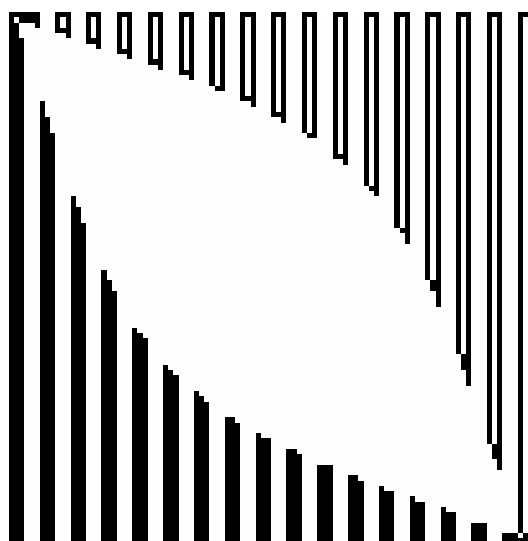


# THEMATIC REVIEW ON ADULT LEARNING



## POLAND

### COUNTRY NOTE

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Objectives and organisation of the thematic review

The main purpose of the thematic review on adult learning is to understand adults' access to and participation in education and training and to enhance policies and approaches to increase incentives for adults to undertake learning activities in OECD countries. It is a joint activity undertaken by the OECD Education Committee (EDC) and the Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Committee (ELSAC) in response to the need to make lifelong learning a reality for all, to improve learning opportunities for low-skilled, disadvantaged adults, and to sustain and increase employability.

A total of 17 countries will have participated in the thematic review between 1999 and 2004. All related documents, Background Reports and Country Notes are publicly available on the OECD adult learning website (<http://www.oecd.org/edu/adultlearning>) and constitute a valuable source of information for international comparison. A comparative report providing an analysis of adult learning participation and policies as well as good practices and recommendations in the first nine reviewed countries was published in 2003 (OECD, *Beyond rhetoric: Adult learning policies and practices*, Paris).

Countries participating in the second round of the thematic review have chosen between two options: a full-scale review covering adult learning in a comprehensive view, or a focussed review addressing adult learning of the low-skilled and disadvantaged adults. From the nine countries participating in the second round, four have opted for the full-scale review (Austria, Hungary, Mexico, Poland), and five for the focussed review (Germany, Korea, Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States).

The thematic review methodology includes national analysis and cross-country comparison. Countries prepare a descriptive Background Report on the status of adult learning in the country. This is followed by an OECD review team visit to the country that enables the reviewers to analyse adult learning on the basis of the Background Report, discussions with representatives of government, administration, employers, trade unions and practitioners, and site visits. After each country visit, the team rapporteur, with the help of the review team, prepares a Country Note analysing the main issues concerning adult learning and policy responses in the country under review. The Country Note addresses four major themes: purposes and priorities for adult learning; incentives to make learning more attractive to adults; improving quality and efficiency of learning and policy coherence. A final comparative report will address some of the different issues and policy responses in a comparative perspective, including the insights gathered from the participating countries.

### 1.2 Poland's participation in the review

The visit was organised by the Polish Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Policy (Social Policy was split from this Ministry during our visit). During the mission we met with representatives from the Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Affairs; the Ministry of Education; and regional and local governments. We also saw representatives of the social partners, and visited a regional and local Public Employment Service office, a local adult learning centre, a teacher-training centre, a Folk university, the

Voluntary Corps, the Warsaw School of Economics and two training firms. The mission provided us with a good overview to identify the problems concerning participation, provision and funding of adult learning, in the context of European Union access.

The review team thanks the Polish authorities for the information provided. The team was well aware of the dynamism in the legislative process covering the field of education in general and adult education in particular. It was, however, difficult for the team to take hold of all the developments for two reasons. First, due to the entry of Poland into the European Union many of the changes were very recent or still in progress, so that at the time of the country visit not all the features of the planned changes were yet visible to the review team. Second, the texts of the legislation, as well as any background material to the laws, were available exclusively in Polish and therefore not accessible in their complete and original form to the review team. The review team had to rely on partial translations or oral accounts. A special thank goes to the national co-ordinator, Ms. Magdalena Nojszewska, who invested herself personally to make the visit a success and to make documents available to the review team.

### **1.3 Structure of the paper**

The country note is structured in seven chapters. After the introduction, Chapter 2 presents background information on the Polish economy, the labour market, the educational system and the adult education system, in order to better understand the main challenges in setting up a lifelong-learning system in Poland. Chapter 3 summarises the most important policy papers and programmes and critically assesses their use and value. The note continues with three chapters that focus on the main areas in adult learning where intervention is either needed or most promising. Additional factual material from different sources to back up and illustrate the arguments is presented in these three chapters. The concluding Chapter 7 presents a synthesis of those actions and fields of intervention which the review team judges to be of the highest priority for the Polish government to concentrate on.

## **2. GENERAL CONTEXT**

### **2.1 The economic environment**

The Polish economy has undergone radical and rapid transformations in the transition process from a planned economy before 1989 to a market economy. Although the transformation is not yet completed, progress has been made in the field of privatisation of major parts of the former state or co-operative sector: the share of GDP produced by the state and co-operative sector has decreased from about 81% in 1988 to 25% in 2001 (WERI, 2004, p. 149). Still, the OECD (OECD, 2002a, p. 17) commented in its economic surveys 2001-2002 and 2003-2004 that the privatisation of large-scale firms needs to be accelerated, as the State continues to have a large or controlling ownership position in some 3 000 firms. Compared to other transition countries (Hungary, the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic), Poland had the highest level of state-owned assets (OECD, 2004).

For the Polish economy the large proportion of population living in rural areas (almost 40% of the population) represents a structural challenge. Although there is now a high rate of migration towards urban areas, the large share of rural population, combined with serious communications and transport infrastructure deficits (Poland has one of the lowest motorway densities of OECD countries), hampers market access and (regional) economic development. Additionally, Poland has the highest share of employment (18% of total employment) in agriculture of all OECD member states, combined with the lowest productivity in agriculture (OECD, 2004).

The transformation led – as in most other transition countries – to initial drawbacks such as GDP decline, high inflation and high unemployment. From the mid-1990s onwards, GDP grew steadily, and inflation came under control at the end of the 1990s. In 2003 GDP per capita stood at 44% of the EU average (USD 11 500).

After 2000, Poland suffered from an economic slowdown, with only about 1% GDP growth in both 2001 and 2002. As a consequence, fiscal policy eased in 2001 and the general government deficit increased to about 5% of the GDP. The rising budget deficits have increased the need to tighten fiscal policy and fears of inflation have led the newly appointed Minister of Finance to announce new measures of fiscal austerity. This will seriously limit the government's room to manoeuvre activity for structural improvements, including in fields where an increase in public investment would be necessary (infrastructure, education, labour market measures, etc.). Therefore in the current tight fiscal situation the financial flows from the European Union are almost the only source to achieve the ambitious goals of the government in the fields of labour market reform, education and adult education in particular.

### **2.2 The labour market**

The sluggish growth of the economy since 2000 led to a rapid increase in unemployment to 20%, the highest point since the transformation after 1989. Although higher GDP growth (around 5%) is forecast for 2004-2005, it is not expected that the levels of unemployment will change for the coming two years.

In 2003, Poland's standardised unemployment rate was at 19.2%, the equivalent of 3.5 million persons, half of them long-term unemployed (over one year). Unemployment is especially high for young people (44% among those aged 15-24). Against this background, it is not surprising that employment-to-population ratios have been falling recently, from 59% in 1998 to 51.7% in 2002 – over 12% below the EU average. This means that half of the working-age population is without work (either unemployed or outside the labour force). This group seems to be developing at a constant rate from people dropping out of the unemployment system. Even in the 1990s, when unemployment rates were lower than at present, not more than half of the unemployed deregistered from unemployment due to finding a job. The phenomenon of under-employment is concentrated among the less skilled – notably those with less than upper secondary education – whose employment rate is no higher than 41% and whose unemployment rate exceeds 22%. Furthermore, there are strong regional disparities in unemployment rates. Another feature of the Polish employment system is the large proportion of people working in small and medium-sized enterprises, with two-thirds working in enterprises with less than six employees (Poland Ministry of Economy and Labour, 2004).

Besides the problem of a difficult labour market, Poland has one of the lowest labour productivity rates in the OECD (just above Mexico and Turkey). A recent and sharp rise in the labour productivity promises a better situation in the future. However, keeping in mind that there is a direct relationship between the stock of human capital in an economy, labour productivity, competitiveness, the rate of job creation and the wealth of a nation, the up-skilling of the Polish labour force should still be the prime focus of governmental policy.

### **2.3 Challenges of EU membership**

In March 1998, Poland started formal talks on its accession to the European Union (EU), and it became a member of the enlarged EU on 1 May 2004 together with nine other candidates. The accession to the EU has brought closer collaboration with the European Commission, even prior to the accession. Since 2000, the Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Policy has been co-operating with the Directorate General for Employment and Social Affairs of the Commission in the field of employment policy. As a result, a *Joint Assessment of Employment Priorities in Poland* (JAP) was signed in 2001. The priorities in the JAP are reflected in the National Development Plan. Of the four main priorities in the JAP at least two touch directly or indirectly the domain of this review. Priority number one is to adapt the education and training system to labour market needs, and priority number three concerns the Active Labour Market Policy (ALMP) and its implementation. In order to improve Poland's compliance with the requirements of the *European Employment Strategy*, the Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Policy has to take a much more active role in the field of adult education.

European projects and initiatives in lifelong learning also heavily involve the Ministry for National Education and Sport. Some of them directly address policy developments in the new member states of the European Union.<sup>1</sup>

Defining targets has been a way in which the European Union is trying to urge members to make progress in participation in education and training. The educational attainment targets for the younger population (aged 13-19 years) set in the JAP for 2006 were met by 2002. The targets for completion of secondary and university education for the younger adult population (aged 20-30 years) are likely to be

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1. In the Copenhagen Declaration of the European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training in 2002 a lifelong learning strategy was declared to be the foundation for development of a knowledge-based Europe and it was stated that: “*It is particularly important that acceding member states should be integrated as partners in future co-operation on education and training initiatives at European level from the very beginning.*”

met by 2006. The target concerning participation in education and training by adults older than 25 years (the age group that is covered by the OECD review) has been set at 18-20% by 2010.

Training issues will also be part of the implementation of the European Social Fund (ESF). Interventions should help adapt the Polish education and training systems to the needs of the labour market in general and to those of regional labour markets (see also Section 2.9.).

## 2.4 The education system

Poland launched an educational reform in 1999. The main goals of this reform, among others, were raising education levels and adapting the educational system to labour market requirements. In terms of education and skills, Poland recently attained one of the highest educational attainment levels among OECD member countries for the youngest generation, with at least 90% of young people completing upper secondary education in 2002 (OECD, 2002b). However, only about 46% of those aged 25 to 64 have attained at least upper secondary education, a low level by international comparison and a clear indicator of the need for continuing education. Table 1 shows that lower levels of educational attainment in Poland have persisted over a very long time and that even those people still in school after the transition in 1989 have had much lower levels than the OECD average.

**Population that has attained at least upper secondary education (2001), by age group.**  
Difference from OECD average in Poland and three other EU accession countries (in percent)

Age groups	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
<b>Poland</b>	-22	-20	-16	-13
Czech Republic	18	22	24	27
Hungary	7	11	12	-5
Slovak Republic	20	22	23	17

Note: Upper secondary education excluding ISCED 3C short programmes.

Source: OECD, 2002b, p. 37.

Additionally, the analysis of adult literacy levels (Tuijnman, 2000) showed that the lower levels of educational attainment in Poland in general were accompanied by much less pronounced time trends for improvement. According to the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), in most comparable countries the literacy levels of the young population (ages 20-25) outperformed the older population (ages 46-65) by a very large margin – but less so in Poland. Tuijnman speculates that the less-than-expected improvement in literacy proficiency over time could be explained by comparatively poor provision of early childhood education, relatively low school expectancy and below-average quality in primary and secondary education.

In the PISA 2000 results, Poland ranked in all three test categories (literacy, mathematics and science) significantly below the OECD average. PISA 2003 data show a more positive picture, with mathematics, science and reading scores in the OECD average range.

Quality improvements and higher student participation in education will be costly. So far, spending for education in Poland is one of the lowest in the OECD. The relation between educational outcomes and GDP per capita shows that much of this is probably due to the low levels in GDP per capita. But to put it in other words, as Poland's GDP growth rates increase, the government must be prepared to increase at least proportionally the spending on education. In recent years (1995-99), expenditure growth for all levels below tertiary education was above GDP growth, but only about half of GDP growth in the case of tertiary education. No comparable figures on adult learning were available.



The structure of spending, where figures were available, shows that Poland has very high levels of direct payments to tertiary education institutions (96.8%; OECD average 84.1%) and very low levels of payments to private entities, scholarships and student loans. Despite this low level of public funding for individual students, there are high levels of enrolment in independent (private) tertiary educational (type A and advanced research programmes) institutions (27.8%; OECD 10.4%) and high levels of part-time students in these programmes (46.1%; OECD 15%).

## **2.5 Adult learning**

The educational system in Poland has traditionally relied almost exclusively on formal in-school education. In recent years out-of-school opportunities for learning and training have increased.

Participation rates in adult learning seem low when compared to other thematic review countries. According to the European Union Labour Force Survey, 5% of adults aged 25 to 64 participated in training in the previous four weeks in 2003. Among the countries participating in the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), Poland had the second lowest participation rate, just ahead of Portugal, in job-related training and other forms of adult learning, (OECD, 2002b, p. 246). As in most countries, participation is especially high for those with high educational attainment but the pattern seems more pronounced. The ratio of participation between individuals with tertiary education relative to individuals who have not completed lower secondary education stands at 6:1 in Poland and 3:1 in the Nordic countries (OECD, 2002b, p. 249).

Based on the IALS, annual participants were listed at 14% of the total population aged 16 to 64 (compared with a country average of 35%) while the 1999 Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS 2) gave a participation rate of at 16% among adults working in firms (country average 34%). Also according to IALS, Poland had one of the lowest literacy scores of adult populations in OECD countries, with 77% of the adult population below literacy level 3, considered the minimum to participate effectively in today's society<sup>2</sup>.

In the first and second stage of the Polish education reform of 1999, measures concerned mainly compulsory and lower secondary education. Adult education was not directly targeted in this reform, although indirectly it will profit from better-prepared young students. The growing interest of young people in full secondary education will lay a sound basis for the development of lifelong learners in the future.

The improvement of vocational education can have an impact on adults. Recent reforms have focused on better equipment in education and continuing education centres, the inclusion of vocational counsellors and the upgrading of teacher training by establishing additional teaching labs with additional equipment (JAP, 2003). Altogether, however, the steps taken so far underline the impression of an educational system that is most concerned with increasing the participation in formal schooling for young people.

## **2.6 The structure of training supply**

The structure of the supply of educational services is highly decentralised and generally not well monitored.<sup>3</sup> A distinctive feature of the Polish adult learning system is the large number of schools for

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2. The survey was executed in 1994.

3. "It was estimated that there are approximately 12 000 institutions providing training in the form of courses, approximately 5 000 among them are schools and more than 2 000 professional enhancement centres, which

adults, which provide formal education at the primary, lower secondary, basic vocational, general secondary and secondary vocational level. These schools offer adults who have not completed their basic schooling (adults are defined in this context by 18 years of age and older) the possibility to get an educational degree at the primary or secondary level. The number of schools at primary level dropped dramatically over the last few years as a consequence of the higher educational attainment of young people and of older people leaving the labour market. In the 2002/03 school year, 38% of the schools for adults offered general secondary education and nearly 54% secondary vocational education (Ministry of Economy and Labour, 2004b, Table 3.22). The number of students, however, increased much more in secondary general education than in secondary vocational, showing an increased interest in types of training that promise greater flexibility to change occupations or later continue formal education on the tertiary level.

Although no figures on the age distribution in these schools were presented to the review team, it seems that the large majority of students in schools for adults are younger than 25, the age barrier for the definition of adults in the OECD review on adult learning.

At the tertiary level, the growing demand for education has led to a strong increase in the total number of training institutions. Specifically, the share of private institutions rose from 44.7% of all institutions in 1995/96 to 66.8% in 2002/03. The number of students in the private sector had also grown, but it represents only 29.4% of all students. This shows that the majority of private suppliers are rather small institutions compared to the traditional public institutions.

*Institutions offering training under commercial principles:* According to the Polish Background Report (Ministry of Economy and Labour, 2004b), the statistics on institutions offering educational services on a commercial basis were inadequate in the past, and the collection of data by the Central Statistical Office (CSO) ended in 2001. Under the PHARE 2000 project “National Vocational Training System”, Poland agreed to carry out a training institutions survey (BIS) by the end of 2003 (JAP, 2003, p. 12). So far a pilot study has been conducted in a specific region (the *mazowieckie voivodship*), where the highest density of training suppliers is believed to exist. In this region, nearly 6 000 different providers offered out-of-school training. 97% of the institutions had less than nine employees and only 0.4% had more than 50 employees. According to the pilot study, the vast majority of the surveyed institutions were created during the last 10 years. More than half of the courses offered were targeted or tailored to specific clients (or employees of one company).

*In-company-training:* According to the Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS2), which surveyed the involvement of employers in continuing training, 40% of all enterprises had provided some type of learning opportunity for their employees in 1999. However, as in most countries, the engagement in training depends largely on the size of the firm: Almost 80% of all large firms had organised training, compared to only one-third of small companies. As 67% of total employment in Poland concentrates in small and medium-sized companies, the opportunities for receiving training for employees is not very high, especially in smaller firms.

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are registered in local government units ... The remaining training providers (institutions acting on the basis of the law on economic activity) exist beyond registers and inspection” (Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Policy, 2004a, p. 10).

### **Box 1. Some of the most important suppliers in adult education**

*Continuing Education Centres (CEC):* Public institutions of adult education established and run by *powiats*. They organise adult education in in-school and out-of-school forms. They co-operate with labour offices and employers in the field of retraining. They play an important role in preparing and implementing modern curricula and methods in adult education. These Centres are the basis for the national distance-learning network and the national network of simulation laboratories.

*The Union of Vocational Education Centres (ZZDZ):* The Union is a non-governmental educational association, acting as a union of associations and corporate bodies. It participates in youth education, as well as training of adults.

*The Polish Association for Adult Education (TWP):* The Association is second to the ZZDZ as far as the number of students is concerned and provides mainly courses.

*Folk Universities:* They are specialised in the provision of continuing education in villages and small towns. The strength of the Folk Universities is that they combine the mission to offer training and education opportunities with the local traditions, crafts and arts. In these domains they are also able to attract older "adults" both as teachers and as students. They rely heavily on the initiative and motivation of individuals, which is on one side their strength, but on the other side the lack of public support strongly reduces the scope of their activities.

*Voluntary Labour Corps:* These institutions concern mainly young persons up to 25 years of age coming from disrupted families, who have school problems or have left the school system without a formal degree. The Labour Corps are successful in their mission of re-integrating these people into the society and the labour market. Besides this main activity, which is based on the charter of the Voluntary Labour Corps, they provide some services for adults above the age of 25, but these numbers are marginal so far.

## **2.7 The demand for (participation in) adult learning**

The patterns of demand for adult education is analysed below along five categories. The first *a)* gives an overview of personal characteristics shaping participation; the second *b)* describes the content and form of training demanded by adults; the third *c)* describes adult education of employed people from the perspective of firms; and the fourth *d)* gives an approximate idea of the absolute numbers of participants in adult education by type of training (formal in-school versus out-of-school training and type of training institutions). The last category *e)* classifies demand according to the source of financing. Training for unemployed people is described separately in Section 2.9.

### **Box 2. Statistical information on education and training in Poland**

Statistical information about educational activity comes from four major sources:

1) The quarterly Labour Force Survey (LFS) generates continuous information about a representative sample of people over 15 years of age. The questions related to adult learning cover all training activities four weeks prior to the date of the survey.

2) The Survey of Adult Education Activity (BAED) carried out in May 2003 within the PHARE 2000 project covered a representative sample of some 20 000 households and covered all educational activities of adults during the 12 months prior to the survey.

3) The Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS2) undertaken in the European Union, accession countries and Norway covers enterprise-based training.

4) The labour offices provide data on training of unemployed persons receiving training organised by these offices.

The two latter sources of information overlap with the two sources on individual engagement in training (LFS and BAED). However, the definitions of training, the time span covered by each survey and even the definitions of unemployment differ and therefore it is not easy to get a coherent overall picture of the activities of adults in continuing education.

## *A. Personal characteristics of learners*

According to the different statistical sources (see Box 2) and the data provided by the Background Report some distinctive features of the demand for adult education in Poland can be found<sup>4</sup>:

- *Education*: The ratio of the participation rate for people with a PhD (ISCED 6) and people with incomplete primary education (ISCED 0) is 10 to 1. Educational levels up to secondary education show rather low participation rates.
- *Hierarchy*: The probability of participating increases with the level of occupational hierarchy in the firm for those who are working.
- *Place of living*: Participation rates in rural areas have risen in the last years but 70 to 80% of all training participants are living in towns.
- *Gender*: The share of women participating in adult learning is generally slightly higher, or at least at the same level, as men. It seems that in the most recent years especially, men in the group of unemployed and economically inactive people have caught up with women.
- *Age*: Participation rates of adults over 25 are the highest for the group of persons aged between 25-29 and fall with age. Taking into account that other factors like hierarchy or unemployment are also connected to age, the negative effect of age is probably higher than described in the statistical documentation.
- *Employment status*: The participation rate of employed people in 2003 was almost twice as much as that of the unemployed. Among employed persons, those with an indefinite work contract have a higher probability of participation (particularly true for women).
- *Frequency*: As in other countries, learners are often multiple learners, either over time or at one point in time (learners taking up several courses simultaneously). Of those that were engaged in learning almost 50% had plans for future learning. Inversely, of those not engaged in learning in 2003, 90% had no future plans for learning. In other words, as there is probably no big turnover in the group of adult learners, periodical cross-sectional statistics show very much the same active persons again and again. On the basis of the information available to the review team it is not possible to say whether the “multiple” learners are a consequence of an uneven distribution of individual motivation to learn, or whether firms support their employees selectively<sup>5</sup>, or both.

All in all, the groups that have a lower probability of engaging in adult learning are similar to disadvantaged groups in other countries. Based on the assumption that adults from disfavoured groups can benefit from improving their skills, they represent a serious gap that should be targeted with special measures.

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4. It is difficult to know whether all the characteristics of adults that show differences in the probability of taking up continuing education are real differences or in some cases just spurious as the information provided to the review team consisted mostly of bivariate analyses.
  5. It is a common observation in many countries that firms support only a fraction of their employees, which they consider to be the most productive. As the most productive are likely to be the ones that already have high educational attainment or have invested in continuing education before, this mechanism creates a pattern that is described as the Mathew principle: those who already have will be given.

## ***B. Content and form of training***

Within the different types of learning provided, there are some general trends in participation. Of those taking training provided by firms, the largest proportion do so in technical aspects of the production process, which may include mandatory courses such as safety and hygiene, followed by courses in accountancy and finance, managerial courses – courses generally concentrated on high-skilled adults (Ministry of Economy and Labour, 2004b, Figure 3.4., Table 3.13 and Table 3.31). Apart from these categories, training content that is general and not firm-specific human capital, like knowledge in information technologies (IT) or foreign languages, is less sought. The share of training time spent in the development of IT skills and languages is just above 10%. Also, there is a large proportion of adults taking general secondary education.

## ***C. Adult learning in firms***

As mentioned in Section 2.6., employees in large firms enjoy a higher probability of participation in learning. Although this picture is in line with findings in other countries, it is difficult to judge how much of these differences are due to the size of firms or to the different composition of their staff.

Considering that, according to the CVTS, about 40% of firms train one-third of their personnel per year, the participation rate of workers is approximately 15%.

Although employees over 45 years of age participate less, the difference between participation rates of different age groups is much smaller in large companies and more pronounced in small companies.

Men and women seem to have almost equal opportunities for learning. There are slight differences, with slightly higher female participation in small and medium-sized companies and men having on average a longer duration in training.

Among the different reasons cited for not providing training, most companies specify that the current staff is sufficiently qualified. The second argument is that training costs are too high, and the third that it is preferable to recruit new workers with the required skills, instead of offering training themselves<sup>6</sup> (Ministry of Economy and Labour, 2004b, figure 3.6). Although it is difficult to interpret the value of the reasons for non-training, they are not *per se* untrustworthy. Most of the non-training companies, for example, are very small (micro) companies, created in the last five years and therefore with new staff, adequately trained and therefore without high training needs. A high proportion of training activities for these companies would be a sign of either a general lack of adequate skills in the labour market or inadequate recruiting processes. Whereas the training policy of a single company therefore may be entirely economically rational, the average participation rate of adults in a situation of slow job creation and low labour productivity is surely still too low.

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6. This partly contrasts with the view offered by many interlocutors during the review. Poaching, that is free-riding on the training efforts of others, was often mentioned as one of the biggest obstacles for training investments. The answer would not be in conflict with the problem of poaching if the recruitment concerned predominantly young people coming out of the formal school system.

#### ***D. Participants in absolute numbers according to the form of training***

Adult learning opportunities and the quantitative demand for these services is segmented in clear sectors, although it is difficult to get a consistent picture of participation, given the differences in sources:

- Overall, according to the Survey of Adult Education Activity, approximately 5.1 million adults had taken some type of learning in 2003, with 54% in formal learning and the rest taking advantage of more informal learning venues, which may also include training provided in different types of institutions (see Table 3.7 of the Polish Background Report).
- In the school year 2001/02 (JAP, 2003, p. 11) nearly 1.45 million adults were enrolled in primary, junior high, secondary and higher education institutions, as well as in postgraduate and doctoral studies (this would represent about 10% of the working population). Of this number, over 950 000 were university-level students.
- According to the LFS, in the fourth quarter of 2002 some 337 000 persons were in out-of-school education. This number comprises employed and economically inactive persons. The difference between the numbers is due to the various methodologies of the surveys.
- In a special module of the LFS, the Central Statistical Office calculated a participation rate of adults in out-of school learning of 8%. The rate relates to activities within the past twelve months before the survey, which took place in the second quarter of 2003.
- Almost 4% (about 120 000) unemployed persons participated in training courses financed by the labour offices.

Although it is difficult to get a clear statistical picture of the overall engagement of Polish adults in continuing education, it seems that there is a relatively large proportion of adults engaged in formal school-type education.

#### ***E. Demand for adult education according to the source of financing***

Employers finance training for almost 60% of employed and almost 15% of unemployed training participants. Labour offices fund training for some of the unemployed and there are some other public resources or resources from foundations or NGOs. The rest of the participants have to rely on their own resources. Interestingly, the share of unemployed people engaged in continuing education that finance the activity at their own expense is as high as among employed people (see Figure 3.9 of the Polish Background Report).

Polish firms apparently invest about 0.8% of their labour costs in CVT courses, a low rate when compared to other European Union countries (EU 15 average of 2.0%). There are plans to develop a “training fund” to provide incentives for firms to set aside a training fund of at least 0.25% of the total company wage bill (see Chapter 3, Box 3), that will also receive subsidies when jointly agreed by labour and management. However, it remains to be seen whether this scheme improves on the current situation of underinvestment. The review team visited two companies (the Polish Mint and a software company) with quite developed and sophisticated training programmes funded through a separate budget, but according to available statistics they do not seem to be representative, but rather reflect a small number of “best-practice” companies.

## 2.8 Regional asymmetries

Pronounced regional asymmetries can be observed in practically all domains of the Polish society and economy. They are visible on the labour market (employment levels and unemployment) as well as in the educational system (educational attainment). While some of these regional patterns are based on history, different cultural heritage or asymmetric economic shocks, the clear line of division is between urban and rural areas.

For example, the ratio of the highest to the lowest unemployment rate per *voivodship* stood in 2002 at 1.63, and between *powiats* the differentiation was even greater with a ratio of 6.4 (JAP, 2003, p. 5). The *powiat* with the highest unemployment rate had an unemployment rate of 40.6% compared to the lowest, the Warsaw *Powiat* with 6.3%. Higher unemployment regions are those experiencing greater change in industrial structure, confirmed by econometric analysis based on unemployment flows (Newell and Pastore, 2000). But the regional differences in employment cannot be fully explained by the asymmetric shocks of economic restructuring. Education levels are also unevenly distributed and internal migration of the better educated from rural areas into towns also has an impact. The general increase in educational levels has not closed the existing differences in educational attainment between towns and rural areas in Poland (see Table 2). In 2002, while 44.8% of the population aged 15 and over in urban areas had only a vocational or lower education, this proportion was over 70% in rural areas.

**Table 2. Change in educational levels (in percentage points) of the population aged 15 and over between 1988 and 2002, by place of residence**

<i>Place of residence</i>	Rural areas	Urban areas
<b><i>Educational level</i></b>		
Vocational and lower	-13.1	-13.6
Secondary and post secondary	+9.3	+6.8
University	+2.5	+4.3

Source: WERI (2003), p. 96.

## 2.9 Adult learning and active labour market policy

Labour offices provide training for unemployed and employed people threatened by unemployment. The training is organised on the basis of bilateral contracts (between the labour office and the training institution) and three-sided contracts (between the labour office, the training institution and the employer). Since 1 January 2000 the labour offices have been under the responsibility of local government authorities (Euridyce, 1999, p. 35).

Unemployment levels show a link with educational attainment levels (see Table 3). Like in most OECD countries, people with low qualifications have a higher risk of unemployment than those with higher qualifications, although the differentials seem not as pronounced in Poland. Altogether, these data show that in Poland, as elsewhere, education can protect people from unemployment.

**Table 3. Unemployment rates (2001), by level of educational attainment and gender as a multiple of the total unemployment rate**

Educational attainment	Below upper secondary	Upper secondary + post secondary non tertiary	Tertiary (type A)
Poland (female)	1.39	1.08	0.35
Poland (male)	1.56	1.00	0.28
OECD (female)	1.54	1.05	0.57
OECD (male)	1.78	0.96	0.56

Source: OECD 2002b, p. 118.

In spite of this, training for unemployed people organised and paid for by the Labour Offices is underdeveloped. Public employment services provided training for about 3.8% of the unemployed people in 2003. Spending on training (JAP, 2003, Appendix 1, p. 3) for the unemployed represented 0.5% of total expenditures and 9.4% of active labour market policy expenditures in 2002. With the rise of overall unemployment, the share of training expenditures in total public expenditure on labour market programmes has even dropped from 1.1% in 2000 to 0.5% in 2002. It also needs to be mentioned that the number of unemployed people that undertook training on their own initiative is (according to the Labour Force Survey) between two to five times higher than the number of unemployed sent by the Labour Office.

## 2.10 Long-distance and e-learning

To overcome regional asymmetries and to offer disadvantaged groups access to education, numerous countries have invested in long-distance and e-learning opportunities. Distance and e-learning can be a double-edged sword when investment in technologies and learning opportunities is unevenly spread. What potentially could close gaps between different learning groups and different regions can develop into a *digital divide*. Up to now, the Polish government has pursued a policy to avoid this divide; in the Sectoral Operational Plan, centres of distance learning in villages and small towns are mentioned as instruments for reducing the educational gap between rural and urban areas (Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Policy, 2004a). Additionally, a more intensive use of ICT in the educational process is seen as a means to improve the quality of education in the Continuous Education Centres as well as the Practical Training Centres (p. 154). The 2003 JAP progress report notes that schools located in rural areas have seen the highest growth in computer facilities in the most recent years. Conditions for the success of these schools include that they be equipped with computers with Internet access, and that there be a sufficient number of professional personnel able to assist pupils and students of all ages in the use of the educational technologies. Some statistical data on the equipment is available, but it is difficult to judge the quantity and quality of the human resources deployed in these schools.

A closer look at the available data shows that there is still a way to go in order to close an already existing gap in the availability of technology in different areas and school levels. Whereas in 2002/03 schools in rural areas were generally better equipped with computer facilities (56% of schools equipped with computer labs compared to a national average of 47%, and around 22 students per computer in rural areas compared to 36 on national average), the number of students per computer with Internet access in rural areas was above the national average. Primary schools and gymnasiums were the best equipped with computer laboratories (61% and 74%, respectively), whereas less than one-fifth of all vocational schools had a computer lab.

The situation in schools for adults is worse than in the formal school system for young pupils. Only 12% of schools for adults had a computer lab, with up to 77 students sharing one computer in schools in small towns and only one computer with Internet access per 117 students in schools in rural areas.



The availability of the technical infrastructure is not a sufficient condition for the successful use of distance and e-learning as a tool in continuing education; it is a prerequisite and the numbers suggest that heavy investments in infrastructure specifically targeted towards adult training institutions are needed.

Apart from the infrastructure, it is unclear what the pattern of use of the existing distance- and e-learning facilities looks like. The government, in an amendment to the Act on the Educational System, has proposed to identify the modalities and terms related to providing distance learning by educational institutions (JAP, 2003, p. 12). However, again it is not clear what the expected outcomes of this activity will be and how they will affect adult (distance) learning. In its Sectoral Operational Plan, the government has stated the goal to conduct research on the effectiveness of the distance-learning programme, but the review team is not aware whether such research has already been carried out or has even been commissioned.

## **2.11 Key issues for adult learning**

In summary, some key issues based on the analysis of economic and social development trends in Poland can be highlighted as relevant to adult learning:

- Low educational attainment of the adult population: At present, there is a strong focus on improving completion rates of secondary and tertiary education for young people. While this is very positive, it might contribute to development of a strong cleavage in society, if the educational needs of adults are not strengthened concurrently.
- High unemployment rates, with a large proportion of low-skilled unemployed. Much unemployment is concentrated on young people.
- High rates of inactivity (especially among older adults), also concentrated on those with low skills.
- Low level of labour productivity.
- Participation rates of adults in continuing education show a highly selective pattern.
- An ageing population in need of skills upgrading. Due to the demographic situation in Poland the rising discrepancy between the skills of younger and older adults limits seriously the possibilities of the Polish economy to keep older workers longer in the labour market. Up-skilling of older workers will therefore be a prerequisite to counterbalance the effects of the rapidly ageing workforce.
- Asymmetries between rural and urban regions in employment levels, educational attainment and participation rates in adult education.
- Large proportion of people working in small and medium-sized enterprises that are less active in training their own staff.

### 3. PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES

The development of the concept of lifelong learning and of adult learning in Poland is recent. There are two main policy strategies: *a)* one prepared in 2000 by the then-Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the *National strategy for employment and human resources development 2000-2006* (NSEHRD); and *b)* one prepared by the Ministry of National Education and Sport, *The Strategy for development of continuing education until the year 2010*. Both have been adopted by the Council of Ministers. The first one refers to the need to improve labour market participation, employability and adaptability to changing market conditions, while the second refers to the need to develop a lifelong learning concept in Poland. Both documents, in particular the latter, respond very much to European Union accession requirements and incorporate EU guidelines in the field.

These documents are launching pads for the future development of adult learning and lifelong learning, which seem to be in their initial stages. Although some public policy papers state objectives and envisage future actions, the OECD review team did not perceive actual implementation of a number of these policies. The new Strategy from the Ministry of National Education and Sport includes a list of most of the features of an effective adult learning system (e-learning, Recognition of Prior Learning, accreditation of providers, etc.), but the budget lines are not clear and neither are the methods of implementation.

Furthermore, while there is policy talk and activity concerning lifelong learning, tax deductions for continuing learning activities were recently abolished, in contradiction to the goals set in the NSEHRD 2000-2006: *“Additionally, individual tax relief for undertaking education and enhancement qualifications by employees should be promoted.”* (Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Policy, 2000, p. 46).

While there is legislative activity in this field, it does not get to the implementation level in practice. On a number of occasions, the review team was informed about the new labour law, which apparently will address many of the current issues and problems detected throughout the mission. A good example is the detailed legal provision for training leave for workers, for which we have not seen clear evidence of use by many workers.

There are some clear policy priorities: very evident is the priority on initial training and youth, at the expense of the older population, including those who became unemployed during the transition period; one is tempted to speak of “forgotten segments” of the population without access to adult learning<sup>7</sup>. That the government’s adult education budget is 0.6% of its total education budget throws a light on these priorities. There is little attempt to create targeted incentives for underprivileged groups other than the provision of adult basic education; by contrast, policies in place might be called regressive, benefiting those who would benefit anyway – people working in larger firms, people with higher educational attainment and people with higher incomes.

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7. The ex-ante evaluation of the NSEHRD shows at least some awareness of this problem: “The only issue that arouses doubt is weak emphasis put on the problem of qualifications and competences that are acquired in the school system of education by pupils from generations from before the reform (still two generations)” (p. 149).

On the other hand, there is a clear concern for providing opportunities for second chance education for adults through the formal education system. The Ministry of Education has a network of adult education centres that, in recent years, have catered to more than 350 000 participants annually in adult secondary education (academic and vocational). The main participants in such schools are from the age group 19-25 (there is obligatory schooling up to the age of 18). A recent initiative provides the possibility of accrediting informal knowledge by taking external examinations for vocational degrees. These may be provided by accredited examination centres (such as the schools and adult centres mentioned above, but also by enterprises). However, as stated before, overall funding channelled to adult learning is a limited part of the Ministry of Education budget.

The impact of the European Union is evident behind efforts to promote adult learning in Poland. With EU support (PHARE, etc.). Poland has assembled good statistical information on adult learning and continuous vocational training. At present, many institutions we visited are waiting to obtain funding from the European Social Fund (ESF) to develop their training programmes and plans. For example, one employer association mentioned that among the training programmes that they recommend to their members was “how to apply for EU funds”. At the national government level, we received the impression that many policy documents and declarations of objectives (referred to above) are linked to the recent accession negotiations to the European Union, and Poland is presently waiting for support from the European Social Fund and the Structural Funds to implement some of them<sup>8</sup>.

Additional measures taken by the Ministry of Economy and Labour concern the introduction of new tools funded by the Labour Fund including elements of training (internships, on-site training) addressed to youth under 25 and people in difficult situations in the labour market (*i.e.* long-term unemployed, people over 50 without any professional qualifications, single mothers, and the disabled). Other tools will promote professional development through job intermediaries and employment advisers, as well as conditioning promotions and financial awards upon participation in particular skills upgrading programmes.

On the supply side, training institutions will be obliged to create registers (see also Section 5.1.). Registration will be compulsory for any training institution seeking public funds, free of charge and accessible online. It should help unemployed job seekers and job centres to acquire an overview of the whole training offer, to find potential collaborators and to facilitate various statistical analyses.

Finally, considerable ESF support will be channelled through programmes aimed at the development of entrepreneurship and the active support of small and medium-sized enterprises. The Polish Agency for Enterprise Development deals with an important part of this through funding of training for firms and raising awareness of the need for education and training through promotional campaigns. The funding of training measures was developed under the PHARE programme and will continue with ESF financing. The funds, an expected EUR 260 million budgeted for the period 2004-2008, are impressive. In its initial phase training was co-financed (up to 80%) on the request of firms; firms had to submit training plans and received funding upon agreement for their training expenses. Due to reported abuses of the system, the Agency has changed to rules of financing allowing training suppliers who have sufficient demand for a training programme to ask for co-financing.

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8. In the Strategy of the Ministry for National Education and Sport (2003, p. 26) for 2010 one can read for example: “Assuming that the activities included in the Strategy for Development of Continuing Education Until the Year 2010 will be continued, a long-term strategy can be created on this basis, taking into account also the possibilities of acquiring financial resources from structural funds in the successive budgetary periods of the European Union.” Whereas inputs from the Polish central government and the local government units “will be conditioned on the budgetary capacity...”

### **Box 3. A recent initiative to support firm training: The Training Fund**

The most recent plans of the Ministry of Economy and Labour include new instruments that aim to stimulate demand for further education and training as well as improve the quality of training available. The major instrument to be introduced in the law on employment promotion and labour market institutions is the *Training Fund*. This instrument should encourage employers to create a training fund to upgrade employees' skills. It is not compulsory to set up the fund; however, once it has been created, the employer has to invest at least 0.25% of the total wage sum of the company. There are high expectations by the social partners and policy makers for the Training Fund and many dispute the fatherhood of this instrument.

Once the Training Fund has been set up, financial support from the Labour Fund will be available to employers for:

- Reimbursement of 50% of the costs of training for employees threatened with redundancy.
- Reimbursement of 80% of the costs of training for employees sent for a paid training leave (up to three weeks).
- Reimbursement of the salary of unemployed persons sent to replace an employee on paid training leave (up to 40% of the average monthly salary).
- Training allowance: reimbursement to the employer of the social insurance contributions of the employee receiving a training allowance (a non-obligatory allowance paid by the employer in big companies undergoing mass dismissals to the employee during the training period).

A precondition for the Training Fund is a Corporate Training Plan. The plan has to be agreed on by the social partners and the spending of the money monitored by both the employer and the trade unions, although this last point is still unclear. Concerns are also raised as to whether the fund will benefit employees who did not benefit from training in the past as much as those who already got (paid) training. Last but not least, it is not clear how many additional firms will be attracted by the Fund to offer training. Representatives from the craft sector complained that the Fund will only benefit big companies.

Under the former financing regime, evaluation showed that the diversity of training contents proposed for co-financing was much greater than expected. It is questionable whether under the new rules, where training suppliers have to play a much more active role, the same diversity of training programmes can be kept and whether suppliers will have the same incentive as under the old rules to search for new and innovative training content. Furthermore, it is likely that the new rules disfavour small and micro enterprises, which will not have the same market power to convince training suppliers to collaborate. As there are reportedly no parts of the overall budget that are reserved for specific categories of firms, the distributive effects of the programme that seems to work on a "first-come-first-served" basis, are not immediately evident.

## 4. THE INCENTIVES FOR LEARNING

This chapter assesses the structure and presence of monetary and non-monetary incentives in the Polish society and economy that could stimulate the demand for education in general and adult learning in particular. The primary role of incentives and incentive structures for augmenting the demand for adult learning is recognised in official government papers in Poland. According to the government's Sectoral Operational Programme on Human Resources Development for 2004-2006, measures to promote the idea of lifelong learning will focus on strengthening the incentive system for employers to invest in human resource development and in the development of a motivation system for individuals interested in the enhancement of their human capital.

### 4.1 Returns to education

Evidence of monetary rewards for education and training are rather scarce and some of the analyses and data are difficult to interpret. In addition, in a period of transition, the situation is fast changing, which makes it difficult for both Polish citizens and outsiders to analyse the situation and get clear signals on the benefits/costs and importance or non-importance of education and training.

According to an analysis by Keane & Prasad (2002), the wage premium for education almost doubled in the first years after the transition to a market economy. Before the transition, the education premium was substantially higher for women than for men. In 1988, the tertiary and upper secondary education premiums (relative to a primary school degree) for women were 58% and 30%, respectively, compared to 38% and 16%, respectively, for men. By 1996, these premiums for both men and women had converged to about 95% and 40%, respectively. The move from a compressed wage structure to a more differentiated wage structure according to educational levels was evident both in the emerging private and the public sector. The opening of the Polish economy to foreign markets and investments seems to have had an additional effect on the widening of wage gaps between different groups of workers. Bedi & Cieslik (2002), show that workers in industries in the manufacturing sector, with greater foreign presence, enjoy higher wages and higher wage growth. But it is unclear whether foreign employers show a different demand for qualifications and whether the salary structure or the education premium is different for foreign employers than for Polish enterprises. According to statements of some trade union (OPZZ) representatives, multinational companies under foreign control do invest more in training than comparable Polish enterprises.

In the early years of transition, while the returns to general human capital (as measured by education premiums) rose markedly, the returns to experience declined. This observation is consistent with the notion of rapid obsolescence of firm- or industry-specific skills during a period of rapid industrial restructuring. However, it is difficult to deduce from this result alone that the rise in the education premiums was a clear signal from the labour market that education did pay. Further observation showed that in contrast to the United States and the United Kingdom experiences, increases in within-group inequality in Poland were very different across skill groups, with much larger increases for highly educated workers. So the average rise of the education premiums went along with a larger variance of salaries for highly educated workers, a development that is likely to blur the signal of the value of education. In line with this observation are the calculations made by Tuijnman (2000). In his analysis of the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS)

data, he found that literacy proficiency combined with other factors like formal education explained less of the observed variance in wages than in the other OECD member states that had participated in IALS. He advances three hypotheses to explain this result: *i)* the wages are more randomly distributed or unobserved variables determine a larger part of the wage distribution in Poland; *ii)* the lack of direct wage rewards to skills is a sign of an inadequate economic demand for skill use; or *iii)* there is a lack of efficient labour market mechanisms for selecting skills. Although the first two explanations may make sense in the case of a country in a transition phase, it is interesting to note that the same factors explain much more of the variance in wages in countries in comparable situations like Hungary or the Czech Republic. If the last of the three hypotheses were to be true, it would indicate serious inefficiencies in the market functions to allocate human capital and in training and remuneration policies.

The evolution of the education premiums is also evident in calculations of the traditional returns to education. They show a rise in the returns, although some of the rise already occurred before the transition, according to the calculations available (see Table 4). Fleisher *et al.* (2004), shows that a rise in the return to education, especially in the early years of economic transformation, is a common feature in transition countries. The speed of reforms (*e.g.* wage liberalisation) increases the returns to education but the initial conditions before the transformation also have an effect on the level of returns.

**Table 4. Rates of return to education over time (coefficient on years of schooling)<sup>9</sup>**

Year	1986	1987	1992	1995-96
<b>Rate of return</b>	2.9	5.0	7.0	7.0

Source: Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2002, p. 27.

In a recent comparative study, Walker & Zhu (2001) calculated rates of return to education with LFS data for different countries, among them Poland. The levels of the rates of return for men are similar to those in Table 4 but generally higher for women. According to their calculations, females can expect up to 10% and more per year of schooling.<sup>10</sup> Taking either the values from Table 4 above, or the figures of Walker & Zhu, a comparison of returns to education in Poland to international averages shows that after the transition, Poland has reached comparable levels to average European countries, without being particularly high. However, since much of the rise in the returns to education is a recent consequence of the transformation, it could also imply that large parts of the population, especially older generations, have yet to learn and experience that education pays much more than in the past.

Traditional data on returns to education only reflect the returns to formal schooling, and it is not clear whether positive rates can also be expected for adult learning. Wolter & Weber (1999) have shown that in a context of rates of return around 5 to 10% per year of schooling, delaying human capital investment results in negative returns. On the one hand, the educational premium is too small to guarantee positive returns when the payback period is shortened; on the other hand, very often adult learning bears direct costs for the participant, while initial education is mostly free. Based on simulations, the OECD (2001) reached the same conclusion for full time adult learning, that unless a third party participates in the financing, the individual (private) rates of return to adult learning are mostly negative. The same conclusion probably applies to Poland, and the lack of private returns to adult education and training could

9. It has to be noted that the figures are based on Mincerian wage equations, which fully account for the years a person in education is not earning a salary but do not adequately reflect the direct costs of education. Therefore, with a probable rise in direct costs (especially for all the students enrolled in extramural courses), the rise in the real return to education could well be lower than showed.

10. The 10% are standard OLS estimates. IV estimates – which try to single out the causal effect of education on wages – show that at least for women the OLS estimates are probably biased downward. Different IV estimates show rates of return in the range of 14 to 16% for women.

explain a part of the low participation rates in training. This argument is supported by an observation from the 2003 Survey of Adult Education Activity. Nearly one-third of the people not engaged in continuing education cited the lack of financial resources as the reason for not learning, the second most frequent answer. Even among those adults active in learning in 2003, one-quarter gave the same argument for not having plans for future learning (Polish Background Report, Table 3.15).

#### **Box 4. Institutional vs. market incentives for training**

In some systems or professions, educational degrees are used as screening devices and the ability to work in the profession, open a business or train new professionals is restricted to those with the necessary credentials. Professions like medical doctors or lawyers are regulated in this way but the same traditions are also widespread in the field of crafts. In these cases the institutional barriers and regulations set the incentives to invest in a specific form of education. The regulations are justified as long as the educational degree guarantees that it provides knowledge and skills that are indispensable to carry out the regulated functions and that people without the degree do not possess. Unfortunately, these systems can be abused sometimes, when the credentials are much less motivated by the protection of consumers than by the creation of entry barriers for competitors, which would be economically inefficient. At the beginning of the transformation process in 1989, Poland engaged in a rapid liberalisation, which also affected the rules, linked to educational diplomas. Before 1989, starting a business in the crafts sector demanded a master's degree in the specific craft. After 1989 everybody was more or less free to set up a business without any educational requirements. The demand for master qualifications – not surprisingly – collapsed as a first reaction to this liberalisation. Why should anyone invest time and money to acquire a diploma that was no longer needed after the institutional barriers had been removed?

In the meantime, however, master's qualifications have become quite popular again. The reason for this is that apparently business owners with a master's diploma can use their diploma as a marketing tool. The incentive for a professional to invest in further education nowadays is not the access to a profession or business or to comply with regulations, but the signalling value of the diploma. The change in the function of a diploma has two preconditions. First, the diploma must be based on a reliable and controllable acquisition of human capital and, second, customers must make the judgement that the quality of goods and services provided by the better educated are really better. Only if these conditions are fulfilled, customers are willing to pay a higher price and only if a higher price is paid, the professional has the incentive to invest in human capital.

It seems as if the Polish economy has just started the process of recognising the value of education and the need for high-quality education in order to create this recognition. So far, the direct links between educational effort and return are not clearly visible for everybody and therefore, market incentives alone do not yet guarantee sufficient levels of participation in training.

## **4.2 Public funding and incentives**

There is a range of existing public incentives to support individual adult learners or the development of human capital within companies. The Labour Code creates an incentive for employers to promote training of their employees through the possibility of paid training leave; companies have access to tax breaks related to training expenditures (especially in the case of apprenticeship training for young people up to the age of 18); training of unemployed people and job seekers can be financed by the Labour Fund and education in public adult schools is free of charge. Further incentives are announced in public documents.<sup>11</sup>

Some of the financial incentives that were in place were abolished recently, probably due to the fiscal situation rather than because of their inefficiency. Before they were abolished in 2003, individuals could deduct expenditures on education from their income tax. The amount of deductions grew steadily over the years and almost doubled in the period between 1997 and 2002. Over 90% of the people taking advantage

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11. In the NSEHRD, the government announces: "Guidelines for a system motivating employers to enhance qualifications of their employees will be created."

of the tax deductions belonged to the lowest income group (up to PLN 37 000<sup>12</sup> in 2002), which would have been positive (Ministry of Economy and Labour, 2004b).

According to the Act on the Education System of 7 September 1991, education in public adult schools is free of charge. It is estimated, however, that students' own funds contribute some 29% of the total expenditure because of insufficient resources of public schools (Euridyce, 1999, p. 34). Tuition fees are paid by students for non-public schools and fees are also charged in out-of-school adult education institutions. At the tertiary level, the distribution of students per type of study shows that probably a large number of students must work, in addition to studying, to finance their studies. Less than half of all students enrolled in tertiary education enrol in day classes. The rest take extramural classes and a small proportion follow evening classes. Some of these students are penalised twice – because they cannot finance their living they have to take extramural classes and work instead of taking day classes and concentrating on studying. In addition in many cases extramural classes charge tuition fees, whereas day classes are mostly free of charge.

Young unemployed without at least a vocational qualification are entitled to receive a grant of 40% of their unemployment allowance if they enrol in a school for adults within the first six months of unemployment. Moreover, students with financial problems or good school achievements are entitled to receive financial assistance in schools for adults, similarly to their counterparts in regular schools.

Besides monetary incentives, there are some promising non-monetary initiatives like the *Investor in Human Capital* and the *Leader in Human Resources Management* programmes. These programmes are designed to promote through non-pecuniary incentives the dissemination of good practices in human resources management, including training schemes for employees.

Despite all these instruments, the review team did not have the impression that these initiatives form a coherent framework to promote lifelong learning. This conclusion is apparently shared by the Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Policy (2004a): “*However, these incentives do not create a coherent system. Therefore it is difficult to assess, particularly since there is no reliable diagnosis of the demand for continuing education, how efficient are these incentives and what are the obstacles in undertaking training initiatives and what changes should be introduced.*” (p. 10).

### **4.3 Incentive systems within companies**

Companies have ways to encourage the participation of employees in training, either through the salary system or through providing training themselves. In the case of salaries, firms set wage premiums for higher education or training levels and thereby create an incentive for employees or even potential employees to invest themselves in training. During the review and in the background material available to the review team there was no clear indication that Polish firms use salaries and salary structure frequently as a tool to incite people to invest in their training. It is more frequent that the firms provide the training themselves (at no cost for the employee) and the augmented productivity of the employees (at more or less the same salary as before the training) is used to repay the training costs. From the point of view of the trained employee, both ways are much the same. The difference between the two policies is that in the second case, the firm is deciding whom to train, whereas in the first case, employees themselves can decide whether or not they would like to invest in their human capital. The selective pattern of training participation one can observe in Poland (see Section 2.7.) can partly be explained by the absence of a general promotion of training participation through inciting salary structures in the firms.

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12. It is difficult to interpret the relevance of this threshold. According to the Polish Background Report, the average household income in 2002 was PLN 24 785, well below this threshold.



In cases where the human capital acquired through training is firm specific, co-financing is the economically most efficient way to finance the training cost. Principles of co-financing of training existed in the firms the review team was able to visit. Depending on the benefit the employer expected from the training investment, the employer either paid the full amount of the costs or participated with less than half of the costs if the training content served primarily the needs of the employee. Co-financing is also a useful tool to reduce the danger of poaching.

Other incentive systems like promotion rules that are linked to training efforts or time accounts (now frequently part of collective agreements in Germany) were less reported. In general most interlocutors did not seem to be aware of the incentive mechanisms that are potentially available within a firm, and the social partners (employer associations and trade unions) did not address the issue specifically. They referred to the level of salaries or the participation level in training, but they did not make the link between those two factors.

Innovative schemes that set the training incentive framework for a more active role of employees and employers within firms surely exist in Polish enterprises but, apparently, at present this potential is not yet fully exploited.

#### **4.4 Active labour market measures**

The use of training measures for the unemployed tends to be re-active, rather than an inspiration for unemployed persons to improve their chances on the labour market with an investment in their human capital. The general rule is that unemployed persons wanting training of their choice have to produce evidence that they have a job offer that requires such training. If this is not the case the Labour Offices can send unemployed people to training measures if they find that such training increases their chances to find employment. Measures such as “group training” may be offered and paid for by the Labour Offices also in cases where there is no direct link to a job vacancy.

One mechanism to support training for the unemployed is the availability of training loans. Since 2000 only 2% of the unemployed received such a loan on annual average. Although the effectiveness of these loans is described as being very high, the low number of recipients shows that either unemployed people only seek this loan when a new job is already found (in order to be able to refund the loan) or the labour offices only grant loans to unemployed people when they have a guarantee that the loan will be paid back. In both cases the instrument does not really work as an incentive to demand training, but rather as a form of prepaying training costs that are associated with a particular occupation.

Another mechanism to protect workers against long-term unemployment is the possibility to obtain a refund of training costs for employees threatened by redundancy. Although the instrument makes sense on paper and international evidence on similar instruments show promising results, the number of employers and workers that profited from this refund in 2003 was only symbolic.

#### **4.5 Making learning more attractive for the low-skilled**

A problem with adult learning in nearly all countries is that those most in need of re-qualifying are the least active. There are different explanations for this. First, employers only train those they consider the most productive and they invest the least in low-skilled people, if they don't have opportunities for higher-skilled workers within their own company. It is rational from the perspective of companies not to invest in people who would then have to leave the company to find an adequate job for their augmented skills.

Second, low-skilled people lack the appropriate financial incentives<sup>13</sup> for at least two reasons: *a)* forgone earnings in the period of training (opportunity costs) are quite important, as they have to support themselves and *b)* loans and credits to pre-finance education are often unavailable or quite expensive. Last but not least, motivational barriers and the absence of positive experiences with education are much more widespread among the low qualified. Therefore, to address this issue properly, governments have a role to play in providing specific learning opportunities and incentives to low-skilled adults, whose lack of skills can otherwise create costs that the whole society has to bear.

So far, low-skilled persons in Poland do not seem to be specifically targeted by public policy, although some regulations exist (law on promotion of employment and labour market institutions) that enable *unemployed* people without any qualification to undergo extended training for up to two years). Specific institutions care for the educational needs of low-skilled persons like the “Practical Education Centres” and the Voluntary Corps (which are, however, focused on youth). Without wanting to minimise these strategies, they are perhaps too passive to be successful to overcome all the obstacles that are specific to low-skilled people. Means-tested loans, grants or vouchers should accompany an improved supply of educational opportunities, together with more outreach and information activities to target low-skilled individuals.

#### **4.6 Learning at work**

One of the side effects perhaps of the focus in Poland on second-chance formal school learning is that other forms of learning contents (informal learning) or learning places (workplace) are less prominent and less visible. Certification of informal learning and the promotion of “on-the-job” learning possibilities would substantially reduce the costs and barriers for adults to engage in learning. The potential incentives for adult learning at all stages of the working life could thereby be augmented.

A learner-friendly environment in which learning at work would be stimulated and recognised would need to include training offers that combine formal (theoretical and vocational) learning and informal “on-the-job” learning and lead to formalised certification at the end of training modules. Certifying experience alone would, however, not be sufficient. The decreasing rates of return to experience on the labour market show that the rates of depreciation of knowledge are far too high to be compensated by increased productivity through learning by repetition.

In a similar context, the Ministry of National Education and Sport emphasises in its Continuing Education Strategy-2010 the role of modular programmes and the possibility to fulfil formal school requirements with knowledge gained outside the formal school system. This is laudable but again still too much oriented on formal school settings, and it is not clear to what extent synergies between the learning that takes place at the workplace and the school are really used.

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13. “Incentives for less qualified persons to invest in lifelong learning are weaker than incentives for more qualified persons, since the private returns to upgrading qualifications rise with education level” (OECD 2003b, p. 90).

## 5. THE QUALITY OF LEARNING

The quality of learning provided by training institutions, schools and firms is in many respects crucial for sound development of a lifelong-learning culture. First, training and education can make a difference (in productivity, salaries but also in general well-being, self-fulfilment, etc.) only if quality is achieved, and only if it makes a difference is there is an incentive to invest in education. Second, quality has to be seen in relation to the cost of the supply. The potential to increase quality through better cost-efficiency can be viewed as a broader strategy to increase the benefits of learning (*e.g.* OECD 2000, p. 110). Quality therefore should be placed in the centre of any adult learning strategy, because it is the lever for higher participation rates and higher private and social returns to education.

Quality can be measured at least along three different dimensions: *a)* cost-efficiency, *b)* effectiveness and *c)* allocative efficiency, and the quality of a system should be assessed separately along each of these dimensions.

### 5.1 The quality of training in general

From the documents available it does not seem that adult learning in Poland is based on a comprehensive quality assurance system. This judgement applies to schools as well as firms. Consequently neither the effectiveness nor the cost-efficiency of the system can be assessed with precision. Additionally, there is little information about the interaction between demand and supply and it is therefore difficult to assess whether the training courses offered respond to the needs of the individuals or firms. The observed inactivity of most training suppliers in analysing the market needs for skills and competences does not lead us to believe that the allocative function of the market is efficient. Many institutions have developed courses to provide only what is mandatory by law (such as adult basic education, or security and hygiene in the workplace). Many wait for demand to arise, without taking a proactive approach to modify their offer or convince potential clients to engage in learning.

Cost-efficiency and effectiveness are hindered by at least two factors: *a)* the lack of a culture of evaluation makes it difficult for the individual customer to properly assess the effectiveness of the training services provided. The lack of transparency prevents competition on the grounds of quality among training suppliers. In fields where competition is observed, it does not guarantee that the most effective and efficient supplier survives. In fact, many interlocutors complained about the general habit of customers to select training offers based solely on the lowest price. *b)* There is little innovation in public policies (apart from the objectives stated in policy strategies) that would promote competition among suppliers in order to improve both cost-efficiency and effectiveness, for example through experimentation with vouchers.

Within the different types of adult learning some distinctions have to be made. In the formal parts of the school system some initiatives are set up to improve the effectiveness of training through the development of national curricula and harmonisation of the testing and certification procedures. There is, however, no visible attempt to actively use information about the quality of the services provided by institutions to pilot the system (closing institutions when they fail to achieve standards or giving supplementary help to underachieving institutions). The government could also indirectly improve the quality of the training supplied by a transparent use of the information on quality. Transparency would

build up pressure on the institutions via the demand for education (see *e.g.* Hanushek & Raymond, 2004). Taking into account the large amount of time and money students have to invest into training, transparency about quality would be a powerful tool to achieve better quality. In some fields of education where students pay substantial fees for their training, some private information about the quality of individual institutions is already generated. Newspapers publish rankings of university institutions, especially in the domain of post-graduate and master's studies. But in the parts of the educational system where training is free and the choice of the institutions limited, supplementary action from the Ministry would be needed. The situation is even more demanding and complicated after decentralisation took place and public schools for adults were organised and run by local government units (Euridyce, 1999, p. 33). The Ministry for National Education and Sport can play a central role pushing through national standards and in disseminating results.

#### **Box 5. Quality control in the Voluntary Corps in Warsaw**

The Voluntary Corps cares primarily for young people with school and/or family problems (15-18 years of age) or with no post-compulsory education (18-25 years of age) or a vocational training that is no longer in demand. The Voluntary Corps was not only able to give quantitative figures about its success in the form of completion rates in attaining the formal degrees (98% for the younger age group). It also uses follow-up studies to monitor the success of these former pupils up to two years after leaving the Voluntary Corps. According to the information given, 60% of the former pupils had found a job within this two-year period. Although this information is difficult to interpret, as no comparative data exist, the Voluntary Corps was one of the few institutions the review team visited that had quantitative information about the success and failure rates of trainees and was explicitly collecting such information.

Source: Meeting at the Voluntary Labour Corps, 19 May, 2004, Warsaw.

A first step in the right direction is taken through the establishment of an accreditation system for training suppliers.<sup>14</sup> Such a system will be beneficial if it is effective but at the moment it is not clear how far reaching it will be. It seems that the primary concern was to establish a register of training institutions for fiscal reasons in response to the recent growth in the number of providers partly caused by the possibility of these institutions to be exempted from VAT on income from educational services. Although there will be an incentive – again for fiscal reasons – not to register just any institution, no precise information was given on which criteria will be used for accreditation of an institution. Ongoing experiences in many other countries show that in order to be able to start an accreditation process that guarantees some minimal standards, extensive prior investments in national quality assurance systems have to be made.<sup>15</sup> Once the accreditation rules are established and institutions are registered, the question remains as to whether a one-time assessment of an institution or a study course is sufficient in order to

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14. In the Strategy for Development of Continuing Education until the year 2010, priority 2: "Raising the quality of continuing education", proposes the creation of a system of accreditation of continuing education institutions in non-school forms. Accreditation would be on a voluntary basis.

15. The Polish Network of Modular Education (PNME) participated in a Leonardo da Vinci Pilot, where among other things a model of accreditation of institutions and a model of accreditation for vocational module curricula were developed and implemented in the institutions associated with PNME (68 associations). In the PNME model, the accreditation is based on the answer to the question whether the institution performs what it declares to perform and whether it is in compliance with the standards set by the accreditation institution. Answering these questions calls for a process of setting up standards and individual inspections (audit) of the institution or the programme. Against this background, one can only guess the amount of investment required for accreditation of a potential of several thousand highly diverse institutions, many of them with a diversity of study courses.

guarantee that the standards are met over time<sup>16</sup>. Most national and international quality assurance systems therefore rely on repetitive quality control. This would most probably demand an even bigger investment than planned today.

#### **Box 6. Centre for Teachers Training & Practical Education in Lodz**

An almost holistic approach to the development of educational services and programmes, as well as to quality assurance, was observed in the Centre for Teachers Training & Practical Education in Lodz. The centre offers services for adults and youth but teaches primarily teachers in continuing education (34 000 out of a total of 36 000 people attending courses in this centre per year). The centre conducts its own labour market research in order to analyse the demand for skills, develops its own curricula for new programmes and courses, offers job counselling and runs its own publishing house where course material and research on pedagogy and didactic methods are published. The centre is also active in the field of distance learning: it trains trainers for distance learning, runs its own distance learning classes, creates modular courses and is active in international collaboration and exchange. The historical closeness to the field of didactics and pedagogy in teacher training institutions has facilitated the creation of a quality-oriented comprehensive training institution, and it would be beneficial if other training institutions could profit from this experience as well.

Source: Meeting at the Centre for Teachers Training & Practical Education in Lodz

In the field of firm-related training, where companies either provide their employees with in-house training or send them to external suppliers, the situation of quality control does not seem better developed than in the public-school sector. Although during the OECD review visit the team witnessed a good example of consequent and continuous evaluation of training quality, only one-fifth of the companies offering training checked the training their employees had acquired by means of examination (Ministry of Economy and Labour, 2004b, p. 42). A culture of evaluation apparently also does not exist in the field of firm-related training.

In the domain of evaluation of firm-based training, much effort is probably needed to assure good quality that is necessary to improve the overall awareness of the potential of training for the success of a company. Improvements will be needed in all parts of an evaluation process of firm-related training, namely in the development of evaluation methods, the evaluation of training costs, the evaluation of training efficiency (including the analysis of opportunity costs) and the evaluation of the effectiveness of the training provided. The benefits of improvements in the evaluation of firm training are widespread; they can contribute to improving the abilities of companies to diagnose the state of skills and competencies within the company, to forecast the need for new skills, to select new applicants and promote existing staff into new functions, to better match skills needs with the training offers supplied by external providers, to build up in-house training offers and finally to motivate personnel to invest themselves in training and contribute to the success of the company.

## **5.2 The quality of training for the unemployed**

The effectiveness of training for unemployed people can be measured by different means. Three quantitative measures generally are favoured over more qualitative ones. The first is the probability that an unemployed person finds a paid occupation. The second refers to whether the intervention leads to a higher salary through the augmentation of human capital. From the perspective of fiscal policy, the latter is quite important. Third, whether the training intervention leads to more stable employment can and should be

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16. As an example: in the accreditation of higher education study courses in Switzerland – in the best case – the accreditation is valid for the maximum duration of seven years. After that the whole process of accreditation has to be started again if the institution wants to remain on the list of accredited courses.

evaluated. This last measure is relevant because some interventions may reduce the time of one unemployment spell, but not the total time spent in unemployment over the long run.

The evidence found on the effectiveness of training for the unemployed is limited to the first measure. At first sight, training measures seem to be highly effective relative to this goal. Three months after completion of training, on average, one-third of the unemployed benefiting from training measures had found a job. When differentiating by type of training, individual training measures<sup>17</sup> have a higher success rate – almost double the effectiveness of group training (Ministry of Economy and Labour, 2004b). The figures dropped only slightly during the period of rising overall unemployment. Unfortunately, it is not possible to draw any conclusion from these figures about the effectiveness of training, as there is *i*) a general selection effect into training and *ii*) a person who applies for individual training must prove prior to the measure that she or he will be employed after the training (no such requirement is asked for group training).

A limited number of scientific studies have analysed the net effect of training measures taking into account selection effects, and some studies compared the effectiveness of training measures against other measures. Kluge *et al.* (1999) found a positive effect of training for men and women on employment probability<sup>18</sup>. Their results were backed up by further analyses by Puhani (1999 & 2002) who found – also on the basis of LFS data – that publicly financed training improves the employment opportunities for both men and women. Puhani (1999) also found that there is even a significant positive net-effect of training on the outflow from unemployment when one takes into account the effect training might have on the outflow from employment. ALMP could generate so-called displacement effects that are neutralising the positive effects on the outflow from unemployment, but it seems that the displacement effects are smaller than the positive effects.

In addition, compared to intervention works (subsidised employment), training programmes are more effective in reducing unemployment. For men, public works and intervention works have negative treatment effects, while participation in intervention works does not affect women's employment probabilities.

Three open questions still remain after a first positive assessment of training measures. First, only a small fraction of unemployed people have benefited from training measures so far and under a very specific regime. It is difficult to tell whether all the micro-econometric corrections have sufficiently improved the analysis to be able to generalise the results for all unemployed people, in the case they would follow training programmes. Second, looking at employment rates after completion of training financed by the labour offices (Ministry of Economy and Labour, 2004b), one can detect a very particular pattern. Training courses that lead to a competence that most likely was a requirement to get a specific job (like driver's licences, operation of specific machines and equipment) have the highest rates of re-employment, whereas more general knowledge courses (IT and software programmes or administrative services) had much lower success rates. Therefore, if training was offered on large scale for many of the unemployed, there would be an urgent need to design appropriate contents in the training programmes in order to achieve the expected results; this includes more general training contents. Third, effectiveness according to these studies means that the quicker re-insertion into the labour market of people who followed training programmes is due to training and not to the specific characteristics of these people or chance. This, however, does not mean that all of these measures are also cost-effective in the sense that the shortening of

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17. Individual training represents only 20% of all training measures. 80% of all participants participate in group training.

18. In their micro-econometric analysis of the effectiveness of Active Labour Market Policies the authors used data from the 18th wave of the Polish LFS and implemented a conditional difference-in-differences matching estimator of treatment effects.

the unemployment period saved enough money to compensate the full costs of the training measure. But in order to better assess whether training measures would be beneficial overall, the criteria for evaluation should be expanded to the ones described in the introduction of this section.

With all these reservations in mind, the tentative conclusion one could draw from the information on the effectiveness of training for unemployed people is that, considering the positive evaluation on employment outcomes, one has to wonder why only 4% of the unemployed are actively taking part in training programmes.

### **5.3 Making training models more effective**

An overall question in the framework of the discussion on quality is also whether the training models correspond to the needs of the Polish labour market. The view that training provided does not always correspond to labour market needs seems to be gaining ground in the assessment of training strategies, and also within the different Ministries. In its National Strategy for Employment and Human Resources Development the government has stressed the importance of vocational training, and in particular training that leads to the acquisition of practical skills, precisely for this reason. A network of Practical Training Centres with the necessary equipment and staff resources was planned. A way to solve the problems of financing modern equipment for vocational schools and vocational training centres is to place the emphasis on practical training (two-thirds is given as a target in the educational reform) for the training provided by the employers themselves.

A higher number of young people choosing the “alternant”<sup>19</sup> education system was set as the target in the NSEHRD. Tax deductions for employers providing vocational training should promote the availability of a sufficient number of training places. In practice the local governments at powiat level refund costs borne by the employers due to the remuneration of apprentices during their apprenticeship. Unfortunately the possibility of tax relief is limited to young apprentices and the question therefore remains open, whether apprenticeship training could also be a viable solution for adult learning (see Box 7).

Despite these intentions and actions, during the OECD review visit, representatives from training institutions (ZZDZ) and Craft Associations complained about: *i*) the high degree of formal schooling even within vocational education; and *ii*) the fact that after completing a vocational degree most people have to undergo further practical training with an employer or take additional training courses. If this assessment of the organisation of the training is accurate, then the direction of the reform is good, but there is still some way to go.

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19. Also known as “dual” form of apprenticeship training.

### Box 7. Apprenticeship training – A model for adult learning?

According to the interview with representatives from the Crafts Association, some 90 000 young students are in apprenticeship training annually. Further, some 5 000 master diplomas are issued every year. Compared to the number of students in the more general parts of the educational system, this is still a minority but the demand both for apprenticeship training posts, and for courses for apprenticeship trainers, is rising. The quality of the education is judged to be good and although there are no exact studies about the work-biography of former apprentices or the transferability of acquired skills, the chances for a smooth transition into the labour market seem to be good. Compared to theoretical training in schools, employers value the socio-economic skills and the consciousness of quality that apprentices acquire during their training. The supply of training posts relative to the demand for training seems to be sub-optimal. As a reason for this, the frequent problem of *poaching* was cited. Without being able to verify this reason, the low retention rate of apprentices (only 15-20% stay with their training company after having completed their apprenticeship training) may speak in favour of this explanation.

Under current conditions one of the remaining reasons to train apprentices is the possibility for tax relief. Before 2002 such tax relief was not age-specific; since 2004 the grants that replaced the tax relief are only available for employers providing training for apprentices aged under 18. Additionally, since 2002 there is no legal possibility any more for adults to enter apprenticeship training. As a consequence, apprenticeship training has become economically relatively uninteresting for employers (Wolter *et al.* 2003 have shown the importance of an attractive cost-benefit ratio for the supply of training posts).

However, it seems as if alternatives in the organisation of the apprenticeship training have not been fully analysed, and a certain number of changes could well improve the attractiveness to employers of providing apprenticeship training for young adults. 1) In order to be able to compensate for the training costs, the employer depends on the apprentices to remain with the company as long as possible. The longer an apprentice remains with the training company, the better the chances for the employer that the value of the apprentice's productive work will eventually exceed the labour costs. In a flexible labour market this time can only be regulated via the legally prescribed duration of the apprenticeship contract. 2) The more time an apprentice spends with the employer during a working week, the bigger the potential benefit for the employer. 3) If craft associations have the power to set binding rules for all employers of a branch or an industry, they could set up sectoral training funds which would make potential "free-riders" contribute to the training costs of those employers active in training. Due to the high flexibility of workers after training is completed, all employers would profit from the general rise of the human capital stock in their industry.

Based on the information provided, the duration of apprenticeship training contracts, especially for "blue-collar" jobs, has the potential to be prolonged. At the same time, the number of days apprentices spend with the firm during a normal working week seems to be rather low, compared to apprentices in other countries. The ability of the Craft Association to set binding rules for employers seems to be too weak to prevent free-riding. Therefore sectoral interventions by the government could be envisaged to help branches to overcome training inefficiencies. In conclusion, despite the less favourable tax situation for the training of adults, there should be enough possibilities to reform the apprenticeship model in order to make it economically attractive for employers also for adult apprentices.



## 6. POLICY INTEGRATION AND COHERENCE

### 6.1 Co-ordination between stakeholders

There is an obvious lack of horizontal and vertical integration of adult learning policies in Poland. Different ministries involved hardly collaborate with each other, although legal regulations and government programmes in the field of adult learning require negotiations between all the ministries concerned. For example, policy statements and brochures of the Ministry of National Education and Sport hardly mention policy plans by the Ministry of Economy and Labour or the Ministry of Finance and vice versa, although they all directly or indirectly have adult learning policies in place. Furthermore, there are few links to other public policies, such as regional or infrastructure development and social or welfare policies. The creation of one body or institution devoted to adult learning could perhaps bring coherence into these policies. Possibly, the co-operation of different stakeholders in the Steering Group for this OECD review could be used as a start for a more fruitful and regular inter-ministerial collaboration.

Another aspect that may contribute to make policy making and implementation difficult is the fact that there has been a policy of decentralisation in recent years. In their analysis of recent developments in municipal finance in four eastern European countries, Nam & Parsche (2001) assessed that this type of fiscal decentralisation has caused some additional problems, particularly for safeguarding the quality of publicly provided goods and services and for co-ordinating intergovernmental fiscal transfers between the central and local governments. Despite apparent problems, the fiscal devolution trend continued and especially small-sized municipalities have suffered from financial bottlenecks and insufficient financial support from the central government. If one sees decentralisation in the educational system in this context, one wonders whether the far-reaching decentralisation<sup>20</sup> has been beneficial and whether appropriate co-ordinating mechanisms exist to counteract its negative aspects. The OECD Economic Survey of Poland provided some analysis on the situation: "The devolution of spending power incorporated in the 1999 regional reform has reduced the central authorities' abilities to influence overall general government. In addition, the efficiency with which services are delivered at the local level could be enhanced by greater co-operation and joint delivery of services. While the legal framework for such co-operative efforts exists, so far few gminas (municipalities) have taken advantage of it" (OECD, 2002a, p. 15).

The decentralisation also affects the Labour Offices, which have been decentralised and incorporated into the regional and local self-government structure. This has led to a lack of national target-setting and monitoring, while there are obvious problems of co-ordination of national and regional policies. Some interlocutors even went as far as saying that the decentralisation had made the labour offices uncontrollable. It seems that there is an urgent need for more central efficiency and quality control. In addition, as stated in the OECD quote above, there are important economies of scale to exploit and problems of critical mass to avoid with a more co-operative form of work.

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20. According to the Polish Background Report, at the voivodship level public education policy is implemented by the education superintendent, who co-operates with the territorial self-government units in creation and implementation of appropriate regional and local education policy and exercises a pedagogic supervision over public and non-public schools and adult learning centres. The poviats self-government is responsible for running schools at upper secondary level as well as continuing education and practical training centres.

## 6.2 The role of social partners

The social partners can potentially play an important role in setting a dynamic framework for adult learning. In the case of Poland they are probably neither strong promoters of, nor big obstacles to the development of adult learning. The underdeveloped role of social partners in this area is mainly due to their current lack of “representativity”. The main employers’ associations are still young (but have growing membership) and the two main trade unions (Solidarnosc and OPZZ) have endured a rapidly falling trade union density during the 1990s, down to 15% at present.

In contrast to other EU countries, collective bargaining is mainly at the company (as opposed to sectoral) level. Works councils (or “worker committees”) only exist in state-owned enterprises, as remnants of the previous socialist period.

As a part of the PHARE 2000 project, conducted by the Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Policy, a working group on the model of continuous training was formed in May 2002, which put forward proposals concerning the financing of continuing education. Apart from the concept of a “Training Fund”, and the registering and accreditation of training institutions, there was also a question of the institutionalisation of social dialogue in the area of continuing education and training (JAP, 2002, p. 13). While the first two proposals, the Training Fund and the accreditation of training institutions, have been developed, social dialogue is continued in its previous forms, *i.e.* within the employment councils and the tripartite committees of social dialogue.

Currently it is doubtful that there exists much “social partnership” in training decisions by enterprises. This may change to some extent with the new provision on training funds that requires an agreement by the two sides to benefit from public financial support. But this change will be limited, due to the lack of representation of union organisations in most companies, apart from the larger ones. Interestingly, both the trade union (OPZZ) and one of the employers’ associations told the review team that they were behind the training fund idea. The trade union representative claimed that companies were investing in training mainly of their highly qualified staff, and the training fund could be a vehicle for staff representatives to push for including the low skilled – but this may turn out to be wishful thinking.

The social partners are supposed to have some influence in the so-called “employment councils”. These councils advise and comment on employment policies at the national, voivod and poviat levels and can influence the use of funds by local PES offices. Nevertheless, the Polish Background Report is probably right in its judgement that “at present employer organisations and trade unions do not actively participate in creating adult learning policy”. One exception perhaps is the tripartite training contract, where employers can co-finance training for persons they want to hire through the local PES offices.

## 6.3 Creating a culture of research and evaluation

In the process of preparation to access the European Union, several surveys have been introduced which should improve the information on and assessment of adult learning in Poland. So far the picture is not coherent and the different statistical sources leave the impression of scattered evidence, a situation which is not uncommon in OECD countries.

Hardly any studies on the effectiveness of training programmes seem to exist. Some interlocutors raised doubts about the accuracy of the IALS results, but in this case one wonders why there are no attempts to rectify this rather negative picture of the qualification levels of the Polish adult population. Additionally, except for a few studies – most of them quoted in this report – we did not come across

methodologically advanced analyses of existing data.<sup>21</sup> Neither did we get the impression that scientific inquiry, statistics and policy evaluation were used in a systematic way to underpin and to improve the design and the implementation of adult learning policies. To be fair, it has to be stressed that in the domain of adult and continuing education the lack of scientific rigour in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of policies is a widespread problem in most OECD member states. Nevertheless, adult learning in Poland would greatly benefit, if policy and practice would be systematically informed by research.

#### **Box 8. A reflection of the value of good data on adult learning**

As a concrete example of the need for more analysis and statistics one could mention the fact that it is not yet known how individuals engage in adult learning over time. Patterns of adult activity in learning over time are important for being able to interpret the overall participation rates measured in national surveys (see Section 2.7.). If some 20% of the adult population engage in learning yearly and each year different adults make up the participants, then every adult would be active in learning every five years. The low rate of participation would mean that adults do not participate in learning frequently. Most probably this is not the case, as the majority of those active in adult education and training participate every year, and in fact each annual survey identifies the same “multiple” learners. In this case the analysis would be quite different because the pattern of participation would mean that the gap between those adults who are active and the majority of adults who are not active in training will increase over time. This could lead to undesirable and negative side-effects for social cohesion and labour market outcomes.

Depending on which of the explanations for the low participation rate is closer to reality, policy measures to improve the situation would have to be designed differently. This is why it is important that the Statistical Office (CSO) produces *panel data* on adult learning on an individual level and that these data are subsequently analysed with the appropriate micro-econometric techniques.

#### **6.4 A national strategy for adult education**

As mentioned earlier in this report, the Ministry of National Education and Sport has issued a plan for the development of adult education until 2010 that has been accepted by the Council of Ministers. The plan lists about 40 measures that will be taken up in this time span, the responsibilities and the sources of financing. It does, however, not answer a wide array of questions that will be crucial in the implementation of the planned actions. It will serve well as an umbrella document to develop a national strategy for adult education, but it should be supplemented by a more refined plan of action that respects the following points:

- 1) The plan should start with an estimation of lifelong learning gaps (see OECD 2000). Detailed benchmark targets should be set and quantitative estimations made about the participation gaps that should be closed for different segments of the adult population.
- 2) Actions to reach the targeted goals should be underpinned by scientific research (introducing the so-called “evidence-based policy”). If an action cannot be justified by existing scientific knowledge, the way this knowledge will be established has to be described and planned (either through experimentation or pilots).
- 3) Training needs and unit costs per person for training should be calculated to estimate the public finances needed to reach a specific goal and estimate the total envelope of financial investments.
- 4) As not all plans can be realised, a ranking of priorities should be established along with a time plan that allows Poland to pursue the goals in a sequential manner according to the set priorities.

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21. Admittedly, the limited number of studies available in English could bias the judgement. But if this research existed in Polish, it would be surprising why in official reports and documents no references are made to it.

At present, there is the impression that all measures will be taken up in parallel, which carries the danger that in the end the result will be sub-optimal compared to the possible outcome.

- 5) To adapt the plans to reality, the government needs to develop cost-sharing strategies in co-operation with the social partners. Public authorities alone cannot provide all the necessary financial resources for lifelong learning. In order to be able to design efficient co-financing strategies (see *e.g.* OECD 2003b), one should estimate the share of return that goes to individuals, firms, the state and society at large under different financing schemes, and calculate on this basis the participation costs for each partner.
- 6) The plan should have feedback loops that help policy to adapt to new circumstances.
- 7) The plan should set quantitative and qualitative targets for all actions and should reflect on the consequences if the goals set are not reached.

An adult learning strategy that would respect the above elements would be sustainable and less prone to fluctuations in the political situation, in public finances and/or financial flows from the European Union.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions, based on the assessment in the preceding chapters, present some strong and weak points of the adult learning system in Poland and highlight the areas where interventions are most needed or would promise the best results in improving, first, participation in and quality of adult learning and, consequently, its private, fiscal and social returns. The final goal should be to set a framework of coherent adult learning policies that guarantee the incentive structures, the regulations and the institutions that make the system self-sustainable and successful. In order to achieve this, the review team proposes *seven* areas of intervention where governmental action and investment of public funds and resources should be primarily targeted. Many of these issues are not measures against an absolute benchmark, as many problems in adult learning are inherent to policy and reality, and not many countries reach overall success. Before addressing these issues, some general remarks on the Polish situation should be made.

Poland is still in the transformation process from a former communist system to a society and economy based on market principles. This process is not yet over and some parts of the heritage, for example the generally low level of educational attainment of the pre-transformation generations, are carried on. The challenges for Polish educational and labour market policy are therefore more serious than in other industrialised countries. In this situation, the primary focus of the Polish educational policy has been for a long time to offer adults a second chance to get a formal school degree at the tertiary, secondary or even primary level. In this, the Polish system seems to be quite successful, as proven by the considerable pool of adults who take up their second chance. The most recent success in raising the educational level of the young population might well serve as an example for other countries suffering from high dropout rates from upper secondary education. At the same time, this prioritisation has led to a duplication of the formal system of initial education for the purpose of adult and continuing education. As a consequence, the system is primarily used by very young adults, unemployed people or people threatened by redundancy.

### ***Increase the participation rate of older adults***

As a primary action the government should consider refocusing its investments in adult learning from the younger to the older adults. Most of the quantitative efforts are placed within the formal educational system and do not reach those over 25 years old. Better-quality initial education and higher proportions of young people attending secondary and higher education will be an important means not only to improve the human capital of Poland but also to lay a sound base for future continuing education. But due to the requirements of the demographic and economic changes, Poland cannot afford “lost generations” and simply wait until all the adults are replaced by the better-educated youth of today. There is an urgent effort needed to raise skill levels of all age groups. In order to achieve this, educational policy needs to create specific learning opportunities for adults much more than it has done in the past and avoid duplicating the formal educational system that is adapted to the needs of young people. In the same line of argument, Poland should reduce the number of instruments of educational and fiscal policy that are age-related and clearly favour the young generations. The lifelong learning strategy should grant opportunities irrespective of age and targeted only in cases where special assistance for disfavoured groups is evident.

Some initial progress has been made in this direction, but more efforts are needed to create adequate educational offers, institutions and curricula that suit the needs and aspirations of adults.

### ***Increase the returns to education***

The observable educational behaviour of large segments of the Polish adult population reveals either a lack of appreciation of the benefits of education or the absence of such benefits (or both). Action is needed on both fronts. In order to convince people that education pays, the returns to education have to be augmented. This can be achieved in at least three domains. First, educational quality has to be improved in order to guarantee that any investment by employees or employers in training is reflected in an adequate gain in productivity. Second, the returns to education can be significantly improved by reforming training. The cost-effectiveness of training should be augmented by measures reducing the costs to learners and firms while at the same time keeping up the level of quality of the training provided. Last but not least, and based on the assumption that differences in educational attainment are true differences in human capital and labour productivity, employers and trade unions have to accept that in order to promote training and educational activities of individuals, they have to agree on salary structures that better reflect educational differences.

Although it can be expected that under the condition of the provision of cost-effective and high-quality training and an effective salary structure the demand for (adult) learning will be stimulated, specific subgroups of the adult population will need additional encouragement to take up training. Motivational campaigns, creating a more learner-friendly environment, reducing access barriers to educational institutions and other creative measures will be needed to make those people who have had an unsuccessful educational biography participate in education.

In short, this implies the creation of an environment in which education pays and in which barriers are removed that could prevent people from participating in lifelong learning.

### ***Increase the priority of adult learning in the general educational and labour market policy***

We are well aware that currently basic education of youth and the necessity to replace lost incomes for the unemployed severely limit the human and financial resources available for other needs. While there is always a possibility to increase the effect of the available resources through efficiency gains, in the present situation it will not be possible to achieve a lifelong learning reality without a shift in priorities.

Currently some 0.6% of total spending on education is devoted to adult education. The review team was informed that there are plans to augment the part of the educational budget that goes into adult education in the near future to 2.5%; however, based on the general assessment of the challenges the Polish society and economy in particular are confronted with, even more emphasis on adult education is needed. The same argument holds for the spending of the Labour Fund. Even if one takes the scarce evidence on the effectiveness of training with caution, a change in priorities from either passive support or subsidised employment towards training seems to be much more promising than the current pattern of spending.

### ***Change the ratio of strategy papers vs. evaluations***

Throughout the visit, the review team was confronted with numerous strategy papers, new plans for legal acts, programmes and declarations but hardly any evaluations of previous programmes. Analysing the new plans, it became evident that only in rare cases was reference made to older plans. In cases where quantitative goals had been set and not been reached or where it was foreseeable that they would not be

reached, no reasons were given for the failures and what lessons were drawn from them. In the period of accession to the European Union it is understandable that there were high demands for setting a legal and policy framework, and an impressive amount of work has been accomplished in a short time. In the future it would, however, be beneficial for the development of a sound adult learning policy that priority is given to *ex post* analyses and evaluations before new programmes are set up. The way policy was formulated and implemented in the early years of transformation and accession to the EU needs to be replaced by a step-by-step *evidence-based* policy. This evidence has to be established through investments in statistics and research.

### ***Make public policy more innovative***

The review team learned that in the Ministry of Economy and Labour several initiatives have been taken up to implement a system of statistics and research to inform policy-making. Such efforts should be strengthened in all governmental departments and actively supported. The team was also informed on many occasions that the local Labour Offices are supposed to conduct more market research in order to achieve a better match between their instruments and the needs of the labour market. While such activities can be beneficial, it is obvious that most Labour Offices will neither have the personnel resources nor the technical knowledge to conduct in-depth studies of the labour market. Therefore research and evaluations on a higher level – despite the decentralisation of the operational tasks – need to be strengthened.

But in order to learn from experience, it is not sufficient to wait for the effects of a policy to emerge, describe them statistically and evaluate them with scientific rigour. In many cases, it is not known *ex ante* which instrument or which specific form of implementation is the most promising, and time and resources can be wasted if one bets on one single policy. The evidence – if one takes into account foreign experiences – on too many questions is scarce, contradictory, dependent upon a specific framework or simply out-dated. The process of designing policies must therefore be improved by innovative ways of establishing evidence. The use of pilots and experiments is recommended in order to establish the necessary information to pilot an effective and efficient system of lifelong learning. Tests can be limited in time, scope and geographical area and the decentralisation of political entities could for once be used as an advantage to set up competing models and evaluate them thoroughly. At the time of the review we were not aware of the use of such tools to establish knowledge about the functioning of the market for adult learning, the effectiveness of different training modes or the effects of training on labour market outcomes in an innovative way. The use of demand-led financing tools like vouchers or sensitivity analyses of the reaction of the demand for training to different financing regimes – to name just two examples for illustrative purposes – could be ways to better understand how public interventions could improve lifelong learning patterns for the adult population as a whole.

### ***Strengthen the co-ordination between different stakeholders at policy level***

Horizontal co-ordination and co-operation is needed at different levels – between ministries, between the public and the private sector, and between the social partners. The decentralisation process in Poland, which can be beneficial in many respects, needs new forms of co-operation and co-ordination. At each level of jurisdiction (voivodship, powiat), policymakers and administrators have to gain experience about when it is most successful to compete with neighbouring jurisdictions, and when it is more promising to co-operate and co-ordinate actions. In many cases, one powiat or even one voivodship does not possess the critical mass to successfully design, implement, test or evaluate a policy, and closer co-operation could therefore be beneficial.

But vertical co-ordination and co-operation is also needed in view of the decentralisation process in Poland. National goals do not always translate into local action and local action is very often in contradiction with goals at the national level. The distribution of tasks and activities between the different levels of the state has to be constantly monitored for inefficiencies.

The participation of Poland in the OECD review as such was an example of close and beneficial co-operation between the Ministry of Economy and Labour and the Ministry of Education. Although co-operation has to be deepened and widened, this experience shows that to address complex areas like adult learning that span different governmental departments and stakeholders outside the government, there is a need for special and institutionalised co-operation to overcome the potential inefficiencies of non-co-operation. The creation of a permanent multi-ministerial task force to co-ordinate activities in adult learning and to check whether new laws and activities or the abolition of existing instruments are not in conflict with a lifelong learning strategy, could be one way to go forward.

### ***Prevent public policies from being regressive***

It is often unclear how policy instruments can guarantee that they are the most beneficial for those who are most in need of intervention.<sup>22</sup> Better targeting of measures is needed to guarantee the most efficient and effective use of scarce public funds, so all instruments should be evaluated *ex ante* and *ex post* to understand their *distributional* and not just their average effects. The problem of distributional aspects of public interventions was rarely addressed (with factual information and not just declarations) in public documents, and in some cases it was rather evident that the flow of funds supported those who would have been active without any public intervention. This creates at least two problems: First, the gaps that public intervention should close are becoming even bigger and second, the “dead-weight-losses” are simply not affordable in times when there are no sufficient public means. In order to better assess future programmes, it has to be clearly analysed what extra value-added the public intervention is creating and what distributional effects are to be expected.

### ***Make training models self-sustainable***

Finally, an effective lifelong learning policy should aim to install training models that are self-sustainable and need only a minimum of public intervention or framework-setting in order to be efficient. Training models must exhibit an incentive structure that, in the equilibrium, incites all partners, learners, employers and training institutions to behave in a way that guarantees a maximum of effectiveness and efficiency. Today, training models often do not seem to incite all the partners to be active and one has the impression that stakeholders are waiting for someone else to move first. Such models need constant outside intervention, backup or support and are therefore not ideal to create a dynamic system. A practical example is the apprenticeship system that currently only seems to work for young people as long as employers can benefit from tax reductions.

Overall, Poland is on the way towards the development of an adult learning strategy. There are a number of different measures and policies in place, and there is public concern for the need to develop the country’s human capital effectively. The seeds have been planted, and public and private efforts need to focus now on promoting their growth and diffusion.

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22. “Failure to systematically evaluate the impacts of programmes means that those with perverse effects do not get re-examined and revised as they should ... evidence suggests that housing-related tax expenditures have principally benefited the better off, while high social security benefits and regionally undifferentiated minimum wages are contributing to joblessness among the low-skilled.” (OECD, 2002a, p. 14).



## GLOSSARY

ALMP	Active Labour Market Policy
BAED	Survey of Adult Education Activity
CSO	Central Statistical Office
CVTS	Continuing Vocational Training Survey
ESF	European Social Fund
IALS	International Adult Literacy Survey
JAP	Joint Assessment of Employment Priorities in Poland
LFS	Labour Force Survey
NSEHRD	National Strategy for Employment and Human Resources Development 2000-2006
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PHARE	Instrument financed by the European Union to assist the applicant countries of Central and Eastern Europe in their preparations for accession
OPZZ	All-Poland Trade Union
TRAL	Thematic Review on Adult Learning
TWP	Polish Association for Adult Education
ZZDZ	Union of Vocational Education Centres

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## **ANNEX 1: STEERING GROUP, BACKGROUND AUTHORS AND CO-ORDINATION**

### **National Steering Committee**

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*Ms. Hanna Świątkiewicz-Zych, Deputy Director of Labour Market Department*

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Mr. Zdzisław Sadowski, Adviser to the Minister

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Mr. Peter Tergeist	Employment Analysis and Policy Division, Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs (ELSA), OECD, Paris, France

### ANNEX 3: PROGRAMME OF THE VISIT

#### Thursday 13 May – Warsaw

- 09.30 *Meeting with National Steering Committee and authors of the Background Report:*  
From Warsaw School of Economics  
Ms. Irena E. Kotowska  
Ms. Anna Baranowska  
Ms. Małgorzata Podogrodzka
- 14.00 *Meeting with representatives from the Main Statistics Office*  
From the Social Statistics Department  
Ms. Grażyna Marciniak, Deputy Director  
Ms. Hanna Strzelecka, Head of the Division  
Ms. Agnieszka Zgierska, Head of the Division  
Mr. Stanisław Radkowski, Head of the Division

#### Friday 14 May – Warsaw

- 09.00 *Visit to Polish Craft Association*  
From the Polish Craft Association  
Mr. Maciej Prószyński, Director of Vocational Education & Social Affairs  
Ms. Jolanta Kossakowska, Expert
- 11.30 *Trade Unions – Solidarność & All-Poland Alliance of Trade Unions*  
From the All-Poland Trade Unions  
Mr. Ryszard Łepik, Vice President  
Mr. Tomasz Jasiński, Senior Expert
- 14.00 *Polish Confederation of Private Employers*  
Ms. Marta Goroszkiewicz, Expert in the Social Dialogue & Labour Relations Department in the PCPE
- 16.00 *Confederation of Polish Employers*  
From the All-Poland Trade Unions  
Mr. Andrzej Jankowski, Corporate Director  
Ms. Hanna Merchel, Training Department  
Ms. Małgorzata Czapka, Director of International Affairs Department  
Ms. Agnieszka Skolimowska, Specialist of International Trade  
Ms. Elżbieta Krzak, Director of Vocational Training Centre “Pi” in Wrocław

**Monday 17 May – Łódź**

- 10.00 *Visit to Craft Chamber*  
Mr. Janusz Chmielewski, Director  
Mr. Piotr Karkowski, Vice President of the Board
- 12.00 *Visit to the Voivodship (Province) Labour Office*  
From the Province Labour Office  
Mr. Mirosław Kwiatkowski, Director  
Mr. Leszek Bandurek, Deputy Director  
Ms. Anna Trębska, Head of the Labour Fund Programmes Unit
- 14.30 *Visit with representatives of local authorities and those from the Poviát (Local) Labour Office in Pabianice*  
From the Local Labour Office  
Mr. Bogusław Oswald, Director  
Ms. Danuta Skwirowska, Deputy Director  
Ms. Halina Fisiak, Board Member of the Poviát Pabianice Authorities  
Mr. Krzysztof Tomczak, in charge of the Director of Continuing Learning Centre in Pabianice

**Tuesday 18 May – Dobieszków / Łódź**

- 09.00 *Visit to the Centre of Training & Upgrading in Dobieszków*  
From the Centre of Training & Upgrading  
Ms. Grażyna Nykiel, Director  
Mr. Tomasz Śliskowski, Teacher  
Mr. Adam Kulik, Chief of Practical Training
- 11.00 *Meeting with the Deputy Chief of Labour Voluntary Corps, Łódź*  
Mr. Piotr Krajewski
- 13.00 *Visit to the Centre for Teachers Training & Practical Education (CTTPE), Łódź*  
From the CTTPE:  
Mr. Janusz Moos, Director  
Ms. Teresa Dąbrowska, Deputy Director for Methodological Counselling & Vocational Improvement  
Ms. Liliana Budkowska, Chief of the Unit for Quality & Management  
Ms. Anna Koludo, Chief of the Unit for Educational and Voivodship (Province) Coordinator for IT in schools & education centres  
Ms. Alicja Oleska, Chief of the Unit for Quality Systems  
Ms. Małgorzata Rau, Expert for International Projects

15.00 *Visit to the Vocational Education Centre, Łódź*  
Mr. Szczepan Wójcik, President of the Board  
Mr. Witold Kurczewski, Director of Training & Education Section

**Wednesday 19 May – Warsaw**

09.00 *Main Office of Voluntary Labour Corps*  
Mr. Marian Najdychor, Deputy Commanding Chief  
Mr. Dariusz Gatner, Director of the Office for Implementation of the European Programmes & International Cooperation

11.00 *Visit to the Polish Security Printing Works S.A. (Enterprise providing training)*  
Ms. Jolanta Witkowska, Deputy Director of Organizational & Security Department  
Ms. Joanna Górka, Chief of Human Resources Development & Social Affairs Unit  
Mr. Marek Laszuk, Chief of Innovation & Local Programmes Unit  
Mr. Piotr Jakielaszek, Expert in Human Resources Development

14.00 *Polish Agency for Enterprise Development*  
Ms. Urszula Golec, Expert HR

15.30 *Visit to Macrosoft S.A. (Enterprise providing training)*  
Ms. Magdalena Teterycz, Human Resources Manager  
Ms. Patrycja Ptaszek-Strączyńska, Member of the Board of Macrosoft S.A.

**Thursday 20 May – Stare Lubiejewo/ Mińsk Mazowiecki/ Warsaw**

09.30 *Visit to Folk University in Stare Lubiejewo*  
Mr. Sławomir Konarzewski, Leader of the University  
Mr. Tadeusz Budzisz, Director of the Practical Training School Centre  
Mr. Tadeusz Legacki, Starosta of Ostrołęcki Powiat  
Ms. Zofia Kaczor-Jędrzycka, President of Polish Union of Folk Universities

13.00 *Visit to Centre of Continuing Training in Mińsk Mazowiecki (Mazovia Province) & meeting with representatives of kuratorium & local authorities*  
From the Continuing Training Centre  
Mr. Jan Wiśniewski, Director  
Ms. Joanna Kowalska, Deputy Director  
Mr. Zbigniew Parol, IT Expert  
Ms. Wanda Kościńska, Chief of Firm PRAKSYM for Practical Exams  
Mr. Krzysztof Ostrowski, Chief of Electronic Workshop



16.00 *Visit to the Warsaw School of Economics, Warsaw*

From the Warsaw School of Economics

Mr. Edward Golachowski, Vice Chancellor

Ms. Irena L. Kotowska

Ms. Anna Baranowska

**Friday 21 May – Warsaw**

09.00 *Meeting at the Ministry of National Education & Sport, Department of Vocational & Continuing Training*

From the Dept. of Vocational Continuing Training

Ms. Halina Cieślak, Director

Ms. Zofia Stypińska, Head of Unit

Ms. Grażyna Osicka, Director of the National Centre for Supporting Vocational & Continuing Education

From the Ministry

Ms. Teresa Bader, Director of Higher Education

Mr. Krzysztof Kafel, Adviser to the Minister

Ms. Halina Sitko, Senior Expert in the Central Examination Commission

Mr. Robert Pawlak, Senior Expert in Educational Strategy & Structural Funds Dept

Ms. Dorota Lewandowska, Senior Expert in Educational Strategy & Structural Funds Department

10.30 *Wrap-up meeting with National Steering Committee: Presentation of preliminary findings by OECD Review Team*