



SHORT COUNTRY REPORT POLAND



etf
SHARING EXPERTISE
IN TRAINING

WORKING PAPER

**THE EUROPEAN TRAINING FOUNDATION IS THE
EUROPEAN UNION'S CENTRE OF EXPERTISE
SUPPORTING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING
REFORM IN THIRD COUNTRIES IN THE CONTEXT OF
THE EU EXTERNAL RELATIONS PROGRAMMES**

HOW TO CONTACT US

Further information on our activities, calls for tender and job opportunities can be found on our web site: www.etf.eu.int

For any additional information please contact:

External Communication Unit
European Training Foundation
Villa Gualino

Viale Settimio Severo 65

I – 10133 Torino

T +39 011 630 2222

F +39 011 630 2200

E info@etf.eu.int

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT POLICY IN POLAND

*Prepared by Elżbieta Drogosz-Zabłocka, Tadeusz Kozek, Elżbieta Kryńska, Barbara Minkiewicz,
Rafał Piwowski, Włodzimierz Trzeciak and Dariusz Zalewski – Polish National Observatory
The contents, opinions and recommendations contained in this report are those of the contractor only
and do not commit the European Union or its agencies in any way.
ETF, 2003*

A great deal of additional information on the European Union is available on the Internet. It can be accessed through the Europa server (<http://europa.eu.int>).

Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.

CONTENTS

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION	5
1.1 Economic developments	5
1.2 Labour market	6
1.3 Demographic development	7
1.4 Skill needs assessment	7
2. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN A LIFELONG LEARNING CONTEXT	9
2.1 Policy development	9
2.2 Adaptation of the legal framework	9
2.3 Governance and responsible bodies	10
2.4 Modernisation of the education and training system	11
2.5 Guidance and counselling	18
2.6 Preparedness of the education and training system to comply with the principles of the European Employment Strategy	19
3. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN EMPLOYMENT POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION	21
3.1 State of preparation for the European Employment Strategy	21
3.2 General outline of employment policy objectives and measures	22
3.3 Adaptation of the legal framework	22
3.4 Governance and responsible bodies	23
3.5 Employment services (national and regional)	23
3.6 Preparedness of employment services to contribute to the implementation of the European Employment Strategy	24
4. CONCLUSIONS	25
ANNEX	27
LIST OF ACRONYMS	29

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1

1.1 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

In 2001 the rate of GDP growth in Poland was 1% – a 3% decrease compared with 2000. In the first six months of 2002 GDP grew by 0.6%¹ compared with a similar period the previous year.

In the economy, the years 1989 to 2001 saw a development of market-oriented services and a gradual decline of certain industrial sectors, particularly heavy, textile and leather industries. However, at the same time no clear evidence of the modernisation of the industrial structure can be seen.

The significance of the private sector has been growing steadily; in 1992 it employed 7,598,000, against 9,611,000 in 2001. And this share in total employment grew in this period from 50.2% to 68.4% (that is,

by 18.2%). At the end of the second quarter of 2002, the share of employment in the private sector was 67.8%, and represented a similar value to the figure from 2001.

In 1990 there were 8,453 state-owned businesses in Poland; this number decreased in 2001 to 2,054 (by 76%)². More recently, a certain slow down of the privatisation processes can be observed. In 2001, 137 state enterprises were privatised, the smallest number since the beginning of the privatisation processes (against 253 in 2000 and 247 in 1999).

In 2000, small enterprises accounted for 99% of all enterprises operating in Poland, medium-sized enterprises for 0.8%, and large enterprises for 0.2%. In 2000 the number of small enterprises decreased by 52,973 (3%), while the number of

¹ www.stat.gov.pl

² In this period the number of commercial law companies increased from 36,300 to 177,100 (position as of year end), quoted from: *Rocznik Statystyczny 1993 [Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Poland 1993]*, GUS Warszawa, 1993; *Mały Rocznik Statystyczny Polski 2002 [Concise Statistical Yearbook of Poland 2002]*, GUS, Warszawa, 2002.

medium-sized enterprises decreased by 41 (0.3%). In all, the SME sector decreased in 2000 by 53,014 entities (2.9%)³.

1.2 LABOUR MARKET

1.2.1 EMPLOYMENT

According to the Central Statistical Office (GUS) data, in 2001 the number of employed people decreased by 1,996,000 (1.3%), and as of 31 December 2001 it was 15,280,400⁴. According to LFS data, at the end of the second quarter of 2002 the working population in Poland numbered 13,821,000 people, which was 431,000 less (3%) than in a similar period in 2001. The employment rate in the same period fell from 46.3% to 44.6%, and the activity rate fell from 56.7% to 55.6%⁵. The largest share of the active population in the second quarter of 2002 worked in the service sector (51.8%). Over the year this share grew by 1.7%, as did – albeit to a slight extent – the share of the employed in agriculture, which increased by 0.4% up to 19.6%. At the same time the share of the population working in industry decreased by 2.2%, to a level of 28.5%⁶.

1.2.2 UNEMPLOYMENT

In August 2001 the number of the registered unemployed was 2,892,600. It grew continually until February 2002 when it reached 3,277,900, then fell to a level of 3,064,600 in May, gradually increasing again to 3,105,600 in August (Figure 1 in the Annex). In August 2002, there were 213,000 more registered unemployed (7.4%) than in a similar period in 2001.

In the period from August 2001 to August 2002 the number of registered unemployed graduates decreased from 125,000 to 122,600 (Figure 2 in the Annex), and their

share in the total number of the unemployed fell from 4.3% to 3.9%.

According to LFS data, at the end of the second quarter of 2002 there were 3,432,000 unemployed in Poland (224,000 or 7% more than a year earlier), and the unemployment rate reached 19.9% (an increase of 1.5%). The male unemployment rate increased at a faster pace (up to 19.2%, a 2.2% increase) than that of women (up to 20.7%, a 0.7% increase). The unemployment rate in towns (21.1%, a 1.6% increase) was higher than in rural areas (17.9%, a 1.4% increase). The highest unemployment rate was recorded in the following regions (voivodships): Warmińsko-Mazurskie (27.3%), Zachodniopomorskie (26.6%) and Lubuskie (25.9%), and the lowest in: Małopolskie (15.6%), Podlaskie (16.1%) and Lubelskie (16.4%).

The situation of the young people on the labour market remained difficult. The unemployment rate of people in the 15 to 24 age bracket was more than two times higher than that of the entire population and reached 43.5% (an increase of 2%). The lowest rate of unemployment, similarly to previous years, could be observed among people in the 45+ age bracket (13.7%, an increase by 1.8%). The highest dynamics of unemployment could be observed among people in the 25 to 34 age bracket (from 18.8% to 21.2%). In terms of education level, the lowest rate of unemployment was noted among people with tertiary education (6.5%, a 0.9% increase), and the highest was among people with elementary and incomplete elementary education (26%, a 2.1% increase). The highest dynamics in terms of population threatened with unemployment could be observed among people with basic vocational education, a group in which the unemployment rate increased from 22% to 24.8% (up by 2.8%).

³ No data for 2001.

⁴ Source: *Mały Rocznik Statystyczny Polski 2002 [Concise Statistical Yearbook of Poland 2002]*, GUS, Warszawa, 2002.

⁵ *Monitoring rynku pracy, Kwartalna informacja o aktywności ekonomicznej ludności [Monitoring of the Labour Market Quarterly Information on Economic Activity of the Population]*, GUS, Warszawa, 20.9.2002.

⁶ Ibid.

At the end of the second quarter of 2002, the long-term unemployed accounted for 47.6% of the total number of unemployed (4.5% higher than a year earlier).

The most numerous group of the unemployed at the end of the second quarter of 2002 were people who had been made redundant (with a share of 44.8%, 2.4% lower than a year earlier). Among all the unemployed 21.9% were in search of their first employment (against 21.5% in 2001). In this group of the unemployed, graduates entering the labour market accounted for 16.1% (as opposed to 20% a year earlier).

In the second quarter of 2002 the primary cause of employment termination for the unemployed was the removal of the job position or liquidation of the company. This applied to 47.6% of the unemployed who had previously had employment (against 44.7% a year earlier). The other most common cause (22.7%) was the expiry of the employment contract at the end of a limited period.

1.3 DEMOGRAPHIC DEVELOPMENT

At the end of 2001 the population of Poland totalled 38,632,000, which represented an increase of 449,000 (1.18%) compared to 1990, and of 12,000 (0.03%) compared to 2000. The natural increase rate in 2001 was 0.1%. In the years 2000 and 2001 negative natural increase was recorded in towns (-0.4% in both years). In rural areas, natural increase was positive throughout this period and higher than in towns, even though it was characterised by a distinct falling tendency: from 6% in 1990 to 1.3% in 2000, and 1.0% in 2001.

In 2001 the share of the pre-working age population was 23.2% (8,970,000). Some 61.9% were of working age⁷ (23,920,000),

and 14.9% (5,742,000) were of post-working age. Compared to 1990 both the number and the share of the population of pre-working age have decreased (by 2,348,000 and 6.4%, respectively). On the other hand, the number and the share of the population of working age have increased (by 1,958,000 and 4.4%) as has that of post-working age (by 839,000 and 2.1%, respectively). As a result of those processes, in 2001 there were 62 individuals of non-working age per every 100 individuals of working age, as compared to 74 in 1990⁸.

1.4 SKILL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

In Poland there exists no system for researching and forecasting labour demand in terms of qualifications. Research of this type is done irregularly by state administration in association with some research establishments, public employment services and commercial entities. In order to address this problem, in 1997, following a resolution from the Prime Minister, the 'Inter-Ministerial Team for Forecasting Work Demand' was set up, headed by the vice-president of the Government Centre for Strategic Studies. The task of the team is to develop methods and procedures for forecasting labour demand taking into account qualification profiles, and to elaborate algorithms useful in the creation and verification of those forecasts. The team produced two forecasts completed in 1999:

- an estimate of the requirements for the main occupational groups up to 2010;
- multi-variant, middle-term labour demand forecast in Poland by 369 occupational groups.

The changes that occurred in the labour market in the years 1999 and 2000 necessitated a review of those forecasts.

⁷ The working age for men is between 18 and 64 years of age, and for women between 18 and 59.

⁸ Source: *Mały Rocznik Statystyczny Polski 2002 [Concise Statistical Yearbook of Poland 2002]*, GUS, Warszawa, 2002, author's calculation.

The document published towards the end of 2001⁹ provides a review of the former extrapolations concerning employment and the demand for occupations in the year 2010, taking into account the change of data for 2000 which was adopted as the starting point for the research. According to the forecast the largest number of jobs is likely to be generated in such occupations as IT specialists, financial and commercial personnel, business counsellors, and IT support personnel. On the other hand, the sharpest decrease is anticipated in such jobs as field crop farmers and animal production farmers, subsistence farmers and fisheries, housekeepers, cleaners and washerwomen, and plant production farmers and gardeners. With regard to the sectoral structure of new jobs, business-related services are expected to prevail, as well as services related to new technologies. In the groups of occupations expected to shed jobs, agriculture and heavy industry prevail.

Following a year-long break in the work of the Inter-Ministerial Team for Forecasting Work Demand, caused by the change of government, they resumed activity in 2002. The forecasts and expert studies developed by the team to date provide the starting point for the planned elaboration of a system of long-term forecasting in this area. This is also the objective of the research project that is to be carried out by the University of Łódź as part of a grant awarded by the Committee for Scientific Research (KBN).

Following the liquidation of the National Labour Office (KUP), research associated with current demand for labour may be conducted, on a non-mandatory basis and in a decentralised manner, by voivodship labour offices. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy intends to create a single uniform tool for analysing labour demand, which might be applied by labour offices.

The Central Statistical Office is planning a cyclical research on job vacancies. Studies envisaged for 2003 will include, among other topics, the number of people in work as of 31 December 2002 and 30 November 2003; changes in the number of people employed (i.e. hiring and termination by level of education and occupations, as well as the main reasons for the mobility of the employed); job vacancies; newly-created jobs; changes foreseen in the number of the employed in 2004 (i.e. terminations and hires by level of education, occupations and main reasons for the mobility of the employed); and handicapped people in work.

Among studies of labour demand conducted by commercial entities, research carried out by TMP Worldwide requires particular attention. It comprises two cyclical studies: the Labour Market Map (done in monthly cycles), and the quarterly Job Index. The Labour Market Map is an analysis providing information on the economic performance in individual sectors and the demand for specific specialists, while the Job Index provides, among its characteristics, forecasts concerning demand for specific specialists and analyses the situation in individual sectors.

⁹ A. Karpiński, S. Paradysz, B. Pencone, *Wpływ zmian na rynku pracy w latach 1999-2000 na projekcję zatrudnienia i strukturę zapotrzebowania na zawody do roku 2010, [Impact of Changes on the Labour Market on Projection of Employment and Structure of Occupational Demand]*, Warszawa, November 2001.

2. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN A LIFELONG LEARNING CONTEXT

2

2.1 POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Changes related to vocational education which have been taking place since 1989 aim towards limiting vocational education within the education system; developing vocational competencies in collaboration with employers (using market mechanisms); and developing non-public schools and establishments, thereby creating new opportunities for those who either failed to complete compulsory education in time or who wish to change, supplement or improve their qualifications.

2.2 ADAPTATION OF THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Ministry of National Education and Sport is currently working on the alignment of education law to new tasks related to vocational education and training in view of the concept of lifelong learning. In the draft version of the amended Educational

System Act there are provisions concerning substantial changes in the sphere of continuing education, pedagogic supervision and the strengthened system of external examinations.

The law provides for the introduction of accreditation for establishments offering continuing education. The accreditation procedure will rest with the school superintendent and will include the following areas: qualification process relating to the employed personnel, facilities available at the establishment, teaching methods used, and elaboration and publication of didactic materials for trainees and teachers.

The structure of the vocational education system in the school year 2002/03 was significantly affected by the amendment of the Educational System Act of 21 November 2001. As a result, there co-exist within the system pre-reform schools (basic vocational schools, general

secondary schools (*lyceums*) and technical secondary schools (*technicums*) as well as schools envisaged by the reform (profiled *lyceums*).

In the school year 2001/02 and in the first months of 2002/03, several ministerial regulations concerning education were issued. The regulations directly associated with vocational education and training were those concerning the classification of vocational education occupations, profiles of general vocational education and practical vocational training¹⁰.

2.3 GOVERNANCE AND RESPONSIBLE BODIES

Roles of, and cooperation among, national, regional and local administration

The education policy of the state is formulated and implemented centrally, while the management and administration of schools is decentralised. The Minister for Education and Sport, who coordinates and implements state education policy, partly supervises the operations of *kurators* (school superintendents) and cooperates with other authorities and organisational units in matters related to the functioning of the education system. The minister creates a legal framework, by means of regulations and detailed arrangements, for the functioning of all educational establishments, including vocational education and training.

The voivodships mainly play a coordinating role; they supervise the minister's policy and provide pedagogic supervision. This task constitutes the responsibility of the kurator appointed by the voivod. Voivodship authorities also operate schools and educational establishments with regional significance, including schools for medical staff and social workers, public establishments for teacher training and development, as well as teachers' libraries.

The *poviats* and their heads (*starosts*) are responsible for the management of higher secondary education (including vocational education), post-secondary schools and special schools (elementary and secondary), sports schools and schools of sports mastery, practical and continuing education centres, and psychological and pedagogical centres.

In Poland, the local level is the *gmina* level. There are 2,489 gminas, most of them rural. All kindergartens, elementary schools and middle schools (*gymnasiums*) are run by the gminas.

At the level of the school or an educational establishment, the headmaster, who is elected from competition for a five-year period, is the person responsible for management. The headmaster also provides pedagogic supervision, and hires and dismisses personnel.

Involvement of social partners

Contrary to the previous year, interest in matters of education on the part of social partners is visibly growing, which is corroborated by topics submitted for discussion in 2002 by the Tripartite Committee for Social and Economic Matters. The 'Solidarity' trade union proposed to discuss the situation in education, tertiary education and science, while the Polish Confederation of Private Employers proposed to evaluate the impact of education at schools on the level of employment and the potential of economic growth. One of the plenary sessions of the tripartite committee was devoted to issues of education. These included continuous education and changes in the curricula at all levels of the education system, and the development of compensatory measures allowing school graduates to supplement, expand or change their qualifications in order to increase their employability. At this session the government proposal of the 'First Job' programme (see Section 3.2) was put forward.

¹⁰ Regulation of the Minister for Education and Sport of 18 April 2002 on the classification of vocational education occupations; Regulation of the Minister for Education and Sport of 1 July 2002 on practical vocational training (Journal of Laws 113/2002 item 988); Regulation of the Minister for Education and Sport of 16 January 2002 on general vocational education profiles (Journal of Laws 8/2002 item 65).

As far as the involvement of social partners in the sphere of vocational education and training is concerned, we should also take into consideration the new negotiating structure introduced in 2002, that is the Voivodship Committees for Social Dialogue (WKDS). Too little time has elapsed since they were established to analyse their activity in any systematic manner. Nonetheless, the relevant documents (WKDS information sheets) indicate that VET issues were discussed at several sessions of the committees. It is difficult to conclude at this point whether and to what extent those committees will contribute to increasing the commitment of social partners in the processes of elaborating and implementing VET curricula. At the same time, the emergence of a new structure of social dialogue might be an important factor in the process of information flow concerning the desirable development directions in vocational education and training at the local or regional levels.

Funding

At the time of preparing the report there was no available data on the financing of education in the year 2002.

In 2001 public expenditure in this sphere accounted for 4.59% of the GDP. In the same year the total share of public financial support and subsidies for education in the local government budgets was 71.7%.

2.4 MODERNISATION OF THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

2.4.1 STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION

The amended Educational System Act (December 2001) introduces, as of 1 September 2002, a new structure of higher secondary education (post-gymnasium), consisting of the following types of school for the young people and for adults:

- basic vocational school with a tuition period not shorter than two years and not longer than three years;
- three-year general education lyceum;
- three-year profiled lyceum;
- four-year technical school;
- two-year supplementary general lyceum and three-year supplementary technical school for the graduates of basic vocational schools and post-secondary schools, with a period of tuition not longer than two and a half years.

The 2002/03 school year is the first year of educational reform in post-gymnasium schools. Compared with the reform assumptions described in the previous reports, radical changes in the structure of this level of education have been effected. Also, the introduction of the external secondary school graduation exam (*matura*) has been postponed until 2005. Originally, the reform envisaged two types of post-gymnasium school: profiled lyceum and basic vocational school¹¹. As a result of the changes, six types of school were introduced, including three providing specific vocational qualifications and one offering broad general vocational preparation.

Entry requirements

The year 2002/03 was the first school year when the graduates from gymnasiums started their education in the new types of school, after nine years of compulsory education in lower-level schools (six years in elementary school and three years in gymnasium). In addition, it was the first time when it was not the entrance examination but the number of points scored that was the decisive factor in admittance to a post-gymnasium school. The score included points for the examination in the third grade of gymnasium and points calculated from the final marks in selected school subjects and other scholarly achievements as evidenced in the final gymnasium certificate.

Specific admittance criteria are established by every post-gymnasium school individually.

¹¹ *Reform of the Educational System, Post-gymnasium Education*, Ministry of National Education, Warszawa, April 2000.

One of the assumptions underlying the introduction of the matura – that is the examination ending secondary school, dubbed the New Matura – was the intention to replace, in part or in full, the entrance exam to universities by a single external final secondary school examination.

In the academic year 2002/03, nearly 87% of the senates of state tertiary schools made a decision allowing the replacement of the results of entrance examinations with marks obtained by the candidates in the New Matura examination as sole or partial grounds for admittance.

Programmes and pathways

In formal education (public and non-public schools possessing the status of public schools), the Minister of Education is responsible for developing framework teaching plans (the so-called 'hour plans'), core curricula for general subjects as well as core curricula for education, in particular vocations, and for a vocational education profile. The framework teaching plans set out lists of topics and the number of hours required for its tuition. Those plans refer to initial vocational education in individual types of post-gymnasium school for young people and adults, and the differences between them relate both to the subjects taught, their number and hours of tuition required.

In 2002 a new type of post-gymnasium school and, at the same time a new educational path, was launched – the profiled lyceum. The 14 profiles of general vocational education correspond to the types of activities listed in the Polish Classification of Activities – PKD.

Adaptation of curricula and teaching and learning methodologies

The available data allow for the evaluation of the possible adaptation of curricula existing in public schools. Framework teaching plans and core curricula open up

possibilities for adapting the existing curricula to the potential of young people and students of schools for adults.

Teachers can choose between teaching methods depending on the number of pupils in the class and facilities available at the school. They are also free to make use of various textbooks selected from the list approved by the Minister of Education. This choice, however, is limited by a relatively small range of textbooks as far as vocational education is concerned. In the 2002/03 school year, the list of the textbooks for the new types of post-gymnasium school was approved.

In out-of-school types of continuing education, the most popular teaching methods include: lectures, workshops, case studies, and simulations. Also, computer applications and films are gaining increasing popularity as teaching aids. Workshops are considered to be the most effective teaching method, used primarily in large training companies with an established presence on the market¹².

Development of educational and occupational standards

In Poland, there is no institution responsible for the elaboration of educational and vocational standards. The development of standards related to tests and examinations, including vocational examinations, partly rests with the Central Examination Commission.

The methodological foundations for designing vocational qualification standards in Poland and draft vocational qualification standards for eight occupations (which were developed earlier as part of the project initiated by the ETF in 1998 and carried out as part of the National Observatory's activities) will be used in designing further standards. In 2002 the institution that will be responsible for the preparation of another 40 occupations was selected.

¹² Report on the Market for Training Programmes. Demand 2001, Management Institute, 2002.

Assessment and certification

The system of evaluating pupils' performance in all types of higher-level secondary schools is based on the rules adopted in 1991 (and subsequently amended). Rules concerning the award of internal marks – partial, periodical, annual in basic vocational schools, general education lyceums and vocational secondary schools – are the same as those used in primary schools (years IV-VI) and gymnasiums. Pupils complete primary, gymnasium and post-gymnasium education if they obtain marks higher than unsatisfactory ones in all compulsory educational subjects.

Schools and educational establishments issue certificates and student books: school promotion certificates, final certificates, maturity certificates as well as diplomas and certificates of the scope of tuition.

Quality assurance and accreditation

Activities aimed at quality assurance of school activities include tests at the end of primary school and gymnasium, in addition to the external matura examination which has been suspended until 2005. Another examination associated with the quality assurance system is the one confirming vocational qualifications, which will also serve as an evaluation of acquired knowledge and skills defined according to examination requirement standards for a given occupation. Such vocational examinations will involve two stages: the written part and the practical part. Standard examination requirements are developed by the Central Examination Commission.

The Central In-service Teacher Training Centre (CODN) makes efforts and takes initiatives aimed at assuring quality in schools and educational establishments through organising training programmes and seminars dealing with this issue.

Accreditation of continuing education institutions is envisaged under the recently amended Educational System Act.

Developments in non-formal education and training

Some voivodship labour offices provide evaluation of vocational skills and experience gained in non-formal contexts, making use of French experiences relating to the balance of competencies. Also, some pedagogical tertiary schools make various attempts to introduce subjects related to the diagnostics of vocational knowledge and skills, acquired in both formal and non-formal contexts, into the curriculum of studies in pedagogy of labour.

Links between initial and continuing training, formal and non-formal training (including accreditation of prior learning)

The current continuing education system encompasses public and non-public establishments functioning within and outside of the school system. External examinations confirming the acquired vocational qualifications represent one of the links between the system of initial vocational education and training and the continuing education system.

2.4.2 DELIVERY

Network of formal and non-formal education and training providers

Institutions offering vocational education and training in formal and non-formal contexts include public and non-public schools, and continuing and practical training centres, as well as other establishments providing non-formal training.

The local poviats governments (the poviats councils) are responsible for establishing a network of public post-gymnasium schools in their area. However, they must take into consideration all schools and educational establishments operating in a given poviat, so that the network of educational institutions allows for the fulfilment of the compulsory school attendance duty for both young pupils and adults.

The network of post-primary schools is unevenly distributed and is best developed in urban areas. This applies to schools for young people and for adults. Only 8% of lyceums for young people, and a similar share of schools for adults, are situated in rural areas.

In the 2001/02 school year, there were 10,514 post-gymnasium schools for young pupils. Most of them are vocational schools (2,209 basic and 6,009 secondary technical and 2,625 post-lyceum schools). The continuing fall in the number of basic vocational schools can be observed, as opposed to the number of secondary vocational schools and post-lyceum schools.

In the 2001/02 school year, the education system for adults comprised 1,752 secondary vocational schools and 148 basic vocational schools.

Continuing education in non-formal forms is organised through:

- continuing training centres;
- practical education centres;
- schools (providing courses);
- training, further training and upgrading centres;
- higher education institutions and research centres;
- enterprises;
- associations, foundations, businesses.

Typically, large companies, frequently with foreign shareholdings and located in large cities, are beneficiaries of training programmes offered by various training companies and institutions¹³.

Teaching and training staff

Over 550,000 full-time teachers are employed in the education system in Poland (700,000 including teachers employed on a part-time basis). It is difficult to assess the exact number of teachers employed in vocational schools since many of them work in more than one school. For the school year 2001/02, calculated per

full-time teacher positions, the following employment figures can be quoted:

- in basic and secondary vocational schools for young pupils – 88,950 teachers;
- in post-lyceum schools – 11,268 teachers;
- in artistic schools offering full qualifications (for youths) – 3,394 teachers.

The National Centre for Supporting Vocational Education (KOWEZ) deals with the preparation of training staff for the teachers' further training system. The centre prepares and promotes standards for the further training of VET teachers, prepares materials for educators¹⁴ and teachers of vocational subjects, prepares the staff for the career orientation, information and guidance system, and is also involved in publishing activities.

For each budget year, the authority responsible for running a given school prepares a plan for the co-financing of various forms of further training of VET teachers. These funds are used to co-finance methodological counselling for teachers, organisation of training programmes and conferences, preparation of training materials, organisation of further training for teachers in a given school or an educational establishment, as well as training schemes for teachers' councils. Furthermore, these funds can be expended on the co-financing of tuition fees charged by tertiary education institutions and teacher training establishments, fees for qualification and upgrading courses, as well as travel and accommodation costs of teachers who, referred by a school headmaster, participate in various forms of professional development (Regulation of 29 March 2002).

In 2000, among the population of vocational education teachers, about 4,500 teachers were studying at faculties related to vocational subjects and an estimated 10,000 at faculties related to general education subjects. Some 19,995 teachers

¹³ Report on the Market for Training Programmes, op. cit.

¹⁴ An educator is a person supporting the learning efforts of teachers.

2. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN A LIFELONG LEARNING CONTEXT

were upgrading and developing their professional qualifications; the majority of them (11,632) were studying at postgraduate level and were involved in other professional development forms exceeding 100 hours of tuition (the remaining 8,363 were participating in shorter forms of further training).

Throughout Poland, in 2000 more than 203,000 teachers were upgrading and developing their professional qualifications in the sphere of general education subjects. It can only be estimated that 40,000 of those teachers were employed in the vocational education sector.

Modernisation of training infrastructure and equipment

School infrastructure calls for a radical modernisation. The existing shortages also pertain to audio and video equipment as well as computers with necessary software¹⁵.

The changes relating to the modernisation of infrastructure and school equipment are due to the introduction (by the Ministry of Education¹⁶) of mandatory certification of goods which may be purchased by schools and educational establishments. This is only permitted when the supplier submits a certificate of conformity with the Polish Norm (PN) or a CE certificate for the goods to be purchased. These certificates should be provided for such goods as school furniture, sports articles and equipment as well as some teaching aids.

In the 2001/02 school year, there were on average 29 pupils per classroom in basic vocational schools, 22 in secondary vocational schools and 30 in post-lyceum schools. For over 8,200 basic and secondary vocational schools for youths there were 2,220 gyms (0.27 gym per school) and 3,280 computer rooms (0.4 room per school). Pupils of vocational

schools had at their disposal approximately 37,870 personal computers (4.6 computers per school), of which 66% had access to Internet. There were 29.4 pupils to one computer.

Training for the unemployed (including specific target groups: long-term unemployed, early school leavers, young graduates, disabled, Romany)

At the end of August 2002, 122,600 graduates from post-primary schools were registered as unemployed in the labour offices; they accounted for 3.9% of the total population of the unemployed. Since the beginning of 2002, the number of unemployed referred to training (including school graduates) has been slowly increasing. In August 2002, 16,200 graduates were deregistered as a result of being referred to training programmes and placements (which accounts for 44.6% of all deregistered graduates).

One of the components of the government's 'First Job' programme is the 'Green Workplace' project aimed at some 2,000 graduates from forestry schools and environmental protection university faculties. The implementation of the project started on 1 July 2002. The project provides an opportunity to acquire vocational licenses (required in some other occupations, such as those related to construction or land surveying) upon passing an examination at the end of the placement.

Management training and business education

In the academic year 2001/02, over 1,718,000 students were studying at all types of tertiary school¹⁷, which was about 8.5% more than in the previous year. Nearly 56% of the studying population were students of extramural studies, slightly over 70% were students of state

¹⁵ A. Bogaj, S.M. Kwiatkowski, G. Młynarczyk, *Infrastruktura medialna szkół [The Media Infrastructure of Schools]*, IBE, Warszawa, 2000.

¹⁶ Regulation of the Minister of Education and Sport of 21 May 2002 on the specification of goods which cannot be purchased by schools and educational establishments when the supplier fails to submit a relevant certificate (Journal of Laws 2002 item).

¹⁷ The number of state tertiary schools has increased to 344 (310 in 2000/01), and the number of private tertiary schools to 221 (195 in 2000/01).

universities and colleges, and more than 26% (i.e. 451,000) were students of management and business studies.

Analysis of the profiles of tertiary education indicates that in the last two years the share of students at business and management faculties has decreased (the number of students admitted in 2001 was lower than the 2000 figure by 12%). This phenomenon is observable both in state and non-state tertiary schools, even though in the former the fall has not been as striking.

Master of Arts (MA) and vocational courses

The available data leaves no doubt that the structure of choices made by those interested in tertiary education has changed. Those who resolve to pursue business and administration studies much more frequently opt for regular intramural MA studies (in 2001, the number of students admitted to such studies at both state and private schools increased by approximately 10% as compared to 2000).

In non-state (private) tertiary schools, the number of students admitted to the first year of MA studies is subject to considerable fluctuation, which is probably due to the growing number of schools which have been licensed to offer courses at MA level. 2001 was another year of decreased interest in Bachelor of Arts (BA) programmes offered by private schools.

Postgraduate study

Data published by the Central Statistical Office¹⁸ indicates that this form of education developed rapidly until the year 2000 (the number of students increased more than fivefold).

The current postgraduate offer comprises 512 programmes addressed to middle or higher level managers. State tertiary schools offer the largest percentage of such courses (around 55%); universities

propose the most varied offer (nearly one third of the list of available programmes); followed by academies of economics (around 30%) and technical universities (27%). The range of programmes offered is quite extensive. Most programmes (over one fifth) are targeted at those graduates who either hold or wish to hold executive positions in the future and are interested in developing their corporate management skills. The reform of the healthcare sector and the education system produced an increased demand for this type of knowledge. Also, the preparedness for professional decision-making concerning corporate human resource policy, in line with the current state of knowledge about contemporary human resource management, is always a valuable asset on the labour market, hence the rich and varied educational offer in this sphere.

Master of Business Administration (MBA) studies

The first MBA studies were offered in Poland in the early 1990s¹⁹, while today's offer encompasses more than 40 MBA programmes. Interest in MBA studies is due to the high employability of the graduates, who are mainly employed by companies with foreign shareholdings.

MBA studies are expensive since top quality experts are hired as teachers. Moreover, those programmes which wish to award two diplomas (that of the foreign partner in addition to their own) have to incur substantial costs involved, and the didactic facilities also tend to be expensive. Despite their high price, interest in such studies is broad. However, there is no information on their popularity in recent years as compared to earlier periods. What is known is that in the past 12 years more than 4,000 Poles obtained MBA diplomas and another 2,000 are expected to be awarded such a diploma in the coming two years²⁰.

It is difficult to unequivocally determine which way management education in

¹⁸ *Higher Schools and their Finances.*

¹⁹ At the International School of Management in 1989.

²⁰ *MBA przepustką do kariery [MBA – The Pass to Career]*, Profit 8/2001, pp. 70-93.

Poland will develop. Currently, the interest in such qualifications is dwindling both on the part of the economy (which looks for cheaper qualifications) and on the part of prospective candidates for students. The scope of postgraduate education and the demand in this sphere is not very well researched. Most probably, however, similar tendencies will appear owing to the diminished profitability of such an education²¹.

Training in enterprises

In-service training programmes may be prepared and organised either by in-company specialists and training units or by external providers. In 2001, large and medium-sized businesses most frequently made use of the services offered by training institutions in the sphere of: upgrading personnel qualifications (49% of businesses), organisational consulting (10%), and personnel recruitment and selection (5%)²². At the same time, the content of training programmes organised in businesses employing over 100 staff included: finance and accounting (67%), technical training schemes (48%), management (41%), production and quality control (37%), and IT (37%). Some 91% of state enterprises offered training programmes in finance and accounting to their staff.

Training to promote labour market and social inclusion of disadvantaged groups

Training programmes preventing social and vocational exclusion relate in particular to those who are disadvantaged on the labour market: women, people with a low level of education and qualifications, and young people without any vocational experience who do not work and do not attend school. Useful forms of education and training that can counteract social and vocational exclusion include: upgrading the level of education, retraining, and enhancing or supplementing qualifications. People threatened with such exclusion should, in

consultation with vocational counsellors, select the forms and methods that correspond to their intellectual and financial potential.

2.4.3 PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Formal/non-formal

Forms of continuing education that are available within the school system are the following:

- schools for adults;
- continuous education centres run by tertiary schools;
- PhD studies.

Forms of continuing education available outside the school system include:

- upgrading and specialised courses and training programmes;
- seminars and conferences, workshops, lectures;
- teaching involving multimedia technology;
- distance learning;
- postgraduate studies;
- vocational placements and exchanges (which also exist within the formal school system).

Courses understood as a non-formal educational measure with duration of not less than 30 hours are the most popular form.

Young people/adults

In the school year 2001/02, 1,113,936 young people attended vocational schools (327,757 in basic vocational and 786,179 in secondary vocational schools).

In the same school year 368,800 students attended all types of school for adults, including 217,000 at vocational schools. As compared to 1995, the number of students

²¹ Any forecast of the demand for postgraduate studies would require additional research.

²² Findings of the research conducted at the turn of 2001/02 on the national sample of representative enterprises and adult Poles. Report on the Market for Training Programmes. Demand 2001, Management Institute, 2002.

in all types of school for adults has increased by nearly 100,000. This was possible due to the increased number of students in gymnasiums, general education lyceums and secondary vocational schools. On the other hand, the number of students in elementary schools has been steadily decreasing; there were only 960,000 such students in the year in question, and 85% of them were male. As compared with the previous year, the number of students in vocational schools has also decreased for the first time in ten years. Compared to 1990 the number of students in vocational schools for adults has increased nearly three and a half times, while that of vocational schools for young pupils has decreased almost twofold, from 814,525 in 1990/91 to 348,468 in 2001/02.

Employed/unemployed

Managers are those who most frequently participate in training programmes and upgrade their qualifications. The research of the Management Institute indicates that only 13% of the respondents took part in training programmes and they were primarily persons with tertiary and secondary education having a professional career²³. Most frequently, they were people between 30 and 39 years of age, who lived in large cities. This situation has not changed since 2001.

Among those employed on a part-time basis, 9.3% combined education with work. Over half of those people (58.9%) were men and those employed in the private sector (90.1%).

Since 1998 the number of unemployed taking part in training programmes has been falling steadily. This situation did not improve until the second quarter of 2002, especially with regard to graduates.

Disadvantaged groups

The population of people disadvantaged towards the labour market, who most

frequently join the group of the long-term unemployed, includes: women, young pupils (including school graduates), people with a low level of education and qualifications, and those living in rural areas. For information on training programmes see Section 2.4.2.

2.5 GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

Vocational counselling remaining within the remit of two departments: the Ministry of National Education and Sports regarding young pupils, and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy regarding adults, especially the unemployed and those seeking employment.

Following inter-departmental arrangements, the Working Team of National Resources Centre for Vocational Guidance has been established at the National Centre for Supporting Vocational Education, which prepares databases on educational establishments and vocational counselling institutions in Poland.

2.5.1 GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING FOR YOUTH

Vocational counselling services within the scope supervised by the Ministry of Education and Sport are mainly provided through a network of 590 psychological and pedagogical centres²⁴, which are run by local poviát governments.

In 2001 and 2002, the Ministry of National Education and Sport initiated a number of actions aimed to prepare pupils for planning their career²⁵. New subjects were introduced into the curriculum: in the gymnasium, 'Preparation for active participation in economic life' as a section of civic education curriculum; in vocational schools, 'Entrepreneurship'; and in lyceums, the thematic inter-profile block

²³ The research comprised representatives of enterprises (600 entities) and a representative sample of adult Poles (over 1,000 individuals).

²⁴ Sołtysińska G., *Poradnictwo zawodowe w polskim systemie edukacji [Vocational Counselling in the Polish Educational System]*, National Centre for Supporting Vocational Education, Warszawa, 2002.

²⁵ Ibid.

2. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN A LIFELONG LEARNING CONTEXT

'Foundations of economic activity'. These introductions involve the need to:

- prepare teachers to implement those new educational components by creating opportunities for their professional development and education (postgraduate studies with a 'vocational counselling' module);
- define the school status of vocational counsellors who would perform their duties as part of the internal school vocational counselling system²⁶.

The National Centre for Supporting Vocational Education (and in particular its Unit for Vocational Guidance and Counselling), plays an important part in the fulfilment of these tasks by developing methodological materials for gymnasiums and conducting professional development courses for methodological counsellors and consultants working at voivodship centres for professional development of teachers (40 people), as well as vocational counsellors selected from among the staff of psychological and pedagogical centres (75 people).

2.5.2 GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING FOR ADULTS

In 2001, vocational counsellors working at Poviats Labour Offices (460 people) and in a network of 51 Career Information and Planning Centres (240 people) provided assistance in the sphere of vocational guidance and counselling to over 515,000 people²⁷. This figure does not include young people in schools who represent a sizeable share of the clients of the Career Information and Planning Centres. Of all clients (the unemployed, those seeking employment, and so on) the unemployed made up the largest group, and young people under 24 were the most numerous subgroup.

In the years 2001 and 2002, bureaus for Professional Promotion of Students and Graduates, commonly known as Career Bureaus, developed rapidly. Established at tertiary schools, both public and private, they offer effective assistance to students and graduates in the development of their professional careers.

The World Congress on Vocational Counselling, organised by the Polish Association of School and Vocational Counsellors in May 2002, with the participation of counsellors from 35 countries, was an important event which contributed to the popularisation of vocational counselling in Poland.

The year 2002 was another year of the National Forum of Vocational Guidance and its operations. All the forum's activities were aimed at integrating the two vocational counselling subsystems attributed to the departments of education and labour, and at promoting the European dimension of vocational counselling. In September 2002, as part of the forum's activities, the Task Force for Human Resources Development (BKRR) organised a seminar on the development of non-public vocational counselling in Poland.

2.6 PREPAREDNESS OF THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM TO COMPLY WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF THE EUROPEAN EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

In 2001 the reform of the education system initiated in 1999 was continued (with amendments adopted in 2000), as a result of which general education was substantially expanded and education of skilled workers was considerably limited. This does not seem desirable in view of the competition on the labour market. It is also thought that in practice there are no

²⁶ Draft regulation of the Minister of National Education and Sport on the rules of providing and organising psychological and pedagogical assistance in public kindergartens, schools and educational establishments was prepared.

²⁷ Pursuant to the Regulation of the Prime Minister of 6 September 2000 (Journal of Laws No 76 of 18 September 2000 item 868), preparing reports on services related to vocational counselling is obligatory (Annex 4 to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy-01 report).

SHORT COUNTRY REPORT POLAND

favourable conditions for the provision of permanent education in Poland. Thus, the preparedness of the Polish education and training system for applying the rules of the European Employment Strategy does not seem to be quite sufficient. In particular, it does not wholly comply with the conditions

indispensable for improving the quality of human resources and equalising of opportunities. The years 2001 and 2002 did not bring any significant changes in this sphere nor was a system for forecasting labour demand by qualifications developed.

3. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN EMPLOYMENT POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION

3

3.1 STATE OF PREPARATION FOR THE EUROPEAN EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

The recommendations and guidelines of the OECD and the European Union in the sphere of employment policies were taken into account in the National Strategy for Employment Growth and Human Resources Development in the Years 2000-06, adopted by the Council of Ministers on 4 January 2000.

In 2000 the National Action Plan for Employment for the Years 2000-01 was adopted. It stipulates that efforts to reduce labour costs are of key importance. Since Poland is not obliged to develop such a plan, owing to the fact that it is not an EU member, the National Action Plan for Employment for 2001 was not adopted.

In 2002 the draft Sectoral Operational Programme for Human Resources Development, one of six sectoral programmes envisaged under the National

Development Programme, was developed along with the draft of the Integrated Operational Programme for Regional Development, complementing activities undertaken as part of the Sectoral Operational Programme for Human Resources. Both programmes relate to the period 2004 to 2006 and envisage implementation of various activities financed from the EU structural funds.

In 2002 the government developed the Social Policy Strategy, whose strategic goal is to create institutional, organisational and financial forms fostering the growth of employment, improving the social security of citizens and preventing social exclusion through securing stable foundations of the social security system while ensuring social dialogue and cooperation of all social partners.

In 2001 the Polish government and the European Commission prepared the Joint Assessment Paper on Employment Priorities in Poland (JAP), which identifies

certain actions, such as completion of the educational reform or expanding the scope of continuing education, within a consistent framework and with the participation of social partners, owing to which employment policies might be sufficiently strengthened so as to cope with the structural problems of the labour market.

In June 2002 the government approved the first report on the implementation of the Joint Assessment Paper, which is to be submitted to the European Commission at the end of 2002.

3.2 GENERAL OUTLINE OF EMPLOYMENT POLICY OBJECTIVES AND MEASURES

The goals of the labour market policy and the relevant measures are defined in the National Strategy for Employment Growth and Human Resources Development in the Years 2000-06. The strategy stipulates that the overriding goal is to achieve a higher level of involvement of the population in labour processes. The wide range of anticipated measures includes: developing the education system in line with the needs of the labour market, developing the system of adult education, strengthening the institutional context of labour market services, improving the tax system and increasing labour flexibility.

In 2002 the 'First Job' programme, one of the three components of the government's economic strategy 'Entrepreneurship – Development – Employment', became an instrument in the implementation of the National Strategy for Employment Growth and Human Resources Development 2000-06²⁸. The fundamental goal of the 'First Job' programme is to avoid a situation where school graduates automatically become and remain unemployed. Therefore, it was regarded as a priority to improve graduates' opportunities for acquiring initial vocational experience and to cover all the registered

graduates by active measures within the first six months of registration.

In view of the deteriorating situation on the labour market in Poland, the Plan of Counter-Crisis Measures in the Sphere of Market Protection and Jobs was proposed by the government in July 2002. The Plan is intended to suppress the growth of unemployment and identifies a package of a dozen legislative and organisational measures relating to²⁹:

- restructuring of the liabilities of public enterprises (reduction of unenforceable liabilities of enterprises upon payment of the so-called 'restructuring fee');
- restructuring of enterprises by banks;
- introducing a tax credit for small start-up companies to generate new jobs.

3.3 ADAPTATION OF THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The statutory regulations concerning the labour market policy in Poland are based on settlements adopted in the Employment and Counteracting Unemployment Act of 14 December 1994³⁰. In the years 2001 and 2002 (until August) the act was amended 11 times. The amendments, among others, were aimed to change the financing structure of labour market policy programmes, to create protection for those who lose jobs for reasons beyond their control, and to introduce necessary regulatory alignments in view of Poland's future EU membership.

In August 2002 the Labour Code was amended. The introduced changes are expected to bring a reduction in costs of labour, to make labour relations more flexible (particularly with regard to working time) and to reduce the administrative burdens of employers. The new regulations should help foster entrepreneurship and create conditions that would be conducive to generating new jobs.

²⁸ The government economic strategy 'Entrepreneurship – Development – Employment' consists of three components: 'Entrepreneurship Above All', 'First Job' and 'Infrastructure – the Key to Development'. They are expected to bring about changes in the structure of the Polish economy.

²⁹ www.kprm.gov.pl

³⁰ Complete text: Journal of Laws 6/2001 item 56 with subsequent amendments.

3.4 GOVERNANCE AND RESPONSIBLE BODIES

As of January 2000 the entities implementing labour market policy include:

- the minister competent for labour issues (until 31 March 2002 in association with the president of the National Labour Office)³¹;
- local voivodship governments;
- the voivods;
- local poviats governments.

These entities collaborate with the authorities, organisations and institutions dealing with issues of employment and counteracting unemployment, in particular with trade unions as well as organisations of both employers and the unemployed.

The labour market policy is mainly financed from the Labour Fund, one of the state special-purpose funds. Until the end of March 2002 the main disposer of the Labour Fund was the president of the National Labour Office; currently it is the minister competent for labour issues.

3.5 EMPLOYMENT SERVICES (NATIONAL AND REGIONAL)

3.5.1 STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION

The administration responsible for matters of employment and counteracting unemployment comprises the voivodship (16) and poviats (312) labour offices, performing the function of public employment services. In January 2000 voivodship labour offices were incorporated into the marshal's offices, and poviats labour offices into the poviats combined administration.

3.5.2 DELIVERY OF SERVICES

At the end of 2001, 1,139 staff were employed at voivodship labour offices and 15,347 staff at poviats labour offices. It should be pointed out that in the conditions of the deteriorating labour market situation and the need to service an increased number of unemployed people, 2001 saw a reduction of the total office staff by 676 (3.9%) as compared with the previous year. The reductions occurred only in the poviats labour offices (714); in the voivodship offices employment increased by 38 staff. This meant that the conditions of providing efficient services to the increasing number of unemployed, who mainly come to the poviats labour offices, have worsened. At the end of 2001, the 15,347 staff of the poviats offices (PUP) provided services to the unemployed population of 3,115,056 people; this implies that one employee assisted 203 unemployed³², a ratio which grew considerably compared to the end of 2000, when this value was 168 unemployed per one employee.

Passive forms of labour market policy aimed to alleviate the consequences of unemployment (unemployment benefits and pre-pension allowances), account for the major part of Labour Fund expenditure: 69.3% of the funds earmarked for labour market policy in 1999, 82.8% in 2000, and 78.1% in 2001³³. The years 1999 to 2001 saw a reduction of expenditure for active forms of counteracting unemployment; the level of expenditure was 19.2% in 1999, 11.1% in 2000 and 6.5% in 2001. The share of expenditure for public works and intervention works decreased the most (from 3.6% in 1999 to 1.2% in 2001, and from 4.8% to 1.7%, respectively). The share of spending on training programmes and schemes decreased from 2% to 0.6%.

³¹ Pursuant to the *Changes in the Organisation and Operation of Central State Administration Bodies and Subordinated Entities and Change of Some Parliamentary Acts* Act of 20 March 2002, on 1 April 2002 one of the central state administration bodies – that of the president of the National Labour Office – was liquidated.

³² If we assume that those in executive positions at the poviats labour offices are not involved in direct services provided to the unemployed, every other employee was obliged to provide service to 235 unemployed.

³³ Together with social security contributions.

3.5.3 MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF ACTIVITIES

Monitoring and evaluation of the operations of the employment services is carried out by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy through the collection and analysis of information on the participants of the labour market programmes and expenditure involved.

3.6 PREPAREDNESS OF EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

Owing to the marked decentralisation of employment services and a high turnover rate among their staff, difficulties can be observed in their preparation for supporting the implementation of the European Employment Strategy guidelines.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4

The continuing difficult situation on the labour market in Poland encouraged the government to take actions that eventually should result in a reduction of unemployment. These actions are programme and legislation-based and are both macro- and micro-economic in character. On the one hand, macro-economic activities focus on the stimulation of economic growth and structural transformations of the Polish economy, and on the other hand they focus on the creation of more favourable conditions for the functioning of businesses which maintain and create new jobs and for people whose situation on the labour market is the most difficult. Micro-economic activities are primarily aimed at making the labour market more flexible through increasing the adaptation capacity of its demand and supply aspects.

Progress in the preparation of Poland to the implementation of the European Employment Strategy is the subject matter of the report submitted to the European Commission by the Polish government in 2002. The fundamental problems in this sphere include the weakness of

employment services and their lack of preparedness for the implementation of the strategy. Also, efforts should be stepped up to prepare the structures and mechanisms for the coordination and administration of financial assistance from the European Social Fund, which will serve as the main tool for supporting the implementation of the strategy priorities. In addition to that, the preparedness of the Polish education and training system to the implementation of the strategy, and particularly the preparedness of the continuous education system to the implementation of the lifelong learning concept, does not seem sufficient.

Plans concerning the reconstruction of the continuing education system should allow for the introduction of the concept of lifelong learning. In this context, the following planned activities should be highlighted.

- Excluding the **Continuing Education Centres (CKU)** and the **Practical Training Centres (CKP)** from the combined school complexes will result in the concentration of their activities on tasks associated with continuous

education. This would represent a shift from the status quo, that of education within the school system. It should also lead to the strengthening of the role of such entities among continuation education establishments.

- Accreditation of continuing education establishments would lead to improving the quality of work of those establishments.

The reform of the Polish education system has been partly suspended. The amendment of the Educational System Act of 21 November 2001 resulted in the co-existence of pre-reform schools and those envisaged by the reform in the Polish school system. The external matura examination has been suspended until 2005.

In view of the demographic changes, secondary and tertiary education should become more open to the education and training of adults. The educational offer of such establishments, particularly tertiary education and research centres, may be in competition with those non-public institutions which offer training programmes.

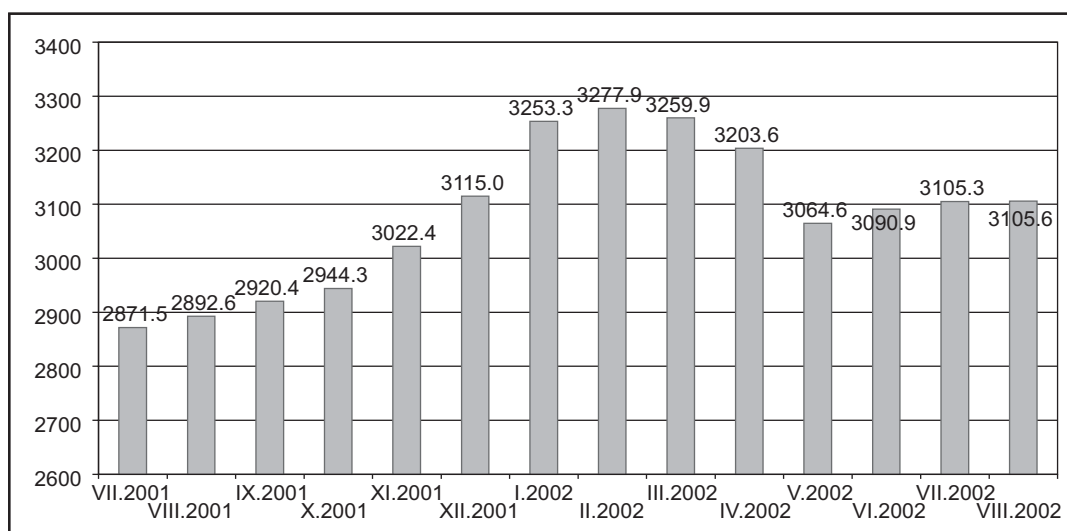
A factor delaying or impeding implementation of policy in the sphere of the spatial mobility of people in work and those seeking employment, is the insufficient coordination of vocational education and training at the supra-poviat level. This restrains the spatial mobility of participants of various training programmes financed by the poviat budgets as poviat labour offices are not interested in financing such programmes in favour of other regions where it is easier to find employment.

Steps that should be taken in the sphere of vocational counselling include:

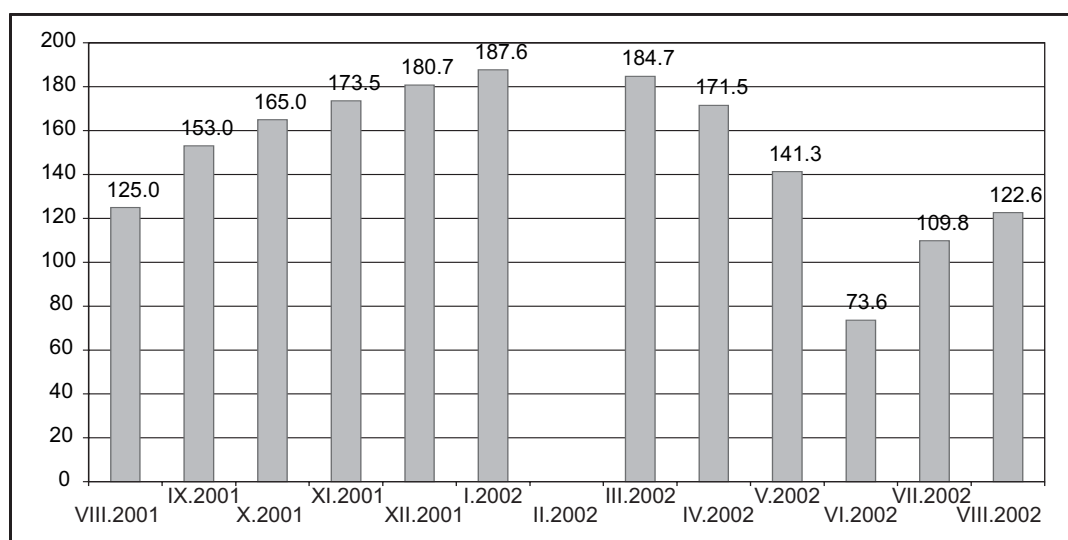
- drafting legislation (for example, an act of parliament) which would regulate the sphere of vocational counselling in the departments of education and labour and would create a uniform system of counselling encompassing the young people, adults and handicapped;
- defining the status of the vocational counsellor as a profession, elaborating a salary scheme corresponding to the tasks of vocational counsellors so as to contain a considerable turnover of vocational counsellors at labour offices;
- creating suitable conditions (a legal framework) for the development of non-public vocational counselling services.

ANNEX

Figure 1: Unemployed persons (in thousand)



Source: www.mpips.gov.pl

Figure 2: Unemployed post-primary school graduates (in thousand)Source: www.mpips.gov.pl**Table 1: Labour Fund structure in 2001 (in percentage)**

Total	100.0
Unemployment benefits	41.9
Pre-retirement benefits	23.5
Pre-retirement entitlements	12.7
Active forms – including:	6.5
• Training	0.6
• Intervention work	1.7
• Public work	1.2
• Business start-up loans	-
• Additional job loans	-
• Special programmes	-
• Vocational activation of graduates	2.0
Initial vocational training for juvenile workers	4.2
Other	11.3

Source: National Labour Office

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross domestic product
GUS	Central Statistical Office
IT	Information technology
LFS	Labour Force Survey
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
VET	Vocational education and training