

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION – ON THE EXAMPLE OF EXPERIENCES OF PWSZ IN CHEŁM

This article presents the legal basis and the characteristics of vocational education in Poland - professional vocational schools, specialised secondary schools, technical schools, and schools of higher education.

The second part considers in detail education at the State School of Higher Education in Chełm. The available school faculties, internship for students and cooperation with foreign partners, among others, the Erasmus program are discussed.

Keywords: *education, vocational education, professional self-experience, higher vocational school.*

Vocational education consists in preparing the young people for working as different professionals. The main aims of the vocational education are: to get the professional knowledge; to get the methods, means and forms of professional work; to expand the abilities and interests connected with a given profession; and to get used to the professional improvement (*lifelong learning*) [7, p. 197]

The government policy aims in terms of vocational education are parallel with the changes in the education system after 1989. The main aims are: to improve the level of the society training through spreading the education; to ensure the equal access to education; and to enhance the quality of education [3, p. 23].

The education system in Poland is regulated by *The Education System Act of September 7, 1991 (Journal of Laws Dz. U. No. 256 of 2004, Item 2572 with subsequent amendments)* and the rules of implementing the new education system are regulated by the *Implementation of the Educational System Reform Act of January 8, 1999 (Journal of Laws Dz. U. No. 12 of 1999, Item 96 with subsequent amendments)*.

According to the *The Act of August 19, 2011 on the Change of the Education System Act and Some Other Acts (Journal of Laws Dz. U. No. 205 of 2011, Item 1206)*, since September 1, 2012, the vocational education in Poland takes place in such types of schools:

- a) three-year basic vocational school, which enables its graduates to obtain the diploma that certifies their professional qualifications after passing the exams confirming the qualifications in a given profession, as well

- as further education, starting from the second grade of a secondary school for adults;
- b) four-year technical school, which enables its graduates to obtain the diploma that certifies their professional qualifications after passing the exams, as well as to get the secondary school maturity certificate after passing the matura exam;
 - c) postsecondary school for people with secondary education, with education period not longer than 2.5 years, which enables its graduates to obtain the diploma that certifies their professional qualifications after passing the exams confirming the qualifications in a given profession;
 - d) three-year special school that prepares for professional work for pupils with moderate or severe mental disability or for students with multiple disabilities, which enables its graduates to obtain the preparation for professional work certificate.

The Ordinance of the Minister of Education of December 23, 2011 on classification of vocational education occupations (Journal of Laws Dz. U. Of January 3, 2012, Item 7) implemented new classification of professions. The new classification of vocational education occupations determines education in the range of 200 professions and 252 qualifications separated within these professions. The professions were classified to eight fields: administration and service; buildings; electricity and electronics; mechanics, mining and metallurgy; agriculture, forestry and environmental protection; tourism and food service; medicine and society; art.

The new classification determines also the type of school that may conduct training in a given profession. The qualifications were also determined and separated. Moreover, the new classification defines whether education within a given qualification may be conducted by extramural forms of training, realised as qualifying professional courses.

Table. The state of vocational education in school year 2012/13

Type of school	Number of schools	Number of students
Special schools	461	10 723
Basic vocational schools	1 872	201 119
Professional	3 243	591 347
Postsecondary schools	2 735	334 331

Source: *Based on figures presented by the Polish Central Statistical Office (GUS)*

In school year 2012/13 there were 8 311 vocational schools (among them 461 special schools preparing for professional work, 1 872 basic vocational schools, 3 243 professional schools and 2 735 postsecondary schools). The total number of students was 1 093 132, of which 10 723 students in special schools preparing for professional work, 197 299 students in basic vocational schools (among them 3 935 adults), 550 779 students in professional schools (among them 41 320 adults), 334 331 students in postsecondary schools.

The most popular groups of profession chosen by men were professions connected with engineering and technology, computer science, architecture and building, production and processing, transport. Women chose first of all professions connected with personal services; medicine; economy and administration [8].

In 2013, there were 137 public and 307 non-public academic institutions. Among public academic institutions there were: 19 universities, 18 technical universities, 6 natural science universities, 5 economic universities, 6 pedagogical universities, 9 medical universities, 2 sea universities, 6 Academies of Physical Education, 19 artistic universities, 4 theological universities, 36 State Higher Schools of Vocational Education, 5 Ministry of National Defence Schools, 2 Ministry of Interior Schools [10, p.10].

For the last 15 years, the State Higher Schools of Vocational Education have been an opportunity for young people to gain higher education and job. There are already 36 such schools. They are operating in places where free studying not far from home is one of the conditions for social advancement. They answer for the regions' needs, assure educated workers for small and medium-sized enterprises. The State Higher Schools of Vocational Education were established on the basis of the *Act of July 26, 1997 on higher schools of vocational education* (Journal of Laws Dz. U. of 1997, Item 96, Par. 590) [6, p.71-92].

In October 1998, there started already nine schools. Not only did they "come to the youth", but also answered the local market's needs, that is to create practical education profiles. Tarnów was the first town in Poland where the State Higher Schools of Vocational Education was created. Other schools were established, for example, in Legnica, Elbląg, Nowy Sącz, Jelenia Góra, Gorzów Wielkopolski, Sulechów, Jarosław. The establishment of the next higher schools of vocational educations, already after the administration reform in

Poland in January 1999, was to some extent a form of compensation for losing the province status.

According to *Higher Education Act of July 27, 2005* (Journal of Laws Dz. U. No. 164 of 2005, Item 1365), a higher school of vocational education is a school that conducts undergraduate and graduate studies or uniform Master's studies and has no authority to confer the title of Doctor. In Poland such schools are represented by the Conference of Rectors of Polish Higher Schools of Vocational Education [2].

A school that was created to answer the local market demands was, among others, the State Higher School of Vocational Education in Chełm. It was established by *Regulation of the Council of Ministers of July 24, 2001 regarding establishment of the State Higher School of Vocational Education*. The school began its activity on January 1, 2001. On August 6, 2001, the Minister of National Education Prof. Edmund Wittbrodt, PhD, Eng. was appointed its first Rector – Prof. Józef Zajac, PhD, while Marian Różański, MA, became the Chancellor.

Nowadays, in the State Higher School of Vocational Education in Chełm there are mainly students connected with Chełm, from the Lubelskie Province. The school educates its students in five institutes: the Institute of Technical Sciences and Aviation, the Institute of Mathematics and Computer Science, the Institute of Humanities, the Institute of Modern Philology and the youngest one – the Institute of Agricultural Sciences. The students have an opportunity to choose one of the nine fields, of which the most popular are: *Mechanics and Machinery Design* and *International Relations*. In the next academic year 2014/15 the school plans to start educating in the field of *Nursing*. It is a course that was strived for both by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

International cooperation is one of the key objectives of the Higher School of Vocational Education in Chełm. The school cooperates with Eastern and Western European universities. We also want to maintain our relations, among others, with universities in Mexico and Israel.

The school cooperates with the Tennessee University, preparing conditions that assure awarding of dual degrees; with the authorities of the National Technical University of Ukraine in Kyiv and

Hochschule Karlsruhe Technik und Wirtschaft oraz Fachhochschule Regensburg.

The main SHSVE (PWSZ) objectives are connected with entering the European Didactical Area. The authorities take serious steps to build the strong position of the school in region. They are: synchronising the curricula paying special attention to practical knowledge, preparing attractive offer of student apprenticeship, expanding the offer of the foreign languages courses, widening the scientific staff exchange, intensifying the students exchange as part of the international programmes, strengthening the cooperation of students' organisations and scientific circles, organising the promotion of graduates and helping them to find jobs, assuring them conditions for permanent education, improving the rules of distribution and appraising the financial resources for didactics and research.

The International Cooperation Department and the Academic Career Centre "Žak" are units devoted to strengthen the international cooperation. They are managing such programmes as:

- a) Erasmus Studies (one or two semesters of studies abroad),
- b) Erasmus Apprenticeship (student apprenticeship abroad),
- c) Erasmus STA (visiting foreign partnership universities in order to conduct classes there),
- d) Erasmus STT (visiting foreign institutions in order to conduct training courses).

Since academic year 2007/08 the school has been taking part in the Erasmus programme, which enables us to realise the student exchange programme with the partnership universities from the EU, EEA and Turkey, which is an EU candidate country. The higher school works on continuous widening the exchange offer for students, so that every interested student that has very good academic achievements and knows a foreign language very well, has an opportunity to realise part of his studies in one of the partnership universities. There is an opportunity to visit such countries as: Slovakia, Finland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Germany, Portugal, Turkey and Italy.

The Erasmus Apprenticeship programme makes it possible to be an apprentice in a foreign enterprise, educational and research institution, non-profit organisation and other institution (state administration units, museums, libraries, hospitals etc.). The

apprenticeship takes place in the EU, EEA and the EU candidate countries [9, p. 7].

Foreign students are offered support in terms of completing the administrative formalities connected with the residence, finding accommodation and getting to know the region.

Slovakia and Turkey are number one destinations among students of SHSVE (PWSZ) in Chełm who take part in the exchange programme, while students who go abroad for apprenticeship most often choose Italy.

The vocational education is closely connected with the local and the global labour market [1]. According to S. M. Kwiatkowski, the integration between the general and vocational educations encourage shaping attitudes which constitute the professional qualifications that encompass a broad range of disciplines, which may be a great advantage on the European labour market [5, p. 7].

The demanding labour market puts pressure on the vocational schools to enhance the quality of education, so that their alumni would have relevant professional qualification and would meet the employers' needs. Undoubtedly, an opportunity to benefit from the Erasmus exchange program is one of the factors that widens the educational offer.

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К. Бяловас, П. Мазур

Профессиональное образование – на примере опыта PWSZ (Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Zawodowa) в Хелме

State Higher Vocational College of Chelm
(54 ул. Почтовая, Хелм, Польша)

В статье рассмотрена правовая основа и базовые характеристики профессионального образования в Польше – профессиональных ПТУ, средних специальных учебных заведений, техникумов и высших учебных заведений. Детально проанализирован опыт профессионального самоопределения в Государственной школе высшего образования города Хелм, а также доступные факультеты, стажировка для студентов и сотрудничество с зарубежными партнерами, в частности программа Эразмус.

Ключевые слова: образование, профессиональное образование, профессиональное самоопределение, опыт, высшая профессиональная школа.

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Професійна освіта – на прикладі досвіду PWSZ (Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Zawodowa) у Хелмі

State Higher Vocational College of Chelm
(54 вул. Поштова, Хелм, Польща)

У статті розглянуті правова основа і базові характеристики професійної освіти у Польщі – професійних ПТУ, середніх спеціальних навчальних закладів, технікумів і вищих навчальних закладів. Детально проаналізовано досвід професійного самовизначення у Державній школі вищої освіти міста Хелм, а також наявні факультети, стажування для студентів та співпрацю із зарубіжними партнерами, зокрема програму Еразмус.

Ключові слова: освіта, професійна освіта, професійне самовизначення, досвід, вища професійна школа.