

Poland

VET in Europe - Country Report

2009

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Abstract:

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

1. General context - framework for the knowledge society
2. Policy development - objectives, frameworks, mechanisms, priorities
3. Legislative and 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. Matching VET provision with labour market needs
8. Guidance and counselling for learning, career and employment
9. Financing - investment in human resources
10. National VET statistics - allocation of programmes

This overview has been prepared in 2009 and its reference year is 2008. Similar overviews of previous years can be viewed at:

http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Information_resources/NationalVet/Thematic/

More detailed thematic information on the VET systems of the EU can also be found at:
http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Information_resources/NationalVet/Thematic/analysis.asp

Keywords:

vocational education and training (VET) systems; initial vocational training; continuing vocational training; lifelong learning; VET policy development; financial crisis and VET policies; VET legislative and institutional frameworks; validation of non-formal and informal education; teachers and trainers; anticipation of skill needs; vocational guidance and counselling; VET financing mechanisms; allocation of national VET programmes; national and international qualification systems.

Geographic term:

Poland

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1 - GENERAL POLICY CONTEXT - FRAMEWORK FOR THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

1.1 - 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 the *Sejm* (460) are elected by the nation in free, equal, direct and proportional elections conducted by secret ballot, and the Senators (100) - 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 or 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 three-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.

1.2 - POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

POLAND'S POPULATION UNTIL 2008

The year 2008 brought a change of trends in the demographic development of Poland, observable since the beginning of the decade. After many years' decrease in the real population figures¹, which was mainly due to a considerable decrease in the number of births and a negative international migration balance, a positive real population increase was recorded. It is estimated that at the end of 2008 the territory of Poland, a country with a total area of 312 679 km², had a population of 38 135 000, that is 20 000 more inhabitants than in 2007³. Poland is the sixth most populous country in the European Union⁴.

¹ In 1997-2007, the aggregate population decrease totalled some 175 000. GUS, *Podstawowe informacje o rozwoju demograficznym Polski do 2008 roku*, Warszawa, 29.01.2009, URL: http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/5840_3906_PLK_HTML.htm, p.1.

² GUS, *Mały rocznik statystyczny Polski 2008*, Warszawa 2008, p. 26.

³ GUS, *Podstawowe informacje o rozwoju demograficznym Polski do 2008 roku*, op. cit., p.1.

⁴ Eurostat statistics, *Guidelines and template for the 2009 edition of VET in Europe - Country Reports, Annex IIB*, Table 1.

TABLE 1. POPULATION BALANCE IN 2006, 2007 AND 2008 (IN THOUSAND)

| Year | 2006 | 2007 | 2008* |
|--|--------|--------|--------|
| Natural increase | 4.5 | 0.7 | 35.3 |
| Live births | 374.2 | 387.9 | 414.5 |
| Deaths | 369.7 | 377.2 | 379.2 |
| Balance of permanent international migration | -36.1 | -20.5 | -15.4 |
| Immigration | 10.8 | 15 | 16 |
| Emigration | 46.9 | 35.5 | 31.4 |
| Actual increase | -32 | -10 | +20 |
| Population as at 31 December | 38 125 | 38 116 | 38 135 |

* - estimates

Source: Prepared by the author based on GUS, *Podstawowe informacje o rozwoju demograficznym Polski do 2008 roku*, Warszawa, 29.01.2009,

URL: http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/5840_3906_PLK_HTML.htm, s. 19; GUS, *Mały rocznik statystyczny Polski 2008*, Warszawa 2008, Table 2(61), p. 112.

In 2008, the rate of population increase reached a positive value of 0.05%, and the natural increase (which was positive third year running) was 35 000⁵. It should also be borne in mind that the growing number of births is mainly associated with the fact that women born during the most recent demographic boom are now entering the age of highest fertility. Despite the fact that the fertility rate increased from 1.22 children per woman in 2003⁶ to 1.31 in 2007, the birth rate decline in Poland is continuing. This is probably due to the changing roles and status of women in the society and the adoption of Western models of the family, including, for example, longer periods of schooling, an increased economic activity of women, wide availability of contraception and the tendency to start 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 to the 25-29 age brackets⁷.

As regards migration, following a dramatic worsening of the situation in 2006, which can be explained by new opportunities for working abroad following Poland's accession to the European Union, 2008 brought certain positive developments (Table 1). The decreasing negative balance of migration was also accompanied by dwindling dynamics of temporary migration and increasing numbers of migrants returning to Poland⁸.

⁵ GUS, *Podstawowe informacje o rozwoju demograficznym Polski do 2008 roku*, op. cit., p. 2.

⁶ In 2003 the fertility rate reached the lowest level in 50 years. After: *ibid.*, p. 4.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

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 with the age structures of many other European nations (e.g. Germany). In 2007, about one third (31.3%) of Poland's population were people in the 0-24 age group; 55.3% were people aged 25-64, and the +65 age group accounted for 13.4% of the country's total population⁹. 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 2008 (Table 2), the category of people in the pre-working age (0-17 years of age) represented approximately 19% of the total population, which was about 10pp less than in 1990. Over this period, a decrease in the pre-working age group was accompanied by an increase in the working age category (people aged 18-59/64) and in the senior (retirement) age group (60+/65+), by 6.3pp respectively, up to a level of ca 64.5%, and by 3.5pp, up to a level of 16.3%¹⁰. In 2007, the average life expectancy, which has been on the increase ever since the early 1990s, was 79.7 years for women and 71 years for men.

TABLE 2. AGE STRUCTURE OF POLAND'S POPULATION IN 1990 AND 2008 (AS AT 31 DECEMBER)

| Age | 1990 | 2008* | 1990 | 2008* |
|------------|------|-------|-------------|--------|
| | % | | in thousand | |
| 0-17 | 29 | 19.2 | 11 040 | 7 322 |
| 18-59/64** | 58.2 | 64.5 | 22 148 | 24 597 |
| 60+/65+*** | 12.8 | 16.3 | 4 885 | 5 888 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 38 073 | 38 135 |

* - estimates

** - 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 on the basis of data from GUS, Podstawowe informacje o rozwoju demograficznym Polski do 2008 roku [Basic information on Poland's demographic development until 2008], op. cit., p. 12.

A comparison of the number of students in different types of schools in the academic years 2005/2006, 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 is quite interesting (Table 3) as the number of pupils/students is decreasing in practically all types of schools. These fluctuations are implications of the demographic changes described above. However, the drop in the number of adult learners and university students could additionally be due to the fact that -in a situation of a general trend of resuming education after a break and extending the learning period for those who start school- the number of people who would like to resume schooling at the secondary or tertiary level but have not done so yet is shrinking.

⁹ GUS, Mały rocznik statystyczny Polski 2008, op. cit., Table 4(63), p. 115.

¹⁰ GUS, Podstawowe informacje o rozwoju demograficznym Polski do 2008 roku, op. cit., p. 10.

TABLE 3. PUPILS AND STUDENTS IN SCHOOL YEARS 2005/2006, 2006/2007 AND 2007/2008 BY TYPE OF SCHOOL (IN THOUSAND)*

| Type of school | 2005/2006 | 2006/2007 | 2007/2008 |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Primary | 2 602.0 | 2 484.8 | 2 375.2 |
| Lower secondary (<i>gimnazjum</i>) | 1 596.8 | 528.8 | 1 453.2 |
| Post-primary and post-lower secondary | 1 719.7 | 1 677.1 | 1 631.9 |
| Post-secondary | 313.5 | 327.9 | 301.6 |
| Higher | 1 953.8 | 1 941.4 | 1 937.4 |
| Adult education | 308.5 | 273.8 | 265.1 |
| Total | 8 494.3 | 7 237.4 | 7 968.0 |

* - as at the beginning of the school/academic year

Source: Prepared by the author on the basis of data from GUS, *Mały rocznik statystyczny Polski 2008* [Concise statistical yearbook of Poland], op. cit., Table 1(133), pp. 230-231.

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 56% receive education. Nonetheless, it has to be admitted that over the past 7 years this share has increased by nearly 10%, which is certainly a positive phenomenon¹¹. 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 developing 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 generate a lot of interest (e.g. new types of employment, working flexi-time).

POPULATION FORECAST UNTIL 2035

The trends in Poland's demographic development which could be observed so far are most likely to continue throughout the forecasting period, i.e. from 2008 until 2035, even if with some improvement¹². Despite the fact that the number of births stopped falling in 2004, it is expected to grow further only until 2012. Then, it will start to grow smaller again. Therefore, the natural increase in Poland is envisaged to be negative again since 2014. To some extent, it will result from the fact of reaching the reproductive age by the not very numerous generation born at the turn of the century. During the forecasting period the fertility rate will increase from around 1.30 to around 1.45 child per woman. At the same time, the intensity of permanent international migration will increase. However, thanks to an expected rise in immigration flows the recorded negative balance is going to improve

¹¹ GUS, *Mały rocznik statystyczny Polski 2008*, op. cit., Table 3(135), p. 234.

¹² Due to the increased number of births and intensified migration observed since 2004 the previous population forecast until 2030 (prepared in 2003) has been revised and became slightly more optimistic.

regularly¹³. In result, these processes will most likely lead to a depopulation of Poland by about 2 200 000 until 2035 (Table 4).

TABLE 4: POPULATION FORECAST UNTIL 2035 (AS AT 31ST DECEMBER; IN THOUSAND)

| AGE | 2009 | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 | 2025 | 2030 | 2035 |
|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 0-24 | 11 234 | 10 981 | 10 139 | 9 630 | 9 336 | 9 029 | 8 437 |
| 25-64 | 21 722 | 21 958 | 21 948 | 21 246 | 20 258 | 19 572 | 19 198 |
| 65+ | 5 144 | 5 153 | 5 929 | 6 954 | 7 844 | 8 195 | 8 358 |
| TOTAL | 38 101 | 38 092 | 38 016 | 37 830 | 37 438 | 36 796 | 35 993 |

Source: Prepared by the author based on: Central Statistical Office, *Podstawowe informacje o rozwoju demograficznym Polski do 2008 roku*, op. cit., tab. 5, p. 17; Central Statistical Office, *Prognoza ludności Polski na lata 2008-2035*, Warsaw 2008,

URL: http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/5840_4559_PLK_HTML.htm, pp.1-2.

This and other phenomena, such as lowered mortality rates and increased life expectancy will be reflected in the age structure of the population. In 2035, the number of children and youth aged 0-24 in the education category will be much 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 (65+) and a decrease of the working-age population (24-64) (Table 4). The shifts in relation between the particular age groups will result in an intense increase of an old age dependency ratio, which is estimated to grow from the level of 18,98 in 2010 to 37,89 by the end of the forecasting period¹⁴.

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

¹³ GUS, *Prognoza ludności Polski na lata 2008-2035*, Warszawa 2008, URL: http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/5840_4559_PLK_HTML.htm, s. 3, 7-8.

¹⁴ Eurostat data, *Guidelines and template for the 2009 edition of VET in Europe - Country Reports*, Annex IIB, tabl. 2.

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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.

1.3 - ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS

EMPLOYMENT STRUCTURE BY SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY

The employment structure in Poland gradually gets better from year to year. In the fourth quarter of 2008, 13.4% of people in work were employed in agriculture, as compared to 14% in the previous year; 32% were employed in industry (31.2%), and 54.6% in services (54.8%)¹⁵. Even though more and more workers move from agriculture to other sectors of the economy, the share of agriculture in the overall employment structure in Poland remains higher than in countries with a highly developed market economy. The anticipated further shifts of labour between sectors will certainly stimulate demand for programmes supporting the retraining process (e.g. for people who want to start activity in tourism instead of agriculture). Such changes are also likely to encourage modifications in the training profiles for new labour market entrants to make them compliant with the needs of modern knowledge-based economy. It is also expected that as a result of such modifications the numbers of trainees in surplus and deficit occupations will be adjusted to suit the needs of the market.

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY RATE¹⁶

In the fourth quarter of 2008, the economic activity rate in Poland reached 54.7%, and was slightly higher year-on-year (54.1%). This change was due to increased activity of both women (from 46.7% in 2007 to 47.1% in 2008) and men (from 62.2% to 63.1%, respectively). Nevertheless, men remain much more active on the labour market than women¹⁷.

It should be noted that the activity rate of people with higher education (which for several years has oscillated at a level of c. 80%) and secondary vocational education (which in the recent years has been around 67%) is much above the country's average. This stands in sharp contrast with the activity of the population with lower secondary and primary education, which is slightly above 20% in this group (Table 1).

¹⁵ For our purposes, the sector of agriculture comprises agriculture, forestry, hunting and fishery; the sector of industry: mining, industrial processing and construction, and the services sector - the remaining sections. GUS, *Monitoring rynku pracy: kwartalna informacja o aktywności ekonomicznej ludności* [Monitoring of the labour market. Quarterly information about economic activity of the population], Warsaw 2009, 24.03.2009, Table 5, p. 6.

¹⁶ As a percentage of the economically active (both employed and unemployed) in the population aged 15 or over.

¹⁷ According to the average annual data based on the Labour Force Survey (BAEL), in 2007 the economic activity rate was 46.3% for women and 61.9% for men, giving an average of 53.7%. GUS, *Mały rocznik statystyczny Polski 2008*, Warsaw 2008, URL: http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/5840_737_PLK_HTML.htm, tabl. 1(82), p. 136; GUS, *Monitoring rynku pracy: kwartalna informacja o aktywności ekonomicznej ludności*, op. cit., Table 2, p. 4.

TABLE 1. ECONOMIC ACTIVITY RATE FOR POPULATION AGED +15 BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION (IN 4Q; IN %)

| Level of education | Total economic activity rate | |
|---|------------------------------|------|
| | 2007 | 2008 |
| Higher (ISCED 5-6) | 80.2 | 80.7 |
| Secondary vocational* (ISCED 4) | 66.8 | 67.0 |
| Secondary general (ISCED 3A) | 44.1 | 46.8 |
| Basic vocational (ISCED 3C) | 64.7 | 64.7 |
| Lower secondary, primary and incomplete primary (ISCED 1-2) | 21.1 | 20.1 |
| Total | 54.1 | 54.7 |

* - including post-secondary non-tertiary schools

Source: prepared on the basis of: GUS, *Monitoring rynku pracy. Kwartalna informacja o rynku pracy [Monitoring of the labour market. Quarterly labour market information]*, Warsaw, 24.02.2009, URL: http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/5840_1791_PLK_HTML.htm, Table 1, p. 3.

In the fourth quarter of 2008, 45.3% of the population aged 15 or over were economically inactive, of whom over 61% were women¹⁸. It should be observed that slightly over 25% of people who were economically inactive and in working age quoted learning and improving qualifications, and 20% - family duties as the main reasons for their inactivity¹⁹.

In light of these data, the educational attainment of individuals can be seen as an important factor stimulating their economic activity²⁰. Therefore, all activities and efforts which can encourage individuals to continue their education at a higher level, resume learning or start continuing training seem very desirable.

Improved accessibility to schools and other training institutions is of particular importance (e.g. in financial terms - scholarships or grants for children from poor families, or improved infrastructure - upgrading transport links), in addition to extending assistance programmes for carers of the disabled or those with small children (e.g. ensuring care for the period the carer or guardian is in training or at school).

EMPLOYMENT RATE²¹

In the recent years, the employment rate in Poland has been growing steadily, a process which has certainly been fostered by falling unemployment. However, in a situation of an

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 13.

¹⁹ Other reasons for inactivity which were listed most frequently included: illness (24.1%), pension or disability pension (18.4%). Table, p. 14.

²⁰ This is, among others, due to the fact that the longer the schooling period, 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, *Ekonomia [Economics]*, T. 1, Warsaw 2000, Polskie Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, pp. 334-337.

²¹ As a percentage of the employed in the population aged 15 or over.

economic downturn this trend is likely to be reversed. In the fourth quarter of 2008, 51% of the aggregate population aged +15 were employed, i.e. 1.5pp more than in the previous year. Nevertheless, the employment rate is still markedly lower than the EU average. Similarly to the previous years, the rate of increase was faster in the case of men than in the case of women. In the fourth quarter of 2008, 59.3% of men and 43.5% of women were employed²².

It should be noted that, similarly to the economic activity of the population, the employment rate figures vary depending on the level of education (Table 2). For all the age groups in the category of people with higher education and for the category of people with secondary education aged 25-49, it has been consistently higher than the average employment rate nationally (a considerable increase in employment in the recent years). On the other hand, the share of the employed among people who ended their education at the lower secondary or primary school level varies with age. It is slightly higher than the national average for the population in the mobile working age, but is much lower in the +50 age brackets. Nonetheless, an upward trend can be seen in both these groups. On the other hand, a very low employment rate among young people (15-24 age group) may be seen as a proof of their difficulties with finding their first job.

TABLE 2. EMPLOYMENT RATES BY AGE GROUPS AND HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINED (%)

| Level of education | Employment rate by age group | | | | | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 2002 | | | 2005 | | | 2007 | | |
| | 15-24 | 25-49 | 50-64 | 15-24 | 25-49 | 50-64 | 15-24 | 25-49 | 50-64 |
| Higher (ISCED 5-6) | 61 | 89.6 | 64.6 | 56.3 | 88.4 | 65.9 | 57.2 | 90.2 | 65.7 |
| Secondary vocational*, secondary general and basic vocational (ISCED 3-4) | 34.9 | 70.1 | 41.2 | 34.1 | 71.3 | 39.9 | 39.9 | 76.5 | 43.6 |
| Lower secondary, primary and incomplete primary (ISCED 1-2) | 6.9 | 51.3 | 27.3 | 6.3 | 49.9 | 27.6 | 6.9 | 55 | 30.4 |
| Total for a given age group | 22 | 70.2 | 38.8 | 22.5 | 72.4 | 40 | 25.8 | 77.5 | 43.4 |
| Total for +15 age group | 44.1 | | | 45.2 | | | 48.5 | | |

* - including post-secondary non-tertiary schools

Source: prepared by the author based on: Eurostat statistics, Guidelines and template for the 2009 edition of VET in Europe - Country Reports, Annex IIB, Table 4; GUS, *Mały rocznik statystyczny Polski 2008 [Concise statistical yearbook of Poland]*, Warsaw 2008,

URL: http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/5840_737_PLK_HTML.htm, Table 1(82), p. 136; GUS, *Mały rocznik statystyczny Polski 2003*, Warsaw 2003,

URL: http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/5840_2144_PLK_HTML.htm, Table 1(85), p. 140.

²² GUS, *Monitoring rynku pracy: kwartalna informacja o aktywności ekonomicznej ludności*, op. cit., Table 4, p. 5.

In general terms, regardless of the education level, lower employment in the youngest age group may indicate difficulties in the labour market entry for those school leavers who have not acquired any job experience and have relatively lesser competences. On the other hand, the lower percentage of the employed in the 50-64 age group may be partly explained by the fact that their competences and experience are gradually becoming outdated. However, a conclusion may also be made that a higher level of education and of vocational or professional competences not only makes labour market entry much easier, but it also facilitates maintaining employment throughout the entire period of occupational activity. Although a university diploma does not guarantee its holder finding a job quickly, unemployment statistics provided below strongly indicate the higher the individual's qualifications the lesser risk of problems on the labour market, also during an economic downturn.

REGISTERED UNEMPLOYMENT RATE²³

In 2008, the total registered unemployment rate in Poland showed a falling tendency, from a level of 11.5% in January down to 8.8% in October, and this was true for both sexes. This helped decrease the overall unemployment to a level unseen from the beginning of the decade²⁴. Unemployment gradually increased towards the end of the year, which was partly due to the economic slowdown and lay-offs in some enterprises. This unfavourable trend continued into the first quarter of 2009, when the unemployment rate exceeded 11%. In the first quarter of 2008, the unemployment rate among women was 7.6% (a 1.8pp drop as compared to the fourth quarter of 2007), among men - 6% (a 1.8pp decrease), and 17.1% (a 1.6pp fall) among people under 25²⁵. Despite a significant reduction of unemployment in the latter group, young people still account for over 20% of all the registered unemployed. Long-term unemployed still remain in a particularly difficult situation in the labour market as they represent 34% of all the unemployed²⁶.

²³ As a percentage of the registered unemployed in the total civil economically active population and in a given category.

²⁴ GUS, *Stopa bezrobocia w latach 1990 - 2009 (bezrobocie rejestrowane)* [Unemployment rates in 1990-2009 (registered unemployment)], URL: http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/5840_677_PLK_HTML.htm.

²⁵ Information derived from the Labour Force Survey (BAEL). GUS, *Monitoring rynku pracy: kwartalna informacja o rynku pracy*, Warsaw, 24.02.2009, URL:

http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/5840_1791_PLK_HTML.htm, p. 9; *Bezrobocie rejestrowane I-IV kwartał 2008*, Warsaw 2009, URL: http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/5840_676_PLK_HTML.htm, p. 38.

²⁶ GUS, *Bezrobocie rejestrowane I-IV kwartał 2008*, op. cit., p. 39.

TABLE 3. UNEMPLOYMENT RATES BY AGE GROUPS AND HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINED (%)

| Level of education | Unemployment rates* by age groups | | | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|-------|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------|
| | 2002 | | | 2005 | | | 2007 | | |
| | 15-24 | 25-49 | 50-64 | 15-24 | 25-49 | 50-64 | 15-24 | 25-49 | 50-64 |
| Higher (ISCED 5-6) | 27.5 | 5.7 | 4.8 (u) | 29.3 | 6.2 | 4.1 | 20 | 4.1 | 2.7 (u) |
| Secondary vocational**, secondary general and basic vocational (ISCED 3-4) | 42.2 | 18.4 | 13.9 | 37 | 16.7 | 14.8 | 21.7 | 8.9 | 7.9 |
| Lower secondary, primary and incomplete primary (ISCED 1-2) | 43.2 | 29.4 | 18.2 | 41.2 | 31.9 | 18.2 | 22.8 | 18.4 | 11.3 |
| Total for a given age group | 41.6 | 17.7 | 13.6 | 36.9 | 15.8 | 13.5 | 21.7 | 8.4 | 7.5 |
| Total | 20 | | | 17.6 | | | 11.4 | | |

* - unemployment rate according to BAEL [Labour Force Survey]

** - including post-secondary non-tertiary

u - incomplete data

Source: prepared by the author based on: Eurostat statistics, Guidelines and template for the 2009 edition of VET in Europe - Country Reports, Annex IIB, Table 5; GUS, Monitoring rynku pracy. Kwartalna informacja o rynku pracy, op. cit., Table 3, p. 9; GUS, Bezrobocie rejestrowane I-IV kwartał 2008 [Registered unemployment, 1-4 quarters 2008], Warsaw 2009, URL: http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/5840_676_PLK_HTML.htm, Table 2, p. 30.

Analysis of the unemployment level by educational attainment shows that people with tertiary education are the least affected by unemployment (Table 3). In 2007, similarly to previous years, the unemployment rate among people with tertiary education was considerably lower than the average in a given age group, and below the national unemployment rate. The group in the 15-24 age brackets is an exception as finding a job for representatives of this group is more difficult also because of their limited job experience. Likewise, this factor is responsible for higher unemployment figures for people in this group with secondary or primary education. As a result, young people encounter relatively bigger problems while seeking work than people in the two remaining age groups.

Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that the situation of those job-seekers aged over 25 who completed their education at the primary, lower secondary or basic vocational level is even worse. In 2008, over 60% of all unemployed were persons with not more than basic vocational education²⁷. It should be added the average period people with the lowest

²⁷ Ibid., Table 11, p. 38.

qualifications spent looking for a job (12-14 months on average) was nearly twice as long as in the case of people with university diplomas (7 months)²⁸. The scale of this phenomenon suggests that a low level of educational attainment and vocational competence is an important factor impeding labour market entry and re-entry. For this reason, stepping up activities aimed to upgrade vocational qualifications of the unemployed or those threatened with unemployment can prove an effective tool in both combating and preventing unemployment. The relationship between the quality of education and vocational qualifications and difficulties in adaptation to the labour market conditions is a strong argument in favour of upgrading the potential of competencies and qualifications of individuals on a continuous basis.

EXPENDITURES ON SCIENCE AND EDUCATION²⁹

In 2005, the aggregate public budget expenditure on science and education totalled PLN 40.6 billion (ca EUR 10.1 billion)³⁰, that is, 5.6% more than a year before. The share of this category of expenditure accounted for about 4.1% of Poland's GDP and was 0.2% lower than in 2004³¹. The total public allocation for science and education (budget appropriations plus expenditure from the local government budgets) in 2005 totalled PLN 53.3 billion (c. EUR 13.2 billion) (Table 4), which represented approximately 5.43% of Poland's GDP. This budget category accounted for about 19.5% of the aggregate state budget expenditure and for 13.0% of the total general government expenditure in 2005³².

²⁸ GUS, *Monitoring rynku pracy: kwartalna informacja o aktywności ekonomicznej ludności*, op. cit., pp. 12-13.

²⁹ The expenditures cover the following budget classification headings: 'Science', 'Higher education', 'Education', 'Educational care' and subsidies for education.

³⁰ Using the average annual PLN/EUR rate in 2005; 1 EUR = 4.03 PLN. Based on: Council of Ministers, *Sprawozdanie z wykonania budżetu państwa za okres od 1.I do 31.XII 2005 roku. Omówienie, T. 1*, Warsaw 2006, p. 28.

³¹ Table, pp. 153-157.

³² It has been assumed that the general government (public finance) sector comprises: the state budget, state special purpose funds, non-budgetary entities of the state budget, local government budgets, voivodship (regional - *województwo*), *powiat* (district, or *powiat*) and *gmina* (municipal) special-purpose funds, non-budgetary entities of the local governments, National Health Fund, state agencies, and other entities in the sector, e.g. Social Insurance Institution (ZUS). Calculations based on: *Ibid*, pp. 153-157; 490-493.

TABLE 4. EXPENDITURE ON SCIENCE AND EDUCATION IN 2005 - BUDGET EXECUTION; IN MILLION PLN (IN MILLION EUR AT AVERAGE ANNUAL MARKET RATE PLN/EUR *)

| Level | Education sector | Education al care | Higher education | Science | Total |
|---|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Gmina, powiat, cities with powiat status and voivodship budgets | 35 138.1 (8 719.4) | 3 515.9 (872.4) | 128.2 (31.8) | 8.3 (2) | 38 790.5 (9 625.5) |
| State budget** | 1 242.7 (308.4) | 613.7 (152.3) | 9 714.0 (2 410.4) | 2,901.1 (719.9) | 14 471.5 (3 590.9) |
| Total | 36 380.8 (9 027.5) | 4 129.6 (1 024.7) | 9 842.2 (2 442.2) | 2 909.4 (721.9) | 53 262.0 (13 216.4) |

* according to the rate of the National Bank of Poland for 2005, 1 EUR = 4.03 PLN, as adopted in the 2005 state budget report. Based on:: Council of Ministers, *Sprawozdanie z wykonania budżetu państwa za okres od 1.I do 31.XII 2005 roku. Omówienie, T. 1* [Report on state budget execution from 1 January till 31 December 2005. A summary. Vol. 1], Warsaw 2006, p. 28.

** excluding the subsidies for education in the amount of PLN 26 097.5 million, incorporated in the expenditures of local governments.

Source: prepared by the author based on: Council of Ministers, Sprawozdanie z wykonania budżetu państwa za okres od 1.I do 31.XII 2005 roku, T. 2, Warsaw 2006, pp. 7-38; Council of Ministers, Sprawozdanie z wykonania budżetu państwa za okres od 1.I do 31.XII 2005 roku. Omówienie, op. cit., pp. 28, 153-157; Council of Ministers, Sprawozdanie z wykonania budżetu państwa za okres od 1.I do 31.XII 2005 roku. Informacja o wykonaniu budżetów jednostek samorządu terytorialnego [Report on state budget execution from 1 January till 31 December 2005. Information about execution of local government budgets], Warsaw 2006, pp. 27-29, 35-43, 60-61, 67-74, 91-92, 98-107, 120-121, 127.

According to Eurostat, in 2005 general public expenditure on secondary education totalled EUR 8.9 billion, of which EUR 6.4 billion was spent on general education and EUR 2.5 billion - on pre-vocational and vocational education. Altogether, these funds accounted for 4.7% of total public expenditure and 2% of Poland's GDP, which was slightly less than the EU average (2.3%)³³. Furthermore, when we take into account the size of the population receiving secondary education we will see that Poland is one of Member States which allocate relatively small funds to this field of expenditure. It can be expected therefore that as the educational system changes (demographic considerations, demand for investment in human resources and in infrastructure, labour market changes), funds earmarked for education (including secondary education) will be gradually increased.

³³ Eurostat statistics, *Guidelines and template for the 2009 edition of VET in Europe - Country Reports, Annex IIB*, Table 6.

1.4 - EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF POPULATION

In 2007, the percentage of the population aged 18-24 with at most lower secondary education and not in further education or training in Poland was 5%, a relatively low figure compared to the average 14.8% in the EU. The Eurostat data show decreasing tendency both in Europe and in Poland since 2002 (17.1% in the EU and 7.6% in Poland). It may mean that the awareness of the need for good education is growing in society, enhanced by conditions of the labour market - people with low education have the least chances for jobs. This can be proved by the Eurostat data concerning percentage of the population aged 20 to 24 having completed at least upper secondary education: in 2007, 91.6% of Polish young people from that age group had completed at least secondary education what exceeds the EU average of 78.1%. Also the percentage of population with tertiary level education (ISCED 5-6) is steadily growing: in 2004 it was 16% and in 2007, 19% (see Tables 1 and 2).

TABLE 1: PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION AGED 18-24 WITH AT MOST LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION AND NOT IN FURTHER EDUCATION OR TRAINING

| | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
|--------|------|------|---------|------|------|------|
| EU 27 | 17.1 | 16.6 | 15.9 | 15.5 | 15.2 | 14.8 |
| Poland | 7.6 | 6.3 | 5.7 (b) | 5.5 | 5.6 | 5 |

(b) Break in series

Source: Eurostat; EU Labour Force Survey; Date of extraction: 29 May 2008

TABLE 2: PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION AGED 20 TO 24 HAVING COMPLETED AT LEAST UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION

| | 2002 | 2005 | 2007 |
|--------|------|------|------|
| EU 27 | 76.7 | 77.5 | 78.1 |
| Poland | 89.2 | 91.1 | 91.6 |

Source: Eurostat, Date of extraction : 27 Feb 09

However, the participation of adults in lifelong learning is still relatively low and only slightly exceeded 5% in 2007. For more information, please see also 5.1.

1.5 - DEFINITIONS

Work on the Lifelong learning strategy and the National Qualifications Framework necessitated broader discussion concerning concepts which are channelled into Polish education from European documents. The experts' findings (e.g. from their work in system-related projects implemented under Priority III of OP HC) will allow for a better description of the relationship showing how these concepts are understood in Poland and in other EU Member States.

The concepts defined in European documents have been furnished with several definitions. It should be borne in mind however that these definitions are not universally acknowledged by the educators' community and sometimes stand in sharp contrast with their traditional connotations in general pedagogy or pedagogy of work.

It should also be noted that some concepts (such as "competences") are currently understood differently in general education and in VET.

GENERAL EDUCATION - KSZTAŁCENIE OGÓLNE

Education intended to ensure an understanding of subjects or groups of subjects through courses with a general orientation, not focusing on any particular specialisation.

Source: Ordinance of the Council of Ministers of 6 May 2003 on the Polish Classification of Education.

The scope of the concept is similar to the European one.

PRE-VOCATIONAL EDUCATION - KSZTAŁCENIE PRZEDZAWODOWE

Period of learning until vocational education is started; it comprises education acquired in the family (at home), and in pre-school, primary and lower secondary school. Specific tasks associated with pre-vocational training include: 1) preliminary introduction into the world of labour and economy; and 2) preparation for choosing an occupation.

Source: Nowacki T., Leksykon pedagogiki pracy, 2004.

The ISCED definition refers to formal training and additionally quotes a quantitative factor (25% of the course curriculum must be occupation-related or technical in content). The Polish definition looks at the term more broadly, and also links it to knowledge acquired outside the formal context.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION - KSZTAŁCENIE ZAWODOWE

Vocational education refers to pre-vocational education, vocational education proper and all forms of vocational development or further education and continuing professional development. We could therefore define vocational education as all structured activities and processes leading to the acquisition of vocational competence/qualifications, including career guidance, and in particular preparation to work in a specific occupation in a specific sector, and at a specific position.

Source: Nowacki T., *Leksykon pedagogiki pracy*, 2004.

The Polish definition refers to formal education and contains no information about validation of qualifications acquired in training. However, upon completion of vocational education in basic vocational school, technical secondary school or post-secondary school, the candidate may sit an examination confirming vocational qualifications. Such an examination is not compulsory. Certificates confirming vocational qualifications are issued by regional examination boards (OKEs).

TECHNICAL EDUCATION - KSZTAŁCENIE TECHNICZNE

Technical education can be divided into general technical education and technical vocational education. Its main goals include provision of basic technical and technological knowledge and development of skills needed for the proper performing of tasks specific to a given occupational profile.

Source: Nowacki T., *Leksykon pedagogiki pracy*, 2004.

This is a narrower term than vocational education.

INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING - WSTĘPNE KSZTAŁCENIE I SZKOLENIE ZAWODOWE

No official definition of the IVET is used in Poland. For the purposes of European studies, publications and reports the definition presented in “P. Tissot: Terminology of vocational training policy. A multilingual glossary for an enlarged Europe. Luxembourg, 2004 CEDEFOP” is adopted: **initial vocational education and training (IVET)** is general or vocational education carried out in the initial education system, usually before entering working life. This definition can be also applied to the Polish education system. IVET is available at every stage of general or vocational education or in apprenticeship. Also, certain forms of training offered or received after entry into working life (such as retraining) may be considered as initial training.

ALTERNANCE TRAINING - KSZTAŁCENIE PRZEMIENNE

There is no official definition used in Poland. For other systems the definition from European Educational Thesaurus is applied: Periods of training in a training establishment alternating with periods of work experience.

APPRENTICESHIP - NAUKA ZAWODU U PRACODAWCY

Apprenticeship in Poland can take one of 2 forms: as practical training at the employer's with theoretical knowledge completed in formal basic vocational school or in non-formal forms in order to acquire qualification of an apprentice or skilled worker and as training at the employer's to perform a specific job, covering only selected work activities comprised by training for a specific occupation. See also 0404.

TERTIARY EDUCATION OR HIGHER EDUCATION - KSZTAŁCENIE WYŻSZE

Tertiary education is offered by colleges (teacher training colleges, foreign language teacher training colleges, colleges of social workers, level ISCED 5B), higher education institutions (ISCED 5A and ISCED 6), and academic and research institutions (ISCED 6).

Higher education programmes include first-cycle courses (undergraduate, or first-degree), second-cycle courses (graduate, or second-degree) and long-cycle courses (directly leading to second degree).

Teacher training colleges, foreign language teacher training colleges and colleges of social workers are included in the higher education system for the purposes of international comparisons only and are not regarded as components of the tertiary system in light of national legislation (*Education System Act of 7 September 1991*).

Source: System edukacji w Polsce, Eurydice, 2007

POST-SECONDARY NON-TERTIARY EDUCATION - KSZTAŁCENIE POLICEALNE

Post-secondary schools prepare students for worker occupations or occupations and specialities which require secondary education. Programme duration varies from occupation to occupation and is defined in the VET classification of occupations (from 1 to 2.5 years).

In the Polish system, post-secondary schooling belongs to post-*gimnazjum* education (secondary), and corresponds to ISCED level 4.

Source: System edukacji w Polsce, Eurydice, 2007

This meaning largely overlaps with the European definitions.

TRAINING - SZKOLENIE

Training is a form of non-school instruction aimed to acquire, supplement or improve vocational or generic skills and competences needed to perform a job, including ability to seek employment.

CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (CVET) - USTAWICZNE KSZTAŁCENIE I SZKOLENIE ZAWODOWE

Continuing education refers to learning in schools for adults as well as acquiring and improving general knowledge and vocational skills and competences in out-of-school forms by individuals beyond compulsory education age. CVET may be provided via full-time, extramural and distance programmes, in schools for adults, practical training centres and further training centres.

Source: Education System Act of 7 September 1991 with further amendments.

The Polish definition does not include non-formal training, including employer-based training.

CONTINUING EDUCATION -KSZTAŁCENIE USTAWICZNE (UNESCO - NAIROBI 1976)

It refers to a set of educational processes, whether formal, non-formal or informal, which regardless of their content, level and methods allow to improve educational attainment in school-based and other forms, as a result of which adults can enhance their skills, broaden their knowledge, upgrade their vocational qualifications, learn a new occupation or change their attitudes.

Source: Strategy for the development of continuing education until 2010 [in Polish], Ministry of National Education and Sport, a document adopted by the Council of Ministers on 8 July 2003.

The term 'continuing education' is gradually being replaced by the term 'lifelong learning'.

SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMMES - KSZTAŁCENIE SZKOLNE

The term refers to instruction provided in full-time, extramural or evening programmes in various types of schools, using the curriculum statutorily defined for a given level of education.

Source: BAED, 2004.

The scope of the concept is similar to the European one.

CURRICULUM - PROGRAM NAUCZANIA

In the Polish education system, a curriculum refers to a description of the method for fulfilling goals and tasks defined in the core curriculum or other tasks supporting the achievement of those goals. The regulations concerning approval of textbooks and curricula for use in schools differentiate between general education curriculum which comprises no less than one stage of education and refers to integrated instruction, subject, educational path, set of subjects or their part; curriculum for specific occupations and curriculum for general vocational education which is a set of structured, intentional patterns of skills and learning contents stipulated in the core curriculum for a specific occupation or in the core curriculum for general vocational education, as defined in separate regulations, including guidelines concerning the delivery of the teaching process and evaluation of learning outcomes.

Source: Ordinance of Ministry of National Education and Sport of 5 February 2004 on approval of pre-school and school curricula and textbooks for use in schools and withdrawal of such approval.

QUALIFICATION - KWALIFIKACJE

Definition 1

Vocational qualifications refer to a set of skills, knowledge, physical and psychical features needed to perform occupational tasks in a given job. Supra-vocational, general vocational, basic vocational and specialised vocational qualifications may be distinguished.

Source: National Vocational Qualification Standards - Development and cooperation - project entitled “Development and Dissemination of National Vocational Qualification Standards” implemented by the Labour Market Department of Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Warsaw 2007.

Definition 2

A similar definition of qualifications can be found in the Ordinance of the Minister of Economy and Labour of 8 December 2004 on the classification of occupations and specialties for the needs of the labour market and the scope of its application. A skill was defined as a verified capability to perform a set of relevant tasks within an occupation (specialty), whilst vocational qualifications refer to sets of knowledge and skills needed to perform constituent vocational tasks.

None of these definitions is directly related to confirmation or validation of the acquired qualifications or learning outcomes.

SKILLS - UMIEJĘTNOŚCI ZAWODOWE

The term ‘skills’ refers to an ability to perform activities leading to a completion of an occupational or professional task.

Source: National Vocational Qualification Standards - Development and cooperation - project entitled “Development and Dissemination of National National Vocational Qualification Standards” implemented by the Labour Market Department of Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Warsaw 2007.

The scope of the concept of the Polish definition is much more narrow than the European concept. It should be borne in mind however that typically skills are accompanied by knowledge and certain physical and psychological features. With such a triad, the concept’s scope is similar to the European definition. Furthermore, the Polish definition has no division into cognitive and practical skills.

COMPETENCES - KOMPETENCJE

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.

In the recent works on the Polish Qualification Framework the experts defined the term “competence” as “set of learning outcomes i.e that what a person knows, understands and is able to do”.

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

2.1 - OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES OF THE NATIONAL POLICY DEVELOPMENT AREAS OF VET

2.1.1 - NATIONAL LLL STRATEGY

In 2003, *the Strategy for the Development of Lifelong Learning until 2010* was developed by the Ministry of National Education and Sport and accepted by the Council of Ministers. The main goal of the Strategy was to assign directions of lifelong learning based on the idea of learning through the entire life and forming a knowledge-based society. The strategy also included assignments for the government and self-government administration, research and educational institutions and social partners. The realization of these assignments would enable to set the trend of the European dimension of learning through the entire life. Additionally, *the Education and Training 2010 Programme*, which was accepted by the Ministers of Education and the European Commission in 2002, had an influence on the policy of education and vocational training.

Up till now the new national lifelong learning (LLL) strategy has not yet been developed in Poland, although *the National Reform Programme for Years 2008-2011* worked out by the Ministry of Economy foresees preparation and implementation of the LLL strategy together with legal and institutional instruments resulting from it. To respond to the challenge of elaboration of the national LLL strategy, the Ministry of National Education undertook certain steps such as the appointment of a team of experts and counsellors who will be responsible for preparing the necessary reforms in vocational education. Moreover, under *the Operational Programme Human Capital* the Ministry of National Education carries out activities focused on creating and implementing the National Qualification Framework and promoting lifelong learning.

2.1.2 - POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN THE MAIN VET POLICY AREAS

GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

Governing and financing vocational education takes place on the central and regional levels. In 2009, non-governmental organisations offer scholarships for vocational school pupils. Local self-governments accept applications for material aid for vocational school pupils (scholarships, allowances). The *Education Development Strategy* for the years 2007-2013 foresees creating “special educational zones” in the areas where specific educational problems occur, for instance areas with a large number of pupils who have difficult educational start due to poor social and living conditions; areas densely populated; and areas with a large Romany community. For those “special educational zones” additional funding will be available.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

In December 2008, a meeting of the team of experts and counsellors for the VET reform took place at the Ministry of National Education. The main topic of the meeting was the role vocational counselling and guidance in the educational system.

Moreover, the *National Centre for Supporting Vocational and Continuing Education (KOWEZiU)* organizes courses for vocational counsellors upgrading their skills and knowledge, amongst the others, in vocational counselling for disadvantaged groups, e.g.

disabled people. A virtual platform for vocational counsellors was also launched (<http://www.koweziu.edu.pl/moodle>) enabling easy access for further training.

TEACHER AND TRAINER TRAINING

On 1 September 2009, a new legislation regarding teachers' qualifications will come into force. The new legislation will increase the qualification requirements for teachers in basic vocational schools - they will have to have at least higher vocational education and pedagogical preparation. This change is to contribute to a better quality of the vocational education and to allow for better preparation of pupils for external exams validating vocational qualifications.

CURRICULUM REFORM AND INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

In order to popularise a more flexible way of vocational education based on modular curricula, the *National Centre for Supporting Vocational and Continuing Education (KOWEZiU)* placed on its website information regarding the project "Preparation of innovative curricula for vocational education and training". All the curricula were accepted for use in the school year 2009/2010 by the Ministry of National Education (<http://www.koweziu.edu.pl/index.php?id=pakiety>). Moreover, 3438 educational packages for 185 vocations were made available on the website. The packages include a guide for pupils and a guide for teachers and offer necessary didactic base for modular curricula, however they can also be useful for traditional curricula.

The Ministry of National Education plans to introduce curricular changes in vocational education which will come into force on 1 September 2009. The changes will make acquiring vocational qualifications for the whole life easier. Vocational education will be better linked with enterprises and external exams validating vocational qualifications will also take into account qualifications acquired outside vocational schools.

SKILLS NEEDS STRATEGY

Up till now any skill needs strategy has not been developed, however, the Centre of Human Resource Development (CRZL) is currently carrying out a project called "Diagnosing qualification and skills demand on the regional and local labour market - cooperation between labour offices, employers and other partners on the labour market" aimed at gathering information on all methods, tools and procedures for diagnosing demand for occupations / qualifications / skills on regional and local labour markets; analysing their functionality and usefulness; and designing new adequate methods, tools and procedures for public employment services. Another project carried out by CRZL regards working out recommendations for changes in the presently used methodology for monitoring surplus and scarce occupations on the local labour market.

VALIDATION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

There are no current initiatives concerning validation of non-formal and informal learning.

2.1.3 - CURRENT DEBATES

Numerous debates on the governmental level regard plans to introduce common range of general education in first grade of all secondary vocational schools as a base for further formal, non-formal and informal education. Also the issue of creating the system for assessment and recognition of learning outcomes gained through informal and non-formal education.

2.2 - THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD OF EUROPEAN TOOLS

NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK, NQF

In Poland, a National Qualification Framework has not yet been implemented, but works on their design are being carried out under the project *“Stocktaking of competences and qualifications for the Polish labour market and the development of the National Qualifications Framework model”* financed from the Operational Programme Human Capital. For more information about the project see point 10.3.

EUROPEAN CREDIT TRANSFER SYSTEM FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING, ECVET

Similarly to the European Qualification Framework, work on ECVET has also been delayed. Social consultations about the European Credit Transfer System for Vocational Education and Training were organised (between November 2006 and 31st March 2007) by the Ministry of National Education - Department of Vocational and Continuing Education. In Poland these consultations were related to dissemination of information about the ECVET system and to organization of debates and sharing of opinions on the topic of the proposal from the EU Commission. A big number of ministries, different institutions, organizations and other authorities were involved in the process. Hundreds of people were dedicated to it.

Implementation of the ECVET system is linked with education and vocational training on pre-university level and all different sectors.

Nowadays identification actions are carried out to analyse the results of social consultations. The big majority of the respondents considered the ECVET system as an innovative initiative, which will be useful for the society. In Poland evaluation and certification of qualifications seems to be easier than in other countries, due to the fact that the Polish system of education is strongly centralized. There are no regional divisions and thus differences in evaluation of the same qualifications in different regions of the country are not significant.

When the process of consultation was finished, the experts responsible for the elaboration of the principles of the system were given the following tasks:

- creation of a common glossary of terms and concepts, to develop methodology of formation process of learning units, evaluation, transfer, recognition of learning outcomes and giving ECVET points;
- postulate of thorough and sufficient in time pilot implementation of the system, precisely supervised on the European level; and
- consequent supervision of the process of preparation preceding the implementation of the system, especially in terms of preparation of guidelines, preparation of typical procedures and model documents.

EUROPASS

Implementation of EUROPASS in Poland in the years 2005-2006 was preceded by an update of the Polish laws. Nowadays all of the documents which form a part of EUROPASS can be obtained in Poland. The EUROPASS - Supplement to Diploma has been used obligatorily by universities since 1 January 2005. The EUROPASS - Certificate Supplement has been used in Poland since 2006 and provided by Regional Examination Commissions. This document is given to the graduates of upper secondary vocational schools who have passed an exam validating their professional qualifications. In 2008, **142 749** Europass Certificate Supplements were issued. The EUROPASS - Mobility has been used in Poland since 2005 and is issued by the National EUROPASS Centre (KCE). In 2008, **3 877** Europass Mobility documents were issued, mostly for Leonardo da Vinci beneficiaries.

The National EUROPASS Centre (KCE) was created by decision of the Minister of National Education and Sport in 2005 and forms part of the Task Force for Training and Human Resources in the "Cooperation Fund" Foundation. Since 1 January 2009, the KCE was transferred to the Education System Development Foundation (FRSE) which also plays a role in the LLL Programme National Agency.

Since 2005, the Polish version of the EUROPASS documents - CV, EUROPASS Language Passport and EUROPASS Mobility- has been available on the EUROPASS European website. The Polish EUROPASS website has been functioning since May 2005. It comprises models of documents and instructions to fill them in, and the link to the European EUROPASS website. The KCE carries out numerous promotional and information activities presenting the Europass initiative to different target groups: vocational counsellors, employers, teachers, students and secondary school pupils, unemployed and job seekers. The representatives of the KCE take part in many events organised at national and regional levels - conferences, labour fair, educational fairs - and they also organise their own conferences, workshops and meetings.

Since its creation in Poland, Europass has been promoted in the media (TV, nation-wide and regional radio stations, daily press and specialist magazines) and on-line (portals for job-seekers, students, HR departments, teachers etc.).

The main way to improve synergies between EUROPASS, ECVET and EQF is to elaborate National Qualification Framework and to adjust it to the European Qualification Framework, a step that has not been taken yet See 1003.

GEOGRAPHICAL MOBILITY IN VET

The strategy for development of education for the years 2007-2013 includes preparation for mobility on international education level and in the labour market through:

- Opening of Polish system of education to pupils, students, teachers and international lecturers, including preparation of programmes of education in foreign languages and creation of good living conditions and social base.
- Students' exchange programmes of primary, secondary and university students as well as for vocational education participants.
- Foreign traineeships and apprenticeships for teachers and university teachers.

- Development of international system of recognition of professional qualifications, periods of studies, validations and diplomas.

Mobility, that forms a part of VET in Poland, is mainly promoted by the Lifelong Learning Programme with its components: Leonardo da Vinci, Comenius, Erasmus and study visits. The following actions are underpinned by geographical mobility:

- Students and teachers exchange;
- mobility in schools for students and traineeships in schools or companies for teachers;
- participation in trainings of teachers and other teaching human resources;
- study and preparation visits executed in the framework of actions related to mobility, partnership, projects or networks (contact seminars included); and
- trainings for teachers and for teachers-to-be.

For the vocational education and training, Leonardo da Vinci plays the biggest role enabling IVET and CVET students acquiring vocational experience and qualifications in other EU countries. In 2007/2008, 4 612 Polish students took advantage of this possibility.

In December 2008, the LLL National Agency launched a new action within Leonardo da Vinci programme: vocational placements for individuals. The action is foreseen as a pilot project till October 2009 and is directed to youths participating in the last years of IVET or those who have just finished it.

As regards university students, a considerable increase of mobility has been noted due to the programme Socrates- Erasmus, both in the number of universities participating in the programme and the number of students. This increase is not only due to the fact that students are very much interested in the possibilities of covering a part of their studies abroad at partner universities, but also due to a better understanding of mechanisms of education recognition and better quality of services offered to students going abroad and coming to a given country. It also results from decisions taken by Polish universities, which realise how important the process of making education international is, and the role that, in the process of internationalization, mobility of students and university teachers plays. A special attention has been put to the actions which increase the number of students coming to Poland: new courses have been organised, which are taught in the most common EU languages (mainly in English); and improvement of functioning of Bureau of International Collaboration to make sure that international students will receive services of a better quality. However, in spite of a gradual improvement, there is still a lack of balance in international exchange. 16 Erasmus programmes have been functioning since 1998. In the years 1998-2007, 53 530 of Polish students participated in international scholarships programmes and over 13 500 foreign students came for exchange to Polish universities. Over 9 400 Polish university teachers went abroad as lecturers. In the academic year 2007/2008, 11 886 Polish students went to study abroad and 976 participated in vocational placements. In the same academic year 256 Polish universities took part in the programme.

2.3 - POSSIBLE PROJECTIONS OF THE FINANCIAL CRISIS ON VET POLICIES

2.3.1 - THE FORESEEN CONSEQUENCES OF THE CRISIS ON VET

Global financial crisis in many sectors of economy forces negative changes on the labour market. Highly qualified experts, who had to leave commercial enterprises, started looking for jobs at schools, which offered stable employment. Therefore, an increase of the number of highly qualified teachers at vocational schools can be noted.

Slowly increasing unemployment suggests that the planned changes in vocational education should go into direction of larger flexibility, allowing quick re-qualification. Wider use of modular education and planned works on recognition of non-formal and informal education will likely serve the purpose.

In vocational schools new class profiles are opened due to the requirements of the labour market. In Silesia, the employers from the mining sector concluded agreements with schools securing employment for vocational school leavers in order to avoid a generation gap in this branch. An *e-guide* for vocational school leavers, and labour offices' and enterprises' personnel was created, where the latter put information on occupations in demand. On the basis of this information, educational boards will be able to open required class profiles in particular schools.

However, the Silesian example is not very common - usually employers do not invest in vocational education or work preparation because they often cannot indicate their own staff needs or needed directions of vocational education and training. There is a strong need for creating a system for research regarding directions of vocational education and training needed by the economy in short and long-term perspective. It is possible that the employers' interest in investing in vocational education will be even weaker due to some financial problems induced by the economic crisis.

Schools promote entrepreneurship and self-employment, putting stress on so-called *responsible business*. Also educational fairs focus more on promoting self-employment than on offering pupils and school leavers jobs and training.

2.3.2 THE MEASURES ALREADY TAKEN OR ENVISAGED TO BE TAKEN AS RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS

As a response to the crisis the government undertook some budget cuts in public administration, however it seems that the changes in vocational education and training will not be threatened. Most of these activities are financed from the EFS. In April 2009, a conference "Future of the vocational education" took place. During the conference the Ministry of National Education presented planned reforms of vocational education: modernisation of external vocational exams, organisation of vocational education, further training of practical instruction teachers and the employers's influence on vocational education process. During discussion the importance of cooperation with employers and the need to build partnerships with entrepreneurs were stressed. Any systemic solutions targeted towards the public vocational education and training system arising from the crisis weren't mentioned.

3 - INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK - PROVISION OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

3.1 - 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.

BASIC LEGISLATION

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, 2003, 2004 and 2009. 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; and the 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 the establishment of new types of schools and the modification of the duration 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 the 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 of National Education and Sport. In recent years approximately over 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); core curricula for vocational education, curricula for particular vocations; general vocational education profiles, rules for employing vocational teachers ,etc.

THE LAW ON HIGHER EDUCATION

On 1st September 2005 a new act, the Law on Higher Education, was introduced in Poland replacing two separate acts of 1990 and of 1997 with one uniform law.

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 *higher education institution* 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.

3.2 - 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 National Education. The Minister of National Education, 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 National Education co-operates with other branch ministers supervising vocational schools: the Minister of Culture and National Heritage (artistic schools), the Minister of Agriculture (agricultural schools) and the Minister of Environment (forestry schools).

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

Furthermore, the Minister of National Education 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. Społeczno-Gospodarczych*) established by resolution of the Council of Ministers of 15th February 1994. The Tripartite Commission is composed of representatives of public administration, employers (e.g. Business Centre Club, Confederation of Polish Employers, Polish Confederation of Private Employers, Association of Polish Crafts and the National Chamber of Commerce), the largest trade unions (*NSZZ Solidarnosc*, *OPZZ* and Trade Unions' Forum) as well as some sectoral trade unions. All these organisations function in 2 capacities in the VET field: both as consultative bodies and as initiators of legal measures.

Another body for social dialogue at national level is the Central Employment Board (*Naczelna Rada Zatrudnienia*) which fulfils an advisory role to the Minister of Labour. It consists of representatives of public administration, employers' organisations, trade unions and representatives of territorial self-governments. It is consulted on, amongst other things, issues concerning training for unemployed people, programmes promoting employment, planning and use of the Labour Fund (state purpose fund).

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

REGIONAL LEVEL

The regional authorities (*województwa*) mainly play a co-ordinating role: they supervise the implementation of the national policy and provide pedagogical supervision. The representative of the educational authority at this level is a school superintendent (*kurator*), who is appointed by the head of the regional government (*wojewoda*). The regional authorities also run schools and educational establishments of regional significance, including schools for medical staff and social workers, public establishments for teacher training and development, as well as teachers' libraries. A 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 educational 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/She 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).

3.3 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR CVET

There is no separate institutional framework for CVET in Poland. Please refer to section 0301.

3.4 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK: CVET

There is no separate institutional framework for CVET in Poland. Please refer to section 0302.

4 - INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

4.1 - BACKGROUND TO THE IVET SYSTEM AND DIAGRAM

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 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 *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 fields³⁴) or 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 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;

³⁴ Source: European Glossary on Education. Volume 1. Examinations, Qualifications and Titles. Eurydice 2004

- 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.

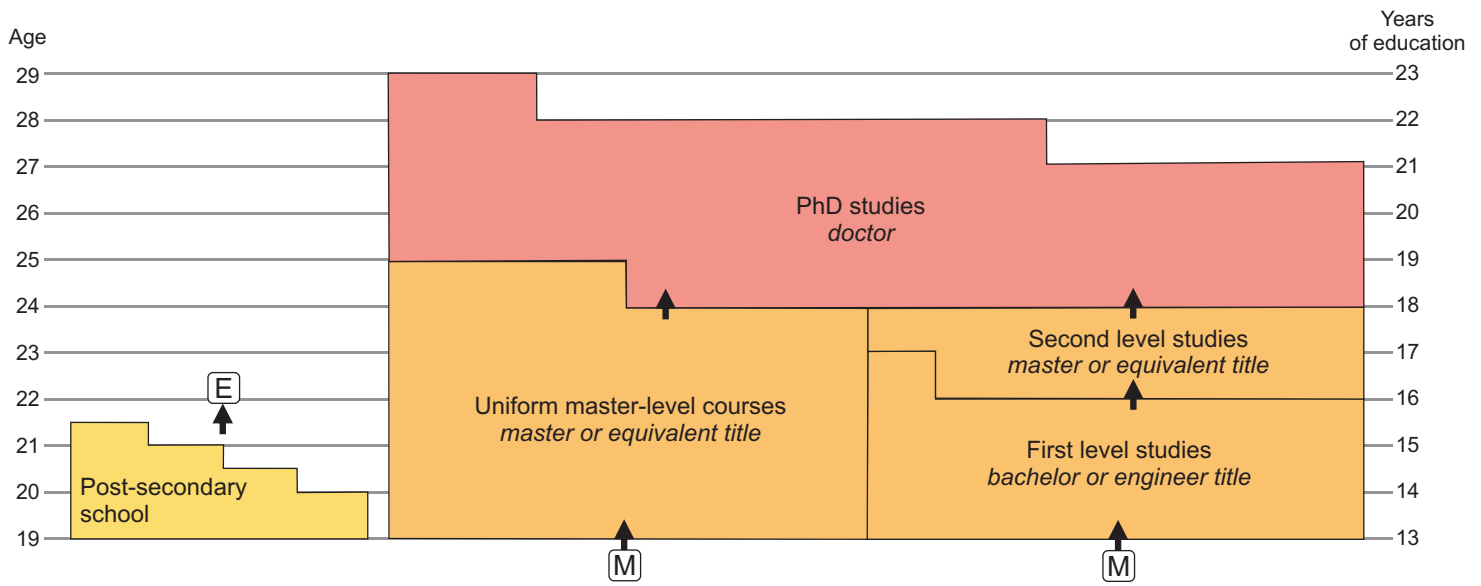
The reason for the different forms of upper secondary schooling lies in the different educational objectives of particular types of schools. General secondary schools (*licea ogólnokształcące*) prepare their students for obtaining an upper secondary school-leaving certificate after passing a *matura* 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 2008/2009 school year, there were 8,464 upper secondary vocational schools for youths including 400 special needs schools. There were also 1,078 upper secondary vocational schools for adults.

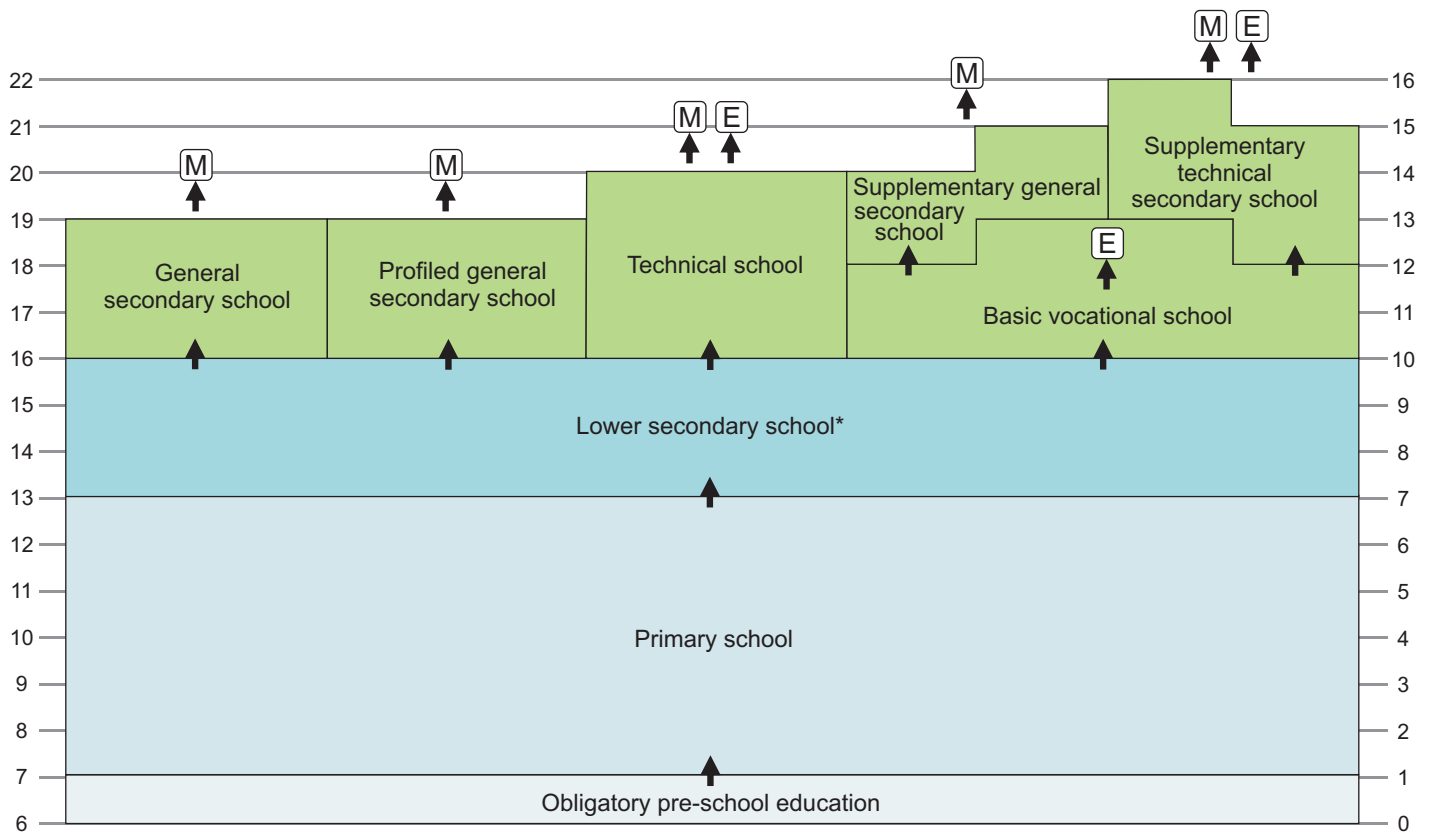
The Polish Education System is summarised in the following chart (see next page).

THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN POLAND



M Maturity examination
maturity certificate

E External examination confirming
vocational qualifications



*Including lower secondary schools with work preparation classes

4.2 - IVET AT LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL

| Type of educational programme | Main economic sectors | Corresponding ISCED level and orientation | Balance between general and vocational subjects [%] | Balance between theoretical and practical training [%] | Average duration of studies | Transfer to other pathways |
|-------------------------------|--|---|--|---|-----------------------------|---|
| Lower secondary schools* | Similar as in basic vocational schools | 2 A | 85:15 (**) | 85:15 (***) | 3 | Basic vocational schools, General secondary schools, Profiled general secondary schools, Technical secondary schools, Special schools |

* work preparation classes concern only 1.35% of the total lower secondary population and are addressed to pupils reaching the age of 15 with learning and truancy problems

** this percentage concerns only work preparation classes

***this percentage concerns only work preparation classes and participation in Voluntary Labour Corps

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 complete 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 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.

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

| Type of educational programme | Main economic sectors | Corresponding ISCED level/orientation | Balance between general and vocational subjects | Balance between theoretical and practical training | Average duration of studies | Transfer to other pathways |
|------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|---|--|-----------------------------|---|
| Profiled general secondary schools | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chemical tests of environment • Business and administration • Forestry and wood technology • Fashion design • Shaping the environment • Mechanical techniques of productions • Mechatronics • Electronics • Electrotechnics • Agricultural and food processing • Art and usable metal craft • Social • Transport and dispatching • Services and economies • Information management • Ordinance of the Minister of National Education and Sport of 26 Feb 2002 | 3 A | 87 / 13 % | | 3 | <p>Post-secondary schools,</p> <p>Tertiary education courses subject to passing of the maturity examination</p> |
| Basic vocational schools | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture • Horticulture • Forestry • Fishing • Mining • Construction | 3 C | 47 / 53 % | 40 / 60 % | 2-3 | Supplementary technical school, supplementary general |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|-----|-----------|---|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metalworking • Mechanics of machines • Toolmaking, smithery • Electricity and electronics • Ceramics, accessories, printing • Classification of VET Occupations | | | | | secondary school |
| Supplementary technical secondary schools | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mining • Construction • Engineering • Chemistry • Economy • Administration • Electronics • Electrotechnics • Sea transport, inland navigation • Mechanics • Mechatronics • Agriculture • Textiles • Transport • Information management • Classification of VET Occupations | 3 A | | From 25 % / 75 % (*) to 75 % / 25 % | 3 | Tertiary education courses subject to passing of the maturity examination |
| Technical secondary schools | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mining • Construction • Engineering • Chemistry • Economy • Administration • Electronics • Electrotechnics • Sea transport, inland navigation • Mechanics • Mechatronics • Agriculture • Textiles • Transport • Information management • Classification of VET Occupations | 3 A | 64 / 36 % | From 20 % / 80 % for such profession as Tuner to 75 % / 25 % (**) | 4 | Tertiary education courses subject to passing of the maturity examination |

** e.g. optical Technician or Technician - clothing industry

** e.g. Technician - water engineering or Technician - railway roads and bridge building

The basic criterion for admittance to all schools at the upper secondary level is completion of the lower secondary school or *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 language 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 started in 2005. Moreover, with an upper secondary school-leaving certificate (*matura*), leavers can access higher education institutions, including higher vocational schools.

In the 2008/2009 school year, profiled general secondary schools were attended by 72.5 thousands pupils. Only 5% gymnasium leavers chose this type of school in the 2007/2008 school year compared with the 2008/2009 school year when 3,6% of pupils only went to the first class of this type of school.

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 school system two types of upper secondary technical school are functioning: technical secondary schools for *gimnazjum* leavers and supplementary technical schools for basic vocational school leavers. In the school year 2008/2009 there were 555 226 pupils in both types of those schools, including 218 427 girls. In the same school year 32% of lower secondary school leavers continued their education in technical secondary schools.

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

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

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

The only vocational school at the upper secondary level that awards a vocational qualification diploma but does not lead to a *matura* is the **basic vocational school** (*zasadnicza szkoła zawodowa*), which confers the qualifications of a skilled worker. Education in this type of school starts at the age of 16 and lasts 2 or 3 years, depending on the vocation. The duration of education for particular vocations is indicated in 'The

Classification of Vocations for Vocational Schooling' (*klasyfikacja zawodow 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 2008/2009 school year, basic vocational schools were educating 50 200 pupils. This type of school was the choice of 20% gymnasium leavers in 2007.

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

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

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 20/80% to 25/75%.

Around 20% (data from 2001) of pupils attending basic vocational schools (at the worker level) receive their practical vocational training in craftsmen's workshops. There are no collective and comprehensive data showing what percentage of pupils (of basic and secondary vocational schools) obtains their practical vocational training in enterprises and in school workshops, and what percentage in practical training centres (CKP) and continuing education centres (CKU). 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 National Education and Sport- 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 the establishment of a network of companies which will offer practical training for pupils and teachers and will support schools' technical base.

Vocational placements in all types of vocational schools lasting 4 weeks are 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.

The 2006 Eurostat data indicate that the number of participants in vocational education on the ISCED 3 level amounted to 885 427, what made 44% of all participants in upper secondary education. In years 2005 and 2003 the percentage was respectively 45% and 54%. According to the data of National Statistical Office, the participation in vocational programmes on the upper secondary level rose to 57% in the 2007/2008 school year. After a couple of years of bigger popularity of general education since the school year 2006/2007 a significant increase of interest in vocational education has been noted. In that school year, the number of first grade pupils in vocational schools rose 4% compared to the previous school year. It can be explained by the changes on the labour market connected with the Polish accession to the EU and gradual opening of the European labour markets to Polish employees. External demand for qualified workers and their migration to other EU countries prompted the increase of national demand for workers having certified qualifications in particular vocations.

TABLE 1: STUDENTS IN UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION BY PROGRAMME ORIENTATION, 2005-2006

| Countries | Total ISCED 3 | Vocational programmes as a percentage of total ISCED 3 | | |
|---------------|---------------|--|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | | Vocational (%) | Pre-vocational (%) | Vocational and pre-vocational (%) |
| EU27 in 2005 | 26036676 | 55.9 | 4.6 | 60.5 |
| EU 27 in 2006 | 22205390 | 46.4 | 5.3 | 51.7 |
| PL in 2005 | 2113088 | 45.0 | 0.0 | 45.0 |
| PL in 2006 | 2010654 | 44.0 | 0.0 | 44.0 |

Source: Eurostat, UOE data collection.

4.4 - APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

| Type of educational programme | Main economic sectors | Corresponding ISCED level/orientation | Balance between general and vocational subjects | Balance between school-based and work-based training | Average duration of studies | Transfer to other pathways |
|-------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|---|--|-----------------------------|--|
| Occupational training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction • Metalworking • Mechanics of machines • Toolmaking, smithery • Electricity and electronics • Food processing • Wood processing • Beauty care • Textile, garment and related making • Leather processing | 3 C | 47 / 53 % | 40 / 60 % | 2-3 | Supplementary technical school, supplementary general secondary school |

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 the 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:

- Apprenticeship as occupational training, aimed to prepare young trainees (under the age of 18) for work as apprentices 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 out of the school system. Most pupils (88%) complete their theoretical education in basic vocational schools, and the rest, coming mostly from rural areas and small towns or opting for training in occupations not listed in the 'school classification', in out-of-school forms.
- Apprenticeship as training to perform a specific job, covering only selected work activities comprised by training for a specific occupation. Training to perform a specific job is limited to a small group of youths who, because of different reasons, did not complete lower secondary school and are at least 15 years of age. After finishing training to perform a specific job, the juvenile workers can continue their vocational education in the form of occupational training and the duration of the first is included into the 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, the 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 (ZRP), in the 2008/2009 school year, in 24 815 enterprises, 92 652 juvenile workers were participating in apprenticeship training. Vocational training in the crafts is offered in 110 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: 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.

4.5 - OTHER YOUTH PROGRAMMES AND ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS

In recognition that young people from specific 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 between the age of 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; coming from dysfunctional, broken or jobless families; or 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:

- lower secondary schools (*gimnazja*) with work preparation classes;
- 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 (mostly organised by the Association of Polish Crafts).

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 | 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 |
| 2007/2008 | 33 575 | 9 372 | 15 269 | 18 306 | 31 197 |

* Usually only 20-25 people yearly 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 2008.*

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

In the 2008/2009 school year there were 3 369 post-secondary schools educating 344.1 thousand 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 school leavers are completion of upper secondary school, and for 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 national 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 (CKU), Practical Training Centres (CKP), employers' companies and 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.

4.7 - 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 prepares 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. Year 2008/2009 shows there were 108 colleges and 21 300 people were attending to them.

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. At the beginning of the 2007/2008 academic year 1,937,400 students were educated in all types of higher education institutions but in the 2008/2009 academic year 1,927,762 students were attending these institutions.

5 - CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS

5.1 - FORMAL EDUCATION

5.1.1 - GENERAL BACKGROUND (ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND FINANCING)

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, and further training centres;and
 - Chamber of crafts.
- Continuing education can be carried out on regular daily basis, as extramural or distance learning.

Continuing education is carried out in the school and out-of-school systems and the institutions of continuing education can be both public and private. This means that, apart from the above mentioned institutions, continuing education is provided by such institutions and organisations, such 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.

The “Development Strategy for Continuing Education until 2010” which was accepted by the Council of Ministers on 8th July 2003 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; and
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.

5.1.2 - MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS OF FORMAL CVET

PROVIDERS

Continuing education takes place in schools for adults, continuing education centres (CKU), practical training centres (CKP), vocational upgrading and further education centres (ZDZ) and higher education /research institutions offering post-diploma studies, courses and distance learning. Continuing education is also provided by chambers of crafts (see also 0404).

A) SCHOOLS FOR ADULTS

Adult education is provided in schools of all types and at all levels (ISCED 2-ISCED 4), in conformity with the provisions of the Education System Act of 1991. 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 a 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 of 2 July, 2004 (Dz.U. Nr 173.poz.1807) 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.

B) CONTINUING EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (CKU), PRACTICAL TRAINING CENTRES (CKP) AND FURTHER TRAINING CENTRES (ZDZ)

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 of the Education System Act). 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).

C) 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 number of post-diploma students in the 2008/2009 academic year decreased of 5.1 thousand compared with the previous year and amounted 168 400 learners, of which 66,5% were women. The above mentioned institutions organize also short forms of continuing education such as conferences, seminars and workshops.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CERTIFICATES

A student of the school for adults (primary, lower secondary or upper secondary school), who completed a given school, receives a certificate of school completion which has the status of a state certificate.

Graduates of secondary vocational schools who complete education in the school system for adults must take the following examinations:

- examination on vocational proficiency for graduates of basic vocational schools following 8-year primary education (old system);
- examination on vocational preparation for graduates of technical schools following 8-year primary education (old system);
- examination confirming vocational qualifications for graduates of basic vocational schools, technical schools and supplementary technical schools and post-secondary schools following lower secondary school (*gimnazjum*) education (in the new system).

The graduate of the school which is based on education in lower secondary schools (*gimnazjum*), i.e. basic vocational school, supplementary technical school and post-secondary school and the graduate of the hitherto basic vocational and secondary

vocational school who passed vocational examination receives a diploma confirming vocational qualifications.

The graduate of the upper secondary school i.e. general secondary school, profiled general secondary school, technical secondary school, supplementary general secondary school and supplementary technical school receives upper secondary school-leaving certificate (*matura*).

Examination boards appointed at chambers of crafts (independent from the school system) conduct examinations for the title of apprentice and master craftsman in the occupations being part of a specific craft, which appears in the classification of occupations and specializations. The chamber of crafts issues an apprentice certificate to a person who passed an apprentice examination and a master craftsman's diploma to a person who passed the master examination.

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 of National 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.

DISTANCE LEARNING

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, for instance, the 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.

MEASURES/INSTRUMENTS FOSTERING ACCESS TO CVET

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.

(So far any measures envisaged to be response to the financial crisis haven't been introduced or announced.)

STATISTICAL DATA

In Poland the participation of adults in continuing education is relatively low compared to other EU countries. In 2006 it covered 5% of population in the 24-65 age group, much less than the average in EU which amounted to 10.8%. In the "Report on the state of continuing education in Poland in 2005" prepared for the Ministry of National Education, financial barriers were considered the main obstacles in continuing education. Moreover the report authors stated that the educational activities are mainly financed from individuals own resources and that the need to continue education after completing the formal one is usually noted by well-educated people. This can be proved by Eurostat data on participation in formal education by educational attainment and working status from 2005 that shows that the highest participation rate can be noted in programmes on the ISCED levels 5-6 and the lowest in the programmes on the ISCED levels 2 and 3. The data also shows that usually employed people are more likely to participate in formal education, because they may be more aware that further education will allow them to keep their jobs. An interesting phenomenon is that Eurostat data shows that in 2005 more unemployed with ISCED levels 5-6 participated in formal continuing vocational training than working people while GUS (National Statistical Office) data from 2006 shows opposite proportions.

The relatively low participation in formal continuing education may result also from low interest and activity of employers in this regard as well as low awareness of such a need from the side of people with low qualifications. Additionally there are groups that face additional problems in access to continuing education - the disabled, 45+, women coming back to the labour market after maternity leaves, etc. For example, in 2006 people in the age group 45+/50+ represented only 8% of all participants in continuing education.

The analysis of the above mentioned data leads to the conclusion that the continuing education policy should concentrate on the following issues:

- overcoming the barriers in access to education for disadvantaged groups (the disabled, 45+, women, long-term unemployed), using, among the others, results of projects carried out under the EQUAL Initiative;
- reinforcing the system of incentives for employers in order to motivate them to invest in staff education; and
- promoting the idea of lifelong learning, especially among people with low qualification.

5.2 - NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

5.2.1 GENERAL BACKGROUND (ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND FINANCING)

The “Development Strategy for Continuing Education until 2010” which was accepted by the Council of Ministers on 8th July 2003 provides the definition of non-formal education as *purposely organised educational activity that takes place outside the formal school system, undertaken individually or as organised group action, enabling a group of participants achievement of assumed educational goals*. Although the aforementioned strategy stresses the importance of non-formal and informal education, it does not elaborate the question any deeper.

Non-formal education cannot be treated as a system. Its different aspects are regulated by separate legislation:

- The amended version of the Education System Act (of June 2003);
- The Act on Promotion of Employment and Institutions of the Labour Market of 20 April 2004;
- The Act on economic activity freedom of 2 July 2004;
- The Labour Code of 26 June 1974;
- Regulation of the Minister of National Education and Sport, and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of 12 October 1993 on rules and conditions concerning the upgrading of vocational qualifications and general education of adults; and
- Regulation of the Minister of National Education and Sport on accreditation of centres providing continuing education in out-of-school forms of 20 December 2003.

Non-formal education is not administered centrally by one body, therefore it is rather difficult to indicate its general objectives or priorities. Mostly it responds to current trends, general continuing vocational training policy (see 5.1.1.) and labour market needs.

Non-formal education is usually paid for. The two exceptions are training financed from ESF or training for the unemployed financed from the Labour Fund. Resources for non-formal continuing education mainly come from:

- State budget;
- Employers;
- Labour Fund;
- Individuals own budgets; and
- Structural funds.

Especially operational programmes financed from ESF such as “Human Resources Development” (2004-2006), “Human Capital” (2007-2013) or Common Initiative EQUAL (2004-2008), contributed to boost different forms of non-formal continuing education for various groups of participants (e.g e-learning platforms) developed as part of projects

carried out under those programmes. Availability of European Structural Funds for training made NGOs more active as training providers.

5.2.2 MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS OF NON-FORMAL CVET

Non-formal education can take forms of training, workshops, conferences, seminars, correspondence courses or e-learning courses.

Continuing non-formal education programmes aim at:

- the acquisition, extension or upgrading of vocational skills and qualifications needed for a given occupation, job or post;
- the adjustment of the knowledge and skills to developing technologies and work organisation, as well as to job changes; and
- reacting quickly to current local market needs and helping the unemployed and those threatened with unemployment to adjust their qualifications to these needs.

The admission requirements are defined by the education providers. They usually depend on the aims of training.

PROVIDERS

Non-formal education and training can be organised by:

- public education institutions (CKU, CKP, ZDZ);
- upgrading and further education centres of branch associations;
- higher education institutions, units of the Polish Academy of Science, research institutes;
- labour market institutions, including Voluntary Labour Corps;
- private training companies;
- enterprises (employers); and
- associations, foundations and other corporate bodies and individuals.

Continuing education centres (CKU) and practical training centres (CKP) and further training centres (ZDZ) organise and provide non-formal vocational education on a regular daily basis, in the extramural form and as distance learning (article 68a). They are public education institutions. There are 136 continuing education centres, 137 practical training centres and 24 further training centres operating all over the country.

Upgrading and further education centres of branch associations such as Accountants Association, Polish Federation of Engineering Associations, The Association of Polish Electricians and many others organise courses allowing obtaining additional specific vocational qualifications, upgrading trainings as well as conferences, seminars and workshops.

Higher education institutions (public and private), units of the Polish Academy of Science and research institutes provide, apart from formal education, also short forms of continuing education such as training, conferences, seminars and workshops.

Labour market institutions, e.g. district labour offices, organise training for the unemployed, those threatened with unemployment, youths giving up education, school leavers and disabled people. The training is aimed at increasing the employability of participants through upgrading vocational qualifications, re-qualification or vocational activation. Training is financed from the Labour Fund (a special-purpose fund, administered by the minister competent for labour issues). A labour office decides on the form of training taking into consideration the labour market needs and the needs of the unemployed. (see 5.3.)

Private training companies are a large group of training providers offering their paid services to enterprises and individuals. The specific data on the number of private training companies in Poland is not available, however the Management Institute in Warsaw carries out a periodical research on private training companies and their activities covering over 300 biggest firms. According to this research, in 2002 a private training company trained on average 1700 people, of which 70% were trained within closed training sessions organised for enterprises and 30% in training sessions opened for individuals. The range of training subjects offered by private training companies is very wide and includes such areas as: management, social skills, sales, law, marketing, human resources, accounting and finance, foreign languages, production and quality control, information technology etc. The most common subjects were: management - 67% of firms offered training in this field, managerial skills - 54% companies, and sales -52%. Only 8% of examined firms offered technical training.

Enterprises provide their employees with various forms of training. The research carried out by the Ministry of Economy and Labour in 2003 as a part of the project “National Vocational Training System” financed from PHARE, shows that during the previous year, 41.4% enterprises organised training which covered 22% of employees. Big enterprises employing over 250 people more often train their employees than the small ones, employing less than 50 people. Two thirds of big enterprises provided their employees with training but only 36% of small firms did so. Mostly employees between 25 and 44 years of age working full-time are trained. Only 4.2% employees working part-time underwent training and 1% people threatened with losing the job.

The data on *NGOs* providing non-formal education are not collected on regular basis. However the survey done in 2006 by the non-governmental organisation Klon-Jawor shows that 35.6% of all NGOs indicate education as one of their main activity areas. As regards the forms of activity, 33.1% mention organising conferences, seminars and workshops and 19.5% mention counselling, consultation and training.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Institutions and centres of continuing education which provide non-formal education 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). 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.

At the end of December 2004 there were 86 institutions with accreditation (the highest number was noted in the *śląskie* region) offering continuing education in out-of school forms.

VALIDATION AND RECOGNITION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

In Poland there is no system of validation and recognition of qualifications acquired in non-formal education. The “Strategy for Development of Continuing Education until the Year 2010”, which was adopted by Council of Ministers on 8th July 2003, foresees the following task for years 2005-2008: *Preparation and implementation of integrated procedures and methods serving to evaluate educational results - system of recognition qualifications in formal, non-formal education*. However, up till now, any initiatives in this regard have not been undertaken.

STATISTICAL DATA

The statistical data on participation in non-formal education by educational attainment and working status show similar trends to the data regarding participation in formal CVET. Both 2005 Eurostat and 2006 GUS (*National Statistical Office*) data indicate that the highest participation rate can be noted among employed people with higher education. Moreover, the GUS data show that women undertake such activities a bit more often than men (almost 52% of women compared to about 48% of men) and definitely non-formal education is more common in cities (78%) than in rural areas. The latter may result from not very rich offer of non-formal education in rural areas but also from lower educational attainment of inhabitants (relatively low rate of people with higher education who are more active in CVET).

An increase in participation in CVET (both formal and informal) of people from rural areas is necessary because of the changes in employment structure in the countryside. More people should seek employment outside agricultural sector what requires better qualifications and higher level of education. Therefore not only the strengthening of the network of CVET providers and further development of distance learning is needed but also an intensive promotion of continuing education seems to be necessary.

5.3 MEASURES TO HELP JOB-SEEKERS AND PEOPLE VULNERABLE TO EXCLUSION FROM THE LABOUR MARKET

Currently, poviats labour offices (PUPs) may offer free training to people who are registered as unemployed. Such training may last up to 12 months, and up to 24 months in the case of people with no vocational qualifications. Moreover, the following situations can be underlined:

- an unemployed person may be referred to a group training organised by the labour office or to a training of his or her choice;
- under 25 years of age, a trainee will receive a grant in the amount of 40% of the unemployment benefit, and over 25 years of age - a training bonus in the amount of 20% of the unemployment benefit;
- the labour office may reimburse the cost of travel, accommodation and board when a training is organised outside the trainee's place of residence; and
- a trainee who is an unemployed single parent of a child or children under 7 years of age may be reimbursed baby-sitting costs, up to 50% of the unemployment benefit.

Unemployed persons who are registered with the labour office may receive partial reimbursement of examination costs, costs of obtaining a licence (up to 50% of average salary) or costs of postgraduate studies (up to 75% of average salary), and those who want to take up a job that requires special qualifications may receive a low-interest training loan to finance the costs of specialist training - up to 400% of average salary. Unemployed persons under 25 without any vocational qualifications (primary school, lower secondary school or general secondary school) and from families entitled to social welfare benefits can receive a bursary to continue education (extramural courses). The bursary, which is 50% of the unemployment benefit, is granted for a period of 12 months (and may be extended). In addition to that, the poviats labour office may offer to people under 25 work placements with employers for up to 12 months to acquire experience and/or update qualifications or, alternately, employer-based vocational training which can last up to 6 months (for people in a particularly disadvantageous labour market situation). Unemployed interns or trainees can receive a grant. Those employers who have set up a training fund may apply for partial co-financing (up to 50%) of the costs of specialist training for personnel threatened by redundancies from the labour office (provided that these workers remain employed).

According to Eurostat, in 2007, 6.2% of the unemployed took part in formal training, and 8.8% in informal training, of a total 1 745 900 unemployed. According to GUS data, 6.9% of people in work participated in formal training, and 26.3% in non-formal training. This suggests that working people participate in training more frequently than the unemployed and economically inactive people. To some extent, this is due to opportunities for improving education offered by enterprises, which may also include partial reimbursement of employee training costs by the employer. On the other hand, employees need to improve their knowledge and adapt to the needs of their employer on a regular basis. The unemployed - i.e. people who should use the time they spend looking for a job to enhance

their qualifications or to retrain - take part in courses/trainings relatively seldom, and also start self-learning less frequently than people in work³⁵.

In 2007, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy conducted an in-depth analysis of training programmes and other services aimed to improve qualifications and offered by labour offices in the period 2000-2006. The number of people referred to training by labour offices in 2006 totalled 147 000, which meant nearly a 2.5 times increase compared to 2000. In the same period, over PLN 186 million were allocated for the financing of training programmes from the Labour Fund, i.e. over PLN 1 300 per trainee. This type of expenditure does not exceed 10% of the aggregate funds earmarked for active forms of combating unemployment. In this regard, Poland considerably lags behind other EU Member States where training expenditure accounts for almost 1/3 of the total public allocation for active forms. Training for the unemployed and job-seekers was provided by nearly 8 500 training institutions operating on the free market for training services. Most typically, these were practical training and continuing professional development centres, associations, foundations or other legal persons. Between them, they delivered in all over 40 000 training courses. In terms of popularity of individual programmes, in 2005-2006 the largest number of persons was referred to courses in such areas, such as transport services (including driving courses), computer courses, sale/marketing/trade, accounting and book-keeping and foreign languages.

The Ministry's analysis corroborated the observable correlation between the level of education of the unemployed and their participation in training (the lower the level of qualifications the less frequent participation in training). Admittedly, persons with higher and general secondary education represent the largest group of the unemployed referred to training, whilst persons with the lowest level of educational attainment (lower secondary and primary) take part in training programmes organised by labour offices the least frequently³⁶.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy informed that 168 400 people were recommended to different kind of vocational trainings financed by Labour Fund in 2008.³⁷

The new EU initiative, the "Operational Programme Human Capital 2007-2013", opens up new opportunities. As the overriding strategic goal of the Programme is to enhance the levels of economic activity and employability of the unemployed and those economically inactive and to reduce the areas of social exclusion, subsequent surveys and studies will certainly demonstrate a considerable increase in the number of the unemployed who take part in non-formal training.

The "National Action Plan for Employment 2009-2011", prepared by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, identifies activities promoting employment which should be undertaken within the coming three years. Currently, the greatest challenge is to increase the economic activity of Poles, with the economic slowdown being the most serious threat. Other challenges include the demographic changes which are taking place in the Polish society. To address these issues, activities to be initiated in the above planning period include efforts to increase economic activity of the population on the one hand, and on the other - those aimed to prepare the Polish labour market for a difficult period of worse

³⁵ *Notatka informacyjna - Kształcenie dorosłych* [Adult education - a memorandum], Central Statistical Office (GUS), Warszawa 2008.

³⁶ *Raport o rynku pracy oraz zabezpieczeniu społecznym* [Report on the labour market and social insurance], Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Warsaw 2008.

³⁷ Ministry of Labour and Social Policy - Information about realization of counteracting unemployment program.

economic performance so as to minimise and reverse the negative effects of the downturn in the shortest possible time.

Among actions addressed to all those falling within the remit of employment policies, the development of continuing training is at present the top priority. Acquisition of new qualifications and competences helps improve employability, i.e. capability to gain and maintain employment, and obtain new employment if necessary. In the Polish labour market, it is still possible to distinguish groups of people who are characterised by a low level of economic activity, greater threat of unemployment (particularly long-term unemployment), and insufficient competences to match the needs demonstrated by the market. These groups primarily include people aged +50, women, people who have difficulties with reconciling work with family duties, youth, residents of rural areas and other areas located far from development centres, people socially excluded and threatened by exclusion (including persons with disabilities). Professional insertion activities should be aimed at equalising the opportunities related to gaining and maintaining employment or business activity. These types of activity involving social and vocational inclusion of socially excluded persons and those threatened with exclusion envisage the promotion of social economy, development of centres and clubs promoting social integration, and expanding their scope of operation³⁸.

In addition to the above, in the years 2004-2008 the project entitled “Inherit a job” was completed. Its aim was to develop methods for impeding the process of inheriting unemployment in families affected by long-term unemployment through facilitating entry or re-entry of parents on the labour market and working out learning habits in children. Another objective was to develop effective methods for the coordination of activities of institutions and organisations involved in socio-vocational integration and to develop methods to stimulate the activity of local communities with a view to setting up local initiatives for employment or self-employment. As part of the project, cooperation of psychologists, career counsellors and educators was ensured³⁹.

Foreign nationals are yet another group who need support in order to be integrated into the labour market. For this reason, a comprehensive system for such integration should be prepared and implemented. Furthermore, specific activities should be undertaken with a view to professional insertion of people with disabilities into both the open and the protected labour market.

³⁸ *National Action Plan for Employment 2009-2011*, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Warsaw 2009.

³⁹ <http://www.odziedziczprace.pl/>

6 - TRAINING VET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

6.1 - 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 (ISCED 4);
- 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; and
- 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, 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 |
|---|--|
| 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 (N.B. No official term in the legislation) | |

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 Table 3). 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.

6.2 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN IVET

TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN IVET

TABLE 2. 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 3. PRE-SERVICE TRAINING FOR DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF TEACHERS

| Types of teachers | Training options |
|---|--|
| <p>General subject teachers for ISCED 3A and 4 schools College teachers - only ISCED 5B</p> | <p>Subject training and pedagogical training within a Master's degree programme (teaching specialisation track) in a higher education institution (ISCED 5A); or</p> <p>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</p> <p>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.</p> |
| <p>General subject teachers for ISCED 3C schools and other ISCED 3C providers</p> | <p>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</p> <p>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).</p> |
| <p>Theoretical vocational subject teachers for ISCED 3A and 4 schools **</p> | <p>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</p> <p>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.</p> |

| | |
|--|--|
| Theoretical vocational subject teachers for ISCED 3C schools and other ISCED 3C providers ** | 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). |
| Practical vocational training teachers for all types of ISCED 3 and 4 schools and other providers ** | 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). |
| Teachers-pedagogues and teachers-psychologists - only ISCED 3 schools | 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.

** A new provision in the amended Education System Act (2009) permits for hiring specialists in a given field who do not have teaching but only topical qualifications to conduct classes as VET teachers.

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.

6.3 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN CVET

TABLE 4. 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: 0602 - 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.

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.

7 – MATCHING VET PROVISION WITH LABOUR MARKET NEEDS

7.1 - SYSTEMS AND MECHANISMS FOR THE ANTICIPATION OF SKILL NEEDS

Development of an efficient system for the anticipation of needs related to skills which may be required of individuals in the labour market is a complicated process underpinned by many educational and economic considerations. The basic components of such a system include employers, trade unions, research centres and ministries responsible for individual sectors of the economy and education (including higher education). Activities aimed to operationalise the system call for a close cooperation of various departments of the state, i.e. individual ministries. Studying the work environment, which is done by specific research centres, requires close cooperation with employers, relating the research findings to macroeconomic forecasts and transposing the results into sets of desirable skills and qualifications. Methods which are used most frequently include diagnostic surveys, as well as questionnaires and interviews using survey questionnaires and interview questionnaires as tools.

Labour market competition and the need to adapt qualifications of school leavers to employers' requirements forces vocational schools to test both internal and external effectiveness of their instruction. Employers carry out random surveys related to vocational competences of school leavers and demand for specific skills as part of regional or local research projects, in some cases funded from grants of the State Committee for Scientific Research (KBN). Development of sets of skills for individual occupations is mainly done within the formal vocational education system(s), at different levels of education, supervised by different ministries. Launching an effective and efficient system to anticipate demand for specific sets of skills shall require the development of an efficient system for diagnosing external effectiveness of education and agreeing cooperation arrangements between individual entities. A considerable deal of autonomy that education and training providers enjoy with regard to both offering and opening types of courses poses some difficulties as they can either make such decisions independently or in consultation with their managing body. In this situation, the costs of education, the existing structures and expertise in addition to short-lived 'fads' for specific occupations, and not forecasts concerning labour market developments and anticipated labour force skills represent the predominant criteria that determine educational decisions.

In the recent period, a number of diverse studies have been conducted to diagnose the level of adaptation of the VET system for the needs of the labour market. Of these, the major ones include:

- “Agroalternative Mazowsze 2000”, task: “Development and implementation of an advisory programme for powiat governments related to the diagnosis of training needs in local labour markets”, Sycyna Educational Association;
- Diagnostic study: “The labour market and VET in the Mazowsze region”, Voivodship Labour Office (WUP) in Warsaw;
- Experts' study - project “The external vocational examination. Analysis, diagnosis and perspective for changes”, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences (IFiS PAN);
- “Validation of employee qualifications in the Polish construction sector”, Research and Development Centre ‘Edukacja i Praca’ [Education and Work];

- Research project in the Podkarpackie voivodship: “Standardisation of vocational competences and training for a job”, Institute of Labour and Social Studies (IPiSS);
- “VET and various aspects of labour market positions”, Warsaw School of Economics; and
- “Quality assessment and optimisation of a modular VET system”. Institute for Sustainable Technologies - National Research Institute in Radom (ITE).

7.2 - PRACTICES TO MATCH VET PROVISION WITH SKILL NEEDS

The work carried out so far to develop vocational qualification standards can be seen as an exceptionally successful exercise aimed to adapt VET to skill needs. The methodology of doing research and preparing the results was developed by research institutions themselves, but the content of individual standards was as a rule defined by employees working in a specific job, their immediate superiors and directors (owners) of enterprises. Vocational qualification standards are among the basic considerations (on a par with the core curriculum for a given occupation) in designing modular curricula.

Cooperation between employer and employee communities was also very strong during the implementation of the project entitled: “Development of innovative VET curricula”, delivered as part of the Sectoral Operational Programme - Human Resources Development 2004 - 2006, and run by the Department of Vocational and Continuing Education of the Ministry of National Education and Sport in cooperation with the National Centre for Supporting Vocational and Continuing Education in Warsaw (KOWEziU). The project was delivered by the Institute for Sustainable Technologies - National Research Institute in Radom, in conjunction with other entities: Institute for Educational Research (IBE) in Warsaw, In-service Teacher Training and Practical Training Centre in Łódź, West Pomeranian In-service Teacher Training Centre in Szczecin, Agricultural Advisory Centre in Brwinów, Technical Schools Complex in Mikołów. The outcome of the project included the development of innovative modular curricula for occupations listed in the classification of VET occupations published by the Ministry of National Education. In designing modular curricula, the already completed vocational qualification standards were used as basic guidelines concerning desirable skills and qualifications of school leavers. A representative of an employer who hired leavers from schools training for a specific occupation or an employee who personally was employed in a specific occupation, who fulfilled specific qualification criteria and had specific expertise, were involved in the work of every team of authors designing a modular curriculum. An integral part of the project was to prepare 3,438 educational packages for modular units of the developed modular VET curricula. In this case, employees in specific occupations (or representatives of employers hiring specific staff) who fulfilled the criteria laid down for the selection of the authors of materials to be developed were engaged in topical work on the curricula.

Pursuant to the amended Education System Act⁴⁰, a person who is not a teacher by education but who has competences approved by the school principal as satisfactory for conducting classes in a given subject may be employed, in justified situations, in a public school, with the consent of the school superintendent (or the minister competent for culture and national heritage in case of schools of arts). A new provision in the amended

⁴⁰ Act of 19 March 2009 amending the Education system act and certain other acts (*Dziennik Ustaw* No. 56 of 2009, item 458).

Act permits for hiring specialists in a given field who do not have teaching but only topical qualifications to conduct classes as VET teachers.

The above can be seen as an example of a strong matching of the education system with labour market requirements as classes can be conducted by employees who actually perform specific vocational tasks in their work. In this way, they can directly develop the desirable skills in pupils at the stage of vocational instruction provided in school.

8 - GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING FOR LEARNING, CAREER AND EMPLOYMENT

8.1 - 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 through the introduction of new legal regulations, development of training curricula for practitioners, improved cooperation on the national and European level and the use funds from community programmes. One of the examples may be the National Centre for Vocational Guidance Resources (*Narodowe Centrum Zasobow Poradnictwa Zawodowego -NCZPZ*) that worked out within Leonardo da Vinci project and established on the basis of the agreement between the two 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 the 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 a 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 two 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.

MINISTRY OF NATIONAL EDUCATION AND SPORT

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 Ośrodki Kariery-SZOK*) have been established. At present 361 such centres function all over the country. School Career Centres belong to 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.

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; and
- 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, 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; and
- 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; and 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).

8.2 - TARGET GROUPS AND MODES OF DELIVERY

In Poland, the provision of vocational guidance services by all the institutions is based on the equal opportunities principle. They are also characterised by the following:

- 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; and
- confidentiality and personal data protection is ensured vis a vis the clients.

TABLE 1: GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING PROVISIONS FOR DIFFERENT TARGET GROUPS

| 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, | - 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 |

| | | | |
|-------------------------|--|---|---|
| | | information meetings addressed to parents | handicapped. - usually poorly computerised |
| School Career Centres | - children and youths from secondary schools | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - gathering, updating and providing educational and vocational information; - indicating additional sources of information to pupils, parents and teachers; - providing pupils and parents with individual counselling; - organising group training preparing pupils for planning their career and undertaking vocational roles; - cooperating with other institutions e.g. pedagogical assistance and counselling centres, labour offices, Vocational Information and Planning Centres | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - individual and group counselling and guidance - materials about different occupations - sources of information needed for career and education planning - specialised multimedia software |
| 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 mothers etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - job intermediary; - career guidance; - provision of information about occupations, 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 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - individual and group counselling and guidance - psychological tests - identifying training needs - information about training opportunities, occupations and the labour market - computer based services and use of multimedia |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| <p>Vocational Information and Planning Centres at regional labour offices</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the unemployed, - people threatened with unemployment, - job seekers' - disadvantaged groups e.g. the disabled, single mothers etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - career guidance and counselling; - improving the clients' attractiveness on the labour market; - gathering, updating and disseminating vocational information in the region. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - individual and group counselling and guidance - vocational evaluation - psychological tools - information resources inc. computer based and multimedia |
| <p>Voluntary Labour Corps (OHP) Youth Career Centres and Youth Labour Offices and Job Clubs</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - job intermediary; - career guidance and counselling; - provision of information about occupations, labour market, training opportunities; - improving the clients' attractiveness on the labour market | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 |
| <p>Mobile Vocational Information Centres of Voluntary Labour Corps(MCIZ)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - young people from rural areas including: youths at school, school leavers, young unemployed and job seekers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - providing advice and 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. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - individual and group counselling 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 |

8.3 - 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; and

- 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.

9 - FINANCING - INVESTMENT IN HUMAN RESOURCES

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 of 1991 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 governments⁴¹. 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

⁴¹ Revenues of Local Governments Act (Art. 28).

allocation of these funds to specific types of schools or institutions or spending categories rests with local government bodies such as municipal and *poviat* (district) councils and the regional assemblies (*sejmik*).

9.1 - 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 EUR 756.9, and in 2007 - to EUR 831.8 , i.e. were 8.5 per cent higher⁴². 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:

- 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.
- 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.
- Schools without the status of a public school and other non-public educational institutions may receive a subsidy from the *poviat* (district) budget, based on procedures laid down by the *poviat* decision-making body. Such a grant may be awarded in the amount stipulated by the subsidising body⁴³.

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 EUR 7,271,753,164 which is 5.78 per cent higher than the 2006 subsidy (EUR 6,915,817,554)⁴⁴.

Currently, a large majority of public schools and other educational institutions are administered by local governments: *gminas* (municipalities), *poviats* (district) and *voivodships* (regions). Schools offering vocational education are set up and administered by

⁴² Data of the Ministry of National Education published on 3 April 2007.

⁴³ The Education System Act of 7 September 1991 (consolidated text: *Dziennik Ustaw* 256/2004 Nr 256, item 2572).

⁴⁴ Data of the Ministry of National Education published on 3 April 2007.

poviat governments, while regional governments are in charge of schools having a regional significance⁴⁵.

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 EUR 9,986,585,184, which accounted for 4.1 per cent GDP, while the state budget expenditure on education was EUR 6,955,830,476, including EUR 6,483,827,694 (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 EUR 9,613,951,408. Of the total allocation of EUR 1,490,535,102, district governments spent 38.1 per cent on vocational schools. Local governments in townships with *poviat* status spent 12 per cent of their total allocation of EUR 3,154,965,966, and regional governments - 21 per cent of a total budget of EUR 223 580 265⁴⁶.

⁴⁵ 'Education in the 2005/2006 School Year' - report published by GUS – Central Statistical Office.

⁴⁶ 'Education in the 2005/2006 School Year' - report published by GUS – Central Statistical Office.

In 2008, public expenditure on education totalled PLN 49.2 billion which gave 3.9 per cent of GDP and the state budget expenditure on education amounted PLN 33.9 billion including PLN 30.9 billion (i.e. 91.1 per cent) of the general subsidy on education for local governments. These financial resources (without subsidies for local councils) were spent on artistic schools (17.2 per cent), departments of educations (4.9 per cent) and other activities connected with education (27.4%). In the same year, local government expenditure on education and education care (including the state budget allocations) amounted PLN 47.3 billion.

Local governments: gminas allocated their financial resources (PLN 23.5 billion) for primary school activities (48.7 per cent) mainly, lower secondary schools (24.4 per cent) and kindergartens (11.5%); poviats (PLN 7.0 billion) spent their financial resources on basic vocational schools (38.4 per cent), general secondary schools (23.3 per cent); town councils with poviat's rights (PLN 15.9 billion) allocated their money on primary schools (24.6 per cent), lower secondary schools (14.6 per cent), kindergartens (13.9 per cent), general secondary schools (12.5 per cent) and basic vocational schools (12.1 per cent). *Voivodships spent totally PLN 0.9 billions: on basic vocational schools (together with post-secondary schools) - 21.2 per cent, teacher training colleges and foreign language teacher training colleges - 14.3 per cent, pedagogic libraries - 13.6 per cent and teacher further training and education institutions - 11.8 per cent.*⁴⁷

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 has 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 principal⁴⁸.

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

9.2.1 - FUNDING FOR 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 and Sport, 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; and
- 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

⁴⁷ "Education in the 2008/2009 School Year - report published by GUS - Central Statistic Office.

⁴⁸ The Teachers' s Charter Act (Art. 70).

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; and
- 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.

9.2.2 - FUNDING FOR CVT IN ENTERPRISES

Further training for employees is regulated by the provisions of the Labour Code⁴⁹. Employers are obliged to facilitate employees' access to continuing vocational training (CVET) and upgrading their vocational qualifications. Employees can be referred to a school or to an out-of-school training, and the initiative rests on 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 exam⁵⁰.

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;

⁴⁹ The Labour Code Act of 26 June 1074 (consolidated text: *Dziennik Ustaw* 21/1998, item 94 - Articles 17, 94, 103.

⁵⁰ 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.

- reimbursement of the costs of textbooks and other training materials;
- reimbursement of tuition fees; and
- 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 statistics⁵¹.

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; and
- 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.

⁵¹ Ministry of Labour and Social Policy - 'Adult Learning - a Thematic Overview. Source Report - Poland'. Warsaw, October 2005.

TABLE 1: TOTAL COST OF CVT COURSES AS % OF TOTAL LABOUR COST (ALL ENTERPRISES) (2005 VS. 1999)

| | Size class (number of employees) | | | | | | | |
|-------|----------------------------------|-------|--------------|-------|---------------|-------|-----------------|-------|
| | Total (%) | | 10 to 49 (%) | | 50 to 249 (%) | | 250 or more (%) | |
| geo | CVTS3 | CVTS2 | CVTS3 | CVTS2 | CVTS3 | CVTS2 | CVTS3 | CVTS2 |
| EU 27 | 1.6 | : | 1.1 | : | 1.4 | : | 1.9 | : |
| EU 25 | 1.6 | 2.3 | 1.1 | 1.5 | 1.4 | 2.4 | 1.9 | 2.5 |
| PL | 1.3 | 0.8 | 0.5 | 0.6 | 1.0 | 0.6 | 1.6 | 1.2 |

: - Information not available

Note: Total costs - direct costs, labour costs of participants and balance of contributions to national or regional training funds and receipts from national or other funding arrangements. *Source:* Eurostat; 2nd and 3rd continuing vocational training survey in enterprises (CVTS2 and CVTS 3).

Training costs supported by public resources concern mostly such areas as setting up and running a private firm or legal issues which are usually not of interest for enterprises. Branch or specialist training is rarely financed from public means. EU means usually cover the cost of training in such fields as education, science, culture, health care(40%), production (22%), commerce (7%) and services (4%). ESF supports mainly human capital development including training in ICT, e-business, clustering as well as the development of training infrastructure enhancing human capital of Polish enterprises.

9.3 - 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 Act⁵².

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 contribution⁵³. The revenues of the Labour Fund include mandatory contributions paid by employers who

⁵² Promotion of Employment and Labour Market Institutions Act of 20 April 2004 (*Dziennik Ustaw* 99/2004 item 1001).

⁵³ 2007 Budget Act of 17 February 2006 (Art. 40).

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 EUR 544,690,563, of which 33.5 per cent are planned to be spent on active forms⁵⁴.

In 2008, Labour Fund spent PLN 3,177,400 on active measures counteracting unemployment.⁵⁵

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 *poviats*. 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 *poviat* 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 (the Vocational and Social Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with disabilities Act of 27 August 1997).

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 *poviat* 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

⁵⁴ Ministry of Labour and Social Policy data – draft financial plan of the Labour Fund for 2006.

⁵⁵ Ministry of Labour and Social Policy - National Action Plan for Employment 2008.

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 each year 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 months⁵⁶.

9.4 - 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- 2006⁵⁷, 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 2010⁵⁸, 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;

⁵⁶ Social Employment Act of 13 June 2003 (*Dziennik Ustaw* 122/2003 item 1143).

⁵⁷ Document adopted by the Council of Ministers on 29 January 2002.

⁵⁸ Document adopted by the Council of Ministers on 8 July 2003.

- 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 - 2013⁵⁹, 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 2007-2013⁶⁰ - 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.

⁵⁹ Document adopted by the Council of Ministers on 6 September 2005.

⁶⁰ Document adopted by the Council of Ministers on 14 February 2006.

10 - NATIONAL VET STATISTICS – ALLOCATION OF PROGRAMMES

10.1 - CLASSIFICATION OF NATIONAL VET PROGRAMMES

10.1.1 - MAIN CRITERIA USED TO ALLOCATE VET PROGRAMMES

The criteria which are used in VET programme allocation are based on: the **VET Classification of Occupations** (*Klasyfikacja Zawodów Szkolnictwa Zawodowego - KZSZ*, prepared by the Ministry of National Education and Sport), and the **Classification of Occupations and Specialties** (*Klasyfikacja Zawodów i Specjalności - KziS*, prepared by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy). An example is shown below:

| Programme | Symbol of programme | Symbol of occupation in KZSZ | Symbol of occupation in KziS | Occupational group in KZSZ and KziS |
|-------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| Mechatronics technician | 311[50] | 311[50] | 311403 | 3 - technicians and other middle-level personnel; 31 - middle-level technical personnel 311 - technicians. |
| Mason | 711[04] | 711[04] | 711301 | 7 - industrial workers and craftsmen; 71 - miners and construction workers; 711 - miners and stoneworkers. |

The Classification of Occupations and Specialties is correlated with ISCED:

1. The first level of qualifications (denoting elementary qualifications) - corresponds to ISCED-1, acquired in primary school (*szkoła podstawowa*);
2. The second level of qualifications - corresponds to ISCED-2, acquired in lower secondary school (*gimnazjum*), and to ISCED-3, acquired in general secondary school (*liceum ogólnokształcące*), specialised general secondary school (*liceum profilowane*) and basic vocational school (*zasadnicza szkoła zawodowa*);
3. The third level of qualifications - corresponds to ISCED-4, acquired in post-secondary non tertiary school (*szkoła policealna*), and to ISCED-3, acquired in technical secondary school (*technikum*);
4. The fourth level of qualifications corresponds to ISCED-5, acquired during tertiary vocational programmes (*studia wyższe zawodowe*), master's programmes (*studia magisterskie*) and postgraduate programmes (*studia podyplomowe*), and to ISCED-6, acquired in doctoral programmes (*studia doktoranckie*).

| Classification of Occupations and Specialties | Name of group in the VET Classification of Occupations | ISCED-correlated level of qualifications | Required level of education |
|---|--|--|---|
| 3. Technicians and other middle-level personnel | 3. Technicians and other middle-level personnel | 3 | Secondary education (<i>technikum, liceum</i>), also post-secondary school leavers |
| 4. Office workers | 4. Office workers | 2 or 3 | Basic vocational or secondary education (incl. <i>gimnazjum</i> and <i>liceum profilowane</i>) |
| 5. Personal services and sales workers | 5. Personal services and sales workers | 2 or 3 | Basic vocational or secondary education (incl. <i>gimnazjum</i> and <i>liceum profilowane</i>) |
| 6. Farmers, gardeners, foresters and fishermen | 6. Farmers, gardeners, foresters and fishermen | 2 | Basic vocational education |
| 7. Industrial workers and craftsmen | 7. Industrial workers and craftsmen | 2 | Basic vocational education |
| 8. Machine operators and assemblers | 8. Machine operators and assemblers | 2 | Basic vocational education |
| 9. People in elementary occupations | 9. People in elementary occupations | 1 | Primary or incomplete primary education |

10.1.2 - VET LEVELS IN THE NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

| Level | Equivalent in ISCED | Minimum duration | Maximum duration | Normal duration | Typical starting age of pupils |
|---|---------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>lower secondary school</i> | 2C | 3 years | 3 years | 3 years | 13 years |
| <i>basic vocational - (upper secondary)</i> | 3C | 2 years | 3 years | 2.5 years | 16 years |
| <i>upper secondary (technical)</i> | 3A | 4 years | 4 years | 4 years | 16 years |
| <i>upper secondary (supplementary technical)</i> | 3 A | 3 years | 3 years | 3 years | 18 years |
| <i>post-secondary</i> | 4C | 1 year | 2.5 years | 2 years | 19 years |
| <i>higher vocational</i> | 5A | 3 years | 3.5 years | 3.5 years | 19 years |
| <i>teacher training college, foreign languages teacher training college</i> | 5B | 3 years | 3 years | 3 years | years |

10.2 - FIELDS OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

| Level | Fields of education/study |
|---|---|
| <i>upper secondary (basic vocational)</i> | <p style="text-align: center;"> <i>Agriculture</i> <i>Horticulture</i> <i>Forestry</i> <i>Fishing</i> <i>Mining</i> <i>Construction</i> <i>Metalworking</i> <i>Mechanics of machines</i> <i>Toolmaking, smithery</i> <i>Electricity and electronics</i> <i>Ceramics, accessories, printing</i> <i>Classification of VET Occupations</i> </p> |
| <i>upper secondary (technical secondary school, supplementary school)</i> | <p style="text-align: center;"> <i>Mining</i> <i>Construction</i> <i>Engineering</i> <i>Chemistry</i> <i>Economy</i> <i>Administration</i> <i>Electronics</i> </p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <p style="text-align: center;"> <i>Electrotechnics</i> <i>Sea transport, inland navigation</i> <i>Mechanics</i> <i>Mechatronics</i> <i>Agriculture</i> <i>Textiles</i> <i>Transport</i> <i>Information management</i> <i>Classification of VET Occupations</i> </p> |
|--|---|

According to the Polish Classification of Education, thematic groups in education are classified as follows: education; art and humanities; social sciences, economy and law; science; technical sciences (technology, industry, construction); agriculture; medical sciences; services; armed forces and national defence.

10.3 - LINKS BETWEEN NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS OR CLASSIFICATIONS

Although the National Qualification Framework (*Krajowe Ramy Kwalifikacji - KRK*) have not been yet introduced in Poland, work on their development and implementation is well under way. Currently, the key effort in this regard is the execution of the project entitled: *Stocktaking of competences and qualifications for the Polish labour market and the development of the National Qualifications Framework model*, which started in October 2008 and is being implemented by the Ministry of National Education as an “Operational Programme Human Capital” (OP HC) project. This initiative is carried out by a team of experts who represent general, vocational and tertiary education as well as employers and other institutions involved in the development and implementation of the qualification framework. By the end of 2009, the Ministry is expected to publish the policy assumptions for the planned Polish NQF, together with a ‘road map’ for further conceptual and implementation work related to the NQF. These assumptions will include the following:

- proposed qualification levels along with the descriptors for general, vocational and tertiary education, including an analysis of their linkages to the European Qualification Framework (EQF) and a comparative analysis with the solutions in this regard adopted by other countries;
- a glossary of terms related to the Framework;
- analysis of methods for validation of learning outcomes which are used in Poland, along with a draft concept of validation in new areas, i.e. informal and non-formal learning;
- analysis of the results of preliminary empirical research into field issues and a full evaluation method concerning qualifications and competences, which is planned for subsequent years;
- preliminary identification of legislative changes needed to introduce the NQF;
- assumptions for the establishment of an institution which will be responsible for the implementation of the NQF in Poland (launch of the National Coordination Point is planned for the end of 2009 or the beginning of 2010).

Members of the Team participate in many national and international projects typically associated with qualification structures; they also take part in the work of the EQF Advisory Group. Cooperation relating to this project has been started with other countries, including Austria, Scotland and Croatia.

In its work, the Team draws on the results and findings from other research and expert's projects which have been completed and those which are now under way, and which are directly or indirectly related to qualifications framework issues, such as:

- a project of the Ministry of National Education entitled: "Enhancing the core curricula for pre-school and general education in individual types of schools to make them compliant with knowledge-based economy", funded by the ESF as part of OP HC;
- a project of the Ministry of National Education entitled: "Enhancing the core curriculum - the key to modernisation of vocational education and training", funded by the ESF as part of OP HC;
- a project of the Ministry of National Education entitled: "Pilot testing of a new formula for vocational exams", funded by the ESF as part of OP HC;
- a project carried out by the Working Group for Qualifications Framework in Higher Education, which was set up in 2006 by the Minister for Science and Higher Education. The results of the Group's work (i.e. the assumptions for the draft of the national qualifications framework for EQF levels 6-8 compliant with the recommendations of the Bologna Process and using the Dublin Descriptors) were accepted by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education in 2009 and are now in a phase of consultations with the academic circles and other stakeholders [for more information see: *Bologna Process, Coordination Group for Qualifications Framework* and *BFUG: Synthesis of the replies received from national QF correspondents*];
- a project carried out by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy entitled: "Development and dissemination of national vocational qualifications standards", funded by the ESF as part of the Sectoral Operational Programme 'Human Resources Development' 2004-2006.

The development of the Polish NQF will be continued until 2012. As part of this exercise, a full stocktaking of the components of the qualifications system in Poland will be made, and the Framework and its implementation methods will be designed. Parallel to that, a system for the validation of learning outcomes acquired outside the formal system will be developed.

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<http://www.mgip.gov.pl/> - Ministry of Economy and Labour

<http://www.psz.praca.gov.pl/> - Public Services for Employment

<http://www.fundusze-strukturalne.gov.pl/> - Structural Funds - information service of the Ministry of Economy and Labour

<http://www.fundusze-strukturalne.gov.pl/informator/npr2/npr.htm> - National Development Plan

<http://www.socrates.org.pl/> - Foundation of the Education System Development

<http://fundusze.ukie.gov.pl/> - Structural Funds

<http://www.mnii.gov.pl> - Ministry of Science and Informatisation

Government Centre for Strategic Studies

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<http://www.stat.gov.pl/> - Central Statistical Office

<http://www.pan.pl/> - Polish Academy of Sciences

<http://www.pfron.org.pl> - National Rehabilitation Fund for the Disabled

<http://www.parp.gov.pl/> - Polish Agency for Enterprise Development

<http://ksu.parp.gov.pl/rejestracja.html> - National System of Services for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

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ABBREVIATIONS

BAED - Badanie aktywności edukacyjnej dorosłych - **Survey on educational activity of adults**

BAEL - Badanie aktywności ekonomicznej ludności - **Survey on economic activity of people**

BIS - Badanie Instytucji Szkoleniowych - **training Institution Survey**

BK - Biuro Karier - **Career Bureaux**

CEB - Naczelna Rada Zatrudnienia - **Central Employment Board**

CKE - Centralna Komisja Egzaminacyjna - **Central Examination Commission**

CKP - Centrum Kształcenia Praktycznego - **Practical Training Centre**

CKU - Centrum Kształcenia Ustawicznego- **Continuing Education Centre**

CMPPP - Centrum Metodyczne Pomocy Psychologiczno-Pedagogicznej - **the Methodological Centre for Psychological and Pedagogical Assistance**

CODN - Centralny Ośrodek Doskonalenia Nauczycieli - **Central Teacher Further Training Facility**

COKNO - Centralny Ośrodek Kształcenia na Odległość - **National Centre of Distance Learning**

CRZL - Centrum Rozwoju Zasobów Ludzkich - **Centre of Human Resource Development**

CTO - Centralne Biuro Statystyczne - **Central Statistic Office**

CVET - Ustawiczne Kształcenie i Szkolenie Zawodowe - **Continuing Vocational Education and Training**

CVT - Ustawiczne Szkolenie Zawodowe - **Continuing Vocational Training ???**

ECVET - Europejski System Punktów Edukacyjnych w Kształceniu Zawodowym - **European Credit Transfer System for Vocational Education and Training**

EFS - Europejski Fundusz Społeczny - **European Social Fund**

EKD - Ekonomiczna Klasyfikacja Działalności - **Business Classification**

ESF - Europejski Fundusz Społeczny - **European Social Fund**

FEANI - Federacja zrzeszająca zawodowe stowarzyszenia inżynierów - **Federation Europeenne d'Associations Nationales d'Ingenieurs**

FP - Fundusz Pracy - **Labour Fund**

FRSE - Fundacja Rozwoju Systemu Edukacji - **Education System Development Foundation**

EQF - Europejskie Ramy Kwalifikacji - **European Qualification Framework**

GUS - Główny Urząd Statystyczny - **Central Statistical Office/National Statistical Office**

HE - Szkolnictwo Wyższe - **Higher Education**

HEI - Instytucje Szkolnictwa Wyższego - **Higher Education Institutions**

IBE - Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych - **Institute for Educational Research**

IFiS PAN - Instytut Filozofii i Socjologii Polskiej Akademii Nauk - **Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences**

IPiSS - Instytut Pracy i Spraw Socjalnych - **Institute of Labour and Social Studies**

ISCED - International Standard Classification of Education - **Międzynarodowa Standardowa Klasyfikacja Kształcenia**

ITE - Instytut Technologii i Eksploatacji - **Institute of Sustainable Technologies**

IVET - Wstępne Kształcenie i Szkolenie Zawodowe - **Initial Vocational Education and Training**

KBN - Komitet Badań Naukowych - **Committee for Scientific Research**

KCE - Krajowe Centrum Europass - **National Europass Centre**

KORPS - Krajowy Ośrodek Rozwoju Programów Szkolnych - **the National Centre for School Curricula Development**

KOWEZiU - Krajowy Ośrodek Wspierania Edukacji Zawodowej i Ustawicznej - **the National Centre for the Support of Vocational and Continuing Education**

KPP - Konfederacja Pracodawców Polskich - **the Confederation of Polish Employers**

KRK - Krajowe Ramy Kwalifikacji - **the National Qualification Framework**

KSU - Krajowy System Usług - **National System of Services**

KZiS - Klasyfikacja Zawodów i Specjalności ISCO-88 - **Classification of Occupations and Specialisations ISCO -88**

KZSZ - Klasyfikacja Zawodów Szkolnictwa Zawodowego - **Classification of Vocations for Vocational Schooling**

LLL - uczenie się przez całe życie - **Lifelong Learning**

LOKNO - Lokalny Ośrodek Kształcenia na Odległość - **Local Distance Learning Centre**

MCIZ - Mobilne Centrum Informacji Zawodowej - **Mobile Vocational Information Centre**

MENIS - Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej i Sportu - **the Ministry of National Education and Sport**

MGiP - Ministerstwo Gospodarki i Pracy - **the Ministry of Economy and Labour**

NCZPZ - Narodowe Centrum Zasobów Poradnictwa Zawodowego - **National Centre for Vocational Guidance Resources**

NGO - Organizacja pozarządowa - **Non-governmental Organization**

NRZ - Naczelna Rada Zatrudnienia - **the Central Employment Board**

NSZZ Solidarność - Niezależne Samorządne Związki Zawodowe Solidarność - **the Independent Self-Governing Trade Union Solidarity**

NQF - Krajowe Ramy Kwalifikacji - **the National Qualification Framework**

ODiDZ - Ośrodek Doksztalcania i Doskonalenia Zawodowego - **Retraining and Further Training Centre**

OECD - Organizacja Współpracy Gospodarczej i Rozwoju - **Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development**

OHP - Ochotnicze Hufce Pracy - **Voluntary Labour Corps**

OKE - Okręgowa Komisja Egzaminacyjna - **Territorial Examination Commission**

OPZZ - Ogólnopolskie Porozumienie Związków Zawodowych - **the All-Poland Alliance of Trade Unions**

PAN - Polska Akademia Nauka - **Polish Academy of Science**

PARP - Polska Agencja Rozwoju Przedsiębiorczości - **Polish Agency for Entrepreneurship Development**

PFRON - Państwowy Fundusz Rehabilitacji Osób Niepełnosprawnych - **the State Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled**

PHARE - program pomocy Polsce i Węgrom w restrukturyzacji gospodarki - **Poland and Hungary Assistance for Restructuring their Economies.**

PKD - Polska Klasyfikacja Działalności- **the Polish Classification of Activities**

PKPP - Polska Konfederacja Pracodawców Prywatnych - **the Polish Confederation of Private Employers**

PUP- Powiatowy Urząd Pracy - **District Labour Office**

RM - Rada Ministrów - **the Council of Ministers**

ROKNO - Regionalny Ośrodek Kształcenia na Odległość - **Regional Distance Learning Centre**

RP - Rzeczpospolita Polska - **the Republic of Poland**

SAC - Państwowa Komisja Akredytacyjna - **the State Accreditation Committee**

SPO RZL - Sektorowy Program Operacyjny Rozwój Zasobów Ludzkich - **Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resource Development**

SZOK - Szkolne Ośrodki Kariery - **School Career Centres**

WOM - Wojewódzki Ośrodek Metodyczny - **Regional Methodological Centre**