

Poland

Overview of the Vocational Education and Training System

2007

eKnowVet – Thematic Overviews

Title: Poland. Overview of the Vocational Education and Training System in 2007

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Author: ReferNet Poland

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 vocational education and training
5. Continuing vocational education and training for adults
6. Training VET teachers and trainers
7. Skills and competence development and innovative pedagogy
8. Accumulating, transferring and validating learning
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: the reference year of this report is, 2006. Later editions can be viewed from December 2008 onwards 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



Poland

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

In 2006, the demographic development of Poland followed the trends observable since the beginning of the decade. The only exceptions were: a positive natural increase caused by an increased number of births, which was recorded for the first time since 2002, and a dramatic increase in international migration. The substantial fall in the number of births and a negative balance of international migration are listed among the major factors responsible for the rapidly growing pace at which the country's actual population is decreasing [1].

It is estimated that at the end of 2006, Poland, a country with a territory of 312 683 km² [2] had a population of 38,122 000, that is, 35,000 less than in 2005. Such a substantial decrease was a result (among other factors) of the permanent migration of some 51 000 Poles. Altogether, in the years 1999-2006, Poland's population decreased by about 155 000. Over the past seven years, the population increase rate was negative, ranging from minus 0.04% in 1999 to minus 0.09% in 2006. [3]

Table 1. Population balance in 2004, 2005 and 2006 (in thousand)

YEAR	2004	2005	2006 *
NATURAL INCREASE	-7.4	-3.9	-5.7
LIVE BIRTHS	356	364	374

DEATHS	363.5	368.3	369
BALANCE OF PERMANENT INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION	-9.4	-12.9	-40
IMMIGRATION	9	9.3	11
EMIGRATION	18.9	22.2	51
ACTUAL INCREASE	-16.8	-16.8	-34.3
POPULATION AS AT 31 DECEMBER	38 174	38 157	38 122

* Estimates.

Source: Prepared by the author based on: GUS, *Podstawowe informacje o rozwoju demograficznym Polski do 2006 roku*, Warszawa styczeń 2007, URL: http://www.stat.gov.pl/cps/rde/xbcr/gus/PUBL_podst_inf_rozwoj_demograficzny_2006.pdf, p. 20; GUS, *Maly rocznik statystyczny Polski 2006*, Warszawa 2006, tabl. 3(61), p. 109.

According to the existing estimates, in 2006 the number of births in Poland was higher than the number of deaths (which showed minimal fluctuations since the beginning of the decade) by nearly 6 000, as a result of which the natural increase, for the first time in four years, reached a positive figure – 0.2‰ as compared to minus 0.1‰ a year earlier) [4]. Despite the fact that the fertility rate increased from 1.22 child per woman in 2003 to 1.24 in 2005, [5] the birth rate slump in Poland is continuing. This is probably due to the changing roles 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 the 25-29 age brackets [6].

As regards migration, 2006 brought a dramatic aggravation of the situation as compared to the previous years (Table 1), which can be explained by the new opportunities for working abroad which appeared following Poland's accession to the European Union. The number of people who have left Poland for good increased more than twice, as compared to 2005. Furthermore, a relatively low increase of the influx of immigrants produced a very unfavourable permanent international migration balance.

Despite the changes taking place in Poland's demographic development in the recent years, the age structure of the population is still characterised by a relatively high share of young people, especially when compared to the age structures of many other European nations (e.g. Germany). In 2005, about one third of Poland's population were people in the 0-24 age group [7]. It should be added however that since the 1990s, demographers have observed a rapid decrease in the number of children and youth. According to the preliminary estimates for 2006 (which only slightly differ from the data for 2005, provided in Table 2), category of people in the pre-working age (0-17 years of age) represented approximately 20% of the total population, which was about 9% less than in 1990. As compared to 1990, this reduction was accompanied by an increase in the working age group (people aged 18-59/64) and in the retirement age group (60+/65+), by 6% respectively, up to a level of ca 64% and by ca 3%, up to a level of

15.7%. The average life expectancy, which was on the increase ever since the early 1990s, in 2005 was 79.4 years for women and 70.8 years for men [8].

Table 2. Age structure of Poland's population in 1990 and 2005
(as at 31 December)

AGE	1990	2005	1990	2005
	% IN THOUSAND			
0-17	29	20.6	10 043	7 864
18-59/64*	58.2	64	22 145	24 405
60+/65+**	12.8	15.4	4 884	5 888
TOTAL	100	100	38 073	38 157

* 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.

Source: Prepared by the author based on: GUS, *Podstawowe informacje o rozwoju demograficznym Polski do 2006 roku*, op. cit., p. 14; GUS, *Maly rocznik statystyczny Polski 2006*, op. cit., tabl. 5(63), pp. 112-113.

In 2006, the sex structure of the Polish population was characterised by a higher number of women than men: women accounted for over 52% of the country's total population, with 107 women per 100 men [9].

A comparison of the number of students in different types of schools in the academic years 2003/2004, 2004/2005 and 2005/2006 is quite interesting (Table 3). These fluctuations are implications of the demographic changes described above, although in the case of the latter two types of schools 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.

It should also be added that while nearly all children and youth aged 7-18 (varying from 95% to 98% depending on the group) participate in the education system, in the 19-24 age group only as few as 55% receive education. Nonetheless, it has to be admitted that over the past five years this share increased by nearly 10%, which is certainly a positive phenomenon [10]. This can be due to the fact that although continuing education (e.g. studies in a different city) does inevitably entail certain costs, it can also in many cases reduce opportunities for taking up a job concurrently with studying. It seems therefore that development of programmes and measures aimed to encourage young people to continue education through the provision of financial supports or adoption of solutions that would facilitate learning and working should attract a lot of interest (e.g. new types of employment, working flexi-time).

Table 3. Pupils and students in school years 2003/2004, 2004/2005 and 2005/2006 by type of school (in thousand)*

TYPE OF SCHOOL	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006
PRIMARY	2 855.6	2 723.7	2 602.0
LOWER SECONDARY (GIMNAZJUM)	1 681.2	1 648.7	1 596.8
POST-PRIMARY AND POST-LOWER SECONDARY	1 807.9	1 802.5	1 729.2
POST-SECONDARY	265.7	291.2	313.5
HIGHER	1 858.7	1 926.1	1 953.8
ADULT EDUCATION	380.9	331.9	308.5
TOTAL	8 850.0	8 724.1	8 503.8

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

Source: Prepared by the author based on: GUS, *Maly rocznik statystyczny Polski 2006*, op. cit., tabl. 1(133), pp. 228-229.

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 31st 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

* 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.

Source: Prepared by the author based on: GUS, *Prognoza ludnosci Polski do 2030 roku*, Warszawa 2004, URL: http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/45_648_PLK_HTML.htm; GUS, *Maly rocznik statystyczny Polski 2005*, Warszawa 2005, Tab. 19 (77), p. 127.

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.

[1] GUS, *Podstawowe informacje o rozwoju demograficznym Polski do 2006 roku*, Warszawa styczen 2007, URL: http://www.stat.gov.pl/cps/rde/xbcr/gus/PUBL_podst_inf_rozwoj_demograficzny_2006.pdf, p. 1.

[2] Following the adjustment exercise carried out in 2005 and based on the geodesic documentation for Poland and the neighbouring countries, the total area of the country

was reduced by 187ha. Based on: GUS, *Powierzchnia i ludność w przekroju terytorialnym w 2006*, op. cit., p. 7.

[3] GUS, *Podstawowe informacje o rozwoju demograficznym Polski do 2006 roku*, op. cit., p. 1.

[4] Ibidem, p. 20.

[5] The fertility rate reached the lowest level in 50 years. After: ibidem, p. 4.

[6] Ibidem, p. 4.

[7] GUS, *Maly rocznik statystyczny Polski 2006*, op. cit., tabl. 5(63), p. 112.

[8] GUS, *Podstawowe informacje o rozwoju demograficznym Polski do 2006 roku*, op. cit., p. 11.

[9] Ibidem, p. 13.

[10] GUS, *Maly rocznik statystyczny Polski 2006*, op. cit., tabl. 3(135), p. 232.

0103 - ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS

The age structure by sectors of economy has been gradually improving. In the third quarter of 2005, 16.3% (as compared to 18.6% a year earlier) of all people in work were employed in agriculture, 30.3% (29%) in industry, and 53.4% (52.3%) in services [1]. Despite a gradual outflow of people employed in agriculture to other sectors of the economy, the share of agriculture in the overall employment structure remains much higher in Poland than in other highly developed countries. Further expected shifts of labour between the sectors are likely to stimulate demand for retraining programmes and measures (for example targeted at people who want to quit agriculture and go into tourism). They will also provide an impetus for effecting changes in the educational profiles of those who enter the labour market to work in modern, knowledge-based economy. Such changes will aim to adjust the influx of those with surplus occupations and ones which are in short supply.

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY RATIO [2]

In 2005, the economic activity ratio in Poland slightly increased, to reach an average of 54.9% (as compared to 54.7% in 2004). This was mainly due to an increase in the economic activity of men, which rose from 62.2% in 2004 to 62.8% in 2005. Men remain much more active in the labour market than women (47.7% in 2005 against 47.8% in the previous year) [3].

It should be observed that the levels of economic activity of those with higher education (which for the past several years has stabilised around 79%) and those with secondary vocational education (recently oscillating around 67%) are much higher than average. At the same time, less than one fourth of the population with primary and lower secondary education are economically active (cf. Table 1).

Table 1. Economic activity ratio for population aged 15+ by level of education (in the third quarter of 2006; in %)

TYPE OF EDUCATION	TOTAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITY RATIO		
	2004	2005	2006
HIGHER	79.4	79.6	79.5

SECONDARY VOCATIONAL *	67.6	68.4	67.5
SECONDARY GENERAL	45.3	45.9	43.9
BASIC VOCATIONAL	68.8	68.4	65.9
LOWER SECONDARY, PRIMARY AND INCOMPLETE PRIMARY	24.3	24.1	22.5
TOTAL	54.8	55.7	54.5

* Including post-secondary schools.

Source: Prepared by the author based on: GUS, *Monitoring rynku pracy. Kwartalna informacja o rynku pracy*, Warszawa, 21.12.2006, URL:

http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/45_1791_PLK_HTML.htm, Tab. 1, p. 4.

In the third quarter of 2006, 45.5% of the population aged 15 or over were economically passive, with women accounting for over 60% of this group [4]. Among those who were economically inactive and in productive age (50%), slightly more than one fourth quoted learning and upgrading qualifications as the main reasons for their passivity [5].

In the light of these data, the educational attainment of individuals can be seen as an important factor stimulating their economic activity [6]. 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, such as upgrading of 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 [7]

2005 was another year which saw an increase in the average annual employment rate. It rose by nearly one per cent as compared to the previous year, i.e. up to a level of 45.2%. This value however, still remains lower than the average values for the European Union. Similarly to previous years, the increase in the employment rate of men was more dynamic than in the case of women, with 52.4% men and 38.6% women in work, respectively [8].

It should be noted that, similarly to the economic activity of the population, the employment figures vary depending on the level of education (Table 2), with values much above the average for those with higher (considerably in excess of 70% and growing) or secondary vocational (over 55% and growing). On the other hand, among the category of those who completed education at the lower secondary or primary level, the employment rate (which still remains under 20%) is visibly lower than the national average.

Table 2. Employment rate for population aged 15+ by level of education (in the third quarter of 2006; in %)

LEVEL OF EDUCATION	TOTAL EMPLOYMENT RATE		
	2004	2005	2006
HIGHER	73.2	73.4	74.7
SECONDARY VOCATIONAL *	56.4	57.3	59.3
SECONDARY GENERAL	35.7	36.2	36.8
BASIC VOCATIONAL	54.0	54.5	56.0
LOWER SECONDARY, PRIMARY AND INCOMPLETE PRIMARY	18.1	18.2	17.9
TOTAL	44.9	46.0	47.4

* Including post-secondary schools.

Source: Prepared by the author based on: GUS, *Monitoring rynku pracy. Kwartalna informacja o rynku pracy*, op. cit., Tab. 2, p. 6.

It can be concluded therefore that both the level of education and the 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.

REGISTERED UNEMPLOYMENT RATE [9]

In 2006, the registered unemployment rate in Poland showed a falling tendency in respect of both sexes, with a decrease from 18% in January to 14.9% in December. The visible decrease helped reduce unemployment to a level which has not been recorded since the turn of the decade [10]. In the late third quarter of 2006, the unemployment rate for women was 14.3% (a decrease by 4.8% as compared to the third quarter of 2005), for men – 12% (a 3.9% drop), and for people under 25 – 27.9% (less by 8.4%) [11]. Although unemployment fell most sharply in the latter group, young people still represent over 20% of all the registered unemployed, followed by elderly people (aged 55 or over) who account for 18% of this group. The situation of the long-term unemployed, who make up more than 50% of all the unemployed, still remains particularly difficult [12].

Analysis of the unemployment level by educational attainment shows that the category of people with other than higher education was much more affected by unemployment (Table 3). As in the previous years, the unemployment level among people with higher education (6.0%) in the third quarter of 2006 was considerably lower than the national average (13%). On the other hand, the prevailing share of people with primary, lower secondary or basic vocational education in the total number of the unemployed can be regarded as a clear proof of their inferior position in the labour market. It should also be noted that in 2006 over 60% of all the unemployed were people with basic vocational or lower education (Table 3).

Table 3. Unemployment rate and the unemployed by level of education (third quarter of 2006; in %)

LEVEL OF EDUCATION	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE *			UNEMPLOYED		
	2004	2005	2006	2004**	2005**	2006
HIGHER	7.7	7.8	6.0	5.0	5.5	6.0
SECONDARY VOCATIONAL ***	16.6	16.2	12.2	21.9	21.9	22.4
SECONDARY GENERAL	21.2	21.2	16.2	7.0	7.6	8.7
BASIC VOCATIONAL	21.5	20.4	15.1	33.8	32.6	30.8
LOWER SECONDARY, PRIMARY AND INCOMPLETE PRIMARY	25.4	24.7	20.2	32.3	32.4	32.1
TOTAL	18.2	17.4	13.0	100	100	100

* Unemployment rate according to the Labour Force Survey (BAEL).

** number of the unemployed with a given level of education as a percentage of the total number of the unemployed, as at 31 December.

*** including post-secondary.

Source: Prepared by the author based on: GUS, *Monitoring rynku pracy. Kwartalna informacja o rynku pracy*, op. cit., tabl. 3, p. 9; GUS, *Maly rocznik statystyczny 2006*, op. cit., tabl. 13(94), p. 153; GUS, *Bezrobocie rejestrowane w III kwartale 2006*, Warszawa 2006, p. 18.

It should be added that the average time needed to find a job by people with the lowest qualifications (22 months) was twice as long as in the case of people with tertiary education (11 months) [13]. The extent of this phenomenon invites the conclusion that a low level of education and vocational qualifications can be regarded as one of the main reasons for difficulties in finding work or re-entering the labour market. 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.

[1] GUS, *Monitoring rynku pracy: kwartalna informacja o aktywnosci ekonomicznej ludnosci*, op. cit., tabl. 5, p. 7.

[2] As a percentage of the economically active (employed and unemployed) in the population aged 15 or over.

[3] Average annual statistics based on the Labour Force Survey (BAEL). According to the survey conducted in the third quarter 2006, the economic activity rate dropped and was 47.1% for women and 62.6% for men, with an average of 54.5%. GUS, *Maly rocznik statystyczny Polski 2006*, op. cit., tabl. 1(82), s. 133; GUS, *Monitoring rynku pracy: kwartalna informacja o aktywnosci ekonomicznej ludnosci*, op. cit., tabl. 2, s. 4.

[4] GUS, *Monitoring rynku pracy: kwartalna informacja o aktywnosci ekonomicznej ludnosci*, op. cit., p. 16.

[5] Other listed reasons for passivity included: illness (24.7%), family duties (18.8%) and pension or disability pension (15.2%). *Ibidem*, p. 16

[6] This is, among others, due to the fact that the longer the schooling, the greater the career aspirations and willingness to reap profits from education (such as good pay). Also, mobility, flexibility and adaptability increase. Begg David, Stanley Fisher, Rudiger Dornbush, *Ekonoma*, T. 1, Warszawa 2000, Polskie Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, pp. 334-337.

[7] As a percentage of the employed in the population aged 15 or over.

[8] Average annual statistics based on the Labour Force Survey (BAEL). According to the survey conducted in the third quarter of 2006, the total employment figures for men and women were slightly higher, and reached, respectively, 47.4%, 55.1% and 40.4% - which is certainly at least partly due to the concurrent drop of unemployment. GUS, *Maly rocznik statystyczny Polski 2006*, op. cit., tabl. 1(82), p. 133; GUS, *Monitoring rynku pracy: kwartalna informacja o aktywnosci ekonomicznej ludnosci*, op. cit., tabl. 4, p. 5.

[9] As a percentage of the registered unemployed in the total civil economically active population and in a given category.

[10] GUS, *Stopa bezrobocia w latach 1990 – 2007 (bezrobocie rejestrowane)*, op. cit., GUS, *Miesieczna informacja o bezrobociu w Polsce w styczniu 2007 r.*, Warszawa, 23.02.2007, p. 1.

[11] Information derived from the Labour Force Survey (BAEL). GUS, *Monitoring rynku pracy: kwartalna informacja o aktywnosci ekonomicznej ludnosci*, op. cit., p. 10; GUS, *Bezrobocie rejestrowane w III kwartale 2006*, Warszawa 2006, pp. 15-17.

[12] GUS, *Bezrobocie rejestrowane w III kwartale 2006*, op. cit., p. 15-19.

[13] GUS, *Monitoring rynku pracy: kwartalna informacja o aktywnosci ekonomicznej ludnosci*, op. cit., p. 13.

0104 - EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF POPULATION

According to Eurostat data, 86% of Poland's population aged 25-64 have at least ISCED-3 level of education (i.e. 17% 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). Compared to 2004 the percentage of population with tertiary education increased 2% (2004-16%, 2005-18%) and the percentage of population with education at the ISCED levels 0-2 equally decreased (2004-16%, 2005-14%).

Eurostat data indicates that the percentage of people aged 18-24 who had at least lower secondary education and did not continue their education beyond the compulsory level is going down in Poland – in 2001 it reached 7.9%, in 2003- 6.3% but

in 2006 it amounted only to 5.6%. These figures position Poland among the countries with the lowest share of school dropouts (after Slovenia and Czech Republic).

According to Eurostat, in 2004 the share of students attending vocational schools at upper secondary level (49.5%) was for the first time lower than the share of students attending general secondary schools (*licea*), which was 50.5%. In 2003 the balance was quite opposite – 54% of students in vocational programmes and 46% in general programmes. Decreasing interest in vocational schools, especially in basic vocational schools which do not lead to *matura* examination, can be observed over last ten years. According to national data, in 1995 37% of pupils chose basic vocational schools but in 2005 only 14%. At the same time the number of pupils choosing general education pathway was steadily growing (1995-32%, 2005 -57%).

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

0201 - OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

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Eurostat data indicates that the percentage of people aged 18-24 who had at least lower secondary education and did not continue their education beyond the compulsory level is going down in Poland – in 2001 it reached 7.9%, in 2003- 6.3% but in 2006 it amounted only to 5.6%. These figures position Poland among the countries with the lowest share of school dropouts (after Slovenia and Czech Republic).

According to Eurostat, in 2004 the share of students attending vocational schools at upper secondary level (49.5%) was for the first time lower than the share of students attending general secondary schools (*licea*), which was 50.5%. In 2003 the balance was quite opposite – 54% of students in vocational programmes and 46% in general programmes. Decreasing interest in vocational schools, especially in basic vocational schools which do not lead to *matura* examination, can be observed over last ten years. According to national data, in 1995 37% of pupils chose basic vocational schools but in 2005 only 14%. At the same time the number of pupils choosing general education pathway was steadily growing (1995-32%, 2005 -57%).

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 expressed in the "Strategy for Education Development for the years 2007/2013" and "The Development Strategy for Continuing Education until 2010" adopted by the Council of Ministers in 2003 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 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.

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.

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. 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.

Currently the comprehensive and consistent lifelong learning strategy has been worked out and is planned to be adopted in June 2007. The new strategy will comprise all possible levels and layers of formal education and training: from supporting parents in bringing up small children and pre-school education to higher education and adult learning. The strategy will not replace existing sectoral and specific strategies for higher education, youth policy and continuing education and training. But it is supposed to determine basic common lines and priorities concerning the development of relations amongst different levels of formal education and training and non-formal and informal learning. It will also introduce and establish the competence learning outcomes-oriented approach to education and training contents and quality. Most activities envisaged in the LLL strategy will be co-financed from the European Social Fund within the framework of the Operational Programme *Human Capital 2007-2013* (the programme is currently under negotiations with the European Commission).

03 - INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK - PROVISION OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

0301 - 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.

0302 - INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK: IVET

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.

NATIONAL LEVEL

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 main institutional platform for social partners' involvement in VET at national level is the Tripartite Commission on Socio-Economic Issues (*Komisja Trojstronna ds. Spoleczno-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 (*Naczelnna 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.

REGIONAL LEVEL

The regional authorities (*wojewodztwa*) 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.

DISTRICT LEVEL

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.

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.

LOCAL LEVEL

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.

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).

0303 - INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK: CVET

There is no separate institutional framework for CVET in Poland.

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 2005/2006 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 2005/2006 school year, there were 5 949 upper secondary vocational schools for youths including 470 special needs schools and there were 1 871 upper secondary vocational schools for adults. 75,2% of the 3 731 post-secondary schools are for adults. According to the Central Statistical Office, 47% of 2005 *gimnazjum* leavers continued education in general secondary schools, 29% - in secondary technical schools, 10% - in profiled general secondary schools, 14% - 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 2005/2006 school year, there were 90 lower secondary schools with work preparation classes, attended by 24 085 000 pupils, including 9 824 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 2005/2006 school year, 1 530 profiled general secondary schools, attended by 202 174 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 2005/2006 school year, there were 2 877 technical secondary schools for *gimnazjum* leavers and 234 supplementary technical schools for basic vocational school leavers. There were 551 097 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 uzupelniajace*) 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 2005/2006 school year, 1 778 basic vocational schools functioned in the school system, educating 232 499 pupils.

3-year special needs schools (*szkoła 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, in 2004 the share of students attending vocational schools at upper secondary level (49.5%) was for the first time lower than the share of students attending general secondary schools (*licea*), which was 50.5% (see table 1). In 2003 the balance was quite opposite – 54% of students in vocational programmes and 46% in general programmes. Decreasing interest in vocational schools, especially in basic vocational schools which do not lead to *matura* examination, can be observed over last ten years. According to national data, in 1995 37% of pupils chose basic vocational schools but in 2005 only 14%. At the same time the number of pupils choosing general education pathway was steadily growing (1995-32%, 2005 -57%). Poland has 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.

Table 1. Students in upper secondary education by programme orientation, 2004¹

COUNTRIES	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	VOCATIONAL PROGRAMMES			GENERAL AND PRE-VOCATIONAL PROGRAMMES		
				TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE

					% %			% %		
EU-25	24,165,456	11,737,110	12,428,347	55.4	57.1	53.9	44.6	42.9	46.1	
POLAND	2,168,139	1,131,265	1,036,874	49.5	58.2	39.9	50.5	41.8	60.1	

Source: Eurostat, UOE data collection; on-line database, download date 23/11/2006

¹ISCED 97, level 3 (excl. ISCED 3c short)

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 completed 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 2005/2006 school year, in 34 500 enterprises, 85 122 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, a baker and a confectioner.

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.

Table 1: Participants in education and training organised by Voluntary Labour Corps in the school years 2005/2006 and 2006/2007

SCHOOL YEAR	PARTICIPANTS		EDUCATION ON THE LEVEL OF PRIMARY* AND LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOL**	VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING***	JUVENILE WORKERS****
	TOTAL	INCL. GIRLS			
2005/2006	32 068	8 502	14 731	17 337	29 255
2006/2007	32 706	8 542	14 586	18 120	30 309

* - usually only 20-25 people complete their education on the level of primary school.

** - on the lower secondary level the participants attend *gimnazjum* with work preparation classes (see 0402)

*** - vocational education and training in this case means education in basic vocational school or in the form of apprenticeship (training to perform a specific job) (see 0404)

**** - juvenile workers work and learn a job on the basis of special apprenticeship agreements with employers (see 0404)

Source: OHP (Voluntary Labour Corps), Main Headquarters, Warsaw 2007

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

In the 2005/2006 school year there were 3 731 post-secondary schools educating 313 484 people. A significant part of post secondary schools - 75.2% are schools for adults providing education for over 73% 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 2005/2006 academic year, in 445 state and private higher education institutions 1 953 832 students were educated.

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.standardyiszkolenia.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;
- undergoing 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 1 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

* Lower secondary school (*gimnazjum*) was introduced by the Act of 8th January 1998:

regulations introducing a reform of the school system.

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

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 2).

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: *Oświata 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 3). 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: *Oświata 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 1. 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 2. 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 3. 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.

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.

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 below 25 years of age and to the unemployed higher education institution graduates below 27 years of age. 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.

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. 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). 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.

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/efs.php>

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 1).

Table 1. 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 2) 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 2. 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 3.

Table 3. 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	12.6	15.9	5.7	6.5

DEVELOPMENT				
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.

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 Polish Agency for Enterprise Development -PARP accreditation). Currently nearly 180 centres are accredited in the KSU network.

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.

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.

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.

The results of the survey presented in the tables 1, 2 and 3 show that the better people are educated the more often they participate in non-formal education - 37% of people with tertiary education and only 9.9% with lower secondary, primary and lower education. It seems that well educated people are more aware of the need to upgrade and develop their skills and knowledge throughout their whole lives. This awarness seems to grow with age as well, however the biggest participation in non-formal education can be noted in the 25-34 age group(29,6%).

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Definitely the most active in the field of non-formal education are working people - almost 80% of all participants, and the least active are the unemployed -only 6.4%. This may be partially caused by the fact that working people often take part in training financed by their employers, and moreover, they have more financial resources to cover the cost of their educational activity by themselves.

It is also interesting that people who graduated from technical programmes such as engineering, production and construction (24.5%) as well as those graduated from general programmes (19.7%) or social sciences, economy and law (18.8%) are more willing to participate in non-formal education than those who possessed school education in humanities, art and languages (3.7%).

Table 1. 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 2. 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 3. 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
	IN THOUSANDS			
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

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 4 presents the basic results of the survey regarding further training, training and foreign language courses.

Table 4. Participation in training and courses by sex and type of training

		COURSES (MORE THAN ONE ANSWER WAS POSSIBLE)											
		TOTAL	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: *Sciezki Edukacyjne Polakow.* (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.

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

TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN VET

Teachers and academic teachers, distinguished in the legislation as separate categories, work within the education system and provide both IVET and CVET. Teachers work in institutions which provide training below the higher education level, and academic teachers in higher education institutions.

Teachers whose primary responsibilities are related to the teaching of classes include:

- general subject teachers or college teachers if working in colleges, which are not recognised as higher education institutions;
- theoretical vocational subject teachers; and
- practical vocational training teachers.

Moreover, there are four categories of teachers performing the role of learning facilitators:

- teachers-pedagogues who provide educational support to pupils;
- teachers-psychologists who provide psychological support to pupils, teachers and parents;
- teachers-methodological advisers who provide support to teachers and school teaching councils;
- teachers-consultants who develop teaching materials, design and deliver in-service training courses for teachers and education managers, etc.

Advisers and consultants may be either the primary role or an additional role of teachers.

Academic teachers are divided into four categories according to their responsibilities: research and teaching staff, teaching staff, research staff, and qualified librarians and qualified scientific documentation and information staff. However, only the first two categories are involved in teaching. **Research and teaching staff** teach students and conduct research, whereas the responsibilities of **teaching staff** include only teaching students.

Trainers are not distinguished as a distinct occupational category. This broad category may include:

- practical vocational training instructors who, as defined in the legislation, are employees, employers or private farm owners providing practical vocational training as part of IVET and CVET at the workplace or in a farm; and
- trainers-specialists who, while not defined in the legislation, may be taken to include various groups of practitioners providing training as their primary or additional activity, mainly as part of CVET outside the education system.

Table 1. VET teachers and trainers

TYPE OF TEACHER/TRAINER	ADDITIONAL ROLES
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TEACHERS	
General subject teachers	Curriculum and/or teaching material author; mentor for other teachers, during their probation period in a given institution; examiner in the external examination system; expert; teacher-methodological adviser; teacher-consultant; trainer outside the education system
Theoretical vocational subject teachers	
Practical vocational training teachers	
College teachers	
Teachers-pedagogues	Teacher teaching remedial classes
Teachers-psychologists	Teacher teaching specific type of classes
Teachers-methodological advisers	General subject teacher, theoretical vocational subject teacher or practical vocational training teacher, depending on their subject qualification; examiner in the external examination system; expert
Teachers-consultants	
ACADEMIC TEACHERS	
Research and teaching staff	Curriculum and/or teaching material author; expert; teacher teaching classes in a school or college; trainer outside the education system
Teaching staff	
TRAINERS	
Practical vocational training instructors	Various primary and additional roles, depending on the extent of their involvement in training, their occupation, level of qualifications, etc.
Trainers-specialists (<i>N.B. No official term in the legislation</i>)	

QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS AND TRAINING ARRANGEMENTS

Teachers must have a specific level of subject/occupational qualifications, depending on the level and/or type of training to be provided, and a pedagogical qualification. **Academic teachers** are not required to hold a pedagogical qualification, and there are no general qualification requirements applicable to all academic teachers. The level of qualifications required is laid down for each position of teaching staff and research and teaching staff (please see [here](#) for Table 2, 3 and 4). Additional requirements may be laid down in the statutes of individual higher education institutions. **Practical vocational training instructors** must hold specific occupational qualifications, which do not depend however on the level of training provided, and a pedagogical qualification. **Trainers-specialists** are only required by the legislation to have occupational qualifications which are appropriate for the type of training provided. Specific requirements are laid down by individual VET providers. For details, see: types of teachers and trainers in IVET below.

All training programmes leading to formal subject/occupational qualifications and programmes/courses leading to a pedagogical qualification are developed by individual training institutions in accordance with the requirements (national standards) laid down in the legislation. Relevant regulations are adopted by the minister responsible for school education, i.e. education below the higher education level, or for higher education, depending on the type of training institutions. All degree programmes offered in higher education institutions are assessed and accredited by the State Accreditation Committee. There are no national arrangements for the external quality assessment or accreditation of non-degree programmes (e.g. non-degree pedagogical training programmes) in higher education institutions. The quality of training programmes provided in other types of institutions is assessed as part of pedagogical supervision by the relevant educational authorities. Training institutions, except schools, which are not higher education institutions may apply for accreditation on a voluntary basis.

MAIN DEVELOPMENTS IN VET TEACHER/TRAINER TRAINING IN RECENT YEARS

- Uniform requirements (national standards) for pre-service teacher training programmes in higher education institutions were laid down by a 2003 Regulation of the Minister of Education, amended in 2004. The Regulation specifies all compulsory training components, including subject training, theoretical and practical pedagogical training, IT training and foreign language training, as well as their duration and contents. Similar requirements will be laid down for teacher training in teacher training colleges, which are not recognised as higher education institutions, by a 2006 regulation; it will be applicable to programmes commencing in the academic year 2007/08.
- Detailed entry requirements concerning the level of subject qualifications and pedagogical qualifications for practical vocational training instructors were laid down in the 2002 Regulation of the Minister of Education, as amended.
- Specific measures were adopted to encourage teachers to undertake in-service training. In accordance with the 2000 Regulation concerning the assessment of teacher performance, participation in in-service training is one of the assessment criteria. Pursuant to the 2004 Regulation establishing professional promotion grades for teachers, teachers must demonstrate that they have developed their professional competence and receive a favourable assessment of their professional achievements in order to be promoted to the next grade.
- The State Accreditation Committee (SAC) was established in January 2002. Since then, all degree programmes, including teacher training programmes, are subject to mandatory assessment and accreditation by the SAC.
- As additional quality improvement measures, regulations adopted by the Minister of Education in 2003 and 2004 introduced accreditation for in-service teacher training

institutions and continuing education providers respectively. However, in both cases accreditation by the educational authorities is voluntary.

0602 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN IVET

TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN IVET

Table 1. Types of teachers and trainers in IVET

TYPES OF TEACHERS/TRAINERS		PLACE OF WORK
TEACHERS		
General subject teachers*		VET secondary and post-secondary schools for young people; public and accredited non-public continuing education centres (CKU); Voluntary Labour Corps (OHP)
Theoretical vocational subject teachers*		VET secondary and post-secondary schools for young people; public and accredited non-public continuing education centres (CKU), retraining and further training centres (ODiDZ) and practical training centres (CKP); Voluntary Labour Corps (OHP)
Practical vocational training teachers*		VET secondary and post-secondary schools for young people; public and accredited non-public continuing education centres (CKU) and practical training centres (CKP); Voluntary Labour Corps (OHP)
College teachers		Colleges of social work, teacher training colleges (not recognised as HE in the national legislation)
Teachers-pedagogues		VET secondary schools for young people
Teachers-psychologists		
ACADEMIC TEACHERS		
Research and teaching staff		Higher education institutions

Teaching staff	
TRAINERS	
Practical vocational training instructors	Mainly: employers (workplace) and privately owned farms; on a limited basis: training institutions within the education system.
Trainers-specialists	Mainly: employers (workplace) and accredited commercial providers; on a limited basis: training institutions within the education system.

For two additional teacher trainer roles, *teachers-methodological advisers* and *teachers-consultants*, which may be performed by these categories of teachers, see: types of teachers and trainers in CVET below.

PRE-SERVICE TRAINING

A. TEACHERS

Pre-service training for all categories of teachers includes subject training, i.e. training in a given field or occupation, and pedagogical training. Pedagogical training always comprises a theoretical part and a practical part. Training paths available depend on the level of pre-service training and the type of subject to be taught or training to be provided.

Table 2. Pre-service training for different categories of teachers

TYPES OF TEACHERS	TRAINING OPTIONS
<i>General subject teachers for ISCED 3A and 4 schools</i> <i>College teachers - only ISCED 5B</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Subject training and pedagogical training within a Master's degree programme (teaching specialisation track) in a higher education institution (ISCED 5A); or - Subject training within a Master's degree programme and separate pedagogical training (optional programme followed in parallel to the degree programme or non-degree postgraduate programme undertaken either in the final years or after the completion of the degree programme) in a higher education institution (ISCED 5A); or - Subject training within a Master's degree programme in a higher education institution (ISCED 5A) and a separate pedagogical qualification course undertaken in an in-service teacher training institution or a teacher training college either in the final years or after the

	completion of the degree programme.
<i>General subject teachers for ISCED 3C schools and other ISCED 3C providers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The same three options as available to general subject teachers for ISCED 3A and 4 schools, but this category of teachers may study either for a Master's degree or for a Bachelor's degree; or - Subject and pedagogical training within a training programme in a teacher training college (ISCED 5B). (Until mid-1990s: also subject and pedagogical training in a teacher training institute (ISCED 3A or 4))
<i>Theoretical vocational subject teachers for ISCED 3A and 4 schools</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Subject training within a Bachelor's or Master's degree programme and separate pedagogical training (optional programme followed in parallel to the degree programme or non-degree postgraduate programme undertaken either in the final years or after the completion of the degree programme)* in a higher education institution (ISCED 5A); or - Subject training within a Master's or Bachelor's degree programme in a higher education institution (ISCED 5A) and a separate pedagogical qualification course undertaken in an in-service teacher training institution either in the final years or after the completion of the degree programme.
<i>Theoretical vocational subject teachers for ISCED 3C schools and other ISCED 3C providers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Both options available to theoretical vocational subject teachers for ISCED 3A and 4 schools. (Until mid-1990s: also subject and pedagogical training in a teacher training institute (ISCED 3A or 4))
<i>Practical vocational training teachers for all types of ISCED 3 and 4 schools and other providers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Both options available to theoretical vocational subject teachers; or - Subject training at least in a secondary school (ISCED 3) and a pedagogical qualification course undertaken subsequently in an in-service teacher training institution. (Until mid-1990s: also subject and pedagogical training in a teacher training institute (ISCED 3A or 4))
<i>Teachers-pedagogues and teachers-psychologists - only ISCED 3 schools</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Subject and pedagogical training within a Master's degree programme (teaching specialisation track) in a higher education institution (ISCED 5A).

* Teaching specialisation tracks, which combine subject and pedagogical training within a

degree programme, are normally not available in the type of higher education institutions which train theoretical vocational subject and practical vocational training teachers.

Prospective teachers trained at higher education level normally choose a concurrent training option (a teaching specialisation track within a degree programme, where available, or separate pedagogical training in parallel to their degree programme) or a "semi-concurrent" option (separate pedagogical training undertaken in the final years of their degree programme) rather than a classical consecutive option (separate pedagogical training undertaken only after the completion of their degree programme leading to a subject qualification).

Degrees in higher education institutions and diplomas of teacher training colleges are awarded on the basis of the final thesis and the final examination conducted by teachers/academic teachers of a given institution. Certificates of completion of separate pedagogical training programmes in higher education institutions are usually awarded on the basis of an examination. Certificates of completion of pedagogical qualification courses in teachers training colleges and in-service teacher training institutions are awarded on the basis of an examination or papers, projects and/or continuous assessment.

B. ACADEMIC TEACHERS

There are no special training paths for academic teachers. All prospective academic teachers obtain a Master's degree, as the minimum entry requirement, on the basis of the final thesis and the final examination in a higher education institution. Higher qualifications required for specific positions are obtained in the course of academic career.

C. PRACTICAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING INSTRUCTORS

Instructors obtain their formal subject/occupational qualifications at higher education, post-secondary or secondary level in accordance with the procedures applicable to a given level of training/type of training institution. As work experience is usually required to perform this role (see: above), prospective instructors complete pedagogical training only when already in employment. Full-time instructors undertake pedagogical training for practical vocational training teachers in an in-service teacher training institution. Part-time instructors may complete either the same pedagogical training as full-time instructors or at least a pedagogical course for practical vocational training instructors in an in-service teacher training institution or other authorised training institution.

D. TRAINERS-SPECIALISTS

There is no pre-defined level or structure of pre-service training for this group.

IN-SERVICE TRAINING

A. TEACHERS

Teachers should upgrade their skills as stipulated in the relevant legislation, but there is no specific requirement for in-service training. However, participation of teachers in in-service training is specified in the legislation as one of the criteria for the promotion to the next professional promotion grade, the assessment of teachers' performance and quality assurance at institutional level. In-service training is organised both within institutions where teachers work and by various external providers. External in-service training is organised mainly by an extensive network of in-service teacher training institutions, as well as by higher education institutions, various continuing education providers and teacher training colleges.

B. ACADEMIC TEACHERS

Academic teachers are required to upgrade their skills by the relevant legislation, but there are no specific national arrangements in this area. Detailed arrangements are laid down by individual higher education institutions.

C AND D. PRACTICAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING INSTRUCTORS AND TRAINERS-SPECIALISTS

There are no national arrangements for in-service training of practical vocational training instructors or trainers-specialists. Specific arrangements may be laid down by their employers. Instructors may attend training courses for practical vocational training teachers.

0603 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN CVET

Table 1. Types of teachers and trainers in CVET

TYPES OF TEACHERS/TRAINERS	PLACE OF WORK
TEACHERS	
GENERAL SUBJECT TEACHERS	VET secondary and post-secondary schools for adults; continuing education centres (CKU)
THEORETICAL VOCATIONAL SUBJECT TEACHERS	VET secondary and post-secondary schools for adults; continuing education centres (CKU), retraining and further training centres (ODiDZ), and practical training centres (CKP)
PRACTICAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING TEACHERS	VET secondary and post-secondary schools for adults; continuing education centres (CKU) and practical training centres (CKP)
COLLEGE TEACHERS	Colleges of social work, teacher training colleges (not recognised as HE in the national legislation)
TEACHERS-METHODOLOGICAL ADVISERS	VET secondary and post-secondary schools for adults; continuing education centres (CKU), practical training centres (CKP); in-service teacher training institutions
TEACHERS-CONSULTANTS	VET secondary and post-secondary schools for adults; continuing education centres (CKU), practical training centres (CKP); in-service teacher training institutions

ACADEMIC TEACHERS	
RESEARCH AND TEACHING STAFF	Higher education institutions
TEACHING STAFF	
TRAINERS	
PRACTICAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING INSTRUCTORS	Mainly: Employers (workplace) and privately owned farms; on a limited basis: VET schools for adults, continuing education centres (CKU) and practical training centres (CKP)
TRAINERS-SPECIALISTS	Mainly: employers, employers' and employees' organisations, trade unions, employment services, government bodies, research institutions, churches and other religious organisations, commercial providers; on a limited basis: training institutions within the education system.

There is no distinction between teachers, academic teachers, practical vocational training instructors and trainers-specialists working in IVET and CVET. Thus entry requirements, pre-service arrangements and in-service arrangements for a given category of practitioners in CVET are the same as for those working in IVET – see: types of teachers and trainers in IVET.

However, there are two additional categories or roles of teachers, **teachers-methodological advisers** and **teachers-consultants**, who are involved only in CVET as teacher trainers. In order to perform these roles, teachers are required to:

- hold a **Master's degree** and a **pedagogical qualification**;
- have obtained the professional **promotion grade** of appointed teacher or chartered teacher (the third and fourth grade, respectively, in the four-grade promotion system); and
- have at least **five-year experience in teaching**.

Thus prospective advisers and consultants first complete pre-service training necessary to become teachers, following one of the training paths outlined above, and take on their roles only in the course of their professional career. Although no specific training is required, many prospective advisers and consultants take training courses for teachers working with adult learners. In-service training for advisers and consultants is organised in the same way as for other teachers, but there are also courses addressing specifically this group.

07 - SKILLS AND COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGY

In Polish pedagogy of work, **skills** are regarded as the most important component of vocational qualifications. **Vocational qualifications** refer to *patterns of skills necessary for performing vocational tasks*. *These patterns comprise mental and*

practical skills, and mental skills determine the ability to perform practical skills (Słownik Pedagogiki Pracy, 1986). Skills are developed through carrying out specific vocational activities leading to the completion of an occupational task. Simple skills, when practised, often turn into habits – patterns of mechanically performed, routine actions (Wiatrowski, 2000). The highest level of skills mastery is expertise leading to professional excellence. The essence of professional excellence is purposeful action and effective and efficient use of skills in changeable and challenging work situations.

In Polish, the meaning of 'competence' is somewhat different than in English where it denotes capability or proficiency. Słownik języka polskiego (1988) defines as **competence** (or competences) a certain scope of authority, empowerment, knowledge, expertise or responsibilities. It also uses the term of **vocational competences**. This means that one can have vocational competences and that they can be exceeded; one can act within one's scope of competences or be under somebody's competence or competences. It can be concluded therefore that, in Poland, having vocational competences means having vocational skills confirmed by a qualification.

Polish pedagogues tend to believe that the notion of 'vocational competences' should not be used in the meaning denoted by the English term 'competences' because in Poland the term of 'vocational qualifications' incorporates this meaning, and denotes 'professional qualifications' or 'master's qualifications' which are acquired in the course of work and gaining vocational experience.

0701 - MECHANISMS FOR THE ANTICIPATION OF SKILL NEEDS

Until recently, anticipation of occupations and vocational qualifications needed in the labour market rested with the **Interdepartmental Team for Labour Demand Forecasts**. The Team was set up in 1998 and formed a part of the Government Centre for Strategic Studies, a body reporting directly to the Prime Minister.

The Interdepartmental Team for Labour Market Forecasts prepared the list of '100 occupations of the future' with the time horizon of 2010. In 2006, the Government Centre for Strategic Studies was eliminated, and its tasks and competences were taken over by the Chancellery of the Prime Minister. The Team was also disbanded.

Currently, there is no nationwide or regional system of monitoring and long-term labour market forecasting for specific occupations and qualifications.

Despite the persisting high unemployment levels, surveys of entrepreneurs carried out by the Central Statistical Office (GUS) indicate problems with finding employees. The reasons for this include increasing emigration to work abroad and considerable qualification mismatches in the demand and supply of labour.

An obstacle to pursuing a pro-active labour market policy by the relevant institutions is the insufficient knowledge about labour market needs. Initiatives undertaken by labour offices are targeted at both the supply side of the labour market (with a view to improving qualifications and employability of the unemployed) and at the demand side (with a view to stimulating creation of new jobs). However, there are no clearly defined priorities which would allow for directing support to sectors, occupations or social groups which are of special importance. Improving the existing system for monitoring the labour market, ensuring access to new data and closing information gaps will make it possible to examine, in a comprehensive way, the overall situation of selected target groups in the labour market and to design effective labour market policies for such groups.

To design an all-encompassing concept of vocational education and the labour market, collaboration between two systems: ongoing coordination (monitoring of shortage and surplus occupations; bilateral contracts between schools and enterprises; surveys and monitoring of school-leavers' job history and of further vocational training courses) and long-term coordination (regular surveys of the evolution and structure of occupations in a long-term perspective; developing a long-term forecast of anticipated demand for human resources by individual regions) is required.

Once popularised, ongoing coordination methods will help to bring the VET system as well as learning contents and structure closer to the needs of the quickly changing economy.

Long-term surveys are needed to adjust educational activities to long-term labour market needs. Of particular importance is the development of a labour market demand forecast by occupations because without such a tool it will not be possible to effect any far-reaching changes in the scope and structure of education. Such forecasts can play a major role in designing human resources development policies and planning changes in the VET structure. In addition to that, they can support the development of training curricula for the labour market, targeted at the unemployed and those threatened with unemployment.

The process of anticipating occupations and qualifications needed for the economy and the society is a part of the preparation and approval of the **National Action Plan for Employment**. The underlying legislation for the Plan is the **Promotion of Employment and Labour Market Institutions Act of 20 April 2004**.

The document “National IT Plan for 2007-2010” proposed the development of the **System for Forecasting Labour Supply and Demand** (SPPP in Polish). This project is a follow-up to the work carried out earlier by the Team for Forecasting Labour Demand of the Government Centre for Strategic Studies. The System will be used as a tool for, amongst the others, evaluating the functioning of the system of labour demand forecasting and developing the system using such measures as integration with other data systems operated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

Having a **system of collecting information about the current situation in the labour market** in place is a necessary condition for early identification of occupations and skills. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy ensures continuous monitoring of job offers and of the unemployed by occupations and specialisations, on the basis of the data collected by the system of Public Employment Services.

In Poland, there is a need to create a platform for discussion and cooperation and devise methods to build a broad understanding between decision makers, researchers, industry and the public at large concerning technological and research priorities and key social problems. The **foresight method**, which is successfully used in most EU countries, is an important component of a process aimed to rationally anticipate possible development paths in the R&D sector. For this reason, in 2006 the **National Foresight Programme “Poland 2020”** was launched by the Minister for Science and Higher Education. The Programme encompassed three research areas: Poland’s sustainable development; Information and telecommunication technologies; and security. The foresight method offers a systematic, future-oriented way to access information in order to develop a mid- and long-term vision, its priorities and directions, which can also be used as a tool to take day-to-day decisions and mobilise common effort.

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 a 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 the 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 - ACCUMULATING, ACCREDITING AND VALIDATING FORMAL LEARNING

In Poland the issues of accumulating, accrediting and validating qualifications acquired in the context of formal learning are regulated by legislation adopted both on the parliamentary level (bills, acts) and on the governmental level (regulations, ordinances). One comprehensive and consistent National Qualification System has not been created yet however its important elements have been in place for many years. These elements consist of national qualifications subsystems related to formal education structure (primary, lower- and upper-secondary, tertiary), structure of professional qualifications defined by relevant ministries (including qualifications for regulated professions and regulated activities), subsystem of qualifications acquired in the craft sector (with long tradition and well structured), etc. The particular subsystems are separated and do not interact easily with one another although detailed measures allow for transferring and recognition of qualifications between sectors.

The legal integration of all above mentioned subsystems preceded by a number of research and analysis and supplemented with the enforcement of the organisational and institutional framework of the National Qualification System, is envisaged in the developed lifelong learning strategy and Operational Programme *Human Capital 2007-2013*^[1]. In the latter document the National Qualification System is defined as supra-sectoral and comprehensive set of systemic mechanisms and institutions supporting

and facilitating acquisition, transfer, comparison, validation, recognition, certification of general and vocational qualifications both on the national and the European level. Gradually the process-oriented approach (nowadays predominant in the learning environment) will be replaced by the approach based on learning outcomes (clearly and transparently defined qualifications). The establishment of one comprehensive and coherent NQS will be accompanied by the definition of the National Qualification Framework interrelated with the prospective European Qualification Framework. The creation of supra-sectoral National Qualification System and National Qualification Framework entails substantial legal amendments and extensive administrative and institutional capacity building.

According to the provisions of the Copenhagen Declaration concerning the improvement of VET quality, mechanisms of accreditation have been introduced to the formal learning sector. Since the end of the year 2003 the framework and procedure of accreditation of adult learning institutions, vocational training centres and teachers' development institutions has been established. Accreditation is granted by regional educational superintendent (governmental educational administration) after a thorough check of quality of the centre's offer carried out by an independent commission. The following process-oriented aspects are subject to examination: qualifications of the educational staff, didactical materials, learning arrangements (i.e. rooms, equipment, etc.); what is not being examined are the learning results (learning outcomes) achieved in the course of training in the accredited institutions. The widespread of this tool is not satisfactory as since the introduction of this measure only circa 300 training institutions have been awarded accreditation (April 2007, teachers' development centres excluded). The obstacle to wider popularisation of this measure is attributed to long and bothersome procedure as well as to limited categories of institutions entitled for application (centres acting on the grounds of the education system act and the act on the business establishments) whereas it has to be noticed that educational and training services are provided by other entities governed by different legislation e.g. the act on craft activity, the act on agriculture support and counselling centres, etc. What needs immediate action is widening the types of institutions allowed to apply for accreditation and simplification of the whole process (the average waiting time for accreditation is four months).

[1] See the draft of the Operational Programme *Human Capital 2007-2013* and Detailed Description of the Priorities (the documents currently negotiated with the European Commission): <http://www.mrr.gov.pl/ProgramyOperacyjne+2007-2013/Kapital+Ludzki/>

0802 - ACCUMULATING, ACCREDITING AND VALIDATING NON-FORMAL/INFORMAL LEARNING

In Poland, the learning culture is dominated by learning in formal context and settings. Nevertheless, lifelong learning concept is gradually gathering attention and acknowledgement. In fact, a number of aspects related to recognition and validation of non-formal / informal learning results has been functioning for decades. Within the education system there is a framework designed for individuals who have not attended any formal route enabling them to obtain a school leaving certificate (ranged from primary to upper secondary school) after having passed a required series of extramural examinations. These examinations are organised in two three-month sessions (autumn and spring), access is open through a large number of commissions appointed in schools and adult learning centres; the cost of the examinations is moderate, in certain cases it is possible to have the costs reimbursed by the employers, labour administration or social security services. This option appears to be particularly convenient to disabled people, persons with family obligations (especially young mothers) and early school leavers (drop-outs) willing to upgrade their education level. The framework of extramural examinations has been recently revised and seriously modified – up till nowadays it has been possible to obtain a leaving certificate of any type of school (incl. vocational and technical) – since the year 2007 it will be limited to general school leaving certificates. Important changes occurred also in the organisation of the examinations – according to the new legal provisions the definition and organisation falls within the responsibility of the eight independent regional

examination commissions. It is estimated that the last change may limit the accessibility to the extramural examinations.

An analogous mechanism exists for individuals who master vocational skills acquired in the course of professional experience or running a business and wish to have them validated and certified by an authorised body. It also takes the form of an examination (both theoretical and practical) taken before the commission appointed by an educational superintendent or professional body or craft or industry chamber. Social partners play a major role in defining standards and procedures of these examinations. These vocational examinations are open to adults who hold a minimum general education certificate (lower secondary ISCED2) as well as to juvenile workers (apprentices) employed in craft sector and small and medium companies. This procedure is gaining more importance in the field of regulated professions and regulated activities as many national legislative acts introduced the obligation of holding a formal vocational certificate for all individuals employed or self-employed in the regulated field.

0803 - IMPACT OF EU POLICY COOPERATION

The policies developed on the EU level influence activities taken on the national ground in a substantial way however not all European priorities have been treated with equal attention.

Of utmost importance is the question of the National Qualification System and National Qualification Framework (see above). The establishment of National Qualification Framework has been set as one of the key issues of the lifelong learning strategy. The aim of the activity is to determine the reference framework including the rules for comparison and transparency of qualifications acquired in the formal system or competences acquired outside the formal system but formally validated and recognised. At a further stage it is planned to link the National Qualification Framework with the European Qualification Framework. It has to be stressed that the creation of NQS and NQF poses a major challenge to the Polish administration as it requires close cooperation and mutual trust between the key ministries i.e. Ministry for National Education, Ministry for Science and Higher Education, Ministry for Labour and Social Policy and last but not least the Ministry for Economy. As experience shows, the insufficient cooperation has always been the most important impediment to overcome.

As regards the proposal on the establishment of the European Credit Transfer for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET), it has been consulted on a wide scale [1]. Social partners, government agencies, education and training institutions and other relevant bodies took active participation in the consultation process and submitted very useful comments and suggestions related to national implementation of the concept of ECVET. All consulted institutions expressed their full support to the idea of a common tool facilitating accumulation and transfer of qualifications in the European perspective. Particularly the social partners i.e. trade unions and employers' associations declared the will to get involved in the process of transposing the idea of ECVET to the Polish educational policy and practice. They also provided relevant remarks and observations concerning the necessary modification and improvement of the existing national mechanisms in order to smoothly run the implementation process (i.e. modularisation and flexibility of training programmes, update and modernisation of the vocational education offer within the schooling system). The issue of ECVET and the results of the consultation process have been duly taken into account in the draft lifelong learning strategy.

The initiative of Europass has been transposed to national legislation which means that the decision is legally binding and national authorities are obliged to conform to it. To facilitate the implementation of Europass and to coordinate all the components (except the higher education diploma supplement) National Europass Centre has been established at the Task Force for Training and Human Resources, Cooperation Fund Foundation[2]. Within the framework of Europass the certificate supplements have been developed for all vocations enlisted in the official classification of vocations (circa 200 vocations). The supplements are accessible in Polish and English language version and free of charge. However, the certificate supplements are available only for graduates from the reformed vocational and technical upper secondary schools, the

ones that passed external vocational examinations before regional examination commissions. This solution means that a large number of adults and young adults who possess formal vocational certificates issued either within the pre-reformed education system or outside the education sector (i.e. craft, business chambers, etc.) are not covered by this mechanism. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that range of persons entitled to obtain the supplements be widened and comprehend all individuals holding a vocational education or training certificate issued by a competent body irrelevant of the period and sector. What should be taken into account and developed is the organisational and institutional framework for delivering a growing number of supplements (in view of the increased geographical and vocational mobility) as well as payment arrangements.

On the other hand, the issue of validation of non-formal and informal learning still requires much notice and effort. Although above mentioned existing measures to some extent establish opportunities for validation prior learning results, they do not follow all the provisions included in the common European principles of validation of non-formal and informal learning. The establishment and implementation of rules and procedures for validation and recognition of qualifications acquired in the non-formal and informal learning context has been envisaged as one of the key elements of the prospective comprehensive National Qualification System.

[1]Further information of the consultation process:

http://www.men.gov.pl/ksztaw/strategia/konsultacje_ecvet.php

[2] http://www.bkkk-cofund.org.pl/index.php?nsp=bkkk_intro_en&jezyk=en

0804 - FACILITATING EU MOBILITY

The existing legal framework allows both transferring and validating qualifications acquired abroad (within and outside the EU) by the nostrification procedure within the school system. All certificates and credentials issued by authorised bodies are subject to nostrification conducted by the regional educational superintendent (governmental educational administration). Nevertheless, pursuant to international agreements certain certificates i.e. International Baccalaureate and European Baccalaureate are automatically recognised and exempt from nostrification. On the tertiary level, higher education institutions enjoy their autonomy and run the nostrification procedure on their own but according to the appropriate nationwide regulations. Moreover, Poland has signed bilateral agreements on the equivalence of diplomas for academic purposes with certain number of countries (e.g. Austria, Lithuania, Germany, Slovakia and Ukraine) therefore nostrification of credentials of these countries of origin is not required. Polish higher education institutions adopted the principles of the Bologna Process and gradually but successfully implement and promote its mobility-related elements: European Credit Transfer System, Diploma Supplement, three-level structure of studies, participation in European Socrates-Erasmus programme.

In the field of recognition of professional qualifications the works on the transposition of the respective EU Directive 2005/36/EC to the Polish law order is underway. The relevant draft of bill (with accompanying regulations) has been prepared by the government and now is the subject to the legislation procedure at the parliament. At the moment this issue is governed by the act of 2001 implementing the annulled directives [89/48/EWG](#), [92/51/EWG](#) and [99/42/WE](#). The adoption of the new bill is planned in the course of the year 2007.

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 Zasobow 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 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.

PROVISION

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 Labour and Social Affairs), responsible for guidance and counselling services to adults.

UNDER MINISTRY OF NATIONAL EDUCATION

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). Services offered by pedagogical assistance and counselling centres are provided free of charge and on a voluntary basis.

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 Osrodkie 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.

UNDER MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

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) are state run labour market institutions designed to assist young people in entering employment and to prevent social exclusion. Their Youth Career Centres, Youth Labour Offices and Job Clubs provide vocational information, guidance and counselling not only to typical OHP clients but to all young people seeking advice about their future careers or looking for placements or jobs. In 2004, 49 Mobile Vocational Information Centres (MCIZ) were established within the OHP structure to provide vocational guidance services for young people from rural areas.

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.

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. Their services are paid only for employers.

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 a vis* the clients.

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

PROVIDER	TARGET GROUP	ACTIVITY	MODES OF DELIVERY
Pedagogical assistance and counselling centres	- children, - youths, - teachers, - parents	- diagnostics related to mental capabilities, personality, aptitudes, interests - work with pupils with health problems, educational problems and those from malfunctioning families - vocational information and guidance for pupils and teachers - lectures, talks, information meetings addressed to parents	- individual and group counselling and guidance; - psychological tests checking mental capabilities, personality, interests, special abilities - pedagogical tests - information about occupations, different types of schools and admission requirements, specialised institutions offering training to the physically and mentally handicapped. - usually poorly computerised
School Career Centres	- children and youths from secondary schools	- 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	- individual and group counselling and guidance - materials about different occupations - sources of information needed for career and education planning - specialised multimedia software

		<p>roles;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - cooperating with other institutions e.g. pedagogical assistance and counselling centres, labour offices, Vocational Information and Planning Centres 	
Career Bureaux	- students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - career guidance; - 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - individual and group counselling and guidance - assessment of interest and competences, - newest technologies for dissemination and exchange of information, such as the Internet or computerised database - information about the labour market - information about vocational and language courses, scholarships, postgraduate studies and studies abroad
District labour offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the unemployed, - people threatened with unemployment, - job seekers, - disadvantaged groups e.g. the disabled, single 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - job intermediary; - career guidance; - provision of information about occupations, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - individual and group counselling and guidance - psychological tests - identifying training needs - information about training

	mothers etc.	labour market, training opportunities; - referrals to specialised psychological tests and medical examinations intended to issue an opinion about candidates' suitability for a given occupation or training profile	opportunities, occupations and the labour market - computerbased services and use of multimedia
Vocational Information and Planning Centres at regional labour offices	- the unemployed, - people threatened with unemployment, - job seekers' - disadvantaged groups e.g. the disabled, single mothers etc.	- career guidance and counselling; - improving the clients' attractiveness on the labour market; - gathering, updating and disseminating vocational information in the region.	- individual and group counselling and guidance - vocational evaluation - psychological tools - information resources inc. computerbased and multimedia
Voluntary Labour Corps (OHP) Youth Career Centres and Youth Labour Offices and Job Clubs	- youth from pathological families, threatened by social exclusion, with a criminal record; - school dropouts; - youth from families having a low material status or from orphanages; - unemployed youth under 25 years of age; - pupils and students seeking temporary/summer jobs	- job intermediary; - career guidance and counselling; - provision of information about occupations, labour market, training opportunities; - improving the clients' attractiveness on the labour market	- individual and group counselling and guidance - vocational evaluation - psychological tools - hardcopy materials such as Occupation Profiles, guidebooks, prospectuses or books - multimedia, Internet and computer databases
Mobile Vocational	- young people from rural areas	- providing advice and	- individual and group counselling

Information Centres of Voluntary Labour Corps(MCIZ)	including: youths at school, school leavers, young unemployed and job seekers	information needed to make choices concerning education, school, occupation, and the labour market entry; - providing information and helping to acquire skills which are necessary to cope in a situation of dynamic social and economic change, and an ability to plan careers; - providing information and vocational guidance with a view to retraining, professional development, job offers.	and guidance - buses equipped with a computer/notebook with an overhead projector, - hardcopy materials such as Occupation Profiles, guidebooks, prospectuses or books - multimedia, Internet and computer databases
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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

The basic premise on which the system of financing education is founded is compliance with the constitutional principle which guarantees free schooling for children and youth under 18 years of age in all types of public schools. This principle does not, however, preclude the financing or co-financing of additional educational services which go beyond statutory tasks of the educational system by parents themselves.

The regulations governing the financing of public schools, including all types of vocational schools and public educational and training institutions (such as continuing education, practical training and further training centres) have been laid down in the

Educational System Act and other legislation concerning public finance, revenues of local government bodies and supports to regional development.

The budget allocation for educational tasks, including VET, is made in the Budget Act for a given year, and has the form of specific appropriations for relevant ministries, including Ministry of Education, voivodships (regions) and the portion of the general subsidy allocated to local governments which is specifically earmarked for education (the appropriation for education).

A large part of the state budget expenditure on education is the appropriation for education in the general subsidy allocated to local governments, which is earmarked for the financing of such tasks as administration of schools and public educational and training institutions by local governments and other entities.

The detailed rules concerning the distribution of the general subsidy for education for individual local governments are set out by the Minister for Education, upon consultations with the Minister for Finance and representatives of local governments^[1]. The algorithm regulating the distribution of the subsidy for education among the local governments differentiates the actual allocations on the basis of such factors as the scale and structure of educational and other tasks in schools and other public educational and training institutions, measured by the number of pupils and school-leavers. In determining the algorithm, the educational policy priorities are taken into account. For every local government running or subsidising schools and educational institutions of every kind, the so-called referential number of students is determined for a given school year. In the vocational and continuing education system, educational tasks comprise the running (administration) of schools offering vocational education, continuing education centres, as well as practical and further training centres. Other school tasks refer to tasks related to the running of institutions mentioned above which allow for the organisation of non-formal education and training.

The subsidy comprises the base amount which is the estimated unit amount per pupil in a given school year (financial standard A), the supplementary amount based on weights to increase financial standard A for the execution of school (educational) tasks and a certain amount for other than educational tasks. A separate weight is adopted for pupils and students of post-lower secondary VET schools (including those offering practical vocational training), for non-formal training providers, for pupils of medical schools, schools offering initial vocational training for inland navigation and artistic schools. These rules apply to the distribution of the educational portion of the general subsidy. However, the final allocation of these funds to specific types of schools or institutions or spending categories rests with local government bodies such as municipal and poviat (county) councils and the regional assemblies (sejmik in Polish).

[\[1\]](#) Revenues of Local Governments Act (Art. 28).

1002 - FUNDING FOR INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

There are no data on the costs of training per pupil in different types of vocational schools. Per capita expenditures of public schools administered by local governments (basic vocational schools, post-lower secondary and post-secondary schools) may serve as an indication. In 2006, they amounted to 756.9 EUR, and in 2007 - to 831.8 EUR, i.e. were 8.5 per cent higher.^[1] Public schools administered by entities which do not belong to the public finance sector receive a subsidy for every pupil from the budget of the local government which is statutorily obliged to administer a given type of school, in the amount corresponding to the expenditure per pupil in such a type of school run by such local government. The rules for awarding subsidies to such schools are adopted by the local government's decision-making body.

Local governments are obliged by law to award subsidies for the co-financing of day-to-day (statutory) activities of entities listed in relevant legislation:

- a. Non-public schools and other educational institutions having the status of a public school (including vocational schools) receive subsidies from the poviat budget of no less than 50 per cent of revenue expenditure per capita in public schools of a given type.

b. Grants to non-public schools having the status of a public school and offering compulsory education are awarded to every pupil of a given type of public school, as a part of the appropriation for education allocated to a given local government.

c. Schools without the status of a public school and other non-public educational institutions may receive a subsidy from the powiat (county) budget, based on procedures laid down by the powiat decision-making body. Such a grant may be awarded in the amount stipulated by the subsidising body.[\[2\]](#)

Local government bodies may commission education-related tasks to NGOs whose statutory activity lies in the field of education. In such a situation, the financing for non-public continuing education providers comes from public funds.

In 2007, the aggregate subsidy for education totalled 7 271 753 164 EUR which is 5.78 per cent higher than the 2006 subsidy (6 915 817 554 EUR).[\[3\]](#)

Currently, a large majority of public schools and other educational institutions are administered by local governments: gminas (municipalities), powiats (counties) and voivodships (regions). Schools offering vocational education are set up and administered by powiat governments, while regional governments are in charge of schools having a regional significance.[\[4\]](#)

In the 2005/2006 school year, local governments were in charge of:

- 71.5 per cent of lower secondary schools (*gimnazjum*) for adults, as compared to 21.5 per cent of such schools run by private providers;
- 90.2 per cent of basic vocational schools (92 per cent of schools for youth and 63 per cent of schools for adults), whereas state administration entities were in charge of 2.9 per cent schools, and the private sector – of 6.9 per cent;
- 84.3 per cent of technical secondary schools (95.8 per cent of such schools for youth and 64.2 per cent – for adults), whereas state administration entities were in charge of 0.6 per cent technical secondary schools, and the private sector - 15 per cent such schools;
- 92.3 per cent of profiled secondary schools (*profiled lyceum*) (96 per cent of such schools for youth and 32.7 per cent – for adults), whereas state administration entities were in charge of 0.1 per cent of such schools, and the private sector – over 7.5 per cent of such schools;
- 40 per cent post-secondary schools, while 0.5 per cent are run by state administration entities and 63.5 per cent - by the private sector;
- over 97 per cent of special schools offering preliminary vocational training, while the remaining ones were run by associations and NGOs;
- 82.4 per cent of general profile secondary schools, while 63 per cent of schools for adults were run by private sector entities: natural persons, foundations and other organisations.

Over 60 per cent of artistic schools are administered by the Minister for Culture and National Heritage; they offer instruction to nearly three fourths of pupils in such schools. Local governments and the private sector run the remaining 40 per cent (20 per cent each).

In 2005, public expenditure on education totalled 9 986 585 184 EUR, which accounted for 4.1 per cent GDP, while the state budget expenditure on education was 6 955 830 476 EUR, including 6 483 827 694 EUR (i.e. 93.4 per cent) of the appropriation for education of the general subsidy for local governments. These allocations were 4.9 per cent higher than in 2004. In the same year, local government expenditures on education and educational care (including the state budget allocations) totalled 9 613 951 408 EUR. Of the total allocation of 1 490 535 102 EUR, district governments spent 38.1 per cent on vocational schools. Local governments in

townships with powiat status spent 12.0 per cent of their total allocation of 3 154 965 966 EUR, and regional governments – 21.0 per cent of a total budget of 223 580 265 EUR.[\[5\]](#)

As regards continuous professional development of teachers of all types of public schools and educational institutions, starting from 2001 onwards, 1 per cent of funds earmarked annually for teachers' pay have been reserved specifically for the co-financing of university studies or teacher training, fees for qualification programmes and further training courses and reimbursement of accommodation and travel costs. These funds can be spent with the approval of the school principal.[\[6\]](#)

[\[1\]](#) Data of the Ministry of National Education published on 3 April 2007.

[\[2\]](#) The Education System Act of 7 September 1991 (consolidated text: *Dziennik Ustaw* 256/2004 Nr 256, item 2572).

[\[3\]](#) Data of the Ministry of National Education published on 3 April 2007.

[\[4\]](#) "Education in the 2005/2006 School Year" - report published by GUS – Central Statistical Office.

[\[5\]](#) Education in the 2005/2006 School Year" - report published by GUS – Central Statistical Office.

[\[6\]](#) The Teachers' Charter Act (Art. 70).

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

Several levels of state administration are in charge of adult continuing education. At the central level, such responsible bodies include:

- Minister for National Education, whose competencies include formulation of overall policies concerning education, including continuing education;
- Minister for Labour and Social Policy, who lays down conditions and procedures for attending training and other forms of vocational activation by the unemployed and job seekers;
- Minister for Finance, who proposes the budget assumptions for a given budget year and tax allowances.

In Poland, adult education institutions are either administered by public administration bodies at different administration levels or operate on the free market based on laws governing the activities of businesses. Such providers offer different types of education and have the right to award certificates and qualifications at different levels.

Formal and non-formal adult continuing education can be financed from a number of sources, such as:

- State and local government budgets (mainly formal adult continuing education);
- Special-purpose funds: Labour Fund, State Fund for Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons;
- Programmes supporting vocational activity of people with disabilities;
- Foreign assistance funds – Phare grants, World Bank loans, EU funds;
- Enterprises;
- Trainees' own funds.

Formal (school) continuing education of adults is funded from the state budget.

Tuition in public schools for adults is free, while non-public schools and non-formal education providers charge fees (e.g. an exam fee). At the same time, due to

insufficient funding for public schools, expenses other than salaries can be financed by student self-government bodies.

ENTERPRISE-BASED CVET

Further training for employees is regulated by the provisions of the Labour Code.[\[1\]](#) Employers are obliged to facilitate employees' access to continuing vocational training (CVT) and upgrading their vocational qualifications. Employees can be referred to a school or to an out-of-school training, and the initiative rests with both sides, i.e. the labour office and the employee.

If an employee attends a primary or secondary evening school, a post-primary school in an extramural system or a higher school in an evening or extramural system, the employer is obliged to offer, respectively: a day or a part of a working day off, a paid training leave of 6 days or – in an extramural system – up to 12 working days for participation in classes. In the case of university studies, the employer is obliged to grant a paid training leave of 21 or 28 working days (depending on the system of study) for every year of study. In addition, during the last year of study, the employee has the right to receive an additional 21-day paid leave for the preparation of the Master's thesis and taking the final exam. [\[2\]](#)

The employer can award additional benefits to the employee who has been referred to training, for example:

- Reimbursement of the costs of travel, accommodation and meals;
- Reimbursement of the costs of textbooks and other training materials;
- Reimbursement of tuition fees;
- Additional training leave.

In the case of non-formal further training, employees referred by the employer have the right to reimbursement of the participation costs and the costs of travel, accommodation and meals, and to a paid leave for participation in classes or allowing part of a working day off.

If employees start training without the employer's referral, they can negotiate similar arrangements with the employer, although the actual extent of support remains at the employer's discretion. Information on the number of beneficiaries and the actual spending on CVT is not available as it is not covered by public statistics.[\[3\]](#)

Employers can seek financial support from the Labour Fund if they employ no less than 20 staff and the employees need to bring their qualifications up to the new requirements related to their work station. Up to 50 per cent of the costs of such training can be refunded by the Labour Fund, however not more than the average salary in the enterprise sector for one trainee.

Employers can also set up a Training Fund, which is another measure to foster demand for CVT and improve the quality of provision on the one hand, and on the other – to motivate employers to make efforts intended to sustain employment and raise vocational qualifications of their staff. The Training Fund can serve to finance or co-finance costs of CVT of both employees and employers. Setting up the Training Fund is not obligatory. Employers who do so must allocate to it no less than 0.25 per cent of the budget for salaries. Partial training costs of employees threatened with dismissal are statutorily reimbursed from the Labour Fund.

Money from the Labour Fund is disbursed on the basis of the training plan, prepared by the employer. The following expenses related to specialist training can be reimbursed from the Labour Fund:

- 50 per cent of the training costs of employees threatened with dismissal or lay-offs;
- 80 per cent of the training costs of employees with training leaves longer than three weeks;

- up to 40 per cent of the average monthly earnings to an unemployed person temporarily employed as a substitute for an employee on a paid training leave.

Due to the lack of relevant public statistics, there are no data on the number of employers using this measure.

[1] The Labour Code Act of 26 June 1074 (consolidated text: *Dziennik Ustaw* 21/1998, item 94 – Articles 17, 94, 103.

[2] Ordinance of the Minister of National Education and Minister of Labour and Social Policy of 12 October 1993 on the terms and conditions for developing vocational qualifications and general education of adults.

[3] Ministry of Labour and Social Policy – "Adult Learning – a Thematic Overview. Source Report – Poland". Warsaw, October 2005.

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

FINANCING OF VOCATIONAL ACTIVATION OF THE UNEMPLOYED AND JOB SEEKERS

Regulations concerning such issues as alleviating adverse effects of unemployment, employment and vocational activation of the unemployed and job seekers are laid down in the Promotion of Employment and Labour Market Institutions Act.[\[1\]](#)

Funding for all programmes and measures aimed to support employment and vocational activation of the jobless comes from the Labour Fund resources. This is a special-purpose fund, administered by the Minister for Labour, and its revenues come from mandatory contributions paid by employers and other organisational entities such as farmers' production cooperatives, and from the state budget. The contributions paid by employers correspond to 2.45 per cent of the statutory basis for the pension contribution. [\[2\]](#) The revenues of the Labour Fund include mandatory contributions paid by employers who employ persons from the categories enumerated in the Act, as well as EU funds earmarked for the co-financing of projects financed from the Fund.

The implemented activation programmes and measures with a training component are targeted at young people under 25 and at people who are disadvantaged in the labour market such as the long-term unemployed, unemployed over 50, unemployed with no vocational qualifications or people with disabilities.

The aggregate Labour Fund spending in 2006 on active measures counteracting unemployment is estimated at 544 690 563 EUR, of which 33.5 per cent are planned to be spent on active forms[\[3\]](#).

The provisions of the Promotion of Employment and Labour Market Institutions Act establish the algorithm and detailed rules for determining the funds to be allocated to voivodships and powiaty. The distribution of resources from the Labour Fund for regional tasks rests with the Minister for Labour, after seeking the opinion of the National Employment Council and the Joint Government and Local Government Commission. Regional and powiat governments receive money from the Labour Fund for the financing of various measures intended to promote employment, alleviate adverse effects of unemployment and support vocational activation in a given voivodship (region).

Specific funds for such programmes are assigned by the Voivodship Boards on the basis of the criteria laid down by the Voivodship Assembly. Such criteria are set, taking into account such factors as unemployment rate or the share of people disadvantaged in the labour market in the total number of the unemployed.

CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND SOCIALLY EXCLUDED

1. People with disabilities

The handicapped youth can receive education in post-lower secondary schools on similar conditions and in similar occupations as their healthy peers. Training for the handicapped, intended to provide them with possibilities to learn vocational skills, get a job and have a career, is offered as part of vocational rehabilitation (cf. footnote to the Vocational and Social Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with disabilities Act).

Most frequently, training is organised in the form of retraining programmes or programmes upgrading qualifications, and is usually offered by providers other than schools. Initiating and organisation of training programmes rests with the powiat labour offices which refer persons with disabilities to training on their own initiative or at the request of the handicapped person in situations when the training in question can help them acquire qualifications to start a job. The duration of the training should not be longer than 36 months.

The training costs of people with disabilities are funded from the State Fund for the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons and the Labour Fund. The sum of the co-financing varies depending on the status of a given beneficiary in the labour market – whether they are employed or seeking a job. 65 per cent of the State Fund for the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons are earmarked for the funding of training and supports to employment.

2. People disadvantaged in the labour market

Special forms of vocational activation and training are targeted at socially excluded groups. The Social Employment Act defines the framework for facilitating social employment through the Centres for Social Integration for people who take part in individual programmes for getting out of homelessness, the unemployed who have been out of work for over 36 months, persons released from prison and having difficulties in social reintegration, persons with alcohol and drug addiction who have completed psychotherapy in an addiction treatment centre, and after that – for offering support in finding employment or starting business activity. Centres for Social Integration offer a special form of training and work in some kind of production, trade or service activity. With an active participation in the Centre's work, socially excluded people can get accommodation and food and receive an integration allowance for a period of up to 11 months.[\[4\]](#)

[1] Promotion of Employment and Labour Market Institutions Act of 20 April 2004 (*Dziennik Ustaw* 99/2004 item 1001).

[2] 2007 Budget Act of 17 February 2006 (Art. 40).

[3] Ministry of Labour and Social Policy data – draft financial plan of the Labour Fund for 2006.

[4] Social Employment Act of 13 June 2003 (*Dziennik Ustaw* 122/2003 item 1143).

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

In line with the goals of the European cohesion policy, the challenges posed by the Lisbon Strategy and the results of an analysis of the key aspects of Poland's socio-economic situation, a number of policy documents were prepared which set out both strategic and operational goals relating to human resources and social development. The strategic documents include the following:

1. *The National Strategy for Employment and Human Resources Development 2000-2006*[\[1\]](#), which sets out key objectives for the labour market policy and measures to achieve such objectives in the years 2000-2002 and 2003-2006. The major types of activities adopted in the strategy include:

- To ensure support to a quality formal and non-formal education system;
- To support the development of continuing education for adults;
- To improve the effectiveness and quality of employment services and development of non-public institutions offering labour market-related services.

2. *Strategy for the Development of Continuing Education and Training Until 2010*[\[2\]](#), which outlines the directions for the development of continuing education and training in the context of lifelong learning and knowledge-based society, including the following policy priorities:

- To increase access to information on education and training, diversity of training offers and forms of training;
- To improve the quality of continuing education as part of further training of the teaching staff and updating the learning content;
- To strengthen cooperation and partnership through increased involvement of the state, local government bodies, employers' organisations and other social partners in pursuing common policies in the field of programming, organising and financing continuing education;
- To increase investment in human resources by offering incentives for starting continuing training, mainly among residents of rural areas;
- To create information resources on continuing education and to develop advisory and consulting services.

3. *Strategy for the Development of Education in 2007 -2013*^[3], which sets out priority goals and directions of development in the education sector. Among those relating to continuing education and training, the following can be listed:

- To popularise continuing education related to acquiring and developing vocational qualifications and generic competences;
- To develop a transparent system of vocational qualifications;
- To introduce effective and efficient mechanisms for public and private co-financing of training costs.
- 4. *The National Employment Strategy for 2007-2013* – defines the goals, priorities and actions in the sphere of labour market policies, which include the following:
 - To support creation of new jobs through fostering the development of enterprise and innovations;
 - To develop continuing education and training and to activate people threatened with unemployment and social exclusion;
 - To improve adaptability of employees and enterprises and to enhance labour market flexibility.

5. *The National Action Plan for Employment* - sets out the implementation principles of the European Employment Strategy and defines the tasks of the state in the sphere of employment promotion, alleviating adverse effects of unemployment and vocational activation and also the responsibilities of local governments and social partners. The Plan identifies directions for labour market actions, the anticipated spending from the Labour Fund and the state budget for the co-financing of measures under the Plan, broken down by subsequent budget years. The Plan for 2007 was prepared by the Minister for Labour in cooperation with the ministries of economy, education, science and higher education.

6. *The National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013*^[4] - the adopted horizontal policies relating to human resources development envisage increasing employment through the development of human and social capital, which shall ensure a better utilisation of labour resources and enhance the competitiveness of the economy.

[1] Document adopted by the Council of Ministers on 29 January 2002.

[2] Document adopted by the Council of Ministers on 8 July 2003.

[3] Document adopted by the Council of Ministers on 6 September 2005.

[4] Document adopted by the Council of Ministers on 14 February 2006.

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

As regards the existing strategies, the current *Strategy for Development of Continuing Education (2003-2010)* adopted in 2003, includes the topics discussed and developed on the European level i.e. the issues of accreditation and transparency of skills, quality of educational and training offer, links with labour market and economic environment as well as consistency between systems of formal and non-formal education. However, it still does represent rather traditional approach, concentrated on continuing education of adults.

The new strategy for lifelong learning is being developed and due to be adopted by the government in the mid 2007 (according to the provisions of the **National Reform Programme 2005-2008**, implementing the **renewed Lisbon Strategy**). The work is underway with substantial involvement of all relevant ministries and government agencies as well as major social partners (employers' organisations, trade unions, NGOs). The strategy will be in line with the *Country Development Strategy 2007-2015*, the latter constituting the framework for the distribution in Poland the sources from the European Structural Funds. Accordingly, a bulk of activities envisaged in the LLL strategy will be co-financed from the European Social Fund within the framework of the Operational Programme *Human Capital 2007-2013*.

The comprehensive and coherent lifelong learning strategy responds to the main challenges facing Polish education and training environment, i.e. low level of pre-primary education, low level of educational attainment, particularly in the rural areas, high level of unemployment, especially youth unemployment, unsatisfactory engagement of employers in upskilling workers and employees, new needs and requirements provoked by modern knowledge-based economy and rapid development of higher education, weak potential of non-formal education (incl. learning in work and social context). The new strategy will comprise all possible levels and layers of learning; it will not replace existing sectoral and specific strategies for higher education, youth policy and continuing education and training. Rather, its aim is to establish basic common lines and priorities concerning the development of relations amongst different levels of formal education and training and non-formal and informal learning. It will also introduce and establish the competence (learning outcomes)-oriented approach to education and training contents and quality.

1102 - IMPACT OF EUROPEANISATION/INTERNATIONALISATION ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Amongst recent developments taken and introduced on the European level, most of them have been included in the Polish education and training policy and the draft of the lifelong learning strategy, i.e. the focus on **key competences** (in line with the appropriate **Recommendation of the Parliament and the Council**), enhancing the **transparency** of skills and competences acquired both on higher education level (**ECTS** – European Credit Transfer System in Higher Education) and in vocational education and training (**ECVET** – European Credit Transfer System for Vocational Education and Training), implementation of **Europass**, creating the framework for **validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes**, development of **lifelong guidance system**, and finally – establishing the **National Qualification System** and **National Qualification Framework**. The European Credit Transfer System in Higher Education is already in place in Poland and used by a growing number of Polish higher education institutions. The proposal for establishing European Credit Transfer System for Vocational Education and Training has been widely consulted with educational environment and social partners and met their full support. The career information and lifelong guidance system is being developed alongside with widening access and improving the offer. Nevertheless, the key actions envisaged in the strategy will be the establishment of National Qualification System (NQS) based on learning outcomes and including the provisions and principles of validation and recognition of prior learning. The NQS will be harmonised with the institutionalisation of National Qualification Framework facilitating transparency and comparability of qualifications and increasing educational, professional and geographical mobility – and interrelated with the **European Qualification Framework**.

Activities related to the creation of NQS and NQF will be mostly carried out within the framework of the programmes co-financed from the **European Structural Funds** (ESF).

The European dimension, apart from the policy level, is visible on the ground – in everyday educational and training practice. VET curricula have been **modularised** and adapted to new Polish and European labour market requirements, new contents such as **foreign languages** have been integrated in the training programmes (especially in areas popular for mobility reasons i.e. health, social and personal care, food industry, modern technologies). In pedagogical practice the usage of new – recommended in the European papers – tools i.e. e-learning and blended learning becomes more and more frequent and welcomed by teachers and trainers. In the local and regional level, cooperation between employers and education and training providers strengthens, the former actively participating in adapting training offer to the modern knowledge economy needs. What still needs improvement is the collaboration and mutual trust between key decision makers on the national level however substantial progress has been achieved.

1103 - AUTHORS, SOURCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

110301 - AUTHORS

Theme 1: Karolina Czerwińska

Theme 2: Elżbieta Drogosz-Zabłocka, Agnieszka Luck

Theme 3:

0301: Elżbieta Drogosz-Zabłocka

0302: Agnieszka Luck, Maciej Prószyński

0303: Agnieszka Luck

Theme 4:

0401: Elżbieta Drogosz-Zabłocka

0402: Elżbieta Drogosz-Zabłocka

0403: Elżbieta Drogosz-Zabłocka

0404: Elżbieta Drogosz-Zabłocka, Agnieszka Luck

0405: Agnieszka Luck

0406: Elżbieta Drogosz-Zabłocka

0407: Elżbieta Drogosz-Zabłocka

Theme 5: Krzysztof Symela, Ireneusz Woźniak

Theme 6: Ewa Kolanowska

Theme 7: Krzysztof Symela, Ireneusz Woźniak

Theme 8: Elżbieta Majchrowicz

Theme 9: Cecylia Pielok, Agnieszka Luck

Theme 10: Ewa Lemieszek

Theme 11: Elżbieta Majchrowicz

110302 - SOURCES, REFERENCES AND WEBSITES

[Bibliography](#)