

Achieving the Lisbon Goal:
The Contribution of Vocational Education and Training Systems

Country Report: Poland

Editors:

Ing. Vera Czesana, CSc.
Ing. Zdenka Matouskova, CSc.

Team of authors:

Ing. Vera Czesana, CSc.
Ing. Vera Havlickova,
Doc. Ing. Anna Kaderabkova, Ph.D.
PhDr. Olga Kofronova, Ph.D.
Ing. Zdenka Matouskova, CSc.,
Ing. Alena Zukersteinova,

Editorial assistant:

Mgr. Jiri Vymazal

Translation:

Hana Cechova
Marc Corner

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Theme 1: Progress of national VET systems towards meeting the challenges of Lisbon

	QUESTION
1	Strategies and barriers for improving the status, flexibility and attractiveness of Initial VET (IVET)
	<i>What strategies are being used to by government, social partners and providers etc. to achieve these objectives:</i>
	<i>a. Raise the status of IVET?</i>
	<i>a. Improve the attractiveness of IVET?</i>
	<i>a. Increase the flexibility of IVET?</i>
	<i>a. What are the main barriers to achieving these objectives?</i>
2	Reducing the number of early school leavers
	<i>How does your country relate to other countries in terms of the contribution to increasing or reducing the number of young people:</i>
	<i>a. Who leave education or training at the earliest opportunity and with few or no recognised qualifications?</i>
	<i>a. Who leave formal education with low levels of basic skills at age of 15?</i>
3	Increasing VET at tertiary level
	<i>What steps are being taken to establish or improve technological and vocational qualifications at the tertiary (higher) educational level? Please refer in particular to any attempts to make pathways more flexible, and to introduce shorter post-secondary VET courses.</i>
4	Incentives for updating knowledge & skills
	<i>What initiatives and measures are the following taking to motivate employees to update knowledge and skills?</i>
	<i>a. Government</i>
	<i>a. Employers</i>
	<i>a. Other stakeholders</i>
	<i>a. Please provide examples (if any) of the contribution of VET to successfully promoting inclusion</i>
5	Meeting the challenges of an aging population

	<i>Please identify any innovations and initiatives in VET that are being introduced to encourage older people (55+) to remain at work longer and to participate in training and other forms of lifelong learning.</i>
6	Effectiveness and efficiency of VET
	<i>a. In the current the national debate, how effective is the system of VET perceived to be? (Is the VET route effective in fostering individual careers, self-confidence and personal identity? Benefits of training for employers? Is the VET route effective in combating youth unemployment?)</i>
	<i>a. In the current national debate, is the VET system seen as offering efficiency/ good value for money? (These questions are given as examples and need not all be answered: Who is investing in VET - the state, the employers, and individuals – and what are their benefits? How can we make the best use of existing resources: Better balance between practical and theoretical training, accreditation of prior learning, raising completion rates, etc.? Improving management and organisation of VET?)</i>
	<i>a. What are the main trends in terms of investment in VET (Public investment? Incentives to employers as well as to individuals to invest more? Public-private partnerships?)</i>

Theme 2: Innovation in Teaching and Learning Processes

7	Improvements in learning processes and contents
	<i>Please identify innovation in teaching and learning methods and contents for VET. (For example, developments towards student-centred learning styles; a possible shift from content/subject based learning to competences/outcomes; more problem- and project-based pedagogy, and contextualised work-based learning processes and contents.)</i>
8	Improving the integration of different learning sites; integration of formal and informal learning
	<i>Please Identify the institutional and organisational links (or lack of them) between learning sites at schools and companies. (How are the traditional barriers between learning at schools/colleges and learning in the workplace being overcome? How far can “simple experiencing” at work be transformed into a “reflective experiencing” by linking company-based learning with school/college based learning?)</i>
9	Evaluation and quality assurance of VET provision
	<i>What systems are in place to evaluate the processes and outcomes of VET – for learners, systems and the system?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>a. For the individual (assessment of competences and knowledge)</i> <i>a. For the institution (internal/external quality management)</i> <i>a. For the system (monitoring and evaluation)</i>

10	Professional development and status of teachers and trainers
	<p><i>Teachers' and trainers' professional development is now recognised as a decisive factor in improving learning processes and outcomes. Please indicate the key initiatives and innovations that are taking place in the training of teachers and trainers.</i></p> <p><i>(These questions are given as examples and need not all be answered: Is initial training being introduced or reformed? If so, how? What provision is made for the continuous professional development of VET teachers and trainers? How do innovative education and training practices benefit students, companies and society? What is the position of trainers within organisations? How much autonomy do they have? What is the professional status - social status and self-esteem - of VET teachers and trainers in the society?)</i></p>

Theme 3: Building European Competences for a European Labour Market

11	Challenges & policies in relation to the Lisbon employment strategy
	<p><i>a. What are the main challenges to achieving the Lisbon employment objectives for your country, according to the European Commission 'Kok Report'?</i></p>
	<p><i>a. Please identify any policies and strategies being developed to tackle these challenges.</i></p>
	<p><i>a. Please identify any obstacles standing in the way of reform of VET in relation to achieving the Lisbon objectives.</i></p>
12	Involving stakeholders
	<p><i>a. Please describe the role of stakeholders or social partners in the planning of VET at national, sector and company level</i></p>
	<p><i>a. Which actions to anticipate and recognise skills and qualifications needs (at national, sector or regional level) for your country do the European social partners identify as important in their recent report?</i></p>
13	Transparency, recognition & mobility
	<p><i>A key objective of the Copenhagen Agreement is to establish mechanisms that can lead to a European labour market. Credit transfer, qualification frameworks and Europass are specified in this respect. What measures, if any, are being developed at national and/ or sector level</i></p> <p><i>a. To establish credit frameworks</i></p> <p><i>a. To establish or reform a qualifications framework</i></p> <p><i>a. To implement Europass?</i></p>

1. Strategies and barriers for improving the status, flexibility and attractiveness of initial VET

a) Raise the status of IVET

The Polish educational system is still undergoing a very ambitious and dynamic reform process, which faced many complications as well as changes in the reform outline. The overall aim of the reform, launched by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) in 1999 and planned to finish in 2007, is to raise access and quality in education and increase school leavers' mobility on the labour market by putting greater emphasis on general secondary and higher education.

The previous education system was, at secondary level, very much focused on VET, which, in the 1990s, accounted for some 65% of the entire provision. This was considered to be excessive in terms of comparison with the EU average (some 47%¹). As compared with other countries in transition, the proportion was not the highest (e.g. the proportion of VET is approx. 80% in the CR and SR). What was seen more as a problem was an outdated content of education and a large number of programmes with too narrow specialisations, which lead to a high rate of unemployment among those who completed them.

The initial efforts to reform VET in the late 1990s were not backed up by a comprehensive VET development policy. One-sided decisions were taken that were based on the requirements of students and their parents, rather than on an analysis of labour market needs. Nearly all types of VET schools were abolished (with the exception of basic vocational schools focused on manual occupations), and the objective was to decrease the proportion of VET to 20%. This approach was then reviewed and a new stage of the reform was launched in 2002. A new structure of secondary schools has been proposed into which secondary technical schools have been re-incorporated, as they constitute an important VET path. The reform is now of a comprehensive nature.

The new structure of schools at secondary and post-secondary schools includes:

a) vocational education:

- Basic vocational schools continue as before (lasting 2-3 years), offering vocational qualifications. However, the new core curriculum provides broader general education. Basic vocational schools provide traditionally school based type of education. The apprenticeship system prevails in the crafts sector only.
- Secondary technical schools (technicums) – have been reintroduce into the education system. Thy cycle has been shortened from 5 to 4 years, leading to both vocational qualifications and maturity examination.
- Supplementary schools (providing programmes with “maturita” certification) for the graduates of basic vocational schools: supplementary lyceums (2 year), supplementary technical schools (3 year)
- Profiled lyceum is introduced as a new type of school. It lasts 3 years and is leading to a “maturita” certificate. It is focused on general education but providing general vocational education (without qualification). There are 14 profiles. This is more of a “pre-qualification” sort of education.

¹ Education at a glance, OECD, 2001

b) general education:

- general education lyceum lasting 3 years, leading to a “maturita” certificate.

c) post-secondary education:

- posts-lyceum schools – providing VET of varying lengths (max. up to 2.5 years). Upon completion a vocational professional qualification is awarded.

The new structure of schools at secondary and post-secondary level provides a number of possible combinations of educational routes. Those who complete general programmes may achieve a vocational qualification in post-lyceum programmes at post-secondary level (of varying lengths). Those who complete basic vocational schools may continue at a supplementary lyceum or a supplementary technical school and to achieve a “maturita” certificate which provides access to tertiary education.

Education reform was in progress simultaneously with state administration reform and was also linked to decentralisation of governance in education and the system of counselling. Since 1999 the responsibility for decisions concerning the structure of schools (i.e. also the relationship between general and vocational education and the proportion of VET) has rested with regional and local governments. The process was, for a short period, accompanied by a lower validity of information about the education system. However, over the long term it should enhance the flexibility of the schools network in meeting regional labour market needs.

In spite of a reduced proportion of students in VET schools the reform should improve the status of VET, since it aims to enhance the quality of VET by means of the following measures:

- introduction of a system of external evaluation of educational results and certification. This should guarantee better transparency of certificates for employers and comparability of the quality of the outputs. New external examination system certifying vocational qualifications is being introduced in 2004. The new design of “maturita” examination will be introduced from 2005. (for details see question 9).
- The curricular reform is limiting ineffective, narrowly profiled vocational education (from September 2002). Key competencies have been introduced into curricula (effective from 2000), and broadly conceived VET programmes have been introduced (for details see question 7). In 2003 changes in the framework curricula for basic vocational schools were introduced
- creation of the State Accreditation Commission to assess the quality of education on the ISCED 5 level (from January 2002)

As part of the reform, attention is also paid to teachers. It is obvious that teachers need appropriate training and that their status must be improved so as to make sure that they are able to put into practice the new curricula, teaching and assessment methods and other components of the reform. The following measures have been adopted in this respect:

- Gradual implementation of the teachers’ remuneration reform on the basis of a new system of professional career (from 2000) (see question 10)
- adopting a new system of financing the in-service teachers training (from 2002)

There are considerable differences in the education system between rural and urban areas. Fewer educational options are available in many rural areas. In the former there are few secondary schools providing programmes with “maturita” and basic vocational schools predominate. Students in the countryside have fewer opportunities to continue studies at tertiary level. Capacities in terms of resources, both personnel and finance, are more limited in small rural communities. The quality of education in rural schools is generally thought to be inferior to that in urban areas². The drop-out level is also higher in rural areas. The MoNE and the Ministry of Agriculture have made an increasing effort to raise the standard of education in rural areas since 1998 (scholarship for rural pupils, increased access to student credits and loans, teacher training).

b) Improve the attractiveness of IVET

There has been a shift in the interest of students from vocational to general education. Participation in general education³ almost doubled from 19 % in 1990 to 36% in 2001/2. However, vocational education still predominates and approximately 60% of the relevant age groups undergo VET at secondary level.

The VET educational routes leading to “maturita” and facilitating access to tertiary education have been promoted. Participation in programmes at secondary technical schools has increased greatly (from 27% to 33%), while the proportion of students in basic vocational schools dropped from 43% to 22%⁴. The most recent data indicate that the decline has stopped and the proportion has stabilised. The greatest increase occurred in terms of participation in tertiary education (from 13% to approx. 44%).

c) Increase the flexibility of IVET

The possibility to pass vertically through the education system is good. **Vertical pathways** from each secondary school including basic vocational schools have been made open for taking the “maturita” exam and for obtaining qualifications, and provide access to postsecondary level and tertiary education.

Horizontal mobility is still limited, as transfers between different types of schools are only possible at the initial stage of the educational cycle.

The curricular reform supports modularisation of study programmes. Unfortunately, modular programmes have not as yet been made full use of in practice.

Flexibility of those who complete IVET programmes **in terms of adapting to labour market changes** should be strengthened, as the curricular reform has provided for a broader general base and highlights transferable competencies. The flexibility of study programmes in terms of meeting employers’ needs remains limited, although the two-level curricula make it possible for schools to adjust their school-based curricula to local market requirements.

The Polish VET system may be described as strongly school-based. One of the continuing drawbacks of the system is a very low standard of practical training. Co-operation between schools and enterprises is limited, because enterprises are not interested. One step towards improving the situation should be the Cooperation

² Country Monograph, p. 73

³ Ratio of all individuals studying at a given level to the population of the official age for that level.

⁴ <http://www.eurydice.org/Eurybase/Application/frameset.asp?country=PL&language=EN>

Agreement for the Promotion of Vocational, Continuing and Practical Training concluded in 2003 between the Ministry and the employers organisations⁵.

The process of adjusting IVET to labour market needs is also made more difficult by the lack of systematic forecasts of the demand for qualifications. Although an Inter-ministerial team for Forecasting Labour Demand⁶ was established in 1998 and various important projects have been launched, the work has not progressed so as to provide results that could be applied in practice.

2. Reducing the number of early school leavers

The „early school leavers“ rate (percentage of 18-24-year-olds with lower secondary attainment levels at the most who are not in education and training) is fairly low (7.6% in 2002 compared with 18.8% in the EU15 average or 8.4% for the new member states⁷). Poland is currently meeting the EU objective set for 2010.

The low proportion of early school leavers is, apart from other factors, the result of 11-year compulsory education (i.e. up to the age of 18). Of this basic school covers 9 years (it was extended by one year in 1998/99), and for the remaining two years there is an obligation to attend some type of upper secondary school or “out-of-school” types of education.

The dropout rate from vocational education (4.2% ISCED 3C and 1.9% ISCED 3A) remains stable at a rather low level as compared to the EU including the new member states.

Individuals who leave school without a qualification may acquire later as part of adult education provided by schools. Although these programmes show low flexibility in meeting the needs of adult learners, they are frequently attended (see question 4).

There is also a governmental organisation „Voluntary Labour Corps“ providing care for young people at risk of unemployment and socio-pathological disorders (it is acting under supervision of the Ministry of Labour). A network of 303 centres provide support towards social inclusion and prevention of dropouts, and organise vocational training⁸. The programmes last two to three years and include young people over 15.

3. Increasing VET at tertiary level

After the collapse of communism in 1989, the academic community was given far-reaching autonomy through the higher education law of 1990. At a time of rapid growth in enrolments⁹ and in the number of private providers, the system has suffered from decreasing budgets and numerous government proposals for reform. Reform has started at the primary and secondary levels, but has been slow in coming

⁵ Polish Employers Confederation, and the Association of Polish Electrical Engineers

⁶ Inter-ministerial team was established at the Government Centre for Strategic Studies.

⁷ Progress towards the common objectives in education and training – Indicators and benchmarks, EC, 2004, p. 107

⁸ Implementing LLL Strategies in Europe: Progress report on the follow-up to the 2002 Council resolution – Reply to the Commission questionnaire (Poland), p. 17

⁹ 1992 saw the beginning of a dynamic growth in the sector of non-state institutions resulting in a rise in enrolment rates from 12 percent to 41 percent.

at the higher education level, which is still operating on the basis of the old 1990 law¹⁰. There are currently a growing number of private higher education institutions that currently enrol almost 30 percent of the Polish student body, which has grown fourfold over the last ten years while the number of faculty has remained level. The increased level of autonomy at the institutional level has meant that structural reform along Bologna lines tends to differ greatly from institution to institution.

Until recently the **two-tier structure** had not succeeded in attracting wide interest from students and employers, who preferred the traditional integrated study programs. However, over the last few years, an increasing number of higher education institutions have abandoned the traditional model of integrated master programs and moved to a two-tier structure in which the first degree (*licencjat* or *inżynier*) corresponds to a bachelor degree, to be followed by a master degree (*Uzupełniająca studia magisterskie*) of 1.5 to 2.5 years. These first-tier degrees are considered more academic than they traditionally were, however, this difference is not reflected in the degree title. Although the two-tier structure appears to now be more common, the two systems currently exist in parallel. Most universities are also adapting to the demand from non-state first-tier degree holders for second-tier programs. These programs are often organized as part-time studies (for which universities may charge fees). The transition has not been a centralized move and, as a result, different institutions have developed different versions of the system with regard to the length of the first and second tier and the conditions for moving from the first to the second one. Legal restrictions exclude medicine, pharmacy, dentistry, veterinary science, psychology and law from the two-tier structure. The new structure seems to be preferred by certain disciplines such as fine arts, archaeology, etc. Most technical universities have introduced the two-tier system. In the other universities the situation is less cohesive, with some departments introducing the new structure, while others not. No urgent need is felt by the ministry, institutions, and students to change the present situation of two systems existing in parallel. Not all institutions of higher education are entitled to offer master's programs (short or long). Therefore, only approximately 40 out of more than 200 private institutions are authorized to run master's programs.

The following **higher education schools** are considered to be **vocational** ones: state and non-state vocational schools created on the basis of the 1997 act on higher vocational schools. At present there are 26 state higher vocational schools and 124 non-state ones. Graduation from a higher vocational school gives the student a higher education status. Upon graduation the student receives the professional title of *licencjat*, *inżynier* or their equivalent defined by the Minister of National Education and Sport. Graduates from higher vocational schools (*wy_sze szko_y zawodowe*) can continue their studies in 2-year supplementary Master's degree courses.

¹⁰ Poland's current system of higher education management is based on article 70 of the Constitution and four principle acts: 1990 Act on Higher Education, 1990 Act on Titles and Degrees, 1991 Act on Establishing the Committee for Scientific Research and 1997 Act on Higher Vocational Schools, which established higher vocational schools of which there are currently 25. A new Act on Academic Titles and Degrees was passed in 2003 and defines academic degrees and titles in the arena of fine arts. Work has begun on new legislation designed to replace the 1990 Higher Education Act and its amendments. It is expected to include: integration of the various acts that concern higher education issues, including elements resulting from the Bologna process; simplification and update of the law; and a simplification of the rules covering student fees.

The state higher vocational schools are established and abolished by the Council of Ministers through a regulation upon a request by the relevant minister of higher education or a regional self-government upon the minister's approval. The request has to be evaluated by the State Accreditation Commission. The non-state higher vocational schools are established upon the approval by the Minister of National Education and Sport and become legal entities after their incorporation into a register of non-state higher vocational schools by the Minister. A non-state higher vocational school, which fulfils conditions for running courses at the magister level, can apply for changing its status into a HEI one acting on the basis of act for schools of higher education. Higher vocational courses - as a level of studies distinguished in the system - may also be provided by HE institutions acting on the basis of act for schools of higher education. They are not therefore strictly linked to one type of institutions classified as "higher vocational schools". However, higher vocational schools may offer only vocational-level courses. This type of education has a specialised, vocational character including 6 semesters of teaching (minimum 2200 hours) as well as 15 weeks of compulsory practical placements.

Legislation dating from 1990 enables all higher education institutions to organize **lifelong learning** courses on an autonomous basis. The Polish education system includes *kolegia nauczycielskie* that do not have the status of higher education institutions. After three years of study in these institutions, graduates are awarded a diploma (*dypłom*) but do not obtain the title of *licencjat*.

As to the **science and engineering fields**, the share of students (at ISCED levels 5-6) is fairly high in Poland within EU-25. In 2000/2001, the share of students in science and engineering fields reached 20 % (males 33 %, females 10 %), of which in science, mathematics and computing 5 % (males 6 %, females 5 %), and in engineering, manufacturing and construction 14 % (males 26 %, females 5 %). When the shares are expressed of graduates in science and engineering fields per 10 000 of the population aged 25-34 - these were 3 in 2000/2001 (males 3, females 2).¹¹

4. Incentives for updating knowledge & skills

a) Government

The **participation in CVT is low** in comparison with OECD and EU15 average. According to IALS data, in 1998/99 the participation in CVT was 13% only (OECD average 31%, Czech Republic 27%)¹².

The current continuing education system encompasses public and non-public establishment functioning with and outside of the school system. The participation of **adults in formal education** as a part of CVT is substantial and still increasing. It is demonstrating the strong school-based approach of the Polish education and CVT system. Adults are participating in secondary vocational schools but on a stagnating trend since 1998. Most dynamically increasing in recent years is participation in secondary general schools and in higher education. In the **out of school** system, the large variety of courses is providing by private and public institutions, however the participation rate is rather low.

¹¹ Education across Europe. Chapter G: Mathematics science and technology. EUROSTAT 2004.

¹² OECD, Education at a Glance 2001.

The authorities attach great importance to continuing education and it is proved by a document entitled “**Development Strategy for Continuing Education until 2010**”, adopted by the Government on 8 July 2003. The main aim of the Strategy is to identify continuing education policies relating to the concept of lifelong learning and to the development of a knowledge- based society. The implementation of the Strategy is intended to ensure individual development for everyone through easier access to continuing education and training and improving its quality, and to promote an active approach, increasing the employability of individuals, cooperation and partnership, more human resources investments, creating IT resources in the sphere of continuing education and development of advisory services and raising awareness of the role of continuing education.¹³

A **range of measures** is already in place to motivate people to participate in continuing training. The existing income tax system makes possible to deduct expenses incurred on additional professional training or on university studies. Unemployed individuals may be sent for professional training of a training course designed to teach the skills of finding and getting a job. The retraining may last for up to 6 months and in cases justified by the training programme it may last for up to 12 months. The labour office finances costs of the training and the unemployed also receives a training supplement equal to 20 % of the unemployment benefit. In addition, in case of not being sent for training, the unemployed may apply for a training loan equal four months’ average wage. (In recent years, the number of registered unemployed participated in re-qualification courses is increasing however is still very low – in 2002 the labour offices sent for training about 5 % of the total number of registered unemployed.) Special annual scholarships for continuation of studies are also provided as a special incentive for the unemployed youth in regions recognised as regions threatened by high structural unemployment. A provision exists also for the acquisition of new qualifications by people whose original training prepared them for professions in declining sectors. The labour offices can finance such people’s training for up to six months with option of extension to twelve months. Specific training measures have also been included in governmental programmes for reform in the mining and steel sectors and in the programme for rural revitalisation.¹⁴

An important role in the CVT system play **Centres for Continuing Education** (102 in year 2000, established and run by local governments), which are multifunctional public educational facilities offering education, further education and training to adults, in both in-school and out-of-school forms.¹⁵

With EU Phare support a National Contact Point for Distance Education (reporting to the MoNE) and several open distance learning study centres were established (3 hosting by Centres for continuing training and 5 by universities) between 1995 and 2000 in order to promote the concept of distance learning. In 2000, the Ministry of Agriculture has created a second National Contact Point - Open and Distance Learning Centre in order to pay more attention to rural areas.

The **professional and educational counselling for adults** is provided within the frameworks of the services of Labour Offices run by local and regional

¹³ National report 2003 – Poland. Polish National Observatory Team, 2003

¹⁴ Joint Assessment Of Employment Priorities in Poland. Polish Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, 2000.

¹⁵ Monographs candidate countries – Vocational education and training and employment services in Poland. ETF, 2002

self-governments. The Professional advisers who are employed in these offices provide assistance to all clients interested in such counselling. They also participate in many activities connected with the preparation of youth for entering the labour market.¹⁶

A measure adopted recently, which seeks to increase interest in qualification improvements within non-formal education, provided for the setting up of examination panels. Those interested may have their knowledge acquired outside the schooling system certified (see question 9).

b) Employers

There are very few incentives provided by employers. One of the major incentives is the provision of leave for training. Employees starting training are entitled to paid leave if the employer sends the employee for training or to unpaid leave where the training is at the employee's initiative. Other benefits such as reimbursement of school fees, travel expenses, food, accommodation, textbooks and other educational equipment are optional and may be granted at the discretion of the employer.

On the other hand, employers receive apprenticeship tax breaks and may obtain a refund (from the Labour Fund) of some costs associated with training of apprentices and other employees. However these provisions have a very limited reach, and incentives for employers to invest more in the professional training of apprentices and in improving professional qualifications of employees are considered insufficient.¹⁷

c) Other stakeholders

A key player in CVT is the **Union of Vocational Education Centres (ZZDZ)**, which is nongovernmental, non-profit institution running a network of 25 services, including also a large number of vocational education schools (about 400). Another important institution is the **Polish Association for Adult Education (TWP)**, which provides mainly courses and has the second largest number of participants.¹⁸

The Independent and Self-governing Trade Union Solidarność is a representative of employees in Poland. According to the programme resolution of 15th national congress the Union demands higher government spending in the sectors of culture and education. The Union also stress that educational profiles and methods should be compatible with the labour market; that various forms of life-long learning should be developed as well as a system of levelling educational opportunities of people from various parts of the country and various communities.¹⁹

d) Please provide examples (if any) of the contribution of VET to successfully promoting inclusion

Youth are endangered by the unemployment and belong to the group at special risk of exclusion. A **program „First work”** within the framework of Governmental Social and Economic Strategy „Entrepreneurship – Development – Work: has been realized since 2002 (earlier in the years 1998 – 2002 a program “ A Graduate” was addressed to youth entering the labour market). The aim of this program is to help young people to obtain first professional experience, which will enable them to check the knowledge, and skills acquired at school and will increase their chance to enter on

¹⁶ Implementing Lifelong Learning Strategies in Europe: Progress report on follow-up to the 2002 Council resolution: Poland. EC, 2003

¹⁷ Joint Assessment Of Employment Priorities in Poland. Polish Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, 2000.

¹⁸ Monographs candidate countries – Vocational education and training and employment services in Poland. ETF, 2002
¹⁹ <http://www.solidarnosc.org.pl/english/docs/index.htm>

the labour market. This program introduced new instruments and undertakings facilitating the professional start of young people. Within the framework of the program „First work” from June 2002 to May 2003 – 155.000 graduates participated in such active programs of labour market as: traineeships, trainings, subsidized employment. 600.000 graduates received other kind of aid in a form of professional counselling or help from the employment agencies.²⁰

5. Meeting the challenges of an ageing population

6. Effectiveness and efficiency of VET

The effectiveness of the VET system may be assessed on the basis of **literacy** (i.e. the capacity to participate in the word of information), which is necessary for success in one’s working as well as personal life. According to the IALS study, two thirds of the Polish population show levels of documentary literacy that are lower than those necessary for day-to-day life in a developed society, while in most OECD countries the proportion is only 40%. Only some 24% of the Polish population scored level 3 and higher in documentary literacy (OECD 53%).

These characteristics of the young population are also monitored as part of the PISA international project (*Programme for International Student Assessment*), which focuses on 15-year-old students. The project concentrates on three dimensions of **literacy** - reading, mathematical and scientific. The results achieved by Polish students are below the OECD average. Moreover, Poles scored worse than Czechs and Hungarians.

Failure of school leavers, and the young population in general, in the labour market as expressed by their **rate of unemployment** is rather high in terms of international comparison. Nearly one half of those who presently leave schools (45%) fail to find employment. In 2001 almost 72% of unemployed school leavers were those who completed VET schools. The rate of unemployment among young people is around 2.5 times higher as compared to that of the active population as a whole. In view of this the Ministry of Labour has initiated a special “first job” programme in order to increase employment among school leavers. The programme seeks to facilitate work experience for all school leavers at the latest within 6 months of their registration at a labour office. The programme has been running since 2002 and has introduced a number of instruments supporting employability of the young (reduced costs related to employing young people in small and medium-sized enterprises, support for entrepreneurial activities, development of public services). Special support is provided for the development of career counselling at schools.

As a consequence of **public administration reform and decentralisation** changes occurred in the funding and governance of schools. IVET and CVT institutions (centres for continuing education and centres for practical training) are managed and funded at the *powiat* (county/district) level. The law on revenues of regional governments of December 1998 changed the **system of funding of education**. The

²⁰ Implementing Lifelong Learning Strategies in Europe: Progress report on follow-up to the 2002 Council resolution: Poland. EC, 2003

new system has been in place since 2000. The Ministry of Finance allocates financial resources to all three levels of regional government, which have autonomy to decide how to use the resources and they are responsible for the funding of all schools in the given region. These financial resources are allocated in line with the principle “money follows the pupil”. Private schools get 50% of the resources (per student) allocated to state schools. As regards continuing education and training, it is expected that enterprises pay the leave their employees take for training purposes. Employers who invest in CVET and organise practical training are eligible for a partial reimbursement of the training costs related to the training of employees at risk of redundancy. Moreover, they may be reimbursed for the amounts paid to work placement supervisors in companies and for employing young manual workers as part of their vocational training. These costs are covered from the Labour Fund, which is composed of contributions from the national budget and from employers (in 2000 14% was contributed by the state, 84% by companies).

The Education Act of 2001 makes it possible for state-funded schools, arts training centres and teacher training centres to set up special funds and to make use of revenues generated by the provision of services, from publications and educational events. The law on individual income provides for tax allowances related to the training and qualification improvements of individuals. The opportunity provided by the law concerning tax allowances for the training of apprentices was not stimulating enough for enterprises. This is why the costs related to these activities are now covered directly by the state. The law on student loans of 1998 is also important. It has introduced a student loan scheme in which students at all types of HE institutions may participate.

Public expenditure on education has been under 5% of GDP in recent years (4.6 in 2001, 4.4 in 2000 and 4.14 in 1995). In view of the ambitious reform plans in the Polish education system these levels are low and experts ask for at least 6% of GDP²¹.

According to Eurostat data the proportion of labour costs enterprises pay for the training of their employees is around 0.8% (in 2001) – the EU 15 average is 2.3%²². According the Labour Force survey data, the share of those who financed CVT on their own initiative increased in last years (54% financed their own training partially or fully in 2002, compared with 47% in 2001)²³.

7. Improvements in learning processes and contents

The reform of the Polish education system planned for 1999-2007 continued in September 2002 with implementation of a new system of upper secondary education. The objective of the reform is, above all, to promote general education, key competencies and to introduce broadly conceived vocational education. This approach is represented mainly by a new school type – the so-called “profiled lyceum” with 15 general/vocational profiles.

□ 80% sou_asn_ch v_daj_ jsou personální náklady

²² CVT in enterprises, Statistics in focus, Theme 3, 2-3/2002, EUROSTAT, 2002

²³ Country Monograph,

Moreover, reforming efforts are currently being focused on the development of new “**core curricula**” which cover 80% of the teaching time. The remaining part may be filled by the teachers in line with local needs.

In September 2002 new core curricula were introduced for general subjects at all levels, i.e. including all types of vocational schools at upper secondary level. The core curricula are divided according to subjects. Objectives, schools’ tasks, the content and expected results are set for each subject. There are various alternatives for each subject depending on whether it is taught at a general or vocational school completed by “maturita”, or at a basic vocational school without “maturita”.

Core curricula for vocational education have been gradually introduced since 1997 for those programmes that are included in the “Vocational Education Programmes” classification (195 programmes). Based on this, school-based curricula are developed and school directors agree with local bodies on which programmes will be taught and for which new school-based curricula will be developed. The Ministry of National Education maintains a registry of curricula approved for public vocational schools. In 2003/04 there were 261 curricula in the registry, some of them were modular. It is expected that, in the future, further progress will be made towards modularisation of curricula. Resources from structural funds should also be used to this end²⁴. The proportion of the vocational component of curricula at vocational schools with “maturita” is 45%, while at basic vocational school it is 54%. The new curricula should facilitate better preparation for labour market requirements (the possibility of employment in a wide variety of jobs, the capacity to work with new technologies, adaptability to ongoing changes, acquisition of social and communication skills etc.). This is why **key competencies** are integral to the new curricula, as they cover the capacity of working with information, foreign language skills (at least two EU languages), better cognitive skills, self-awareness and personal development.

One of the major tasks on the way to improving the quality of continuing education and training is **modularisation of training programmes**. The Strategy for Continuing Education until 2010 envisages that a databank of modular programmes to be used in school and in other areas should be developed. The strategy also reckons with the development of a distance learning module and the subsequent design of the relevant curricula and a didactic framework for distance learning and e-learning.

The curricular reform seeks to strengthen the general component in vocational education. The powers of schools in respect to the development²⁵ of their own curricula have been expanded. Although the powers are not too large²⁵, schools are not ready to exercise them in full. The objective is for teachers to achieve such professional skills so as to be able to put the tasks defined in the core curriculum to day-to-day practice and to design properly the school-based curriculum.

The issue of providing schools with computer technology is also receiving great attention, because Poland has so far lagged behind in this respect. The standards of the ICT facilities are also important. In 2002/03 there were 5.2 computers and 0.4 classrooms per one vocational school in Poland. A total of 88.4% of computers were

²⁴ As part of Sectoral Operational Program – Human Resources Development 150 new modular programs and 3000 educational kits (for teachers and students) will be elaborated.

²⁵ Only 20% of teaching time can be covered by the school-based curriculum.

connected to the Internet. There were 25 students per one computer. Compared to the previous year, the number of computers in schools increased by 12%²⁶. In spite of this, the availability of ICT facilities in Poland is still far lower than the EU 15 average.

8. Improving the integration of different learning site; integration of formal and informal learning

The VET is characterised as a strongly school-based system. Pupils who attend secondary technical schools are obliged to undergo work placements in enterprises lasting 4-6 weeks. Students who attend basic vocational schools providing manual qualifications undergo practical training in school workshops, centres for practical training or in enterprises. The centres for practical training were established in 1996²⁷ and their workshops are very well equipped. They deliver practical training programmes for apprentices, vocational training programmes for young people and adults and specialised teacher training courses, and they also organise vocational examinations. The basic operations of the centres are funded by the state.

Besides the school-based system, there is also a system of apprentice training in the traditional sense, where young people (15-18) sign an employment contract with an enterprise. The contract is focused on vocational training which is completed by an examination with the award of a qualification. This system concerns, above all, crafts. The Polish Crafts Association is currently the most important organiser of practical training.

The Ministry of Labour is developing instruments for monitoring the standards of practical training in school workshops, centres for practical training and continuing training centres. These efforts are expected to contribute to a gradual improvement and modernisation of practical training.

Although the reform of education highlights the importance of better co-operation between schools and enterprises, no specific measures have been designed and a coherent policy covering various forms of practical training is missing. The reform is also focused on reducing the length of practical training in enterprises and promoting training in schools. However, employers are against these changes.

There is an important agreement between the Ministry of Education and the Polish Confederation of Employers (2003), which aims to support the development of a network of enterprises that provide practical training for pupils and students, assist schools in improving their facilities and develop professional skills of teachers (see also question 11).

Changes have also occurred in the funding of practical training in enterprises. The earlier system of tax allowances for companies organising practical training for students has been replaced by a system of “purchasing services”. This means that enterprises are reimbursed for the relevant costs on the condition that the student completes the training and passes the relevant examination.

²⁶ Poland. National Report. Warsaw: Polish National Observatory 2003, p. 14.

²⁷ In 2002 there were 125 such centres. Their quantitative increasing is supposed.

Integration of formal and non-formal education. Qualifications acquired outside the schooling system in a non-formal manner may be recognised on the basis of examinations organised by state examination panels (see also question 9a). V 1993 a ministerial decree stipulated that an individual with practical experience or skills acquired in a non-formal manner may have his/her qualification recognised and may apply for this examination.

Moreover, the continuing training centres play an important role as regard the integration of formal and non-formal education. The centres are multi-functional public training facilities offering both formal and non-formal types of education.

There are also examination panels composed of employers who certify the skills necessary for achieving the title of “journeyman” or “master of crafts” in a particular profession. Professional associations also issue nationally recognised certificates – based on training and examinations they organise – in certain fields (electrical engineers and technicians, some crafts, work safety inspectors, etc.).

Some regional labour offices carry out, as part of their counselling activities, evaluation of skills and experience acquired in a non-formal manner in line with a French model (diagnostics and balance of competencies). Some HE institutions providing teacher training have introduced subjects related to diagnostics of vocational knowledge and skills acquired both in formal and non-formal education.

The Education Act of 2001 provides for links between the formal schooling system and non-formal education outside school. In practice, however, the approaches to recognising non-formal qualifications vary and the certificates issued by various institutions are not comparable. Implementation of a uniform system for recognising qualifications acquired both in the formal (in school) and non-formal (outside school) system is one of the objectives set out in the Strategy for the Development of Continuing Education until 2010 and the Action Employment Plan of 2002.

9. Evaluation and quality assurance of VET provision

a) for the individual (assessment of competences and knowledge)

The evaluation system of pupils’ performance in all types of upper secondary schools is based on the rules adopted in 1991 (a subsequently amended). Rules concerning awarding of internal marks – partial, periodical, annual are the same as those used in primary schools. As the existing system of evaluation and examination does not ensure comparability of students’ performance it will be replaced by a new system combining both internal (oral) and external (written) examinations²⁸. The new maturity examination will be introduced in 2005, the first external vocational examination will take place in 2004.

Central Examination Board (Centralna Komisja Egzaminacyjna)²⁹ in collaboration with eight Regional Examination Boards³⁰ is responsible for preparation and improvement of the external examination system. Responsibility for evaluation, certification and the issuing of the maturity exam and vocational title diplomas (now managed by head

²⁸ Source: Vocational Education and Training and Employment Services in Poland, ETF, 2002

²⁹ In addition to this, the Central Examination Board co-ordinates the activities of the regional boards so as to ensure uniform standards of these examinations.

³⁰ Appointed by the minister of national education

teachers) will move at the same time to these regional commissions. A system of accreditation of examination centres (which could be schools, enterprises or other institutions) will be an important quality assurance element of the scheme. Vocational examination involves two stages: the written part and the practical part. Requirement standards for the examination confirming vocational qualifications for those occupations which are taught in basic vocational schools and post-secondary schools have been established and published by the Central Examination Commission³¹.

Since 1999 vocational school graduation has been separated from the acquisition of the occupational title. The system now allows graduates (except graduates from basic vocational schools) to continue their education at a higher level, whether or not they have taken a vocational examination. The same rules apply for adult education in school system.

Specific training is required for the performance of certain occupations (for instance: protection workers, engineers and technical staff in the electric power sector). The knowledge and skills acquired by means of this training are tested in an examination and those who pass it are awarded state-recognised certificates.

Those who have acquired knowledge and skills in non-formal education may demonstrate these competencies before state examination panels and acquire a formal qualification³². Examinations are organised by craft chambers.

b) for the institution (internal/external quality management)³³

The extremely liberal conditions for setting up non-state education institutions have called for their better evaluation. External **evaluation of secondary schools** is carried out by Kuratorium (school superintendence offices) represent the Ministry of Education at regional level (NUTS 2). One of their task is pedagogical supervision and performing quality audits for all types of school. Warsaw Kuratorium for instance expects that all schools in their region will be covered by the audit in a five-year cycle³⁴.

According to the Act on Higher Education of 1990, certain functions in education quality assessment were fulfilled by the **Central Council of Higher Education** (Rada G_ówna Szkolnictwa Wy_szego), an independently elected academic body. Among others, the Council had the authority to define staff requirements necessary for an institution to organise studies in a given educational profile, to settle the profile directory, to specify minimal curricula, and finally to describe conditions for issuing certificates of higher education. In addition to that, the Council could approve or reject applications to establish new higher education institutions. In case of non-state institutions, it considered applications to set up a new educational profile and to shift the education level to Master's level. Apart from the activities listed above, the Council carried out pilot assessments of education quality in a few selected fields of study³⁵.

³¹ Source: VET Short Report, Polish national Observatory, 2003

³² In 1993 the legal provisions and procedures for this was introduced by a joint Ministerial Decree (Ministry of National Education and Ministry of labour and Social Policy)

³³ Source: Higher Education in Poland – Implementing the Assumption of the Bologna Declaration in 2000-2002, prepared by DWM in cooperation with DSW and the SOCRATES/Erasmus Agency

³⁴ Source: Vocational Education and Training and Employment Services in Poland, ETF, 2002, p.15

³⁵ Source: MoNES: Bologna Process – Implementation of the Resolutions of the Bologne Declaration in Polish Higher Education, p. 2

In 1998, the University Accreditation Committee — a non-governmental body — was established Rectors' Conference to create an accreditation system of university programs and to garner equality in the education standards among institutions according to those of the EU. Accreditation from this body is entirely voluntary. Two preconditions that must be met before the accreditation procedure can be started are: an administrative unit of the school (a faculty, an institute, a chair) which applies for accreditation for a given area of studies applies internal methods of stimulating and evaluating the quality of education offered; there exists for this area a system of assigning credit points which is congruent with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

The establishment of the **National Accreditation Commission** (Pa_stwowa Komisja Akredytacyjna) constituted another step forward in evaluation of higher education. It initiated its operation on the 1st of January 2002³⁶. Commission evaluates the quality of teaching and verifying compliance with the requirements for higher-education degree programmes in all Polish civilian state-owned and non-state owned institutions of higher education, academic and vocational, supervised by the minister for higher education, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Culture and National Heritage as well as the Minister for Infrastructure.

The National Accreditation Commission³⁷ proclaims opinions, which at a later stage serve as the basis for the Minister's final decisions to grant, suspend or withdraw authorisation for managing higher education institutions³⁸. The process of quality assessment is threefold. It comprises the stage of the self-assessment, the stage of onsite visit by a group of experts and the stage of final reporting. State Accreditation Committee Presidium defined the structure of the self assessment³⁹.

The General Council for Higher Education is responsible for the definition of fields of study and the development of standards in education. These standards are implemented in accordance with a separate regulation by the Ministry of National Education and Sport.

³⁶ The Acts on Higher Education and Higher Vocational Schools were changed by the Polish Parliament (Sejm) in July 2001

³⁷ The Commission is made up of 70 members appointed by the Minister of National Education and Sport and selected from candidates presented by the Supreme Council of Higher Education, by senates of higher education institutions and by scientific, vocational and artistic associations as well as organisations of employers.

³⁸ Recommendations of the National Accreditation Commission have resulted in the closure of a few private institutions of higher education by the Minister of National Education and Sports, and the suspension of the right of a few other institutions to offer study programs in selected fields of study. It is hoped that the commission will be able to curb some undesirable quality-related phenomena associated with the expansion of the private sector in Poland. The NAC offers opinions, which serve as the basis for the Minister of Education's final decision to grant, suspend or withdraw authorization for the management of higher education institutions. Other tasks include passing judgment on applications for new institutions and departments, and concession of licenses to organize new fields of study in existing ones.

³⁹ The resolution No. 18/2002 of 28 February 2002. The self-evaluation report should be synthetic and short (maximum 30 pages). The structure of the report should be in accordance with the following scheme: 1/ members of the panel preparing a self-evaluation report; 2/ short presentation of the institution for higher education; 3/ presentation of the organizational unit; 4/ staff for specified degree programme; 5/ teaching; 6/ students' matters; 7/ research activities of the specified organizational unit; 8/ interuniversity and international cooperation; 9/ the most important achievements of the specified organizational unit; 10/ the weakest points of the specified organizational unit; 11/ plans for the nearest future. In addition to that the President of the Committee may expand the guidelines with additional data. The appendixes to the report are plans and programmes of studies; there can be other additional materials concerning the evaluated degree programme.

The quality and standard of services provided by the private training market remain a considerable challenge, however the **accreditation of continuing education institutions** has been introduced under the amended Educational System Act⁴⁰. Accreditation rests with the school superintendent and comprises the following areas: qualifications of the teaching staff, school equipment, teaching methods applied, development and publication of didactic materials for teachers and students.

One of the priorities set out in the Strategy for Development of Continuing Education until 2010 is to raise the **quality of continuing education**. In view of meeting this objective, the relevant institutional preconditions have been established. 16 regional accreditation teams were set up, and staff training is underway this year. Accreditation procedures will start next year and the relevant processes and results will be monitored.

c) for the system

In spite of decentralisation of the education system, its monitoring is carried out by government supervision bodies.⁴¹

10 Professional development and status of teachers and trainers

a) Professional development

Initial training of VET teachers for the different levels and types of schools is provided within two sectors of education: the higher education sector (university-type education and higher vocational education) and the upper secondary education sector. Teacher education occurs mainly within five-year master's studies (ISCED 5A), three-year licentiate studies and four-year professional studies.

As from September 2000, fundamental changes to the *Teachers Charter Act* of 1982 (amended 1996) have been introduced, aiming at a **new definition of teacher status (establishing four categories of teachers), promotion paths, and substantial salary increases. First experience with the reform showed financial bottlenecks as well as the risk that the implementation could become bureaucratic⁴².**

In-service training is provided within two paths: as complementary education and as staff development. Complementary education covers the courses of study which lead to a higher level of education or additional qualifications, and staff development covers the forms of refreshment which enrich the working techniques of teachers within the qualifications they already have. The financing of complementary education and staff development is guaranteed in the Teachers' Charter which provides that the state budget allocates for this purpose an amount equal to 2.5% of

⁴⁰ Source: VET Short Report, 2003, p. 7,11

⁴¹ Source: Vocational Education and Training and Employment Services in Poland, ETF, 2002, str. 32

⁴² The minister of education fixes the minimum rates of basic salary, whereas determination of the rates and rules for bonuses and allowances has been transferred to the local self-government level. In addition, initial implementation has on occasion proved problematic as regards financing. While nearly all teachers received the amounts due for their 2000 salary rise, only 11% of local governments declared that they would be able to pay out the full amount in June as foreseen for year 2001, while the rest could pay only part (44%) or did not have sufficient budgetary resources (45%). Since January 2001 provisions have been in force laying down standard examination procedures for teachers, thus opening up equal opportunities for all graduates regardless of their location.)

the planned expenditure on teachers' salaries. These amounts can be increased through additional allocations by local authorities, donations and sponsoring.

The statutory responsibility for in-service teacher training rests with the Minister of National Education and Sport. The Minister has the Council for Teacher Training acting as an advisory body in, inter alia, the area of in-service teacher training.

The responsibility for in-service teacher training in individual regions rests with the respective school education superintendents as it is them who exercise the pedagogical supervision of teachers, as well as with respective local governments at *voivodship* level, as it is them who run in-service teacher training centres [as from January 1999].

The Central In-service Teacher Training Centre (CODN) undertakes efforts aimed to assure quality at schools and educational establishments through organising training programmes and seminars dealing with this issue.

The National Centre for Supporting Vocational and Continuing Education (KOWEZiU) deals with the preparation of training staff for the teachers' upgrading system. The Centre prepares and promotes standards for the upgrading of VET teachers, prepared materials for educators⁴³ and teachers of vocational subjects, prepares the staff for the career orientation, information and guidance system, and also is involved in publishing activities.

Further training for teachers is implemented by five central establishments as well as many universities and institutions (including non-public institutions) at regional and local level. However, continuing training is not obligatory for teachers and the Teachers' Charter requires only two periods of in-service training during their career.

Although training of Teacher Educators⁴⁴ started in 2000 in order to prepare teachers to implement the reform, many teachers were not prepared sufficiently. Modular programmes were expected to be an alternative option for traditional programmes. Teachers were not adequately prepared to use them. Currently, advisors and consultants are trained to help schools and teachers in using modular programmes.

In-Service Training of Academic Teachers is regulated by Act on Higher Education and by relevant decrees. Law stipulates that an academic teacher is entitled to undertake post-graduate training at the cost of his/her home institution and to take a paid or unpaid leave for scientific, artistic or professional training purposes. Teachers may be delegated to take part in the following forms of in-service training within the country and abroad: courses, specialist training sessions, scientific and practical placements, seminars and conferences. A single paid leave of up to 1 year is granted by the rector of a higher education institution if a teacher intends to accelerate research or artistic work, important for the needs of science, technology or culture, to undertake a scientific or practical placement, to participate in specialist training sessions.

As concerned the adult education teachers and trainers, there is no system of education. Most of teachers employed in further education institutions are part-time workers. The only exception is the upper secondary schools, where more than 50% of teachers are employed full time. The in-Service Teacher Training Centre does not deal with adult education teachers and trainers. An agency that provides courses for

⁴³ Educator is a person supporting the teaching efforts of teachers.

⁴⁴ Educator is a person supporting the teaching efforts of teachers.

adult education teachers and trainers is the Post-diploma Adult Education College. It has been acknowledged by the MoNE and put in operation in 1994.

b) Status

Teachers employed on the appointment basis are not subject to civil service legislation. However, in performing his/her duties, the teacher is entitled to protection provided for civil servants.

The salaries of teachers are determined in the Minister of National Education and Sport Regulation on the remuneration of teachers. The regulation is amended on an annual basis in connection with changes in salary rates, these resulting mainly from inflation. It covers teachers of all levels and types of schools and establishments in the school education sector (from nursery schools to colleges and in-service teacher training establishments) as well as staff members of regional educational authorities (*kuratoria*) and departments of the Ministry of National Education and Sport holding pedagogical posts.

The salary of a teacher consists of a basic pay and the allowances⁴⁵. Once every 2 years, up to the 30th year of employment, the teacher advances to a higher level of basic salary. The difference in basic salary between a teacher starting his/her first job and a teacher of 30-years employment in the teaching profession is around 30%.

The rules for the remuneration of academic teachers are laid down in laws, and the amount of a salary is determined in a regulation issued by the Minister of National Education and Sport in agreement with the Minister of Labour and Social Policy. The salary of an academic teacher consists also of a basic salary and allowances. The difference in the basic salary between an assistant and a professor may amount to over 100%. Starting 1 September 2002 this difference was increased up to 200%.

Although an average gross salary in the education sector is gradually increasing, it is still low (in 2000 the salary in education represented only 95.4% of total average wage).

11. Challenges & policies in relation to the Lisbon employment strategy

According to Kok's report, the following must be done to attain the objective set forth in the employment strategy:

a) to ensure that the education and training system provides new labour market entrants with the skills needs in a labour market and to increase commitment of the social partners towards more in-company training

Improvements in this area are expected as a result agreements concluded between MoNES and the Polish Employers' Confederation (KPP) in 2003. This agreement is aimed to facilitate the establishment of a network of companies which will offer practical training for pupils and students, to improve the didactic facilities and

⁴⁵ Allowances are calculated according to the length of service, motivation, function, conditions of service, remuneration for additional working hours and colleague replacement hours, awards and other payments due to the employment relationship (apart from the so-called social fund and social additional payments - housing and rural allowances).

enhance the skills of their teaching staff. Similarly important agreement was signed between MoNES and the Association of Polish Electrical Engineers (SEP) on cooperation for improving the condition of education in the sphere of broadly understood electrical engineering⁴⁶ (see also question 7 and 8). The interest on the part of employers in organising practical training for vocational school students should also be promoted by the change in funding. (see question 8).

The development of new methods of labour market monitoring has started and has been piloted successfully since 1995 in selected regions, in particular the monitoring of shortage and surplus occupations (MSSO), which was reviewed by the MoLSP recently. Labour market monitoring allows VET schools to adjust their offer gradually to the local labour market by regularly receiving information on shortage and surplus occupations from labour offices.

b) to ensure equal access to education⁴⁷

Although there are no formal obstacles, inequality in access to education is, above all, the result of the social conditions and the lack of educational facilities in rural areas. Various forms of financial support have been designed to alleviate the drawbacks (social allowances linked to the financial situation of the family, release from the accommodation fee in student hostels, refunds of fees for meals in schools), school allowances and national stipends, donations by private institutions and persons are granted for highly talented students. Since 1998 students may apply for student loans. In addition, the National Strategy for Education 2001 – 2006 proposes that financial resources should be earmarked specifically for young people in pro youth from rural areas and poor families and for assurance of equal opportunities for young „dropouts“ of the educational system (national and ethnic minorities, immigrants, children from rural areas and poor families)⁴⁸.

The law on education provides to ethnic and national minorities the right to be educated in their mother tongue and to study their mother tongue in primary and secondary schools. Special projects are aimed at integration of young Roma into primary and secondary education.

c) to improve the efficiency and quality of education

see question 6

d) to ensure resources and incentives for workers and employers to invest in training

see question 4

12. Involving stakeholders

a) The role of stakeholders or social partners in the planning of VET at national, sector and company level

⁴⁶ Source: VET Short Report, page7

⁴⁷ Source: Vocational Education and Training and Employment Services in Poland, ETF, 2002, page 70

⁴⁸ 475 million PLN for 2002-2005 is granted for youth in rural areas and poor families, 12 million PLN for the same period is reserved for equal opportunities for young dropouts. The final level of this expenditure will depend on the availability of funds in the state budget.

The involvement of social partners in education and training is still weak and limited, mainly due to the lack of interest of employers and efficient co-operation models. The links between schools and employers are not very well developed.

A thorough analysis of the minutes from the meetings of the Tripartite Committee (and other negotiation bodies – the Supreme Employment Council and Voivodship Committees for Social Dialogue - WKDS) held in the period January-September 2003 indicates that issues of vocational education and training were not part of the existing social dialogue. In a situation of social unrest and the difficulties of the state budget, pressure is exerted on social partners to focus on the current problems which call for a prompt solution. When confronted with the pressing social and financial problems (unemployment, state budget deficit, poverty), the issues of aligning vocational qualifications to the needs of the labour market become of lesser importance.

Nonetheless the recently signed (24.09.2003) agreement between the Minister for Education and Sport and the largest Polish employers' organisation – the Polish Employers' Confederation, can be seen as a proof that social partners are interested in the issues related to vocational education and training in Poland. The aim of the agreement is to improve the level of vocational education in schools, continuing education, especially practical training, through encouraging employers – members of the Confederation – to become more involved in the education and training of their future employees. Possible measures for such involvement include the organisation and provision of practical training activities, especially vocational placements, and financial assistance in the purchase of modern didactic aids and facilities for schools and other public educational establishments.

Another recent measure implemented by the Polish government to enhance the involvement of firms, sectors and branches of industry in order to improve VET system's ability to develop skills and qualifications is reimbursement of practical VET costs to employers. Previous system of tax exemptions for employees, who practically train students was replaced by buying of service – costs are reimbursed after the completion of training and successful passing the adequate exam by the student.

b) Actions to anticipate and recognise skills and qualifications needs (at national, sector or regional level) for your country do the European social partners identify as important in their recent report

Currently, no specific methodology for forecasting labour demand by qualifications is used in Poland.

For developing and implementing a computerised, integrated system of labour demand forecasting in Poland, the Inter-Ministerial Team for Forecasting Labour Demand was established in 1998 at the Government Centre for Strategic Studies⁴⁹. The Team is made up of representatives of ministries and central government agencies which influence labour market policies in Poland, in addition to experts in labour market issues as well as social and economic modelling. The Team mainly prepares analyses concerning methodologies and statistical tools which could be

⁴⁹ The Inter-Ministerial Team for Forecasting Labour Demand was set up pursuant to Ordinance no. 2 of the Prime Minister dated 26 January 1998 as an auxiliary body to the Council of Ministers. In the years 1998-2001, the Team's operations were based on the said legislative act. The Team's legal situation changed in January 2002, when a new Ordinance of the Prime Minister was issued (No. 8 dated 22 January 2002).

used in the forecasting process, as well as analyses of new phenomena potentially affecting the labour market).

The forecasts and studies prepared so far by the Team provide a starting point for establishing a system of long-term forecasting in this sphere. Based on the outcome of the Team's work, a system of labour demand forecasting in Poland is planned to be developed. It will be an integrated IT system that will be used to support the process of forecasting phenomena and variables on the national and local labour markets. In particular, this system should allow to:

- establish and update databases required for making the forecasts;
- apply varied, complementary forecasting methods;
- monitor and validate long-term forecasts;
- develop incremental short- and medium-term forecasts, and
- ensure availability for users.

This is to be furthered by such initiatives as the Commissioned Special-Purpose Project "*System of Labour Demand Forecasting in Poland*", under implementation since 2002, pursuant to a contract between the Government Centre for Strategic Studies, the State Committee for Scientific Research and ód University. As a result of the project, reproducible, reliable and disaggregated (by regional and local levels) forecasts of labour demand by qualifications will be produced.

13. Transparency, recognition & mobility

a) Credit Framework

There is no legal obligation for universities to use credits for the transfer or accumulation of study periods. However, the participation of Polish higher education institutions in the Tempus Program from 1990 and later SOCRATES/ERASMUS has resulted in the gradual implementation of credit transfer systems based on **European Credit Transfer System** (ECTS) for mobility purposes.⁵⁰ ECTS is used by most state institutions specializing in arts, business and health profiles. The implementation of ECTS is one of the conditions for study programs to be accredited at the traditional universities. These 17 traditional universities are the most advanced in implementing and using the credit system. It has been used mainly as a transfer system but often too as an accumulation system. In the 2002/03 academic year, 70 Polish higher education institutions profited from a grant given by SOCRATES/ERASMUS for the introduction of ECTS. These grants have often been implemented at faculty or departmental level and sometimes at institutional level, although mostly for mobility. Some private institutions (over 200 in Poland) have only just started implementing ECTS.

b) Qualifications Framework

There are ongoing efforts to develop a system of standards that would facilitate comparison of qualifications, certificates and diplomas acquired in the formal as well as the non-formal system of education. In 1998 a basic methodology for the design of

⁵⁰ According to a report prepared by the ministry of education for the Berlin-Bologna 2003 ministerial conference, ECTS is applied for credit transfer in 68 percent (43/63) of state institutions and 35 percent (22/63) non-state institutions.

standards of vocational qualifications was developed as part of an ETF-initiated project⁵¹. Standards for eight professions have been designed using the methodology. There are plans to develop national vocational qualification standards for approx. 40 professions by the end of 2004, including a proposal for a legal and organisational framework for the implementation of the system.

In 2001 unification of the two following official systems of occupations/professions have been finalised:

- Classification of occupations and specialisations used by the Ministry of Labour and the Central Statistical Office for statistical purposes (contains over 2,400 occupations);
- Classification of vocational fields used by the Ministry of Education as a basis for designing vocational education for the relevant professions (contains 195 broadly conceived fields).

By means of the above, the prerequisite for the development of a system of qualification standards has been established.

The state may only recognise the qualifications and certificates (skilled manual worker, technician, etc.) that fall within the classification of vocational education fields. There is not yet a national system of qualification standards, although some of its components are already in place. The development of a coherent system of standards is one of the priorities of the Strategy for the Development of Continuing Education until 2010. It sets out the objective to develop, based on qualification standards and training standards derived from them, a system of examination, verification and recognition of qualifications acquired in the schooling system, as well as in other systems, including self-study and work experience. The implementation of this objective is made more difficult by the fact that, in Poland, there still is not an institution responsible for the development and quality of qualification standards, and for the development of a national system of qualifications comparable with other EU countries. The design of standards related to vocational examinations is the responsibility of the Central Examination Board.

Diploma Supplement

The Polish ENIC/NARIC body is *Biuro Uznawalnosci Wykształcenia i Wymiany Międzynarodowej*, which started promoting the **diploma supplement** in Polish higher education institutions in 2000. A pilot project on the use of the diploma supplement involving 69 institutions of higher education was initiated in academic year 2000/2001. The object was to specify terms and conditions for the introduction of the new document in Poland as well as the issue of the first supplements (almost 4,000). The Ministry of Education has recommended the introduction of the diploma supplement and the relevant legal act is passing through the final stage of the legislative process. It is assumed that the act will come into fruition in academic year 2003/2004. From 2004/05 onwards, the diploma supplement will be compulsorily annexed to all Polish higher education qualifications. It will contain full information on studies completed and the academic and vocational qualifications acquired. Until

⁵¹ Kwiatkowski, S.M.; Symela, K. Standardy kwalifikacji zawodowych. Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych, Warszawa 2001.

then, supplements will be issued upon request.⁵² Poland has signed but not ratified the Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications.

Mobility

Poland entered into the TEMPUS program in 1990. In 1998 Poland began participating in SOCRATES programs and in academic year 1998/99, 46 institutions participated in the ERASMUS Program. By academic year 2002/03, 129 institutions were participating. Academic year 2001/2002 saw 4323 Polish students making use of the ERASMUS program to study abroad, whereas in the same year only 792 students came to Poland to study through the same program. To stimulate the mobility of students and especially to counteract the imbalance in the number of incoming and outgoing students, the Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland (CRASP) has developed a catalogue of programs and courses taught in English at Polish institutions of higher education. The Ministry of Education has identified two areas that would help institutions profit more from the SOCRATES programs: Improvement of subject matter — new content and didactic methodology — and improved management and administration of a number of institutions of higher education. Poland has bilateral agreements with a number of countries for the recognition of credentials.

⁵² According to a recent poll carried out by the Ministry of Education, 40 percent of higher education institutions have declared themselves ready to adopt the diploma supplement.

List of Abbreviations

CODN	Central In-service Teacher Training Centre
CRASP	Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland
CVET	Continuing Education and Vocational Training
CVT	Continuing Vocational Training
DWM	Dzia_ Wspó_pracy Mi_dzynarodowej
EC	European Commission
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
ENIC	European Network of Information Centres
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
IT	Information Technologies
IVET	Initial Vocational Education and Training
KOWEZiU	National Centre for Supporting Vocational and Continuing Education
KPP	Polish Employers' Confederation
LLL	Lifelong Learning
MoLSP	Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
MoNE	Ministry of National Education
MoNES	Ministry of National Education and Sport
MSSO	Monitoring of Shortage and Surplus Occupations
NAC	National Accreditation Commission
NARIC	National Academic Recognition Information Centres
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PISA	Program for International Student Assessment
PLN	Polish Zloty, Currency
SEP	Association of Polish Electrical Engineers
TWP	Polish Association for Adult Education
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WKDS	Voivodship Committees for Social Dialogue
ZZDZ	Union of Vocational Education Centres

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