



COOPERATION FUND
Foundation

VET Policy Report Poland 2008

**Progress in the policy
priority areas for
vocational education
and training**



CEDEFOP

European Centre
for the Development
of Vocational Training

REFERNET

Authors:

Henryk Bednarczyk, Krzysztof Symela, Ireneusz Woźniak, Ludmiła Łopacińska

This report is one of a set of European country reports on VET policy development. It has been produced as a contribution to Cedefop's third policy report which reviews progress in VET towards the policy goals of the Copenhagen process. The opinions expressed in this national report are not necessarily those of Cedefop.

The preparation of this report has been co-financed by the European Community.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	National political and socio-economic context	3
1.1	National political/policy context	3
31.2	Socio-economic context	5
1.2.1	<i>Examples of policy measures</i>	7
2	Improving access to and equity in VET	9
2.1	National policy context on improving access to and equity in VET	9
2.2	Increasing access to and attractiveness of VET	10
2.2.1	<i>Policy progress since 2002</i>	10
2.2.2	<i>Examples of policy measures</i>	10
2.3	Improving equity for specific target groups	11
2.3.1	<i>Policy progress since 2002</i>	11
2.3.2	<i>Examples of policy measures</i>	12
3	Lifelong learning through VET	13
3.1	National policy context on lifelong learning through VET	13
3.2	Facilitating transfer between VET pathways	15
3.2.1	<i>Policy progress since 2002</i>	15
3.2.2	<i>Examples of policy measures</i>	16
3.3	Improving guidance and counselling services and creating guidance structures	17
3.3.1	<i>Policy progress since 2002</i>	17
3.3.2	<i>Examples of policy measures</i>	19
3.4	Validating (identifying, assessing and recognizing) skills and competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning	20
3.4.1	<i>Policy progress since 2002</i>	20
3.4.2	<i>Examples of policy measures</i>	21
4	Improving quality of VET	22
4.1	National policy context on improving quality of VET	22
4.2	Improving quality in VET provision	23
4.2.1	<i>Policy progress since 2002</i>	23
4.2.2	<i>Examples of policy measures</i>	25
4.3	Supporting the professional development of VET teachers and trainers and increasing the attractiveness and social status of teaching and training professions	26
4.3.1	<i>Policy progress since 2002</i>	26
4.3.2	<i>Examples of policy measures</i>	27
5	Strengthening the links between VET and the labour market	28
5.1	National policy context on strengthening the links between VET and the labour market	28
5.2	Involving companies/sectoral organisations/social partners in VET provision to make it more responsive to labour market needs	29
5.2.1	<i>Policy progress since 2002</i>	29
5.2.2	<i>Examples of policy measures</i>	30
5.3	Integrating learning with working	31
5.3.1	<i>Policy progress since 2002</i>	31
5.3.2	<i>Examples of policy measures</i>	32
5.4	Integrating skill and competence needs of the labour market into VET provision	33
5.4.1	<i>Policy progress since 2002</i>	33
5.4.2	<i>Examples of policy measures</i>	34
6.	Governance and funding	35
6.1	National policy context on VET governance and funding	35
6.2	Changes made to administrative/institutional structures	36
6.2.1	<i>Policy progress since 2002</i>	36
6.2.2	<i>Examples of policy measures</i>	37

6.3	Changes made to funding arrangements for VET	37
6.3.1	<i>Policy progress since 2002</i>	37
6.3.2	<i>Examples of policy measures</i>	39
6.4	Promoting partnerships in VET policy making	40
6.4.1	<i>Policy progress since 2002</i>	40
6.4.2	<i>Examples of policy measures</i>	42
7.	EU tools and geographic mobility within VET	43
7.1	National policy context to introduction and dissemination of EU tools: EQF, ECVET, Europass and the promotion of geographic mobility within VET	43
7.2	Promoting the comparability of qualifications between different national, regional or sectoral contexts and ensuring their future compatibility with EQF	43
7.2.1	<i>Policy progress since 2002</i>	43
7.2.2	<i>Examples of policy measures</i>	44
7.3	Promoting the transfer and accumulation of qualifications between different national, regional or sectoral contexts and facilitating the future implementation of ECVET	45
7.3.1	<i>Policy progress since 2002</i>	45
7.3.2	<i>Examples of policy measures</i>	46
7.4	Promoting Europass and ensuring synergy with EQF and ECVET	47
7.4.1	<i>Policy progress since 2005</i>	47
7.4.2	<i>Examples of policy measures</i>	48
7.5	Promoting geographical mobility of learners within VET	48
7.5.1	<i>Policy progress since 2002</i>	48
7.5.2	<i>Examples of policy measures</i>	49
8	Development of VET statistics	51
8.1	Progress made on national VET statistics since 2002	51
8.2	Examples of policies/measures/projects for improving national VET statistics	52
9	VET beyond 2010	53
9.1	VET issues that should be on the national and on the EU policy agenda post 2010 and why	53
9.2	How could these issues be addressed through national and EU policy and/or targets?	54
10	Authors, bibliographical references and sources	55
10.1	Authors	55
10.2	Sources, references and websites	55
10.3	List of Acronyms	58

Theme 1. National political and socio-economic context

1.1. National political/policy context

At the national level the National Vocational Education and Training Policy is coordinated and realized by the ministers competent for education and higher education. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy supports the vocational education system conceding that modernization of training package is indispensable for effective vocational and social activation of citizens, particularly the unemployed and threatened with unemployment.

The education policy, like the whole economic and social policy in Poland, needs to be divided into two basic periods: the pre-accession period lasting until the 1st March 2004 and the period of Poland's membership in the European Union.

The first period (pre-accession), having started with the moment of Poland's entering into negotiations for the European Union accession, is characterized by the fact that according to drawn commitments, the main emphasis was directed towards the adjustment of the new law to the partnership's requirements. In the mentioned period considerable difficulties occurred in the labour market.

The rising unemployment, resulting primarily from the mismatch between vocational qualifications and the labour market's demands, and the necessity for the adjustment towards the European Union standards initiated a process of reforms' implementation, including the reform of the education system implemented in 1999. The Bologna Declaration of 1999, postulating a formation of a harmonious higher education system in Europe, had an influence on the higher education reform.

The main goal of the reform was:

- to improve the level of education of the society through publicizing the secondary and higher education,
- to equate educational opportunities,
- to improve the quality of education, understood as the integral process of education and upbringing.

The implementation of the reform's goals, including the education and vocational training after 2000, was linked to targets arising from notations of *Memorandum on Lifelong Learning* (a document accepted by The Commission of the European Communities in Brussels in October, 2000) and *The Copenhagen Declaration (The Declaration of European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training and The European Commission*, agreed in Copenhagen on 29-30th November 2002, concerning extended European cooperation in the field of vocational education and training).

In 2000 The Council of Ministers accepted *The National Strategy of Employment and Human Resources Development in 2000-2006* which outlined directions of educational activities that needed to have been taken to meet the demands of the labour market. The strategy also constituted the ground for drawing up annual national plans of activities towards employment. In 2003 *The Strategy for the Development of Lifelong Learning until 2010* was developed by The Ministry of National Education and Sport and accepted by The Council of Ministers. The main goal of the Strategy was to assign directions of lifelong learning in the context of the idea of learning through the entire life and forming a knowledge-based society. The strategy also included assignments for the government and self-government administration, research and educational institutions and social partners. The assignments' realization would enable to set the trend of the European dimension of learning through the entire life. Additionally, *The Education and Training 2010 Programme*, which was accepted by the Ministers of Education and The European Commission in 2002, had an influence on the policy of education and vocational training.

In the second period, Poland having joined the European Union in May 2004, entered into implementation of the cohesion policy, aiming at the promotion of a harmonious development of all UE-25 countries. *The National Development Plan 2004-2006* defines the socio-economic strategy of the country within the first years of Poland's membership in the UE whereas the *Sectoral Operational Programme -Human Resources Development (SOP HRD)* which main goal was: "creation of an open, knowledge-based society by assuring conditions for the development of human resources through education, training and work" enabled the realization of projects aiming to adjust the educational offer of schools, academies and vocational education establishments to the demands of the

labour market and to popularize the idea of learning through the entire life. The SOP DHR was complementary to other operational programmes anticipated in *The National Reform Program 2005-2008* for the realization of The Lisbon Strategy accepted by The Council of Ministers in December 2005.

On the basis of UE directives, The Ministry of Regional Development prepared *The National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013 (NSRF)* supporting the economic growth and employment. The mentioned document was accepted by the decision of The European Commission approving certain elements of *The National Strategic Reference Framework in May 2007*.

The strategic goal of The National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) for Poland is to create conditions for a growth of competition of a knowledge and entrepreneurship-based economy ensuring an increase of employment and a level of social, economic and spatial coherence. NSRF is a reference instrument for a preparation of operational programmes and it allows for notations of *The National Reform Programme for 2005-2008* for the realization of The Lisbon strategy, *The National Development Strategy for 2007-2015* and the *Education Development Strategy for 2007-2013*.

The goal will be achieved through realization of six detailed horizontal aims. One of the aims is *Improving quality of human capital and increasing social cohesion* (aim nr 2). All operational programmes have been directed into realization of the above-mentioned aim.

The “*Operational Programme - Human Capital*” mainly accomplishes the above-mentioned aim. The term “human capital” is a concept determining a knowledge resource, abilities and potential in each human being and the society as a whole which form a base for abilities to work, adaptation to changes in the environment and possibilities of developing new resolutions.

The issues of education and vocational training in the “*Operational Programme - Human Capital (OP HC)*” are formulated in nine priorities realized on the central and regional level. Concerning the central level the issues occur mainly in:

- Priority II. The development of human resources and adaptation of enterprises’ potential and improving the health condition of working persons
 - Priority III. High quality of the educational system,
 - Priority IV. Higher education and science,
- and on the regional level in Priority IX. The development of education and competences in the regions.

The above-mentioned strategic documents are a response to challenges identified in the socio-economic diagnosis of the country.

The “*Operational Programme - Human Capital*” is coherent to other programmes, particularly to *The Innovative Economy Operational Programme* and *The Development of Eastern Poland Operational Programme*. On the regional level the assignments included in this programme will be implemented within the scope of sixteen Regional Operational Programmes.

The following table specifies priorities of created policy for education and vocational training along with the causes and political activities.

N°	Policy priority	Main causes and reasons	Policy approach
1	An increase in the level of education of the society	Too little percentage of people with secondary or higher education	Improvement of youth and adults’ participation in educational and training process, especially people with low formal qualifications. Permanent improvement of educational level of Poles related to growing educational aspirations.
2	Assuring a high quality of education and vocational training of each level	A mismatch between programmes and changing demands of a knowledge-based economy and a low degree of ICT application in VET process	Modernization of the programme frameworks in vocational education and educational programmes and support in financing the teaching facilities of educational and training institutions, including computerization of schools Reinforcement of the system for assessing quality of vocational training in education and higher education.
3	Modernization of the system of education and teacher and academic staff’s development	Low level of teachers’ training and in-service training. Low foreign language skills and	Improvement of the effectiveness of educational system, development and employment of teachers. Supporting the

		using of ICT.	accreditation system of teacher training units. The change of vocational standards for teachers, teaching subjects, practice dimension and educational content and required competencies. Obligation for higher vocational studies to prepare teachers-to-be to teach two subjects.
4	Adjustment of the vocational education and training system to demands of the labour market through (among others) publicizing the system of distance education	Improvement of the education and qualifications of workers and people coming into the labour market	Co-operation between schools and economy within learning in practice. Introduction of modular curricula and training and national occupational qualifications standards. Promotion pedagogical innovations including distance learning
5	Development of lifelong learning	Too little access to and a lack of a complex educational offer of vocational and higher schools adjusted to demands of the economy. Lack of mechanisms for updating and developing vocational qualifications in the workplace.	Preparing tools (programmes) having an influence on shaping pro-educational attitudes of citizens. Formation of a clear system of vocational qualifications. Introduction of effective mechanisms of lifelong learning expenditures co-financing from public and private funds. Promoting e-learning.
6	Compilation and implementation of The National Qualifications Framework.	A need to validate qualifications and competencies in national and international dimensions that are acquired in formal, informal and non formal learning	Improvement of transparency and comparison of qualifications and competencies through developing National Qualifications Structure consisting of sectoral structures of qualifications including qualifications structure within higher, general, vocational and continuing education and labour market. Facilitation of mobility (educational, vocational and geographical).
7	Improvement of the labour demand forecasting system	Need to plan rationally networks of vocational schools and faculties that requiring to possess and to develop systems of gathering information on present labour market.	Building connections between labour market and vocational education. Development of national monitoring system of labour market. Improvement of employment services and development of databases.
8	Development of the Vocational Counselling System	Law awareness of responsible bodies for development of work stations for vocational counselors at schools. Lack of connections between vocational counseling for labour market and vocational counseling at schools.	Development of common counseling system at schools and beyond. Preparation staff of vocational counselors and development of vocational information system. Improvement of employment services and vocational counselors.
9	Creation of the system of cooperation between educational institutions and higher schools with employers	Lack of a precise relation between educational institutions and higher schools and the community of employers and the labour market	Searching social partners for schools and co-operation with them through formal agreements to improve the quality of vocational education (especially practical) and to enlarge its technical base through using opportunities of enterprises.
10	System support aiming to increase the number of graduates from branches of studies having a key significance for the knowledge-based economy	Lack of a high-qualified technical staff in the knowledge-based economy.	Creation of preferences for higher schools and students from scientific branches of studies

1.2. Socio-economic context

In 1998 the situation on the labour market in Poland expressed by employment indexes, vocational activity and unemployment was comparable to the indexes in the 15 Countries of the European Union. In the next few years it came to a sharp decrease of employment and vocational activity and to an increase of unemployment. That situation was brought about by rapid transformations in the labour

market between 1999 and 2002. The main negative factors that had an influence on the labour market were:

- slowdown in economic growth between 2001 and 2002,
- out-of-employment economic growth,
- solutions in the social policy leading to vocational deactivation and permanent unemployment,
- leaving the labour market by productive age groups,
- qualification and vocational mismatches between the supply of labour and the needs of employers,
- low quality of human capital compared to the average level in the UE, consolidated through a slight degree of participation in lifelong learning,
- long-term and structural character of unemployment, as well as its intense regional diversity.¹

The above mentioned factors and the situation on the labour market should create the VET policy.

Between 1998 and 2002 the number of workers decreased of over 1,5 mln (over 10%), alongside with the increase of unemployed people and the rate of unemployment (from 10,6% in 1998 to 19,9% in 2002) and a stability of the number of people vocationally active. In years 2003-2004 a reversion of the falling trend in unemployment was taking place, however an increase of the employment index and a decrease of the unemployment rate appeared.

According to data of The Central Statistical Office,² the number of workers in 2007 constituted 8126.6 thousand people and was higher up by 3.4% than in the previous year. A contribution of workers in the private sector constituted 59.5% (57.9% a year earlier). A high increase of employment was stated in the construction industry (up by 8.9%), in sales and reparations (up by 6.7%), in hotels and restaurants (up by 6.5%), in services for properties and enterprises (up by 5.0%), in financial agencies and industrial processing (each up by 4.3%). However, when compared with the corresponding period of the previous year, a decrease of the average employment rate appeared in such sections: mining (down by 1.8%), farming, hunting and forestry (down by 1.2%), manufacturing and supplying electrical energy, gas, water (down by 0.7%) and in the education section (down by 0.1%).

At the end of December 2007 labour offices registered 1746.6 thousand unemployed people (including 1017.3 thousand women). When compared with December 2006, the number of the unemployed decreased down by 562.8 thousand people.

The rate of registered unemployment in Poland has still been the highest in Europe and constituted 11.4% of the vocationally active civil population at the end of December 2007. Despite positive changes on the labour market in Poland, the distance between Poland and other countries has still been very significant.

It is assumed that the structural unemployment (arising from structural discrepancy between the labour supply and demand) constitutes over 80% of the whole unemployment.

As a result of economic transformations appeared a definite increase of the private sector's contribution in the production of domestic product. The structure of employment experienced the following changes:

- a significant decrease of employment in industry and farming (proportionately down by 585 thousand people and 1026 thousand people in 1994-2004), whereas in the sphere of services the employment increased (an increase up by 1014 thousand people in the above mentioned years),
- liquidation of a large number of workplaces in the so called "traditional" sectors – mainly in heavy industry. Additionally, there was a significant decrease of employment in the public sector (down by 55.4% in 1992-2004) and farming,
- new workplaces emerged in the private sector, in small and medium-sized enterprises (their number increased three times in the period of transformation) and in services.³

Due to the ownership transformation processes, the number of national enterprises decreased. Of total number of 3581.6 thousand enterprises operating in Poland until the end of 2003, 129.3 thousand

¹ The National Employment Strategy for 2007-2013. The Ministry of Economy and Labour. The document accepted by The Council of Ministers on 6th September 2005.

² The employment and earnings in the national economy in 2007, CSO, Warsaw 2008.

³ The National Employment Strategy for years 2007-2013. The Ministry of Economy and Labour. The document accepted by The Council of Ministers on 6th September 2005.

enterprises operated in the public sector, while 3452.3 thousand operated in the private sector. In 2007 the total number of operating enterprises amounted to 3685.6 thousand, including national – 139.5 thousand and private enterprises– 3546.1 thousand.⁴

As a negative consequence of restructuring in Poland there is a low index of employment and a high unemployment rate coming, inter alia, from the mismatch between vocational qualifications and the demand for labour. Since 1995 The Central Statistical Office (GUS) has taken serial researches in this point aiming to identify the staff deficiency in economic subjects. The results of the research of the labour demand in 2006 indicated that:

- most of all developed and free workplaces appeared in the private sector,
- the most numerous group of vacant workplaces was intended for workers with vocational education and higher education for specialists,
- most of new workplaces were created in the private sector in sizable units.⁵

Companies have and will have difficulties in finding workers with suitable qualifications. One of the causes is a mismatch between the system of education and vocational training and the demands of the labour market as well as the phenomenon of wage earning migration. The major countries of the wage earning migration for Polish people are: Great Britain, Germany, Ireland, The Netherlands and Norway. The scale of this phenomenon is not precisely known. The appearing estimated data of this quantity is varied and ranging from 300 thousand to 1.8 mln people. According to the analysis of the influence of wage earning emigration on the economy of Poland, formulated by The Department of Analyses and Forecasts of the Ministry in February 2007, it appears that in countries of different kinds of The European Economic Area, about 800-900 thousand Polish citizens take up employment yearly. The labour force outflow has intensified the problem of the lack of hands at work which in the future may lead to a slowdown of economic development.

In view of emerged gaps on the labour market in Poland and a lack of interest of national workers with low prestigious and salary jobs, primarily in sales, farming, construction industry and household services, a new possibility of employment for foreigners (mainly from the East) has opened. The scale of employment of foreigners has been small and it meets a positive social acceptance. In 2006 over 10 000 work permits were passed and over 5 000 during the first half of 2007. The Ukrainians, The Vietnamese and The Byelorussians dominated in the group of foreigners. Social effects of emigration will be definitely positive. Out of the borders of Poland emigrants will gain new vocational competencies and a possibility to invest the aggregated capital in Poland. In connection with this the implementation of the reemigration strategy through prompting will be a key issue for the government.⁶

The government undertakes actions for adjusting the demand and supply, among others, in favour of the improvement of the lifelong learning system through:

- creating infrastructure of services conducive to lifelong learning,
- increasing the access to and the quality of lifelong learning,
- making sectoral programmes (trade) enabling to gain and rise vocational qualifications needed on the labour market and implementing regulations facilitating lifelong learning.⁷

1.2.1. Examples of policy measures

Sectoral Operational Programme - Human Resources Development 2004-2006 (SOP HRD)

The programme was accepted by the Ordinance of The Minister of Economy and Labour of July 1, 2004 (Dz. U. No. 166, item 1743 with further amendments). Sectoral Operational Programme - Human Resources Development was an integral element of the realized by the Government of Poland labour market policy aiming to increase employment and limit the effects of unemployment and was

⁴ Structural changes in groups of the national economy subjects in 2007. CSO, Warsaw 2008.

⁵ The demand for Labour in 2006. The Central Statistical Office, Warsaw 2007.

⁶ 4 years of Poland's membership in the European Union. Balance of socio-economic benefits and costs connected with the membership in the UE. Office of the Committee for European Integration. The Department of Analyses and Strategies, Warsaw 2008.

⁷ The National Employment Strategy 2007-2013. The Ministry of Economy and Labour. The document accepted by The Council of Ministers on 6th September 2005.

one of the six sectoral operational programmes which were designed for the realization of the National Development Plan for 2004-2006. The programme has already been formally accomplished.

The aim of SOP HRD was to create an open, knowledge-based society by assuring conditions for the human resource development through education, training and work. The aims of SOP HRD were realized mainly through two priorities. Priority 1 "Active policy of the labour market and professional and social integration" was destined to strengthen the institutional service of clients of employment services, social services and other institutions operating for the sake of the labour market. Priority 2 "Development of knowledge-based society" was destined to provide more widespread access to education and improve the level of education.

Any actions within the programmes were addressed both to the youth and to adults. Priority 1 was mainly addressed to long-term unemployed people, the disabled, stemming from groups of special risk, as well as women and the youth. Within Priority 2 carried out actions were addressed to workers intending to raise their qualifications and were promoting lifelong learning, aiming to rise the quality of education in relation to the labour market's demands. The programme was implemented on the central and regional level. The managing authority, in this case The Minister of Economy and Labour, was responsible for the management and implementation of SOP HRD. The managing authority of SOP HRD was delegating certain tasks, in the field of management of certain priorities or actions, to Intermediate Bodies, among others to The Ministry of National Education.

SOP HRD was an innovative programme when considering the way of describing priorities and actions, their character and financing methods. It also included notations arising, inter alia, from documents: The National Strategy for Employment Growth and Human Resources Development 2000-2006, The Joint Assessment Paper on Polish Employment Policy, The Economic Strategy of The Government "Entrepreneurship-Development-Labour." A continuation of the actions of SOP HRD for years 2007-2013 will be the "*Operational Programme - Human Capital*".

National and private institutions and companies were the implementing authorities.

The projects' execution was positively assessed by final beneficiaries. The basic form of support were trainings (about 78% respondents took part) which were highly assessed (about 31% of respondents recognized the acquired support as generally "very good." About 70% of interviewees "often" used acquired qualifications and knowledge. In case of about 395 final beneficiaries at least one positive change has appeared since they started to take part in the project - an increase of incomes, a change of occupation, a vocational promotion).⁸

Nearly 872.9 thousand people took part in the programme. Most final beneficiaries (over 450 thousand people) had the actions implemented on the regional level by labour offices. Simultaneously 72.3 thousand companies were covered by the assistance until the end of 2006. Conclusions from the SOP HRD evaluation indicate that the implementation of projects directed towards supporting the labour market, adapting the personnel administration of the economy, social integration and the education system on the regional level allows to spend funds effectively.⁹

As a result of the SOP HRD evaluation conclusions were formulated for the next period. Non-governmental organizations (associations and foundations) had some difficulties in obtaining funds available within the operational programmes from The European Social Fund. The Report "Barriers limiting the activity of non-governmental organizations in the utilization of funds from The European Social Fund"¹⁰ identifies the following barriers: insufficient information about possibilities of application for funds from The European Social Fund, too complicated formal requirements, weak preparation to the projects' realization, financial barriers, inconsistency between fields of actions of organizations and types of projects financed from The European Social Fund and a weakness of the non-governmental personnel department.

⁸ The survey of final beneficiaries of "The Development of Human Resources 2004-2006." Sectoral Operational Programme Cumulative Report of 1st, 2nd and 3rd session of surveying respondents covered by the assistance as workers. The report was prepared by a team of evaluators of the ABR Opinia limited partnership, commissioned by The Minister of Regional Development, Warsaw, November 2007.

⁹ The "Operational Programme - Human Capital". The National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013. The Ministry of Regional Development, Warsaw 7th September 2007

¹⁰ Chrościcka A., Plachecki T., Sternik A. Barriers limiting the activity of non-governmental organizations in the utilization of funds from The European Social Fund. The Report for The Managing Authority of the Community Support Framework in The Ministry of Economy and Labour. Warsaw, September 2005 http://www.efs.gov.pl/NR/rdonlyres/44AFE056-C063-4708-A863E4C9585D1117/14362/Raport_NGOaEFS1.pdf

The evaluation of the programme is accomplished by The Ministry of Regional Development. In their actions, the Ministry took certain changes concerning the information and promotion policy of The European Social Fund (decentralization of promotion and information actions within the frames of the “Operational Programme - Human Capital”, an increase of the number of Regional Centers of The European Social Fund - to 50, construction of a clear web portal common for all structural funds) and certain facilitations concerning the projects` formal assessment (most enclosures to an application were not necessary any longer, simplification of the formal assessment of an application, taking a new formula of the applications generator available on-line).¹¹

Theme 2. Improving access to and equity in VET

2.1. National policy context on improving access to and equity in VET

Poland has one of the best indexes of publicizing formal education to people between the ages of 6 and 24, and at the same time one of the weakest indexes of publicizing education to the age of 5 and from the age of 25, with very weak vocational trainings publicizing, especially in domain of small and medium-sized companies.

Poland is one of the European Union countries which have the lowest level of participation in lifelong learning. According to Eurostat the percentage of people between the ages of 25 and 64 and taking part in the trainings, amounted to 4.3% in 2002 in Poland, that is below 1 mln people between the ages 25-64, whereas the average percentage for the countries of The European Union amounted to 8.4%. In the educational activity there is a slight participation of disfavored people and people at a disadvantage on the labour market, that is the unemployed, with low qualifications, older people, the disabled and from national minorities.

The traditional attitude to education consisting in not very flexible process of education and underestimation of other than formal learning still stunts the development of competencies and qualifications as well as the access to education and vocational training. What is more, good indexes of the participation in the process of formal learning of people between the ages of 6 and 24 do not move in tandem with indexes of the education effects – the level of key competences of the youth and adults is not satisfying, what may have a negative influence on the social development and educational-vocational mobility.

That is why, in the next few years it is planned to create an oversectoral structure of management of the national qualification system and to create a national qualifications framework and a validation system ensuring equity and utilization of the potential of three spheres of learning: formal, non-formal and informal (incidental). It should lead to the integration of vocational education and trainings conducted in the education system, higher education, the labour market and non-governmental organizations. The development of vocational trainings, especially in domain of small and medium-sized companies and the development of post-academic trainings is going to happen also through promotion of social partners` involvement in the process of citizens education in various places and forms as well as through the development of the whole life vocational counseling. It will be important to continue changes in vocational education programmes, evaluation systems and vocational examinations for acquiring key competencies, including organizational changes in education and vocational training aiming at publicizing module education and external examinations confirming vocational qualifications.

¹¹ Prędkopowicz D. Barriers and simplifications for non-governmental organizations. The Ministry of Regional Development.
http://www.eu.ngo.pl/files/ue.ngo.pl/public/materialy_analizy/konferencja4.12/warsztata_spoleczenstwo/spoleczenstwo_o_bywatelskie_daniel_predkopowicz.ppt#292,4 Situation Diagnosis

2.2. Increasing access to and attractiveness of VET

2.2.1. Policy progress since 2002

The growth of educational aspirations of Poles, initiated in mid 90s of the previous century, has an influence on the development of the policy of the access to and making the education and vocational training in Poland more appealing (CBOS, 2004). Between 2002-2008 the trend has still been noticeable what has an influence on transformations in the whole system of education, starting from the reform of the education system in 1989. However, older and worse educated people, although they understand the necessity to educate children, are little prone to learn by themselves and raise their vocational qualifications. The data of Eurostat also confirms the information about the low participation of Poles in various forms of lifelong learning. According to the Eurostat 4.7% of adults (aged 25-64) took part in trainings in 2006 towards the average of the 10.1% in the UE-25.

In 2003 the Government of Poland accepted to realization: “Lifelong Learning Strategy until 2010.” The mentioned document appointed the appropriate direction for changes in the education policy of the country, but only from the point of view of raising the attractiveness and participation of adults in education and vocational training. The problems of initial vocational education (IVET) and vocational education of teenagers (VET) were not included in the Strategy, which was affected by the traditional understanding of lifelong learning as the vocational education of adults. The shortage will be completed according to postulates of the National Reform Program 2005-2008, in currently prepared “*Strategy of lifelong learning*”.

Within the reform of the education system, schools and teachers had some freedom in developing school curricula. Moreover, standard national external examinations were provided, including the examination confirming vocational qualifications (since 2004). A successfully passed examination ends with a diploma confirming vocational qualifications in specified occupations and with The Europass Diploma Supplement thus increasing the informative function of delivered documents, what has been well perceived by employers and has given graduates a possibility of using The Supplement also abroad.

The earliest changes will be referring to the sphere of philosophy and organizational priorities of the education and vocational training system. The process of teaching will be oriented mostly on results. The actions will be possible through the implementation of The Copenhagen Declaration, including, inter alia: formation of The National Qualifications System (NQS) and The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and implementation of ranking achievements score system in the education and vocational training, based on the European Credit Transfer for Vocational Education and Training System (ECVET). The attempts will facilitate confirmation of results in non-formal and informal learning. It will lead to a clarity and comparability of competencies and qualifications acquired in the non-formal education system as well as will ensure a better comparability of results in various educational forms and an increase of the availability to VET services.

2.2.2. Examples of policy measures

External examinations confirming vocational qualifications

External examinations in vocational education were implemented as a means of improvement of the quality of vocational education through getting and disseminating objective and comparable results of vocational education in the country. The implementation of external vocational examinations was also a result of the policy of the country aiming to develop external examinations on every stage of education (the primary school final exam, the junior high school final exam and the Matura exam). In the nearest future vocational examinations will become a tool of a rising access to education and vocational training as a basis for validation of non-formal and informal qualifications.

The exam confirming vocational qualifications in the target vocation is a form of assessment of the level of knowledge and skills within the scope of a target vocation, assigned in standard requirements as a basis for conducting the exam, and its results presented in a diploma and a diploma supplement confirming vocational qualifications are important pieces of information for employers about the vocational usefulness of a graduate. The Central Examination Commission (CKE) cooperates with representatives of employers and ministers competent for each vocation on the formation of standards of examinations requirements and forms of examinations. Departments of vocational examinations,

called in each of the eighth Regional Examination Commissions (OKE), are responsible for organization and conducting examinations confirming vocational qualifications.

In order to provide to students and listeners a suitable level of practical education and a possibility of taking examinations confirming vocational qualifications, there is a successive realization of orders for equipping schools within the project “The equipment of Centres of Continuing Education (CKU), Practical Education Centres (CKP) and vocational schools with places for vocational examinations.” The assignment is co-financed by funds from The European Social Fund, of aggregate value of 150 mln zł. According to data of December 31st, 2007, 1 157 schools and establishments were equipped with examination places but in the nearest future it is planned to equip further 425 schools and establishments.

The first external examinations confirming vocational qualifications took place in 2004 for graduates from 2-year basic vocational schools, and in 2005 for graduates from 3-year basic vocational schools. The first examinations for graduates from technician qualifications schools were carried out in 2006. In 2007 the examination was addressed to graduates from all types of vocational schools, and in comparison to 2004 (when the exam took place for the first time) the number of students taking the exam increased nearly 10 times and amounted approximately to 230 thousand people. In 2007, the exam in 59 vocations was carried out for graduates from basic vocational schools and for technicians and post-secondary schools in 97 vocations. The most numerous groups took an examination in such vocations: a technician economist – 21 922 persons, a technician mechanic – 13 042, a cook of small catering – 11 509. Passing the exam for graduates from basic vocational schools amounted to 81.3%, while in the group of technical and post-secondary schools to 50.9% (The Central Examination Commission, 2007). Currently there has been a discussion in the country on the reasons of poor passing records among graduates from secondary vocational schools.

As part of financed projects from the European Social Fund in 2007-2013 works will be carried out on preparing the examination also for persons who gain qualifications in the system of non-school lifelong learning. Ultimately the examinations confirming vocational qualifications will be commonly available to everyone interested and will be organized a few or several times at all-year-round examination centres, and the written stage of the examination confirming vocational qualifications will be carried out with the use of computers.

2.3. Improving access to and equity in VET

2.3.1. Policy progress since 2002

An equal access to the education is one of the most important directions of the educational policy of the state. In this area, actions are concentrated above all on the following groups of students:

- disabled pupils - for them textbooks free of charge were predicted, revalidation classes, possibility of prolonging their education at least for one year on every educational stage and a lower number of pupils in units to which the disabled pupils attend;
- socially unsuited young people, threatened with social maladjustment, threatened with addictions or behavioral disorders - for them sociotherapeutic classes are carried on and the number of pupils in units to which the pupils with dysfunctions and behavioral disorders attend is decreased;
- pupils belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups – they receive free of charge textbooks for learning languages of national minorities or ethnic groups. For example within “The Government Pilot Programme for the Romany Community in the Malopolska Province for years 2001- 2003,” carried out in 13 communes of the Malopolska Province, a system of supporting Romany children studying in integration units was introduced, consisting, among others, in treating pupils of Romany origins as two-language or foreign-language pupils, in employing supporting teachers and Romany assistants who provide versatile help to children and Romany young people. This solution is carried on, at the national level, within the frames of the “Programme for the Romany community in Poland;”
- pupils and teachers from rural areas - preparing teachers from rural schools for taking studies at teachers' training colleges or foreign-language studies in order to gain qualifications needed for teaching a foreign language within the programme “Recruiting the scarce teaching staff in rural areas.” Liquidation of barriers connected with commuting to the nearest school as part of the programme “Small School”, of which holding small country schools is a purpose. Grants are given

aiming at developing interests and artistic talents, intellectual and sports children and the youth from rural areas in forms of the non- school education system, scholarships are divided among the youth from country areas, taking and carrying their education in secondary-schools within the frames of “The Programme of leveling educational opportunities of the youth from rural areas”

The disabled still remain a community with a relatively low level of education. Almost half of the disabled have only primary education, and it causes problems with entering into the labour market and with keeping the employment. There is improvement in educating the disabled, however, an educational system still remains unsuited to the needs of the disabled. Schools, on account of pedagogic and organizational problems, treat disabled persons on different principles than the fully fit ones. A fact that educating disabled persons doesn't often match to the level and the title they receive is one of consequences, since schools abuse facilitations or special education courses in teaching the disabled. The vocational education is often maladjusted to the needs of the local labour market, as well as to the disability. A high probability exists that a disabled person will be, for this reason, permanently vocationally deactivated.

Persons being subjected to social exclusion, on account of one's situation in life, are not able to fulfill their necessities of life what in consequence leads to the poverty and a limited involvement in the vocational, public and family life. For these persons, a social employment is offered through the participation in the Centre of Social Integration. The Centre of Social Integration is an organizational unit realizing the vocational and social reintegration through the following services:

- creating abilities allowing to fill social roles and achieve social positions accessible to persons not subjected to social exclusion;
- acquiring vocational skills and training for a job, retraining or increasing vocational qualifications;
- learning how to plan one's life and fulfill one's own needs by one's own tries, especially through the alternative of achieving own incomes by employment or business activity;
- teaching the ability of rational managing of owned financial means.

Long-term unemployed persons – it is assessed that in Poland a phenomenon of social exclusion for the reason of unemployment may concern from 500 thousand to 3 mln people, above all the long-term unemployed. The action “Social and vocational integration of groups threatened with social exclusion,” carried out within the scope of Phare 2003 “National programme of human resources development” was dedicated to the unemployed. Since 1st December 2005, as part of the *Sectoral Operational Programme - Human Resources Development* a project directed to the unemployed and working women was carried: “On express train to the knowledge: the first station Training, the second Employment.” The project supported 390 women who took part in the vocational training, the vocational, legal and psychological counseling as well as they were guaranteed, as part of the project, the care over children and dependent persons.

An example of a different action, realized since 2006 and directed to unemployed and vocationally passive women, was the project “Preparing unemployed women after 50 years of age from the land of the Mazovian province for providing protective services amongst older and disabled persons.” Gaining new vocational skills or increasing qualifications and supporting beneficiaries on the labour market in the country and abroad in the sphere of providing protective services have been the purposes of the project. Within the Project participants attended a week's training (50 classes).

2.3.2. Examples of policy measures

The Community Initiative EQUAL

The Community Initiative EQUAL, was announced in Poland for years 2004-2006 (actions and financing finishing in 2008) and has been a part of the strategy of the European Union aimed at formation of new and better workplaces and assuring that nobody would be deprived of the access. One of nine thematic spheres undertaken in Poland concerned “Promoting lifelong learning and inclusive work practices which encourage the recruitment and retention of those suffering from discrimination and inequality in connection with the labour market.”

Polish actions of EQUAL were a supplement to actions carried out within the scope of the “Sectoral Operational Programme - Human Resources Development” and the “Operational Programme - Regional Development”. Almost 43 thousand people were surrounded by support within the frames of the EQUAL project. The number of agreements for projects co-financing amounted nearly to 300, to

the total amount of about 700 mln zł. The year 2007 was a period of intensive realization of actions consisting in testing innovative methods and tools for improving the situation of discriminated or threatened with discrimination groups on the labour market: ex-offenders, immigrants, people 50+, long-term unemployed, women after a long break in their careers, the disabled etc. The actions were aimed at disseminating and including the results that had been worked out in previous years of the project's realization to the policy and the practice of institutions and organizations operating in the area of the labour market's policy and social integration.

For example, within the scope of Activity 2: trainings were carried out for penitentiary employment services, probation and public employment services; 78 social enterprises were started; activity of e-learning platforms was initiated. Within the frames of Activity 3: proposals of legislative changes were worked out in the area of the disabled employment and the pension jurisdiction; barriers in the development of social enterprises were identified and proposals of legal changes were worked out; databases of best traineeships within the education and vocational counseling were worked out.

Moreover, in 2007 the Managing Institution (the Ministry of Regional Development) accepted 4 projects supplementary to the EQUAL Initiative in order to disseminate its results and include them into the policy and practice. The projects are carried out by "The Cooperation Fund" Foundation (from July 2007- September 2008). They have cross-thematic character and regard the results and products supporting: lifelong learning, social economy, gender mainstreaming and rural areas. In the result analysis carried out under the project "Promoting the EQUAL results supporting the lifelong learning" 111 EQUAL results supporting lifelong learning have been recommended as good practices worth implementing on the wider scale. The project focused on mostly promoting the results and products supporting equal access to lifelong learning for particular groups threatened with social exclusion: people 50+, the disabled, women with children (combining family life with learning and career), long-term unemployed (development of social economy through development of lifelong learning opportunities). The project activities included creation and distribution of the database of EQUAL results supporting lifelong learning, promotional campaign in media promoting EQUAL results for aforementioned target groups and the idea of lifelong learning, debates with social partners and parliament members about the changes in the law necessary to increase the access to lifelong learning for the above mentioned groups threatened with social exclusion and to implement EQUAL results in this field on the wider scale.

Theme 3. Lifelong Learning through VET

3.1. National policy context on lifelong learning through VET

The main role in initiating and controlling the educational policy within the scope of lifelong learning, performs The Minister of National Education (MEN), cooperating with the Minister of Labour and Social Policy and other ministers.

The Strategy for the Development of Lifelong Learning until 2010 accepted in 2003 by the Government of the Republic of Poland, is realized on various levels of administration departments (central, regional and local) with the participation of social partners. It includes, among others, tasks concerning a cohesion between the formal and non-formal education system. According to the traditional approach to the idea of lifelong learning (LLL), it focuses only on adults' continuous training. The strategy is not superior to all levels of education and training. At present, works are being carried on a complex, coherent and oversectoral strategy for lifelong learning according to the schedule of The National Reform Programme 2005-2008.

The main obstacle for creating a complex and coherent LLL strategy, is consolidated before political transformations and lasting to these days, a domination of the formal education. In the legal system, in actions of administration on various levels and in actions of institutions and social partners there still has been a tendency of reducing the LLL idea to the formal education and training of adults. One of the effects of this domination is a delay in the development of recognizing competences acquired outside the formal education, in spite of a visible progress in implementing other elements of LLL

strategy. Limitations are also created through modest supplies of public means, low incomes of the population and the weakness of social partners: the majority of employers, especially small and medium-sized enterprises are not interested in trainings of their employees, while non-governmental organizations do not have any solid bases of property and finances. Among others, The Polish Craft Association, being in charge of vocational trainings of juveniles and The Federation of Science and Technology Associations “NOT” belong to exceptions.

Also a lack of central institutions dealing with compiling and actualization of school curricula determining a profile of graduates from different types of schools, and an institution coordinating actions connected with identifying, assessing and recognizing qualifications are the obstacles for creating a coherent LLL strategy. Changes of the Government in 2005-2007 were the organizational reason for delaying works on the LLL strategy.

A created at present strategy will include all levels of the education and training - from supporting parents bringing small children up and the pre-school education to higher education and continuous education of adults. This strategy will not replace the even more detailed strategies for the development of the education of children and the youth (including general and vocational education) and higher education. However, a criterion of precedence over these strategies will be fulfilled, establishing the following directions:

- the development of connections between individual levels of education and trainings and formal with informal education and non-formal learning,
- a competent approach towards the educational and training contents and assuring its quality.

On account of a great regional and local diversity of the human capital, the success of the LLL strategy in Poland will depend chiefly on the cohesion between nationwide directions of actions and the regional policy, in other words local and regional detailed solutions. Supporting the development of the human capital in rural and industrially degraded areas is particularly important, with keeping the mentioned priorities and directions of actions.

The majority of planned actions will be financed with the participation of European funds on the basis of regulations in the “*Operational Programme - Human Capital 2007-2013*”, co-financed from funds of the European Social Fund. This programme is included in the package of operational programmes of *The National Strategic Reference Framework*, of which the following documents are the basis: *The National Development Strategy 2007-2015*, *The National Reform Programme 2005-2008* and *Strategic Partnership Outlines for cohesion*.

Interveners of the state predict basic directions, inter alia:

- starting an oversectoral structure of management of the national qualifications system, creating a national qualification framework and a validation system providing the equality and the use of the potential in three learning areas,
- integration of trainings in domain of education, higher education, labour and social organizations, based on shared description principles and qualifications` granting and principles for supporting studying persons,
- citizens` motivating and facilitating learning in different places and different forms, promotion of the engagement of many subjects into facilitating the education of citizens, the development of lifelong counselling,
- promotion of connections between the education and training and the vocational and social practice (teaching at work and through work), acquiring qualifications at work, not only through education and training,
- development of trainings, in it vocational training courses, especially in the area of small and medium-sized enterprises, post-academic trainings, among others based on new, “demand-included” models of the trainings` financing,
- strengthening the quality assurance mechanisms in education on the basis of the assessment of education and trainings` effects,
- strengthening trainings of the staff important for accelerating the development of the country (teachers, training staff, personnel of the modern economy, public administration and health care),
- continuation of changes in school curricula, systems of assessment and examinations towards acquiring competences important in life, in it organizational changes in secondary education based on modular education.

From 1st January 2007 to the end of 2013 The Foundation of the Education System Development System runs a new educational programme of the European Union - Life Long Learning (LLL). This programme supports the mobility, the active European citizenship and the cross-cultural dialogue; it also promotes learning foreign languages and the European integration. It is directed to every age persons, regardless of financial or health situation. It helps in self-realization, it develops the spirit of enterprise. Detailed programmes are responsible for the realization of purposes of the programme “learning through the entire life” in individual sectors: Comenius, Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci Grundtvig, Jean Monet, the oversectoral Programme.

3.2. Facilitating transfer between VET pathways

3.2.1. Policy progress since 2002

Raising the level of education of the society is the main purpose of the development of education in Poland so that the secondary education could become more common - (70%) in the age group between 25 and 45 years until 2013, with assuring at the same time a high quality of education. Simultaneously, there is a necessity for permanent raising of the level of adults qualifications, above all of vocational qualifications and general competences essential for functioning in the contemporary society.

A positive phenomenon, having been observed since the last few years, is a steady growth of the level of Poles` education, connected with the growth of educational aspirations. It arises probably from the fact that it is easier to find a job for the best educated people. The highest index of employment applies to persons in the age group 25-44 years and with higher education. In turn, the highest unemployment rate characterizes young persons (15-24 years) and with basic vocational education or lower education (Situation and forecasting tendencies in the labour market in 2006, Warsaw, May 2006 y.).

Progress is also visible with reference to trainings organized for unemployed and looking for a job persons through public services. In 2006 altogether 147 39 persons were directed to trainings, what constituted 5.5% of the whole of the unemployed (in 2005 - 4.8%). In 2007 altogether 175357 unemployed persons were directed to trainings, i.e. about 9% of the whole of unemployed persons.

A facilitation of the transfer between VET pathways in Poland takes place mainly thanks to strategic documents accepted by the government between 2002-2007, among them: “*The Strategy for the Development of Lifelong Learning until 2010*” and “*The Development of Education Strategy for 2007-2013.*” Priority actions resulting from these documents predict, among others: increasing the accessibility to lifelong learning, raising the quality of lifelong learning, an increase of investments in human resources, creating information stores in the scope of lifelong learning and the development of advisory services as well as awakening people to the role and the meaning of lifelong learning. Thanks to the “*Sectoral Operational Programme - Human Resources Development*” actions are being carried out, aimed at adapting the educational offer of schools, academies and vocational education establishments to the needs of the labour market.

For the educational offer (it concerns over 200 vocations taught in the school system) there are modular curricula implemented which have a flexible structure that allow to update, modify, supplement and exchange modules and modular units in the modules, depending on individual needs or resulting from scientific-technological progresses. An important quality of these programmes is an orientation on getting concrete effects in the form of knowledge, skills and competences of learning persons. These programmes can be used for organizing the education at schools and for organizing non- school forms of adults education.

The offer of school curricula is being systematically extended and modified. Within the project “*Development of innovative programmes in vocational education*” , co-financed from funds of the European Social Fund, modular programmes for vocational education and educational packages (for a teacher and for a pupil) have been compiled between 2005 and 2008 to the order of the Ministry of National Education (MEN), for supporting the process of education for about 3500 packages constituting the teaching support for 131 modular curricula.

Taking the development of human resources as one of priorities of a social-economic progress, as well as answering to challenges resulting from creating a knowledge-based economy, The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MPiPS) between 2002 and 2004 were carrying out actions within the frames of *Phare 2000 Project - “National Vocational Training System.*” As a result modular curricula

for vocational training were worked out and disseminated, based on the concept of the International Labour Organization (ILO) of Modules of Employable Skills (MES).

Facilitating the transfer between VET pathways also takes place thanks to results of the project realized to the order of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, and concerning the development of National Professional Qualifications Standards (see chapter 5.1) which are now more commonly used for creating and actualization of the educational and vocational training offer and recognizing vocational qualifications and competences.

Even though the progress is visible in the scope of vocational guidance and counselling services, it is necessary to correlate vocational guidance and counselling services functioning in the educational system with the vocational guidance carried out by institutions of the labour market. It is also advisable to create the youth information network which will facilitate making decisions in choosing their vocational footpaths. A distribution of methodic and didactic materials for planning vocational carriers of pupils was prepared and started. Until the end of 2005, a publication describing 193 professions was published. In 2006 didactic and methodic materials for planning a vocational career were handed over to schools and establishments.

A growing demand of the Polish economy for high qualifications and a progress in using by Polish citizens - mainly the youth and high qualified workers - possibilities that are given by a wage earning migration cause that a liquidation of mismatches is one of important challenges, with which the Polish labour market and the VET system must cope in recent years. All listed areas of the support for VET will be continued in the “*Operational Programme - Human Capital*”.

3.2.2. Examples of policy measures

The National Vocational Training System (NVTS)

Phare 2000 project of “The National Vocational Training System” was realized in 2002-2004 and was a consequence of implementing a policy described in *The National Strategy for Employment Growth and Human Resources Development 2000-2006* which postulated, among others, the development of lifelong learning, assuring:

- universality of trainings - availability for a wide group of vocationally active persons,
- a high quality of the training and a clarity of acquired qualifications,
- a speed and flexibility of trainings and adapting the contents of trainings to the requirements of professional work.

A legitimacy of the realization of this policy results from the need for creating conditions supporting a more universal participation in vocational education of people who left the school system. On the one hand, because the school will be putting a greater emphasis on general education, on the other hand - since a technical and organizational progress forces permanent acquiring or raising new vocational qualifications. In order to carry out the idea of lifelong learning (LLL), the purpose of the project was to create bases of an effectively functioning system of adults lifelong learning, in it:

- reforming the process of making decisions in the area of employment and educational policy,
- providing high-quality trainings offered as part of continuous education and a clarity of qualifications,
- providing to adults a fast and flexible training adjusted to the labour market’s demands.

The following actions supported the achievement of the mentioned above purposes:

- Action 1: enlarging the information base and improving tools of public statistics for regular analysis of lifelong learning, in it making international comparisons.
- Action 2: compiling a collection of national vocational qualifications standards, based on the analysis of the requirements of workstations.
- Action 3: compiling and disseminating modular programmes for vocational training, based on the conception of Modules of Employable Skills (MES) of the International Labour Organization.

An indicator of the success is, among others:

- compiling a methodology on examining the adults’ educational activity,
- compiling descriptions of vocational qualifications standards for 40 occupations,
- compiling 89 modular training programmes for occupations/specialities indicated by The Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Policy, and disseminating information about them;

- designing a model of organizational and legal solutions determining a procedure of creating, approving and using vocational training modular programmes;
- organizing the training for 600 specialists, dealing with the adults` education, preparing for developing and disseminating modular programmes, according to needs of the labour market;
- conducting disseminating seminars for 500 participants;
- designing and implementing a computer system, containing databases on vocational qualifications standards and on modular vocational trainings (the address of the database: www.standardyiskolenia.praca.gov.pl)

The target groups, to which the results of the project were dedicated, were organizations dealing with organizing the education and vocational training and with planning the development of human resources, as well as The Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Policy which was the main beneficiary. The results of the project were integrated with the quality of education and vocational training improvement policies included in the “Sectoral Operational Programme - Human Resources Development” and currently realized the “Operational Programme - Human Capital”.

A new “generation” of vocational training curricula, which came into existence in Phare 2000 project, is only a beginning of the direction leading to the improvement in the quality of educational services and to the development of qualifications and competences of “human resources” in our country. The hitherto gathered intellectual potential (experts, authors of programmes, reviewers, training institutions) constitute a good base for a continuation of works at further phases of the NVTs development. The urgent actions for the future are: a permanent reinforcement of the computer system with new modular programmes for vocational training and their further dissemination and promotion, as well as a consequent improvement of trainers` competences and introducing a system of incentives for employers so that they invest in trainings and their workers in order to improve qualifications systematically.

3.3. Improving guidance and counseling services and creating guidance structures

3.3.1. Policy progress since 2002

Vocational guidance in Poland is subordinated to two departments, to the department of education – i. e. The Ministry of National Education (guidance for the learning youth) and to the department of labour – i. e. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (guidance for adults).

Legal solutions enabling to develop a coherent guidance system in schools and the schools` environment were legislated by the department of education in 2001-2003.¹² Current priority actions within the development of a coherent guidance system in schools and the schools` environment are: preparing a staff of vocational counsellors, creating a vocational information system within the frames of PLOTEUS II educational portal, compiling and disseminating on methodology and didactic materials for planning vocational careers of pupils and enriching the workshop of vocational counsellors, activation of managing bodies and directors of schools for conducting an active employment policy with reference to vocational counsellors, as well as strengthening the connections between the educational and vocational guidance organized by the department of education, and the adults guidance organized by the department of labour.

In the light of the legal rules, being in force, guidance services and the educational and vocational information are offered in schools and psychological and pedagogic centres. These services are voluntary and free. However, the number of counsellors seems to be disproportionate to the needs. For over 6 mln children and adolescents attending schools in 2006, only 20 thousand pedagogues/psychologists were employed (some of them employed part-time), including only 508 professionally-prepared vocational counsellors. On account of costs, managing organs of schools rarely give their permission for employing vocational counsellors at schools.

According to data of the Education Information System (SIO), the number of vocational counsellors employed in all types of schools rose from 346 in the school year 2005/2006 to 508¹³ in the school year 2006/2007. In 565 psychological and pedagogic centres, only 94 qualified professional

¹² Report on the implementation of the programme „Education and Training 2010 in Poland between 2005 and 2007,” The Ministry of National Education, Warsaw, 30th April 2007.

¹³ Education Information System of The Ministry of National Education – http://sio.men.gov.pl/informacje/informacje_biezace.php

counsellors were employed. Additionally, about 7 thousand pedagogues and psychologists were employed, among whom only one thousand were realizing assignments in the scope of vocational guidance. One of the reasons of a small number of vocational counsellors in schools and psychological and pedagogic centres is, among others, a requirement of having by them prescribed professional qualifications which acquiring is connected with the necessity for attending expensive post-graduate studies. In order to solve this problem, The Ministry of National Education initiated a project concerning post-graduate studies for teachers preparing to fill the role of a vocational counsellor. Between 2005 and 2007 about 4500 professional advisors were educated within the scope of grants from funds of the European Social Fund, but only a small number of them was employed in schools and centres.

The National Centre for Supporting Vocational and Continuing Education (KOWEZiU) compiled a package of didactic and methodic materials for planning the pupils' vocational career which was disseminated at schools and educational establishments. The development of cooperation and coordination within the frames of guidance services is supported also through initiatives of social partners, among them having been operating since 2000 and considered as the most important the All-Polish Forum of Vocational Guidance, which has been connected with the Career Development Institute in Warsaw since 2004.

An advisory role for graduates from all types of secondary and higher schools perform The Youth Work Agencies, Commune Information Centres (so far 963), as well as trade associations, while for students from higher schools – Academic Career Offices, which development is supported from funds of the Labour Fund. At schools, 344 School Career Centres are functioning, established between 2003 and 2005 thanks to grants of The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. Counselling services for the youth being under the risk of public ruling out (young people above the age of 15), unemployed adolescents in the age between 18-25 years, pupils and students perform Voluntary Labour Regiments through The Methodological Centre for Vocational Information, Mobile Vocational Information Centres (49 units), the Youth Career Centres (23 units) and The Work Club (110 units). In 2006 over 100 thousand people took advantage of the vocational guidance offered as part of departure sessions of Mobile Vocational Information Centres.

Vocational guidance also provides vocational counsellors employed within the frames of public employment services to unemployed people (782 counsellors at the end of 2005). In 2005 one counsellor was directed to 4 614 unemployed persons, which means that in spite of a steady growth of the number of counsellors, it is still insufficient.

With the over-departmental cooperation within the scope of the Euroguidance project, The National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance came into existence - (NRC VG). The Euroguidance was implemented until 2006 by The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and The National Support Centre for Vocational and Lifelong Education (NSC VLE). A continuation of works was planned in the new edition of programmes of the European Commission for years 2007-2013, within the scope of Lifelong Learning Programme.

In the “*Operational Programme Human Capital 2007-2013*” actions were planned for the development of the education and vocational counselling system, including the improvement of the access to services in vocational guidance for pupils.

This task will be conducted, among others, through implementing the programme *Telephone Vocational Counsellor*. It was also planned to extend the range of the educational portal Scholaris with pieces of information connected with educational and vocational guidance, to compile a specialist bulletin for pupils and vocational counsellors and also to equip educational institutions providing educational and vocational counselling with diagnostic tools and methodological materials.

3.3.2. Examples of policy measures

“Your knowledge – Your success” –Education 2006 “Education-Knowledge-Work”

The project was realized in 2006-2007 by the Voluntary Labor Corps (VLC) to the order of The Minister of Economy and Labour within the scope of the “Sectoral Operational Programme - Human Resources Development 2004-2006,” according to the priority “Active policy of the labour market and professional and social integration” within the frames of “Promoting active social policy through supporting groups at special risk.” The project is widened by the continuation of the project “Your

knowledge - Your success,” realized by the VLC 2004-2005 within the frames of the Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development 2004-2006 and it is coherent with the National Strategy for Social Integration for 2004-2006.

The main purpose of the project is: social and vocational activation of the youth at risk of public ruling out through their return to the education system, getting a profession and becoming independent. Detailed purposes included:

- directing to the youth all kinds of services in vocational, psychological and legal guidance, helping the youth in the choice of educational directions, acquiring appropriate qualifications and skills by the youth in professions in demand on the labour market, appropriately to their interests and abilities
- increasing and acquiring abilities to use a chosen foreign language,
- acquiring practical computer literacy within basic programmes, in it also within the scope of the European Computer Driving License (ECDL),
- learning methods of active looking for a job.

The project becomes a part of the action 1.5 scheme b SOP HRD into the following types of projects: trainings of adolescents from groups threatened with social ruling out and educational and tutorial workshops for difficult adolescents. Within the scope of the project the following actions were taken: workshops, trainings, professional and psychological counselling.

Final beneficiaries of the project were adolescents at the age group of 15-18 years (group I) and at the age group of 18-24 years - group II (altogether about 8000 participants), coming from families and communities threatened with social pathologies, poverty and long-term unemployment, not-studying and not-working. The recruitment of participants was taking place in close cooperation with appropriate self-governmental services and organizational units of the local government such as: schools, child caring and tutorial institutions, social support centres, non-governmental organizations dealing with social problems.

The achieved results are indicators of the success, in it:

- a return to the education system or continuation of the education or trainings by 85% of beneficiaries from group I (3 400 participants of the project),
- acquiring professional qualifications by 85% from group II (3400 participants of the project),
- taking the employment or a business activity by 30% of beneficiaries from group II (1200 participants),
- an improvement of the individual self-assessment and self-esteem, activation of attitudes,
- increasing motivation for education or acquiring vocational qualifications,
- increasing motivation for looking for a job,
- obtaining the ability to use computer technologies, move on the labour market (increase of the knowledge about a local labour market), deal with stress, an increase of a feeling of responsibility for performed tasks.

These actions would not be possible without the support of The European Social Fund on account of limited budget funds of the Voluntary Labour Regiments and on account of a difficult financial situation of final beneficiaries and their families. In order to get permanent results, the executor was using tested in other countries activation methods and methods for involving final beneficiaries such as: the empowerment, the participation, the interactive education. Obtained results can be multifiled in the network of organizations of the Voluntary Labour Regiments, as well as in non-governmental organizations and institutions dealing with adolescents at risk of social ruling out.

3.4. Validating (identifying, assessing and recognizing) skills and competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning

3.4.1. Policy progress since 2002

In Poland elements of the National Qualifications System have already been functioning, or rather its individual subsystems (the education system, the system of higher education, the system of qualifications and professional entitlements regulated with regulations of separate ministers, the system of craft, etc.); however a legal integration of the mentioned above subsystems has not set in yet.

Directed for this purpose actions are a fundamental element of *Lifelong Learning Strategy* and *The Operational Programme "Human Capital 2007-2013."* The improvement of a degree of clarity and recognizing qualifications and competences, including qualifications and competencies acquired through non-formal and informal learning, is one of the priorities of the "*Lifelong Learning*"¹⁴ Programme. It is being predicted, among others, that researches and analyses will be carried out, referring to acquiring, assessing and recognizing competences and qualifications appearing in the Polish labour market. The National Qualifications System will be established, determining a legal integration and a close-up of formal subsystems for acquiring qualifications. Rules and procedures for recognizing and confirming competences acquired through informal education and training system will be established and implemented. Regulations of the accepted by The Council of Ministers on 23rd January 2007 bill of *The Act on some medical professions*, introducing the mentioned above procedures with reference to 20 medical professions constitute an example of solutions aimed at compiling and implementing the rules and procedures for recognizing and confirming competences acquired through informal education and training system.

Supporting organizational and institutional solutions of the National Qualifications System will be an essential issue. Standards of vocational qualifications, compiled within the scope of the realized in 2006-2008 project of The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy "*Development and popularization of national professional qualifications standards*", will be useful.

The Working Group was appointed by the Minister of Science and Higher Education in October 2006 for conducting works on the National Qualifications Structure within the scope of higher education. The purpose of works on the National Qualifications Structure is gaining: versatile information concerning competences acquired by graduates within the scope of individual educational pathways, information concerning a possibility of continuous education in the aspect of lifelong learning, comparability of educational effects (in the national and international dimension), educational standards based on educational effects, as well as a greater diversity of studies allowing for better adaptation of graduates to the labour market.

The system of external examinations is constantly improved, allowing adults who do not attend school (but acquire knowledge and abilities through self-education) to obtain school certificate for adults (of all types). An example of solutions promoting the system of external examinations (allowing adults to obtain the title of diagnostics laboratory technician) is the act of July 27th, 2001 (amended in 2006) on *laboratory diagnostics* which implemented external examinations as the alternative for the hitherto stationary mode of post-graduate studies within the scope of medical analytics. A similar example is the system of apprentice and master chamber examinations, which is legally valid in Poland and known in the countries of the European Union. Chamber examinations are accessible to various groups of candidates, for both juvenile graduates of the apprenticeship and adults searching for possibilities of validating qualifications acquired through vocational work and theoretical preparation. Regulations enabling validation of vocational qualifications, acquired within vocational experience or self-conducted business activity, through the so called external examinations were specified in 2006. The regulation also implemented mechanisms enabling to assure partial vocational qualifications, acquired as a result of accomplishment of a given non- school form, as well as accepting them at taking education in schools for adults, which provide vocational education. Poland participates, within the scope of Leonardo da Vinci programme, in creating tools for certifying qualifications acquired through informal learning. At present, two projects of Poznań Polytechnics are realized on certifying qualifications within the scope of telecommunication, in it for people who did not accomplished formal technical education but passed the exam for the mentioned above certificate on-line.

In spite of the fact that the results validation system of non-formal and informal learning does not exist in Poland yet, a lot of elements of such a system can be identified. The meaning of validation of non-formal and informal learning is commonly acknowledged and legal solutions that accompany it are being successively adjusted to the changing needs within this scope.

While validation and acknowledgement of non-formal and informal learning depends de jure on system and legal solutions that are being gradually implemented, de facto validation subsystems already exist in some craft professions, as well as in other sectors. A lot of initiatives of this type are

¹⁴ Decision of the European Parliament and the European Council of 15th November 2006 establishing the programme of actions within the scope of lifelong learning. Nr 1720/2006/WE

undertaken within the scope of the activity of the third sector, as well as interesting analytical and developmental projects are conducted in the academic sector. A considerable part of these initiatives are supported within the scope of European programmes (e.g. EQUAL). Therefore, it is advisable to accelerate the process of the effects assessment and validation of other than formal learning. A support for validation system in Poland will be given through adaptation in Poland until 2011 of the European Credit Transfer System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET).

3.4.2. Examples of policy measures

Validation of non-formal competencies acquired through experience at work.

As a result of the realization of the project “*Let’s Build Together*” in 2006-2008, within the scope of the Community Initiative EQUAL, innovative solutions were tested, such as e.g. a model of competencies validation acquired through non-formal learning. The main executor of the project was Warmia and Mazury Vocational Training Centre in Olsztyn with cooperation of domestic partners, i.e.: Olsztyn Chamber of Construction, Agricultural Property Agency Field Organization in Olsztyn, Polish Corporation of Sanitary, Heating and Gas Installation Companies. A supranational partnership in the project was formed by: Fonction Encadrement De Chantier En Rehabilitation Du Bati Ancien En Milieu Urb (AREF) (France), Trans-Formations (France), “Adaptalmanzora” Tic@1 Project (Spain).

Realized in the project “*Let’s Build Together*” validation of non-formal vocational competences had a regional character and aimed at: raising qualifications of construction staff, increasing the role of the economic self-government, facilitating the access to the labour market, disseminating new technologies, increasing the quality of construction staff’s education.

Main ideas of competencies validation were accepted in the project with the use of a French model which is effective in practice for validating qualifications through validation of acquired experiences. However, methodological postulates of the process of vocational competences validation predicted, among others:

- providing information and promoting a new approach towards the assessment of competences in a local community,
- working out procedures and tools of competences validation,
- preparing a technological and didactic infrastructure of places for examining,
- preparing examiners for assessing the value of professional competences,
- including to the process of competences validation representatives of employers, in it trade self-governments,
- assuring quality of competences validation and clear mechanisms for certificating.

All interested persons can subject themselves to validation of vocational competences - both working and unemployed persons; there are no limitations of the age, sex or education. Every person can submit his/her vocational competences to assessment but the person must report his/her access through filling an application form (two kinds of an application form – for an installation and sanitary fitter and for a gas installation fitter), in which the person will describe his/her integral qualifications and will state that his/her knowledge and vocational skills have been acquired through experience at work and have not been validated by any official document (a diploma or a certificate).

A result of the project “*Let’s Build Together*” is a tool set for preparing a balance of competences of workers and the unemployed within the scope of one, chosen construction speciality and testing this solution in practice. The competences validation system will enable workers and the unemployed to get a certificate confirming skills possessed by them, without a necessity for taking part in a full training cycle. Through having such a validated by employers diploma, they are becoming more believable thus having a greater chance of keeping, changing or getting the employment.

A partnership character of the project “*Let’s Build Together*,” realized with economic self-governments of the construction sector and strongly supported by the Supranational Partnership, allowed for carrying out the first in Poland piloting for over two hundred people in the scope of validating qualifications acquired through experience, in such professions: an installation and sanitary fitter and a gas installation fitter.

A possibility of validating skills acquired through experience in Warmia and Mazury Province met a very positive acceptance and at first it even exceeded expectations of the implementers of the project, who assessed that potential candidates would declare on average three partial qualifications for validating. However, the reality was a little bit different because in almost 80% cases candidates reported for validation all possible qualifications concerning a given profession. As a result 283 candidates entered into the pilot undertaking (at different age and with different education) and thanks to it 186 people obtained formal qualifications validation in the occupation-an installation and sanitary fitter and 87 people in the occupation - a gas installation fitter. The majority of the examined candidates (83%) are workers, however not only from construction or installation trade companies. Among people validating qualifications acquired through experience were also Border Guard Officers, car mechanics, farmers, drivers, wood technology technicians, welders, restorers and salesmen. The youngest candidate was 20 years old, the oldest – 66 years old. The most numerous group was a group representing the age between 25 and 47.¹⁵

Successful effects of the implementation of methodology accepted in the project “Let’s Build Together” entitle the implementers to disseminate the result “validation of competencies acquired through experience” and join it with the general current of policy. Validation of competencies is a solution engaging a wide number of subjects and institutions. It is necessary

for its own effectiveness that the process of competencies validation will be carried out by an institution having the appropriate authority, prestige and confidence among entrepreneurs. A participation of employers` representatives in the process of validation, e. g. trade self-governments is the additional advantage strengthening the certificate’s reliability.

Taking into consideration a great interest and positive results of “non-formal competences validation” it seems to be purposeful to take further actions in over regional and nationwide scale, for developing and implementing mechanisms validating qualifications acquired through non-formal learning, with cooperation of interested economic self-governments and other subjects of the economy, of the education and the labour market. Actions within this scope should be coherent with system projects, concerning especially the National Qualifications Framework and the National Qualifications System.

Theme 4. Improving quality of VET

4.1. National policy context on improving quality of VET

Improving quality of lifelong learning system is one of priority actions of the education policy in Poland. There are a lot of reasons for this. However, three of these reasons seem to be particularly important. The first one is connected with a noticeable decrease of the level of teaching and an expanding scale of school failures of pupils. The second reason is connected with a progressing process of integration in Europe and implementation of “the Education and Training Programme 2010.” The third important reason refers to the issue of assuring quality of offered services within VET, which is a central element of “Lifelong Learning Strategy 2010.”

In Poland the system of lifelong learning is based on devices guaranteeing a high quality of provided educational services, what from the one side is a result of decentralization and a lack of coordinating instruments, from the other side the insufficient monitoring of an interaction between the supply and the demand for educational services, does not allow to state, whether the offered forms and directions of education meet the needs of individuals and employers. Establishing a system of accreditation for institutions providing continuous education in non-school forms with retaining freedom within the scope of submitting oneself to accreditation, was the first step which was taken within this scope. Since December 2003 the Ordinance of the Minister of Education has been implemented, on accreditation of establishments and centres providing continuous education in non-school forms. Accreditation is one of external means for assuring quality of the educational process and its effects. Measuring quality of a school or an establishment is being conducted internally by a headmaster in every school year, while external quality measurement conducts the schools superintendent, not less

¹⁵ Narwojsz H., Krawczyński C., Symela K., Zwiefka K. (ed.): *Validation of non-formal competences acquired through experience at work*. Warmia and Mazury Vocational Training Centre, Olsztyn 2008.

frequently than for five years. The schools superintendent can waive the measurement of the quality of a school and an educational establishment in case of having by them documents confirming the implemented quality management and assurance system.¹⁶

Since 2004 the system of external examinations confirming vocational qualifications has been implemented. Ultimately it is planned to create a unified system of examinations ranging from graduates of schools to persons wanting to confirm their professional qualifications acquired through education in non-school forms, job seniority and vocational experience.

Additionally, the compiled standards of equipping laboratories for vocational education within the scope of all vocations taught in technical and post-secondary schools also contribute towards the improvement of VET quality.

Thanks to projects of the European Social Fund, the process of compiling modular education and vocational training curricula is being carried on as well as modular education technologies are being disseminated. However, the quality of trainings and the clarity of qualifications, written down in strategic documents of the education and labour department, will be achieved through development and implementation of the national vocational qualifications standards. These standards allow for better linkage between the teaching and vocational training contents and professional work. They also allow for keeping a certain quality of offered courses, independently of the place of training.

The improvement of the effectiveness and quality in processes of education and vocational training and opening educational systems in the labour market, in it increasing the accessibility to education and developing distance education with the use of computer technologies were also predicted in the *Operational Programme Human Capital - National Cohesion Strategy 2007-2013*.

4.2. Improving quality in VET provision

4.2.1. Policy progress since 2002

A key element for improving quality of vocational education is the external examinations system administered by The Central Examination Commission (CKE) and The Regional Examination Commission (OKE) for confirming qualifications acquired through the process of learning. A similar role also perform apprentice and master's examinations conducted by the Chambers of Crafts supervised by the Polish Craft Association. Between 2005-2007 actions aiming at implementation and improvement of the external examinations system were carried on. In 2005 graduates from 3-year basic vocational schools for the first time took the external examination confirming vocational qualifications, while in 2006 – graduates from 4-year technical and post-secondary schools learning within a year cycle. In 2007 the group included 82% of graduates from basic vocational schools and 91% of graduates from technical and post-secondary schools. The Operational Programme Human Capital for 2007-2013 foresees research projects, in frames of which an analysis of the education system will be carried out for preparing graduates for entering into the labour market.

The Ministry of National Education carried out the project within the scope of the European Social Fund "The equipment of Centres of Continuing Education, Centres of Practical Education and vocational schools with places for vocational examinations." The aim of the project was to equip schools/establishments with modern techno didactic apparatus that would enable to conduct external vocational examinations and preparation for them in the process of education. There were two stages of the project. Within the scope of the first stage (2005-2006) 2-year vocational schools were equipped. Within the second stage of the project (2006-2007) 3-year vocational and technical schools were equipped.

The concern for the quality of education in Poland has its concrete expression. The functioning accreditation system of establishments and centres providing lifelong learning in non-school forms (legal basis – The Ordinance of The Minister of National Education and Sport of December 20 , 2003), as well as the training institutions register initiated by the department of labour as a consequence of realization of the act on promoting employment and institutions of the labour market

¹⁶ The Ordinance of The Minister of National Education and Sport of April 23, 2004 on detailed rules for organization of pedagogical supervision, the list of posts demanding pedagogic qualifications, qualifications required for pedagogic supervision, as well as qualifications of people for whom carrying out researches and compiling surveys can be delegated.

(The Act of April 20, 2004) are formal confirmations of the quality of education, additional education and vocational development. In particular lifelong learning establishments with accreditation granted by the school superintendent, can be written down in the training institutions register conducted by a district labour office. The registration is compulsory for training institutions applying for trainings of unemployed and looking for a job persons.

In the future the development of the system of accreditation will fill a key role for assuring quality of lifelong learning, although there are also visible more often some other pro-quality solutions on “guard” of the quality, such as systems based on the norm PN-EN ISO 9001:2001 and systems of total quality management TQM with the Excellence EFQM - Model ahead (the model implemented by the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM)). Educational institutions, having the accreditation confirmed by entitled organizations (e. g. School Inspectorates, certificating units for quality management systems, among others: Polish Centre for Testing and Certification (PCBC) or German CERTQUA and TÜV Cert) compete more effectively on the market of educational services because they give a guarantee on fulfilling described requirements concerning e. g. the contents of school curricula, qualifications of pedagogic staff, equipment with teaching aids, etc. On the market of vocational education services exists also the so-called “environmental accreditation” (e.g. registration in the National System of Services for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises conducted by the Polish Entrepreneurship Development Agency and accreditation of institutions and education and vocational training programmes conducted by the Polish Network of Modular Education). Therefore, the accreditation is becoming a kind of “a quality mark” of a given educational institution.

Initiated in 2005 by the Ministry of National Education researches showed that only 16% of the examined lifelong learning establishments had a certificate of quality management system for education and training, 9% of the examined lifelong learning establishments had the accreditation of an appropriate school superintendent. The teaching staff’s certification was employed by 7% establishments, while slightly above 37% employed tools for assessing the teaching staff. However, nearly half of the examined establishments were regularly conducting evaluation of educational classes and claimed that was using its results for modifying school curricula and organizing educational classes.¹⁷

In order to assure a high quality of training for the unemployed and those seeking a job, the act on promoting employment and institutions of the labour market commissions the minister suitable for labour to compile national vocational qualifications standards based on requirements for workstations and employers, as well as to compile modular curricula for vocational training. Successively being compiled, vocational qualifications standards and training modules are inserted in the widely available database, from where their users can get them freely and employ in their institutions. The base is functioning at the Internet address: www.standardyizkolenia.praca.gov.pl.

The participation in projects co-financed from funds of the European Social Fund will be an important factor for the improvement of quality in domain of education and vocational training. For example, in 2008 the project has been realized consisting in monitoring of accredited institutions and its effect will be a report enabling to assess the implemented system of establishments accreditation for its adequacy towards the planned aims, what in consequence will allow for the improvement of this system.

4.2.2 Examples of policy measures

The guidebook of procedures for accreditation of establishments conducting lifelong learning in non-school forms.

The guidebook was compiled from funds of the European Social Fund within the frames of the Sectoral Operational Programme - Human Resources Development 2004-2006. Activity 2.2, scheme d. In Poland, a legal basis for the process of accreditation is constituted by regulations of the Act of September 7, 1991 on the education system (unified text: Dz. U. 2004, No. 256, item 2572 with

¹⁷ The Ministry of Education and Science, Continuing Education 2005. Report on the status of Continuing Education in Poland in 2005, Warsaw 2005.

further amendments) and by the Ordinance of the Minister of National Education and Sport of December 20, 2003 on accreditation of establishments and centres conducting lifelong learning in non-school forms (Dz. U. No. 277, item 2247 with further amendments). Accreditation led by school superintendent offices aims at confirming the quality of education in an establishment, and not confirming the existence of an establishment. Obtaining the accreditation by an establishment is supposed to constitute a guarantee on achieving a high quality of educational services.¹⁸

Obtaining the accreditation by an establishment leads to:

- the improvement of the quality of provided services and their repeatability,
- the increase of reliance on an educational establishment,
- the increase of competitiveness on the market of educational services,
- the rise of a marketing value of an establishment,
- the increase of motivation of a didactic staff,
- the increase of the prestige of an establishment,
- broadening the educational offer.

Institutions possessing the accreditation enable their clients, among others:

- to use a high-quality level of educational services,
- to recognize results of vocational courses at taking education in schools providing vocational education for adults,
- to obtain a certificate confirming graduation from a given form of education, given by a credible establishment,
- to fulfill the duty of the education in non-formal forms,
- to increase one's opportunity for employment.

The process of competing for accreditation by educational establishments enables the school superintendent offices to get detailed information about these establishments, kinds and quality of provided by them services. Within the frames of projects realized according to the Sectoral Operational Programme "Human Resources Development 2004-2006," 200 workers of the education administration (school inspectorates) were trained in 2005 within the scope of conducting accreditation of establishments, the guidebook of procedures for accreditation of establishments conducting lifelong learning in non-school forms was compiled, as well as the electronic, interactive database of accredited institutions was created, enabling to obtain current information about the activity of accredited establishments. The database of accredited institutions is available at the Internet address: <http://akredytacje.mein.gov.pl/bamen/menu.do>.

In order to encourage institutions to apply for accreditation within the scope of the European Social Fund, the guidebook of procedures for accreditation of establishments conducting lifelong learning in non-school forms was published. 343 institutions obtained the accreditation until March, 2007.¹⁹

This system will be still developed in the Operational Programme - Human Capital, but its present main challenge is to describe the scope of the market of lifelong learning.

For creating and developing the system of accreditation, that is stimulating the quality of education and vocational training, the role of the state seems to be particularly important. For solving this problem a cooperation is recommended, especially of the department of education, the department of labour and trade organizations, and a promotion of quality systems and examples of a good practice.

4.3. Supporting the professional development of VET teachers and trainers and increasing the attractiveness and social status of teaching and training professions.

4.3.1. Policy progress since 2002

How teachers follow the educational policy of the state within the scope of VET depend greatly on the potential of the staff resources in this sector. The educational background of teachers working in vocational schools is comparable with the level of education of all teachers employed in the education system, and even the percentage of teachers with higher education in vocational schools exceeds the

¹⁸ *The guidebook of procedures for accreditation of establishments conducting lifelong learning in non-school forms.* The Ministry of National Education, The European Social Fund, Warsaw 2005, p. 5.

¹⁹ You can explore the database of accredited establishments (created within the scope of the European Social Fund) on the Internet site: <http://akredytacje.mein.gov.pl/>

average percentage in the country. Only in basic vocational schools, the percentage of teachers with higher education is lower than the average percentage in the country, but qualifications` requirements with reference to this group are a little bit different than requirements towards teachers employed in other types of schools. In September 2004, the Ordinance of the Minister of National Education and Sport appeared and it determined qualifications` requirements for teachers employed in schools and educational establishments. New requirements for teachers are as follows: obtaining the second speciality, a foreign language knowledge, obtaining skills to use the information technology and using it also in teaching.

Between 2006-2008 a possibility for financing education and vocational improvement of teachers was used from funds of the European Social Fund, what allowed for providing diverse forms of improvement to teachers from vocational schools. In this period, within the scope of post-graduate studies, a staff was prepared for conducting distance lifelong learning (about 1400 persons). The participants of these studies were mainly teachers of different specialities from schools for adults, lifelong and practical education establishments, teachers consultants from teacher improvement centres, methodology advisors, staff of the pedagogic supervision in schools for adults and lifelong learning establishments.

Within the scope of the “Sectoral Operational Programme - Human Resources Development” the following action was realized: “*Underpinning vocational education through courses and other forms of improvement.*” As a result of this action, 12 800 people are supposed to accomplish higher studies and the level of vocational qualifications will be raised with reference to teachers connected with the sector of vocational education. Acquiring knowledge and practical skills is going to appear, too. Another action was “Preparing staff towards conducting distance lifelong learning.” As a result of this action there are plans for the accomplishment of studies within the scope of conducting distance education of 1200 persons, as well as for the development of skills within ITC.

In 2007 1 554 vocational education teachers were trained (1042 women and 512 men) within: modular vocational education curricula, methodology in creating multimedia lessons and methodology in creating multimedia tests. Additionally, improvement courses, trainings, seminars and conferences were addressed to vocational education teachers and were conducted in teacher improvement centres around the area of the whole country. Vocational education teachers improve themselves also through employment, among others, under the strength of agreements made by the Minister of National Education and organizations of employers, economic self-governments and other non-governmental organizations.

Teachers participated in forms of improvement preparing them for filling the following functions:

- an examiner – 9 687 persons written down in the register of examiners within the scope of vocational examination (dated November 30, 2005),
- an expert on teachers` professional promotion,
- a methodology advisor,
- a teacher consultant,
- a designer of modular school curricula and educational packages.

Between 2006-2008 conditions for permanent professional improvement of teachers were created, what had a positive influence on the organization of the process of vocational education, including practical vocational education and practical classes with the use of the newest techniques and technologies. Between 2006-2008 the number of examiners within the vocational examination rose, when compared with 2006, and amounted to 11 527 (data of March 30, 2007). Vocational education teachers as examiners within the vocational examination are modifying the way of teaching what causes that their pupils achieve better results on external examinations.

According to data of February 29, 2008 the number of experts on professional promotion with the training amounts to 3 315, from it vocational education teachers constitute about 20%. Nonetheless, 10 142 persons have not accomplished the candidates training on experts.

However between 2003-2004, within the scope of Phare 2000 Project - *National Vocational Training System,*” trainings were organized for 600 teachers and instructors, dealing with the adult education, preparing for developing and disseminating modular training programmes, in accordance with the labour market needs (look p. 3.2.2).

Within the scope of the Operational Programme - Human Capital for 2007-2013 the activity was planned, among others, “*an effective system of education and improvement of the education system’s*

staff,” concerning the adjustment of qualifications of teachers, instructors of practical vocational education and the administration staff of the education system institutions to requirements connected with strategic directions of the regions development, the change of the education directions, need for new qualifications and changing demographic situation in the education system. Among others, it is planned to prepare a new staff of teachers for vocational education and provide possibilities of retraining to teachers from schools and education directions that are being closed.

4.3.2. Examples of policy measures

Promoting modular education and improvement of teachers competencies

The realization of the 4-stage project co-financed from funds of the European Social Fund “*Preparing innovative school curricula for vocational education*,” realized within the scope of the Sectoral Operational Programme – “Human Resources Development,” is an important element of the assistance for the idea of implementing vocational school curricula with modular structure in the system of vocational education.

The project aims at compiling, promoting and distributing school curricula with modular structure for 131 occupations, formulated in the classification of vocational education occupations and compiling about 3.5 thousand educational packages, consisting of a guidebook for a student and a guidebook for a teacher, underpinning the realization of each modular units specified in these curricula.

The Minister of National Education successively allows for the school use the school curricula compiled within the project. Among 131 compiled school curricula, 74 were allowed for the use, what together with modular school curricula, compiled before starting the project, enables “modular” education in 128 occupations (data of the end of December, 2007).

During the last few years, modular school curricula have been placed together with traditional school curricula in the published every year index of school curricula entitled for the use in schools conducting vocational education. Following the widening (with modern modular school curricula) educational offer, there is an increase of interest of schools in a possibility of implementing these school curricula in the process of education. Nonetheless, it needs to be mentioned that schools have the right to choose a school curriculum for a target occupation from the index. With reference to this, the Ministry of National Education took up a lot of actions disseminating a modular technology of the process of vocational education. In this process, potential implementing establishments are supported by the Polish Network of Modular Education – created in 2002 and developed within the scope of projects (EMCET de Bank and EMCET2) Leonardo da Vinci “European Bank of Modular Curricula and Educational Technologies” (details: www.emcet.net).

In order to widespread modular education technologies:

- training of teachers was organized – implementers of the education based on curricula with modular structure – so far 137 educators have been trained on 80-hour courses and 800 teachers have been trained on 16-hour courses,
- training of school inspectors from school inspectorates was organized – 2 school inspectors from each school inspectorate,
- 24 regional conferences were organized disseminating modular education, in which headmasters of schools and directors of establishments took part, also representatives of local self-governments, trade associations and employers (2 440 participants),
- 3 000 people acquired new didactic competencies within the scope of designing modular curricula and educational packages – mainly VET teachers,
- in each province at least a few vocations are being taught with the use of modular school curricula. Most often, modular school curricula are chosen by schools educating in such professions: *information technology technician, mechanic technician, administration technician, hotel industry technician, mechatronic technician.*

It is being observed that there is a slow, but continuous increase of interest in vocational education with the use of modular school curricula. In spite of initial problems, concerning the sphere of financing, a completely new role of a teacher conducting the process of modular education, as well as the organization of this process, a successive dissemination of education based on a modular education technology gives a prospect for a significant increase of this process’s effectiveness, and first of all it enables a lot better adjustment to changing economic conditions and development of technologies, e. i.

to the labour market's needs. More often local self-government units, educational communities, including teachers that are aware of their mission, look for proven solutions for improving the quality of the education process. According to data of the National Centre for Supporting Vocational and Continuing Education and the Polish Network of Modular Education, it comes that there is a willingness for organizing further courses dealing with implementation of modular curricula. Also organs managing public schools analyze and compare the results of "passing" the exam confirming vocational qualifications in schools educating in the same professions – traditionally and with the use of modular education technologies.

Theme 5. Strengthening link between VET and the labour market

5.1. National political context on strengthening the links between VET and the labour market

Priorities and guidelines of the national policy in terms of employment and education set for a the labour market were defined by the government in the following documents:

- Governmental programme of action "LOYAL COUNTRY" ("SOLIDARNE PAŃSTWO"),
- National programme of reforms for the years 2005 – 2008,
- National employment strategy for the years 2007 – 2013,
- National plan of action for employment for the year 2008,
- Strategy for the country development for the years 2007 – 2015,
- Plan of IT access in Poland for the years 2007 – 2010,
- National plan Foresight "Poland 2010",
- Strategy of development of vocational education up to 2010,
- Strategy of education development for the years 2007 – 2013.

The national policy that was defined in the aforementioned documents on employment and vocational education mark a framework for the tasks for Poland in the framework of promotion of employment, diminishing of unemployment effects and employment activation. The accepted objectives, priorities and tasks are put for realization through "National Plan of Action for Employment". The fundamental objectives of this plan for 2008 are the following:

- increase of employment and its equality – the rate of employment in the age group between 15 and 64 (according to BAEL) should reach 58% in the 4 quarter of 2008.
- Limiting of unemployment – the overall unemployment rate (according to BAEL) should reach the level of 9% in the 4 quarter of 2008.
- Improvement of quality of human resources taking into consideration the labour market needs.

In the document "Plan of IT access in Poland for the years 2007 – 2010" an important issue for consolidation of link between the labour market and vocational education was raised. It postulates to establish **System of Forecast of Labour Demand and Supply** (SPPP). This project is a follow up of an investigation on demand for work forecasting carried out by an interdepartmental team in a dissolved Governmental Center for Strategic Studies.

Forecasting for professions and qualifications necessary for rational planning for a network of vocational schools and directions for education, requires a **system of gathering information about a current situation on a the labour market**. Ministry of Labour and Social Policy has been carrying out a constant monitoring of the job offers and the unemployed environment in accordance with the professions and specialty, data provided by the system of Public Employment Services. At present a **monitoring of deficit and surplus professions** is being implemented and a proposal to set up a so called **National System for The labour market Monitoring** has been elaborated (it has also been given a name of "**data wholesale outlet**") together with a computer programme to enable the collection of data.

In the years 2002 – 2007 work was carried out to elaborate National Standards for Vocational Qualifications. So far 253 standard profession qualifications have been established in the framework of PHARE and Sectoral Operational Programmes for Human Resources Development. All of them are available on Ministry of Labour and Social Policy internet administrative data base (www.standardyiszkolenia.praca.gov.pl). There is a lot of hope for the future to use standard vocational qualifications for vocational training programmes and to standardize external exams for

validation of professional qualifications. Then a direct link would be created between the professional requirements for professions in companies and the system of vocational education and training.

5.2. Involving companies/sectoral organisations/social partners in VET provision to make it more responsive to the labour market needs

5.2.1. Policy progress since 2002

In Poland due to decades of the after war centralized policy and economy there is a lack of tradition of partnership and collaboration to implement the labour market policy. However this situation has been changing. The annual National Plan of Action Promoting Employment (**KPDZ**) can be quoted as a good example of partner collaboration in favour of the labour market. On the one hand it is the collaboration of different departments to prepare KPDZ project, on the other hand there is a process of consultation and gathering opinions about the project from the social partners in order to be able to improve the project.

The character of the project is interdepartmental with the representatives of different ministries and central institutions. The participants are delegated by the institutions to work on the project. The objective for the team is to elaborate initial KPDZ project, to formulate the guidance proposals for the labour market policy and the election of task for realization. The team takes decisions by consensus. Next the KPDZ project is accepted by the directors of Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and is sent to Central Employment Committee for opinion. Furthermore the project is sent for opinion from the social partners, which are union organizations, employers' organizations, craft organizations included and the associations of the disabled. The project undergoes also a process of consultation with the regional labour offices and the Council of Forum of directors of district labour offices (district is a second level of local government administration in Poland).

The representatives of the employers and employees participated in the preparation and endorsement of the **National Professional Qualification Standards**. The main beneficiaries of the projects in the framework of which the vocational qualification standards are established, represent on the one hand the economy and the labour market organizations, on the other hand education sectors: vocational education and the entities belonging to the out of school system of vocational education. These are following groups:

- professional associations, national employers' associations and national union organizations.
- public entities of labour services – regional and district labour offices, information and work career planning centres included.
- Employment agencies.
- School and out of school system of vocational education institutions – different types of higher education centres, vocational education schools, continual education centres, practical education centres, centres of professional improvement and vocational schools, professional improvement entities, etc.
- Voluntary Labour Regiments
- Other organizational entities – different ministries and other central bureaus with their related branches, especially Central and Regional Examination Commissions, examination boards responsible for crafts exams and other institutions responsible for regulated professions.

However, the future of the vocational qualification standards depends on how well the collaboration between the social partners will carry on. The partners who are interested in the active participation in the process of elaboration, updating, and above all, in implementation of standards complying with the needs for professions for a specific economy sector. These partners should closely collaborate with the Central Examination Commission in the fields of preparation of proposals for standards of examination requirements, which validate professional qualifications. They should also collaborate with professions advisers in jobcentres, with the European network of employment services EURES, with the European network of information about systems of education centres and recognition of certificates, diplomas and vocational qualifications ENIC/NARIC.

5.2.2. Examples of policy measures

Development of human resources of a new economy

Polish Agency for Entrepreneurship Development used to be an institution to implement Action 2.3 “**Development of human resources of a new economy**” Human Resources Development Sectoral Operational Programme, which was a tool to raise the qualifications of companies’ staff, to invest in knowledge and competence of the employees and managers. The implementation of this Action required a close collaboration between education institutions together with companies. The institutions prepared a training offer interesting for the employers and the employees. The managing institution for this Action was Ministry of Economy. This Action was implemented on the whole territory of Poland. The main objective of it was to improve the professional qualifications and to invest in knowledge and competence of employees due to providing them with access to a subsidized extensive offer of training services, traineeships and post-graduate studies. The following actions were subsidized: the cost to organize a course for the entrepreneurs, post-graduate studies and apprenticeships in research centres. The subsidies took a form of financial help destined to the educational institutions appointed during an open competition.

The beneficiaries of subsidies in the framework of Actions training were the following:

- Entrepreneurs (micro, small, medium size and big companies) from all the sectors, with coal mining sector excluded, with their registered office in Poland, companies with commissary management or during liquidation or bankruptcy procedure, reorganization proceedings excluded.
- The employees of the aforementioned groups of entrepreneurs.

Only the entities promoting employment and development of human resources could apply for the subsidies for the training projects for entrepreneurs in the framework of the competition executed by the Polish Agency for Development of Entrepreneurship. The applicants were the following: organs leading a school or other educational centre acting within the system of education, higher education centres, research entities, other legal entities, which in accordance with their status provide training activities (for example limited liability companies, or joint-stock companies, associations, foundations, employers associations, chambers of commerce, etc.), entrepreneurs with their business activity related to training (private persons having business activity). The applicants could present the projects for both open trainings and closed trainings tailored for the needs of a given company.

In the framework of this Action the following forms of human resources development of companies were included:

- vocational trainings and advisory assistance for managers and other company employees, which aimed at raising the overall qualifications and at obtaining new qualifications related to the changes in technologies (the use of IT, new technologies, innovations);
- training and assistance in advising to managers and other company employees in the field of improvement of managing human resources, identification of the needs in the field of improvement of employees qualifications, improvement of work organization, health and safety management and flexibility of forms of rendered work;
- practical training and apprenticeship for the company employees done in research and development institutions;
- projects focused on improvement of command and qualifications of employees with a low lever or preparation for work (for example with low qualifications).

The training offered in the framework of the Action did not require high financial investment from the entrepreneurs. The level of financing depended on the size of the company, the type of training and the type of employees delegated for training.

5.3. Integrating learning with working

5.3.1. Policy progress since 2002

In Poland there are mainly two departments responsible for human resources development –Ministry of Education (MEN) and Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MPiPS). The Polish Agency for Development of Entrepreneurship (PARP), which fosters development of small and medium sized companies, has also been involved in this process. The implementation of the following projects has recently been accomplished: “National strategy of employment improvement and human resources development for the years 2000 – 2006”, socio-economic governmental strategy “Entrepreneurship – Development – Employment” and “National Plan of Development for the years 2004 – 2006”, which was a complex document that established socio-economic strategy for Poland for the first year of the

Polish partnership in the EU. Furthermore the Polish government has been implementing “Strategy for development of vocational education to the year 2010” and “National strategy for young people for the years 2003 – 2012”. Farther perspective has been designed in “National plan of development for the years 2007 – 2013” and “Strategy for education development for the years 2007 – 2013”. As a consequence of the guidelines set in the aforementioned documents actions related to three fundamental fields of support have been defined – for companies, development of infrastructure and human resources development.

The fundamental tool to implement the aforementioned plans and strategies was the Sectoral Operational Programme – Human Resources Development elaborated in the framework of the European Social Fund (EFS). Its main goal was to foster a society, which is open and based on knowledge. This goal should be reached due to providing good conditions for human resources developments thanks to access to education, training and work. Some of the projects were implemented with the support from the Polish Agency for Development of Entrepreneurship (for example Action 2.3 SPO-RZL „Development of human resources of a modern economy”). Their main aim was to create and promote an idea of “learning organization”, which in Polish political and educational environment was hardly ever used. In Poland a learning organization is an entity with implemented systems of quality control based on ISO norms series 9000, TQU and others, with regular training and vocational training for their employees (Internet abilities included) and with implemented systems of employees’ knowledge and competence management. However, only very few organizations comply with the aforementioned criteria. Their exact number is also not precise, as a collection of data in this field has not been carried out.

In accordance with the “National Strategic Framework of Reference” (NSRO) all the actions of the European Social Fund in Poland in the years of 2007 – 2013 were put in the framework of “Operational Programme – Human Resources” (POKL), which main objective is to enable full use of human resources potential due to raise of employment and the adjustment of the potential of companies and their employees, and also to increase the level of education of the society, to diminish territories of social exclusion and to provide support for building structures of national administration. We should pay special attention to Priority II “Human resources development and potential for adaptation of companies and health improvement of employees’ and Priority VIII POKL “Regional human resource of economy”. In the framework of Priority II support is given to trans-regional and national training projects (including post-graduate studies). Special attention is also put to advisory services to employees, companies and social partners, who act to improve the possibilities of adaptation of the employees and companies. These projects are destined for companies, groups of companies, or their branches, located in different regions of the country, which would have it difficult to implement the projects on regional level. The accessibility and adjustment of the trainings to the companies needs were taken into consideration through e-learning training and blended learning, among others. Special attention was put on the group of employees “50+”. Complementary instruments have been implemented in Priority VIII as they are related to the employees of the companies, which do not have trans-regional character i.e. which are located in only one region.

In compliance with Art. 94 of the **Labour Code** an employer is obliged among others to enable an employee to raise his/her professional qualifications. Raising vocational qualifications and general competence of an employee means education and training in schools for adults and higher education centres, education development and also out of school training – on request of the employer or without it.

Rules and condition of improving vocational qualifications and general command of employees in the form of in school or out of school trainings were established in Directive of Minister of National Education and Minister of Labour and Social Policy of 12 October 1993 .(Dz. U. Nr 103, poz. 472; zm. W 1996 r. Nr 24,poz. 110).

Improvement of vocational qualifications and general command can be done during day courses, night classes, extramural learning, directed self tuition, extension learning and by blended learning. An employer comes up a decision to send an employee for training or professional development courses based on the reported needs of the company. The usefulness of the employee’s qualifications in the company activity must be taken into consideration. The employer establishes an agreement with the employee, who is going to undergo the training in school based on the employer’s request, in which the rights and obligations of the parties are established. The main objective of such an agreement is to

specify the scope of individual concessions and benefits, to which the employee will be entitled during the whole period of the time when studying in a higher education centre, or to establish the scope of employee's obligations referred for training specifying the number of working hours in a given company after having finished the training. The agreement should also include the conditions for return of costs related to training incurred by the employer in case the employee breaks the agreement and terminates the work contract with notice, or when s/he is dismissed on disciplinary grounds.

According to GUS statistics around 90% of the companies with over 9 employees declare that their staff participate in different types of training. Micro companies, however, are an exception (they employ between 1 and 9 people). Training in this companies is followed by 59% of the staff. External and internal training are equally popular. The most popular form of training is an open training. They make 70% of the whole of external trainings. There is a biggest need for training related to administration issues and compulsory health and safety trainings (53%), also to professional trainings directly related to work executed in companies (49%). E-learning is not very popular, only a small amount of companies use this type of training.

5.3.2. Examples of policy measures

Traineeship for the graduates

In Poland there are no laws, which would impose solutions in companies to promote trainings in workplaces, programmes fostering rotation on job posts, or training plans. Only a few companies deal with professional career planning, however it should be noted that employers are getting more and more aware of the need. Traineeships which are becoming more and more popular are a proof of the same.

The Bill on employment promotion and the labour market institutions of 20 April 2004 stipulates organization of **traineeships** for the unemployed (mainly the graduates) by the interested employers. It means that the unemployed will get practical knowledge required for a job by doing the tasks in a workplace, however without signing a contract with the company. Only the unemployed under 25, or those who within a year after graduating have not become 27 may apply for this type of traineeships . The condition to be referred for a traineeships is lack of professional experience. The proposed traineeship cannot be shorter than 3 months and longer than 12 months. The traineeship must be based on an agreement signed between for example starosta or the mayor with the employer. The agreement must be in accordance with the traineeship programme and be based on the presented application with the following information included: the name of the job, scope of tasks, documents proving the vocational qualifications of the guardian responsible for the apprentice. The apprentice is entitled to scholarship equal to 140% of the unemployment benefit during the period of the traineeship or professional training. The scholarship is paid from the budget of the starosta. The employer offering the apprenticeship or professional training must inform the unemployed about the apprenticeship programme, their obligations and rights. The apprentice must also get familiar with the health and safety procedures, fire drill and with the work code. The unemployed referred to do the apprenticeship or professional training must stick to the timetable established by the employer, diligently and carefully do all the tasks included in the traineeship programme or in the professional training programme, and also follow the employer's and the guardian's recommendations as long as they are lawful. The apprentice should write a report from his/her traineeship or from professional training, which should include information about the tasks fulfilled and the qualifications or professional knowledge he/ she has obtained. The guardian of the apprentice offers him/ her indications and assistance with the entrusted tasks and signs under the report the apprentice will prepare to confirm the information included there.

The employer, after the traineeship has been finished, issues an opinion with information about the tasks fulfilled and the qualifications and knowledge the unemployed has gained during the period of the apprenticeship. Starosta issues a certificate to confirm that the traineeship, or professional training has been completed.

5.4. Integrating skill and competence needs of the labour market into VET provision

5.4.1. Policy progress since 2002

In Poland competence needs of the labour market and the companies are included in the system of education and vocational education in a traditional way, i.e. the representatives of employers participate in the elaboration of programmes for vocational centres (basic programme, teaching programmes and standardized examination requirements). Lately they are also involved in preparation of professional qualification standards. The new National System of Qualifications, due in a few years time, will probably introduce a lot of changes in this respect.

Creation of the National System of Qualifications has been included into the project on which Ministry of Education has been working on – “National strategy for life learning”. It forms a part of a “Operational Programme – Human Resources – 2007 – 2013”. This system was defined in those documents as a trans-sartorial and complex set of legal, institution based and procedural solutions and legal mechanisms, which enable to obtain knowledge and to transfer, compare, recognize and validate both general and vocational qualifications on national and European level. Dominating in education environment up till now trend to focus on the process of learning will soon be substituted by an approached focused on learning outcomes (clearly defined qualifications). The created National System of Qualifications will be accompanied by the process of establishing **National Qualification Framework** related to **European Qualification Framework**.

In 2007 Ministry of National Education started social consultations and work on the EU Commission proposal to create European Credit Points System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET). In the process of consultation the following partners took part: social partners, governmental agencies, education and training institutions and other important entities. They provided their suggestions and remarks about the implementation of ECVET concept. The issues related to ECVET and the results from the process of consultation were also included in the “life-learning” project, that is being developed. ECVET system is based on a trust in national education and vocational training, thus a key point it is to make sure that the obtained qualifications and competence, that are specified and evaluated in ECVET, should meet global and national economy and the labour market requirements.

Documents on the **Europass** initiative have been important in the process of creating in Poland a transparent system of qualifications. Europass was implemented in Poland as well as in the rest of the EU member states on 01.01.2005. The national Europass centre started to fulfill its tasks from mid 2005. In Poland it is the **Task Force for Training and Human Resources (BKKK)** in Warsaw, which forms a part of “Cooperation Fund” Foundation. At present all the documents forming a part of Europass are functioning in Poland. Europass – Supplement to Diploma was introduced based on Directive of Minister of National Education and Sport of 23 July 2004 on different types of diplomas and professional titles and the university diplomas models and of 1 January 2005 it became obligatory for all Polish universities. Europass – Certificate Supplement was introduced by Directive of Minister of Education and Science of 15.02.2006 amending Directive on rules of issuing certificates and their models and since 2006 it has been issued by Regional Examination Commissions to the graduates of basic vocational schools, who have passed an external exam validating their professional qualifications.

Standards for examination requirements are the basis for examinations, which validate professional qualifications. The proposals for the standards are prepared by Central Examination Commission in collaboration with the involved ministries, higher education centres, research and development entities, employers and employees associations. In the future standards for examination requirements should be prepared based on a system of national vocational qualification standards.

National vocational qualification standards, which are being drawn up and implemented, are a big hope to solve a problem of adjusting vocational education to professional requirements. National vocational qualification standards are based on research on the requirements in companies for professions.

5.4.2. Examples of policy measures

National vocational qualification standards

In Poland a legal ground for elaboration of national vocational qualification standards is the Bill of 20 April 2004 on employment promotion and the labour market institutions. Art. 4 of this Bill stipulates that a due labour minister is, among others, responsible for coordination of the process of preparation of vocational qualification standards for the professions included in the classification of professions

and specializations. He/ she shall also coordinate data bases with information about qualification standards. In the present legal state standards of vocational qualifications are not an obligatory document. The already existing standards function as a recommended by Ministry of Labour and Social Policy document and may be used for different purposes by the interested parties and institutions, for example for elaboration of examination requirements standards in vocational education, basic programme for vocational education, education programmes and professional development, adjustment job offer to the qualifications of those looking for work, evaluation of “qualification gap” of the unemployed and those looking for work, elaboration of apprenticeship programmes and professional traineeships done in the framework of professional preparation.

In Poland elaboration and development of vocational qualifications related to economy and the labour market requirements is mainly done in the framework of vocational qualification standards projects. The methodological fundamentals of designing standards in Poland as well as the first eight standards were elaborated between 1998 and 1999 in the framework of a ETF project “Building up the system of vocational qualification standards in Poland. Methodology of creating vocational qualification standards” carried out by National Observatory of Education and Vocational Training, which formed a part of BKKK “Cooperation Fund” Foundation. Further work was done in between 2002–2004 in the PHARE 2000 project “National system of vocational training” supervised by Ministry of Economy and Education, which resulted in elaboration of 40 professional qualification standards. In the framework of the next PHARE 2002 project “Improving Public Employment Services command in implementation of European Employment Strategy and participation in EURES system” led by Ministry of Economy and Education, 7 other standards for professions and professional work scope used in jobcentres were prepared. The biggest so far project was carried out between 2006 and 2007 – “Elaboration and dissemination of national vocational qualification standards”. It was co-financed from funds from European Social Fund in the framework of Human Resources Development Sectoral Operational Programme.

The aforementioned project included the following: description of qualifications required by employers to perform jobs/ specializations; elaboration, based on noted requirements, of description of 200 national vocational qualification standards (consultation with sector organizations and other interested in the subject institutions took place); dissemination of information about national vocational qualification standards and research on how different standards can be used by different users.

The project is expected to become a basis to improve the process of decision making in the field of employment policy and education, to ensure a high level of vocational training in the framework of vocational education, especially in out-of-school forms, to enhance professional mobility of adults due to making the qualifications more transparent and to adjust the qualifications to the labour market requirements.

A set of 253 national vocational qualification standards was put on the Internet data base of Ministry of Labour and Social Policy server (the address: <http://www.standardyiszkolenia.praca.gov.pl>).

Theme 6. Governance and funding

6.1. National policy context on VET governance and funding

National education policy is prepared and implemented on a national level, however the management of education and schools is decentralized. The main principle of the system of financing education is to observe the constitutional principle for free education for children and youngsters up to 18 years old in all the public primary, low secondary and high secondary schools. Adult education in schools is also financed from the national budget.

Minister of National Education manages education on the national level. The minister coordinates and implements national education policy, often supervises the activities of school superintendents (on the

voivodeship level) and collaborates with other organs and organisational units. In terms of vocational education s/he collaborates with other ministers, for example with Minister of Economy, Minister of Health or with Minister of Culture. Together they establish detailed rules for supervision of teachers in schools of a given type. Besides, based on directives and taken decisions, Minister of Education prepares legal framework for the functioning of all the educational entities, with centers of vocational training included.

The national general framework for vocational education, that forms a part of the system of education, is set according to Directive of Minister of National Education of 26 June 2007 on "Classification of professions within vocational education". The types of professions, that can be taught in different types of vocational schools, the length of the courses and the due detailed programme of education are included in the aforementioned classification and their selection is based on the applications of different ministers. These applications must include the following: a description of a profession with specified professional abilities, justification of a need that exists for education in a particular profession, information about the labour market necessities for this profession and the opinion of an association of employers, who represent such a profession. At present the classification comprises 202 professions.

Minister of National Education is also responsible for establishing, on request of due ministers, professions which can be taught at schools. The legal role of local authorities is to adjust vocational training to the needs of a given region, or a local labour market. The local authorities are responsible for tasks related to basic secondary and vocational education, education in schools and out of school forms and for the management of the policy for the local labour market. These authorities have also influence on adjusting the structure of education to the changing economic and social conditions (also demographic), i.e. they have the authority to establish networks of schools, including vocational schools, which means to decide about the shape of education on territories according to the territorial characteristics. District labour offices together with their consultancy organs – district employment councils operate on the same level of governance A headmaster of a vocational education school when establishing professions to be taught in his/ her centre, first must find an agreement about the same with the organ managing the school, and after that get an opinion from a school superintendent. He/ she is obliged to get an opinion about the same, among others, from the voivodeship or district employment council.

The reform of the programme of vocational education facilitates for the big majority of professions to introduce at end of the period of education a specialization. It will be a short period preparation to train for the future jobs or for a group of related work posts. Vocational schools choose the specializations that are going to be taught at their centres according to the local labour market needs. The programme of education for a particular specialization is elaborated by the competent school group responsible for taught subjects, or the offers of programme elaborated by MEN are used.

Taking the aforementioned information into consideration, schools and their supervisory entities of local authorities and the institutions operating on the labour market should closely collaborate in order to be able to undertake common actions, which should aim at adjusting the offer of the vocational education to the social and economic needs of a given region. They should fulfill the development guidelines specified in the voivodeship strategies. Local authority units, when undertaking the streamlining of a network of schools and directions of vocational education, should take into consideration the cultural conditions specific to a given region and fulfill the educational aspirations of the inhabitants of the region.

In the framework of Sectoral Operational Programme - Human Resources Development, co-financed from the European Social Fund, in the years 2004 – 2006 Ministry of National Education had at its disposal 527,4 million Euros (395,55 million Euros came from EFS funds and 131,85 million Euros from the national public contribution).

Education is one of the key fields supported from PO KL. 30% of the funds were destined to finance education priorities (the total amount was 11,420,207 thousand Euros).

In the years 2005 - 2006 expenditures on education and training increased. From the national budget in 2006 subsidies destined to finance tasks related to the activities of schools and other centres of education transferred to local authority units increased by 2.2% in comparison to 2005. In 2006 Ministry of National Education prepared a set of new rules about financing education tasks from the national funds, which was planned to be implemented on 1 January 2008. A detailed SWOT analysis

have been undertaken to check the present solutions in this field. Opinions from Ministry of Finance, local authorities and researchers have been collected. Nowadays work has been done to elaborate alternative methods to finance education in Poland.

6.2. Changes made to administrative/institutional structures

6.2.1. Policy progress since 2002

In 16 voivodeships (administrative regions) school superintendents manage the questions of education. In the past they used to be appointed by Minister of Education, at present they are appointed by the voivodes (provincial governors). This is why the school superintendents are the local administration officials, and they are subordinate to the voivodes even though they implement the policy of Ministry of Education. Their most important responsibility is the pedagogical supervision over public and private schools and education centres. The voivodeship authorities manage schools and education centres with regional character, including medical schools and schools for social workers, and also public education and training centres for teachers and pedagogical libraries.

In 314 districts the starosts are responsible for managing upper secondary education (vocational training included). To this group also the following schools and centres belong: vocational colleges and special schools (primary and secondary), sport and sport expertness schools, practical education centres, continual education centres and psychology - pedagogical counseling centres. A school with vocational education or with a profile of general vocational education in order to be able to carry on their activity must first obtain a positive opinion from a school superintendent. Local authority units have registers, according to their competence, of types of private schools and centres. In order for a school of a specific vocational education (for example medical or art school) to be registered, it must first obtain a positive opinion of a minister, that represents a given sector.

In 2002, similarly to the previous years, Ministry of National Education carried on work to adjust education policy to the new rules for education and vocational training, which resulted from a reform of the system of education and the implementation of life-learning and the objectives of the economy based on knowledge. The new (or novelized at that time) laws did not refer directly neither to education, nor to vocational training. However, their outcome is related to functioning of the aforementioned schools. *The law of 19 February 2004 on system of information about education* is important in terms of obtaining information necessary to fulfill the national education policy, to improve the quality of education and to improve financing of the objectives for education. The system of information about education consists of gathering data about schools and education centres, pupils, attendees, school leavers, teachers, coaches and other employees. The tasks of the system is also to check if the education obligation is fulfilled. The received information is from and about all different types of schools and centres, including vocational education. *The law of 7 of September 1991 on the system of education* has also been amended. The changes introduced focused on a set of new rules about the financial assistance for pupils. These amendments have been extremely important for the system of vocational education, as the pupils in this type of schools get poorer results (taking into consideration the results of the secondary school-leaving exams in vocational secondary schools) and they often come from families with lower economic level. Financial help has the character of social help or a motivation grant.

Minister of National Education issued many directives related to education in the analyzed period of time. The following legal acts were directly related to education and vocational training: the classification of professions within vocational education, core curricula for vocational education, exams taken without enrollment as a pupil, accreditations of units and centres with continual education in out of school form, conditions and types of evaluation, classification and promotion of pupils and attendees and exams system in public schools, rules for getting a professional promotion for teachers, rules to issue certificates, national diplomas and other school documents and their models.

In 2007 from the initiative of MPiPS survey research about different forms and tools to support continual education for employees was carried out. The obtained results will form a basis for a proposal of solutions to improve the system (financial, legal and organisational), which would raise the employee's participation in continual education.

6.2.2. Examples of policy measures

Initiatives to support changes in administration and institutional structures

In order to improve the competence of students in so called “key skills” there have been actions undertaken in the framework of the programme *Activation and support for local authority units and for non-governmental organisations to provide students with financial help for education*. The programme was adopted by the Polish government in March 2006.²⁰ The main objective of this programme is to use the local authority, public and non-public means as a financial help destined the education of students. The local authorities and organisations, which showed interest in the programme, were obliged not only to diagnose the educational needs of students, but also to finance them. Every quantity destined by a local authority unit or an organisation is doubled from the funds of the national budget (co-financing 1:1). The beneficiaries of this program are children from poor families, who need extra support, children with excellent school results, who obtain success on the national, European and global level, and students who cultivate their interests, which exceed the school programme. Also in March 2006 the government approved *The programme of equaling education possibilities for students from families from the former state-owned farms for the years 2006-2008*. The beneficiaries of this programme are students of high secondary schools, who live in villages or small towns (to 20,000 inhabitants). This programme was designed to help the students to pass the secondary school-leaving examination. These are students, who come from the families of the former employees of state-owned farms with low economic level, who were granted scholarships by the Agricultural Property Agency. One of the priorities set by the Polish government is to diminish bureaucracy of the key processes of education, especially of the process of the promotion for teachers and pedagogical supervision on all the levels of education. Since January 2007 there is a binding new law, which aims at making the rules for pedagogical supervision less bureaucratic. A project of changes in logistics has been elaborated, which will contribute to make the possibilities of promotions for teachers less bureaucratic. The legal act was planned for 2007. The main objective of the proposed changes is to diminish the number of additional documents to be enclosed to the application to start the procedures related to qualifications and to exams, and to make a clear distinction between the headmaster’s evaluation of a teacher’s professional scope and the evaluation done by the qualification and examination committees to establish whether a teacher meets the requirements necessary for a professional promotion. The project of this regulation is the answer to the teachers’ demand on the same.

6.3. Changes made to funding arrangements for VET

6.3.1. Policy progress since 2002

Education tasks related to managing (subsidizing) schools and education centres by the local authority units are financed from the revenue of the units. A part of the revenue of the local authorities is a part of the general subsidies for education. In accordance with the law on self-government units’ (JST) revenues, the quantity of the part of the general subsidies for education destined to all of the local authority units is based on a budget act approved every year. The education subsidy is established for a given calendar year and it is transferred to the local authority units from the national budget. Due to the very complex structure of the education tasks realized by JST, the algorithm division of the subventions for education takes into consideration a series of conditions and parameters, which reflect the characteristic way of establishing the elements of the subvention in relation to school and out of school tasks. The algorithm of the division of the subsidies for education is modified on a yearly basis. It is due to the analysis of economic indexes, which indicate the average cost of education and of school and other education centres activities. The relationship of the relations included in the algorithm are based on the solution that “money goes where the student goes”. This means that the calculation of subventions is based on the number of students following education programmes at schools and at other education centres, which are managed or subsidized by specific local authorities (communes), districts and voivodeships. The scarcity of financial means derives from the fact that the most of the expenditures of the local authority units destined for education covers only the obligatory expenditures, which are salaries, social security contributions and Labour Fund contribution. It means over 85% of

²⁰ http://bip.men.gov.pl/akty_projekty/projekt_uchwaly_280906.pdf

expenditures on education (in communes 86%, in districts and voivodeships 87%). In an average school the proportions are very similar to the ones quoted.

Education in public schools for adults is free of charge. However, due to the insufficient financial means for public schools, there is a possibility to subsidize expenditures, other than salaries, from the attendees' self-government funds. In the schools where the attendees' self-governments are created, voluntary fees are paid for these self-governments (self-governments established how big the fees are). Education in private schools is chargeable. The non-public schools with the rights of a public school get subsidies from the national budget. In the out of school forms education is also chargeable (for example the fees for the exams taken without an enrollment as a pupil are calculated on the base of the average monthly salary). Financing of continual education is a different question. In this case the financial means may come from the following: the national budget (mainly school-based forms of education), companies (school and out of school forms of education), proper means of the pupils, international financial help.

Labour Fund is the source of financing for trainings destined to the unemployed and those looking for a job. The financial means from this fund can be used to finance trainings, understood as training for a particular job, retraining, improvement of vocational qualifications or a program to teach how to look for a job and how to get it. The expenditures for education in absolute values have been regularly growing since 2003. In that year 113,9 million zlotys was spent on education and in the next years the following quantities were allocated: in 2004 - 125,9 million zloty, in 2005 - 181,8 million zlotys, in 2006 - 186,7 million zlotys, and in 2007 (estimate) - 266,4 million zlotys. The part of the expenditures destined for trainings for the unemployed from the overall budget for so called active forms of support is on the similar level. In 2005 it was 9.54%, in 2006 - 8.41%, and in 2007 (estimate) - 9.83%. In 2007 an additional initiative was undertaken "Investment in deficit qualifications on the labour market" which aimed at assigning additional financial means from Labour Fund (the reserve at the disposal of Minister of Education) of 102 million zlotys to the projects of professional activation, trainings for the unemployed included. The evaluation of the effects of this programme will only be possible in the second half of 2008.

The financial means from the European Social Fund form another source of financing for trainings for the unemployed. The funds are allocated on the basis of projects selected in the process of competition implemented by different institutions from the labour market.

In the present state of Polish public finances it is difficult to count on bigger subventions for local authority units, including districts, which manage vocational schools. However, it is likely that due to the government programme in the near future the national budget for education will increase. It means that the sum for subventions for education will also increase, which will improve the level of financing and better functioning of schools and education centres, including those for vocational education. Ministry of National Education has changed the system of division of the general subsidies destined to the local authority units. Self-government, governmental and scientific groups have been debating about the aforementioned issue.

Vocational training, especially the creation and updating of technical and didactical base, requires considerable investment. The funds from the self-government units for new equipment for vocational schools are not sufficient. It leads to the situation that most of the machinery and equipment used in schools is old-fashioned and not up to the technical and technological advancements.

The actions planned, which aim at reviving the link between schools and employers include also trying to involve the employers into the process of education of their future employees. It can be by among others by providing the schools with new machinery and equipment. It would certainly improve the level of education and the level of attractiveness of different professions.

In the years 2005 and 2006 there was an increase of financial means destined for education of students from ethnic and national minorities in Poland. It was due to the increase of counting indicator for the part of the general subsidies destined for education purposes of the local authority units. The preferential system, that was introduced, on the other hand was meant to compensate higher expenditures of schools for classes to help the students from minorities to maintain their national language and cultural identity, and on the other hand to protect small schools, especially when the members of a minority are dispersed. As a result of the aforementioned changes in 2006 additional funds of 95 million zlotys were allocated from the national budget for the national and ethnic minorities. How large the subsidy is depends on the size of the population of students from a given

minority and on the number of schools, which they attend. Small schools count on a higher preferential coefficient. Additional work on the governmental documents related to different minorities has been planned. The EU initiative EQUAL has also included actions aiming at national and ethnic minorities.

6.3.2. *Examples of policy measures*

Analysis of the training fund effectiveness – statutory instrument, which supports vocational education

In the years 2005 - 2006 from the initiative of MPiPS the following research project was carried out – “Analysis of the training fund effectiveness - statutory instrument, which supports vocational education”²¹. This project was carried out in the framework of Sectoral Operational Programme – Human Resources Development 2004 – 2006 co-financed from the European Social Fund. It was realized in the Institute of Labour and Social Affairs²² since March to November 2006.

The objective of that project was to diagnose the practical effectiveness of a training fund, one of the statutory instruments included in the *Law of 20 April 2004 on promoting employment and the labour market institutions*. The intention of the legislator was to give support to the employers, who take actions to raise professional qualifications of the employees, due to which they are able to keep employed.

The results of the undertaken research showed that the training fund was not used sufficiently – the population of the employers, who take advantage of this instrument is very small in Poland (only 4.2% of the total of the employers, who participated in the research, are aware that such a training fund exists, and which was created based on the *Law of 20 April 2004 on promoting employment and the labour market institutions*). Employers, however, reported a list of general remarks about some of the aspects of the functioning of vocational education and especially about the company training funds. These remarks, together with the answers from the respondents, became a basis to formulate a recommendation for improvement of the effectiveness of company training fund, which acts as an instrument of support for vocational training.

The result of the undertaken research is a series of recommendations to improve the functioning of the training fund, which is an instrument for the development of human resources.

The results of the research confirmed that the earlier suspicions about the low level of use of the training fund (the population of the employers in Poland, who use this instrument is very scarce). The research showed that 55.8% of the employers, who participated in the research, did not have any idea about the rules how to set up and later to use the company training fund. The majority, as 85% of the respondents, did not create any training fund, and over 70% of the entities do not have any intention to set up such a fund in the future. Only in 16 case out of 380 of the employers, who took part in the research (which means 4.2% of the total respondents), said there is a company training fund in their companies, which was crated on the base of the *Law of 20 April 2004 on promoting employment and the labour market institutions*. It is also worth mentioning, that among the 380 entities under research 33 employers had created a training fund on their own initiative before 2004. It means that the funds were based on a different set of laws than the *Law on promoting employment and the labour market institutions*.

None of the 16 employers, who crated the company training fund, benefited from the subsidies of the Employment Fund, which means that this instrument was not used from the legal point of view. Employers use mainly own financial means to finance trainings for their employees. Sometimes they benefit from subsidies (financial aid means). During the research the employers indicated that the obstacles for a good collaboration with jobcentres is, on the one hand the fact that the procedures required by the law are very laborious and time consuming, and on the other hand the fear for numerous inspections. In general the public assistance to support professional training of employees, has been evaluated as very poor.

²¹ <http://www.mpips.gov.pl/index.php?gid=1000>

²² The project was carried out by a research group with the following researchers: Dr. Iwona Kukulak-Dolata, Dr. Halina Sobocka-Szczapa, MA/MSc Iwona Poliwczak and MA/MSc Łukasz Arendt. The director of the group was: Professor with a post-doctoral degree Elżbieta Kryńska.

The report includes also a lot of interesting information about the quality of the human resources in the examined companies and the methods of its improvement. Most of employers think that their employees have adequate qualifications for the needs of their companies. The main drawbacks however are lack of sufficient technical knowledge, also specialised knowledge (8.4%), lack of professional practice, experience and manual abilities (7.4%), lack of creativity, independence, ability to take decisions and lack of involvement in the work tasks (6.1%). Majority of employers elaborate company plans of training, however in case of 44.8% these types of plans are not elaborated. Only 11.2% of the respondents collaborated with labour offices in terms of training for their employees. This collaboration was done in a form of a training for the unemployed – the potential candidates to work in the aforementioned companies. Due to the needs of the companies there was an application made to the labour office with the specific information about the vacancies. The cost of the training for the future employees was reimbursed. The employees received information about different trainings carried out by education institutions. The research showed that the process of training in companies is in general not related to the strategy of the development of a company. Only 40% of the employers initiate trainings for their employees. Apart from that, over half of them finance the professional training, but the level of information they have about different possibilities of financing from different sources is low.

The financial recommendations aim at:

- to increase an interest of the entities in continual education of the employees and employers. The financial recommendations should be focused on diminishing the costs covered by the employers. Generally speaking, in order for the employers to create willingly the company training funds within the human resources policy of a given company solutions should be proposed for higher subsidies for this types of activities.
- Based on the employers' opinions, recommendations should be proposed to link the company training fund with the tax system. This link should be done due to the tax relief and/ or concessions as early as in the process of establishing such a fund and later in the phase of its implementation.

Summing up, it is worth to undertake the actions to improve functioning of the company training fund, as it is a very useful instrument not only today, but also will appear to be more and more useful in the future.

6.4. Promoting partnerships in VET policy making

6.4.1. Policy progress since 2002

Social partners - the associations of employers and employees, are interested in the issues related to vocational and continual education. The fact is related to, on the other hand, the needs of the employers to raise the quality of the produced products and offered services, and on the other hand on the increase of mobility of employees on the labour market.

The organisations that on the national level represent both of the aforementioned groups, with especially the Tripartite Commission for Social and Economic Affairs, which deals with the aforementioned issues. Other organisations, that represent the interests of employers (Business Centre Club, Polish Confederation of Employers, Polish Confederation of Private Companies, Polish Association of Crafts and Polish Chamber of Commerce) started to deal with these issues too. They want to participate in the process of creating opinions about the ideas and projects of legal acts and to become a real partner to the government and to the national education, labour and social policy departments. This role is also played by the organisations that represent in the Tripartite Commission the employees (for example Trade Unions Federation, NSZZ Solidarność, The National Trade Union, Polish Teacher's Association). The employers and employees' associations respectively form opinions, and also initiate legal solutions in terms of vocational education. As an example of this type of action we can quote talks during the plenary meeting in March 2004 between the Tripartite Commission for Social and Economic Affairs with the participation of Minister of National Education. The main topic of the meeting was the issues related to vocational and continual education. The meeting gave an

opportunity to share opinions between the social partners on the present situation in vocational and continual education and to plan different paths of their development for the future.²³

Since 2004 Ministry of National Education carries on an initiative to look for social partner and to sign legal agreements with them to improve the quality of vocational education (especially practical aspects) and to enlarge its technical base thanks to the collaboration with companies. Between the years 2002 and 2004 Minister of Education signed agreements with ten social partners. Some of them are the organisations, which participate in the social dialogue of the Tripartite Committee. For some of them (for example for the Polish Craft Association) these types of agreements are the crowning achievement of a long collaboration with the department of education, for some others they marked the first step of a journey together. The participation of employers and their associations in the process of vocational education will definitely contribute to improve the possibilities of the graduates to find a job, due to for example, earlier possibilities to undergo a traineeships in the real work conditions.

The social partners have also played a very important role from the political point of view, in the process of formation of the legal act *The Law of 20 April 2004 on promoting employment and the labour market institutions*, which included parts related to training funds established by employers. In order to develop continual education it is necessary to have the participation of employees and on the other hand positive input from the state, not only in terms of the legal aspect, but also economics.

Social partners carry out their actions in the following fundamental VET fields:

- Vocational education on the level of schools;
- Continual education;
- Standarisisation and validation of professional qualifications;
- Giving opinions about different types of programmes of education and vocational trainings.

Different organisations are not always active in all of the aforementioned fields. This situation can be related to the fact that the role of a craft organisation in the process of supervision over the conditions for practical education for a given profession carried out in the craft workshop is regulated by the law and other organisations, which are not particularly interested in the situation of the young employees in this respect. We can see a very similar situation with the validation of professional qualifications for an apprentice or a craft master to which the Commissions of Craft Chambers are authorised according to the law. The Commissions are supervised by the Polish Craft Association (ZRP). The exams are taken in 108 different professions and the standards for them are elaborated by the ZRP. The aforementioned issues are related only to craft organisations, which does not limit other social partners in creation of specific systems and solutions.

Different organisations of employers and employees actively collaborate in the initiation and implementation of the process of continual education. The employers' organisations (on their own or in collaboration with the specialised entities) organize short- and long term trainings, which aim at increasing competitiveness of the Polish companies on the European economic market.

Based on experience gained in the years 2004 – 2007 we can clearly say that the active participation of the social partners in the field of vocational education development has improved. The governmental units have also become more interested in the collaboration with the aforementioned organisations.

One of the obstacles to the improvement of quality of education and vocational training in Poland is still a very low number of places, where students could undergo a vocational training. One of the reasons for such a situation could be attributed to the structure of small and medium sized companies in Poland. Polish Agency on Entrepreneurship Development in the report *On the condition of small and medium sized companies in Poland in the years 2005 – 2006* informed that in 2006 there was a total of 3.517.898 small and medium sized companies registered, and 3.348.708 of them with less than 9 employees. This small family owned companies are 98.2% of the total small and medium sized companies in Poland and they are not interested in accepting students for vocational training. It is due to the fact that there are no financial stimuli for companies, which would encourage to create additional new places for vocational training. Despite the fact, the situation in this aspect has slowly been changing. It is more and more difficult for employers to select employees from the labour market, who would be prepared for a particular profession, thus employers become more open to educate and train their potential employees. There are more and more employees who approach different schools for

²³ Report 2004 – National Observatory of Education and Vocational Training, Bureau of Coordination of Human Resources Education, Foundation “ Collaboration Fund”, Warsaw 2005.

collaboration. The schools get new equipment in exchange of preparation of new staff for the local companies.

6.4.2. Examples of policy measures

Global and sustained development education – consultations of MEN representatives with non-governmental organisations

The first meeting with the non-governmental organisations took place on 14 February 2008 in the head office of Ministry of National Education (MEN). The talks during that meeting were related to the activities of non-governmental organisation undertaken together with MEN in the field of global and sustained development education. MEN was represented by the Undersecretary of State. That meeting started a systematic cycle of MEN consultations with the non-governmental organisations about actions focused on children and the youth in the fields of civic education, voluntary work, information about equal opportunities and international collaboration.

The non-governmental organisations came up with a few proposals about the role of MEN in the process of improvement of global education. These are some of them:

- to appoint a MEN representative, whose functions would be to coordinate all the issues related to development education. This person would participate in the Working Group for Development Education, which belongs to the group “Zagranica”.
- To create good training possibilities (vocational training) for teachers, to eliminate stereotypes present in the system of education, and to put special attention to responsible and good quality of knowledge about the world;
- To prepare a special training pack for teachers in collaboration with non-governmental organisations, or assign it to another organisation or education institution; MEN could finance this project and endorse it;
- To start work on implementation at schools a so called “trans-subject path – global education”; MEN participation in the implementation of the strategy for development education at schools;
- To include MEN (and related institutions) in the process of evaluation of teaching materials prepared by the NGO, i.e. to ‘validate’ the didactic and teaching materials;
- To make sure that the students, who follow pedagogic education, should learn about development education and its methods of teaching;
- To finance buying for the school libraries literature and films on global education, to finance translations and subtitles or dubbing for different useful documentaries, which otherwise would not be understood by the young people;
- For MEN to contribute in the actions such as Global Education Week;
- To organize thematic contests on global education;
- To support organisations, which work in schools and deal with informal education – a list of such organisations, which will give credit to these organisations and their activities;
- To provide financial assistance for the organisations, which offer different classes at school (grants, competitions), competitions for schools where different NGOs could become a partner of such a project;
- To coordinate activities of MEN with those of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MSZ) in the framework of development education, for example by the participation of these two ministries in the working group.

The non-governmental organisations expect MEN to collaborate as a partner in the realization of the projects on global education and sustained development. It was also said that it is necessary to undertake coordinated actions on the governmental level. Both the parties were content that there is an interest in the aforementioned issues and hope the collaboration between them in this respect will develop.

Theme 7. EU tools and geographic mobility within VET

7.1. National policy context to introduction and dissemination of EU tools: EQF, ECVET and Europass and the promotion of geographical mobility within VET

European Qualification Framework, European Transfer of Credit Points for the purposes of Education and Vocational Training and EUROPASS are important for the Polish policy of education, as they must serve to improve the transparency of vocational qualifications on the European market. Each of the solutions has a different character, a different use and a different impact, however they all serve the same purpose – the promotion of the model practices, improvement of recognition of vocational qualifications in different countries and on an international level, and a better possibility to get to know different components of higher education, qualifications, universities and systems of education. They aim at increasing the transparency of systems and of mobility of qualified citizens. The links between the mechanisms that serve transparency and the national framework structures of qualifications are complex. All of them should directly or indirectly help students, qualified staff and those interested, among others: employers, advisers who deal with qualification evaluation, university teachers and state officials, etc. The “new style” national framework qualification structures will strengthen the already existing transparency tools thanks to simplified information, which they are meant to transfer. The value of the Supplements to Diplomas will increase, as they will specify the level of qualification on the base of precise national framework structures and the European framework structure of qualifications. Their value will also increase if they refer to effects of education clear in a given country and abroad and to the levels and descriptors of qualifications. The Supplement to Diplomas plays a very important role in this context, It is already very popular between students as it includes a description of system of education in a given country. This part should describe national or some other appropriate system using the framework qualification structure. Thanks to projects within Operational Programme - Human Resources for the years 2007 – 2013 Polish national policy has started actions aimed at implementation of European Qualification Framework, European system of Credit Points in education and vocational training.

7.2. Promoting the comparability of qualifications between different national, regional or sectoral contexts and their future compatibility with EQF

7.2.1. Policy progress since 2002

Poland has been working on the first stage of the National Qualification Structure, which is meant to improve national levels of qualification and leverage them, due to EQF, to a level of other European countries. There is a lot to be done in this respect, thus the question to comply with the deadlines set within the Recommendation of the EU Parliament and Commission, is uncertain. The biggest challenges in comparing qualifications are the following:

- Insufficient connection between qualifications structures from different sectors and lack of experience in creation of a concise, trans-sectorial qualifications structure,
- A strong tradition of describing qualifications and the relationship between the same in terms of process and conditions necessary for acquiring qualifications, and not in terms of effects of learning,
- Domination of formal education and a strictly linked tradition to relate qualifications to having completed formal programmes of education and trainings,
- Associating the qualities of qualifications with forms focused on processes and education conditions observations, and less with focus put on effects of learning,
- Underestimation of a learning process when working and through work seen as a source of competence and qualifications (in the past such a trend resulted from a low economic level and lack of developed independent citizens' associations),
- Not sufficient advancement to create a common system of validation (identification, evaluation and recognition of effects of out of formal and informal learning),
- Limiting problems related to qualifications to professional qualifications, also considering a profession as the key item in the systems of qualifications.

The scale of these challenges will be a hindrance to relate the use of EQF for the national levels of qualifications with the levels of qualifications in other countries. Lack of experience to carry out international projects of to compare systems of qualifications seems to be another obstacle, especially

the fact that Poland did not participate in OECD review of national systems of qualifications, which preceded EQF elaboration. As a favorable factor, however, we can consider the fact that education in Poland is strongly centralized and there are no regional differences in terms of acquiring qualifications. Poland declared to elaborate National Qualification Framework (KRK). It will be included in priority III "High level of education system" within Human Resources Operational Programme. From the experience with KRK we can clearly see that due to a few years of delay of creation of national LLL strategy, there is a danger that there will be a growing gap between the European EQF guidelines and the practical aspects of Polish system of qualifications. A considerable hindrance in this respect is also the lack of experience in setting up systems of validation, i.e. identification, evaluation and recognition of qualifications acquired outside the formal system of education and trainings (work in this field has not started yet). We must remember that to consider qualifications as effects of a learning process, regardless the place, time and manner of learning, is one of the most fundamental principals of EQF. A working group appointed in October 2006 by Minister of Science and Higher Education has been working of the National Qualifications Structure (KSK) in higher education. The main aim of KSK is to obtain the following results: comprehensive information about competence the graduates obtain following different education pathways, information about the possibilities to continue education in the aspect of life-learning, comparability of education effects (on national and international level), education standards based on education effects, and also a broader variety of higher education programmes, which shall enable better adjustment of the graduates to the labour market.

7.2.2. Examples of policy measures

Human Resources Operational Programme – High Quality of Education (Priority III)

The bases of implementation – EU Council Directive No. 1083/2006 setting general regulations for European Fund for Regional Development, European Social Fund and Cohesion Fund and repealing Directive EU No. 1260/1999, the Bill of 6 December 2006 on rules governing development policy implementation (Dz. U. Nr 227, poz. 1658 z późn. zm.) and Directive EU No. 1081/2006 of European Parliament and EU Council of 5 July 2006 on European Social Fund and repealing Directive EU No. 1784/1999. The established objectives were the following: elaboration and implementation of National Qualification Framework and National System of Qualifications and life-learning dissemination. The programme includes all the levels of education and economic sectors. Ministry of National Education has been working on the preparatory stages. The whole programme was planned for the years 2007 – 2013.

The programme is being implemented on a central level. The managing body is the due Minister for Regional Development – Managing Department for European Social Fund. The mediating institution is due Minister of Education – Department of Structural Funds.

Elaboration and implementation of National System of Qualifications (KSK) will be delivered into three stages. The first stage is focused on analytical and research activities. The fundamental action is to gather information about all the competence and qualifications that are present on the Polish market, regardless the manner of their acquiring. This stage also consists of the analysis of legal acts and other documents establishing and describing formal and non-formal systems of education and training. It has also been planned to examine and define (using, among others, representative survey research) the competence acquired by employees in non-formal and informal manners and social expectations (advantages) from their formal validation. The identification of competence and qualifications acquired in a formal manner (school forms and outside school forms), non-formal and informal will lead to the second stage of the realized task, which will focus on structuring and later on description of the identified competence and qualifications. As a result of this process National Qualification Framework will be created. The National Qualification Framework will correspond to the European Qualification Framework, which will enable in the future to comparison and recognition of qualifications on an international level. The third stage will consist of elaboration and implementation of rules and procedures for the validation of competence and qualifications gained through formal, non-formal and informal education. As a result National System of Qualifications will be created. Actions with institutional character will also be included in this stage. They will consist of support for the creation of organization structures, which will be responsible for implementation of National System of Qualifications (new structures, or the ones created on the base of already existing

institutions of the education system). National Polish campaigns will also be carried out, which will air at dissemination of life-learning process.

The creation of KKK has been delayed in Poland. In case of qualifications based on learning outcomes, vocational qualification standards have been elaborated together with innovative teaching programmes and education packs appointed by Ministry of National Education. The contents of the programmes and packs have been adjusted to the aforementioned learning outcomes.

The following actors will take part in the creation of National Qualification Framework and adjusting it to the EQF:

- Ministry of National Education;
- Ministry of Science and Higher Education together with different economic sectors;
- Central and Regional Examination Commission;
- Schools, education centres and their leading organizations;
- Education administration;
- Employers and employers' associations;
- Professional associations;
- Craft chambers and other craft organizations;
- Universities and research and development centres;
- Education and training centres.

Due to an early stage of the development of the programme, it cannot be evaluated yet. At the moment the only thing that can be stated is that due to the delay of national strategy of life-learning, there is a possibility that a gap might be created between the European principles of EQF and the practical aspects of the systems of qualifications in Poland. An important factor in this respect is also a lack of experience in the creation of system of validation, i.e. recognition, evaluation and recognition of competence acquired outside the formal system of education and training. An important issue noted by Ministry of National Education is to be able to use experience from other European countries, which are much more advanced in the process of implementation of EQF. An example of how these experiences might be used a workshop of a group „Peer learning activity on National qualification frameworks”, organised in Niepolomice (near Cracow) 11–13 June 2008 by the aforementioned Ministry and with collaboration of Cedefop. The title of the workshop was: “Building National qualification frameworks: Reducing barriers and building bridges?”

7.3. Promote the transfer and accumulation of qualifications between different national, regional or sectoral contexts and facilitating the future implementation of ECVET

7.3.1. Policy progress since 2002

Similarly to European Qualification Framework, work on ECVET has also been delayed. In 2007 Ministry of National Education tried to encourage all the interested parties to participate actively in the process of social consultations, who were asked to send all different types of remarks, comments and opinions about the implementation of ECVET in Poland. Social consultations were also carried out about the proposal of the EU Commission to create European System of Credit Points Transfer for the purposes of education and vocational training. This consultation was organised at the same time in all of the European Union member states, which participated in the Copenhagen Process, which aimed at strengthening collaboration between the EU member states in education and vocational training. European Commission also invited social partners on international, national and sectoral levels to participate in the process of consultation about ECVET project. ECVET system is meant to facilitate gathering, movement and recognition of qualifications understood as a validated in a given country learning outcomes (regardless the circumstances in which the process of learning takes place). The imperative objective of ECVET is to underpin the implementation of the idea of life-learning, improvement of transparency and comparability of qualifications, to support mobility in geographical, educational and professional dimension and to strengthen mutual trust and collaboration between the EU member states. ECVET system is meant to be fully voluntary, thus the countries which decide to implement this system will establish on their own, in accordance with their national regulations, the way of the implementation and the scope of the same. The consultations about the ECVET system in the big majority of countries, Poland included, resulted in taking specific actions to disseminate information about the system and in organising debates and exchange of views on the proposal coming

from EU Commissions. A big number of ministries, different institutions, organizations and other authorities were involved in the process. Hundreds of people were dedicated to it.

7.3.2. Examples of policy measures

ECVET Consultations

Social consultations about the European System of Credit Points Transfer for the purpose of education and vocational education ECVET were organised (between November 2006 and 31st March 2007) by Ministry of National Education – Department of Vocational and Continual Education. In Poland these consultations were related to dissemination of information about the ECVET system and to organization of debates and sharing of opinions on the topic of the proposal from the EU Commission. A big number of ministries, different institutions, organizations and other authorities were involved in the process. Hundreds of people were dedicated to it.

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

Nowadays identification actions are carried out to analyse the results of social consultations. The big majority of the respondents considered ECVET system as an innovative initiative, which will be useful for the society. ECVET was thought to contribute greatly to improve mobility of people and to validate and recognize their qualifications. The system has also been considered to be a good tool for collaboration between those involved in vocational education not only on the European level, but also on the national level. In Poland evaluation and certification of qualifications seems to be easier than in other countries, due to the fact that the Polish system of education is strongly centralized. There are no regional divisions and thus differences in evaluation of the same qualifications in different regions of the country are not significant.

Ministry of National Education involved all the interested entities in the process of consultation, especially from economy sectors and different social environments on a national level, representative organizations for the social partners, higher education network, organizations that deal with education and vocational training, research institutions and VET experts.

The conclusions obtained in the process of consultation about how to improve ECVET system are based on observations, remarks, questions and proposals, which should be taken into consideration in the farther process of development of the system. They refer mainly to the following:

- more precise description and interpretation of terms (“learning units”, “validation”, “due organs”, “120 credit points of ECVET”),
- more detailed description of the main principles of the system (to present concrete use of ECVET from the point of view of learners and education bodies, to show how ECVET may be applied in the process of recognition of non-formal and informal learning),
- to describe the role of ECVET points in the system and the method to give points to learning units),
- to show links between ECVET with ECTS and ECVET with EQF.

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

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

Indicators of the success of implementation of ECVET are the following:

- support for the process of life-learning,
- improvement of transparency and comparability of qualifications and competence due to a common method of describing qualifications and references to European Qualification Framework (EQF) and linking it to the supplementary EUROPASS,

- enabling mobility (of education, professional and geographic) – ECVET proposes an approach, which promotes to recognise knowledge of a given person acquired abroad when validating his/her qualifications in their home countries.

A survey prepared by Ministry of National Education for consultation included the following issues:

- objectives and justification of the ECVET system introduction: whether the document for consultation includes the most important objectives and functions of the ECVET system as well as the roles and tasks of the due organs (institutions); what is the main added value of the ECVET system?
- Technical basis of the ECVET system: whether the technical questions should be more precise, which enable practical implementation of ECVET (if so, then which ones?); whether the following issues have been included in the proposal in the correct way: evaluation, recognition, validation, accumulation and moving learning outcomes (formal, non-formal and informal); whether the proposal of allocation of 120 credit points to qualification and to learning units acquired during the period of a year learning process has been accurate.
- ECVET implementation: what kind of conditions should be fulfilled so that to describe qualification as a result of learning process and to use learning units to describe them could effectively improve transparency of qualifications and raise the level of trust; which criteria or combinations of criteria of credit points assignation should be chosen and used for the needs of ECVET; whether there are in Poland any characteristics of the system of qualification, which might make the ECVET implementation easier; in what a manner and in what time framework (concerning stages of the beginning of the process, introduction, pilot implementation, thorough dissemination) the ECVET system could be implemented in Poland.
- Instruments of support for implementation and development of ECVET: what kind of measures could be taken on European, national and sectoral levels in order to facilitate ECVET implementation; what kind of documents, guidebooks and guidelines should be elaborated in order to facilitate ECVET implementation.
- Potential of the ECVET system in the aspect of increasing mobility: in what demotion and how ECVET can contribute to create national and trans-national partnerships and to the development of collaboration; in what dimension and how ECVET can contribute to improve EU programmes in mobility and to improve participation in these programmes; in what dimension and how ECVET and EUROPASS could complement each other in order to intensify mobility.

7.4. Promoting Europass and ensuring synergy with EQF and ECVET

7.4.1. Policy progress since 2005 to introduce and promote Europass

Implementation of EUROPASS in Poland in the years 2005 – 2006 was preceded by update of the Polish laws. Nowadays all of the documents which form a part of EUROPASS can be obtained in Poland. EUROPASS – Supplement to Diploma has been used obligatorily by universities since 1 January 2005. EUROPASS – Certificate Supplement has been used in Poland since 2006 and provided by Regional Examination Commissions. They are given to the graduates of upper secondary vocational schools, who have passed an exam validating their professional qualifications. Document EUROPASS – Mobility has been used in Poland since 2005 and is issued by National EUROPASS Centre (KCE). It was created based on the decision of Minister of National Education and Sport in 2005 and forms a part of Task Force for Training and Human Resources in “Cooperation Fund” Foundation. Since 2005 Polish version of the EUROPASS documents – CV, EUROPASS – Language Passport and EUROPASS – Mobility have been available on EUROPASS European website. The Polish EUROPASS website has been functioning since May 2005. It comprises models of documents, instructions to fill them in and the link to the European EUROPASS website. At the beginning of 2006 a Polish version of European EUROPASS website was created. National Europass Centre carries out numerous promotional and information activities presenting the Europass Initiative to different target groups: vocational counsellors, employers, teachers, students and secondary school pupils, the unemployed and job seekers. The representatives of KCE take part in many events organised on the national and regional levels – conferences, labour fair, educational fairs as well as they organise their own conferences, workshops and meetings. From the beginning of its existence in Poland Europass

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

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

One of the main victories in terms of the EUROPASS implementation is the fact that the holders of a diploma, that validates vocational qualifications, are able to prove the trajectory of their education and to validate their competence and abilities. The main objective of this document is to improve transparency of qualifications. This document at the same time enables employers to see what kind of competence the owner of such a diploma has. This type of diploma is issued by Regional Examination Commissions. The Supplements are both in Polish and English versions.

7.4.2. Examples of policy measures and practice

EUROPASS CV

This CV sheet enables to put acquired knowledge and competence in clear format. It is recognized on a national and international level.

EUROPASS CV has been very popular as it is highly valued within employers' environment. The possibility to make an easy comparison between the candidates, when the CVs for example are in different languages, has been emphasized. The indication of the success of this document is the fact that in only in 2006 about 85,000 of people downloaded the model of CV in English. EUROPASS CV is useful for both employers and employees. There are no impediments to use EUROPASS-CV, as it is recognized in the majority of education and the labour market institutions. This document enables to demonstrate professional experience and qualifications gained through not only formal but also non-formal and informal education.

National EUROPASS Centre (KCE)

National EUROPASS Centre was created due to Decision of Minister of National Education and Sport of 6 January 2005. Its fundamental function is to promote documents included in Decision of European Parliament and Commission on uniform framework for transparency of qualifications and competence (Europass) and coordination of actions, which aim at implementation of EUROPASS in Poland.

This undertaking has been successfully functioning since 2005. KCE tasks include the following: to issue one of the documents that form a part of Europass, that is Europass – Mobility (which is to mark periods of European educational mobility); to promote Europass documents; to facilitate access to information and professional advice about different possibilities of education in Europe; structures of systems of education and training; and other questions related to educational mobility. KCE tasks are also related to data collection on educational mobility and on the use of the document of Europass – Certificate Supplement KCE functions on the national and international level, and the main entities interested in this document are clients using this type of services and information and Central and Regional Examination Commissions.

7.5. Promoting geographical mobility of learners within VET

7.5.1. Policy progress since 2002

Strategy for development of education for the years 2007 – 2013 includes preparation for mobility on international education level and on international the labour market due to the following issues:

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

Mobility, that forms a part of VET in Poland, is mainly promoted by EUROPASS Mobility, Leonardo da Vinci programme, Comenius programme, study visits and Erasmus programme. The following actions are underpinned by geographical mobility:

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

In case of students a considerable increase of mobility has been noted due to programme Socrates-Erasmus, both in the number of universities participating in the programme and the number of students. This increase is not only due to the fact that students are very much interested in the possibilities of covering a part of their studies abroad at a partner universities, but also due to a better understanding of mechanisms of education recognition and better quality of services offered to students going abroad and coming to a given country. It also results from decisions taken by Polish universities, which see how important the process of making education international is, and the role that in the process of internationalization mobility of students and university teachers plays. A special attention has been put to the actions, which increase the number of students coming to Poland: new courses have been organised, which are taught in the most common EU languages (mainly in English), improvement of functioning of Bureau of International Collaboration to make sure that international students will receive services of a better quality. However, in spite of a gradual improvement, there is still a lack of balance in international exchange. 16 Erasmus programmes have been functioning since 1998. Till 2005/06 over 42,000 of Polish students participated in international scholarships programmes and over 7,500 foreign students came for exchange to Polish universities. Over 7,400 Polish university teachers went abroad as lecturers and over 4,500 foreign lectures lectured at Polish universities. In 2006/07 academic year there will be over 200 Polish universities, that will take part in the programme.

Furthermore, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MPiPS) in 2006 acted as a coordinator for actions undertaken by Polish central administration in the framework of European Employees Mobility Year (ERMP). Together with Ministry of Education and Science, Repatriation and Foreigners Bureau a programme of action in the framework of Mobility Year was prepared. It included among others organization of an international conference on evaluation of temporary solutions for access to the labour market in the initial stage of functioning and also undertakings, which aim at increasing the awareness of advantages and costs related to geographic and professional mobility, such as informative campaigns, contests and promotion of voluntary work among younger generation. Furthermore in September of 2006 work fair was organised, which coincided with the organization of the same type of fair in several dozen of EU cities.

7.5.2. Examples of policy measures

Training and in service training courses for teachers in the framework of Comenius programme

One of the objectives of Comenius programme is to promote mobility of teachers. It includes among others the following issues:

- exchange of students and teachers;
- mobility in schools for students and traineeships for teachers in schools or companies;
- training programmes for teachers and the rest of teaching staff;
- preparatory and study visits in the framework of actions related to mobility, partnerships, projects or networks (also contact seminars);
- traineeships for teachers and teachers – to – be.

This programme has transnational dimension and is coordinated by Foundation of Education System Development.

In the years 2001 – 2006 traineeship courses were followed by 2,792 participants (253 male). The low number of male participants, who took part in Comenius traineeship courses reflects the fact of feminization of the teacher profession in Poland. The beneficiaries of this programme were young people between 26 and 34. The highest number of institutions that applied for the programme came from the following voivodeships: Mazovia (553), Silesia (543) and Pomerania. The lowest number of

participants was from Lubuskie voivodeship (36). The beneficiaries of this programme were mostly city dwellers. 2,216 of the institutions, that recommended participants for the courses, are located in cities and in suburban areas. The highest representation of a professional group was of teachers from basic secondary schools (1067), secondary school teachers (716) and primary school teachers (537). The beneficiaries selected the courses they wanted to follow from the Comenius catalogue published on the European Commission website and from the courses offered on the free market. The second category of the courses was very popular with 1,985 courses offered. The rest 807 of courses came from Comenius catalogue. The free market courses were mainly methodology - language courses, or language courses especially for teachers teaching in a bilingual way. From all the courses offered the most popular were methodology – language courses and language courses. 81% of the participants chose one of the aforementioned courses. 6% of the beneficiaries were interested in specialized courses – new technologies. The main languages during the courses were: English (2,031), German (366) and French (351). In very few cases the language of the course was Spanish (29) and Italian (9). The indicators of the success of the programme have been presented in the table below, where information about the progress in number of realized projects in the years 1998 and 2006 was shown.

Tab. 1. Courses of traineeships for teachers – number of accepted project in relation to voivodeships

Region in Poland (voivodship)	1998	2006
Dolnoslaskie	1	60
Kujawsko-Pomorskie	3	20
Lódzkie	2	28
Lubelskie	2	31
Lubuskie	-	9
Malopolskie	1	43
Mazowieckie	3	95
Opolskie	2	16
Podkarpackie	6	28
Podlaskie	3	26
Pomorskie	4	36
Slaskie	15	115
Swietokrzyskie	4	26
Warminsko-Mazurskie	10	29
Wielkopolskie	-	38
Zachodniopomorskie	1	18
TOTAL	57	619

Source: <http://www.socrates.org.pl/socrates2/index1.php?dzial=5&node=76&doc=1000225>

This programme has become very popular. There are more and more teachers who decide to go abroad and improve their professional qualifications.

EUROPASS – Mobility

The document has a transnational character. Since 2005 it has been issued by National EUROPASS Centre. Its main purpose is to promote educational mobility. These are the main objectives of the document:

- in a clear and precise way it describes the scope of actions and tasks of a person, who undergoes a training, traineeship or apprenticeship abroad, or who follows a six month training at university and time of the duration;
- it shows the level of command and qualifications gained during the period of training,
- the contents of the programme is validated by both the national agency, which recommend a person for a training, and the foreign organization, which receives the beneficiary,
- the potential employers are able to verify, or to get into detail with the information included in the document;

- it promotes the Recommendation (EC) No. 2006/961 on transnational mobility within the Community for education and training purposes: European Quality Charter for Mobility (OJ L 394 of 30.12.2006),
- it encourages companies to support initiatives related to mobility and to participate in them;
- it promotes transnational mobility for the people interested in education and vocational training.

Any person going abroad after 1 January 2005 regardless their age, level of education or professional status is entitled to the EUROPASS Mobility document. It refers to trips organised in the framework of EU initiatives such as Leonardo da Vinci or Socrates and other trips organised in the framework of other initiatives, including bilateral agreements between different EU organizations. It means that both a school or an institution with a bilateral agreement about a training or students or employee's exchange (for example a commercial company sending its employees to its branch, head quarters or sister company in another European country) can apply to National Europass Centre for Europass – Mobility documents for the participants in such a training or traineeship.

Employees and employers consider EUROPASS – Mobility to be a useful document, which describes foreign trainings and professional experience. EUROPASS Mobility is becoming more and more popular on the Polish the labour market – so far over 10 000 documents have been issued.

Theme 8. Development of VET statistics

8.1. Progress made on national VET statistics since 2002

The modern system of information nowadays offers a lot of data about the labour market needs: about the unemployment, the working group and the salaries. The information is collected by labour offices subordinate to Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and to statistical offices (based on data received from companies) and also from sources of Ministry of Finance, Social Security Office and Rural Social Security Bank.

The advantages of this system are the following: it is an independent source of information, which makes it possible to authenticate the data, systematic way of gathering data, transparency of gathering and processing data and unification of terminology and definitions. IT PLUS system, which operates in district labour offices gives an additional possibility to collect specific individual data about the unemployed and those looking for a job.

On the other hand some drawbacks of the system have been found. One of them is the fact that there is too little specific information related to the labour market about qualifications, professions and education. There is not enough data about mobility of employees (geographic and professional). There is lack of possibilities for effective analysis of the level of employment in small companies and on the local the labour markets. There is insufficient information about qualifications and level of education between people employed in agriculture. There is hardly any information about the self-employed outside the agricultural sector. There is no coordination between data related to education with data related to the labour market. The latter limits the possibilities to forecast the demand and supply trends on the labour market. In overall we can say that the whole system of collection of data about the labour market lacks coordination.

Public statistics do not carry our any complex research on education activity of the society, which hinders evaluation of the level of vocational training. Research entitled “Vocational Training in 2003”, published by GUS in 2004, was based on methodology of Study of Economical Activity of the Population (BAEL). However, there is still a lot to be said on this topic. As a positive exception we could quote three studies carried out in 2003 by Social Research Office in Sopot in the framework of PHARE 2000 programme “National System of Vocational Training” – Part II, executed by Ministry of Economy and Employment:

- Study on Educational Activity of Adults (BAED) – on adults participation in out of school education;
- Study on Training Institutions (BIS) – on the activities of training institutions located in Mazovia voivodeship;

- Study on Continuing Vocational Training in Companies – based on the international CVTS2 methodology (*Continuing Vocational Training Survey*) carried out by Eurostat.

The aforementioned studies were pilot studies carried out with the aim to prepare methodology and research tools for the Central Statistical Office (GUS). There is a need to implement the results of the aforementioned studies to the systematic practice of public statistical system.

It has been planned to enlarge IT systems of Public Employment Services and to integrate them with the IT systems of Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MPiPS), of Central Statistical Office (GUS), Social Security Office (ZUS) and with the System of Information of Education (SIO). This way it will be possible to obtain classified data (on different levels of classification) and unidentified individual data about the unemployed and those looking for a job and also about people who work, who are passive professionally and the graduates, who have graduated from vocational education schools and general secondary schools.

8.2. Examples of policies/ measures/ projects for improving national VET statistics

Study on continuing vocational training in CVTS2 companies

Up to date results of a research on educational activity in companies were due to PHARE 2000 programme “National System of Vocational Training – Part II”. Statistical studies done in the framework of this programme were carried on in 2003.

Study on continuing vocational training in companies was based on the methodology of an international study CVTS2 (*Continuing Vocational Training Survey*). This study in Poland was carried out by Social Research Office in Sopot.

Effective number of those participating in the study, imposed due to methodology, was 15,000 companies. It is the required number of effectively examined companies (surveys which were filled in and sent back). The number of filled in and sent back surveys were from 40,241 companies (it means around 40% of the population of the valuation study). The valuation study in this case was based on Companies Registration Office certificate REGON, which is valid in the whole territory of Poland. The most important part of the study are includes in the following fragment.

“One of the most important information obtained during the study is a fraction estimate of the companies, which carry out any type of vocational training. The participation of companies that carry out trainings in the overall number of entities is 41.1%. We should take into consideration the fact that the bigger the companies are, the higher number among them of those, which finance and co-finance training for their employees.

The level of commitment of the entities in professional training also depends on their business activity. The highest percentage of the entities that carry out trainings is found in J65-67 section – financial mediation (74% of the total number of the companies in a given section). A little smaller percentage is in E section – electric energy, gas and water supply (67%). High participation of companies that carry out trainings, as over 50%, belong also to C section (coal mining and mining) and K section (real estate services and services for companies). It means that more than every second entity (in sections J, E, C and K) organised in 2002 different forms of continuing vocational training.

(...) The aforementioned data shows the fact that not all of the companies are involved equally in organization of professional trainings and their participation depends to a big extent on how big the entity is, and on the type of their business activity. Thus a question arises – **why a part of the companies is not interested in carrying out professional training programmes?**

Over 73.5% of entities that do not organise trainings say (table 10) that the qualifications of their employees are sufficient for their needs and thus they find further trainings unnecessary (entities could choose maximum three reasons out of ten). This is the main reason given by this group of entities, regardless their size and EKD section, to which they belong (...).”

After having analysed the results obtained during the study it can be clearly seen that **the preparation and execution of trainings is more often done by external contractors than inside contractors**. Their participation of the total time of trainings is of 65.7%. Entities that employ the lowest number of staff use the most external trainings (78.3%). The most probable reason for this tendency is the fact that small companies do not have qualified and staff transferred especially for planning and execution of trainings.

(...) The results of the study show that the entities, which employ external contractors to execute trainings use most often services of specialised public training institutions, private training companies and private universities. This fraction is respectively of: 50.1% and 33.7% of the total external training time.

(...) Continuing vocational training executed in companies in 2002 differed in form. The results of the study show **that 87.4% of the entities involved in undertakings related to vocational training executed training in a basic and traditional form.** They were led outside the workstations, in conference halls or in training centres in the time framework set by the organizer of the same. They were either courses or trainings tailored especially for the purpose to improve vocational abilities of employees. **Among the companies that opted for basic form trainings as many as 79.1% chose external courses and trainings, and only 27% of entities organised courses and trainings on their own** – the entities had the possibility to organize both internal and external trainings.” (Balicki, 2003)

Theme 9. VET beyond 2010

9.1. What VET issues do you believe should be on the national and on the EU policy agenda post 2010 and why?

National policy agenda

- In Poland there are certain elements that support vocational training, which encourage adults to raise their qualifications:
 - The obligation to enable employees to raise their vocational qualifications imposed on employers on the strength of the Bill on Laboral Code,
 - Tax relief related to training expenditures,
 - Trainings for the unemployed and those who are likely to loose a job/ those looking for a job, which are financed from *Labour Fund* (financed from the national budget and from employers donations). These elements however, do not form a homogeneous system, which together with the lack of a good diagnose of the demand for continual education, makes it impossible to evaluate to what extant the already existing supportive mechanisms are effective, and where the fundamental obstacles that hinder taking up new initiatives lie.
- Observing training offers we can see that the sector of companies is becoming more and more interested in promotion and execution of e-trainings for the staff. Studies carried out in Poland by GUS on the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in companies and in households show that there is a need to stimulate the development of the employees from the sectors of services and production by offering them a more extensive training offer, which will include e-training methods. These will allow in a more flexible way to shape the plans of professional competence development and will diminish, at the same time, the total cost of a training. In order to be able to effectively implement e-learning methods for the benefits of economy, it is necessary to develop standard solutions available for the beneficiaries and the suppliers of e-learning. Methodological support is also necessary for teaching processes, learning and standarisation of new profiles of organizers and specialists in e-learning services.
- One of the challenges Poland is facing at the moment is reorientation of education offer. It results from demographic changes and from aging of the population. It is extremely important to include issues of continual education of older people in all the activities done by the state, as retirement cannot be a reason for exclusion from social life, from access to education or culture.
- The market of supply of educational services is also not well known. It causes difficulties to control the quality of offered courses and to ensure effective funds spending on training.
- As far as the vocational exams are concerned the following actions should be undertaken:
 - To create a model of an exam, which would validate all the qualifications specified in a given profession and not “the whole profession”, as it is done at present.
 - Examination centres should also validate qualifications and knowledge obtained out of education system, it should be an exam that would verify knowledge and qualifications of

the person taking an exam, regardless the system s/he used to obtain the knowledge and qualifications during non-formal and informal education).

- Examination centres should work on a continuous basis for the people, who want to certify their qualifications to be able to choose a suitable date for them during the whole year.
- Exams validating vocational qualifications for technicians should include a practical test of a given professional task – work test, and not as it is common at present, a project only on paper.
- Central Examination Commission does not have an examination topic base sufficient enough. The biggest problem is to find the authors for the tasks –low salary discourages experts from executing this kind of activities (especially experts from fields other than education), examination tasks prepared on a central level quite often are done with mistakes. Thus the best solution would be a decentralization of decisions about the examination tasks. Regional Examination Commissions should have access to broad base of examination topics and tasks, which first should be checked by experts from Central Examination Commission (CKE) and then allowed to be used for exams. However, it should be Regional Examination Commission (OKE) to decide which examination task/ topic will be used in a given examination centre in a given time.
- CKE and OKE should stimulate implementation of new technologies in education and vocational centres. If new technologies are used during an exam, vocational schools will have to implement new technologies in teaching a given profession.

EU policy agenda

- Due to the fact that there is a need to raise competitiveness in Europe, there should be more attention put to advancements in education and trainings and high level of competence.
- Due to the need to prepare a more mobile employees environment, more attention should be put to key competence, also in vocational training.
- Better professional preparation should be reached not only by vocational education, but also general education, which in accordance with the main principle of life-learning, should also lead to obtaining certain qualifications.
- Aging European society requires “global” – transnational University of the Third Age. In the process of life-learning the experience of the third generation should be used more often – experts from different fields could become trainers/ coaches for a younger, less experienced generation.

9.2. What VET issues do you believe should be on the national and on the EU policy agenda?

- In case of Poland the aforementioned issues should eventually lead to the changes in legal system and to the initiation of new projects in the framework of Operational Programme human Capital (POKL) and Lifelong Learning Programme (LLL). New professions related to e-learning should also be included in the professional and specialists classification for the labour market and they should be standardized.
- As for the EU the following issues should be taken into consideration: possibility to correct e-learning objectives and guidelines, with a special attention put to the competence of e-learning specialists.

Theme 10. Authors, bibliographical references and sources

10.1. Authors

- dr hab. inż. (prof. ITeE-PIB) **Henryk Bednarczyk** – Head of Work Pedagogy of Innovative Economy Centre in the Institute for Sustainable Technologies – National Research Institute in Radom. Author of the Theme 1, 6, 10.
- dr inż. **Krzysztof Symela** – Head of Vocational Education Research Department in the Institute for Sustainable Technologies – National Research Institute in Radom. Author of the Theme 3, 4, 9, 10.

- dr inż. **Ireneusz Woźniak** – Senior Lecturer. of Vocational Education Research Department in the Institute for Sustainable Technologies – National Research Institute in Radom Author of the Theme 2, 5, 8, 10.
- mgr **Ludmiła Łopacińska** – Assistant of Vocational Education Research Department in the Institute for Sustainable Technologies – National Research Institute in Radom. Author of the Theme 7, 10.

10.2. Sources, references and websites

- Bednarczyk H., Woźniak I. (eds.): *Edukacja ustawiczna 2005. Raport o stanie edukacji ustawicznej w Polsce w roku 2005.* (**Continuing Education 2005. Report on the continuing education situation in Poland in 2005.**) Ministerstwo Edukacji i Nauki, Warszawa 2005. ISBN 83-7204-477-5.
- Bednarczyk H., Woźniak I. (red): *Diagnoza potrzeb edukacyjnych powiatowego rynku pracy.* Stowarzyszenie Oświatowe SYCYNA 2003. ISBN 83-918104-3-7. (**Diagnosis of educational needs in district labour market**)
- Bednarczyk H. (red): *Podstawy teoretyczne i modele systemów zarządzania w ustawicznej edukacji zawodowej.* ITeE-PIB, Radom 2005. (**Theoretical basis and models of management systems in continuing education**)
- Bednarczyk H., Shklyar A. (red.): *Jakość ustawicznej edukacji zawodowej.* ITeE-PIB, WSP ZNP, Radom-Warszawa 2006. (**Quality of continuing vocational education**)
- *Decyzja Parlamentu Europejskiego i Rady z dnia 15 listopada 2006 r. ustanawiająca program działań w zakresie uczenia się przez całe życie.* Nr 1720/2006/WE. (**Decision No 1720/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 November 2006 establishing an action programme in the field of lifelong learning**)
- *Europejskie Ramy Kwalifikacji: nowy sposób interpretowania kwalifikacji w całej Europie,* Bruksela 5 września 2006, IP/06/1148. (**The European Qualifications Framework: a new way to understand qualifications across Europe, Brussels 5 September 2006**)
- *Edukacja i szkolenie 2010 – sukces strategii lizbońskiej zależy od wprowadzenia natychmiastowych reform.* (**Education and training 2010 – success of Lisbon Strategy hinges on urgent reforms**). Wspólny raport Rady i Komisji. Rada Unii Europejskiej, Bruksela, 3 marca 2004
- *Edukacja w Europie: różne systemy kształcenia i szkolenia – wspólne cele do roku 2010* (**Education in Europe: different systems of education and training – common objectives until 2010.**), Fundacja Rozwoju Systemu Edukacji, Warszawa 2003
- *Ekspertyza. Kierunki wspierania przedsiębiorstw w zakresie szkoleń zawodowych.* (**Expertise. Trends of support for enterprises in the field of vocational training.**), Fundacja Rozwoju Kapitału Ludzkiego. PARP, Warszawa 2004 (www.parp.gov.pl/raport13.html)
- Grabowski M. (red. Nauk.): *Imigracja wykwalifikowanych pracowników do Polski. Forum Strategii Lizbońskiej.* Instytut Badań nad Gospodarką Rynkową. Warszawa - Gdańsk 2007. ISBN 978-83-89443-72-4 (Niebieskie Księgi 2007 ; nr 22) (**Immigration of qualified workers to Poland. Forum of Lisbon Strategy**)
- *Krajowy Plan Działania na rzecz Integracji Społecznej na lata 2004–2006* (**National Plan of Activities for Social Integration in the years 2004–2006**), Ministerstwo Polityki Społecznej, Warszawa 2004.
- *Krajowy System Szkolenia Zawodowego PHARE 2000* (**National System of Vocational Training PHARE 2000.**) Rynek Pracy (special issue, December 2003).
- Kramek Z., Strojna E., Symela K.: *Informator o modułowych programach szkolenia zawodowego.* (**Modular curricula for vocational education guide**). Projekt Phare 2000 – Krajowy System Szkolenia Zawodowego. MGiP, Warszawa 2004.
- *Kształcenie Ustawiczne w 2003 r.* (**Continuing Education in 2003.**) Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Warszawa 2004.
- *Kształcenie ustawiczne w Polsce.* Niebieska Księga Polskiego Forum Strategii Lizbońskiej (**Continuing Education in Poland. The Blue Book of the Polish Forum of Lisbon Strategy**), Warszawa 2003.
- Kwiatkowski S.M., Woźniak I. (eds.): *„Krajowe standardy kwalifikacji zawodowych. Projektowanie i stosowanie”* (**National vocational education standards. Design and application**). Ministerstwo Gospodarki, Pracy i Polityki Społecznej, Warszawa 2003.
- Kwiatkowski S.M., Woźniak I. (eds.): *„Krajowe standardy kwalifikacji zawodowych. Kontekst europejski”* (**National Professional Qualification Standards. European context**). Ministerstwo Gospodarki i Pracy, Warszawa 2004.

- Kwiatkowski S.M., Woźniak I. (red.): *Krajowe standardy kwalifikacji zawodowych. Projektowanie i stosowanie*. Projekt PHARE 2000 Cz. II – Krajowy System Szkolenia Zawodowego. (**National Professional Qualification Standards. Design and adaptation. Part 2 of PHARE 2000 Project – National System Of Vocational Training**) Ministerstwo Gospodarki, Pracy i Polityki Społecznej, Warszawa 2003. ISBN 83-7204-378-7.
- Kwiatkowski S.M., Woźniak I., Bednarczyk H. (red.): *Krajowe standardy kwalifikacji zawodowych. Rozwój i współpraca*. Projekt EFS SPO-RZL Opracowanie i upowszechnienie krajowych standardów kwalifikacji zawodowych, (**National Professional Qualification Standards. Development and Cooperation**) Ministerstwo Pracy i Polityki Społecznej, Warszawa 2007. ISBN 978-83-7204-597-3.
- Kukulak-Dolata I., *Zmiany struktury kwalifikacyjno-zawodowej podaży pracy w województwie mazowieckim i ich determinanty*, (**Changes in Qualification-Vocational Structure of Supply Side of the labour market in Mazowiecki Province**) Instytut Pracy i Spraw Socjalnych, Warszawa 2006. SBN 83-87890-61-8.
- Narwojsz H., Krawczyński C., Symela K., Zwiefka K. (red.): *Walidacja kompetencji nieformalnych uzyskanych poprzez doświadczenie w pracy*. (**Validation of nonformal competences acquired through work experience**) Warmińsko-Mazurski Zakład Doskonalenia Zawodowego, Olsztyn 2008. ISBN: 978-83-7204-678-9.
- *Narodowe Obserwatorium Kształcenia i Szkolenia Zawodowego. Raport 2003* (**National Observatory of Vocational Education and Training. Report 2003.**), Biuro Koordynacji Kształcenia Kadr, Fundacja „Fundusz Współpracy”, Warszawa 2004.
- Osiecka-Chojnacka J.: *„Kształcenie dorosłych w wybranych krajach Unii Europejskiej”*. (**Adult education in selected EU countries**). Kancelaria Sejmu, Warszawa 2003.
- Osiecka-Chojnacka J.: *„Kształcenie ustawiczne i kształcenie dorosłych w Polsce”*. (**Continuing and adult education in Poland**), Kancelaria Sejmu, Warszawa 2003.
- Plewka Cz., Bednarczyk H. (red.): *Menadżer i kreator edukacji*. (**Manager and creator of education**) ITeE-PIB, Radom 2008. ISBN 978-83-7204-651-2.
- *Program Operacyjny „Wykształcenie i kompetencje”, Narodowy Plan Rozwoju 2007-2013*. Projekt, wersja z 12 września 2005 r. (**Operational Programme „Education and competencies”, National Development Plan 2007-2013. Project, version of 12 September 2005.**)
- *Proponowane kierunki rozwoju społeczeństwa informacyjnego w Polsce do 2020 r.* (**Suggested trends of development of information society in Poland until 2020.**) Ministerstwo Nauki i Informatyzacji, Warszawa, wrzesień 2004.
- *Przewodnik procedur akredytacji placówek prowadzących kształcenie ustawiczne w formach pozaszkolnych*. (**Guide of accreditation procedure for institution providing out-off-school vocational training**) Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej, EFS, Warszawa 2005.
- *Rynek usług szkoleniowych dla przedsiębiorstw w Polsce*. (**The market of training services for enterprises in Poland.**) Instytut Zarządzania, Warszawa 2004.
- *Rezultaty europejskiego procesu konsultacji w sprawie Europejskiego Systemu Transferu Punktów dla celów Kształcenia i Szkolenia Zawodowego (ECVET) - Konsultacje społeczne w sprawie Europejskiego Systemu Transferu Punktów Kredytowych dla celów Kształcenia i Szkolenia Zawodowego ECVET*. IP/06/1148 Bruksela, dnia 5 września 2006 r. (**Results of European process of consultation regarding the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) – Social consultations regarding the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)**)
- *Strategia kierunkowa rozwoju informatyzacji Polski do roku 2013 oraz perspektywiczna prognoza transformacji społeczeństwa informacyjnego do roku 2020*. (**Strategic trends of informatisation development in Poland until 2013 and prospective prognosis of the information society transformation until 2020.**) Ministerstwo Nauki i Informatyzacji, Warszawa, czerwiec 2005.
- *Strategia rozwoju edukacji na lata 2007-2013* (**Development strategy of education for the years 2007-2013**), Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej i Sportu, sierpień 2005.
- *Strategia rozwoju kształcenia ustawicznego do roku 2010* (**Development strategy of continuing education until 2010**), Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej i Sportu, Warszawa 2003.
- *Sprawozdanie z wdrażania programu „Edukacja i Szkolenie 2010 w Polsce w okresie 2005-2007*. MEN, warszawa 30.04. 2007. (**Report of implementing programme „Education and Training 2010 in Poland in 2005-2007 period**)
- Symela K. (red.): *Efektywność kształcenia modułowego w Polsce w systemie szkolnym i pozaszkolnym*

(**Effectiveness of modular curricula in school and out-of-school systems in Poland**), ITeE, Radom 2001.

- Symela K. (red.): *Kształcenie i szkolenie modułowe dla rynku pracy. (Modular training for the labour market purposes)*, Projekt Leonardo da Vinci PL/00/B/f/PP/140.179. ITeE, Radom 2003.
- Symela K. (red.): *Poradnik metodyczny dla autorów modułowych programów szkolenia zawodowego. (Methodological guide for modular curricula designers)*, Projekt Phare 2000 Krajowy System Szkolenia Zawodowego, MGiP, Warszawa 2004.
- Symela K.: *Kompetencje i jakość pracy doradcy zawodowego*. W: Edukacja dla rynku pracy. Problemy poradnictwa zawodowego. (red. S.M. Kwiatkowski, Z. Sirojć) (**Competences and quality of work of vocational advisor**) Ochotnicze Hufce Pracy. Komenda Główna, Warszawa 2006.
- *Uczenie się przez całe życie: rola systemów edukacji w państwach członkowskich Unii Europejskiej. (Lifelong education: the role of education systems in EU member countries)*. European Office EURIDICE, Lisbon 2000; Polish edition: Fundacja Rozwoju Systemu Edukacji, Warszawa 2002.
- *Ustawiczne kształcenie osób dorosłych w Polsce* Raport przygotowany dla OECD (**Continuing education of adults in Poland, Report prepared for OECD**). Warszawa 2004.
- *Uzupełnienie Sektorowego Programu Operacyjnego Rozwój Zasobów Ludzkich 2004-2006. (Supplementation of the Sectoral Operational Programme - HR Development 2004-2006)*, Ministerstwo Gospodarki i Pracy – Departament Zarządzania Europejskim Funduszem Społecznym, Warszawa 2005.

Internet Sources:

<http://www.men.gov.pl/> - Ministry of National Education
<http://www.men.gov.pl/dfs/glowna/index.php> - Structural Funds for the education sector (2007-2013)
<http://www.nauka.gov.pl/> - Ministry of Science and Higher Education
<http://www.europass.org.pl/> - National Europass Centre
<http://www.cofund.org.pl/> - „Fundusz Współpracy” Foundation
<http://www.mpips.gov.pl/> - Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
<http://www.mrr.gov.pl/> - Ministry of Regional Development
<http://www.psz.praca.gov.pl/> - Public Services for Employment
<http://www.fundusze-strukturalne.gov.pl/> - Structural Funds – information service of the Ministry of Regional Development
<http://www.cie.gov.pl/> - Office of the Committee for European Integration
<http://www.stat.gov.pl/> - Central Statistical Office
<http://www.pfron.org.pl/> - National Rehabilitation Fund for the Disabled
<http://www.parp.gov.pl/> - Polish Agency for Enterprise Development
http://ksu.parp.gov.pl/pl/o_ksu - National System of Services for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
<http://www.cke.edu.pl/> - Central Examination Board
<http://www.pfsl.pl/> - Polish Lisbon Strategy Forum (PFSL)
www.standardyiskolenia.praca.gov.pl – Database of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy concerning modular vocational training and vocational qualification standards
<http://www.psz.praca.gov.pl/main.php?do=ShowPage&nPID=867754&pT=details&sP=CONTENT,objectID,868098> – Register of training institutions
http://www.men.gov.pl/ksztzaw/strategia/rezultaty_ecvet.php - Results of consultations process regarding European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training
http://www.men.gov.pl/ksztzaw/strategia/konsultacje_ecvet.php - Social consultations regarding European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training
http://www.men.gov.pl/ksztzaw/strategia/strat_ust.php - Strategy of development of continuing education until 2010
<http://www.frse.org.pl/> - Foundation for the Development of the Education System
http://bip.men.gov.pl/akty_projekty/projekt_ustawy_20080310_uzasadnienie.pdf - Proposal of amendment to division of government administration act
http://www.eurodesk.pl/index2.php?go=program_details&c_outid=PL0010000124 - Comenius – life long learning
<http://www.socrates.org.pl/europass.html> - National Centre of Europass
<http://www.mrr.gov.pl/Dokumenty+oficjalne/Okres+programowania+2004-2006/> - Official Documents for 2004 – 2006 Programming Period
<http://www.efs.gov.pl/SPO+RZL++podstawowe+informacje/> - Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development

<http://www.men.gov.pl/dfs/glowna/index.php> - European Funds for Education
http://www.mps.gov.pl/_download.php?f=userfiles%2FFile%2FRaporty%2Fkrajowa+strategia+zatrudnienia.pdf
National Employment Strategy 2007 - 2013
http://www.mpips.gov.pl/_download.php?f=userfiles%2FFile%2Fnowe%2Fstrategiaps.pdf - Social Policy Strategy 2007-2013
http://sio.men.gov.pl/informacje/informacje_biezace.php - System of Educational Information
<http://akredytacje.mein.gov.pl/> - Accredited Institutions Database
<http://www.mpips.gov.pl/index.php?gid=1000> - Project the Analysis of the efficiency of the Training Fund
<http://www.scholaris.pl/cms/> - Internet Centre for Educational Resources

10.3. List of Acronyms

BAEL – Badanie Aktywności Ekonomicznej Ludności (*Satdy of Economical Activity*)
BAED – Badanie Aktywności Edukacyjnej Dorosłych (*Educational Activity of Adults*)
BIS – Badanie Instytucji Szkoleniowych (*Study on Training Institutions*)
CVTS2 – Badanie Ustawicznego Szkolenia Zawodowego w Przedsiębiorstwach – oparte na metodologii badania międzynarodowego (*CVTS2 - Continuing Vocational Training Survey*)
CKU – Centrum Kształcenia Ustawicznego (*Centres of Continuing Education*)
CKP – Centrum Kształcenia Praktycznego (*Practical Education Centres*)
CKE – Centralna Komisja Egzaminacyjna (*Central Examination Board*)
EFS – Europejski Fundusz Społeczny (*European Social Fund*)
EQF – Europejskie Ramy Kwalifikacji (*European Qualification Framework*)
ECVET – Europejski Transfer Punktów Kredytowych dla celów Kształcenia i Szkolenia Zawodowego (*European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training*)
EURES – Europejskie Służby Zatrudnienia (*EUROpean Employment Services*)
ECTS – Europejski System Punktów Kredytowych (*European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System*)
EC – Komisja Europejska (*European Commission*)
EQUAL – Inicjatywa Wspólnota (*Community Initiative EQUAL*)
GUS – Główny Urząd Statystyczny (*Central Statistical Office*)
KRK – Krajowe Ramy Kwalifikacji (*National Qualifications Framework*)
KCE – Krajowe Centrum EUROPASS (*National Europass Centre*)
KPDZ – Krajowy Plan Działań na rzecz Zatrudnienia (*National Plan of Action for Employment*)
KSKZ – Krajowe Standardy Kwalifikacji Zawodowych (*National Professional Qualification Standards*)
MEN – Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej (*Ministry of National Education*)
MPiPS – Ministerstwo Pracy i Polityki Społecznej (*Ministry of Labour and Social Policy*)
NCZPZ – Narodowe Centrum Zasobów Poradnictwa Zawodowego (*National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance - VCZPZ*)
NSRO – Narodowe Strategiczne Ramy Odniesienia (*National Strategic Framework of Reference*)
NQS – Krajowy System Kwalifikacji (*National Qualifications System*)
OKE – Okręgowa Komisja Egzaminacyjna (*Regional Examination Board*)
OECD – Organizacja Współpracy Gospodarczej i Rozwoju (*Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development*)
PO KL – Program Operacyjny Kapitał Ludzki (*Operational Programme - Human Capital*)
PSKM – Polska Sieć Kształcenia Modułowego (*Polish Network of Modular Education*)
SIO – System Informacji Oświatowej (*System of Information of Education*)
SPO RZL – Sektorowy Program Operacyjny Rozwój Zasobów Ludzkich (*Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development*)
VET – Kształcenie i szkolenie zawodowe (*Vocational Education and Training*)
UE – Unia Europejska (*European Union*)