

## Short country survey on employability - POLAND

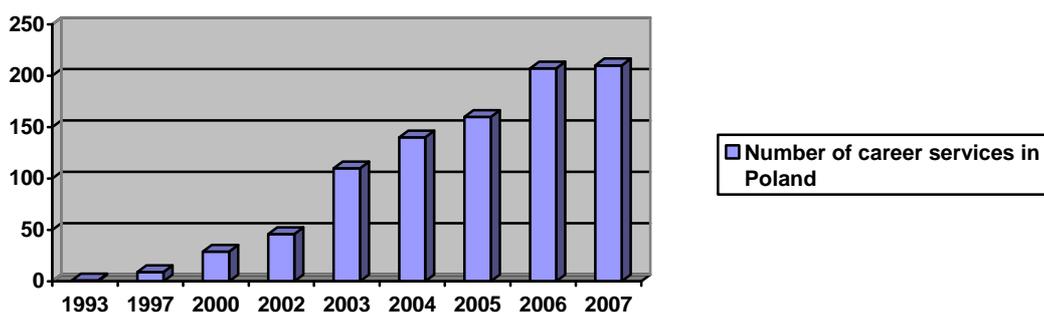
- 1) What are the main challenges for your country in terms of employability? (eg. Is graduate unemployment a problem? Are there restrictions on access to certain jobs? Is there a careers and guidance service?) What would help you most as an output from this working group?

At the moment in general there is no problem of employability of HE graduates, which results from the economy development and openness of the European Labor Market. Some problems in specific, narrow fields of studies may occur.

The first cycle degrees are not well recognized by employers and the society yet. Due to the previous educational system the first cycle degree is still not seen as a “full university degree” by some groups and employers. There are no formal restrictions on access to jobs by 1st cycle degree holders, except for requirements for certain positions and in the academic institutions where master degree is the requirement .

The main challenge for the HE system is to implement and strengthen the development of generic competences among graduates. In some disciplines of studies it is still not seen as the basic competence for employment. Other challenges include the development of flexibility of study programs and greater diversity of individual competences of graduates completing the same degree program and broadening the field of 1st cycle degrees.

The system for university students counselling is very well developed in Poland. Over 200 career services operate here, majority of which is grouped in an informal structure called Polish Network of Career Services. Career services operate as university units (with average staff of 2-3 full time advisors mainly of psychological background).



There are five main areas of operation of Career Services: (1) job counseling and advising on preparing job application documents, (2) training (soft skills, self-presentation skills), (3) information (job and internship offers for graduates and information on graduate supply for employers – mainly through websites), (4) contacts with employers, organization of job fairs and presentation of companies at universities and in growing number of cases (5) surveys on first destination of graduates (although these are scattered initiatives not performed in unified way and occasionally). Poland is represented in FEDORA organisation grouping European education and careers counsellors, and through many programmes co-operate with European partners.

In the area of guidance there are also other actors such as: employers through direct activities towards students with strong counselling component, activities of student organisations (AIESEC, BEST) and commercial headhunting companies as well as public labour services.

2) Is there a dialogue in your country between higher education institutions and employers? If so, at what level does this take place – national, regional, institutional etc? What sort of issues does it cover?

A short mailing survey was performed in April 2008 directed to 150 career services in Poland with questions about their knowledge as to co-operation with the employers at their universities in the area of curricula devising. Answers were obtained from 56 HEIs, out of which:

In 20 cases the answer was yes (mainly Technical Universities and private HE Institutions): there are organized consultations as to curricula adequacy to requirements of the job market. Successful projects: (AMG Class Łódź University of Technology, SABRE and MOTOROLA courses at University of Science and Technology (AGH) in Cracow - special course of mathematics devised in consultations with SABRE holding, postgraduate course in the area of IT with MOTOROLA).

7 HEIs declared that no consultations are held at present but new projects are underway for regular monitoring of job market requirements within the framework of EU funds sponsored projects.

In 29 cases no such activities were reported (at majority of universities).

Employers are also involved in regular internship programmes for regular consultation as to post diploma courses contents adopted to the needs of local economic community.

However there is lack of regular, systematic research or monitoring on graduates position on the job market and on employers requirements and expectations as well as lack of reliable analyses and forecasts on the job market for graduates by qualifications.

Temporary questioning of employers, quests during alumni associates meetings as well as meetings of faculty authorities with representatives of employers (e.g. panel discussions at job fairs) – are more and more popular especially with respect to engineering fields of studies.

3) Can you provide two examples of good practice in your country in relation to any of the themes to be covered by the report?<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Suggested themes to be covered in the report are:

- awareness-raising amongst employers of the value of a bachelors qualification and associated learning outcomes;
- involving employers in devising curricula;
- the provision of careers and guidance services;
- employment and career structures within the public service that are fully compatible with the new degree system;
- self-employability;
- curriculum innovation based on learning outcomes;
- the recognition of degrees in the labour market across Europe;
- the role of higher education in lifelong learning and continuing professional development.

The good practice in Poland is the development of Career Services and the operation of their informal network. Their activities, mainly the events they organize under the name of Job Fairs (or other) provide a very good opportunity for the dialog between three parties – employers, academics and students. Round table sessions are organized for this purpose.

The training in some generic competences provided to students/graduates by Career Services fills in the gap in the curricula designed some years ago.

April 2008.