

Poland

VET in Europe - Country Report

2011

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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. Modernizing VET to support LLL, internationalization and mobility
3. VET to support recovery from the crisis
4. Historical background, Legislative and Institutional framework
5. Initial vocational education and training
6. Continuing vocational education and training for adults
7. Training VET teachers and trainers
8. Matching VET provision (skills) with labour market needs (jobs)
9. Lifelong guidance for lifelong learning and sustainable employment
10. Financing - investment in human resources
11. Authors, sources, bibliography, acronyms and abbreviations

This overview has been prepared in 2011 and its reference year is 2010. 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 CONTEXT - FRAMEWORK FOR THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

1.1 - POLITICAL AND SOCIO-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 2010

The year 2010 is another one confirming changes of demographic trends (the year 2009 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 2010 the territory of Poland, a country with a total area of 312 679 km², had a population of 38 204 000, that is 37 000 more inhabitants than in 2009. Poland is still the sixth most populous country in the European Union³.

¹Podstawowe informacje o rozwoju demograficznym Polski w latach 2000 -2010, Warszawa, 28.01.2011 (Basic information about demographic development of Poland), URL: http://www.stat.gov.pl/cps/rde/xbcr/gus/PUBL_L_podst_inf_o_rozwoju_dem_pl.pdf

² GUS, Mały rocznik statystyczny Polski 2011, Warszawa 2011

³ Podstawowe informacje.. Op.cit p.16, Tab. 3

TABLE 1. POPULATION BALANCE IN 2006, 2007, 2008 AND 2009 (IN THOUSAND)

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010*
Natural increase	0.7	35.3	32.7	38
Live births	387.9	414.5	417.6	418
Deaths	377.2	379.2	384.9	380
Balance of permanent international migration	-20.5	-15.4	-1.2	- 1,5
Immigration	15	16	17.4	15,5
Emigration	35.5	31.4	18.6	17
Actual increase	-10	+20	+31	+36
Population as at 31 December	38 116	38 135	38167	38204

* - estimates

Source: Prepared by the author based on GUS, *Podstawowe informacje o rozwoju demograficznym Polski w latach 2000 - 2010*, Warszawa, 28.01.2011, (Basic information about demographic development of Poland in 2000 -2010, Warsaw, 28.01.2011)

The rate of growth of population in 2010 was positive and was 0.1%(in 2009 amounted to 0.08%). In 2010 population growth was positive - mainly as a result of growing number of births and amounted to about 38 thousand which means that in 2010 on average of 10 thousand people, has been noticed increase of 10 people (in 2009 - 9 and at the beginning of this century - 3 persons). Positive real growth is observed for the third year in a row.

The rate of natural increase is much higher in rural areas. In terms of population, Poland is in 34nd place among the countries of the world.⁴ According to preliminary data in 2010 more than 418 thousand live births were registered which means an increase of about 1 thousand in comparement to the previous year. In relation to 2009 the birth rate was 10.9‰ (about 1 point more than on the beginning of thr decade but about 8.5 points less than in 1983)⁵. Increase of intensity of birth occurs mainly among families living in cities, but birth rate is higher in rural areas, in 2009 it amounted to 11.4‰ in 10.6‰

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 (1979-1985) are now entering the age of highest fertility. In addition the increase has been stimulated by current implementation of parenting plans that were previously postponed (for those born in the 70s of the last century).

⁴ *Podstawowe informacje o rozwoju demograficznym Polski w latach 2000 - 2010*, Warszawa, GUS,28.01.2011, p.1 i 2 (Basic information about demographic development of Poland in 2000 -2010, Warsaw, 28.01.2011)

⁵ Op.cit. 4, p.3

However, the reproduction level still does not guarantee the replacement of generations - since 1989 has been still observed a period of depression at birth.

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, as well as significant increase of fertility in group of 30-34 age⁶.

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 in 2004, in 2009, there was a further decline in the number of trips abroad - both permanent and temporary residence. It is estimated that in late 2010 a definitive negative net international migration amounted to less than 1,5 thousand which was due to significant reduction in trips abroad made by Poles for permanent staying. Consequently, there has been equating the number of emigrants and immigrants, as in previous year.⁷

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 2010, (18,6%) of Poland's population were people in the 0-17 age group; 64,5% were people aged 18-59/64, and the +60/+65 age group accounted for 16,9% of the country's total population⁸. 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 2010 (Table 2), the category of people in the pre-working age (0-17 years of age) represented 18,6 of the total population, which was about 10,4pp 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 4,1 pp, up to a level of 16.5%⁹. In 2009, the average life expectancy, which has been on the increase ever since the early 1990s, was 80.1 years for women and 71.5 years for men.

⁶op.cit,4

⁷ Op.cit. 4, p.3

⁸ Rynek Pracy w Polsce 2011, MPiPS, Departament Rynku Pracy, Warszawa, 14.03.2011

⁹ *Podstawowe informacje o rozwoju demograficznym Polski w latach 2000 - 2010*, Warszawa, GUS, 28.01.2011, p.13 (Basic information about demographic development of Poland in 2000 -2010, Warsaw, 28.01.2011)

TABLE 2. AGE STRUCTURE OF POLAND'S POPULATION IN 1990 AND 2010 (AS AT 31 DECEMBER)

Age	1990	2010*	1990	2010*
	%		in thousand	
0-17	29	18.6	11 040	7126
18-59/64**	58.2	64.5	22 148	24640
60+/65+***	12.8	16.9	4 885	6438
Total	100	100	38 073	38204

* - 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 Podstawowe informacje o rozwoju demograficznym Polski w latach 2000 - 2010, Warszawa, GUS, 28.01.2011, Tab.2 p.13, Tab. 3 p.16 (Basic information about demographic development of Poland in 2000 - 2010, Warsaw 2011 Concise Statistical Yearbook Tab.2 p.13, Tab. 3 p.16]

A comparison of the number of students in different types of schools in the academic years 2006/2007, 2007/2008, 2008/2009 , 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 is quite interesting (Table 3) as the number of pupils/students is constantly decreasing. These tendency is e implication 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.

TABLE 3. PUPILS AND STUDENTS IN SCHOOL YEARS 2006/2007, 2007/2008, 2008/2009, 2009/2010 AND 2010/2011 BY TYPE OF SCHOOL (IN THOUSAND)*

Type of school	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011
Primary	2 484.8	2 375.2	2 294.4	2 235.0	2191,7
Lower secondary (gimnazjum)	528.8	1 453.2	1 381.4	1 322.2	1261,4
Post-primary and post-lower secondary	1 677.1	1 631.9	1 576.7	1 519.5	1464,9
Post-secondary	327.9	301.6	344.1	284.8	298,8
Higher	1 941.4	1 937.4	1 927.8	1 920.0	1841,3
Adult education	273.8	265.1	282.2	274.6	289,2
Total	7 233.8	7 964.40	7 806.6	7 556.1	7347,3

* - 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 2011 [Concise Statistical Yearbook of Poland], op. cit., Table I(133), pp. 235

It should also be added that in 2010/2011 school year nearly all children and youth aged 7-18 (varying from 95.3% to 96,7% depending on the group) participate in the education system, in the 19-24 age group only as few as 57,3% receive education.¹⁰ This can be due to the fact that although continuing education (e.g. studies in a different city) does inevitably entail certain costs, it can also in many cases reduce opportunities for taking up a job concurrently with studying. It seems, therefore, that 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 2010 until 2035, even if with some improvement¹¹. 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 regularly¹². 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	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035
0-24	10 981	10 139	9 630	9 336	9 029	8 437
25-64	21 958	21 948	21 246	20 258	19 572	19 198
65+	5 153	5 929	6 954	7 844	8 195	8 358
TOTAL	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,

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

¹⁰ GUS, *Mały rocznik statystyczny Polski 2011*, Table 3(135), p. 239. (Concise Statistical Yearbook of Poland 2011, GUS, Tab. 3(135), p. 239)

¹¹ 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.

¹² GUS, *Prognoza ludności Polski na lata 2008-2035*, Warszawa 2008, (Forecast of Polish population in 2008-2035) URL: http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/5840_4559_PLK_HTML.htm, p. 3, 7-8.

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 period¹³.

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

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

1.3 - ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS

EMPLOYMENT STRUCTURE BY SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY

The employment structure in Poland gradually gets better from year to year. On 31st Dec 2010, 12,8% of working people were employed in agriculture, as compared to 13,3% in the previous year; 30,2% were employed in industry and 56,9% in services¹⁴. 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.

¹³ Eurostat data, Guidelines and template for the 2009 edition of VET in Europe - Country Reports, Annex IIB, tabl. 2. Opracowała Karolina Czerwińska, Czerwiec 2009

¹⁴ Rynek pracy w Polsce 2010 rok. Warszawa 14.03.2011, Ministerstwo Pracy i Polityki Społecznej, Departament Rynku Pracy, s. 5 (Labour market in Poland 2010, Warsaw 14.03.2011, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Labour Market Department,

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY RATE

In 2010, the economic activity rate in Poland reached 55,7%, and was slightly higher year-on-year (54.9%).¹⁵ This change was due to increased activity of both women (from 47,3% in 2009 to 48,2% in the fourth quarter of 2010) and men (from 63,4% in 2009 to 64,3% in the fourth quarter of 2010). Nevertheless, men remain much more active on the labour market than women¹⁶.

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 18% in this group (Table 1).

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

Level of education	Total economic activity rate	
	2009	2010
Higher (ISCED 5-6)	80.7	80.6
Secondary vocational* (ISCED 4)	66.9	67.8
Secondary general (ISCED 3A)	47.0	48.1
Basic vocational (ISCED 3C)	63.9	62.9
Lower secondary, primary and incomplete primary (ISCED 1-2)	19.1	18.6
Total	55.5	55

* - 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, 25.05.2011, URL: http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/5840_1791_PLK_HTML.htm, Table 1, p. 3.

In the IV quarter of 2010 from the 14,1 mln of economically inactive persons aged 15 and more, 45,2% constituted persons who did not undertake work due to retirement. The other reasons were: education and training (22,2%), illness and disability (14,6%) as well as family responsibilities (11,3%).¹⁷

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

¹⁵ Rynek pracy w Polsce 2010. Ministerstwo Pracy i Polityki Społecznej, Departament Rynku Pracy, Warszawa, 2011 (Labour market in Poland 2010, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Labour Market Dept., Warsaw, 2011)

¹⁶ GUS, *Mały rocznik statystyczny 2010*, Warszawa 2010, Tabela I(81), Concise Statistical Yearbook of Poland 2011, GUS, Tab. I(81)

¹⁷ GUS, *Mały rocznik statystyczny 2011*, Warszawa 2011, p. 139.

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 RATE¹⁸

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 economic downturn this trend is likely to be reversed. In the fourth quarter of 2010, 50,6% of the aggregate population aged +15 were employed. 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 2010, 58,6% of men and 43,4% of women were employed¹⁹.

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 and highest level of education attained (%), 2003,2006,2009								
	2003			2006			2009		
	15-24	25-49	50-64	15-24	25-49	50-64	15-24	25-49	50-64
Higher (ISCED 5-6)	57.3	89.3	63.0	55.8	88.9	65.8	52.6	89.4	67.8
Secondary vocational*, secondary general and basic vocational (ISCED 3-4)	32.9	69.9	40.9	37.0	73.2	41.4	41.4	77.0	47.5
Lower secondary, primary and incomplete primary (ISCED 0-2)	6.6	50.5	27.3	6.2	51.0	29.0	6.4	54,5	29,6h
Total for +15 age group	21.2	70.7	38.9	24.0	74.4	41.5	26.3	78.9	47.0

* - including post-secondary non-tertiary schools

¹⁸ As a percentage of the employed in the population aged 15 or over.

¹⁹ Mały rocznik statystyczny 2011, Tabela I(81) p. 137

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey); Extracted on 19-05-2011;
Last update: 12-05-2011
Description: Employment rates represent the number of employed persons as percentage of the total population. Specific rates are calculated by age groups and educational level

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 RATE²⁰

At the end of 2010, the total registered unemployment rate in Poland was 12,3% . The increasing tendency was noticeable whole year.²¹ At the end of 2010 were registreted 1954,7 thousand unemployed people i.ej. about 62 thousands more than the previous year (an increase of 3.3%). The number of unemployed persons previously working increased (about 3,7%) together with an increase of the number of previously non-working (about 1,6%).

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 2010, when the unemployment rate exceeded 12%. In 2010, the unemployment rate among women was 51,9%, among men - 48,1% , and 23,7% (a 3,1pp increasr) among people under 25 (22,8% among women and 20,9% among men)²². As in the previous year young people still constitute the largest age group of all the registered unemployed.

²⁰ As a percentage of the registered unemployed in the total civil economically active population and in a given category.

²¹Rynek pracy w Polsce 2010, Ministerstwo Pracy i Polityki Społecznej, Departament Rynku Pracy, Warszawa 14.03.2011

²²Mały rocznik Statystyczny 2011, p.157

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

Level of education PL	Unemployment rates by age groups and highest level of education attained								
	2003			2006			2010		
	15-24	25-49	50-64	15-24	25-49	50-64	15-24	25-49	50-64
Lower secondary, primary and incomplete primary (ISCED 0-2)	38.7	31.1	17.5	36.3	26.0	14.4	30.1	18.7	12.8
Secondary vocational, secondary general and basic vocational (ISCED 3-4)	42.9	17.8	13.8	29.5	13.2	11.2	23.1	9.3	8.0
Higher (ISCED 5-6)	27.7	6.3	4.1(u)	23.2	5.5	3.1(u)	20.7	4.6	2.4(u)
NO A.	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Total	41.4	17.2	13.2	29.8	12.4	10.2	23.7	8.4	7.6
Level of education EU									
Lower secondary, primary and incomplete primary (ISCED 0-2)	20.2 (i)	11.6 (i)	7.2(i)	21.2	11.2	7.5	27.4	16.3	10.2
Secondary vocational, secondary general and basic vocational (ISCED 3-4)	17.7 (i)	8.4 (i)	7.7	15.4	7.3	6.9	18.1	8.2	6.7
Higher (ISCED 5-6)	12.0 (i)	4.8 (i)	3.7 (i)	13.4	4.3	3.6	16.2	5.3	3.6
NO A.	13.9 (i)	7.8 (i)	7.4(i)	20.1	:	:		8.2	:
Total	18.0	8.3	6.6	17.2	7.3	6.3	20.8	8.9	6.9

Source: Eurostat (LFS); Extracted on: 30-05-2011; Last update: 12-05-2011

Description: unemployment rates represent the number of unemployed persons as percentage of the active population (employed + unemployed)

Analysis of the unemployment level by educational attainment shows that people with tertiary education are the least affected by unemployment (Table 3). 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 2010, about 56,6% of all unemployed were persons with not more than basic vocational education²³. It should be added the average period people with the lowest 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). 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 EDUCATION²⁴

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.

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 on public finance, revenues of local government bodies (Act of 13 November 2003) and supports to regional development. The budget allocation for all educational tasks, is made in the Budget Act for a given year.

In 2007, Poland allocated 1.89% of the GDP to education at ISCED 2-4 level. The EU-27 average for the same period has 2.2% (Table 4).

In 2009, public expenditure on education totalled PLN 53.1 billion, which accounted for 3.9% GDP, while the State budget expenditure on education was PLN 35.7 billion, including PLN 33.2 billion (i.e. 93%) of the appropriation for education of the general subsidy for local governments.²⁵

Currently, most public schools and other educational institutions are administered and financed by local governments: *gminy* (municipalities), *poviats* (district) and *voivodships* (regions). Schools offering vocational education are set up and administered by *poviat* governments, while regional governments are in charge of schools having a regional significance (GUS, 2006).

Public schools administered by entities which do not belong to the public finance sector receive a subsidy for every student from the budget of the local government. Local governments are also obliged by law to award subsidies for the cofinancing of day-to-day

²³ Mały rocznik statystyczny 2011, Tabela 13(92) p.157g

²⁴ The expenditures cover the following budget classification headings: 'Science', 'Higher education', 'Education', 'Educational care' and subsidies for education.

²⁵ Oświata i Wychowanie w roku szkolnym 2009/2010. GUS. Watszawa 2010. S. 49 (Education in 2009/2010 school year). CSU. Warsaw 2010. P.49

(statutory) activities of entities listed in relevant legislation, for example non-public schools and other educational institutions having the status of a public school (including vocational schools), schools without the status of a public school and other non-public educational institutions (Education System Act, of 7 September 1991).

Local government bodies may commission education-related tasks to non-governmental organisations 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.

Several levels of state administration are in charge of adult continuing education. At central level, such responsible bodies are the Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the Ministry of Finance.

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

Formal and non-formal adult continuing education can be financed from several sources, such as State and local government budget, 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), and enterprises.

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 autonomous government bodies.

As regards continuous professional development of teachers of all types of public schools and educational institutions, starting from 2001 onwards, 1% of funds earmarked annually for teachers' pay has been reserved specifically for cofinancing university studies or teacher training, fees for qualification programmes and further training courses and reimbursement of accommodation and travel costs. These funds can be spent with the approval of the school principal (Act of 26 January 1982, Teachers' Charter, Art. 70).

TABLE 4. Total public expenditure on education, at secondary level of education, 2007

TABLE 4 : TOTAL PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION AS % OF GDP, AT SECONDARY LEVEL OF EDUCATION (ISCED 2-4)2002-2008							
SECONDARY LEVEL OF EDUCATION (ISCED 2-4)							
GEO	2002.	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
EU27	2.3 (s)2	2.35 (s)	2.29 (s)	2.25 (s)	2.23 (s)	2.20 (s)	;
PL	2.10	2.06	2.01	2.04	2.05	1.89	:

Source: Eurostat (UOE Data collection); extracted on: 19-05-2011 last update: 12-04-2011

Description: Total public expenditure on education, at ISCED level of education 2-3-4, by programme orientation (ISCED 2, 3, 4)

(s) Eurostat estimated

Note: All data are provisional estimations. Special data extraction to Cedefop

1.4 - EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF POPULATION

In 2009, the percentage of the early school leavers in Poland amounted to 5.3% (Figure 7). It was a relatively low figure compared to the EU average 14.4%. Data show decreasing tendency since 2002 as in the EU more generally (17.0% in the EU and 7.2% in Poland). It indicates an increased awareness of the need for education by the society. 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.

TABLE 1: EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS (%) 2002 - 2009

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
EU 27	17.0	16.6 (b)	16.1	15.8	15.5	15.1	14.9	14.4
Poland	7.2	6.0	5.6 (b)	5.3	5.4	5.0	5.0	5.3

(b) Break in series

Source: Eurostat (LFS); Extracted: 19-05-2011; Last update 01-04-2011

Description: Percentage of the population aged 18-24 with at most lower secondary education and not in further education or training

TABLE 2: Graduates at ISCED level 3 and level 4 by level of education, programme orientation and sex (numbers), 2007 and 2009

Source: Eurostat (UOE Data collection); Extracted: 19-05-2011; Last update: 29-04-2011

TABLE 2 :GRADUATES AT ISCED LEVEL 3 AND LEVEL 4 BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION, PROGRAMME ORIENTATION AND SEX (NUMBERS), 2007 AND 2009													
YEAR		2007						2009					
GEO	S	3 GEN	3 PV	3 VOC	4 GEN	4 PV	4 VOC	3 GEN	3 PV	3 VOC	4 GEN	4 PV	4 VOC
PL	T	340148	:	192576	:	:	82542	308805	:	200576	:	:	74273
	F	141790	:	119463	:	:	33446	124062	:	125817	:	:	30311
	M	198358	:	73113	:	:	49096	184743	:	74759	:	:	43962
EU 27*	T	239329 1	:	259556 9	49493	:	424537	231974 6	:	248037 3	:	:	394682
	F	102220 2	:	140031 7	23958	:	194372	995733	:	134453 2	:	:	188195
	M	137108 9	:	119525 1	25535	:	230165	132401 3	:	113584 2	:	:	206487

* Available total – calculated by Cedefop;

S= sex; M=males; F=females; T= total; GEN=general; PV=pre-vocational; VOC=vocational

Eurostat original label: educ_grad2-Graduates in ISCED 3 and 4 by age and sex

Link to data: http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=educ_grad2&lang=en

Further selections: Level=ISCED 3 general, ISCED 3 prevocational, ISCED 3 vocational, ISCED 4 general, ISCED 4 prevocational, ISCED4 vocational, sex =Total, male, female, age =total

Link to metadata: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_SDDS/EN/educ_esms.htm
AGE=Total; INDICATORS= OBS_FLAG

Taking under consideration numbers of women and men being educated at the level ISCED 3 of general education the number is getting decrease (Tab. 2 year 2007 and 2009). National statistical data confirms the same tendency for other types of education at the same level ISCED and shows decreasing number of women and men in all types of education at the level ISCED 4. It is connected with population decline. Slight increase of learning people is noticeable at the level ISCED 3 which does not EU27 tendency. The number of learning people in EU27 at the level ISCED 3 and 4 increase.

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.

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.

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”.

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.

FIRST STAGE OF TERTIARY OR HIGHER EDUCATION - (ISCED 5)- KSZTAŁCENIE WYŻSZE

Includes tertiary programmes with: (a) academic orientation (type A), which are largely theoretical; (b) occupational orientation (type B), usually shorter than type A and geared towards entry to the labour market. Type A programmes provide access to advanced research studies and professions with high skill requirements. Type B programmes prepare students for direct entry into a specific occupation. Entry to ISCED level 5 normally requires successful completion of ISCED levels 3 or 4.

Comment: Level 5 A programmes with academic orientation are typically outside the scope of VET.

Source: Cedefop, 2008, based on Unesco, 1997; Eurydice, 2006. Terminology of European education and training policy: a selection of 100 key terms. Luxembourg: Publications Office.

Available

from

Internet:

<http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/europass/home/hornav/Glossary.csp>

Tertiary education in Poland 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

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.

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.

LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION (ISCED2) - KSZTAŁCENIE GIMNAZJALNE

Lower secondary education generally continues the basic programmes of primary, although teaching is typically more subject-focused, often employing more specialised teachers to conduct classes.

Comment: in some countries, this level may appear as an artificial division which does not correspond to the national education system (nine years of basic education including ISCED level 2). In such cases, ISCED 2 level is called ‘second stage of basic education’.

Source: Cedefop, 2008, based on Unesco, 1997; Eurydice, 2006. Terminology of European education and training policy: a selection of 100 key terms. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Available from Internet:

<http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/europass/home/hornav/Glossary.csp>
[cited 22.07.2010].

Lower secondary education generally continues the basic programmes of primary, although teaching is typically more subject-focused, often employing more specialised teachers to conduct classes. ISCED 2 level is called ‘second stage of basic education’. It is compulsory and it lasts three years, culminating in an examination, giving the possibility of further education on ISCED 3 level. The organizational structure of lower secondary school includes class I-III.

OCCUPATION - ZAWÓD

A group of tasks (activities) separated by the social division of labor, carried out continuously or with minor changes, required appropriate qualifications (knowledge and skills), acquired through education or practice

Source: *Rozporządzenie Ministra Pracy i Polityki Społecznej z dn. 27-04-2010 w sprawie klasyfikacji zawodów i specjalności na potrzeby rynku pracy oraz zakresu jej stosowania.*

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.

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.

PROFESSION - PROFESJA/ZAWÓD

Professional activity or group of professional activities, access to which, the pursuit of which, or one of the modes of pursuit of which is subject, directly or indirectly, by virtue of legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions to the possession of specific professional qualifications.

Source: European Parliament and Council of the European Union (2005). directive 2005/36/EC of the European parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications.

Available from Internet:
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2005:255:0022:0142:en:PDF>
[cited 03.05.2011].

The definition is similar to the European one, however it is commonly replaced with the word 'occupation'

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.

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.

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 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.

UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION (ISCED 3)- Kształcenie ponadobowiązkowe

Final stage of secondary education that normally begins at the end of compulsory education. The entrance age is usually 15 or 16 years. Entrance qualifications (completion of compulsory education) and other minimum entry requirements are generally needed. Instruction is often more subject-oriented than lower secondary education (ISCED 2). The typical duration of ISCED level 3 varies from two to five years.

Source: Cedefop, 2008, based on Unesco, 1997; Eurydice, 2006. Terminology of European education and training policy: a selection of 100 key terms. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Available from Internet: <http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/europass/home/hornav/Glossary.csp> [cited 22.07.2010].

The above definition is applicable to Polish education system. The upper secondary education is offered by: special schools, general secondary schools, profiled general secondary schools, technical schools, supplementary general secondary schools, supplementary technical secondary schools and basic vocational schools, general art schools.

2 – MODERNIZING VET TO SUPPORT LLL, INTERNATIONALIZATION AND MOBILITY.

2.1 VET POLICY DEVELOPMENTS AND PRIORITIES IN SUPPORTING LLL

The Polish Government started to implement the strategic Community documents underpinning the systemic changes in Europe aimed to build a *knowledge based economy*, and in this context to introduce and widely popularise the *lifelong learning* (LLL) concept, before formal Poland's accession to the EU on 1 May 2004.

The relevant policy documents endorsed at the Community level, from the *Lisbon Strategy to Education and Training 2011*, and their subsequent implementation stages, from the *Bologna Declaration* to the *Copenhagen Declaration*, were reflected in the activities of various departments and agencies of the state, notably the Ministry of National Education (*Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej*) as a government body responsible for the formulation of education policies, including modernisation of VET.

These processes have been substantially enhanced by European programmes of cooperation in the field of education, since 2007 implemented under the common framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme.

At present, the key document offering a comprehensive picture of LLL issues in the context of changes which need to be made in education and training and creation of a national system for recognition of qualifications aligned with the European Qualifications framework is **The Lifelong Learning Perspective** (*Perspektywa uczenia się przez całe życie*)²⁶, prepared by the Interdepartmental Team for Lifelong Learning and the National Qualifications Framework, which was set up by the President of the Council of Ministers in February 2010.²⁷ The document provides a broad diagnosis of the situation at hand, formulates strategic and operational objectives and proposes ways for their implementation and monitoring.

Perspektywa has the following contents:

1. Background
 - Knowledge as the basis for socio-economic development
 - Need for a reorientation of school and vocational career models
 - Establishment of the European LLL area, including the European Qualifications framework
 - Need for an all-encompassing and coherent approach to learning
 - Linking *Perspektywa* with other strategic documents
2. Learning at different life and career stages - diagnosis and forecast
 - Children - family learning, pre-school and early school education
 - Youth and young adults - education and labour market entry
 - Adults in the labour market - learning and vocational and school careers
 - The elderly - learning to stay active
 - Forecast of demand and supply trends in learning until 2020
 - Summing up key opportunities and challenges for LLL in Poland

²⁶ The document has been published on the Ministry's website at www.men.gov.pl, section on BIP (Public Information Bulletin), in the tab relating to legislation and government projects (Akty prawne/Rządowe programy i projekty), this is a draft dated 04.02.2011.

²⁷ The Team includes representatives of the following institutions: Ministry of National Education (LLL policy coordination), Ministry of Science and Higher Education (NQF coordination), Chancellery of the President of the Council of Ministers, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Regional Development and Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

3. Grounds for action - strategic objectives
4. Operational objectives and areas of intervention
 - Objective 1: Creativity and innovation
 - Objective 2: Transparent and coherent national qualifications system
 - Objective 3: Varied and widely accessible early education and care
 - Objective 4: Education and training attuned to the needs of the economy and labour market changes
 - Objective 5: Work environment and social involvement promoting LLL
5. System for implementation and monitoring
 - Key performance targets and benchmarks until 2020.

Perspektywa, which is to be accepted as a government document by the Council of Ministers, is a plan of action laying down proposals of various initiatives **aimed to make LLL an integral part of vocational education and training processes.**

Perspektywa outlines such issues as linking lifelong learning with the strategies proposed by the Government in the document entitled *A structuring plan for the development strategy*, adopted in November 2009,²⁸ as horizontal activities which are required for the completion of all the strategies, addressing the fact that the level of competences and qualifications is one of the fundamental pre-conditions for attaining the adopted goals.

Another strategic document, the report *Poland 2030 (Raport Polska 2030)*, prepared by the Team of Strategic Advisors of the President of the Council of Ministers, deals extensively with the need to **modernise educational processes and systems** so that Poland can effectively respond to the civilisational challenges it will face in the future²⁹.

The recent **amendment of the Act on Education**³⁰ introduced many changes in the Polish VET system as of 1 September 2012, which include among others:

- Overall facilitation of acquiring vocational education and making the VET system more flexible;
- Creating possibilities for a successive acquisition of qualifications required for specific occupations;
- Division of occupations on the basis of the relevant qualifications and their classification based on common or related qualifications in eight broad vocational areas (each of the occupations is described by one to three specific classifications, whereas a single qualification can be a component of many occupations);
- Changes in the system's organisation - some institutions will cease to exist (specialised post-lower secondary and supplementary post-lower secondary schools, which will now function as general education post-secondary schools for adults). In parallel, vocational schools will have an option to be transformed into vocational and continuing education centres, with a more varied offer and improved opportunities for cooperation with employers;

²⁸ The strategies outlined in the Plan cover such issues as: innovation and effectiveness of the economy; development of human capital; development of transport; energy and environmental security; effective and efficient state; development of social capital; regional development, National Security; sustainable development of rural areas, agriculture and fishery.

²⁹ The text of Raport Polska 2030 can be found at: <http://www.zds.kprm.gov.pl/node>

³⁰ Act of 19 August 2011 amending the act on the system of education and certain other (Journal of Laws 2011 no. 205 item 1206). The legislative changes were discussed on the basis of information available at the EURYDICE website, draft version for the EURYPEDIA database.

- change in the core curricula - vocational education at the post-lower secondary level will be merged with the core curriculum for general secondary schools. Pupils will continue their education, having the general education core curriculum as the basis for instruction, in the first year of post-lower secondary vocational school, and in post-lower secondary general education schools for adults, starting from the second year;
- changes in the organisation of exams will make it easier to acquire new qualifications and learn new occupations: exams confirming specific qualifications will be held for different education levels, and not only following the completion of vocational school; validated qualifications will be confirmed by a certificate (students will receive a VET certificate once all the qualifications required for a given occupation have been validated),
- new, out-of-school vocational training opportunities will be opened up, in the form of vocational courses, whose participants will be able to take examinations confirming vocational qualifications.

Changes in the VET system to make it more in tune with the lifelong learning requirements have been supported by a number of ESF-funded projects, implemented since 2008³¹ by the National Centre for Supporting Vocational and Continuing Education (*Krajowy Ośrodek Wsparcia Edukacji Zawodowej i Ustawicznej*) as part of the Human Capital Operational Programme), e.g.:

- Enhancing core curricula as the key to VET modernisation (2008-2013);
- Support system for schools and institutions implementing modular VET curricula (2009-2013);
- Model system for an implementation and dissemination of distance learning in lifelong learning (2009-2014).

2.2 IMPLEMENTATION OF EUROPEAN TOOLS AND PRINCIPLES

The Polish Qualifications Framework³²

Work on the Polish Qualifications Framework. Poland began work on its national qualifications framework in 2006. In February 2010, the Team for Lifelong Learning and National Qualifications Framework was set up. Then a subteam was formed, to act as the Steering Committee for NQF and LLL issues (NQF Committee).

First stage of work. Between October 2008 and January 2010, works were carried out by experts as part of a systemic project entitled “Stocktaking of competences and qualifications for the Polish labour market and the development of the National Qualifications Framework model”. As a result of this exercise, a model of the Polish qualifications framework was prepared based on the experts’ proposal, and preliminary implementation guidelines were drawn.

Second stage of work. In the period July 2010-December 2013, the Warsaw-based Educational Research Institute (*Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych*), will complete a systemic

³¹ For more information on these projects see: <http://www.koweziu.edu.pl>

³² Information on activities related to the development and implementation of the Polish Qualifications Framework was prepared on the basis of an information leaflet entitled *Kwalifikacje po europejsku* [European-style qualifications], published in June 2011 in connection with the ESF project *Człowiek - najlepsza inwestycja* [People are the best investment]. For more information on the preparation of the NQF, see: www.kwalifikacje.org.pl

project entitled “Development of policy and institutional assumptions for the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning”.

Third stage of work - implementation of the Polish Qualifications Framework and the National Qualifications Register - is planned for 2012.

Other NQF-related projects. The work on the introduction of the NQF is supported by a number of HC OP projects focusing on different areas of education, in particular VET and the labour market.

The Polish Qualifications Framework (as shown in the table below) will provide a uniform way to describe qualifications acquired at every stage of education, be it formal, non-formal or informal.

LEVELS OF QUALIFICATIONS	REQUIREMENTS FOR INDIVIDUAL LEVELS OF EDUCATION					
	GENERAL EDUCATION			VOCATIONAL EDUCATION		
Level 1	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL COMPETENCES	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL COMPETENCES
Level 2	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL COMPETENCES	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL COMPETENCES
Level 3	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL COMPETENCES	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL COMPETENCES
Level 4	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL COMPETENCES	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL COMPETENCES
	HIGHER EDUCATION					
Level 5	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL COMPETENCES	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL COMPETENCES
Level 6	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL COMPETENCES	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL COMPETENCES
Level 7	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL COMPETENCES	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL COMPETENCES
Level 8	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL COMPETENCES	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL COMPETENCES

The Polish Qualifications framework (PQF) defines eight levels of qualifications, to which specific descriptors have been ascribed, i.e. general descriptions specifying the relevant range of knowledge, competences and skills: knowledge refers to a body of facts, principles, theories and practices related to a field of work or study (knowledge can be theoretical or factual); skills are divided into cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) and practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments). Skills refer to the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems, whilst personal and social competences mean the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and, social or methodological competences demonstrated in work, in study situations and personal development, while competences define responsibility and autonomy.

The Polish descriptors have been divided into four groups:

- Universal descriptors, relevant to the learning outcomes acquired at specific levels and relative to all types of education;
- descriptors relevant to vocational education at levels 1-8. These are standard minimum learning outcomes required for qualifications in specific occupations;
- descriptors relevant to general education at levels 1-4 - from primary school to general secondary education exam (*matura*);
- descriptors relevant to higher education at levels 5-8 (level 8, up to doctorate)

Ultimately, the model of the Polish Qualifications framework will distinguish “full” and “partial” qualifications, associated with specific levels. A qualification does not necessarily mean an occupation since there can be occupations which involve a number of qualifications.

Acquisition of a full qualification at a given level will open up a possibility to seek a full qualification at a higher level. In some situations, several partial qualifications may be needed to acquire one full qualification. Each full qualification will involve specific minimum requirements in terms of knowledge, skills and competences; it will also have its specific “volume”, i.e. the acquired qualification can be developed further (instead of pursuing a higher-level qualification). The “volume” of individual qualifications will be determined using ECVET points.

In order to ensure the implementation and a smooth operation of the National Qualifications System, it will be necessary, in addition to the Polish Qualifications Framework, to: develop procedures to assure the quality of qualifications; validate competences acquired in formal, non-formal and informal contexts; create a system for the transfer and accumulation of learning outcomes outside higher education; prepare the accreditation of training providers, etc.

ECVET - STATE OF PLAY IN 2011

*The Recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training*³³ provides a political rationale for the need to establish such a system, largely parallel to

³³ Official Journal of the European Union 2009/C, 155/02, website: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu>

the ECTS scheme, already in operation at higher education institutions³⁴; The *Recommendation* has two annexes, outlining the definitions and system description³⁵.

Pursuant to the *Recommendation*, EU Member States should promote ECVET with reference to VET qualifications at all levels of the European Qualifications Framework in order to facilitate trans-national mobility and promote recognition of learning outcomes and lifelong learning.

The introduction of ECVET is planned for 2012, whilst the European Commission will be obliged to monitor the delivery and to prepare, by 18 June 2014, a report on the accumulated experiences and conclusions for the future for the European Parliament and the Council.

One reliable source of information on the preparation of the instruction of ECVET in Poland concerning is the *Stocktaking of competences and qualifications for the Polish labour market and the development of the National Qualifications Framework model - an experts' report*. Ministry of National Education, Priority III HC OP, Measure 3.4, Submeasure 3.4.1, Warsaw, January 2010.³⁶ The document states (p. 13) that “to date, ECVET has not been implemented in Poland or any other country. Pilot projects are under way, intended to accumulate experiences and good practices, in order to facilitate the system’s implementation in the future.”

It should also be noted that the issue of ECVET is raised in all documents dealing with the EQF (and the NQF), including *Perspektywa*, which lists, among the strategic policy interventions for Objective 2 (chapter 2.6), “Ensuring possibilities for the transfer of learning outcomes, including partial qualifications:

- implementation of ECVET,
- ensuring coherence between ECVET and ECTS.”

To sum up, it can be said that the introduction of ECVET in Poland, closely intertwined with the work on the Polish Qualifications Framework, is currently at the stage of theoretical work. Nevertheless, some pilot projects in this regard may have taken place (or are currently under way), but their results have not, to date, been communicated to the public.

EUROPASS³⁷

The *Europass* portfolio is quite popular in Poland. In 2010, Poland was ranked 7th among EU Member States as regards the number of visits to the *Europass CV* and *Europass Language Passport* sites. *Europass* documents are increasingly used by candidates in recruitment processes and are more and more appreciated by employers.

In addition to providing information and handling formalities accompanying the issue of *Europass* Mobility documents, the National *Europass* Centre is engaged in programme promotion at home, in order to popularise the *Europass* portfolio among individual groups of potential addressees and future beneficiaries.

³⁴ European Credit Transfer System

³⁵ Annex II: ECVET - PRINCIPLES AND TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS - 1. Units of learning outcomes, 2. Transfer and accumulation of learning outcomes, ECVET partnerships. 3. Learning agreement and personal transcript, 4. ECVET points.

³⁶ Text available at the website of the Educational Research Institute (Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych), in the tab on NQF, <http://kwalifikacje.org.pl>

³⁷ Information on *Europass* activity prepared on the basis of the relevant contribution to the LLP 2010 annual report prepared by the National *Europass* Centre.

In 2010, there were 166 500 visits to the National Europass Centre website. Its representatives ran 40 presentations and websites across Poland showing the broad spectrum of possibilities that the *Europass* portfolio can offer, addressed to representatives of education and labour market institutions, education and local authorities at all levels, employers, vocational counsellors, university students, pupils of post-lower secondary schools and the unemployed. *Europass* was also promoted on the web (via Internet portals for job seekers, youth and those interested in issues of education), including Youtube; and in the press (sectoral, local and nationwide). CDs with information materials about *Europass* and leaflets were published, to be distributed during meetings with potential users.

Five years after the introduction of the *Europass Certificate Supplement*, the National Europass Centre, in collaboration with the Ministry of National Education, on 22-23 September 2010 organised a meeting entitled: “Europass as a tool for promoting mobility in CVET - experiences and prospects for the future” to discuss such issues as e.g. role of the *Europass* portfolio in the modernisation of the VET system in Poland.

These activities promoting the *Europass* initiative were also continued in 2011.

The National Europass Centre does not have any aggregated data on the *Diploma Supplement* issued by higher education institutions; it should be noted that the *Diploma Supplement*, under the applicable legislation in force, is issued routinely upon completion of a higher education programme.

Use of Europass documents in Poland in 2010

	Type of Europass document				
	CV	Language Passport	Mobility	Diploma Supplement	Certificate Supplement
Number of documents issued	2361 downloads of CV examples ----- 10 961 CV downloaded to complete offline	2084 downloads of LP examples ----- 1300 LP downloaded to complete offline	4912 documents issued	No data at National Europass Centre ----- Diploma Supplement is routinely issued by higher education institutions	163 933 Supplements issued by the Regional Examination Boards

2.3 INTERNATIONALISATION AND TRANSNATIONAL MOBILITY IN VET

2.3.1 POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR INTERNATIONALISATION AND TRANSNATIONAL MOBILITY IN VET

As indicated earlier in this chapter, several strategic documents have recently been published, which describe the status quo of the Polish education system, including CVET. The proposed diagnoses clearly indicate that there is a need for the modernisation of the system of education in Poland so as to diversify the options for acquiring education and vocational qualifications (in school forms or out of school, be it non-formally or informally).

If these documents do not make express references to the international context associated with the planned and necessary changes, it has probably been due to the fact that their authors did not see any need for them. This could suggest that, for many years, if not from the moment of Poland's EU accession, this context has had such a strong presence in daily activities that the question of internationalisation regarding many issues, including education, that is no longer perceived as an external one.

Some aspects of the internalisation of the Polish education system can be highlighted. In Poland's higher education system, where the issue of internationalisation of tertiary education has been a major topic since the 1990s, (TEMPUS programme³⁸), *the Bologna Declaration*³⁹ can be regarded as a watershed. The *Bologna process* triggered the process of modernisation and systemic transformation, including for example the introduction of two-cycle, and later three-cycle system of studies; popularisation of ECTS or introduction of the *Diploma Supplement*. Mobility of European students as part of the ERASMUS Programme has come to significantly involve students from Polish universities and colleges, with the number of mobility experiences exceeding two million since the launch of the programme.

As regards primary education, Poland has for many years taken part in PISA testing, organised under the auspices of the OECD⁴⁰. The findings from the most recent study on reading (2010) ranked Poland 5th of 65 surveyed countries. Poland has taken part in PISA assessments since 2000, and there is little doubt that the conclusions drawn from subsequent assessment exercises have helped improve the quality of education in the relevant fields. It should be noted that the results of PISA surveys are commonly recognised as key indicators of educational development. In the European Union, they are used to assess educational progress across Europe, both with regard to the period 2000-2010 comprised by the *Lisbon Strategy*, and in view of the new strategy - *Europe 2020*.

School youth have taken part in European cooperation programmes since 1998, which means that Poland's participation, based on the same terms and conditions as those applicable to the EU Member States, started long before Poland's formal EU accession. The SOCRATES/COMENIUS Programme, addressed to school youth, and the VET-focused LEONARDO da VINCI have formed part of the framework Lifelong Learning programme since 2007. The constantly growing number of participants of these programmes, which have in the meantime undergone a number of internal changes, and an increasing number of mobility experiences, i.e. incoming and outgoing visits of students, teachers and instructors; jointly implemented projects; exchange of experiences; dissemination of foreign languages and improvement of linguistic competency, can serve as both proof and measure of the internationalisation of the system of education in Poland.

³⁸ EU assistance programme supporting higher education reforms, started in 1990; <http://www.tempus.org.pl>

³⁹ Joint Declaration of the European Ministers of Education convened in Bologna on the 19th of June 1999, for the full text see: <http://ekspercibolonscy.org.pl>

⁴⁰ PISA - Programme for International Student Assessment, www.pisa.oecd.org

The collaboration of Polish partners with partners from the EU and EEA Member States as well as EU-associated countries as part of the LLP programmes has been the most popular form of institutionalised cooperation with abroad in the Polish system of education.

Naturally, cooperation on the European arena does not preclude cooperation or exchanges with other countries pursued at the central level (agreements on bilateral cooperation have been concluded by the Ministry of National Education and Ministry of Science and Higher Education with many countries), or direct/decentralised cooperation robustly developed by voivodships (provinces), poviats (districts), gminas (municipalities), cities or NGOs.

Germany is unquestionably the key collaboration partner for Polish institutions and organisations, also in relation to the relevant European programmes. Poland's direct neighbour in the west, it is a country with huge potential and extensive opportunities it can offer to Polish partners. Polish-German cooperation relating to young people has been built up within the framework of the *Organisation for Polish-German Youth Cooperation (PNWM)*, established by the governments of Poland and Germany in 1991 by virtue of an intergovernmental agreement. Cross-border cooperation between Poland and Germany is also well developed; as part of this cooperation, some projects have been carried out in the field of education (such as Polish-German classes, bilingual schools, etc.).

There are no institutional arrangements in place which would aim to remove obstacles to international mobility in VET or would facilitate organisation of such mobility.

There are no data available concerning the targeted financing of specific groups of beneficiaries.

2.3.2 TRANSNATIONAL MOBILITY PROGRAMMES AND SCHEMES IN VET

The table below provides information on one of the European cooperation programmes, LEONARDO da VINCI, which forms a part of the broad LLP initiative. As mentioned above, participation in the LLP programme is undoubtedly the most popular and varied form of cooperation with partners from other countries which is pursued in Poland.

The only available statistics are those showing the number of outgoing participants of Community programmes.

Data on multilateral, bilateral, national and regional programmes are systematically collected by individual institutions and organisations and cannot be presented in an aggregate way.

TABLE 2.3.2. - OVERVIEW OF VET TRANSNATIONAL MOBILITY PROGRAMMES AND SCHEMES

Title of program/scheme and geographical coverage	Managing authority	Sources of funding ⁽⁴¹⁾ and corresponding level of funding for the programming period	Start - end date (programming period)	Target groups ⁽⁴²⁾	Average duration of mobility per target group (in months)	Number of participants ⁽⁴³⁾	Implementation mechanisms ⁽⁴⁴⁾	Practices to recognise the KSC acquired abroad	Sources of information (including evaluation reports)
EU programmes									
1. Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) - Leonardo da Vinci Programme (mobility scheme)	LLP National Agency (NA) under the supervision of the Ministry of National	EU programmes	2007-2013	IVET students, apprentices, graduates, people in the labour market, VET professionals	IVET Students + Apprentices - 1 month VET Professionals - 0.5 month People in the	IVET Students + Apprentices 2 885 (total of 11 542 in the period 2007-2010) VET	NA1 - grant applications are submitted to the NA designated by the national authority in the	Europass-Mobility Certificate	EC/NA databases

⁽⁴¹⁾ EU programmes, EU Structural Funds (e.g. ESF), National budget, Employer contribution, Individuals' funds/savings, etc.

⁽⁴²⁾ E.g. students, apprentices, VET professionals, etc.

⁽⁴³⁾ The number of students who have spent a period abroad in one single year (please specify year). In case statistics are collected differently, please specify.

⁽⁴⁴⁾ Please briefly present the application procedure & the eligibility requirements for the applicants. In case of EU programs, please indicate if standard procedure is applied. In case of exceptions, please briefly describe.

	Education				labour market - 3 months	<p>Professionals 1 092 (total of 4 370 in the period 2007-2010)</p> <p>People in the labour market - 273 (total of 1 905 in the period 2007-2010)</p>	<p>applicant's country. NAs carry out the selection and allocate financial support to the applicants selected. NAs award grants to beneficiaries located in their respective countries.</p>		
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2.3.3. ARRANGEMENTS TO SECURE WORK PLACEMENTS FOR TRANSNATIONAL MOBILITY IN VET

Entrepreneurs have similar access to information on international mobility opportunities as all other entities participating in social life.

There is no information available on any dedicated activities or schemes to encourage enterprises to pursue international mobility initiatives.

Periods of employment abroad are recognised by employers in accordance with the relevant labour law legislation.

There is no information (register) available on enterprises taking part in VET mobility schemes.

3. VET TO SUPPORT RECOVERY FROM THE CRISIS

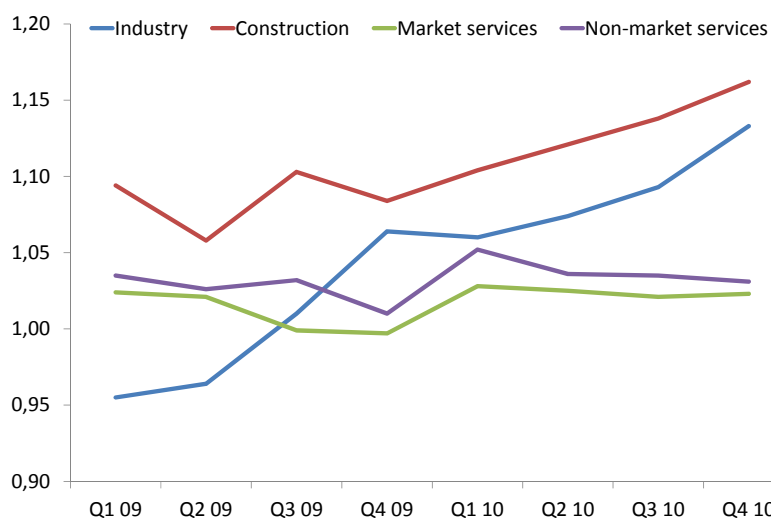
3.1 OVERVIEW

The crisis encountered in developed economies was also the source of the economic slowdown noted in Poland in 2009. This slowdown had an external character, caused by limited demand from abroad, because in contrast to many other EU economies, Poland did not experience the speculative bubble in the real estate sector of the pre-crisis period. Additionally, the Polish banking sector was not as extensively involved in financing construction as American, British or Irish banks. This is why, the banking sector in Poland was threatened with fluctuations in liquidity only in the initial phase of the crisis, and these were quickly staved off by the coordinated reaction of Polish financial supervision authorities and the central bank. Furthermore, in Poland the negative export dynamic lasted for a slightly shorter period than in other EU countries, the scale of the drop in international trade volume was smaller and its proportion in the GDP before the crisis was lower than in the remaining eastern European EU member countries. Public investments financed with EU structural funds had a positive influence in easing the transmission of the crisis to Poland via the channel of international trade. Without their existence, reductions in investments would have been greater, and following this, there would have most likely been a decrease in economic growth and a worsening situation in the labour market. As a result, a positive rate of economic growth at 1.7% was noted in 2009, distinguishing Poland against the backdrop of the continent.

The economic recovery of 2010 was accompanied by improved results in a prevailing majority of economic sectors and trades. Industrial production, construction and services grew (see Figure 1). Some of the most dynamic sectors in industry included electronics, motorisation, the chemical industry and metallurgy. Construction dropped insignificantly (0.8 percent) as the result of weak demand in the real estate market and difficulties caused by the very low temperatures and floods during the first and second quarters of 2010. Demand-driven light industry, especially clothing manufacturing, continues to experience difficulties. The situation in the services is also improving, wholesale and retail sales have increased, as has employment (1.2% higher than in the rest of the economy). Agricultural production decreased by an insignificant amount.

Figure 1. Gross value added by economic sectors in 2009-2010

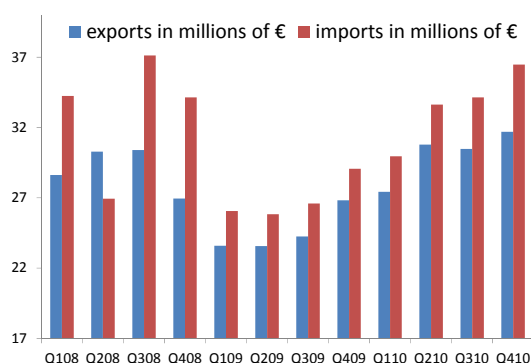
(1.0 = the analogous quarter in 2008)



Source: own work based on data of the Central Statistical Office GUS (2011a).

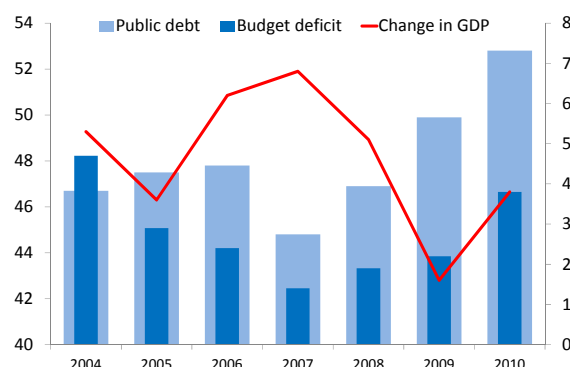
In effect, Poland noted an increase in the GDP of 3.8% in 2010.⁴⁵ Increasing domestic demand together with an improved situation in foreign markets resulted in a significant improvement of export and import figures, which grew in 2010 by 24.6% and 24.8% respectively compared to 2009, and came close to the levels of 2008 (see Figures 2 and 3) (GUS 2011a). However, the deficit in the public finances sector grew from 3.7% to 6% of the GDP and the public debt grew from 49.9% to 52.8% of the GDP, exceeding the debt ceiling level mandated by law, which means that in the following year it cannot be greater than the level determined for the 2011 budget.

Figure 2. Imports and exports of goods in 2008-2010 in millions of € (quarterly data).



Source: own work based on data from GUS(2011a).

Figure 3. Budget deficit (right axis) and public debt (left axis) as percentage of GDP and the change in GDP in percentages (left axis) for 2004-2010

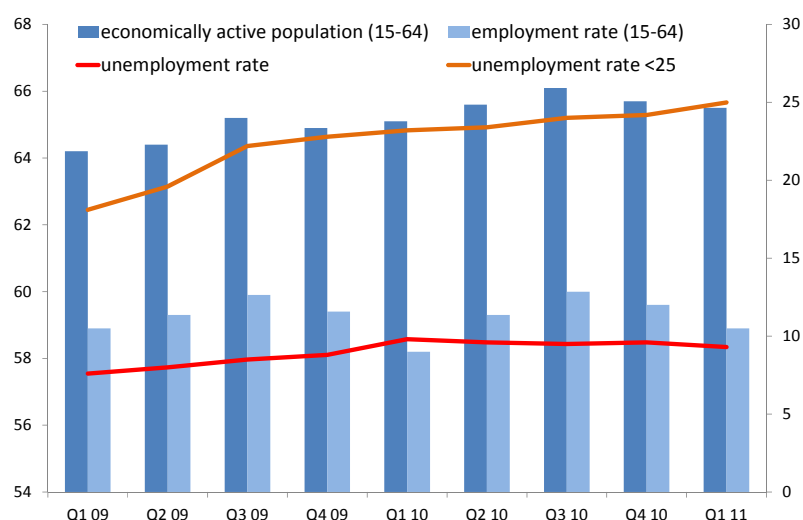


Source: own work based on data from the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Economy.

Despite an increase in employment (number of employed persons) and greater activity in the labour market, the unemployment rate rose slightly to 9.6% (see Fig. 4). However, it should be added that the number of working hours slightly decreased. Young persons and individuals with low qualifications suffered the greatest decline in the labour market. The unemployment rate among young people (under 25 years of age) increased from 18.1% in the first quarter of 2009 to 24.2% in the last quarter of 2010. This trend was similarly noted for persons having an incomplete elementary education, a completed elementary or lower secondary school level education (from 11.4% at the end of 2008 to 17.2% at the end of 2010) (GUS 2011b).

⁴⁵ The prognosis for 2011 is that the rate of growth will remain the same or slightly increase. The Minister of Finance predicts 4.0% growth, while market analysts foresee growth of 3.6%-3.8%.

Figure 4. The rates of economically active and employed persons 15-64 years old (left axis), the overall unemployment rate and the unemployment rate of persons under the age of 25 (right axis) in percentages



Source: own work based on Eurostat.

In summary, the limited effect of the world recession on the Polish labour market in 2008-2010 clearly differed from the fluctuations in the rates of employment and unemployment recorded in the past, especially during the Russian crisis of 1998 when a similarly extensive economic slowdown resulted in significantly stronger adjustments in the labour market (the unemployment rate then went from 10% to over 20%). Given the changes occurring in other developed countries, especially in Europe, the quantitative adjustments in the Polish economy and the increase of unemployed in the labour market should be considered mild.

3.2. EFFECTS OF THE CRISIS ON VET AND CORRESPONDING MEASURES

Accessible quantitative data collected for educational statistics, as well as research performed in the business sector (e.g. Orłowski, Pasternak et al. 2010) and among professionals undergoing training (e.g. Worek, Stec et. al 2011) do not indicate that the economic crisis had a significant impact on changes in the attitudes of learners (see part 3.2.1.) and employers (see part 3.2.2.).

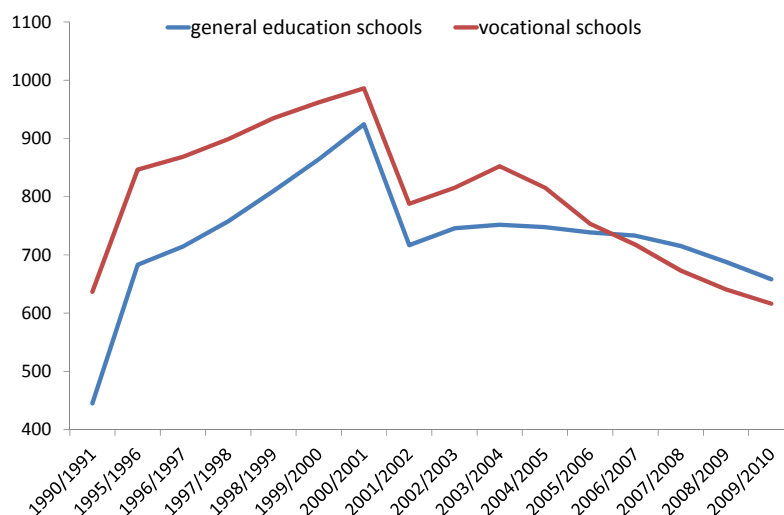
Because the crisis affected the rate of economic growth and the labour market to a relatively small degree, it is also difficult to indicate broadly targeted activities that would have constituted a direct response of social partners or VET institutions to the deteriorating economic situation in the case of Poland. The only actual government instruments counteracting the negative effects of the crisis in Poland are the so-called anti-crisis package, in force until the end of 2011, which is, among other things, to prevent a drop in the level of investment by employers in their personnel, as well as the Ministry of Regional Development's package, which designated funds from the Human Capital Operating Programme to counteract the negative effects of the economic slowdown. Thus, an analysis of the crisis' impact on vocational training and activities undertaken to prevent its unwanted consequences evolved into an assessment of the availability and effectiveness of using these two instruments (see part 3.2.3.)

3.2.1 TRENDS IN LEARNERS' BEHAVIOURS

IVET AND FORMAL CVET

Changes in the popularity of general and vocational education should be assessed from the perspective of at least the last 10 years. School forms of vocational training (for youth as well as for adults) are primarily the result of the education system reforms that have been gradually introduced since September 1, 1999 and efforts to expand the curriculum in schools to make it possible for pupils to take the upper secondary school final exams (matura) that qualifies them to apply for acceptance at institutions of higher education. Neither the economic crisis nor changes occurring in the past few years in the national labour market had a significant effect on the numbers recruited to vocational schools. The greatest changes in the numbers of vocational school pupils occurred in the years before the crisis: in the 2000/2001 school year and from 2003 to 2005. Since about 2005, the proportion of persons attending vocational schools compared to general education schools stayed at about the same level, while the slightly lower recruitment to vocational schools in the 2010/2011 school year is interpreted as a general demographic trend of the 16-18 year old age group (see Figure 5) (GUS 2010).

Figure 5. Changes in the number of pupils attending upper secondary general education and vocational schools for youth (in thousands)



Source: own work based on data from GUS (2010).

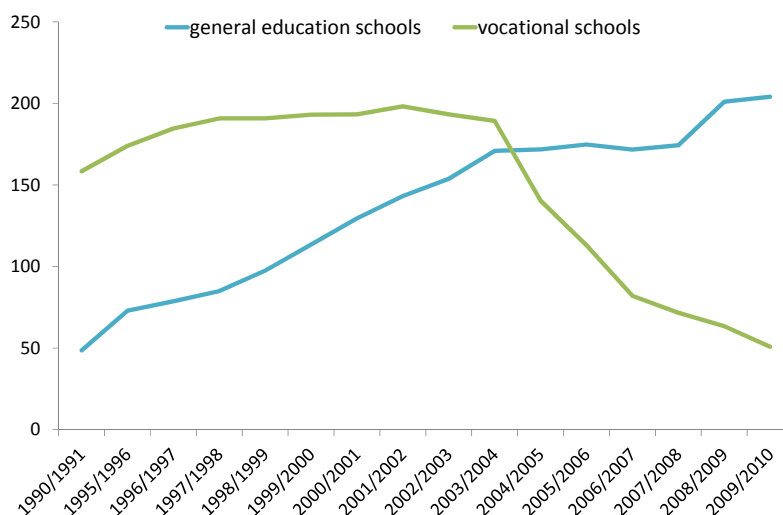
Changes in the number of persons attending vocational schools for adults are more striking. Among all persons attending schools for adults in the 1995/1996 school year, 28.6% were at general education upper secondary schools and 71.4% at vocational schools. By the 2009/2010 school year, among adults supplementing their general education and raising their vocational qualifications, as many as 78.5% were attending general education schools, whereas the proportion of pupils at vocational schools dropped to 21.5% (GUS 2010).

Figure 6 clearly shows that the world economic crisis also did not have a significant effect on the decisions made by adult learners in schools preparing them for an occupation: the most significant changes took place in the years just before the crisis.

For several years now, the most popular fields of study among vocational school pupils (both those for youth as well as for adults) are: engineering-technical, people-oriented

services, business and administration, production and processing, architecture and construction (GUS 2010).

Figure 6. Changes in the number of persons attending schools for adults with a general education or vocational profile (in thousands)



Source: own work based on data from GUS (2010).

The percentage rate of persons leaving school before completion in Poland is one of the lowest in the EU: in 2010, this rate for persons aged 18-24 years was 5.4%, compared to the average of 14.1% for the 27 EU member states (IBE 2011).

NON-FORMAL CVET AND ADULT LEARNING

Changes in quantitative data do not show that the crisis impacted the individual decisions of persons participating in lifelong learning (LLL). Poland continues to have one of the lowest rates of participation in LLL. The number of adult learners (between 25-64 years of age) during the past three years was maintained at an even level. The characteristics of persons involved in LLL also has not changed: unemployed persons, persons with low qualifications and older adults are least likely to be involved in continuing education and raising competences, while young people (under age 30) - with secondary and higher education degrees and employed - are most likely to be found doing so.⁴⁶ Among employees, persons with higher education degrees are found to regularly participate in learning, while this is true for persons with upper secondary school degrees among the unemployed and economically inactive persons (see Dębowski, Lis, Pogorzelski 2010).

According to research conducted by PARP (Worek, Stec et al. 2011), the most frequently selected subjects of training include: languages (above all, English), personal development and general competences (e.g. interpersonal communication, searching for a job, preparing a CV), construction and industry (e.g. operators of loaders, excavators and lifts; welding), medical services, social work, psychology, (e.g. psychotherapy, emergency medical services), education, pedagogy (e.g. work with children, training to become an examiner), driver education, vehicle maintenance and repair (e.g. fork lift operators, mechanics, automotive electronics) and computer science.

⁴⁶ The rate of continuing education among young persons (25-29 years old) in Poland continues to be 25% lower than the EU-27 average.

3.2.2 TRENDS IN ENTERPRISES' BEHAVIOUR

ADULTS/CONTINUING TRAINING

The study „Investment processes and strategies of firms in times of crisis” conducted in December 2009 among representatives of small and medium-sized enterprises (Orłowski, Pasternak et al. 2010) found that nearly half of the respondents (46%) believed that the crisis impacted them negatively only to a small degree, while 43% did not identify the crisis as the cause of changes in the conditions under which their firms were functioning. One could observe, however, that during the crisis, the conviction of Polish entrepreneurs increased about the more onerous nature of bureaucracy. They also increasingly believed that the conditions for running a company in Poland were worse compared to the rest of the world.⁴⁷ The tax system operating in Poland was acknowledged as the greatest threat to the ability of firms to function well, with significantly more serious consequences than, for example, the difficulties of securing credit, unstable currency exchange rates, problems in making loan payments or the lack of employees with relevant occupational competences.

33% of firms studied did not undertake any action in response to the crisis. The remaining firms - according to statements of their representatives - most often responded by limiting their expenditures (49% of firms), increasing marketing efforts to secure new clients (21%) or lowering the cost of products and services (19%) (Orłowski, Pasternak et al. 2010). It should be noted, however, that the reductions in expenses declared during the study did not include investments in personnel. Firms that made any cuts in their budgets resigned, for example, from purchasing a vehicle, renovating offices, acquiring new machines, undertaking marketing activities or opening new branches.

The research conducted by PARP, aimed at determining the characteristic elements of the strategies used by Polish entrepreneurs during the crisis, supplements the conclusions of other analyses seeking to explain why there is such a low level of investment in personnel. In the case of Polish entrepreneurs, the cost of training is only one of many factors affecting decisions to support employees' development of professional competences.⁴⁸ However, even those firms experiencing the negative results of a worsening world economy that decided to reduce expenses did not look for savings by limiting the number of workers undergoing training.

ENTERPRISES PROVIDING APPRENTICESHIPS

Learning a trade in vocational school consists of two components: theoretical (provided by specific vocational schools) and practical (which can be provided not only by employers,

⁴⁷ It could be assumed that the negative opinion of most firms about the efficiency of public administration activities and the possibility of taking advantage of funds foreseen by legislation resulted in the very low interest among entrepreneurs in the anti-crisis package.

⁴⁸ The cost of training is one of the many reasons for the low level of investment in personnel. Other significant barriers include: lack of knowledge on the part of employers about the benefits of training, lack of a thoughtfully planned strategy of personnel development, low innovativeness of Polish entrepreneurs limiting the developmental needs of employees and unclear information about available training programs. See the chapter on financing vocational training and more broadly, Worek, Stec et al. (2011); Dębowski, Lis, Pogorzelski (2010).

but also in school workshops, school laboratories, centres of continuing education, centres of practical education and individually owned farms). The practical study of a trade occurs in the form of practical lessons and vocational practice, providing the pupil with the opportunity to apply and extend acquired vocational knowledge and skills under actual working conditions. The scope of information and skills acquired by the pupil during practical lessons and vocational practice, as well as the number of hours of these activities, are defined by the core curriculum of the given occupation as regulated by the Minister of National Education.

According to available GUS data published annually in the „Education in the School Year”, slightly over 117,000 pupils of basic vocational schools for youth contracted with an employer to learn a trade and attended school to acquire theoretical knowledge in the 2009/2010 school year. The crisis did not affect the willingness of employers to accept pupils for apprenticeships.⁴⁹ To the contrary, the number of pupils in basic vocational schools that were apprenticed with employers grew in 2008-2010 (from 44.1% in the 2007/2008 school year to 49.8% in the 2009/2010 school year) (GUS 2010).

The only available data about the number and vocational profiles of performed apprenticeships come from the annual reports of Polish Craft Association (where about 75% of young workers perform their apprenticeships). These reports show that in recent years the most popular occupations are those related to: care of the body, construction, metal working and machine mechanics. The greatest decrease in young workers employed in crafts trades are noted in the clothing and textile industry (Kabaj 2010). It should be noted, however, that the decreasing proportion of pupils preparing for work in these trades is not the result of the crisis, but rather reflects the structural changes occurring in the Polish economy.

Due to the lack of analyses and precise data, one can only assume that the crisis also did not have a significant effect on employees' willingness to accept apprentices from the unemployed or persons threatened with unemployment (e.g. persons over the age of 45 or with low qualifications). However, these apprenticeships are financed by the county employment offices through the Labour Fund and not by the budgets of firms.

In 2010, funds designated for apprenticeships encompassed 1,634 persons (compared to 4,523 persons in 2009) who were unemployed, dismissed from work due to reasons not related to the employee, related to economic difficulties or the insolvency of employers during the financial crisis.

3.2.3 MEASURES TAKEN TO ADDRESS NEGATIVE ECONOMIC EFFECTS

Even though the crisis initiated by the collapse of Lehman Brothers affected Poland's economy to a small degree, economic growth did in fact slow down in 2009 (from 5.1% in 2008 to 1.7% in 2009); Polish currency weakened, export volume dropped and the number of unemployed grew. This was the catalyst for negotiations undertaken between employers and the trade unions. Dialogue at the national level began in February 2009 and, after almost two months, led to the signing of a 13 point agreement called the anti-crisis package. The agreement concerned three areas: (1) wages and social benefits, (2) the labour market and employment contracts, and (3) economic policies.⁵⁰ The government,

⁴⁹ In Poland, funding for vocational apprenticeships with an employer is provided by the entity operating the school, and not the workplace. For example, funds are allocated to reimburse employers for the wages of instructors providing practical on-the-job training. Therefore, even if a firm's economic situation is worsening, it should not significantly influence the decision to accept an apprentice.

⁵⁰ Signing the bilateral agreement is an important precedence of Polish social dialogue at the national level, not only due to the content of the agreement, but primarily for the very

which was not a party to the agreement and did not actively participate in the negotiations, at first accepted the document worked out. However, several months later when the appropriate legal acts were being prepared, only some of the provisions of the package were introduced, to the great dissatisfaction of the trade unions.

Ultimately, legislation easing the effects of the economic crisis for employers and enterprises was signed on July 1, 2009. It set forth the principles for (1) lengthening the term of the settlement period for time worked, establishing employees' individual schedules of work time, lowering the amount of time worked, establishing limitations on employing workers based on a work contract for an unlimited time period and on employing workers based on a work contract for a limited time period; (2) granting, making payments and reimbursing benefits financed by the Guaranteed Employee Benefits Fund (GEBF);⁵¹ (3) granting, making payments and reimbursing funds to finance the cost of training and post-graduate studies for employees and to finance stipends for employees funded by the Labour Fund.⁵²

There is little interest on the part of employers in the instruments of support provided by the legislation. This is clearly indicated by the belief expressed during the study of Polish entrepreneurs (Orłowski, Pasternak 2010) that the economic crisis did not affect in any manner the way they take advantage of various sources of financing. Furthermore it is plainly illustrated by available data on the extent funds from the GEBF and Labour Fund were used:

- In 2010, the GEBF made payments in the amount of 5.79 million PLN, representing 1.16% of planned expenditures. Transfers for persons planned in the amount of 505 million PLN were realised at the level of 5.6 million, or 1.12% of the planned amount.
- In implementing provisions of the Law on easing the effects of the crisis, GEBF made payments to 6,591 employees (and not as planned by lawmakers to 200,000 persons), at an average of 879 PLN per person for:
 - partial reimbursement of employee wages during temporary production stoppages for 4,388 workers at an average of 625 PLN per person,
 - partial compensation for reduced working hours for 2,203 employees at an average of 1,018 PLN per person,

fact that it came to be. This may be evidence that a certain degree of maturity has been reached in social dialogue in Poland. In earlier, similar situations, coming to agreement was not possible. This may confirm the theory that instituting the Trilateral Commission can serve as an effective mechanism for negotiations and consultations among dialogue partners to result in important agreements. See Gardawski, Meardi (2010); Bukowski, Dębowski (2010).

⁵¹ Guaranteed Employee Benefits Fund [Fundusz Gwarantowanych Świadczeń Pracowniczych (FGŚP)] - this single purpose fund is a legal entity established in 1994. Its main function is to make payments to workers of benefits owed by insolvent employees. The Fund's activities are conducted by the National GEBF Office and GEBF Field Offices. The Fund is financed by employer contributions, credit recovery and other income. The budget act annually determines the level of the contribution.

⁵² See the Law of 1 July 2009 on easing the effects of the economic crisis for employers and entrepreneurs, enacted on 22 August 2009 and in force until the end of 2011. According to the Law, financing from the Labour Fund is available to employers who invest in raising the professional competences of their employees and have a company training fund. Given the available data showing that in 2006, only 4.2% of employers decided to establish a training fund, and about 8% in 2009 (Górniak, Mazur 2010), it seems that implementation of the law's provision to support investments in human resources was doomed to fail from the outset.

- payment of social benefits contributions owed by employers for 6,591 persons at an average of 123 PLN per employee.
- Applications submitted to date for Labour Fund financing of training not to exceed 6 months duration, as well as post-graduate studies not to exceed 12 months duration will encompass 1,203 persons, and not - as foreseen by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy - 50,000 persons.⁵³

An important source of initiatives and increased funds for anti-crisis activities was also the Ministry of Regional Development's package, based on using resources from the Human Capital Operating Programme for this purpose. Specifically, this included (1) a relocation allowance (one-time payment for persons who began working at a new job at a location over 50 km. from their place of residence - to cover travel or resettlement costs), (2) a motivational allowance (one-time payment for persons who began working at a new job for lower wages than their previous place of employment; paid out at a level equal to three-times the difference between the gross higher and lower wage, but not more than 4,000 PLN), (3) the possibility to allocate funds for business start-ups by workers covered by the monitored layoff program (MRR 2009). The data and analyses published by the Ministry of Regional Development do not allow for an unequivocal assessment of the use of these anti-crisis mechanisms implemented through the Human Capital Programme.

⁵³ This is the status as of October 3, 2011. The data presented originate from the report of the National GEBF Office (2011) and informational materials about the anti-crisis package published at the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy's website: <http://mpips.gov.pl>.

4 – HISTORICAL BACKGROUND, LEGISLATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The beginnings of vocational education can be found at an early period of Polish state and they are associated with a development of craft. This career path system consisted of apprenticeship under master, qualifying as journeyman and long-term improvement of his skills through getting experience “from various sources”, mostly in the form of travelling from master to master, from country to country. The last part of this path was master examination taken at the front of the elders of the guild. At the end of the 1st Republic of Poland (18th century) just before the partition of the country (division and annexation of Polish territory by three neighbours: Russia, Prussia and Austria) - an effort was made to adjust the guilds' statutes and their work to a new economic situation. Requirements of acquiring master's title were soften and craftsmen were acknowledged as a closed class.

In 19th century Poland did not exist and vocational education was created under Russian and Prussian rules. The first provincial craft's school (lessons were provided on Sundays) was opened in 1819 on the Polish territory governed by Russia (named the Kingdom of Poland). Then industrial schools started appearing and their main purpose was to prepare supervisory workers in industrial plants. There were also formed a forestry school, carpentry-masonry school and mining school. After defeat of the November Uprising in 1831 the period of increase of vocational schools was stopped. From this time a gimnasium took a role of institution which prepared pupils to industrial, agriculture and crafts jobs starting from 6th class and it was divided on two types: philology and technique. Defeat of the second uprising (called January Uprising) in 1864 was followed by tzars' reactions and liquidation of the Kingdom of Poland identity. All types of schools were destined for russification. Stagnation of industry and craft development in Galicia (Polish territory under Austrian rules) was a main reason of lack of interest in vocational education. Different situation was in Prussian district. Better development and quality of vocational schools was in Silesia because industry, trade and craft were better advanced although Germans provided policy of germanization in schools. German education policy regarding vocational schools was an effect of socio-economic relations on this part of Polish territory and general plans of the Reich to make this land a supplier of agriculture products to Prussia. It had an impact on organizational structure of vocational schools. German authorities mainly focused on preparing future employees for crafts, small industry and trade. After 1905 an independent system of private education of all levels and adult education started developing.

In 1918, after Poland regained independence, educational system was sustained and was divided into elite and mass education. Vocational education was obliged to deliver as many qualified employees as possible and was divided into two main types - vocational and supplementary schools. School's reform of 1932 introduced significant changes in general and secondary education. New Act gave more rights to develop vocational schools which had to include lower and upper-secondary school (on the level of gimnasium and lyceum). Additionally supplementary schools were introduced and preparation for work at specialization courses. The Act authorized the state's authorities to control private schools. In school year 1937/1938, 177 public vocational schools worked, 119 self-governing schools and 637 private units. After breaking the second world war out secret educational courses were organized which also concerned vocational schools. Development of vocational schools was possible because Germans needed qualified labour force.

The war destroyed Polish economy, culture and education. After the war the main directions of educational reform were fixed in April 1945. Vocational schools were to be based on the foundation of an 8-class primary school. There was stressed the need of development of vocational schools for working and non-working youths till 18 year old and

education institutions for adults. Education in vocational schools was to last three years. After 1948 dissemination of 8-class primary school was abandoned. From this time 7-class primary school became an organizational basis and core curriculum for educational system. General secondary level (classes VIII-XI) and all types of vocational schools were based on it. The act from 1950 introduced 6-year plan for economic development framework which created the Central Office of Vocational Training. This institution was obliged to implement new reform and development of vocational schools. Thanks to the Central Office the resolution on vocational education system was prepared. Teachers of primary schools were trained in 4-year pedagogical secondary schools next 2-year and 4-year higher pedagogical schools were opened. From 1951 the following schools existed: preparing to work, giving practical qualification to vocation, basic vocational schools - educating qualified workers, technical secondary schools - educating technicians, master's schools for qualified workers. The negative part of all vocational schools was their over-specialization not coherent with labour market needs. In 1961 a new reform of general and secondary education started. The 8-class primary school was introduced again as the base for vocational schools, secondary general schools and for further education enabling to gain qualification during a whole career. The act of 1961 introduced a new type of schools - post-secondary school - for graduates of general secondary schools.

The political transformation in 1989 was followed by the gradual changes in the education system. The new Education System Act was introduced in 1991. The number of vocational schools decreased after 1991 because of saving plan. A new reform of education started in September 1999 which has shaped the present system of vocational education.⁵⁴ The changes in the school structure, begun in 1999, first covered primary and lower secondary schools, and since 2002, upper secondary general schools and vocational schools and since 2005 post-secondary non-tertiary schools.

4.2 - LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR INITIAL 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.

⁵⁴ On the base of the following materials: „Dylematy kształcenia zawodowego” Włodzimierz Kuzitowicz, <http://liberte.pl/component/content/article/970.html>; „Historia rzemiosła” <http://www.izba.bielsko.pl/hist.rzem.>; „Przemiany polskiej oświaty i szkolnictwa po II wojnie światowej” http://www.sciaga.pl/tekst/95221-96-przemiany_polskiej_oswiaty_i_szkolnictwa_po_ii_wojnie_swiatowej

- 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.
- 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.

In January 2009 the next amendment to the Education System Act was approved. The changes concern the following aspects:

1. Assurance of a better access to education for the youngest children by decreasing the age of starting school obligation to 6 year old to enabling equal chances.
2. Pre-primary education dissemination
From the 1st Sep 2009 five-year old children got the right for one-year pre-primary education preparation. From the 1st Sep 2011 it will be obligatory.
3. Handing over schools to individual and legal persons not being self-government units
Recommended changes will allow local self-governments to hand over schools to another entity and avoid liquidation process if:
 - more than 70 pupils are learning in school;
 - informs school staff 6 months earlier;
 - gets approval (positive opinion) from educational inspector to hand a school over.
4. Strengthen supervisory and limitation of school bureaucracy
The Act aims to make more detailed division of duties between self-governments and educational inspectors. Changes will allow educational inspectors to focus on more important task - supervisory of education quality.
5. Transparency of subsidy system of public and non-public schools by self-government units
There will be introduced mechanisms enabling verification of granted subsidies to schools and institutions run by individual and legal persons - different than self-government units and to non-public schools and institutions run by individual and legal persons.
6. Opening Polish educational system to world through creating possibilities of opening international classes
Teaching will be consistent with curriculum prepared by foreign education institution.
7. Foreigners in Polish education system
According to the Council of Europe guidelines the Ministry of National Education proposed solutions enabling of immigrants' children integration in school environment and society. The aim will be realized by employment of teachers' assistants speaking foreigners languages who learn in school. They will support immigrants

children to integrate in schools environment and teachers who have such child in classes with several or over twenty pupils. Pupils in international class who are not Polish citizens school will assure Polish language lessons as a foreign language.

8. Home education

It allows to fulfill one-year pre-primary education preparation, school obligation and learning obligation outside of school or kindergarten.

9. Authorization of the use of curriculum, school books/textbooks and didactic facilities

Chose or prepared by teachers curriculum will be allowed for using in particular school by its headmaster. He will be responsible for including of all core curriculum in curriculum set for particular education stage and announce specification of appointed school books/textbooks till 15 June of each year.

10. Introduction of definition of multisensoral disabilities

Introduction of legal definition will enable to sort out all aspects regarding issuing of statements about need of special education and exact calculation of educational subsidy sums for disable pupils.

11. Employment of people for VET

Proposed rules allow to fix a level of salaries for such persons on not higher level than salaries for chartered teachers. These changes are especially important for basic vocational schools and art schools in which high qualified professionals are employed without pedagogical preparation.

12. Access to Internet in schools

School has an obligation to install and up-date internet security programmes .⁵⁵

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.

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. In 2011 some significant new regulations issued by the Minister of National Education came into force. There are:

Regulation of 21 January 2011 on the core curricula of education in the professions: assistant of a disabled person, floral designer, cook small catering, forest machine operator, guardian medical assistant room service employee, salesperson, salesman techniques,

techniques for food service organizations, the dairy processing techniques and technician of veterinary. Regulation of 19.04.2011 on the core curricula of education in the professions: tinsmith industrial insulation, industrial insulation fitter, operator of

⁵⁵ Nowelizacja Ustawy O Systemie Oświaty w pigułce, MEN, Warszawa, luty 2009

machinery and equipment for plastics processing, guardian of an elderly person, energetics technician, gas technician, solid mineral processing technician, masonry and artistic stucco technician, tyfloinformatition technition, equipment and techniques of renewable energy technician. Regulation of 15.06.2011 on the core curricula of education in the professions: fitter of network and telecommunications equipment, processes digital images technician, sound technician, electronics technician, technician of the organization of film and television production, advertising technician, techniques of sound production, ICT technician, telecommunications technician , audio-visual technician and technician of financial and postal services.

THE LAW ON HIGHER EDUCATION

On 24th September 2010 a new act, the Law on Higher Education, was introduced in Poland replacing two separate acts of 1990, 1997 and 2005 with one uniform law. Resolutions of the new act came into force in 1st October 2011 instead of 1st Oct 2010 as it was planned earlier. The amendments concern:

A new model of higher education The reform increases the autonomy of universities. The universities will gain freedom in creating new copyright courses. Programs will be created with the support of scientific authorities, employers and experts in the field of economy. New mechanisms are introduced on the basis of operating in Europe so. Qualifications Framework. Thanks to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) diplomas of Polish universities will be able to be compared with diplomas from other European countries.

National Scientific Leadership Centers

The reform envisages the emergence of National Research Centers Lead (KNOW), i.e. the best public and private universities. KNOWs are selected through competitions in various areas of knowledge. The selections are made by committees with the participation of independent international experts. KNOWs are funded for five years, with the possibility of extending the period for a further five years.

Transparent rules of scientific career

The reform of higher education simplifies scientific career path (reduction the length of time to obtain habilitation, greater emphasis on a real scientific achivement of habilitant, doctoral students receive more financial support and the best of them - an additional scholarship, introduction of competition procedures for all positions in universities and greater oppenes to foreign researchers, reeduction the possibility of working by academic teachers on more the one job position, university teachers are evaluated in terms of scientific, educational and organizational achievements).

The combination of education and the economy sector.

There is forseen increase of integration universities with socio-economic environment. Universities are required to develop and implement intellectual property rules and to adopt rules to commercialize research results. School will gain the possibility of training the students with the participation of the employers or at their request. To create programs of study with vocational profile can be included representants of social organizations, business and public.

Abolition of studies fee

The reform of higher education guarnatees the lack of additional fees charged by public and private universities. There is catalogue of free, guaranteed services for students: free exams (bugfix and Commissions), final examination, the submission fee and assessment of the thesis as well as providing of doploma suplement.

Decentralization of Higher Education

The amendment also provides for deregulatory activities and decentralize the higher education system. The requirement for approval by the minister of science university regulations and statutes of the university has been abolished. Rectors received more powers in the creation, transformation and liquidation of the organizational units of universities and the creation of their affiliates.

Free second faculty for talented students

Only the best students are allowed to study for free on second faculty⁵⁶. The second faculty will be free for 10% of the best students.

4.3 - INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR IVET AND ORGANIGRAM

Schools and educational establishments can be public, non-public or non-public with the competencies of a public school. A non-public school can obtain the competencies of public school, if it implements the minimum programme as well as applies the principles of classifying and promoting students as established by the Ministry of National Education, allowing students to obtain state certificate or diplomas. Central administration entities and local self-government entities can administer public schools only. Primary schools and lower secondary schools can be public or non-public with the competencies of public school only.

Tertiary education can be public and non-public. Non-public higher education institutions are established on the basis of a permit of the Minister of Science and Higher Education.⁵⁷

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.

⁵⁶ Kancelaria Prezesa Rady Ministrów. Reforma szkolnictwa wyższego podpisana. http://www.premier.gov.pl/centrum_prasowe/wydarzenia/reforma_szkolnictwa_wyzszego_p,6341/

⁵⁷ Mały rocznik statystyczny Polski 2011. p. 231 [Concise Statistical Yearbook of Poland 2011], Central Statistical Office (GUS),

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).

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.

Regional commissions for social dialogue consist of representatives of regional administration, employers' organisations, trade unions and representatives of regional government. Sometimes the representatives of district governments are invited to the meetings. The commissions meet at least once every three months and discuss social and economic matters crucial for the region, including questions of education organisation and financing.

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 on VET

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.

In enterprises, social partner involvement in vocational education is mostly through either the organisation of practical training or of working placements for vocational education students based on agreements concluded between employers and particular schools, or organising vocational training under the apprenticeship scheme.

THE MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

NATIONAL LEVEL

• The Minister of National Education

- formulates educational policy,
- creates a legal framework for functioning of all educational establishments, including vocational education and training,
- manages the national budget for education,
- sets out the core curricula for general and vocational education,
- accepts the curricula for particular subjects,
- approves the textbooks used in both general and vocational education,
- partly supervises the operation of school superintendents (kurators)

• The Board of National Education (consultative body)

- co-operates with the Minister of National Education in formulating educational policy for higher education
- gives opinions to the proposed directions of changes in education,
- consults the proposals of legislative acts,
- provides the suggestions of reforms in education.

• Institutions of Social Dialogue

- consult the proposals of legislative acts,
- gives opinions in issues concerning vocational education, training for unemployed people, programmes promoting employment.

REGIONAL LEVEL

• The Regional Authorities represented by School Superintendent (kurator)

- supervise the implementation of the national policy
- provide pedagogical supervision for educational establishments in the region,
- 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.

• Institutions of Social Dialogue

- give opinions concerning VET in the region,
- consult questions of educational organization and financing.

DISTRICT LEVEL

• Institutions of Social Dialogue – District Employment Boards, (consultative bodies)

- give opinions concerning VET in the district,

• The District Authorities (powiaty) represented by their heads (starosta)

- are in charge of managing upper secondary education (including vocational education),
- run post-secondary schools and special schools (primary and secondary), sports schools and schools of sports mastery,
- manage practical and continuing education centres,
- are in charge of psychological and pedagogical assistance centres.

LOCAL LEVEL

• Local self-governments (gmina)

- are in charge of managing lower secondary education,
- run primary schools,
- are in charge of pre-school education (kindergartens).

SCHOOL LEVEL

• The headmaster of a school or educational establishment

- chooses curricula,
- provides pedagogical supervision,
- hires and dismisses personnel,
- manages the school budget.

4.4 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR CVET

There is no separate institutional framework for CVET in Poland.

4.5 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR CVET AND ORGANIGRAM

There is no separate institutional framework for CVET in Poland.

5 - INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

5.1 - BACKGROUND TO THE IVET SYSTEM AND DIAGRAM OF THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

Compulsory education obligation in Poland is fulfilled by attending primary or lower secondary schools. Compulsory education starts at the beginning of the school year, in the calendar year in which a child becomes seven years old ⁽⁵⁸⁾ and continues until graduation from a lower secondary school (usually at the age of 16).

Obligatory schooling (imposed by the Constitution of the Republic of Poland) lasts until the person is 18 years old, and can be achieved by attending a public or non-public upper secondary school; attending extracurricular classes in accredited public and non-public institutions; attending classes carried out as a part of educational activities provided by legal and natural persons; or by accomplishing vocational training with an employer (subject to separate regulations).

No official definition of the initial vocational education and training (IVET) system is used in Poland and such term is rarely used – only for European publications to enable comparison of the systems. In such cases IVET is understood as vocational education carried out in schools, usually before entering working life.

Upper secondary general education or vocational education in schools starts at the age of 16. It lasts between two and six years depending on the type of school. Most vocational students complete their IVET at the age of 19 or 20.

The following types of schools provide initial vocational education at upper secondary:

- (a) four-year technical secondary school (*technikum*);
- (b) three-year supplementary technical secondary school — existing only until the end of 2012(*technikum uzupełniające*);
- (c) two/three-year basic vocational school (*zasadnicza szkoła zawodowa*);
- (d) three-year special needs school preparing for work students mentally or physically handicapped (*szkoła specjalna*).

Vocational education is also provided in post-secondary schools:

- (e) two and a half year post-secondary school (*szkoła policealna*);

As mentioned above, until the end of obligatory schooling, vocational training can also be followed outside the school system in the form of an apprenticeship.

Different types of schools pursue different educational objectives. General secondary schools (*licea ogólnokształcące*) prepare students for passing a *matura* exam and for pursuing their education in higher-education institutions. The rest of upper secondary schools are focused on providing vocational qualifications. That is why their curricula are different and their educational process includes practical training in the work place.

Whether in secondary technical schools, basic vocational schools or post-secondary schools, vocational education is provided for occupations included in the classification of occupations for VET (MENiS, 2007), which is consistent with the classification developed for labour market needs (MPiPS, 2010b). In the 2009/10 school year, there were 5 771

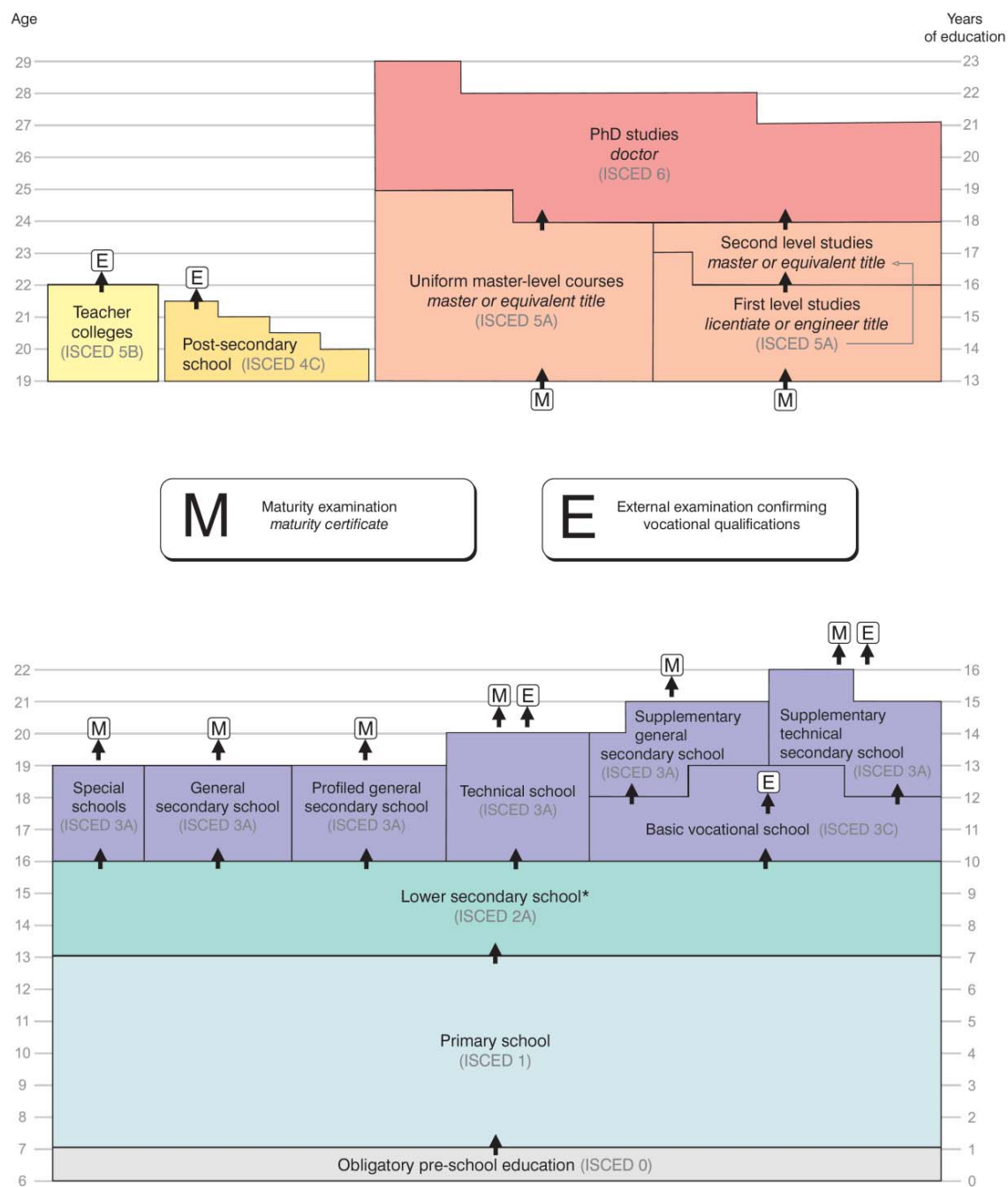
⁽⁵⁸⁾ Additionally, since 2004/05 school year children aged six are obliged to attend '0 grade', preparing for primary education.

upper secondary vocational schools for youths including 427 special needs schools (*szkola specjalna*).

In the 2009/2010 school year, there were 5771 upper secondary vocational schools for youths including 4427 special needs schools. After years of bigger popularity of general education, a significant increase of interest in VET has been noted since the school year 2006/07. 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 Member States prompted the increase of national demand for workers having certified qualifications in particular occupations.

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

The education system in Poland



Source: ReferNet Poland (2010).

5.2 - IVET AT LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL

Name of IVET programme	Admission requirements	Main economic sectors	Corresponding ISCED level and orientation/destination	Balance between general and vocational subjects [%]	Balance between school and work-based training [%]	Average duration of studies	Access to (horizontal /vertical) to other pathways
Lower secondary schools*	Positive decision of school headmaster, following a resolution of the teachers' board, with the consent of parents and upon consultation with a doctor or a counselling centre.	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.

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.

5.3 - IVET AT UPPER SECONDARY LEVEL (MAINLY SCHOOL-BASED)

Name of IVET programme	Admission requirements	Main economic sectors	Corresponding ISCED level/ destination	Balance between general and vocational subjects	Balance between school and work-based training	Average duration of studies	Access to (horizontal /vertical) to other pathways
Profiled general secondary schools	Apply to all IVET programmes: completion of the lower secondary school (<i>gimnazjum</i>). Other criteria usually comprised in the school statute. They may concern the number of points obtained at the final <i>gimnazjum</i> exam, a pupil's marks in Polish language and three other compulsory subjects and his special achievements.	<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	Post-secondary schools, Tertiary education courses subject to passing of the maturity examination
Basic vocational schools		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture • Horticulture • Forestry • Fishing • Mining • Construction • Metalworking • Mechanics of machines 	3 C	47 / 53 %	40 / 60 %	2-3	Supplementary technical school, supplementary general secondary school

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toolmaking, smithery • Electricity and electronics • Ceramics, accessories, printing • Classification of VET Occupations 					
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 (*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: information management - 28,8%, social - 26,7%, administration- 24,2% of pupils. 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 2010/2011 school year, profiled general secondary schools were attended by 34,3 thousands pupils.

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 2009/2010 there were 559 530 pupils in both types of those schools, including 220 969 girls. 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 zawodów szkolnych*). The most popular vocations in the 2-year schools are: a shop-assistant, a cook and a gardener, and in 3-year schools: an automobile mechanic, a hairdresser and a baker.

In the 2010/2011 school year, basic vocational schools were educating 224 900 pupils.

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% 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 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 2009 Eurostat data indicate that the number of participants in vocational education on the ISCED 3 level amounted to 1837850 what made 47,2% of all participants in upper secondary education, which was 0,2% more than in EU-27. 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, 2009

Countriess	Total ISCED 3	Vocational programmes as a percentage of total ISCED 3		
		Vocational (%)	Pre-vocational (%)	Vocational and pre-vocational (%)
EU27	20633767	47.0	:	47.0
PL	1837850	47.2	:	47.2

Source: Eurostat, UOE data collection extracted on 19-05-2011; last update: 13-05-2011

5.4 - ALTERNANCE TRAINING (INCL. APPRENTICESHIP)

Name of alternance programme	Admission requirements	Main economic sectors	Corresponding ISCED level and orientation /destination	Balance between general and vocational subjects	Balance between school-based and work-based training	Average duration of studies	Access (horizontal /vertical) to other pathways
Occupational training	Completion of the lower secondary school - <i>gimnazjum</i> and being at least 16 years of age. However, in special situations, the law allows for some exceptions to this rule.	<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 VET. The main condition to participate 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 training 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 apprenticeship training. According to data provided by the Polish association of crafts (*Związek Rzemiosła Polskiego*), in the 2009/10 school year, in 26 662 enterprises, 90 669 juvenile workers were participating in apprenticeship training. Apprenticeship in crafts is offered in 117 occupations and the most common occupations were: hairdresser, carpenter, baker and 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.

Apprenticeship can take either of the following two forms:

- (f) apprenticeship as occupational training (ISCED 3) leading to qualifications of an apprentice or a skilled worker. It comprises practical vocational training at the employer's organisation and theoretical training. Trainees/students (under the age of 18) can choose the form of theoretical training – it can take place in the school system or non-formal education forms. Most trainees/students (88%) complete their theoretical education in basic vocational schools. Training lasts between 24 and 36 months and finishes with the apprentice exam organised by the chamber of crafts;
- (g) apprenticeship as training to perform a specific job (ISCED 2) and covering only selected work activities. It is limited to a small group of youths who, for different reasons, did not complete lower secondary school and are at least 15 years of age. The employer defines curriculum considering existing core curricula. Training takes three to six months. After 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 took place and is recognised by the education system. After finishing training, the young workers (between 16 and 18 years old) can continue their vocational education in the apprenticeship leading to a qualification (the duration of the first is included into the duration of the latter).

Based on the Ordinance of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy of 7 April 2009 on vocational preparation of adults also adults can participate in apprenticeship similarly to young workers. However, due to their earlier work experience the programmes for adults are shorter (occupational training 12 to 18 months and training aimed at preparation for performing a specific job 3 to 6 months).

5.5 - PROGRAMMES AND ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

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.

During two or three years these young people have a chance to complete their education, work and gain vocational qualifications. In the 2009/2010 school year 36 552 students participated in education and training organised by voluntary labour corps ⁽⁵⁹⁾.

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 2006/2004, 2007/2008 AND 2009/2010

School year	Participants	Education on the level of primary* and lower secondary school**	Vocational education and training***	Juvenile workers****
	Total			
2006/2007	32 706	14 586	18 120	30 309
2007/2008	33 575	15 269	18 306	31 197
2009/2010	33 719	15 077	18 642	33 719

* 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

*** 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,).

**** Juvenile workers work and learn a job on the basis of special apprenticeship agreements with employers

Source: *OHP (Voluntary Labour Corps), Main Headquarters, Warsaw 2011.*

⁽⁵⁹⁾ Source: Voluntary labour corps main headquarters in Warsaw (2011).

5.6 - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT POST-SECONDARY (NON TERTIARY) LEVEL (MAINLY SCHOOL-BASED)

In the 2009/10 school year there were 3 210 post-secondary schools educating 284 836 people. 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.

5.7 - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT TERTIARY LEVEL (MAINLY SCHOOL-BASED)

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 2008/2009 school year, there were 21 300 people who acquired qualifications in 108 teacher colleges, of which 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 2008/2009 academic year 1 927 762 students were educated in all types of higher education institutions, in the 2009/2010 academic year 1 900 000 and in the 2010/2011 - 1 841 300 students were attending these institutions.⁶⁰

5.8 LANGUAGE LEARNING IN IVET

GENERAL INFORMATION

Foreign language learning is one of the priorities of the modified system of education in Poland. General information and statistical data presented in this report are derived from the data published by Central Statistical Office (*GUS*) and from the *Report on the availability of foreign language provision in Poland*, published by the Centre for Education Development (*ORE*).

The main objective of foreign language learning in vocational schools is to equip students in skills enabling fluent communication in speaking and writing in the specialised field. Foreign language tuition is compulsory in the segment of lower secondary and upper secondary vocational education in Poland. Following the requirements of the modified National Core Curriculum (*Nowa podstawa programowa*), implemented into the system of education on 30 January 2009, lower and upper secondary students in vocational schools are obliged to learn one or two foreign languages, depending on the type of vocational school.

In the profiled general secondary schools two foreign languages are compulsory. **English is the most popular foreign language in Poland**, continued from primary school. English is learnt by 68,5% - 96,7% of students in all types of schools (*ORE Report, 2010*)

German is the second, most popular foreign language, taught as the second compulsory foreign language. German is learnt by 31,2% - 66,0% population of students (*ORE Report 2010*). German language is popular due to the economic and family links with Germany. Polish manual workers, engineers and IT specialists can get well paid jobs in Germany which is the main reason why vocational students choose German as the second foreign language.

Lower secondary schools (*gimnazjum*) with work preparation classes, which constitute only 1,35% of *gimnazjum* population offer general education, including foreign language tuition as required by the Ministry of Education. Following MEN requirements, at the age of 15 many of these students join Voluntary Labour Corps (*OHP*), to obtain basic practical

⁽⁶⁰⁾ Mały rocznik statystyczny Polski 2011. p. 235 [Concise Statistical Yearbook of Poland 2011], Central Statistical Office (*GUS*).

skills in craftsmanship and get the job. There is no compulsory foreign language training at Voluntary Labour Corps program.

In basic vocational schools one foreign language is compulsory. The main educational objective in basic vocational school is to train students to take jobs within a short period of time. Therefore, the main focus is on developing practical craftsmanship skills training. Learning one foreign language is compulsory, however majority of students from basic vocational schools are less motivated to become fluent foreign language users. Another issue, which may have an impact on low interest in foreign language learning is lack of course books and educational materials in English, written specifically for vocational schools.

In secondary technical schools students learn two foreign languages. They continue learning the first foreign language from primary school and take the second foreign language from the beginner/elementary level.

Students continue learning the first foreign language at lower secondary vocational level but also choose the second compulsory foreign language to satisfy their personal interests or future career and plans to emigrate to EU countries. The popularity of the second foreign language chosen at secondary level depends to a large extent on historical and social traditions in the region and family links in the neighbouring countries, e.g. German being more popular in western and southern voivodships. English being more popular in central and eastern regions of Poland from which many Poles emigrated to the USA and to the UK.

In Eastern parts of Poland Lithuanian, Belorussian and Ukrainian languages are also taught in secondary schools as supplementary languages. Students of these national minorities are keen on learning their native language which is a part of their cultural heritage and family tradition. There is no statistical data available on the numbers of students learning these languages within IVET.

According to *the Report on the availability of foreign language provision in the year 2009/2010*, published by the Centre for Education Development (*Ośrodek Rozwoju Edukacji, ORE*) the following foreign languages are most popular in all types of upper secondary schools in vocational strand: English, German, Russian French, Spanish and Italian.

English is the most popular foreign language in Poland, enabling students from basic vocational and technical schools to get better jobs and facilitating mobility into the European Union countries. EU countries opened their labour market to workers specialising in such professions as plumbers, carpenters, mechanics, electricians, builders, bakers, nurses, etc. The main factor which has an impact on students' choice of foreign language is educational and vocational mobility which resulted in the increased motivation to learn at least one foreign language. Foreign language learning availability in vocational schools is demonstrated in the table below.

Foreign language learning

	English	French	German	Russian	Spanish	Italian
Secondary general profiled schools	95,8%	4,7%	71,%	16,0%	0,4%	0,3%
Secondary technical schools	95,4%	5,0%	76,0%	11,8%	0,2%	0,1%
Basic vocational schools	43,0%	1,0%	34,9%	11,3%	0,0%	0,0%
Post-secondary vocational schools	10,3%	0,7%	1,9%	0,2%	0,2%	0,1%

Source: Central Statistical Office (GUS)

Foreign language provision has significantly improved since Poland joined the European Union in May 2004. The system of education has been systematically modified to follow the directives of the Council of Europe, expanding foreign language tuition in all types of schools and implementing the idea of life-long learning into the *National Core Curriculum (Nowa podstawa programowa)*.

Student preferences in foreign language learning

Students learning foreign languages in different types of vocational schools	One foreign language	Two foreign languages	Three or more foreign languages
Basic vocational schools	89,69%	2,57%	0,00%
Profiled general secondary schools	3,85%	93,59%	0,26%
Technical and art secondary schools	4,53%	91,10%	0,78%
Post-secondary vocational schools	29,21%	1,73%	0,00%

Source: Centre for Education Development (ORE)

Foreign language learning in vocational schools is aimed at developing basic communication skills in the first foreign language, better adjusted to the changing needs of global economy and shrinking labour market in many countries.

The Ministry of National Education promote acquiring better knowledge of foreign languages through modified foreign language syllabi which facilitate students' mobility to EU countries and their personal needs in developing vocational career.

Foreign languages are taught as individual subjects though teachers also teach specialised language using supplementary materials in the given field.

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach is a part of National Core Curriculum so teachers implement the elements of CLIL in vocational foreign language tuition. Learning content through foreign language is not very common in vocational schools due to the following factors:

- teachers of vocational subjects are not fluent in foreign languages
- students' level of foreign language proficiency is not good enough to learn vocational subjects
- there are no specialised coursebooks offering vocational content in foreign languages

Teachers of foreign languages in vocational schools often prepare their own materials and teach the elements of vocational vocabulary in foreign language lessons.

Certification and levels of competence in foreign language learning

Graduates of basic vocational schools manage to achieve A2 level in a foreign language. These students do not take any formal examinations in a foreign language but receive a school leaving certificate.

Students at upper secondary technical schools who want to obtain *Matura Certificate* must take one foreign language as compulsory part of school leaving exam (*matura*). Following the Ministry of Education requirements upper secondary students who want to enter universities are obliged to take compulsory exam in at least one foreign language; Basic Matura Exam (B2 Level) or Extended Matura Exam (C1 level).

State examinations (*matura*) in foreign languages are prepared by Central Examination Commission (*Centralna Komisja Egzaminacyjna*), an official administrative body which is subordinated to and supervised by the Ministry of National Education. Examination and assessment criteria are set by the members of Central Examination Commission. Written *matura exams* are checked and assessed by external examiners to guarantee objective, high quality assessment and grading.

Language learning at tertiary vocational level

VET at the tertiary level is provided by teacher training colleges and higher education institutions.

Graduates of foreign language teacher training colleges obtain qualifications entitling them to teach one or two foreign languages in primary, lower and upper secondary schools. In teacher training colleges all subjects are taught in foreign languages. Students of teacher training colleges graduate with BA diploma (*licencjat*) and C2 level in the first foreign language. The graduates of teacher training colleges are also obliged to fulfil the requirement to acquire fluency in the second foreign language at B2 level.

All higher education institutions offering BA degree (*licencjat*) are obliged to include at least one foreign language in their curricula to maintain high standards of general education. The number of hours offered as well as the level of foreign language competence depends on the individual curriculum requirements. This may vary in different types of tertiary vocational institutions. The main source of reference in constructing foreign language syllabus and exam requirements is the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*.

Tertiary vocational institutions offering specialized courses in different fields (engineers, builders, road constructors, mechanics, information technology specialists, etc.) provide basic or extended foreign language training.

Compulsory foreign language training syllabus in higher education vocational courses may vary from 120 to 240 hours. This depends on the specialization and curriculum requirements of the tertiary vocational institution.

Foreign languages at tertiary vocational and higher education institutions are taught as separate subjects. Again, foreign language teachers use variety of supplementary materials to train students in specialized, vocational language (CLIL), however this is not formalized and may vary in different tertiary educational institutions. There is a general agreement among tertiary vocational institutions that all graduates, holders of MA diploma in vocational studies are obliged to pass foreign language exam at B2 level. Technical universities or tertiary vocational institutions have their own, internal foreign language exams. Examination standards and assessment criteria are set by highly qualified and experienced teachers from these institutions.

There are no formal requirements in Polish vocational institutions to present

a foreign language portfolio or language passport, although these are very well known to educational authorities and recommended by foreign language teachers. Portfolios may be used as supplementary documents but are not formally recognized by tertiary vocational institutions. The employers require formal diplomas, not portfolios or language passports.

The following international certificates in English are recognized by tertiary vocational institutions in Poland: FCE, CAE, LCCI, TOEFL, TELC.

6 - CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

6.1 - GENERAL BACKGROUND

In Poland continuing education takes place either in schools for adults or out of school schemes targeted to people who, after compulsory education want to gain or supplement their knowledge and skills, to gain access to qualifications. The term 'continuing education' is used not only for vocational education and training but also for complementing by adults general education at a higher level than the one reached during compulsory education. Continuing education can be formal when it takes place in the schools and institutions supervised by the Ministry of National Education or non-formal when being offered by other providers.

The development strategy for continuing education until 2010 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' (MENiS, 2003).

As the responsibility for continuing education and training is divided between the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (Chapter 3) the legal basis is set in various documents – mainly in the Education System Act of 7 September 1991, with further amendments and the Act of 20 April 2004 on promoting employment and labour market institutions, which regulates the training for unemployed, job seekers and vocational guidance and counselling.

Principles and conditions of adult vocational qualification and general education development are also defined in regulations issued by both ministries, especially in the Ordinance of 12 October 1993 and the amendment in the Act of 2 February 1996. Additionally, the Labour Code (*Kodeks pracy*) specifies some obligations and rights of employers and employees regarding qualification development of staff (Act of 5 January 2011 amending the Labour Code Act).

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.

6.2 - FORMAL LEARNING IN CVET

Continuing education can be carried out on daily basis as extramural or distance learning in various types of schools for adults and other institutions (public and private), using the curriculum statutorily defined for a given level of education and leading to qualifications and certificates defined by the Ministry of Education in relevant legal regulations. Formal continuing education in public establishments is free of charge.

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 levels ISCED 2-4, 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 conditions prescribed for the education of children and youth did not attain a targeted level of education. Such people have a possibility to complete general education, gain or acquire new vocational qualifications. Adults can choose to attend classroom courses, distance learning or prepare themselves to the final exams.

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 according 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. 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. In the 2009/2010 academic year 194 212 students participated in post -diploma studies and 32 494 students participated in doctoral studies. Since 2007/2008 it has been noticed constant growth in the number of students participating in doctoral studies.⁶¹

D) THE ASSOCIATION OF POLISH CRAFTS

The apprenticeship training is also available to adults who want to acquire qualifications of an apprentice, skilled worker or a master.

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.

⁽⁶¹⁾ Notatka na temat szkół wyższych w Polsce, GUS, Warszawa 2010, [Note on higher education in Poland, Central Statistical Office (GUS), Warsaw 2010].

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. To make this form of education actually possible, in June 2005 the Ministry of Education and Sport (MENiS, 2005a) suggested a concept referring to a model which include formal, informal and non-formal education. The Polish model of distance learning is being implemented by the National Centre for supporting vocational and continuing education as a part of the project ‘the model of implementation and dissemination of distance learning in lifelong learning’⁽⁶²⁾ financed from the European Social Fund.

STATISTICAL DATA

In Poland the participation of adults in continuing education (both formal and non-formal) is relatively low compared to other Member States. According to Eurostat data in 2008 it covered 4.7% of population in the 24-65 age group, much less than the average in EU which amounted to 9.5%.

The statistical data prepared by the National Statistical Office (*Główny Urząd Statystyczny*, GUS) from 2006 on participation in formal education by educational attainment and gender show that the group of the highest participation rate are women (57.1%) of which 59.4% had higher education. Also 52.8% of men participating in formal

⁽⁶²⁾ <http://www.koweziu.edu.pl/index.php?id=projekty&n=5>.

education had higher education. The data also show that employed people are more likely to participate in formal education and that almost half of the people participating in formal education (49%) did not exceed 30 years of age. The groups that face problems in access to continuing education are the disabled, people aged 45+, and women coming back to the labour market after maternity leaves. For example, in 2006 people in the age group 45+/50+ represented only 8% of all participants in continuing education.

6.3 - NON-FORMAL LEARNING IN CVET

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*. 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 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.

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 (continuing education centres), practical training centres), vocational upgrading and further education centres) providing training in short forms and various vocational and qualifications coursesupgrading and further education centres of branch associations;
- higher education institutions, units of the Polish Academy of Science, research institutes – providing training, seminars, workshops, etc.
- 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.

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.

Enterprises provide their employees with various forms of training, depending on their needs and financial possibilities.

The data on NGOs providing non-formal education are not collected on regular basis. However the survey done in 2010 by the non-governmental organisation Klon-Jawor shows that 12% of all NGOs indicate education as one of their main activity areas. As regards the forms of activity, 31% pointed on educational activities and formation of children and adolescents, whereas 26% organizations mentioned on continuing education, adults education, supplementary trainings and courses.

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. There are separate solutions functioning in different branches, there are external examinations carried out by territorial examination boards allowing adults to receive the certificate of primary school lower (*gimnazjum*) or upper -secondary general school (*liceum ogólnokształcące*) without actually attending the school. However, External examinations confirming vocational qualifications are foreseen only for the graduates of particular vocational schools.

The new reform of vocational education⁶³, connected to the works on the National Qualification System, is going to change that. The reform includes transformation of the existing system of examinations confirming vocational qualifications - a pupil will be able to confirm separately every qualification selected, from vocation, during whole education process not only during exams. For every confirmed qualification the pupil would get certificate and as soon as the pupil confirms all selected qualifications he/she will get diploma with supplement. The Ministry of the National Education emphasizes these changes will strengthen a practical aspect of vocational exam for technical upper-secondary school level especially. There will be computerized system of examination tasks database and exams will be carried out during all year instead of examination session. The Ministry acknowledges the essential role of employers, professional associations, organizations of local government as units helping to create examination centers and enabling them to work which could assure the real conditions of job environment. Suggested changes in confirming selected qualifications will help to eliminate an examination system for professional titles carried out by the national examination boards and the vocational system examination will be unified regardless of learning forms - school or non-school.

⁶³ „Założenia projektowanych zmian. Kształcenie zawodowe i ustawiczne. Informator.” [Assumptions of designed changes. Vocational and continuous education. A guide], MEN, Warszawa 2010

STATISTICAL DATA

Statistical data on participation in non-formal education by educational attainment and working status show similar trends to data on participation in formal continuing education. The 2006 data, from the National Statistical Office (GUS), indicate that the highest participation rate can be noted among employed people with higher education. Moreover, it shows that women undertake such activities 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.

6.4 LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CVET

Current global economic crisis and changes in the country economy result in the development of various forms of continuing vocational education for adults.

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education implement new academic programs and modes of vocational education to ensure better response to the changing demands of the labour market. Adults need to obtain new vocational skills as well as learn foreign languages to become competitive in the dynamically changing labour market in Poland. As the status of continuing education is imprecise the provision of foreign language tuition may differ in various types of adult vocational training institutions.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TUITION AND CERTIFICATION IN CVET

Continuing Education for adults carried out in continuing education centres (CKU), practical training centers (CKP) and vocational upgrading and further education centres (ZDZ) follows the requirements of the Ministry of Education and provides foreign language training as required by National Core Curriculum.

Adults technical schools include foreign language learning as separate course subject. It is expected that the graduates of these schools become relatively fluent users of foreign language around B2 level. This

is certified by a formal school-leaving certificate (*Matura*) which is passed in front of Central Examination Commission.

Higher Education Institutions, units of Polish Academy of Science and Research Institutes are independent in designing their academic curricula for post-diploma studies. Therefore, there may be differences in basic requirements in foreign language tuition in different types of HE institutions. The main source of reference for all types of foreign language syllabi is the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* levels in establishing the assessment criteria in foreign language competence.

MBA is one of the most popular specialisations in post-graduate studies in Poland. These are high-profile, vocational business studies, offered by the best Higher Education Institutions in Poland. These studies are chosen by ambitious, in-service (already employed) students who decide to invest in their professional development. Lectures and classes in some MBA studies are run in foreign languages, usually by guest professors and experts in business, native speakers from different countries.

Higher Education Institutions develop their own, internal assessment systems in all subjects (including foreign languages), in accordance with their specific profile of education, students needs, staff expertise and external circumstances. A student leaving post-diploma studies will obtain a formal diploma in the given specialization. There are internal systems of examinations in Higher Education Institutions, so there is no collective data available which would demonstrate how the assessment system in foreign languages works in different vocational post-diploma studies.

Vocational training in foreign languages is also promoted through *Socrates*,

Erasmus and *Leonardo da Vinci* programmes in EU countries, offering further vocational qualifications training. International conferences and seminars on specific professional areas stimulate fluency training in foreign languages both in higher Education Institutions and in other organizations

There are also numerous 'in-company' vocational training programmes, including refresher courses in foreign languages. The main objective of this type of training is to raise the qualifications of company employees and prepare them to become more competitive in Polish market. Again, the data regarding this form of vocational in-service training is not available as this is confidential and is not reported by companies to Central Statistical Office.

DISTANCE LEARNING IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Distance learning vocational courses are not yet very common in Poland although public and private institutions report the growing interest in this form of continuing adult education. Adult learners gradually develop their computer literacy skills and have access to the Internet which hopefully will enable participating in distance learning and blended learning courses. This mode of vocational adult training is still at the early stage of development and cannot be treated as a mass market vocational adult education.

CERTIFICATES AND ASSESSMENT STANDARDS

There are no separate, state certificates in foreign language learning in continuing vocational education for adults.

Adult graduates of upper secondary general schools, profiled general secondary schools, technical secondary schools supplementary technical schools receive upper secondary school-leaving certificate (*matura*).

Language portfolio is not recognized as formal qualifications document although it may be recommended by vocational education institutions as supplementary certification of the acquired foreign language skills and competence.

Employers in Poland do not recognize language portfolios as formal document, confirming language competence of the prospective employee. Language portfolio and passport require further promotion by appropriate vocational educational institutions offering continuing education.

Certificates acquired by adults abroad, during temporary employment or through mobility programs need to be assessed and approved by vocational education institutions. This is due to independence of higher education institutions who set their own standards and assessment criteria in different specializations.

The Bologna Process directives are taken into consideration when constructing assessment and certification standards.

6.5 TRAINING PROGRAMS TO HELP TO HELP JOB-SEEKERS AND PEOPLE VOULNERABLE 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 grant to continue education (extramural courses). The grant, which is 50% of the unemployment benefit, is awarded 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 work⁶⁴. 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. In 2006 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

⁶⁴ Notatka informacyjna - Kształcenie dorosłych [Adult education - a memorandum], Central Statistical Office (GUS), Warszawa 2008.

(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 frequently⁶⁵.

Most of the unemployed who register with employment offices tend to have relatively low level of education. The two largest groups among the unemployed are persons with basic vocational education and lower secondary, primary and incomplete primary (respectively 28.4% and 28.3% in the total number of registered unemployed in March 2011). These two populations together accounted for 56.7% of the total number the unemployed. Unemployed women were characterized by different structure of education than men, because 53.2% of unemployed women had secondary or higher education,

while the percentage of men with this level of education was 33.00%.⁶⁶

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 2008.⁶⁷

The EU "Operational Programme Human Capital 2007-2013" is another important instrument to enhance the levels of economic activity and employability of the unemployed and those economically inactive and to reduce the areas of social exclusion. The "National Action Plan for Employment 2009-2011", prepared by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, identifies activities promoting employment. 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 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

⁶⁵ Raport o rynku pracy oraz zabezpieczeniu społecznym [Report on the labour market and social insurance], Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Warsaw 2008.

⁶⁶ Bezrobocie rejestrowane I kwartał 2011. GUS, Warszawa 2011. [Registered Unemployment I Quarter 2011, Central Statistical Office, Warsaw 2011]

⁶⁷ Ministry of Labour and Social Policy - Information about realization of counteracting unemployment program.

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 operation⁶⁸.

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.

⁶⁸ National Action Plan for Employment 2009-2011, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Warsaw 2009.

7 - TRAINING VET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

7.1 PRIORITIES IN TRAINING VET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

PROVISIONS FOR ENTERING AND DEVELOPING CAREER FOR TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

In terms of entering and developing career for teachers and trainers, there is no distinction between teachers, academic teachers, practical vocational training instructors and trainers-specialists working in initial and continuing vocational education. Entry requirements, pre-service and in-service arrangements for a given category of practitioners in continuing education are the same as for those working in initial education.

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. Additional requirements may be laid down in the statutes of individual higher education institutions.

Teachers-methodological advisers and teachers-consultants, involved only in continuing education as teacher trainers are required to:

- a) hold a Master's degree and a pedagogical qualification;
- b) have obtained the professional promotion grade of appointed teacher or chartered teacher (the third and fourth grade, respectively, in the four-grade promotion system);
- c) 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.

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.

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.

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; 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;
- 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)	

CURRICULUM REFORM TO VET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

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.

On the 30 June 2006, the Ministry of National Education issued a regulation on standards for teachers' education in teacher training colleges and teacher training colleges of foreign language.

Detailed entry requirements concerning the level of subject qualifications and pedagogical qualifications for practical vocational training instructors were laid down in the Regulation on practical vocational training of 1 July 2002, as amended.

As additional quality improvement measures, regulations adopted by the Minister for Education in 2003 introduced accreditation for in-service teacher training institutions and continuing education providers respectively. However, in both cases accreditation by the educational authorities is voluntary. In March 2009, the Ministry of National Education issued a regulation on the specific qualifications required from teachers and schools and cases in which teachers with no higher education or having completed teacher training can be employed. There were raised requirements for teachers in vocational schools. A teacher has to identify himself with higher education diploma of the first degree (a licentiate) at least. In particular cases there will be possible to employ people with no teacher qualifications.

In September 2009, the new legislation regarding teachers' qualifications came into force. The new legislation increases the qualification requirements for teachers in basic vocational schools – they have to have at least higher vocational education and pedagogical preparation. A new curricula reform launched mechanisms to encourage employers to engage in the process of training and vocational education. Teachers will be affected by mechanisms of the system including training through internships or work placement. Periodic trainings will be conducted in modern methods of vocational training and modern techniques and technology.

Pursuant to the amended Education System Act ⁽⁶⁹⁾, 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 Education System Act permits vocational schools for hiring specialists in a given field who do not have teaching but only topical qualifications to conduct classes as vocational education teachers. This 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 the vocational education provided at schools.

All types of special schools were specified with division on students' disabilities and defined qualification requirements for teachers in these schools. The document "Pupils with special educational needs" defines directions to implement of particular part of core curriculum with SEN pupils and how to provide lessons with them.

⁽⁶⁹⁾ Act of 19 March 2009 amending the Education System Act and certain other acts (OJ, 2009 No 56, item 458).

7.2 - TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN IVET

7.2.1 TEACHERS, TRAINERS AND TRAINING FACILITATORS 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.

7.2.2 PRE-SERVICE AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING OF IVET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

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
General subject teachers for ISCED 3A and 4 schools College teachers - only ISCED 5B	<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>
General subject teachers for ISCED 3C schools and other ISCED 3C providers	<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>
Theoretical vocational subject teachers for ISCED 3A and 4 schools **	<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.

7.3 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN CVET

7.3.1 TEACHERS, TRAINERS AND TRAINING FACILITATORS 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. 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.

7.3.2 PRE-SERVICE AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING OF CVET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

There is not separate system of pre-service and in-service training in Poland. Both IVET and CVET teachers on their own expense can participate in trainings provided by private training companies.

8 – MATCHING VET PROVISION (SKILLS) WITH LABOUR MARKET NEEDS (JOBS)

8.1 - 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:

- Developing a set of national standards of professional competence required by employers - Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.
- Qualifications for the needs of employer - Polish Confederation of Private Employers Lewiatan (PKPP Lewiatan).
- Research project "Professional education. Condition - Potential - Needs" - the Labour Market Observatory for the Voivodship Labour Office (WUP) in Warsaw
- "Lifelong learning as a general education" - the Labour Market Observatory for the Voivodship Labour Office (WUP) in Warsaw

8.2 - PRACTICES TO MATCH VET PROVISION (SKILLS) WITH SKILL NEEDS (JOBS)

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.

One of the projects concerning the demand for certain qualifications on labour market is "Qualifications for the employers' needs" realized by Lewiatan, co-financed by the European Social Fund under the Human Capital Operational Programme (Measure 2.1 Development of personnel of modern economy), Fri "Qualifying for the needs of employers."

The project provided an analysis of the four branches, in which the problems of matching supply to demand for workers' qualifications are clearly discernible. These are: the energy industry, construction, garment and IT. The project provided information about the deficits in the education system and qualifications as well as about system factors that cause the mismatch between workers' skills to the requirements of labour market. The analysis also allowed to answer the questions what skills employers are looking for in certain industry and what qualifications do not possess workers seeking employment. During the study it has been developed a solution which enable the employers participation in shaping the curriculum. The result of the study are reports containing recommendations of changes in education, with particular emphasis on lifelong learning. Dissemination and implementation of recommendations will help to bridge the gap between the qualifications held by workers and those sought by employers.

The project also developed publications on good practices of lifelong learning in the workplace and good practice in cooperation between employers and educational institutions. These solutions, best practices for creating effective linkages between educational institutions and businesses, will be promoted among entrepreneurs, universities, vocational and professional training institutions.

On the base of good practices and studies of the project, there has been prepared the recommendations concerning educational system, including the participation of employers in designing curricula. This will allow for the active presentation of solutions recommended by busines.

Pursuant to the amended Education System Act⁷⁰, 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 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.

⁷⁰ Act of 19 March 2009 amending the Education system act and certain other acts (Dziennik Ustaw No. 56 of 2009, item 458).

9 - GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING FOR LEARNING, CAREER AND EMPLOYMENT

9.1 - STRATEGY AND PROVISION

The rapid changes in almost all spheres of human life are also noticeable in the area of guidance services. Counsellors' clients are not only the unemployed and young people awaiting advice on the choice of profession or the path of education. Nowadays people must quickly adapt to changes and difficult decisions. They need help, professional advice on their career path. Polish accession to EU associated with certain responsibilities, including the field of vocational guidance. This is an area in Poland which only recently began to develop and to which particular attention is paid. Society can not be left alone in the labor market itself. Individuals need not only assistance in finding suitable employment, but also preparation for the possibility of frequent changes in career. Professional counseling should not be just a one-time advice, but it must be organized in a continuous and consistent manner. The key challenge and expectation of society is that everyone, regardless of place of residence or social situation, have guaranteed equal access to advisory services of the same quality.

There is no doubt that Polish society needs the support of the counselors. However the main problem, especially in small towns and villages, is difficulty to access counseling services. Not all people are informed about the exact form and the fee for such advice. They need it, but do not always know where to ask for it. It is noticeable increase of social demand for the quality of advisory services, particularly for persons providing them. Apart of the vast knowledge of many scientific fields (such as communication, interpersonal skills, commitment, ability to establish relationships, creativity), career counsellors must support and mobilize their clients, to be near them during the difficult changes.

Polish society is just beginning to learn and appreciate the role of vocational counsellors. Difficulties in finding their place in professional life have not only the persons undergoing the process of job reorientation, but also young people, entering the labour market, who do not want to make mistakes⁷¹.

According to the recommendations prepared by the Voivodship Labour Office (WUP) in Warsaw, in lower and upper secondary schools there should be employed counselors who help students plan a career, on the basis of solid labor market analysis, rather than everyday knowledge or opinions of colleagues⁷².

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 Euroguidance project that worked out within Leonardo da Vinci*

⁷¹ Artykuł: "Doradca zawodowy a potrzeby rynku pracy"
<http://www.koweziu.edu.pl/edukator/>

⁷²<http://obserwatorium.mazowsze.pl/idm,32,idn,368,debaty-o-ksztalceniu-ustawicznym-i-szkolnictwie-zawodowym-w-województwie-mazowieckim-.html>

programme and established on the basis of the agreement between the two departments responsible for vocational guidance - education and labour (<http://www.euroguidance.pl>)

Euroguidance is a transnational European network of different Euroguidance centres in most European countries. It promotes international mobility and the European dimension in guidance and counselling by sharing quality information and good practices. Euroguidance target groups are guidance practitioners and policy makers from both the educational and employment sectors. The project is a part of the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission.

In 2003 a link to the Polish version of PLOTEUS was placed on the web pages of both departments.

There are ongoing activities under the project “Developing a model of vocational guidance and web-based vocational and educational information system. It is system project implemented by the National Centre for Supporting Vocational and Continuing Education (KOWEŻiU) in 2009-2012 under the Human Capital Operational Programme. The project was entrusted to the National Centre for Supporting Vocational and Continuing Education by Ministry of National Education.

General objective of the project is dissemination of access to educational and vocational guidance to pupils from lower secondary education by building a cohesive and adapted to current needs, the vocational guidance in the educational system enforcing the idea of lifelong learning. Moreover the project will contribute to the dissemination of access to reliable informations on educational and vocational system for students, parents, teachers and guidance counselors through the creation of the Internet System for Educational and Vocational Information, containing information appropriate to national, voivodship and poviast (district) level.

PROVISION

Vocational guidance is under the remit of two departments, education (Ministry of National Education), 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

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. 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, occupying more than a thousand full time counselors in 2010. .. 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).

9.2 - 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.

All acts of law drawn up since the beginning of transformation in Poland governing matters related to education, counteracting unemployment and labour market institutions, include provisions relating to vocational guidance.

The Act on schools education and executive regulations to that Act regulate the method of providing guidance at schools and educational institutions. The Act stipulates that the education system ensures in particular preparation of students to choose future vocation and course to choose future vocation and course of education. Weekly mandatory number of teaching hours for vocational counselors conducting activities relating to selection of course of education and vocation in order to support students in making education and profession-related decisions is specified by the school's governing body (local self-government unit). Schools are obliged to create intraschool vocational guidance systems at lower secondary schools (gimnazja), general secondary schools (licea ogólnokształcące), technical secondary schools (technika) and basic vocational schools (zasadnicze szkoły zawodowe). The tasks pertaining to vocational guidance and information are implemented with the use of active work methods.

To ensure high quality of vocational counsellors' services, the necessary qualifications of a teacher-vocational counselor have been specified in the Ordinance of the Minister of National Education of 12 March 2009 on the detailed requirements concerning teacher qualifications can be employed. Depending on the school or institution type, first level (licentiate) or second level (master degree) studies in vocational counseling or first level (licentiate) or second level (master degree) of any kind and postgraduate studies in vocational counseling and having pedagogic preparation are required⁷³.

⁷³ System Poradnictwa Zawodowego w Polsce. Ministerstwo Pracy i Polityki Społecznej, Departament Rynku Pracy, Warszawa 2010 p. 41 [System of Vocational guidance in Poland, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Department of Labour Market. Warsaw 2010 p. 41].

TABLE 1: GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING PROVISIONS FOR DIFFERENT TARGET GROUPS

Provider	Target Group	Activity	Modes of Delivery
Pedagogical assistance and counselling centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - children; - youths; - teachers; - parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - diagnostics related to mental capabilities, personality, aptitudes, interests - work with pupils with health problems, educational problems and those from malfunctioning families - vocational information and guidance for pupils and teachers - lectures, talks, information meetings addressed to parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - individual and group counselling and guidance; - psychological tests checking mental capabilities, personality, interests, special abilities - pedagogical tests - information about occupations, different types of schools and admission requirements, specialised institutions offering training to the physically and mentally handicapped. - usually poorly computerised
School Career Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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' 	<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

		suitability for a given occupation or training profile	of multimedia
Vocational Information and Planning Centres at regional 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"> - 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
Voluntary Labour Corps (OHP) Youth Career Centres and Youth Labour Offices and Job Clubs	<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
Mobile Vocational Information Centres of Voluntary Labour Corps(MCIZ)	<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

9.3 - 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).

National statistics confirm the increasing number of vocational counsellors employed by the education and employment departments. In 2009 995 counsellors were employed in education sector and 23 222 in employment department.⁷⁴ Vocational counsellors are also employed by private employment agencies. Statistical data on vocational counsellors working in such agencies are not collected.

Recruitment to postgraduate studies is 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 academic centres in Poland, both public and private, selected in an open tender procedure. 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

⁷⁴ "Poradnictwo zawodowo-edukacyjne w systemie edukacji w Polsce", KOWEŻiU, Wydział Poradnictwa Zawodowego, Anna Dziedzic, Marta Łuczak, Jerzy Bielecki, Warszawa, październik 2010, Sprawozdanie MPiPS-06, p.20

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.

10 – FINANCING: INVESTMENT IN HUMAN RESOURCES

10.1 VET FINANCING POLICY

The system of financing education in Poland is underpinned by the principle of free education for children and youth up to 18 years of age in all types of public schools, enshrined in the Constitution.

The regulations governing the financing of public schools, including all types of vocational schools, as well as public education and training institutions (such as continuing education centres, practical training centres and further education centres) are laid down in the Act on the education system (*Ustawa o systemie oświaty*) of 1991 (as amended) and other legislative acts relating to public finance, revenues of local government units (LGU) and regional development. The budget allocation for all types of educational activities, including vocational training, is defined annually in the Budget Act.

In 2010, public expenditure on education accounted for 4.7% GDP. The State expenditure on education totalled EUR 8.08 billion, of which EUR 7.56 billion (i.e. 93%) was the educational portion of the general subsidy transferred to schools and other educational establishments via local government units (MF 2011; GUS 2011)⁷⁵.

Local government units, especially those at the NUTS 4 level, are responsible for operating and financing initial vocational education and training schools (IVET) (cf. 10.2). They are also in charge of the financing of formal continuing vocational education and training (CVET, cf. 10.2). Labour Fund resources provide the main channel for the co-financing of non-formal CVET (job activation measures for the unemployed and training organised by the employers) (cf. 10.3). Moreover, the resources from the European Social Fund are also used in Poland for activities intended to ensure better matching of the vocational competences of learners and the requirements of the labour market and maintain high employment levels. The major sources of funding for VET and job activation measures for the unemployed are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Major sources of financing VET from public resources, including the EU

Sources of funding	Beneficiaries	Comments
Budgets of local government units (LGU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocational schools for youth, vocational schools for adults, continuing education centres, practical training centres (IVET and formal CVET) 	<p>The education subsidy from the State budget is one of the main sources of LGU revenues. It is divided among individual LGUs (municipalities [gminas], districts [poviats] and provinces [voivodships]) on the basis of an annually modified algorithm, using different weights for individual groups of students and schools (including vocational school students).</p> <p>In 2010, expenditure on education accounted for 31% of all local governments' expenditure. The</p>

⁷⁵ All expenditures referred to in the text have been converted using the NBP exchange rate as at 24.10.2011, where EUR 1 = PLN 4.3934.

		education subsidy covered 69.3% of LGUs' educational expenditures.
The Labour Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enterprises which maintain their internal training fund and invest in developing vocational competences of their employees Enterprises which hire young workers for apprenticeship training or train them to perform a specific job Enterprises which employ unemployed persons referred by the labour office The unemployed and those disadvantaged in the labour market (such as people aged 50+, long-term unemployed, people with no vocational qualifications, people with disabilities, etc.) Labour market institutions (such as job activation centres launched as part of the district labour offices - PUP) 	<p>Employers offering apprenticeship training receive funds from the school that the apprentice attends.</p> <p>Granting co-financing to employers who have signed an employment agreement with young workers for the provision of occupational training depends, among others, on the fact whether the student has passed the vocational exam.</p> <p>The unemployed and people disadvantaged in the labour market can make use of the Labour Fund resources through public employment services</p>
European Social Fund (Human Capital Programme)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secondary and tertiary education institutions Training providers Labour market institutions State administration bodies and local governments Entrepreneurs Business environment institutions NGOs Other entities 	<p>The main objectives and areas of the Human Capital Programme for 2007-2013 include: fostering vocational activity and employability of the unemployed, enhancing adaptability of employers and employees to changes taking place in the economy, improving the quality of educational services, supporting the concept of lifelong learning.</p>

Source: prepared by the authors.

10.2 FUNDING FOR INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (IVET)

Pursuant to the Act on the education system, public vocational schools and non-public vocational schools with the rights accorded to public schools are financed from LGU budgets. Education in public schools is free. In most cases, tuition fees are the main source of financing in non-public schools, although such schools may also apply for subsidies from

LGU budgets on the condition that the funds received are expended solely on the school's current expenses⁷⁶. Due to the lack of data showing the scale of private spending on non-public vocational schools, this analysis concerns only LGU expenditures. However, it should be added that the number of students attending non-public IVET schools is marginal⁷⁷; therefore, it may be assumed that the volume of LGU co-financing shows a true picture of IVET financing in Poland.

The education management system in Poland, including management of VET, is one of the most decentralised systems in the world (Herbst et al. 2009). The establishment, operation and financing of IVET schools (of which technical secondary schools, post-secondary schools and basic vocational schools, respectively, are the most popular) has been mostly delegated to the district (NUTS 4) level and, to a lesser extent, to regional governments (NUTS 2), if the schools have regional or trans-regional significance, or to municipalities (NUTS 5), if the local government units concerned sign a relevant agreement⁷⁸.

The Polish Constitution provides that local government units participate in public revenues adequately to their tasks. The key provisions relating to the financing of schools and other educational establishments are laid down in the Act on the education system (according to which "resources required for the attainment of educational goals [...] including teachers' remuneration and the costs of maintenance of schools and other educational establishments, are secured in the revenues of local government units") as well as in the Act on the revenues of local government units.

Local government units finance vocational education from the following sources: their own revenues⁷⁹, the general subsidy and grants. The general subsidy is the most important. Its major portion concerning education (known as the education subsidy) is earmarked for the financing of LGU tasks stipulated in the Act on the education system⁸⁰.

⁷⁶ It should be stressed that all students are entitled to financial support irrespective of the type of school they attend (that is, students in a difficult financial condition and those who are highly successful academically).

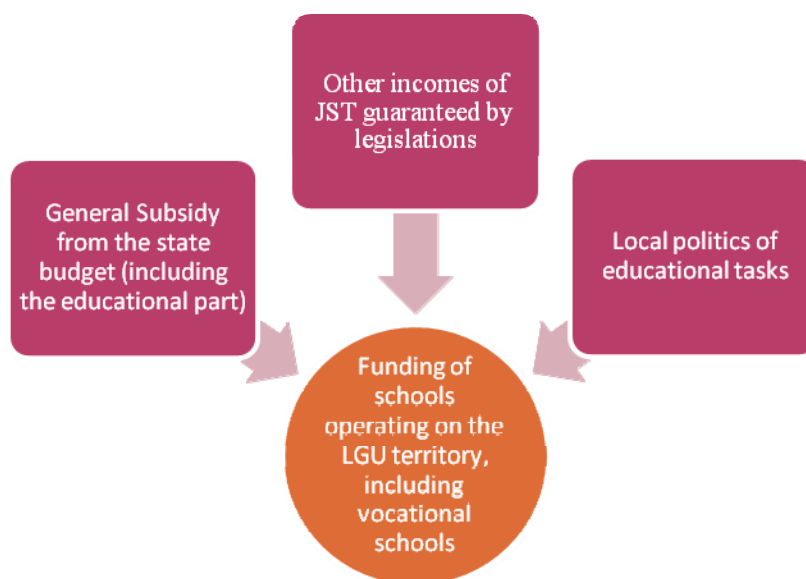
⁷⁷ In the 2009/2010 school year, public schools accounted for 93.9% of vocational schools for youth (excluding special schools), non-public schools with rights accorded to public schools - 6.05%, non-public schools - 0.05% (GUS 2010).

⁷⁸ Local government units may commission the performance of educational tasks to NGOs whose statutory activities include education. In such cases, non-public continuing education providers are financed from public resources.

⁷⁹ *The most significant are the revenues from Personal Income Tax (PIT) and Corporate Income Tax (CIT), as well as from the district assets.*

⁸⁰ *Prior to 2003, a fixed part of the anticipated State revenues (12.8%) was earmarked for the education subsidy. As of 2004, the amount of the education subsidy cannot be lower than it was in the previous fiscal year. In 2010, expenditure on education and development accounted for ca. 30% of all local government expenses (and amounted to EUR 11 489.5 million). Cf. IBE (2011a), MF (2011), BDL GUS. It should be stressed that local governments themselves decide what portion of the education subsidy will be spent on education.*

Figure 1. Financing of vocational schools from LGU budgets



Source: prepared by the authors.

Other LGU revenues guaranteed by law

Local educational policy

Financing of schools operating in a given LGU, incl. vocational schools

General subsidy (incl. education portion), transferred from the State budget

The rules for the distribution of the education portion of the subsidy among LGUs are annually specified in the Regulation of the Minister of National Education⁸¹. Under the Regulation, the education subsidy “shall be distributed among individual LGUs, taking into account the scope of their educational tasks”. After subtracting 0.6% of the amount as the reserve to be administered by the Minister of Finance, the remaining part is divided according to an annually modified algorithm. In the algorithm, a number of weights are used, which are determined not only for individual types of schools but also for different groups of students of schools operating in the area of a given local government (e.g. blind and visually impaired students, students from ethnic minorities or from schools located in rural areas). As of 2000, a separate weight has been introduced for vocational school students in apprenticeship training, students of specialised secondary schools and students of special schools offering training to perform a specific job. Changes in the values of the weights in the years 2000-2011 are shown in Table 2.

⁸¹*Cf. The Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 16 December 2010 on the distribution of the portion of the general subsidy for education among local government units.*

TABLE 2. ALGORITHM WEIGHTS FOR VOCATIONAL SCHOOL STUDENTS

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Weights for vocational school students	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.17	0.19	0.19
Weight for upper secondary school students (general education and artistic schools)	-	0.05	0.05	0.044	0.05	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.082	0.082

Source: prepared by IBE.

The majority of vocational schools are run and financed by the district (poviat) authorities. In the recent years, the total amount of co-financing for vocational schools from the poviat budgets has been on the increase. However, the percentage allocated to vocational schools as a share of the total expenditure on education has remained at a relatively similar level⁸². Therefore, it seems that there has been no significant increase of resources for the vocational training of youth nationally.

In 2010, the poviats allocated EUR 1 250 100 000 for the financing of vocational schools. Detailed data concerning the expenditure on vocational schools in individual LGUs are shown in Table 3 .

TABLE 3. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION EXPENDITURE (FORMAL IVET) FROM NUTS 5 AND NUTS 4 LEVEL BUDGETS IN MILLION EUR (EXCLUDING SPECIAL SCHOOLS)

	2007	2008	2009	2010
municipalities (ca 2413 units)	8.9	10.5	13.1	15.1
as % of expenditure on education	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
urban districts (65 largest cities in Poland)	381.8	439.2	484.4	527.0
as % of expenditure on education	13.0%	13.3%	13.7%	14.1%
rural districts (314 units)	562.9	612.1	674.0	723.1
as % of expenditure on education	46.3%	46.6%	47.0%	46.9%
TOTAL	953.6	1061.8	1171.5	1265.2

Source: prepared by the authors based on BDL GUS.

⁸² GUS does not provide data broken into individual types of vocational schools.

The annually modified algorithm for the distribution of the education subsidy among LGUs takes into account, among others, the specific nature of individual schools and educational establishments as well as the financial condition of a given local government. It has to be stressed, however, that the weight determined for vocational school students has not been suitably assessed. First of all, it does not sufficiently compensate for the difference between the costs of general and vocational education, the latter being “definitely more expensive than general education, due to the equipment requirements, the need to conduct placements and internships, the need to recruit teachers with current or recent practical experience in the occupation they teach” (IBE 2011b). Secondly, it does not take into account the differences between the individual types of vocational schools and the unique nature of training for different occupations, and therefore it seems to favour those types of schools which do not require significant financial outlays, and to a lesser extent offers an incentive to develop schools providing training in occupations which are sought after in the labour market (IBE 2001b; Herbst et al. 2009).

In the recent years, developing an effective, and modern VET system has become a priority in the Polish educational policy. In 2010, the Ministry of National Education launched the project “Vocational school - a school of positive choice”, and undertook to prepare and popularise, before the 2012/2013 school year, solutions and arrangements that would improve the performance and attractiveness of VET schools, with the ultimate goal of encouraging lower secondary school students to continue education in vocational schools⁸³.

In view of a growing demand for employees having vocational competences linked with generic skills (and in light of Poland’s obligations resulting from its EU membership), in March 2011 the Ministry of National Education prepared a bill amending the act on the education system and a number of other parliamentary acts. The amended act will enter into force on 1 September 2012. The new law will have a great impact on formal IVET as it introduces crucial changes in the descriptions of school occupations: it distinguishes qualifications needed for particular occupations and makes it possible to validate each individual qualification acquired in the process of training. It also makes the issuance of a certificate confirming vocational qualifications (including the certificate supplement, describing the knowledge, skills and competences acquired) dependent on the submission of certificates confirming all the qualifications ascribed to a given occupation and on completion of an appropriate school. The proposed changes are intended not only to let better match vocational qualifications with the expectations and needs of the labour market, but also to help make the idea of lifelong learning a reality and to promote greater mobility of students.

⁸³ *The Project is implemented under Measure 3.4 - openness of the educational system in the context of lifelong learning. Submeasure 3.4.2 - Popularisation of lifelong learning, of the Human Capital Operational Programme. For more details, see the website of the Ministry of National Education: <http://men.gov.pl>.*

10.3 FINANCING OF CVET AND ADULT LEARNING

10.3.1 PUBLIC FUNDING SCHEMES AND MACHANISMS TO FINANCE CVET

FORMAL CVET

Continuing education is offered by schools for adults, continuing education centres (CKU), practical training centres (CKP), further training centres (ZDZ), and higher education/research institutions offering post-graduate studies, courses and distance learning.

CKU, CKP and ZDZ are financed from LGU budgets on the same principles as IVET schools, which means public schools do not charge any tuition fees (except when, due to an insufficient funding for public schools, expenses other than salaries can be financed by student self-government bodies), as opposed to non-public schools, which are financed mainly from tuition fees paid by learners.

The operation and financing of vocational tertiary schools are governed by the Act on higher education and the Act on vocational tertiary schools. In principle, public tertiary schools are financed from the State budget and regional government budgets and they do not charge tuition fees for full-time studies. Although non-public tertiary schools may apply for financial support to regional governments, tuition fees remain their main source of financing.

NON-FORMAL CVET AND ADULT LEARNING

Under the current legal and systemic regulations, the Labour Fund (*Fundusz Pracy*) and the EU Structural Funds represent the main vehicles for transferring the State support for non-formal CVET and adult learning.

The Labour Fund provides resources for the funding of active labour market policy measures, including training initiatives launched by enterprises (see Box 1) and training courses for the unemployed, organised through public employment services (cf. 10.4).

Box 1. Labour Fund co-financing of training organised by employers

Provision of co-financing to employers directly from the Labour Fund is one of the state financial instruments used for job activation and promoting investments in human capital. The Labour Fund⁸⁴ can reimburse the costs incurred by enterprises which:

- a) Organise apprenticeship training for young workers or train them to perform a specific job - in order to qualify for reimbursement of the costs incurred on the training of young workers, an employer needs to submit an “application for the agreement to reimburse wages paid to young workers and social insurance contributions paid on such reimbursed wages” to the Regional Headquarters of the

⁸⁴ The Labour Fund is a state special-purpose fund which operates under the Act of 20 April 2004 on promoting employment and labour market institutions. It is administered by the Minister competent in matters of labour. The Fund's revenues come from mandatory contributions paid mainly by employers and entrepreneurs, state budget subsidies and funds from the EU budget for the co-financing of projects funded from the Labour Fund. The Labour Fund contribution paid by employers is 2.45% of sum representing the basis for calculating the social insurance contribution for a given employee.

Voluntary Labour Corps (*Ochotnicze Hufce Pracy - OHP*) (at its centre for youth education and work). To receive the co-financing stipulated in the legislation, the employer needs to fulfil two conditions: hire a young worker in an occupation found in the list of occupations developed by a given regional government and ensure that the conditions in which vocational training is provided observes the provisions of the Labour Code (*Kodeks Pracy*). The employer receiving such co-financing is also obliged to employ all young workers co-financed from the Labour Fund on the basis of an employment contract for at least six months following their completion of occupational training. The amount of co-financing per one young worker depends on the period of training: in the case of apprenticeship training lasting 24 months it is over EUR 1 105.5 (i.e. EUR 46.1 per month), and over EUR 1 740.1 for training lasting 36 months (i.e. more than EUR 48.3 per month of training). The amount granted for training a young worker to perform a specific job is similar - ca. EUR 54.6 for each full month of training⁸⁵;

- b) Finance or co-finance the costs of continuing training of employees and employers from the internal training fund; the head of the district government (*starosta*) may reimburse up to 50% of the costs of such training (but not more than up to the amount of the average monthly salary, published regularly by the Central Statistical Office [GUS], applicable for the date of concluding the contract), per person, and up to 80% for people aged 45 or more⁸⁶;
- c) Employ unemployed persons - employers can sign agreements with district labour offices (PUP) for the reimbursement of the costs of providing equipment required for specific jobs in case of hiring unemployed persons referred by the labour office⁸⁷.

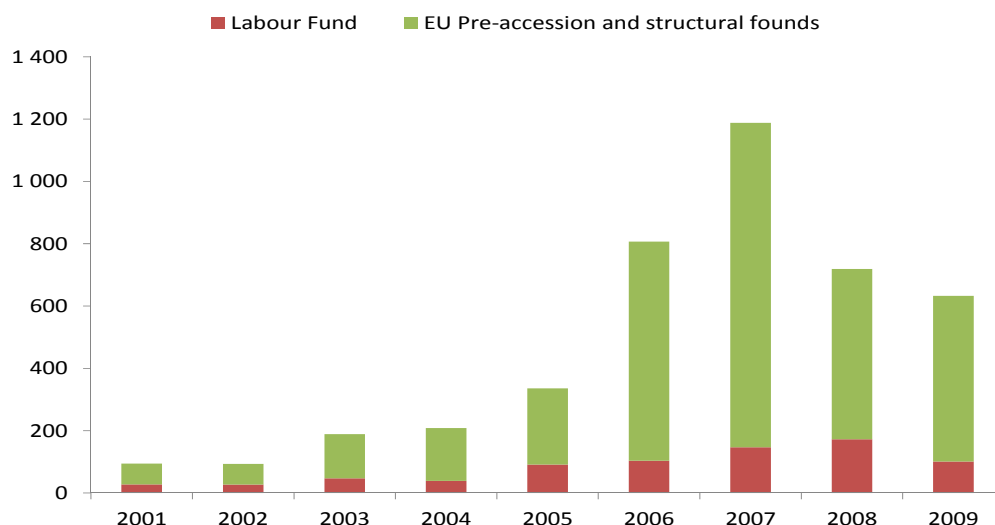
Adult education was co-financed from the EU Structural Funds mainly via the following programmes: SOP HRD (Priorities I and II), EQUAL (Themes A, F, I) and IROP (Priority II), and in the current budget perspective, via: HC OP (Priorities I, II and partly III, V, VIII and IX) as well as the Regional Operational Programmes. The estimated volumes spent on lifelong learning from public funds, including the EU, in individual years are shown in Figure 2.

⁸⁵ For more information see: <http://www.ohp.pl>.

⁸⁶ Cf. Articles 67-69 of the Act on promoting employment and labour market institutions.

⁸⁷ Under Article 46.6 of the Act on promoting employment and labour market institutions and the relevant secondary legislation.

Figure 2. Co-financing of adult education in Poland from public funds (in million PLN)



Note: Since no statistics are available which would allow to precisely calculate the volume of public expenditure earmarked for adult education in Poland, the values in the chart are estimates only.

The calculations were made using the following assumptions:

- *The EU funds for adult education were expended at the same pace at which the funds were spent as a whole (based on MRR reports on the implementation of the National Development Plan (2004-2006) and the National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013);*
- *the EU funds in a given year were expended using the average annual EUR/PLN exchange rate published for this year by the National Bank of Poland (NBP); all the values on the chart are shown in 2009 prices.*

Source: Dębowski, Lis, Pogorzelski (2010). EU pre-accession and Structural Funds, Labour Fund

According to Dębowski, Lis, Pogorzelski (2010), since 2006 there has been a huge increase in the funding for adult learning (from ca. EUR 91 million in 2001 and 2002, to ca. EUR 1.13 billion in 2007). In the coming years (up to 2015), due to the continued implementation of the EU assistance funds, the current level of public expenditure in this area, which is EUR 0.57-0.68 billion per year, can be expected to be kept up (even though it must be borne in mind that these are estimates only).

Nevertheless, it should be noted that the measures supporting CVET and adult learning in Poland are mostly targeted at the supply side of the process, viz. the labour offices as well as public and private training providers (cf. Table 3). Despite the huge allocation on the co-financing of adult education (over EUR 2.7 billion in 2006-2008), the levels of participation in CVET have not significantly increased. In 2010, they were slightly higher than in 2004⁸⁸, and remained one of the lowest in the EU⁸⁹.

⁸⁸ In 2004, the LLL index (four weeks) prior to the survey was 5.34%, and 5.33% in 2010.

⁸⁹ The reasons for such a low level of LLL participation (despite a significant increase in funding) are currently investigated as part of a research project carried out by the Educational Research Institute (IBE). Cf. Dębowski (2011). This phenomenon is partly explained in: Magda et al. (2010), and also: Dębowski, Lis, Pogorzelski (2010).

TABLE 3. FINANCIAL SUPPORT INSTRUMENTS TO CVET AND ADULT EDUCATION IN POLAND FINANCED FROM PUBLIC AND EU FUNDS

Instrument	Final beneficiaries
Training financed or organised by public employment services, incl. co-financing for internships and occupational training in enterprises	People disadvantaged in the labour market: unemployed, people aged 50+, low-skilled people, reservists, employees of closed-down enterprises, etc.
Labour Fund co-financing of training for employees from enterprises which have set up an internal training	Employees and employers
Grants to public educational institutions (continuing training centres and practical training centres), allocated as part of the education subsidy from the state budget	Those wishing to supplement their education (gained e.g. in lower secondary school or general secondary school for adults) or acquire new qualifications (e.g. in further training centres)
Grants to public and non-public educational institutions from the EU Structural Funds	Mostly people disadvantaged in the labour market: unemployed, people aged 50+, women entering or re-entering the labour market, low-skilled people, employees of closed-down enterprises, etc.

Source: prepared by the authors based on: Dębowski, Lis, Pogorzelski (2010).

10.3.2 PUBLIC-PRIVATE COST-SHARING

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 governments⁹⁰. The algorithm regulating the distribution of the subsidy for education among the local governments differentiates the actual allocations on the basis of such factors as the scale and structure of educational and other tasks in schools and other public educational and training institutions, measured by the number of pupils and school-leavers. In determining the algorithm, the educational policy priorities are taken into account. For every local government running or subsidising schools and educational institutions of every kind, the so-called referential number of students is determined for a given school year. In the vocational and continuing education system, educational tasks comprise the running (administration) of schools offering vocational education, continuing education centres, as well as practical and further training centres. Other school tasks refer to tasks related to the running of institutions mentioned above which allow for the organisation of non-formal education and training.

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

The system allows to use additional instruments of financing of education. There are:

Student's loan - all students can apply for loans no matter what kind of universities or form of study they choose. The only restriction is that the study has to start before student's 25 year old. The loan is granted for whole period of study and doctorant studies. Repayment starts two years after graduating studies. <http://www.studia.net/jak-studiowac/1775-kredyt-studencki-2009-2010>

Voucher for exam - some higher education institutions and training centers grant "vouchers for exam" which gives single right to take exam with no fees. <http://www.microsoft.ahe.lodz.pl> Akademia Humanistyczno-Ekonomiczna w Łodzi - Microsoft IT Academy Program Member

Education voucher - in Poland there is no national system of education vouchers but the legislation allows to use it locally. Education voucher was introduced in some *powiaty*. There are debates/discussions on possibility of introducing the voucher as the main source of financing education. http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bon_o%C5%9Bwiatowy

⁹⁰ Revenues of Local Governments Act (Art. 28).

10.3.3 COLLECTIVE (EMPLOYER, EMPLOYEE) INVESTMENT TO FINANCE CVET

Employers are among major sources of funding for non-formal CVET and adult learning in Poland; they either organise apprenticeship training or send their employees to external training programmes. According to the 2010 Labour Force Survey, over a half (54%) of those who enrolled for training claimed to have done so on the initiative of their employer⁹¹.

It should be noted, however, that the participation of employers in improving the competences of their staff is very modest in Poland when compared with other EU Member States, particularly with regard to workplace based training (cf. Eurostat, CVT3 Survey). The most recent studies (Worek, Stec et al. 2011) indicate that, in 2010, approximately half of the surveyed employers did not undertake any activities aimed to improve the vocational qualifications of their staff. According to the authors, this was largely due to the absence of any informed HRD strategy, the employers' failure to see benefits from employee training and a low level of innovation in Polish enterprises, which reduces the training needs of staff, and to a lesser extent - to the shortage of funds (cf. also Dębowski, Lis, Pogorzelski 2010).

The level of expenditure on human resources is also negatively affected by the information barriers associated with a huge range of training courses offered by training providers, many of which provide low-quality services, and the impossibility to verify the quality of their offer (cf. *Inwestycja w kadry...*; Boni 2007; *Ocena wpływu funduszy...*). In such a situation, employers, mostly those from the SME sector, may resign from organising any type of training. In their opinion, using the public co-financing does not reduce the risk of making a poor investment; referring the staff to low-quality training is viewed as more harmful than forgoing training at all. It should also be emphasised that the topics of training are very rarely submitted to public tendering (cf. Męcina 2009, Dębowski 2010; Bukowski, Dębowski 2010;). In many countries, social dialogue between employers and employees results in a larger number of training programmes being organised by employers, and a more "equal" policy of training organisation (provision of training to people with lower competences; the elderly, etc.).

10.3.4 REACHING THE GROUPS AT RISK THROUGH FUNDING SCHEMES AND MECHANISMS

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 *powiat* labour offices which refer persons with disabilities to training on their own initiative or at the request of the handicapped person in situations when the training in question can help them acquire

⁹¹ 41% of respondents said they started training on their own initiative, and 5% - that they were referred to training by the labour office.

qualifications to start a job. The duration of the training should not be longer than 36 months.

The training costs of people with disabilities are funded from the State Fund for the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons and the Labour Fund. The sum of the co-financing varies depending on the status of a given beneficiary in the labour market - whether they are employed or seeking a job. 65 per cent of the State Fund for the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons are earmarked 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 months⁹².

10.4 FUNDING FOR TRAINING FOR THE UNEMPLOYED

Such issues as alleviating negative consequences of unemployment, measures promoting high employment levels and job activation measures are regulated by the Act of 20 April 2004 on employment promotion and labour market institutions.

Programmes and measures promoting employment and resuming active professional life by people without work are funded from the Labour Fund. The Fund, among others, covers the cost of training for the unemployed; internships; post-graduate programmes; reimbursement costs of providing equipment required for specific jobs in case of hiring unemployed persons referred by the labour office; flat-rate sum paid for those starting a business. These funds are administered by public employment services, operating in regions and districts (which can also apply for co-financing to ESF-funded projects, cf. 10.3.1). These services address their job activation programmes to the unemployed and people in a disadvantageous labour market situation (such as youth under 25, long-term unemployed, people without vocational qualifications and people with disabilities⁹³).

⁹² Social Employment Act of 13 June 2003 (Dziennik Ustaw 122/2003 item 1143).

⁹³ *Categories of people disadvantaged in the labour market are defined in Art. 49 of the Act on promoting employment and labour market institutions. They include: 1) unemployed under 25; 2) long-term unemployed, including women who have not resumed employment after giving birth to a child; 3) unemployed aged 50+; 4) unemployed without vocational qualifications, work experience or secondary education; 5) unemployed who are single parents of at least one child under 18; 6) unemployed who have not resumed work after completing a period of imprisonment; 7) unemployed with disabilities.*

11 - AUTHORS, SOURCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY, ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

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11.3 LIST OF ACCRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

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

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

BK - Biuro Karier - Career Bureaux

CKE - Centralna Komisja Egzaminacyjna - Central Examination Commission

CKP - Centrum Kształcenia Praktycznego - Practical Training Centre

CKU - Centrum Kształcenia Ustawicznego- Continuing Education Centre

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

CVET - Ustawiczne Szkolenie Zawodowe - Continuing Vocational Training

ECTS - Europejski System Transferu Punktów - European Credit Transfer System

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**

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

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**

GDP - Produkt Krajowy Brutto - **Gross Domestic Product**

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**

KNOW - Krajowe Naukowe Ośrodki Wiodące - **National Scientific Leading Centers**

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

KOWEziU - Krajowy Ośrodek Wsparcia 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**

MEN - Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej - **the Ministry of National Education**

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

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

MPiPS - Ministerstwo Pracy i Polityki Społecznej - the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

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

OP HC - Program Operacyjny Kapitał Ludzki - Operational Programme Human Capital

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

PLN - Polski złoty - Polish zloty

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

SEN - Specjalne Potrzeby Edukacyjne - Special Education Needs

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**

WUP - Wojewódzki Urząd Pracy - **Voivodship Labour Office**

ZDZ - Zakład Doskonalenia Zawodowego - **Vocational Upgrading and Further Education Centres**

ZRP - Związek Rzemiosła Polskiego - **the Polish Association of Crafts**