing the phase of dynamic development. This is a result of growing awareness of the need to develop employees’ competencies and an early phase of distance learning development. The nearest years will tidy up the market and training institutions will increasingly specialize. The technological gap and the level of education in the market, however, will not allow us to catch up quickly with the European countries or American market in this respect. The existing offer of e-Learning training is addressed to public business organizations, managerial staff, research and science sector, teachers, SMEs employees, craftsmen, students and other groups.

In Poland the model of open or distance learning is not very common. There are numerous obstacles which have to be overcome to allow free functioning of distance education e.g.: lack of legal regulations, suitable technical infrastructure including wide-band access to the Internet, well prepared staff and long-term development programme. To make this form of education actually possible, the Ministry of Education and Sport (MENiS) in June 2005 suggested a system solution in a document entitled “A Concept of distance learning implementation in the Polish situation”.

The concept presented refers to a model including formal, informal and non-formal education. The Polish model of distance learning assumes founding the National Centre of Distance Learning (COKNO). Its functions will be performed by the National Centre of Support for Vocational and Continuing Education after it has been transformed into the national institution for continuing education. It is also planned to form Regional Distance Learning Centres (ROKNO) the functions of which will be taken over by existing centres of continuing and practical education. It is assumed that each of the 16 provinces will have 1 distance learning centre. The model assumes also establishment of Local Distance Learning Centres (LOKNO), which will create a network co-operating with school superintendents and bodies running particular schools. They will be used as a didactic and staff base for non-public and public schools, continuing and practical education institutions and vocational training centres. Local distance learning centres will be able to create consultation points using resources of, among others, district labour offices, municipal libraries, municipal information and culture centres.

PLANNING AND FORECASTING

The planned CVET training in Poland can be performed in an indirect way, at the national level, mainly by means of the systematic forecasting of labour demand made by Government Centre of Strategic Studies and Inter-ministerial Team for Forecasting

Labour Demand. Within the framework of the work performed by this Team an integrated system of information was created which enables formulation and publication of up-to-date forecasts concerning labour demand, employment and the number of working people. Results of these forecasts can become a starting point for making strategic decisions concerning HR development in our country.

Requirements concerning certain qualifications and skills are also specified within the framework of the Ministry of Economy and Labour (now Ministry of Labour and Social Policy) National System of Vocational Training assisted by the database concerning the offer of modular training and vocational qualification standards (database address: <http://www.standardyiskolenia.praca.gov.pl>).

A new initiative which supports identification of needs in the field of vocational education and development offer for employees is a Long-term Programme (PW-004/ITE/2004) – “Improvement of innovativeness development systems in production and maintenance, 2004/2008”, in the part dealing with state provided services SP-5 “Vocational development in the field of advanced production and maintenance technologies”. The programme is coordinated by the Institute for Terotechnology – National Research Institute. Some of the works carried out are R&D works aimed at the development of methodology and tools which would enable identification of needs in the SMEs employees’ vocational qualification adjustment to changing production and maintenance technologies.

At the regional level, regional and district labour offices analyse the labour market to identify the jobs which are in deficit, in excess or their supply is balanced. The analysis as well as surveys and interviews with employers are collected to create a relevant training offer for the unemployed.

Planning of the CVET training and identification of training needs for individuals are accomplished with the help of vocational advisors of the public employment services and commercial firms involved in HR development.

0502 - PUBLICLY PROMOTED CVET FOR ALL

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

Publicly promoted CVET is part of the formal education system. The responsibility for continuing education can be divided into central administration bodies and self-government bodies at the regional, district and municipal levels, in conformity with the administrative structure of the state (16 regions, 379 districts, 2 489 municipalities).

Central institutions, especially the governmental ones, are responsible for the implementation of the continuing education policy at the European and national levels. A particular role in this respect is fulfilled by: the Minister of Education, responsible for the school and out-of-school education system; the Minister of Labour –in charge for training of the unemployed and job seekers; the Minister of Finance – who decides about tax relieves related to education and development and other ministers who decide about conditions of performing the jobs which are within the branches depending on them.

The regional authorities (*województwa*) mainly play a co-ordinating role; they supervise the implementation of the national policy, adjusting its objectives to the local needs as well as provide pedagogical supervision over public schools and continuing education institutions. The representative of the educational authority at this level is an educational superintendent (*kurator*), who is appointed by the head of the regional government. The regional authorities also run schools and educational establishments of regional significance. The district authorities (*powiats*) and their heads (*starosts*) are in charge of

managing upper secondary education (including schools for adults), post-secondary schools, Continuing Education Centres (CKU) and Practical Training Centres (CKP).

In Poland, the local level is the *gmina* level. All primary schools and lower secondary schools (*gimnazja*), including those for adults, are run by local governments.

TARGET GROUPS

The Polish system of continuing education is meant for adults who completed 18 years of age and are past education obligation and for youngsters who fulfilled their school obligation by completing lower secondary school but are below 18 years of age.

The school obligation is fulfilled by attending a primary school and lower secondary school, either public or non-public.

Following lower secondary school completion, the education obligation is fulfilled by:

- attending a public or non-public upper secondary school;
- attending classes run in the out-of-school system and in public and non-public accredited institutions;
- attending classes offered within the framework of educational activities run by natural or legal persons on the basis of received accreditation;
- under going vocational training organized by the employer in accordance with separate regulations.

In conformity with article 94 of the Labour Code, the employer is obliged to facilitate upgrading of vocational qualifications to its employees. The term “upgrading vocational qualifications and general education by employees” must be understood as education in schools for adults and schools of higher education as well as education and development and improvement in out-of-school forms – either as a result of being sent by the employer or without it.

STATISTICS

Table 10 shows changes in the number of schools for adults in the last decade. The total number of schools for adults has increased significantly but the number of primary schools has decreased. This can be accounted for by the general improvement in society’s education and the fact that elderly people of low education left the labour market.

Table 1: Schools for adults by the education level in 1995/1996, 2001/2002 and 2004/2005 (public and non-public ones having the status of public schools)			
TYPE OF SCHOOL	1995/1996	2001/2002	2004/2005
	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS FOR ADULTS		
TOTAL	1 900	3 127	3 951
PRIMARY	135	7	9
LOWER SECONDARY*	–	96	120
BASIC VOCATIONAL	97	148	137
GENERAL SECONDARY	330	1 124	1 816
SECONDARY VOCATIONAL AND GENERAL VOCATIONAL	1 338	1 752	1 869

Source: *Oswiata i wychowanie w roku szkolnym* (Education in the school years): 1995/1996, 2001/2002, 2004/2005, GUS

* Lower secondary school (*gimnazjum*) was introduced by the Act of 8th January 1998: regulations introducing a reform of the school system.

The most popular form of education in the case of lower secondary schools and basic vocational schools are daily and evening classes whereas in the secondary vocational schools, general vocational and general secondary schools – the classes in the evening or extramural system are more popular (Table 11).

Table 2: Attendants of schools for adults by the form of education in the school year 2004/2005				
FORM OF EDUCATION	DAILY	EVENING	EXTRAMURAL	TOTAL
	NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF THE ATTENDANTS			
PRIMARY	44 (36%)	62 (50%)	18 (14%)	124 (100%)
LOWER SECONDARY	5 956 (50%)	5 096 (43%)	774 (7%)	11 826 (100%)
BASIC VOCATIONAL	3 247 (42%)	4 117 (53%)	452 (5%)	7 816 (100%)
GENERAL SECONDARY	761 (1%)	57 604 (33%)	11 343 (66%)	171 801 (100%)
SECONDARY VOCATIONAL AND GENERAL VOCATIONAL	2 731 (2%)	137 636 (98%)		140 367 (100%)

Source: *Oswiata i wychowanie w roku szkolnym 2004/2005* (Education in the school year 2004/2005), GUS

In the last decade the general number of students in the schools for adults rose significantly (a slight fall was noted in 2004/2005), especially in general education secondary schools. On the other hand, the number of students in basic and secondary vocational schools dropped (Table 12). This is conformable with the general tendency among youngsters and adults to choose general education secondary schools allowing to pass the maturity (school leaving) exam fairly quickly and to continue education in a school of higher education. It is a commonly-held belief, confirmed by statistics, that secondary and higher education offer more chances of employment.

Table 3: Number of attendants in the schools for adults in the school years 1995/1996, 2001/2002 and 2004/2005			
TYPE OF SCHOOL	1995/1996	2001/2002	2004/2005
	NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN SCHOOLS FOR ADULTS (THOUSAND)		
TOTAL	263.7	362.9	331.9
PRIMARY	8.7	0.1	0.1
LOWER SECONDARY	–	8.6	11.8
BASIC VOCATIONAL	8.0	1.8	7.8
GENERAL SECONDARY	73.0	143.2	171.8
SECONDARY VOCATIONAL AND GENERAL VOCATIONAL	174.0	198.2	140.4

Source: *Oswiata i wychowanie w roku szkolnym* (Education in the school years): 1995/1996, 2001/2002, 2004/2005, GUS

PROVIDERS

Continuing education takes place in schools for adults, continuing education centres (CKU), practical training centres (CKP), vocational upgrading and further education centres and in higher education /research institutions offering post-diploma studies, courses and distance learning.

SCHOOLS FOR ADULTS

Adult education is provided in schools of all types and at all levels, in conformity with the provisions of the Education System Act. The schools for adults are meant for people who in the time and manner prescribed for the education of children and youth did not attain targeted level of education. Such persons have a possibility to complete general education, gain or change vocational qualifications. Education in schools for adults can be provided on a regular daily basis, in the extramural form or as distance learning.

When a person undertakes education in a school for adults providing vocational education, it is possible to recognize results of vocational courses run by public and non-public institutions and centres accredited by the school superintendent or by legal or natural persons carrying out educational activities pursuant to the Freedom of Business Activity Act for which they received accreditation.

The school leaving certificate, apart from medical schools, can be obtained also by passing an exam in front of a National Examination Commission, appointed by a school superintendent without attending the school regularly.

CONTINUING EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS, PRACTICAL TRAINING CENTRES AND FURTHER TRAINING CENTRES

The statutory duty of these institutions is to organise and provide continuing education on a regular daily basis, in the extramural form and as distance learning (article 68a). There are 136 continuing education centres, 137 practical training centres and 24 further training centres operating all over the country.

Institutions and centres of continuing education which provide continuing education in out-of-school forms can obtain accreditation which confirms that they meet specific requirements and assure quality to the education provided. Accreditation can be given to the entire education provided or to its part only (article 68b of the Education System Act).

HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS, UNITS OF THE POLISH ACADEMY OF SCIENCE AND RESEARCH INSTITUTES

Higher education institutions, units of the Polish Academy of Science and research institutes provide the tertiary-level graduates with post-diploma studies aimed at upgrading their qualification, updating their knowledge, completing the education necessary to perform their jobs (e.g. pedagogical studies, managerial studies, medical studies etc.) or to acquire qualifications in a profession related to their own as well as doctoral studies. In the 2004/2005 academic year, 136 500 students participated in post-diploma studies, of which 70.5% were women, while 33 000 participated in doctoral studies, including 15 900 women. The above mentioned institutions organize also short forms of continuing education such as conferences, seminars and workshops.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

In the system controlled by the Minister of Education which includes schools for adults, continuing education institutions, practical training centres and further training centres, the pedagogical supervision is performed by school headmasters and school superintendents. (Regulation of the Minister of National Education and Sport of 23rd April 2004, on detailed provisions governing pedagogical supervision, qualifications indispensable for performing pedagogical supervision as well as qualifications of the persons who can be ordered to conduct a survey and develop expertise). The model of supervision is based on the concept of "measuring the school work quality" which, in turn, is based on quality standards and indexes which are developed for the whole country by the Minister competent in the matters of education. The school or educational institution's work quality is measured internally by the school principal every year. External measurements are carried out by the school superintendents— at least once in 5 years. The school superintendent can withdraw from measuring the school or institution's work quality if the school or institution has documents confirming implementation of the quality management and quality assurance systems.

The quality of education in the schools for adults which educate in a specific vocation should be assured also within the framework of the external assessment system, similarly to the school system for youngsters. External vocational examinations aim at confirming vocational qualifications acquired during the course of school education. They are based on examination requirement standards established by the Central Examination Commission and conducted by Territorial Examination Commissions.

From the point of view of quality assurance in continuing education institutions which provide continuing education in out-of-school forms, article 68b of the Education System Act is essential. Pursuant to the provisions included in the Act, both public and non-public institutions can apply for accreditation which will refer to the whole or a part of the education provided. Accreditation is awarded by the school superintendent competent for

the seat of the institution. However, the accreditation, introduced in 2003 is voluntary, therefore the out-of-school establishments providing education in compliance with the principles of free business activity are able to escape any control over the standard of services rendered by them.

0503 - TRAINING FOR UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE AND OTHERS VULNERABLE TO EXCLUSION IN THE LABOUR MARKET

The system of training for the unemployed, job seekers and disadvantaged groups is regulated by the "Act on Promoting Employment and Labour Market Institutions". According to this Act, regional and district labour offices are a part of the public employment services which accomplish territorial self-government tasks in the field of labour market. Labour offices are territorial self-government units. The Minister competent in the labour market affairs co-ordinates activities of public employment services and the *Voivode* (Head of the Region) supervises and controls them.

At the end of December 2005, the number of the unemployed registered at the labour office was 2 773.0. The unemployment rate at the end of December 2005 stood at 17.6%. In December 2004, the unemployment rate stood at 19.0% of vocationally active population.

With reference to persons who were described in the Act on Promoting Employment and Labour Market Institutions as "being in a specific situation in the labour market", at the end of December 2005, 626 800 unemployed below 25 years of age had been registered by labour offices; which made 22.6% of all unemployed. At the same time, 15.9% of all unemployed were people above 50 years of age (440 400), and 66% of all unemployed were long-term unemployed (1 828 800).

Table 13: Number of the unemployed by age (at the end of December, 2004 and 2005)				
AGE GROUPS	NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED (THOUSAND)			
	DECEMBER 2004		DECEMBER 2005	
	IN THOUSAND	%	IN THOUSAND	%
TOTAL	2 999.6	100.0	2 773.0	100.0
YEARS OF AGE:				
18-24	728.2	24.3	626.1	22.6
25-34	844.7	28.2	778.5	28.1
35-44	628.5	20.9	567.0	20.4
45-54	681.8	22.7	660.2	23.8
55-59	101.3	3.4	123.5	4.5
60-64	15,1	0.5	17.7	0.6

An unfavourable feature of unemployment is the low education level of the unemployed. The most numerous group consists of people with basic vocational education (32.6%), lower secondary education or below it (32.4%). During 2005 a slight increase in unemployment was noted among people with higher or general secondary education - by 3 000 and 2 100, respectively.

Table 14: Number of the unemployed by education (at the end of December, 2004 and 2005)				
EDUCATION LEVEL	NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED (THOUSAND)			
	DECEMBER 2004		DECEMBER 2005	
	IN THOUSAND	%	IN THOUSAND	%
TOTAL	2 999.6	100.0	2 773.0	100.0
EDUCATION:				
HIGHER	149.4	5.0	152.4	5.5
POST-SECONDARY AND SECONDARY	-	-	-	-
VOCATIONAL	655.8	21.9	606.7	21.9
GENERAL SECONDARY	209.4	7.0	211.5	7.6
BASIC VOCATIONAL	1,014.4	33.8	903.6	32.6
LOWER SECONDARY AND BELOW	970.6	32.3	898.8	32.4

Source: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. Information on unemployment in December 2005.

Table 15: Training of the unemployed in the years 2000/2005.			
PERIOD	PERSONS WHO STARTED TRAINING TOTAL	INCL. WOMEN	INCL. MEN
2000	98 651	50 368	48 283
2001	47 587	22 987	24 600
2002	68 564	32 972	35 592
2003	132 230	63 353	68 877
2004	127 785	60 895	66 890
2005	151 285	68 041	83 244

Source: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. Information on unemployment in December 2005.

In the case of the unemployed, training takes form of out-of-school classes aiming at obtaining, completing or upgrading vocational skills and qualifications necessary for performing a job, including job seeking abilities. In conformity with the "Act on Promoting Employment and Labour Market Institutions" training offered to the unemployed can be either individual or a group training.

Group training is initiated in order to raise the chances of obtaining a job, upgrade hitherto qualifications or increase vocational activity and, in particular, in the case of:

- lack of vocational qualifications;
- necessity to re-qualify due to the lack of any suitable job offers;
- loss of employability in the hitherto performed job;
- lack of ability to actively look for a job.

The people sent for training, in the period of training are entitled to:

- training allowance in the amount of 20% of the unemployment benefit;
- training grant in the amount of 40% of the unemployment benefit for the unemployed below 25 years of age.

Group training is fully financed from the resources of the Labour Fund. Training is organized in groups of 15. Classes can be both in the morning and in the afternoon, from Monday to Saturday. The person sent for training is obliged to attend the classes regularly.

Individual training is financed by labour offices provided that the unemployed person declares in writing willingness to undertake training and his/her future employment (after completion of training) is probable.

Training costs per person in the period of 3 subsequent years cannot exceed the value of ten minimum wages. At the unemployed person's request, the sub-prefect can finance 75% of the costs of post-diploma studies from the Labour Fund if the unemployed proves that completion of the studies will ensure obtaining of a suitable job. At the unemployed person's motion, the sub-prefect can finance costs of examinations (up to 50% of average salary) which will enable him/her to obtain certificates, diplomas, vocational qualifications or vocational titles as well as costs of obtaining licenses indispensable for performing a job.

TARGET GROUPS

In case of training of the unemployed the priority is given to "persons in a specific situation in the labour market". According to the legal regulations the term "persons in a specific situation in the labour market" covers:

- the unemployed below 25 years of age;
- long-term unemployed;
- the unemployed above 50 years of age;
- the unemployed without vocational qualifications;
- the unemployed who single-handedly raise at least one child below 7 years of age;
- disabled unemployed.

Target groups include also:

- disabled persons, in particular, persons with minor physical or mental disability;
- refugees;
- person possessing a permit for a tolerated stay (as specified by regulations about giving protection to aliens in the territory of the Republic of Poland);
- repatriates;
- persons released from prisons (ex-offenders);
- juvenile delinquents staying in juvenile detention centres or released from them.

A very important role in activating the unemployed is attributed to the government programme "First Job", which was implemented in June 2002 on the initiative of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy. The programme is addressed to unemployed people (registered in labour offices competent for the seat of their residence, whether permanent or temporary) below 25 years of age and to the unemployed higher education institution graduates below 27 years of age (in the case of people registered as the unemployed in the period until 12 months following graduation, sent for internships). The aim of the programme is to increase young people's chances for obtaining vocational experience and finding a job.

In July 2005, on the basis of positive results of the programme, the Ministry of Labour implemented another programme "First Business", addressed to the unemployed young people. It aims at providing assistance in undertaking business activity and promoting entrepreneurial attitudes among young people. The programme is implemented, among others, by district labour offices, academic organisations and employer organisations. The "First Business" programme consists of 3 major parts: theoretical training, practical counselling, subsidies and loans for setting up a firm. The programme foresees also provision of the appropriate network of advisors, wider access to financial resources and promotion of guarantor institutions and para-banks.

It is estimated that in Poland social exclusion can affect from 500 000 to 3 000 000 people, in particular, the long-term unemployed. According to the data of the Ministry of Economy and Labour concerning January 2005, 85.5% of the registered unemployed are not entitled to the unemployment benefit. These people, who for different reasons are on the margin of social life, should have an opportunity of returning to society, i.e. of social and vocational re-integration. To counteract social marginalization, apart from protective activities, it is necessary to develop also active forms such as activation and education of vocationally and socially marginalized groups and to support employment of these groups. An action which is dedicated to these groups is Social and vocational integration of groups vulnerable to exclusion. It is implemented within the framework of the PHARE 2003 programme National Programme of Human Resources Development (PL 2003/004-379.05.01). National Programme of Human Resources Development uses experience and outcomes of previous programmes supporting HR development, PHARE 2000, PHARE 2001 and PHARE 2002 (programmes supporting HR development), implemented since 2002. Within the framework of the programme's component Social and Vocational Integration of Groups Vulnerable to Exclusion support will be granted to districts, municipalities and juvenile detention centres to implement projects which aim at increasing the chances of vocational and social re-integration for groups vulnerable to exclusion.

Supported activities will include, amongst the others: coaching and vocational guidance, psychological counselling, vocational training, coaching and guidance for those planning to set up business activity, employment intermediary, training and financial support for employers (and work organisers in companies) employing or intending to employ the disabled, development of alternative work forms adjusted to the needs of disabled workers - telework, work through the Internet, part-time job, etc.

On 1st December 2005 a new project addressed to the unemployed and working people started off. It is called "Express to knowledge: first stop Training, second stop Employment" and it is a part of Action 1.6 of the Sectoral Operational Programme of HR Development "Women's Vocational Integration and Re-integration". The project supports 390 women, offers them vocational training, legal and psychological counselling, taking care of children and other dependants. Ultimate beneficiaries will be able to participate in free-of-charge vocational training courses. For more information see: <http://www.knowledge.pl/>

An example of a project (it commences at the beginning of 2006) addressed to the unemployed and vocationally passive women is the project entitled "Preparation of unemployed women above 50 years of age from the Mazowsze Region for rendering services of an elderly and disabled people carer". The aim of the project is to gain new vocational skills or upgrade qualifications and to support its beneficiaries in the Polish and foreign labour markets in the field of rendering carer's services. Within the framework of the project, women will undergo 1-week training (50 hours of training), costs will be covered by organizers and people who have completed training will obtain Certificates confirming participation in the course and acquisition of appropriate qualifications which allow them to perform the duties of a carer.

PROVIDERS

Organisation of training for the unemployed and job seekers in Poland is the responsibility of district labour offices, however, the training is provided by public and private training companies. The biggest providers of training for the unemployed are: Further Training Centres, the Association of Polish Crafts, Continuing Education Centres, Practical Training Centres, vocational schools, training centres, branch organisations. In

Poland there is no such institution which would specialize in training for the unemployed exclusively.

Training for the unemployed is one of the labour office tasks. A district labour office decides on the form of training taking into consideration the labour market needs and the needs of the unemployed. It also can choose a training provider from the register of labour market training institutions. While performing these tasks, a district labour office co-operates with employers, training institutions and other social partners. It also assesses whether the training chosen by the unemployed will increase his employability and later on controls the course of training and measures systematically training effectiveness.

The district labour office organises training for the unemployed by taking advantage of the tripartite training agreements concluded between the labour office, the employer and the training institution. These agreements specify qualifications required by the employer from the candidate for a job and these qualifications should be taken into account in the training curriculum.

In respect of the topic and scope, the training for the unemployed does not differ much from the courses organized for enterprises or individual participants from the so called free recruitment/enrolment. Some of the topics which training courses deal with include: operating computers and application programmes, assembly of tele-information networks, accountancy and book-keeping, administration and office work in a company, conducting business activity, marketing, company management, applying modern technologies in building industry and installations, operating machines and equipment, transport, tourist services, child care, foreign languages, activation and motivation. The training offer for the unemployed can also be created on the basis of the modular training curricula obtained from the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (database: www.standardyiszkolenia.praca.gov.pl).

The information on training offers for the unemployed is available in every labour office.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

In order to ensure a high standard of training for the unemployed and job seekers, the Act on Promoting Employment and Labour Market Institutions orders the minister competent in labour affairs to develop national standards of vocational qualifications based on the job and employers requirements as well as modular curricula of vocational education. Developed qualification standards and training modules are placed in a widely accessible database from which users can load them free of charge and apply in their institutions. The base's website can be found at: <http://www.standardyiszkolenia.praca.gov.pl>. New labour market instruments have been introduced which, to a certain extent, allow to monitor the quality of training for the unemployed and job seekers. They include: a financial reward for training institutions for the high quality of their services expressed by a high number of graduates who, following the training, found a job and registration of training institutions which is accomplished by the regional labour offices.

What is more, continuing education centres which have been accredited by the school superintendent can be entered into the Register of Training Institutions run by the Regional Labour Office. The registration is compulsory for training institutions which apply for grants paid by the Labour Fund and the National Fund for Rehabilitation of the Disabled aimed at training of the unemployed and job seekers, pursuant to the provisions of article 20 of the Act on employment promotion and labour market institutions.

Few institutions implementing training for the unemployed have quality certificates based on ISO 9001. Training conducted by the Polish Modular Training Network and the accreditation system serve the purposes of quality assurance to modular training.

0504 - CVET AT THE INITIATIVE OF ENTERPRISES OR SOCIAL PARTNERS

The Labour Code puts the employer under an obligation to facilitate his employees vocational qualification development (article 17). The Act of 20th April 2004 on Promoting Employment and Labour Market Institutions gives employers an opportunity to create their own training fund meant for financing or co-financing of the continuing education costs of employees and employers (article. 67, sections 1 and 2). Collective labour agreement or the fund byelaws regulate creation, functioning and winding up of the training fund (article 67, section 4). Expenditures from the fund must be in compliance with the training schedule agreed on by the employer and the trade unions (article 68, section 2).

Employers facilitate qualification development to their employees in the scope and on the conditions specified in the Regulation of the Minister of National Education and Minister of Labour and Social Policy of 12th October 1993 concerning the principles and conditions of adult vocational qualification development and general education development (*Dziennik Ustaw* No. 103, item.472 and *Dziennik Ustaw* of 1996, No. 24, item. 110).

Vocational qualification and general education upgrading can be undertaken on the basis of the employer's recommendation or without such a recommendation. The employee can be sent for training in any phase of learning, e.g. to a school of higher education - in any academic year or in any term of academic studies.

The employee who starts learning in a school on the basis of employer's recommendation has a number of rights: the right to a training leave and release from a part of working day paid according to the regulations governing calculation, reimbursement of travel expenses, accommodation and board in conformity with the terms binding in the case of business trips within the country, if education is provided in a town different from the place of the employee's residence or employment. Furthermore, the employer can cover the costs of textbooks and other training materials, cover the school fees or grant an additional leave for training.

It should be noted, however, that granting the above mentioned benefits can be conditioned by employee's learning results. In case the employee repeats the term (or year) due to unsatisfactory learning results, the employer can refuse a training leave or a release from a part of the working day as well as other benefits through the period of the term (year) repetition.

Not always is the employer willing to recommend the employee to learning and therefore incur the costs related to education. In such a situation, the employee can start education at school without the employer's recommendation. If he decides to do so, the employer can grant him an unpaid leave and release him from a part of his working day but without retaining the right to remuneration for the time agreed by the parties concerned, that is the employer and employee. This is provided for in § 5 of the Regulation. What is essential is that the period of the unpaid leave should be included in the period of employment in the company with reference to all the rights resulting from the period of employment.

The above described provisions of the Regulation of 12th October 1993 apply to the persons upgrading their vocational qualifications and general education, enterprises and adult education organisers running their activities in school and out-of-school forms and -

partially - also to employees of basic health care and academic teachers and scientific staff rendering services for the benefit of the basic health care activities. It should be emphasized that these regulations, with few exceptions do not apply to employees of basic health care activities, teachers and academic teachers in the scope regulated by separate regulations, scientific staff and research/technical employees of the R&D units and also other persons within the scope regulated separately by the regulations concerning qualification and general education development of these persons or in collective labour agreements or regulations concerning remuneration of workers.

PARTICIPATION OF ENTERPRISES IN CONTINUING EDUCATION

Public statistics does not conduct any surveys with reference to the training institution activities, although there is national and international need to fill in this information gap. A fairly updated data on educational activities in enterprises has been provided by the PHARE 2000 programme "National System of Vocational Education - Part II". Statistical surveys conducted within the framework of this programme were accomplished in 2003.

The surveys of continuing vocational education in enterprises were based on the methodology of an international survey CVTS2 (Continuing Vocational Training Survey). The survey was carried out by *Pracownia Badan Społecznych* (Laboratory of Social Surveys) in Sopot.

The effective sample size - imposed by methodology - was 15 000 enterprises. It indicates the required number of effectively surveyed companies (surveys filled in and returned). The sample size ensuring appropriate number of filled in and returned surveys was 40 241 companies (that means ca. 40% of the valid sample). The valid sample was the system of registration of economic entities (REGON) covering the whole country. The most important results of the survey are included in the passage below.

Among the most important information provided by the survey is the estimated number of enterprises implementing some forms of vocational training. The share of enterprises implementing training in the total number of enterprises amounts to 41.4%. The bigger the enterprise, the bigger the share of those who finance or co-finance the training of their employees (Table 16).

Table 16: Enterprise involvement in training for employees by size of the enterprise (2002)				
SPECIFICATION	TOTAL	BIG	MEDIUM-SIZED	SMALL
	PERCENTAGE OF ENTERPRISES			
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
THOSE ORGANISING TRAINING	41.4	77.9	58.6	36.4
THE ONES NOT ORGANISING TRAINING	58.6	22.1	41.4	63.6

Source: Survey Continuing Vocational Training in Enterprises (CVTS2), project: PHARE 2000 "National System of Vocational Training", Ministry of Economy and Labour, Warszawa 2003.

The type of activities performed by the entity has also an influence on their involvement in vocational development. The highest percentage of the entities implementing training is found in the section J65-67 - financial brokerage (74.8% of the total number of enterprises in the section). A slightly lower percentage is indicated in section E - electric power, gas and water supplies (67.2%). A high percentage, over 50%, is also revealed in sections C (mining) and K (services for real estate and companies). This means that in 2002 more or less every second economic entities in sections J, E, C and K organised different forms of vocational education.

The above data indicate that not all enterprises are equally involved in vocational training and their involvement depends, to a large extent, on the size and type of their business activities. A question arises here about the reason for which a part of enterprises lack interest in implementing the programme of vocational training.

Over 73.5% of the entities which do not organize training claim (table 17) their employees qualifications are sufficient for their needs and therefore further training is not needed (subjects could choose maximum 3 out of 9 reasons). It is the main reason given by this group of enterprises, regardless of their size and EKD(Business Classification) section they belong to.

Table 17: The reasons for not implementing training by the size of enterprises (2002)				
REASONS FOR LACK OF TRAINING ACTIVITIES	TOTAL	BIG	MEDIUM-SIZED	SMALL
	PERCENTAGE OF ENTERPRISES WHICH GIVE THIS REASON			
SUFFICIENT QUALIFICATIONS OF EMPLOYEES	73.5	62.9	69.1	75.8
INITIAL TRAINING IS SUFFICIENT	21.7	18.8	21.8	21.8
HIGH COSTS OF TRAINING	43.2	43.0	42.1	43.6
EMPLOYING NEW PEOPLE POSSESSING REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS	24.3	0.5	30.9	21.4

Source: Survey of Continuing Vocational Training in Enterprises (CVTS2), project: PHARE 2000 "National System of Vocational Training", Ministry of Economy and Labour, Warszawa 2003.

(...) One of the important objectives of the survey was to learn about the topics of training carried out in enterprises. The data reveal that in 2002 majority of training courses dealt with technical aspects of production processes and services rendered (28.2% of the total training time). Training dealing with this topic dominated in all economic entities,

irrespective of their size and in the G50 section - section of car sales and repairs it was (37.2%), F section - construction (36.2%), most of D section - production (31.7%), I section - transport, post and telecommunications (28.3%) and G52 section - retail sales (26.5%). In the remaining sections, most of the training time was devoted to the following areas: employee's personal development and career (E section - electricity, gas and water supplies - 30.9%, O - activities of member organizations and activities related to recreation, culture and dispute - 28.1%), sales and marketing (in D15-16 sections - production of food articles, beverages and tobacco products - 22.9%, D21-22 - production of cellulose pulp, paper and paper products - 46.7%, G51 - wholesale and second-hand trade - 39%) and management and administration (K70-71 section - real estate services, machine and equipment hire - 28.7%) - see table 18.

Table 18: Training time in 2002 by training areas and enterprise size				
TRAINING AREAS	TOTAL	BIG	MEDIUM-SIZED	SMALL
	SHARE OF THE TOPICS IN TOTAL TRAINING TIME (W %)			
TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF PRODUCTION PROCESSES AND SERVICES RENDERED	28.2	26.7	29.6	35.3
EMPLOYEE'S PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT	12.6	15.9	5.7	6.5
ACCOUNTANCY, FINANCES AND INSURANCE	9.7	8.7	10.8	14.3
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND THE USE OF COMPUTERS	6.3	5.8	7.8	5.5
SALES AND MARKETING	8.9	7.2	14.0	7.4
FOREIGN LANGUAGES	5.0	5.2	5.4	2.5
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION	3.5	3.8	3.3	2.8
OFFICE WORK	0.6	0.5	0.5	1.3

Source: Survey of Continuing Vocational Training in Enterprises (CVTS2), project: PHARE 2000 "National System of Vocational Training", Ministry of Economy and Labour, Warszawa 2003.

Training is implemented by a person or organisation which actually provides it. It can be the enterprise itself which prepares and implements training for its employees (internal provider), as well as people and organizations which are not a part of the enterprises but which are involved in training preparation and implementation (external provider).

Following the analysis of the survey results it was found out that most often training is prepared and provided by external rather than internal providers. Their share in the total training time amounts to 65.7%. Training outsourcing is used by the subjects employing the least number of employees (78.3%). The most likely reason for this tendency is the fact that a small enterprise does not have the staff who are qualified and can be specially appointed to plan and carry out training.

Survey results also indicate that the companies employing external training providers most often use the services of specialist public training institutions, and private training institutions as well as private higher education institutions. Their shares in the total externally provided training time are 50.1% and 33.7%, respectively.

In 2002 continuing vocational training carried out in enterprises assumed different forms. Survey results indicate that 87.4% of the enterprises involved in the vocational development projects carried out training in a basic, traditional form. They were carried out outside the workplace, in conference halls or training centres, in the time earlier scheduled by organisers. They were in the form of a course or training specially designed for the purposes of employees' vocational development. Among the enterprises which benefited from basic training forms, 79.1% chose external courses and training, and only 27.0% of the entities organised internally provided courses and training (economic entities could organise both externally and internally provided training at the same time). (*Balicki A.:Badanie stanu ustawicznego szkolenia zawodowego w przedsiębiorstwach w 2002* (Examination of the continuing vocational training condition in enterprises in 2002). *Rynek pracy*, Special issue, December 2003, pp. 155-163).

PARTICULAR TARGET GROUPS

At the moment in Poland training assistance is not organised for enterprises representing branches of specific needs. All enterprises can take advantage of the programmes co-financed from the European Social Fund on uniform conditions. Preferences are used only in the case of small and medium-sized enterprises (the branch is not specified), which can take advantage of numerous programmes addressed exclusively to them and supporting their competitiveness and human resources.

The support for small and medium-sized enterprise development is carried out by a network of non-profit organizations (Regional Development Agencies, business development centres, foundations and associations) and by commercial institutions (training providers accredited by PARP within the framework of the National System of Services (KSU), providers licensed to provide services without PARP accreditation). Currently nearly 180 centres are accredited in the KSU network.

The KSU network was set up in October 1996 on the initiative of the Polish Foundation of Promotion and Development of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (presently Polish Agency for Enterprise Development -PARP) as a result of the implementation of the already completed programme Phare 1995 – STEP I. PARP co-ordinates KSU activities and supports network members in subject and organization related aspects.

Each registered KSU centre provides at the very least one of the four categories of services aimed at small and medium-sized enterprises or people starting up a business activity, i.e. advisory services (including pro-innovation ones), training information and financial services.

Training services include the following types of training:

- specialist, e.g. in the field of marketing;

- in the field of finance and management;
- for people starting up a business activity;
- industry specific;
- general (among others, computer or languages).

Polish Agency for Enterprise Development is the Implementing Institution for the Activity 2.3 SPO - RZL "Development of Staff for Modern Economy", scheme a) "Staff skills and qualification development", which is an instrument of enterprise staff development, investment in employees and managers' knowledge and skills. Implementation of the Activity requires close co-operation of training institutions and enterprises and a training offer prepared by these institutions, which could be found interesting by enterprises and their workers. The activity is implemented in the whole area of Poland and is financed from the European Social Fund resources and the state budget.

The aim of the Activity within the Scheme is development of enterprise staff and investment in employees' knowledge and skills by enabling them access to a wide offer of co-financed training services, internships, post-graduate studies and training practice in scientific institutions for entrepreneurs in the form of financial support granted to training institutions selected in procurement proceedings. Thanks to this form of assistance, entrepreneurs are given a chance of participation in the training covered by the Activity on preferential basis.

The training offered within the framework of the Activity does not require large financial contributions from the entrepreneur. The amount of co-financing depends on the size of the business, the type of training and the type of employee who was sent for training.

0505 - CVET AT THE INITIATIVE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

It is not possible to estimate the size of the CVET undertaken as individual initiative because the research carried out by the Central Statistical Office does not include category understood as "individual initiative". Indirectly, about those types of initiative we can deduct from the participation of adults in non-formal education. Such survey was carried out by the Central Statistical Office in the II quarter of 2003, including 18 900 households what gave a sample of 47 900 people at the age of 15 and more.

Tables 19, 20 and 21 present the results of the survey.

Table 19: Participation in non-formal education by age and educational level						
AGE GROUPS	TOTAL	INCLUDING THOSE WITH EDUCATION AT THE LEVEL				
		TERTIARY	UPPER SECONDARY VOCATIONAL (INCLUDING POST-SECONDARY)	UPPER SECONDARY GENERAL	BASIC VOCATIONAL	LOWER SECONDARY, PRIMARY AND LOWER
		IN THOUSANDS				
TOTAL	2 468	916	716	242	348	245
15-24 YEARS	451	20	87	110	43	190
25-34	732	352	206	59	98	17
35-44	633	264	206	35	117	12
45 LAT AND MORE	651	280	215	38	90	28
MALES	1 216	378	346	82	277	133
15-24 YEARS	203	-	37	39	31	94
25-34	383	145	122	25	77	13
35-44	299	102	86	10	96	6
45 LAT AND MORE	331	129	100	9	73	20
FEMALES	1 252	538	371	160	71	112
15-24 YEARS	247	18	51	71	12	95
25-34	349	206	84	35	22	-
35-44	334	162	121	25	20	5
45 LAT AND MORE	321	151	116	29	17	8

Source: Kształcenie ustawiczne 2003(Continuing education). GUS, Warszawa 2004.

Table 20: Participation in non-formal education by level and field of possessed school education				
FIELD	EDUCATIONAL LEVEL			
	TOTAL	TERTIARY	UPPER SECONDARY VOCATIONAL (INCLUDING POST-SECONDARY)	BASIC VOCATIONAL
	IN THOUSANDS			
TOTAL	2 468	916	716	348
GENERAL PROGRAMMES	488	-	-	-
PEDAGOGY AND TEACHER TRAINING	208	185	23	-
HUMANITIES, ART AND LANGUAGES	92	83	9	-
SOCIAL SCIENCE, ECONOMY AND LAW	466	227	181	7
NATURAL SCIENCE, MATHEMATICS AND IT	162	114	47	-
ENGINEERING, PRODUCTION AND CONSTRUCTION	604	128	259	217
AGRICULTURE AND VETERINARY	120	30	60	29
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	162	89	73	-
SERVICES	161	9	62	89

Source: Kształcenie ustawiczne 2003(Continuing education). GUS, Warszawa 2004.

Table 21: Participation in non-formal education in the last 12 months by age and level of current economic activity status				
AGE GROUPS	TOTAL	WORKING	UNEMPLOYED	PROFESSIONALLY PASSIVE
	I N T H O U S A N D S			
TOTAL	2 468	1 965	160	343
15-24 YEARS	451	124	47	280
25-34	732	641	60	30
35-44	633	591	33	9
45 YEARS AND MORE	651	609	19	24
MALES	1 216	1 007	69	140
15-24 YEARS	203	69	17	116
25-34	383	343	28	11
35-44	299	284	12	-
45 YEARS AND MORE	331	309	12	10
FEMALES	1 252	958	90	203
15-24 YEARS	247	55	30	163
25-34	349	298	32	19
35-44	344	306	21	6
45 YEARS AND MORE	321	299	7	14

Source: Kształcenie ustawiczne 2003(Continuing education). GUS, Warszawa 2004

Table 22 presents data relating to people participating in self-study forms of non-formal education. The survey includes 4 forms of self-study:

- Self-study using printed materials;
- Self-study using internet;
- Self-study using educational TV and radio broadcasts, video tapes or computer software;
- Self-study using the services of educational institutions such as libraries, education centres.

Table 22: Participation in self-study forms of non-formal education by age and form of self-study					
FORMS	AGE				
	TOTAL	14-24	25-34	35-44	45 YEARS AND MORE
	IN THOUSANDS				
TOTAL	9 127	3 258	1 960	1 492	2 416
PEOPLE USING ONE FORM OF SELF-STUDY	2 747	582	574	543	1 049
PEOPLE USING TWO FORMS OF SELF-STUDY	2 682	859	561	456	806
PEOPLE USING THREE FORMS OF SELF-STUDY	1 797	777	425	246	339
PEOPLE USING FOUR FORMS OF SELF-STUDY	1 911	1 040	400	248	222

Source: *Kształcenie ustawiczne 2003* (Continuing education). GUS, Warszawa 2004

Education in a formal way incites educational activity understood as participation in self-educational forms. Among the people surveyed, 65.6% of those who are learning and are below 30 years of age undertook different forms of self-education in the last 12 months. This percentage in the non-learning group below 30 years of age was: 35.2% - and in the group above 30 years of age - 23.3%. Differences refer to the type of self-education forms, the age and gender of the people concerned. The printed matter was used by 77.5% of people who are currently learning, as compared to 43.9% non-learning people below 30 years of age and 50.5% non-learning people above 30 years of age. Among learning people, learning or training with computer prevailed - 88.5%, but the prevalence of the percentage of men as compared to women amounted to 11.1 points (94.3% and 83.2% users, respectively). Among non-learning people, the use of computer for self-education purposes was significantly lower and it is illustrated by the following figures: 39.1% in the case of a younger group and 31.4% for the group above 30 years of age. Also here, like in the case of learning people, men prevailed (46.4% as compared to 33.0% and 34.1% against 29.2%, respectively). The prevalence of women was evident when it came to the use of institutions of educational nature, such as libraries or information centres: 48.6% as compared to 39.2% men in the group of learning persons, and among non-learning persons - 16.9% women as compared to 7.7% men in the group below 30 years of age and 15.6% against 8.4% in the group of people above 30 years of age. The percentage of people using this type of self-education is almost 4 times higher in the group of learning persons (44.1% as compared to non-learning persons: 12.8% in the group below 30 years of age and 12.6% in the group above 30 years of age). It is worth noting that the TV offer of educational broadcasts is hardly used. Only ca. 4% of the learning persons (4.3%) and non-learning persons below 30 years of age (4.2%) and 5.6% of non-learning persons above 30 years of age took advantage of this opportunity.

Approximate statistical data concerning individual initiative in the field of continuing education were published in the most recent publication by the Central Statistical Office (GUS), entitled "Poles' educational pathways". The survey results presented below were

developed by a representative method on the group selected for the analysis of household expenditures in August 2004 r. 9 687 people were surveyed (including 5 165 females and 4 522 males). Table 23, presents the basic results of the survey regarding further training, training and foreign language courses.

Table 23: Participation in training and courses by sex and type of training						
	TOTAL	COURSES (MORE THAN ONE ANSWER WAS POSSIBLE)				
		FOREIGN LANGUAGES	COMPUTER	FURTHER TRAINING	ACQUIRING BASIC VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS	OTHER
		PERCENTAGE				
PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE ATTENDING COURSES AND TRAINING DURING LAST 12 MONTHS						
TOTAL	100.00	69.24	13.91	71.91	19.95	27.86
FEMALES	100.00	87.92	16.25	68.41	15.26	23.80
MALES	100.00	42.13	10.51	76.98	26.72	33.75
TOTAL	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
FEMALES	59.14	75.14	69.11	56.27	45.26	50.51
MALES	40.86	24.86	30.89	43.73	54.74	49.49

Source: Sieczki Edukacyjne Polaków.(Poles' educational pathways) GUS, Warszawa 2005

Most often people participated in further training. People below 30 years of age more often participated in language courses (69.2%). Men usually chose strictly vocational courses and women preferred language and computer courses.

The people participating in language courses as the main reason for taking them up declared broadening of their own interests (47.0%). In the case of computer courses, courses preparing for obtaining formal vocational qualifications or for qualification examinations and courses upgrading the vocational skills and training for a job, the main motivation was developing and upgrading of vocational qualifications. Almost 75% of persons admitting to the intention of leaving for abroad, attended language courses in 2005 and attendance at courses upgrading vocational qualifications and courses preparing for obtaining formal vocational qualifications were attended by less than 9% each. In the case of people who attended courses increasing their employability, the courses training for a job (more than 1/3 of the people surveyed) and computer courses (more than 1/5) dominated.

Popular participation in language courses and compulsory language learning at schools and schools of higher education leads to good knowledge of languages. 60.6% of the respondents (62.1% women and 59.0% men) stated that they can communicate in the foreign language. Among them - 49.9% can communicate in English, 33.0% -in German,

and 60.1% - in Russian). 34.6% of the respondents can read a book or a newspaper in a foreign language (36.2% women and 32.8% men), including 43.9% people able to read English press, 29.3% of those who can do it in German and 50.9% who read in Russian. A TV or radio broadcast in a foreign language is understood by 29.3% of the people surveyed (30.0% women and 28.5% men); 43.5% declared such ability in the English language, 27.5% - in the German language and 49.5% - in the Russian language. About 1% of the people surveyed declared knowledge of other modern languages. For the French language the figure was higher (5.0%). The knowledge of a foreign language confirmed by a certificate was declared by 2.5% of the people surveyed (2.8% women and 2.2% men). Among them certificates confirming their knowledge of the English language were possessed by 61.3% people, German language - 23.3%, Russian language - 20.5%, and French language - 7.7% (10.7% women).

Most often the course fees were paid by the surveyed people themselves (69.0%). Language courses were fully paid from their own resources by 87.8% of participants, and 7.9% - partly from their own funds; computer course fees were paid from their own resources by nearly half of the people trained (44.5%). Fully financed by the employer were chiefly the courses training for a job (45.1% of the people surveyed participated in such courses) and those upgrading already existing vocational skills (58.8%).

06 - TRAINING VET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

0601 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN VET

In Poland, the following types of VET teachers can be distinguished:

- Teachers teaching general education subjects;
- Teachers teaching theoretical vocational subjects in IVET;
- Teachers offering practical instruction in IVET;
- Trainers offering practical instruction in IVET;
- Academic teachers.

Table 24: VET teachers	
TEACHERS	OTHER ROLES
Teachers of general education subjects	Course lecturer; Curriculum author; Author of teaching packages; Expert; Examiner in the external examinations system; In-school teacher training leader; Methodological advisor; Consultant.
Teachers of theoretical vocational subjects in IVET	Course lecturer; Curriculum author; Author of teaching packages; Expert; Examiner in the external examinations system; In-school teacher training leader; Methodological advisor; Consultant.
Practical instruction teachers	Course lecturer; Curriculum author; Author of teaching packages; Expert; Examiner in the external examinations system; In-school teacher training leader; Methodological advisor.
Practical instruction trainers	Course teacher; Curriculum author; Author of teaching packages.
<p>Academic teachers:</p> <p>1. teaching and research staff: full professor (<i>profesor zwyczajny</i>); associate professor (<i>profesor nadzwyczajny</i>); assistant professor (<i>adiunkt</i>); assistant (<i>asystent</i>).</p> <p>2. teaching staff: senior lecturer (<i>starszy wykładowca</i>); lecturer (<i>wykładowca</i>); foreign language teacher (<i>lektor</i>); instructor (<i>instruktor</i>).</p>	<p>Course teacher; Curriculum author; Author of teaching packages; Expert; Examiner in the external examinations system.</p>

Each of the above categories of teachers must comply with different qualification criteria. Qualification requirements towards IVET teachers will differ depending on the type of school where a given teacher will work.

Among teachers and trainers the practical instruction trainers have to possess with the lowest minimum qualification requirements, i.e. a Master Craftsman Certificate (*dyplom mistrza*) for the occupation concerned and a course in pedagogy, a Technician's Certificate (*dyplom technika*) or a Worker's Certificate (*dyplom robotnika*), plus a secondary school certificate (*matura*) and a course in pedagogy (ISCED 3A and 3C levels) are sufficient. Practical instruction trainers can work as practical instruction teachers only if practical instruction for a given occupation is provided at the employer's or in an individually owned agricultural farm.

The lowest accepted qualifications for practical instruction teachers include: Technician's Certificate (*dyplom technika*), a secondary school certificate (*matura*) and a course in pedagogy or a Leaving Certificate from a Post-Secondary Technical School (*dyplom pedagogicznego studium technicznego*)¹ (ISCED 3A level).

For teachers teaching theoretical vocational subjects as well as general education subjects, an MA (or equivalent) diploma (*magister*) or a higher vocational education diploma (*inżynier* or *licencjat*) is required, as well as proven pedagogical competence. For this group of teachers teaching in basic vocational schools a teacher training college diploma² (ISCED 5A level) is sufficient, too.

Academic teachers are divided into 2 categories: research and teaching staff, and teaching staff. Those academic teachers having a research and teaching position must fulfil the following conditions:

- For a full professor position – holds an academic title (ISCED 6 level);
- For an associate professor position – holds an academic title or the degree of *doktor habilitowany* (ISCED 6 level);
- For an assistant professor position – holds an academic degree (ISCED 6 level);
- For an assistant position – holds an MA degree or an equivalent vocational higher education degree (ISCED 5A level).

The professional qualifications of academic teachers employed at teaching positions are specified in the statutes of the different higher education institutions.

The qualifications required of IVET teachers and academic teachers are laid down in relevant primary legislation and ordinances of the minister for education.

All matters related to the training of teachers and trainers (such as curricula for teacher training courses, their assessment and monitoring) are coordinated by the minister for education.

During the past 5 years several important changes were made in the sphere of teachers' qualifications and further training:

- An obligation was imposed on teachers to improve their qualifications up to the standard required by 2006 – Teacher’s Charter;
- The requirements for VET and general education teachers were harmonised;
- The detailed requirements concerning practical instruction trainers were specified;
- Career advancement levels (promotion scale) for teachers were introduced, and specific requirements and procedures concerning particular levels were defined;
- Qualification criteria and framework training curricula for candidates for experts to sit on examination and qualification committees for teachers seeking promotion were defined;
- Qualification criteria for candidates for examiners to sit on regional examination committees were defined and relevant framework curricula were adopted;
- Accreditation was introduced for practical training centres, continuous education and further education centres, and qualification criteria for staff employed in such centres were defined;
- Standards in teacher training were established;
- Goals and rules of the provision of pedagogical supervision were defined (including those relating to school performance and teacher’s further training).

¹ Post-Secondary Technical Schools training practical instruction teachers do not exist any longer. The process of their liquidation was started in 1992.

² For IVET teachers these were: Teacher Schools (*Studium Nauczycielskie*) and Pedagogical Technical Schools (*Pedagogiczne Studium Techniczne*) – both types of schools no longer exist.

0602 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN IVET

Table 25: The number of teachers employed in the vocational schooling in the school year 2002/2003. Without academic teachers and practical instruction trainers.		
LP.		IVET
1	Teachers of general subjects	36 231
2	Teachers of theoretical vocational subjects	16 053
3	Teachers of practical vocational subjects	8 680
4	Practical instruction teachers	1 854

5	Total	62 818
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Source: THE SYSTEM OF EDUCATION IN POLAND. Fundation for the Development of the Education System. Warsaw 2005.

Table 26: Teachers in IVET		
TYPE OF TEACHER/TRAINER	QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED	TYPE OF TRAINING PROVIDER
Teachers of general education subjects	<p>MA degree and pedagogical competence; or MA degree in a different specialisation than the subject taught and pedagogical competence plus post-graduate course in the subject taught.</p> <p>Only for teachers working in basic vocational schools: § Teacher's college diploma.</p>	<p>School system: Secondary general education schools; Basic vocational schools; Technical vocational schools and secondary vocational schools; Post-secondary schools; Profiled secondary schools; Continuing education centres; Further teacher training centres; Teacher's colleges.</p>
Teachers of theoretical vocational subjects	<p>MA degree and pedagogical competence; or MA degree in a different specialisation than the subject taught and pedagogical competence plus post-graduate course in the subject taught; or Higher vocational school diploma and pedagogical competence.</p> <p>Only for teachers working in basic vocational schools: § Teacher's college diploma.</p>	<p>School system: Basic vocational schools; Technical vocational schools and secondary vocational schools; Practical training centres; Continuing education centres; Further teacher training centres; Other training centres.</p>
Practical instruction teachers	<p>MA degree and pedagogical competence; or MA degree in a different specialisation than the subject taught and pedagogical competence plus post-graduate course in the subject taught; or Higher vocational school diploma and pedagogical competence; or Pedagogical technical school diploma; or Secondary school certificate and technician's certificate plus at least two years of work experience and pedagogical competence; or Master craftsman's certificate in a given occupation and pedagogical competence.</p>	<p>School system: basic vocational schools; technical vocational schools and secondary vocational schools; practical training centres</p>

<p>Practical instruction trainers</p>	<p>Master craftsman's certificate in a given occupation and pedagogical competence; Secondary school certificate and technician's certificate plus at least three years of work experience or a pedagogical course completed; Skilled worker's certificate or equivalent for the occupation in which practical instruction is provided and at least 4 years' work experience and pedagogical competence or a pedagogical course completed; Higher vocational school diploma and at least 3 years work experience in a given occupation plus pedagogical competence or a pedagogical course completed.</p>	<p>Alternate training: At the employer's; In individually owned agricultural farms; Crafts establishments.</p>
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INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING

For teachers of vocational subjects, the so-called topical competence and pedagogical competence are acquired through a separate course of study. If such a course of study is completed no further in-service training is required, and the teacher has no obligation to upgrade his/her qualifications or pursue any form of professional development.

There is no institution in the higher, post-secondary or secondary education which would train IVET teachers as its statutory activity.

Higher-level training for teachers and trainers is provided at higher education institutions which offer specialised courses and topical qualifications, such as:

- Technical higher education institutions, mainly universities of technology (*politechnika*); also higher schools of engineering (*wyższa szkoła inżynierska*), university of science and technology (*akademia górniczo-hutnicza*) and universities of science and agriculture (*akademie techniczno-rolnicze*);
- Academies of economics (*akademia ekonomiczna*);
- Academies of medicine (*akademia medyczna*);
- Academies of agriculture (*akademia rolnicza*);
- Academies of fine arts (*akademia sztuk pięknych*).

These institutions are academic establishments whose main tasks include research and education in specific branches of knowledge.

In the above-listed types of higher education institutions, candidates for teachers only receive the so-called topical competence (i.e. in a given field).

PEDAGOGICAL COMPETENCE REQUIREMENTS

Pedagogical competence is acquired through non-compulsory pedagogical studies (which are frequently offered in extramural, i.e. paid forms) organised by the same higher education institutions parallel to the 'topical' course of study, usually in the final year, or through completing a pedagogical course organised by an institution accredited by the minister for education.

The requirements concerning pedagogical competence are established by the minister for education. Under the existing laws, pedagogical competence denotes certain knowledge and skills in the sphere of psychology, pedagogy and didactics for teaching a specific subject, and must be acquired through a course having no less than 270 hours, plus practical training of no less than 150 hours. For practical instruction teachers, the required course length is at least 150 hours, and for practical instruction trainers – 70 hours (psychology, pedagogy and methodology) and 10 hours of practical methodological training.

Acquisition of pedagogical competence is proven by a diploma or another document issued by a higher education institution, a teacher's college diploma or a certificate of completion from a pedagogical course.

In view of the above, it can be said that there are no regulations which would imply a need to adapt training curricula for teachers and trainers to changes in school curricula.

There are no specific requirements for candidates for the teaching profession. Admission criteria to higher education institutions are established individually by the institution concerned, whereas candidates for pedagogical studies (either non-compulsory or post-graduate) do not have to fulfil any specific entry requirements. Admission to pedagogical studies and courses is open to all.

There is no secondary-level training for teachers teaching vocational subjects, mainly practical instruction teachers. In 1992 the process of liquidating 30 Post-secondary Technical Schools (PST) offering training to this group of teachers was started. Until now, no other type of school has been introduced to offer training to practical instruction teachers. To become such a teacher, a candidate must: gain competence in a given occupation in a secondary vocational school (or a higher vocational school); have some work experience in a given occupation; and acquire pedagogical competence (through a course organised by teacher in-service training centres).

TEACHER IN-SERVICE TRAINING

For teachers, continuing training is a voluntary issue. The only formal mechanism that can motivate teachers to develop their professional qualifications on a continuous basis is the career promotion scale, introduced in September 2000, which consists of 5 stages :

- trainee teacher (*nauczyciel stazysta*);
- contract teacher (*nauczyciel kontraktowy*);
- tenured teacher (*nauczyciel mianowany*);
- chartered teacher (*nauczyciel dyplomowany*);
- senior teacher (honorary title) (*profesor oswiaty*).

To qualify for one of the above categories, a teacher must fulfil a number of criteria laid down in the relevant ordinance of the minister for education. One of the pre-conditions for career promotion is completion of some form of professional development.

It can also be said that pedagogical supervision which, among others, assesses the development of the teaching staff, can to some extent act as an incentive for teachers' continuing training.

There is no special professional development policy for IVET teachers. Similar regulations of law apply to all teachers, and all teachers can make use of the same continuing training system. Institutions whose statutory task is to offer professional development opportunities to teachers include public and non-public in-service teacher training centres. Regrettably, the training offer of these bodies for IVET teachers is rather modest, whereas offers of professional training are not addressed directly to teachers and are organised by private providers for a fee, which is the reason why they are of practically no interest to teachers.

0603 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN CVET

Under the Polish Educational System Act, continuing education denotes "education provided in schools for adults, as well as acquisition and improvement of general knowledge, vocational competences and skills in a non-formalised context by persons who have completed compulsory education". Continuing education provided in the context of the school system is offered by:

- Schools for adults;
- Continuing education centres, practical training centres and further training centres.

In Poland, there is no distinct category of teachers and trainers working in CVET. In the institutions listed above, training is provided by IVET teachers and trainers.

In addition to the above, continuing education can be provided on a commercial basis, and is regulated by the provisions of law relating to business activity. Such non-public (commercial) training providers can include: natural persons, joint-stock companies, partnerships, limited-liability companies, foundations, associations, higher education institutions and cooperatives. Such providers individually establish their qualification criteria for trainers, with the quality of provision being evaluated directly by the service users (clients).

07 - SKILLS AND COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGY

0701 - MECHANISMS FOR THE ANTICIPATION OF SKILL NEEDS

To ensure that young people are prepared and are able to function in a new economic and social system and within the EU labour market, anticipating skill needs has gained in importance. The Governmental Centre for Strategic Studies carries out research regarding labour demand in Poland: their results are used for both labour market and VET system needs. There is also an Inter-Ministerial Team for forecasting Labour Demand (established in 1998 in the Governmental Centre for Strategic Studies) which prepares analyses concerning methodologies and statistical tools which could be used in the forecasting process, as well as analyses of new phenomena potentially affecting the labour market.

In 2002, the following studies were prepared by the Team:

- Projection of Employment and Demand for Main Occupational Groups Until 2005 in Light of the Current Labour Market Situation (edited by A. Karpinski);
- Poland's Transformation Towards Knowledge-Based Economy and the Demand for Labour (edited by A. Wierzbicki).

In the first half of 2003, a study entitled "Structure of Demand for Main Occupational Groups Required for the Development of Knowledge-Based Economy (KBE) in the 2010 and 2020 Time Span" was published (edited by A. Wierzbicki).

According to the conclusions drawn from a number of studies of the Inter-Ministerial Team for forecasting Labour Demand, skills related to information technologies, finance, business and trade will be in the biggest demand by the labour market. Demand will be much weaker for occupations connected with agriculture and heavy industry. The forecasts and studies prepared so far by the Team provide a starting point for establishing a system of long-term forecasting. Based on the outcome of the Team's work, a system of labour demand forecasting in Poland is planned. Cyclic research on labour demand has already been carried out by the Central Statistical Office (GUS) since 1995. The research provides information on the changes in the number of the employed and the causes of such changes. Moreover, some commercial companies carry out similar research: the monthly Labour Market Map and quarterly Job Index prepared by TMP Worldwide are two examples. These reports forecast the state of affairs in particular sectors and the demand for particular specialities.

Other research includes identifying if there is match between labour market demands and the training of graduates and vocational school leavers. In this research, graduates and employers are the main source of information through a survey. According to this research, employers attach great importance to: level of vocational skills; flexibility in adaptation to new tasks; and ability to work in a team.

All the above forecasting methods are used in identifying and providing for new specialisations or verifying existing ones in vocational schools.

0702 - BRIDGING PATHWAYS AND NEW EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Part of the rationale for recent reforms to the Polish VET system has been to ensure that young people can change pathways quite easily. These changes have included those outlined below.

CORE CURRICULA

All schools in the upper secondary education and VET system must follow certain curricula guidelines and standards developed by the Minister of National Education and Sport. Every curriculum developed must follow the core curriculum guidelines. This ensures that all graduates of every school have a standard set of skills and knowledge.

NATIONWIDE EXAMINATIONS

All vocational qualifications obtained within school-based IVET may be confirmed through an external exam and assessment. The exam applies across the nation and is put together by the Central Examination Commission. The exam comprises both a written and practical stage: the written stage is held across the country at the same time.

The external examination includes a final stage evaluating the level of general education of graduates from all upper secondary schools providing general education (i.e. upper secondary general schools: *lycea*, profiled *lycea*, upper secondary technical schools, supplementary *lycea* and supplementary upper secondary technical schools). Passing this examination entitles graduates to receive an upper secondary school-leaving certificate (*matura*). The first external *matura* examination will take place in 2004/2005 school year. It will allow graduates to access higher education institutions without entrance exams.

NATIONAL ACCREDITATION COMMISSION

This was set up in 2002 to assure the quality of education provided in higher education institutions.

The national system of vocational qualification standards is currently being created in Poland. The methodological foundation for designing vocational qualification standards and draft vocational standards for eight occupations were developed as part of the project initiated by the European Training Foundation in 1998. In 2003 work related to another 40 occupations was completed.

MODULAR CURRICULA

In order to enhance flexibility of VET system and shorten the vocational education pathway, the Ministry of National Education and Sport recommends using modular curricula in all types of schools providing vocational education.

Modular curricula can be adapted to changing requirements of the labour market and to technological progress faster than the curricula of a subject structure.

Now modular curricula are used in all types of vocational schools and in Continuing Education Centres. The new post-secondary schools which will start operating in the 2005/2006 school year will also provide vocational education based on modular curricula. They will enable profiled lyceum leavers to complete their vocational education in a shorter cycle and allow upper secondary school graduates to obtain additional vocational qualifications quicker.

PARTNERSHIPS

As building a modern school requires a dialogue, partnership and exchange of experience and information, schools of the same or different types establish partnerships of informal character. These partnerships operate as non-institutionalised discussion platforms supporting schools in solving financial, educational or methodological problems. The co-operation concerns headmasters, teachers and pupils. The partnerships allow to organise common training sessions for teachers and enables students to get to know the educational offer of schools and other educational establishments in their area. Moreover, many vocational schools set up bilateral partnerships with similar schools in other EU countries, also through participation in EU programmes e.g. Leonardo da Vinci. Such partnerships result in exchange of teaching methods and didactic tools and know-how, as well as enable the pupils to acquire qualifications or vocational experience abroad and develop their language skills.

0703 - RENEWAL OF CURRICULA

Renewing and changing the curricula has received a lot of attention in Polish policy making. As indicated below.

INTRODUCTION OF CORE CURRICULA

Under the Educational System Act (1991 – see section 0302) and its further amendments, the Minister of National Education and Sport decides on the core curricula for general education, in individual occupations in vocational education. Around the basis of the core curricula, schools and other education and training providers develop the whole curricula. The Minister agrees whether application to apply this curricula are agreed.

Curricula may be also developed centrally by the curriculum team appointed by the Minister. The team consists of researchers, experienced teachers, methodological counsellors and representatives of employers, branch ministers or other branch organisations and is appointed for the time needed for working out a curriculum.

Public vocational schools provide vocational education based on curricula developed for individual occupations. They include framework teaching plans for individual school types, taking account of the number of tuition hours devoted to vocational education in each type of school. Headmasters develop teaching plans for their schools, setting the number of tuition hours in each vocational subject based on the programming requirements applicable. Each approved curricula are officially listed: at present there are 258 including 54 modular curricula. When a curriculum becomes outdated, the Minister is entitled to delete it from the list. The recent tendency has been to admit curricula in wider occupational profiles rather than to have too narrow specialisations.

LANGUAGE LEARNING

Learning a foreign language is an obligatory part of curricula. The number of hours as well as the content of the language education is defined in the core curricula for each education level (it starts at primary level). A second language forms part of the lower secondary core curricula. The most common languages are English (64.9% pupils), German (34.2%), Russian (7.6%) and French (3.4%), but some schools, mainly in big cities, also offer Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Slovak and Swedish. An exam in one foreign language (written and oral) is part of the final general education exam at the end of an upper secondary school to achieve the upper secondary school-leaving certificate (*matura*). In vocational schools language education is focused on vocabulary related to the occupational specialisation followed.

INTRODUCTION OF KEY COMPETENCES AND NEW SKILLS

Between 1992/1997, a number of new competences and skills were introduced into all curricula including, for example, lessons in how a market economy operates. More general key competences include: (1) planning, organising and self-assessing of learning; (2) efficient communication; (3) team work; (4) creative problem-solving; (5) efficient computer use.

NEW WAYS OF LEARNING

Given the speed of technological progress, the development of educational methodology to include new technologies are frequently used as didactic tools. Education in information technology starts within primary school and continues throughout the education and training system (various projects exist to ensure the latest equipment is available).

In the post-compulsory education and training sectors, more e-Learning opportunities are becoming available. In 2004/2005, a post-diploma programme in organising and

conducting e-Learning courses was developed for pedagogical staff in continuing education centres. Again, various initiatives have been launched to ensure that more people have access to the internet necessary for participating in such courses.

08 - ACCUMULATING, TRANSFERRING AND VALIDATING LEARNING

0801 - VALIDATION OF FORMAL LEARNING: GENERAL CONCEPTS AND SCHEMES

Validation of formal learning in Poland occurs on the basis of the Education System Act of 7th September 1991 with further amendments and separate regulations of Minister of National Education and Sport and is guaranteed by an external examination system.

The external examination system, implemented in 2002, consists of the following stages:

- a test of knowledge and skills held in the last grade of the 6-year primary school, against requirement standards defined by relevant laws;
- an examination in the third grade of a three-year lower secondary school (*gimnazjum*), in the skills and knowledge acquired in humanities, mathematics and natural sciences, against requirement standards defined by relevant laws;
- the matriculation examination - evaluation of the level of general education of graduates from all upper secondary schools providing general education [i.e. upper secondary general schools (*licea ogólnokształcące*), profiled general secondary schools (*licea profilowane*), upper secondary technical schools, supplementary secondary general schools and supplementary upper secondary technical schools]. The examination consists of 2 parts – an oral part and a written one. The obligatory subjects are Polish language, foreign language and 1 other subject chosen by a pupil. Passing this examination entitles the graduates to receive an upper secondary school-leaving certificate;
- the vocational qualification validation examination for graduates from all types of vocational schools at the secondary and post-secondary level. The exam proceeds in two stages: (1) a written exam, lasting 120 minutes and consisting of 50 questions testing vocational and specialist knowledge and skills and 20 questions referring to knowledge and skills in the area of employment and running a business, and (2) a practical exam, lasting 180–240 minutes depending on the vocation and consisting of practical work tests. During this practical exam, 1 test is performed for each qualification required in a given occupation. The written stage is held simultaneously across the country in all examination institutions; the

practical stage is held on dates set by the pertinent territorial examination commission. An examination team evaluates the performance of the practical task. In order to pass the exam a graduate must score at least 50% of all points in the first part of the written exam and at least 30% of all points in the second part of the written exam and at least 75% of all points in the practical exam. The graduate who has passed the exam will receive a diploma confirming vocational qualifications issued by the Territorial Examination Commission. The examination is not obligatory.

STANDARDS

All external examinations and tests are based on nationwide examination requirement standards, worked out by the Central Examination Commission and approved by the Minister of National Education and Sport. The standards define the scope of knowledge and skills that should be achieved by pupils at the end of particular stages of education and correspond to the content of existing core curricula. The nationwide examination requirement standards are worked out for vocations included in “the Classification of Vocations for Vocational Schooling” and only qualifications acquired in those vocations can be confirmed through the system of external examinations. Currently, examination requirement standards have been worked out for all vocations at the level of skilled worker (76 standards) and examination requirement standards for vocations at the level of a technician (over 120 vocations) are being elaborated.

RESPONSIBLE BODIES

The bodies competent for validation of vocational qualifications are:

- the Central Examination Commission;
- 8 Territorial Examination Commissions;
- The Association of Polish Crafts;
- National Examination Commissions appointed by school superintendents.

The Central Examination Commission started its operation in 1st January 1999 in Warsaw. The main tasks of the Central Examination Commission include:

- Working out examination requirements in co-operation with appropriate ministers, higher education institutions, research institutes, employers’ organizations and branch self-governments;
- Preparing questions, tasks and tests for particular external exams;
- Working out, in co-operation with territorial examination commissions and ministers appropriate for particular vocations, and publishing guides containing the requirements, sample of questions and tasks and assessment criteria;

- Analysing the results of the exams and preparing reports on the level of achievements of pupils at different levels of education for the Minister of National Education and Sport;
- Co-ordinating and supervising the activities of territorial examination commissions.

The main tasks of territorial examination commissions include:

- Carrying out examinations and tests;
- Preparing reports based on the results of examinations and tests and passing them to headmasters, bodies running schools, educational superintendents and the Central Examination Commission;
- Issuing diplomas confirming vocational qualifications.

VALIDATION OF VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS IN CRAFTS

The Association of Polish Crafts, on the basis of the Act on crafts of 23rd March 1989, is entitled to carry out examinations for a vocational title of an apprentice and a master in a vocation and to confirm them with an apprentice certificate and a master's diploma. Particular chambers of crafts are responsible for organising and carrying out vocational exams. At present in Poland there are 27 chambers of crafts, at which examination commissions are functioning. There are about 1 000 such commissions all over the country. The system of awarding vocational titles in crafts is regulated by unified nationwide principles determined by the regulation of the Minister of National Education and Sport of 4th December, 2002 on examination for the titles of an apprentice and a master in a vocation carried out by examination commissions of chambers of crafts. The examinations are based on examination requirement standards worked out by the chambers of crafts. In the case of apprentice exam, they often include the curriculum of a basic vocational school educating in the vocation, but not always.

For both the apprenticeship and master certificate, the exam consists of 2 stages: theoretical and practical. The examination tasks are prepared by the members of examination commission and approved by the chairman of the commission. The chairman of the commission determines the dates and the order in which the 2 stages are taken.

A person can take a qualification examination for a title of an apprentice in a vocation if he/she:

- completed vocational education in the alternance form - practical training at a craftsman's and theoretical education at school or through an out-of- school form;
- obtained a lower secondary school-leaving certificate or a certificate of 8-year primary school (from the old system) and completed vocational education in out-of-school forms;
- obtained a lower secondary school-leaving certificate or a certificate of 8-year primary school (from the old system) and 2 or 3-year practice in the vocation, equivalent to the duration of education in this vocation

foreseen in the Classification of Vocations for Vocational Schooling;

- obtained a post-gymnasium vocational school-leaving certificate or a post-primary vocational school-leaving certificate (from the old system) and at least 1.5- year practice in the vocation;
- obtained a vocational title in a related vocation and has since worked at least half a year in the vocation in which he is applying for a title.

A person is allowed to take a qualification examination for a title of a master in a vocation if he/she:

- obtained the title of an apprentice or its equivalent in the given vocation and has since worked at least 3 years in the vocation and is a holder of an upper secondary school-leaving certificate or a post-primary school-leaving certificate (from the old system);
- has worked in the vocation independently for at least 6 years running his/her own business and is a holder of a post-gymnasium school-leaving certificate or a post-primary school-leaving certificate (from the old system);
- obtained the title of an apprentice or its equivalent in a related vocation and after that has worked at least 3 years in the vocation for which he/she is taking the exam and is a holder of a post-gymnasium school-leaving certificate or a post-primary school-leaving certificate (from the old system);
- obtained the title of a master in a related vocation and has since worked at least 1 year in the vocation he/she is taking the exam and is a holder of a post-gymnasium school-leaving certificate or a post-primary school-leaving certificate (from the old system);
- has secondary or higher technical education and after obtaining a vocational title has worked at least 1 or 2 years in the vocation in which he/she is taking the exam.

The examinations commissions of chambers of craft carry out approximately 4 800 exams for master per year and 5 800 for the apprenticeship certificate (the failure rate is only about 10%).

REGULATED PROFESSIONS

Validation of regulated professions, e.g in medical area, public administration, law, forestry and others, takes place on the basis of separate legal regulations appropriate for particular branches.

0802 - VALIDATION AND RECOGNITION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

In Poland there is no system of validating qualifications acquired in non-formal or informal learning, however, some elements of such a system exist.

People who have not completed a vocational school and acquired their vocational qualifications in their vocational experience or in the continuing vocational system may confirm the qualifications taking an exam in front of a National Examination Commission, appointed by an educational superintendent.

National Examination Commissions function on the basis of a joint regulation of the Minister of National Education and the Minister of Labour and Social Policy of 12th October, 1993 on principles and conditions for upgrading qualifications and general education of adults. The commissions confirm acquired qualifications and award the titles of a skilled worker or a master in a vocation.

A person who is over 18 and does not attend a school can take a qualification examination for a title of a skilled worker in a vocation if he/she has an experience in the vocation, equivalent to the duration of education in this vocation foreseen in "the Classification of Vocations for Vocational Schooling".

A person who is over 18 and does not attend a school can take a qualification examination for a title of a master in a vocation if he/ she has a title of a skilled worker in a vocation and at least 3-year vocational experience.

The governmental document "the Development Strategy for Continuing Education until the year 2010", adopted by the Council of Ministers on 8th July 2003, foresees the preparation and implementation of integrated procedures and methods that would evaluate educational achievements i.e. a system to recognise qualifications gained through formal and non-formal education. This has been prioritised as a main task for the years 2005/2008.

09 - GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING FOR LEARNING, CAREER AND EMPLOYMENT

0901 - STRATEGY AND PROVISION

The key priorities of the development of vocational guidance in Poland include the building up of information resources in the field of continuing education and promoting the development of vocational guidance and counselling services. The underlying objectives include ensuring universal and permanently accessible services in the field of vocational and educational guidance addressed to a wide spectrum of clients across their lives, developing widely accessible data banks on continuing education and creating a system of vocational information services. The last years have brought an intensive development of vocational counselling and guidance in Poland in regard to introducing new legal regulations, development of training curricula for practitioners, improving cooperation on the national and European level and using funds from community programmes. One of the examples may be The National Centre for Vocational Guidance Resources (*Narodowe Centrum Zasobów Poradnictwa Zawodowego –NCZPZ*) worked out within Leonardo da Vinci project and established on the basis of the agreement between the 2 departments responsible for vocational guidance – education and labour (www.psz.praca.gov.pl). The activities of the centre are co-financed by the European Commission and include supporting educational and vocational mobility in Europe through gathering exchange and provision of information on educational and vocational opportunities in Europe. In 2003 a link to the Polish version of PLOTEUS was placed on the web pages of both departments. The European dimension of vocational guidance is also supported through pilot project "Ergo-in-Net – the European Guidance Counsellor Integrated Networks". The project envisages dissemination of methodologies, materials and tools as well as sources of information which can be used by an European vocational counsellor.

Moreover, a new form of vocational guidance –distance counselling is being developed. As a part of the “Distance Counselling” project a training curriculum and a textbook for counsellors were worked out.

Vocational guidance is under the remit of 2 departments, education (Ministry of National Education and Sport), responsible for providing guidance and counselling services to young people at school, and labour (Ministry of Economy and Labour), responsible for guidance and counselling services to adults.

Vocational guidance services under the remit of the department of education are provided by specialised pedagogical assistance and counselling centres, which offer a broad range of psychological and pedagogical assistance, including vocational guidance services to children and young people, and counselling to both teachers and parents related to the education and raising children and young people (www.cmppp.edu.pl).

In the 2002/2003 school year, there were 575 such centres in Poland, including 30 specialised vocational counselling institutions, which employ approximately 1 000 vocational counsellors. Also, there were approximately 10 000 educational counsellors in various types of schools.

Since 2003 in lower and upper secondary schools School Career Centres (*Szkolne Ośrodki Kariery-SZOK*) has been established. At present 361 such centres function all over the country. School Career Centres belong to components making up the internal career guidance system at schools. SZOKs are designed as facilities in the *gimnazjum* or upper secondary schools where pupils can acquire knowledge and skills helpful in their future career paths, such as information about the local labour market, rules and principles governing the labour market as such, and about labour law.

If a school has no vocational counsellor, school educational counsellors are responsible for the planning and coordination of the school tasks related to pupil career choices *vis à vis* pupils, parents and teachers. Services offered by pedagogical assistance and counselling centres and schools are provided free of charge and on a voluntary basis and include: vocational guidance; youth counselling (including prevention of various addictions); family counselling; assistance to handicapped children and youth; early diagnosis and rehabilitation.

Pedagogical and psychological counselling is offered individually and on a group basis.

Activity of public employment services in the field of vocational guidance is regulated by the Promoting Employment and Labour Market Institutions Act of 20th April 2004 (JL 2004 No. 99 item 1 001). The Act specifies in detail the tasks of the state relating to the alleviation of the consequences of unemployment, employment promotion and vocational activation. These tasks are performed by 338 district labour offices and 53 vocational information and planning and centres at regional labour offices.

Vocational guidance services offered through labour offices are targeted at various categories of clients, mainly the unemployed and job seekers, who are at different stages of their careers.

Vocational guidance services arising from the above Act and relevant secondary legislation include:

- provision of advice (to individuals and groups) for the unemployed and other job seekers, intended to facilitate career or retraining choices, taking up or changing work,

which makes use of standardised methods, primarily to diagnose vocational interests and aptitudes;

- provision of information about occupations, labour market, training opportunities, using information resources in hard copy, audiovisual and other computer-aided forms of information transmission;
- referrals to specialised psychological tests and medical examinations intended to issue an opinion about candidates' suitability for a given occupation or training profile;
- offering assistance to employers in the selection of candidates for positions requiring specific mental or physical predispositions.

VOLUNTARY LABOUR CORPS (OHP)

These are state run labour market institutions designed to assist young people in entering employment and to prevent social exclusion. In 2004, 49 Mobile Vocational Information Centres (MCIZ) were established within the OHP structure to provide vocational guidance services for young people. They offer: updated multimedia information about occupations, vocational schools, training institutions, training events; individual and group vocational guidance for young people at school and school leavers, responding to their specific situations and individual difficulties.

Among labour market institutions, non-public entities are also listed, the so-called employment agencies, which include vocational guidance agencies. They mainly offer services related to: providing assistance in making informed career and employment decisions; providing vocational information; providing assistance to employers in selecting candidates for positions requiring specific mental and physical predispositions.

Once the ordinance on the procedure of registering employment agencies (Art. 19, 13) enters into force (by the end of 2004), agencies shall be entered in a relevant register and shall operate on the strength of a licence granted by the minister competent for labour issues. Services will be paid only for employers.

The basic task of Career Bureaux, which have been set up at Polish universities since 1993, include provision of assistance to students and graduates in planning their career paths. This is done through:

- helping students and graduates identify their innate abilities and advising them how to use them in a conscious way to manage their careers;
- collecting information about companies operating on the labour market and employment possibilities for graduates from various types of studies;
- finding job offers for future graduates through such initiatives as establishing contacts with employers in Poland and abroad;
- collecting information about vocational and language courses, scholarships, postgraduate studies and studies abroad.

Career Bureau use newest technologies for dissemination and exchange of information, such as the Internet or computerised databases. Students and graduates may be registered in the database which is made available to employers and may obtain information which can be useful in the preparation of documentation for the future employer (CV, covering letter) and during the interview with the potential employer. These services are offered free of charge. Currently, 209 Academic Career Bureaux are operating throughout Poland.

Military Outplacement Centre in Warsaw provides services in the field of vocational counselling, guidance and job intermediary to professional soldiers who lost or are to lose jobs in the army due to reconversion. Vocational counsellors in the Centre gain qualifications through tailor-made training courses.

Employers and social partners (trade unions, associations, foundations) do not provide vocational guidance services; instead, they take part in preparing opinions and regulations, for example those concerning vocational guidance (both the primary and secondary legislation in this matter were consulted with the principal actors involved).

0902 - TARGET GROUPS AND MODES OF DELIVERY

Vocational guidance services in Poland are based on the following principles:

- they are offered on a voluntary basis, irrespective of nationality, sex, religion, membership of political or social organisations or other circumstances;
- freedom in the choice of occupation and place of work;
- they are offered free of charge;
- confidentiality and personal data protection is ensured *vis à vis* the clients.

Provision of vocational guidance services by all the institutions is based on the equal opportunities principle.

Pedagogical assistance and counselling centres support children and young people in making educational and career decisions. Their main statutory activities include, amongst the others:

- diagnostics related to mental capabilities, personality, aptitudes, interests, performed using a broad spectrum of tools, as well as paper and practical tests;
- direct work with students, which also involves issue of documents qualifying students with various health problems for further education;
- work with students with many years' delay with regard to compulsory education;
- work with students from malfunctioning families and *milieus*;
- activities targeted at students at various stages of education, including lectures presenting various

occupations, meetings at specialised vocational guidance centres or vocational information centres;

- activities addressed to parents – lectures to parents, talks, information meetings.

In performing their tasks, vocational counsellors make use of various kinds of information. Currently, pedagogical assistance and counselling centres gather information about occupations (occupational profiles, descriptions of occupations and other information materials); different types of schools and admission requirements; specialised institutions offering training to the physically and mentally handicapped, and those from socially disadvantaged groups; training courses and other non-formal education forms at the local, district or regional level.

In their diagnostic work, vocational counsellors mainly use psychological tests checking mental capabilities, personality, interests, special abilities, or pedagogical tests. Activities related to vocational orientation and guidance should accompany children and young people throughout the period of their education (in line with the assumptions of the educational reform). However, in practice these activities are most fully performed with regard to those age groups which are in a transition period between general secondary school and further stages of education or work. In other words, they are addressed to pupils in the final years of the respective education stages.

School Career Centres (*Szkolne Ośrodki Kariery-SZOK*) are aimed at helping secondary school pupils to build their careers at an early stage. SZOKs should be furnished with various materials about different occupations, sources of information needed for career and education planning, as well as specialised multimedia software. SZOKs' vocational counsellors carry out the following tasks:

- gathering, updating and providing educational and vocational information;
- indicating additional sources of information to pupils, parents and teachers;
- providing pupils and parents with individual counselling;
- organising group training preparing pupils for planning their career and undertaking vocational roles;
- co-operating with other institutions e.g. pedagogical assistance and counselling centres, labour offices, Vocational Information and Planning Centres.

Vocational counsellors working at district labour offices help clients (the unemployed and job seekers) solve their career problems, and provide information about training opportunities, occupations and the labour market. They also assist clients in defining their attitude to complex life situations, mapping out possible options and consequences of their choices. Advice is offered on an individual and group basis. In addition to that, many clients want to receive assistance in learning about techniques and developing skills needed when looking for work. Typical clients include young people under 25, people living in rural areas, the handicapped, people threatened with redundancy, single mothers, etc.

Vocational counsellors who are psychology graduates can offer psychological services, such as tests, and their results can be used in the advisory process. Their task is also to identify training needs of clients and propose suitable directions and forms of vocational

training. They provide services to employers in selecting candidates for positions requiring specific mental and physical predispositions.

Vocational Information and Planning Centres at regional labour offices address their services to various groups of clients: the unemployed, those threatened by unemployment and job seekers. Vocational counsellors working in the Centres offer individual and group counselling, provide vocational information and specialised services related to career planning. They help clients properly assess their chances to find work, choose a suitable career path, improve their attractiveness on the labour market, and support them in their efforts to find and retain suitable employment. Through vocational evaluation, psychological tools, information resources and the clients' vocational experience, advisors help them solve various employment-related problems. They also gather, update, collate and disseminate vocational information in the region (by making available publications on vocational training for adults, the labour market, employers' expectations, etc.).

Activities of Vocational Labour Corps (OHP) are mainly targeted at the following groups:

- youth from pathological families, threatened by social exclusion, with a criminal record;
- school dropouts (young people who leave school without any vocational qualifications);
- youth from families having a low material status, families with many children or single-parent families, or from orphanages;
- unemployed youth under 25 years of age;
- youth at school or university, who would like to take up some form of work.

Youth labour offices provide services that include seeking job offers for young people, organising job fairs, helping employers in selection of potential employees, etc.

Mobile Vocational Information Centres (MCIZ), which are furnished with the necessary equipment easy to unpack and transport, also provide vocational guidance services. Their basic equipment includes a computer/notebook with an overhead projector, plus traditional, hard-copy materials such as Occupation Profiles, guidebooks, prospectuses or books.

MCIZ address their services primarily to young people living in rural areas, including:

- youth at school – providing advice and information needed to make choices concerning education, school, occupation, and the labour market entry;
- school leavers – providing them with information and helping them acquire skills which are necessary to cope in a situation of dynamic social and economic change, and an ability to plan their careers in a proactive and flexible way, in line with their innate potential;
- adult unemployed and job seekers – providing information and vocational guidance with a view to retraining, professional development, job offers.

Those services will be available to all young people, and a special emphasis will be placed on people who are threatened with social exclusion.

0903 - GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING PERSONNEL

Vocational guidance services within the remit of the department of education are provided by highly qualified staff. All the counsellors have university education, at least at the MA level. Over 30% of them have completed postgraduate studies in vocational orientation and guidance.

Psychologists and pedagogues make up about 90% of all vocational counsellors. Most of them (about 60%) improve their qualifications on a systematic basis, during short training programmes and courses (mainly in preparing students to use active methods in making career choices, medical certificate stating suitability (or lack of it) for a given occupation, diagnostics, etc. The vast majority of vocational counsellors are women (90.2%).

The department of education plans to increase the number of vocational counsellors by enabling candidates who want to qualify as vocational counsellors to complete relevant postgraduate studies (to work in over 23 000 lower and upper secondary schools) and prepare teachers to work as vocational counsellors through postgraduate studies (graduates from MA and higher vocational studies – teachers of lower and upper secondary schools who are interested in work as vocational counsellors at school (the ultimate planned number: 3 432 people).

Recruitment to postgraduate studies will be carried out by universities, in cooperation with boards of education and local government units, which are responsible for the operation of schools and educational establishments in their area.

Postgraduate programmes are to be offered by 8 academic centres in Poland, both public and private, selected in an open tender procedure. In 2004 the first 3-term postgraduate programme was launched, lasting from 1st October 2004 till 1st March 2006.

About 800 vocational counsellors are employed in public employment services, i.e. district labour offices and vocational information and planning centres.

All counsellors have university education – 37% have degrees in pedagogy, 17% in sociology, 17% in psychology, 2% in social science and 27% in other disciplines. The nature of the counsellors' work requires interdisciplinary knowledge and specific skills.

Formal requirements concerning the qualifications of counsellors working in public employment services, Voluntary Labour Corps and further education institutions are laid down in the Promoting Employment and Labour Market Institutions Act of 20th April 2004. All vocational counsellors must hold a university diploma and a professional licence, viz.:

- a professional licence (basic level) may be awarded to a person who has provided vocational guidance services for at least 12 months in public employment services, Voluntary Labour Corps or further education institutions referred to in relevant legislation concerning the education system, or who has completed preparatory training for vocational counsellors, as proved by relevant documents, within a period of 2 years preceding the date of submitting an application for the vocational counsellor licence;

- a first-degree licence may be awarded to a person who has at least 24-months' experience in working as a vocational counsellor in public employment services, Voluntary Labour Corps or further education institutions referred to in relevant legislation concerning the education system, holds a vocational counsellor licence, has completed MA studies and has completed training in the field of vocational guidance, as proved by relevant documents;
- a second-degree licence may be awarded to a person who holds a university degree and has at least 36-months' experience in working as a vocational counsellor in public employment services, Voluntary Labour Corps or further education institutions referred to in relevant legislation concerning the education system, holds a vocational counsellor licence (first degree) and has completed postgraduate studies in the field of vocational guidance.

Vocational counsellors should have social competences (such as specific personality traits, aptitudes and interests which facilitate effective work with people) and should improve their professional qualifications on a permanent basis, by self-study and participation in postgraduate studies and other forms of training. They should also have considerable knowledge in the field of vocational guidance, psychology, sociology, pedagogy, social policy, education and labour market issues, and public administration tasks.

Due to increasing vocational mobility in Europe the preparation of competent vocational counsellors providing services in European dimension is required. It is possible thanks to the Leonardo da Vinci project – “Transnational Vocational Guidance” (2001/2004) whose result was development of a curriculum for training counsellors in European vocational counselling and guidance. In 2006 a couple of higher education institutions plan to launch post-graduate studies in this field on the basis of the above mentioned curriculum.

10 - FINANCING - INVESTMENT IN HUMAN RESOURCES

1001 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION CONCERNING FINANCING ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRAINING

In Poland there is, as yet, no single data collection system which would bring together different categories of information on financing education. The available information is uncorrelated, “sectoral” in nature, collected at different levels of generality, which makes any comprehensive analysis extremely difficult. According to the information available this chapter summarises the levels of financing and distribution of funds concerning vocational education and training. Unfortunately there is lack of data on the national scale regarding financing continuing education in out-of-school forms.

The basic policy premise underlying the financing system is that education for all is free until 18 years of age in all public schools, as is adult education in the school system. Both are financed from the state budget.

The financing of the education and training system are governed by the Education System Act (1991), the Public Finance Act (1998) and the Revenues of self governing districts and regions (1998). A great deal of funding for the education and training system

is co-financed by the ESF under the Operational Programme for Human Resource Development. Between 2004/2006, the Ministry for National Education and Sport has been allocated € 527.4 million (€ 395.55 from ESF and € 131.85 from the state budget). These are budgetary guidelines rather than levels of real expenditure, which can change.

In 2005 the National Education Commission Fund was established. The Fund has purposeful character and is supposed to help territorial self-governments in supporting educational chances of children and youths. The principles for such support are outlined in the amended Education System Act.

In 2004 public expenditure on education and science totalled PLN 38.4 billion (in 2004 1 €=4.534 PLN), approximately 4.3% of GDP. The expenditures for education from the state budget amounted to 37.2 billion PLN, approximately 4.13% of GDP. Territorial government units spent on education 36 billion PLN.

The allocation of funds earmarked for the individual levels of education is related to the transfer of the budgetary resources to municipal governments (*gmina* - the local level), district governments (*powiat* level) and regional governments (*województwo*).

Until 1990, all expenditures on education were made through the state budget. The taking over of kindergartens (in 1991), primary schools (in 1993/1994) and secondary schools, including vocational ones (since 1999) by the local governments, results in continual increase of the funds for education which were at the disposal of the local and regional governments.

The basic act and the tool used to determine how the financial resources are divided among the local governments and then among schools is the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 16th December 1999 on the rules of the division of the general subsidy for education tasks for territorial self-government units, in short referred to as the financing algorithm. Until the end of 1999, the teacher and the school grade were the main elements in the financing of the public education system. Since 1st January 2000, it is the student's education that the financing is primarily allocated to.

1002 - FUNDING FOR INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

It is difficult to determine full costs of the education of vocational school students. It has been acknowledged for many years that they are higher than in the general secondary education. Per capita expenditures of public schools administered by self-government entities (a definite majority of all vocational schools) may serve as an indication. In 2002, they amounted to 3 514 PLN per one student (about 911.37 €) .

In the basic and secondary technical school system, public schools are definitely in the majority, while non-public schools prevail in the post-secondary school structure. The Minister for National Education and Sport is in charge of the majority of vocational schools. The Ministry of Education, in cooperation with the Ministers for Culture and Health, exercises supervision over the small number of medical and artistic schools.

Territorial governments are the holders of a vast majority of funds earmarked for education. These funds come from the central budget (and have the form of the general subsidy for education tasks and allocation from the state budget, as well as the territorial governments' funds.

In 2004 the following expenditures has been spent on vocational schools (in 2004: 1 €= 4.534 PLN):

- 2.2 billion PLN (485.2 M €) by district self-governments, which are the bodies responsible for running upper secondary schools, i.e. 40% of their financial resources;
- 1.5 billion PLN (330.83 M €) by self-governments in towns having a district status i.e. 13% of their financial resources;
- 0.18 billion PLN (39.7 M €) by regional self-governments, i.e. 30% of their funds on vocational schools, 17.4% on teacher colleges and 16% on teacher further training establishments.

Non-public upper secondary schools, including vocational ones, which have a status of a public school, receive a subsidy from the district budget amounting to no less than 50% of current expenditure for one pupil in a public school of the same type.

The schools which don't have the status of a public school may receive a subsidy from the district budget on the basis of regulations defined by the district self-government.

Alternate vocational education forms are based on employment contracts to learn an occupation or training to perform a specific job, which are concluded between the employer and juvenile workers. It sets out terms of the paying the wages of juvenile workers, which are contributed by the employer. The employer who agrees to train a student is obliged to cover the costs related to preparing a training station furnished with all the required equipment, tools, materials, technical documentation and to provide working clothes and footwear or personal hygiene items.

Juvenile workers who receive initial training for a given job are entitled to compensation representing no less than 4% of the monthly average salary in the national economy. In 2004, the average monthly salary in the national economy was 2 273.44 PLN (501.42 €). Thus, pay of juvenile workers in the individual years of training approximately ranges from 90 to 140 PLN a month (20-30€). Provided they fulfil the prescribed conditions, employers may be reimbursed for the wages of juvenile workers and their social insurance contributions from the Labour Fund. They need to submit an application for such reimbursement to the district labour office.

The acquired vocational qualifications are confirmed with an exam. If an juvenile worker is hired by an employer who runs a crafts business, he/she takes a qualification exam for an apprentice, held by the examination commissions appointed by the chambers of crafts. A fee must be paid to sit such an exam. The costs of organising the exam on the first set date are borne by the employer. Also, the employer may cover the costs of a repeat exam. Fees for exams organised by chambers of crafts are set by the chambers themselves, based on the average monthly salary in the enterprise sector. Fees for the apprenticeship exam cannot be higher than 20% of the baseline amount. In justified cases, the chamber of crafts may decide not to collect the fees.

The sum of the reimbursement cannot exceed the sum agreed earlier and may be applied only to training in several occupations listed in the classification of occupations and specialisations. Preparing a list of occupations eligible for reimbursement is intended to reduce training in vocations in which it is difficult for school-leavers to find employment or in which the unemployment rate is high.

1003 - FUNDING FOR CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING, AND ADULT LEARNING

Education in public schools for adults is free of charge. These schools are financed in the same way as public schools for youths (see section 1002).

Education in non-public schools is paid. Non-public schools, which have a status of a public school, receive a subsidy from the state budget.

In general, continuing education can be financed from the following sources:

- state budget (school forms and expenditures of Labour Fund);
- trainees' own funds;
- enterprises/employers;
- foreign assistance funds.

The Survey on Educational Activity of Adults (BAED), carried out by the Central Statistical Office in 2003 shows that in out-of-school education 31% of participants finance their education from their own or family's resources, 57.6% have the education financed by employers, 4.6% by foundations and other NGOs, 2.2% by labour offices and 4.7% have the education financed from other public funds.

The pilot monitoring project concerning vocational training of employees in enterprises, carried out in 2002 demonstrates that the involvement of employers in the training of their employees depends on the number of staff and type of business activity. In 2002, the cost of completed and financed training programmes in the surveyed enterprises (100 randomly selected enterprises in the *Mazowsze* region) totalled 452 700 PLN (117 410.58 €), which accounted for 0.6% of total labour costs. The training investment per capita (regardless of the training duration) was 442 PLN (114.64 €).

The 2002 survey of continuous vocational training in enterprises was based on the CVTS2 methodology (cf. *Balicki* 2003). The survey findings show that 41.4% enterprises were involved in training, and that the bigger the enterprise the larger the share it had in the financing or co-financing of training. The obtained data indicates that, on average, in 2002 enterprises spent 694 PLN (179.99 €) on every employee in training. As the enterprise size increased, the unit training cost would diminish. In small enterprises, the largest training costs were borne by entities in the sector of wholesale and consignment trade - 1 879 PLN (487.33 €) per trainee. In medium-sized enterprises, most funds were spent on training by entities manufacturing means of transport – 2 607 PLN (676.14 €), and in large ones – by entities manufacturing cellulose pulp, paper and paper products – 1 291 PLN (334.82 €).

The amounts spent on training also depend on the type of the enterprise's activity, and were the largest (on average) in the sector of wholesale and consignment trade – 1 297 PLN (336.38 €) per trainee. The survey shows that as the expenditures on training grow, measured by the relation of total training costs to total labour costs, the average training costs per trainee also increase (cf. *Balicki* 2003).

Surveys carried out by the Management Institute at the turn of 2001 indicate that the average cost of training depends on the training content and the level of the personnel for whom the training is organised. Research proves that the training costs of executives and managers are on average twice as high as those of other employees. Also, considerable regional disparities in the training costs can easily be observed. The average cost of 1 training day for 1 trainee who is an executive/manager reached 383 PLN (99.33 €) in central Poland (*Warsaw* and *Mazowieckie* region), and 138 PLN (35.79 €) in *Malopolskie* region. The average cost of one training day for one trainee among the

other (non-executive) staff is, in the above regions, 204 PLN (52.9 €) and 111 PLN (28.78 €), respectively.

1004 - FUNDING FOR TRAINING FOR UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE AND OTHER GROUPS EXCLUDED FROM THE LABOUR MARKET

As of 1st January 2002, labour offices were included in the local government structures. Setting the ceilings for expenditures and transfer of Labour Fund (The Labour Fund was created in 1990 as the state-owned target fund. The basic task of the Fund is to finance the allowances that the unemployed are entitled to as well as programmes which fight unemployment. The main revenues of the Labour Fund are contributions paid by the employers and persons running businesses. They account for 90% of the Fund's total revenues. Commencing on 1st January 2004, the contribution towards the Labour Fund is 2.45% of the pension assessment basis.) money to regional and district governments is effected using the algorithm defined in the Regulation of the Council of Ministers. The tasks financed from the Labour Fund have been divided into 3 groups: mandatory, optional - earmarked for the financing of active measures counteracting unemployment (such as training, intervention works, public works, loans) and other optional tasks (such as development and dissemination of career information, costs of implementation, development and maintenance of the IT system). In 1990/2002, changes in the regulations concerning expenditures from the Labour Fund, in particular rules for awarding unemployment benefits, their amounts and duration, as well as pre-pension benefits and allowances, exerted a strong influence on the volumes and structure of expenditures from the Fund. In 1990/2002, the bulk of the expenditures were unemployment benefits as well as pre-pension benefits and allowances (mandatory). In 1990, the share of expenditures for such payments was 51.1% and grew to 89.0% in 2002 .

FINANCING TRAINING OF THE UNEMPLOYED

In December 2003, 11 365 registered unemployed started training. 22 874 people completed training, i.e. 6 628 more than in the previous month. In the reporting period (December 2003), 1 512 graduates started training, and 3 865 – work placements.

The rules and procedures for organising and financing training are defined in the Employment and Counteracting Unemployment Act of 14th December 1994. The costs of training are covered from the Labour Fund.

The Labour Fund resources are earmarked among others for financing the costs of training of employees, unemployed and other eligible persons, training allowances, loans, scholarships, contributions for social insurance related to scholarships and training costs of personnel performing tasks arising from the relevant legislation.

The training costs of the unemployed involve a sum agreed with the training institution, as well as the cost of accident insurance, of necessary medical checks and costs of exam to acquire specific vocational qualifications. If the training takes place outside the place of residence of the unemployed, then the cost of training also includes travel and accommodation costs.

The unemployed who take part in training may apply for a training allowance. As of 1st September 2003, the training allowance for the unemployed (20% of the basic benefit) was 100.7 PLN (22.89 €). The unemployed may also get a "training loan" towards the financing of the costs of training started without the referral from the district labour office. Graduates and school leavers registered at the district labour office may receive scholarships for the time of training, work placement at the employer's or the period of

study in a post-primary, upper-secondary or higher school (in the extramural or evening studies system).

FINANCING ACTIVE MEASURES COUNTERACTING UNEMPLOYMENT

The share of Labour Fund expenditures for active measures counteracting unemployment is low and still falling, as is the share of training expenditures. The share of such expenditures in total Labour Fund expenditures was 1.6.% in 1997, against mere 0.5% in 2002, while the share of training expenditures in active measures counteracting unemployment in 1997/2002 remained at a relatively stable level of over 9%.

FINANCING ACTIVITIES AIMED AT THE DISADVANTAGED GROUPS

Activities aimed to prevent vocational and social exclusion include education and training programmes targeted at the disabled, women, people with low education and skills, young people with no career experience who do not learn, train or work. Other marginalised groups include young people from poor and pathological families. Most frequently, such young people live and learn at training and pedagogical centres run by the Voluntary Labour Corps (OHP), financed from the public funds. In such centres, accommodation and instruction are provided free of charge.

Disabled youth may continue their education in upper secondary schools, similarly to their non-disabled peers. In the school year 2002/2003, altogether, 18 003 students were learning in schools for the disabled and in integration, open classes. Education in public vocational schools for disabled students is financed from the territorial government budgets. In 2002 the expenditure of territorial governments for vocational schools for the disabled amounted to 151 million PLN (39 162 797.93 €), of which 98.68% was spent by district self-governments.

The government programme entitled “The First Job” promotes acquiring first vocational experiences by school leavers from different types of schools. It is targeted at the school leavers from post-gymnasium schools of all levels. Vocational placement at the employer’s establishment is one of the basic forms of vocational mobilisation of school-leavers. During the placement, trainees are entitled to a scholarship paid by the district labour office. The cost incurred in 2002 per one graduate by the Programme was 2 788 PLN (723.08 €), depending on the mobilisation form in question. In 2003, Labour Fund expenditures for the implementation of active measures counteracting unemployment totalled 1 588.5 million PLN (411 987 447.15 €).

As of 1st September 2003, the scholarship for unemployed graduates during the placement is 503.2 PLN (114.42 €) [100% of the basic benefit], during the training –302.0 PLN (68.67 €) [60% of the basic benefit], continuation of learning –302.0 PLN (in regions threatened with high unemployment). The labour offices pay pension and disability pension insurance (plus accident insurance – 0.97%) on the scholarships for the period of the training and the placement, amounting to 33.49% of the basic benefit.

The Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development (SOP HRD) provides for supporting high-risks groups. Among others, it envisages measures aimed to help the unemployed (youth and adults), school-leavers, young people wishing to start their own business, the disabled persons, people threatened with social exclusion (unemployed over 24, alcoholics, drug addicts, people living prisons), women (in labour market integration), employees and employers. Such measures include training programmes, placements, workshops, labour exchange services, advisory and information services as well as supporting social employment.

Support to high-risk groups is stipulated by measures in the following priorities:

1. Active labour market policies, vocational integration and social inclusion, including Measure 1.5. Promotion of active social policy by supporting high-risk groups.
2. Development of knowledge-based society, including Measure 2.1. Increasing access to education – promotion of lifelong learning.

The overall financial breakdown for the implementation of SOP HRD allows to identify the funds and their breakdown by all the measures in priorities 1 to 3 in the years 2004/2006. In 2004, the national public contribution for priority 1 totals 55 350 305 €. In this amount, the state budget resources account for 14.97%, territorial government resources – for 2.37%, other sources (such as the Labour Fund or the State Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled – PFRON) – 82.66%. The estimated private contribution is 2 480 850 €. In the same year, the national public contribution for priority 2 is estimated at 57 837 065 € and is to be contributed wholly by the state budget, with the planned private contribution at 1 825 433 €.

1005 - PERSPECTIVES AND ISSUES: FROM FUNDING TO INVESTING IN HUMAN RESOURCES

It is difficult to draw general conclusions as there is a lack of detailed data reflecting financing vocational education and training of different types and levels, especially information on the cost of training borne by the individual participants.

It seems that execution of tasks indicated in “the Development Strategy for Continuing Education until 2010” (see section 0501, lifelong learning chapter, too) and proposed way of their financing may lead to significant positive changes in the field of continuing education and to improvement of its quality and level.

11 - EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS, TOWARDS AN OPEN AREA OF LIFELONG LEARNING

1101 - NATIONAL STRATEGIES RELATED TO POLICY PRIORITIES, PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES AT EU LEVEL

One of the most important governmental documents promoting the idea of lifelong learning in Poland is “the Development Strategy for Continuing Education until 2010”. The tasks indicated in this document are consistent with the goals set in the Lisbon Strategy i.e. building knowledge-based society through development of high quality, accessible continuing education, promoting the value of learning, improvement of vocational counselling and guidance and through promoting entrepreneurship. This is meant to enable individual development of every citizen and regular upgrading of vocational qualifications in order to respond to the requirements of the labour market. “The Development Strategy for Continuing Education until 2010” was worked out on the basis of recommendations for Poland formulated by the World Bank in *Aide Memoire* in November 2002. It also includes priorities and tasks assigned to the member states in the Memorandum concerning continuing education and in the Copenhagen Declaration. The priorities and tasks are carried out in Poland also through Polish-German co-operation based on the Polish-German Declaration about co-operation in the field of vocational education, signed in April 2004. The Declaration assumes taking up common activities focused on execution of postulates pointed out in the Copenhagen Declaration, especially regarding such issues as: Europass promotion, validation of non-formal and informal education, creating credit transfer system in vocational and continuing education and training, quality of education and training and development of vocational counselling and guidance. Furthermore it presumes working out common mobility strategy and strengthening the co-operation between institutions involved in vocational education and training.

Since both general and vocational education has a great impact on creating abilities to cope with the labour market requirements, the need to invest in the education system and the development of qualified human resources was exposed in the “National Strategy for Employment Increase and Human Resources Development for the years 2000/2006”. This document stresses the significance of education in counteracting unemployment, putting emphasis on the role of proper curricula, introducing vocational counsellors to schools and development of continuing education. The activities in this fields are also meaningful for regional development and compactness policy so that they have been treated as priorities in the National Development Plan for the years 2004/2006 and in the Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development. Priority 2 of the SOP HRD allows to carry out, among the others, projects aimed at adjusting the educational offer of schools, higher education institutions and other vocational education establishments to the labour market needs and at enhancement of continuing education for adults.

1102 - IMPACT OF EUROPEANISATION/INTERNATIONALISATION ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING

As regards the impact of European initiatives on vocational and continuing education in Poland, the Polish participation in the Leonardo da Vinci programme should be especially noted. The programme responds to the need to increase mobility through modernisation of vocational education and training and preparing beneficiaries for the requirements of the European labour market as well as to the need to develop a European dimension of vocational education and training in Poland through promoting good practices, developing and modernising curricula and teachers' qualifications and through development of non-traditional forms of vocational education and training. The advantages have occurred on different levels. From the point of view of educational and social policy the Leonardo da Vinci programme stresses the significance of quality improvement, accessibility of continuing vocational education and training and lifelong acquiring skills and competence which are key factors in building knowledge-based society. At the institutional level, thanks to international exchange, the prestige of vocational education and training is increasing as well as the standing of the vocational school. The partnerships formed within the programme are being extended to embrace more and more institutions.

On the national scale, dissemination of innovative results of both thematic projects and exchanges contribute to the modernisation of curricula and teaching methods as well as to the improvement of co-operation between a school and its environment. On the level of individuals, the beneficiaries may acquire vocational experience and qualifications that increase their employability both on the national and European labour markets.

In the years 1998/2004 14 521 people went abroad for placements through the Leonardo da Vinci programme, including 5 843 people only in 2004. In 2005 the number of beneficiaries rose to 6 582. (www.leonardo.org.pl)

Socrates-Erasmus programme also supports the promotion of educational and vocational mobility. The programme enabling the exchange of students and academic teachers, development of new curricula and introducing European Credit Transfer System has a significant impact on development of vocational education and training on the tertiary level. Simultaneously the programme contributes to increasing transparency of qualifications in Europe. The number of beneficiaries is constantly growing: in the academic year 1998/1999 – 1 426 Polish students went to study abroad, in 2000/2001 – 3 691, in 2003/2004 – 6 278 and in 2004/2005 -8 366 students. A similar situation occurs in case of academic teachers' exchanges – their number has increased from 678 people in the academic year 2000/2001 to 1 394 in 2004/2005. (www.socrates.org.pl)

Both Leonardo da Vinci and Socrates-Erasmus programmes create for young people a great platform for intercultural contacts. That is why they are treated as an important element of executing assumptions comprised in "The State Strategy for Youths for the years 2003/2012" prepared by the Ministry of Education and approved by the Council of Ministers. (www.kprm.gov.pl)

Strengthening mobility in Poland includes also such governmental measures as introducing obligatory foreign language education in vocational schools (2 languages in upper secondary schools and 1 language in basic vocational schools), development and popularisation of IT-based teaching methods and modern forms of education, e.g. modular curricula or distance learning, modernisation of school equipment, introducing entrepreneurship content into core curricula, etc. Many of these activities are supported by projects carried out as part of the European Social Fund.

Additionally, establishing an external examination system, adjusting Polish legislation in the area of qualification recognition to the directives of European Commission are leading to better qualification and competence transparency and to increasing mobility on the labour market. Although formal education dominates in Poland, the significance of non-formal and informal education is rising, so validating partial competencies regardless of how they had been acquired becomes a challenge. The Europass documents extend possibilities to register various forms of training and acquiring vocational experience in the country and abroad, thereby contributing to their transparency and transferability. Polish educational authorities along the implementation of the Europass Training in 2004 undertook preparation steps to implement new Europass through, amongst others, intensification of works on Language Portfolio and Certificate Supplement. Also a legal regulation was issued on the basis of which higher education institutions in Poland started issuing a Diploma Supplement in January 2005. The National Europass Centre was appointed at the Task Force for Training and Human Resources, Cooperation Fund Foundation, which earlier played role of the National Contact Point for Europass Training. In the period between 1st of May and 31st of December 2004, 770 Europass Training documents were issued, mostly to Leonardo daVinci beneficiaries. Over the year 2005 the Polish NEC issued about 1 500 Europass-Mobility documents. (www.europass.org.pl)

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THEME 8

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The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

<http://www.mpips.gov.pl>

Ministry of Education and Science

<http://www.mein.gov.pl>

Bureau for Academic Recognition and International Exchange

<http://www.buwiwm.edu.pl>

THEME 9

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<http://www.menis.gov.pl>

Polish Leonardo da Vinci Agency

<http://www.leonardo.org.pl>

Polish Socrates Agency

<http://www.socrates.org.pl>

Chancellery of the Council of Ministers

<http://www.kprm.gov.pl>

Polish National Europass Centre

<http://www.europass.org.pl>