

## **ANED country report on equality of educational and training opportunities for young disabled people**

**Country: Poland**

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The [Academic Network of European Disability experts](#) (ANED) was established by the European Commission in 2008 to provide scientific support and advice for its disability policy Unit. In particular, the activities of the Network will support the future development of the EU Disability Action Plan and practical implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled People.

This country report has been prepared as input for the Thematic report on the implementation of EU Equality of educational and training opportunities in European countries with reference to equality for young disabled people.

The purpose of the report ([Terms of Reference](#)) is to review national implementation on equality of educational and training opportunities for young people, and in particular the National Strategic Reports of member states from a disability equality perspective in education and training, and provide the Commission with useful evidence in supporting disability policy mainstreaming.

## Section 1: Executive summary and conclusions

Poland already signed but has not yet ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Although the preliminary review of the national legislation showed that it already reflects the majority of the Convention provisions, changes will be necessary to achieve full consistency of national law with the Convention, including the article 24. Although the Polish education system is steadily going in the direction of less segregated and more inclusive education, access to inclusive education, particularly at the secondary level and for students with more severe disabilities, is still restricted. There is a very visible tendency to enroll primary schools pupils in more mainstream environment; this trend, however, is not so obvious in case of lower secondary schools and access to mainstream settings is much more limited at the upper secondary level. The more the disability, the more likely the student is to be enrolled in segregated settings. There are some types of disabilities where the overwhelming majority of pupils attend special schools. Definitely, Poland is far from achieving the Convention provisions that persons with disabilities are able to access general tertiary education, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning without discrimination and on equal basis with others. Available statistics show that access to these types of education and training for people with disabilities is very limited. At the same time it is worth stressing that, although still small, the number of students with disabilities in higher education systematically increases every year. On the other hand, the availability of data on continuing education is very limited. There is a clear need for more consistent, complete and continuous statistics on the education of people with disabilities particularly in higher education and continuing education.

Current legislation imposes clear obligations on schools to ensure appropriate conditions, special equipment and teaching aid for students with disabilities as well as individualized support. This applies, however, only to educational units up to the upper secondary stage of education and the level of support varies from school to school. As institutions of higher education are autonomous, legislation does not precisely describe the content and scope of the support available to disabled students or university applicants. Every college or university may implement their own disability policy, employ a disability plenipotentiary and establish an office for persons with disabilities but this is always an autonomous decision of the institution. Therefore, the scope and quality of the support varies from one institution to another. On the other hand, there is clear legislation on financial support for college and university students with disabilities and the overwhelming majority use the financial services. As to continuing education, education and training providers are not particularly required to provide accessibility of environments, learning materials or individualized support for students or trainees with disabilities. Access to personal assistance services is extremely limited.

To sum up, since 1989 the education system in Poland has been transforming towards greater inclusion and recognition of the right to equal access to education and training at all levels for people with disabilities. Still, the system has many weaknesses, particularly at the post-compulsory levels of education.

## Section 2: Legal and policy context

The main legislative framework for the school education system is the Education System (1991) and Ministry of National Education is the main ministry responsible for it at the central level. Special education is an integral part of the education system in Poland, although a system of separate special schools remains. The educational system provides a variety of schooling options (also non-public) for students with disabilities, including mainstream schools (which can have special or integrated sections), integrated schools<sup>1</sup>, special schools, home-schooling and remedial centres (for pupils with intellectual disabilities in profound degree).

The Act on Education System (1991) provides that pupils with disabilities may attend any type of school according to their individual needs and possibilities, as well as the right to individual teaching, curricula and classes, and appropriate adjustment to the content of the curricula in order to correspond to individual abilities. Mainstream schools have the legal responsibility to enrol every child living in their districts. Even if in the evaluation for special education there is a recommendation for special schools, parents still have the right to send their child to the district mainstream school. In practice, however, although the Polish education system is steadily going into the direction of less segregated and more inclusive education, some parents may be under pressure from the school to place the child in special school (OSI 2005). In practice, inclusive education in Poland is a developing concept and is often much misunderstood and equated with integrated education (Firkowska-Mankiewicz 2008). Inclusive education, particularly integrated education has been developing in Poland since 1989, mostly on the initiative of parents. In 1989–1990 there was only one integrated kindergarten in Poland but in the school year 2006–2007 nearly 25 thousand pupils with disabilities were studying in the integrated system in 362 kindergartens, 694 primary schools, 349 lower secondary schools and 85 secondary schools (Kummant 2007). It should be, however, added that some parents and parents' organizations want to maintain special schools and criticize more inclusive forms of education in their current shape in Poland (OSI 2005, Suchcicka 2006).

Education in Poland is compulsory for all children and young people from the age of 6 to 18, regardless of whether or not they have disabilities<sup>2</sup>. The duty starts with 1 year of preschool education, then continuous with 6 years of primary school, and lasts until completion of 3 years of lower secondary school and/or up to the age of 18 years. The 1 year of preschool education ('zero year') is obligatory for all six-year-old children. The beginning of compulsory education in primary school starts during the calendar year in which the child reaches the age of 7. The compulsory education continues until completion of lower secondary school (pupils are usually 16 years of age), but in no case beyond the age of 18 years.

<sup>1</sup> Integrated education refers to teaching a few (3-5) pupils with disabilities together with non-disabled peers in classes of 15-20 children where additional educators provide support to the student with disabilities.

<sup>2</sup> Since 1 January 1996, it is no longer possible to exempt a child with *profound* intellectual disabilities from compulsory education. Until this time those children were deprived of all education (OSI 2005).

Afterwards, students may continue their education in non-compulsory upper secondary schools or outside school education. The following schools (mainstream or special) offer the *Matura* examination necessary for admission to higher education:

- 3-year general secondary schools,
- 3-year specialised secondary schools secondary level,
- 4-year technical secondary school,

There are also 2 to 3-year basic vocational schools (mainstream or special) which do not offer the *Matura* examination. Their graduates may, however, continue education in secondary supplementary schools (general or technical) offering 2 to 3-year of full- or part-time education in preparation for the *Matura* examination. Moreover, for the last several years special job-training schools for young people with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities have been developed to enhanced opportunities for education of this group of people.

Gymnasium' graduates may also continue their education in out-of-school institutions which offer both education and vocational training, i.e. the alternance training (alternating work and training), which is considered to be at the same level as the basic vocational school. There are two kinds of public out-of-school institutions: Continuing Education Centres (CKU), Practical Training Centres (CKP) but the alternative training is also available in the scheme of so called Voluntary Labour Corps (OHP). The vocational training is usually based on the contract concluded between training institutions and employers.

Pupils with disabilities who have been evaluated as needing special education have the right to attend each stage of education for a longer period: primary school until the age of 18, lower secondary school until the age of 21 and secondary school until the age of 24. They can also attend pre-school beyond the age of six and their compulsory primary school education can be postponed until the end of the school year when they reach the age of ten (*Regulation on conditions...*, 2005). The only exception are children and young people with *profound* intellectual disabilities who fulfil their compulsory pre-schooling and schooling obligation by participating in so called rehabilitation-educational classes. They have the right to attend such classes between the ages of three and 25. These classes can be provided both within the education system (in public kindergartens and schools), in special educational care centres, non-governmental remedial centres, social care homes, community self-help homes and medical care centres; or at the child's family home (*Regulation on rehabilitation-educational classes*, 1997) .

In 2009, a new reform of the system of education began. When the new changes come into effect the age of starting the 1 year of preschool education will be lowered to 5 (starting in 2011) and of the compulsory education in primary school to 6 (starting in 2012). Pupils with disabilities can still attend pre-school beyond the age of six but, since the school year 2012-2013, their compulsory primary school education can be postponed only until the end of the school year when they reach the age of eight.

As part of the changes, curricula reform has been introduced aimed at adapting the content of teaching to the present population of pupils, to adjust the curricula to the abilities of younger pupils as a result of lowering the school starting age and to create a coherent curriculum for the 6-7 year period of lower secondary and upper secondary schools instead of dividing it into two, repetitive three-year cycles. The curricula reform will be implemented gradually, beginning with the school year 2008-2009, and it will reach all the grades throughout the whole education system by the year 2017 (Eurydice 2009).

As education of students with disabilities is an integral part of the general education system, these changes will apply to students with disabilities as well. Additionally, some changes address pupils with disabilities directly. A team of experts on special educational needs (SEN) was established in 2008 to draw up changes in special education and psychological-educational support (Council of Ministries, 2009). Drafts of two regulations of great importance for situation of disabled pupils in schools<sup>3</sup> have been prepared<sup>4</sup>. As a result of lowering the general school starting age, changes will occur in the provisions allowing pupils with disabilities to attend each stage of education for a longer period (primary school until the age of 15, lower secondary school until the age of 19 and secondary school until the age of 23). Other important changes are as follow:

- Unlike the previous regulations, which used only a general term 'children and young persons with disabilities', the draft regulation on condition in mainstream schools specifies more precisely groups of children with disabilities for whom integrated sections can be organized. The draft narrows them to the following types of disability: deaf, hard of hearing, blind, vision impaired, motor-skill impairment, intellectual disabilities, autism including Asperger Syndrome, and multiple disabilities. For incomprehensible reason, other types of disabilities, for instance children and young persons with mental health problems are not mentioned. This means that, if the changes are implemented, those children will not have the possibility to use provisions of the new law. Children and young persons with mental health problems as well as chronically ill pupils were also removed from the list of types of disabilities for which special schools are organized.
- Current legislation imposes an obligation on mainstream schools to develop individual plans based on comprehensive professional multidisciplinary team evaluation. This is now clearly stated in the draft regulation.
- According to the draft, mainstream schools will have the possibility to hire specialists in the field of special education as well as teachers' assistants. After completing upper secondary schools students can continue their education at the level of tertiary education. They must hold, however, the Matura certificate.

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<sup>3</sup> Regulation on conditions in mainstream schools (2005) and Regulation on conditions in special schools (2005).

<sup>4</sup> Projects from 28 of April 2010; available at: [www.men.gov.pl](http://www.men.gov.pl).

The main legislative framework for the higher education system is the Law on Higher Education (2005) and the responsible body is the Minister of Science and Higher Education. Higher education is free of charge in public sector institutions but in full-time day courses only and a tuition fee is charged for part-time degree programmes. In fact, the majority of state higher education institutions organise fee-paying studies and the proportion of students for which fees are charged increases every year. The Minister of Science and Higher Education allocates funds to higher education establishments, taking into account the following criteria: number of enrolled students, number of students eligible for accommodation in student hostels and the number of hostels. These funds are distributed according to internal rules (Eurydice 2009).

Reform of the higher education system intended to improve the quality of teaching and research and to focus on innovation has also been planned. It aims, among other things, at improving access to higher education institutions for students with disabilities. The principles of this reform currently undergo wide public consultation (Eurydice 2009).

There are several institutions in Poland that deal with adult and continuing education. Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Science and Higher Education, Ministry of Social Policy and Labour are the main ministries responsible for creating adult and continuing learning at the central level. There are also several legal regulations which define the main tasks of continuing education.

According to the Act on Education System (1991), continuing education can be provided on daily, extra-mural, and distance-learning bases and may be organized in schools for adults, continuing education centres (CKU), practical training centres (CKP) and other institutions for in-service training. The Law on Higher Education (2005) includes provisions regarding post-graduates studies and training courses offered to adults by higher education institutions. The Act on Promotion of Employment (2004) includes legal regulations concerning institutions in the labour market including public employment services and training institutions. Public employment services coordinate activities in the area of continuing education and training of the unemployed and job-seekers. Training institutions are both public and non-public units offering out-of-school education and eligible to offer training to the unemployed; these must hold an accreditation from the regional educational superintendents and be registered in the Register of Training Institutions. Additionally, some provisions concerning training tailored for people with disabilities are included in the Act on Rehabilitation (1997); (see more below in Section 4).

Although, the Constitution of the Republic of Poland (1997) states that “public authorities shall ensure universal and equal access to education for citizens”, the right of people with disabilities to equal access to continuing education is not expressed clearly.

People with disabilities are mentioned in some provisions (see Section No. 4, below) but the statistical data shows (see Section No. 3, below) that their access to continuing education is far from being equal. Current legislation imposes clear obligation on schools to ensure appropriate conditions, special equipment and teaching aid for people with disabilities as well as individualized support (Act on Education System 1991, Regulation on conditions in special schools, 2005, Regulation on conditions in mainstream schools 2005) but this apply only to educational units up to upper secondary level. As to other laws (the Act on Promotion of Employment 2004, the Law on Higher Education 2005), education and training providers are not required to provide accessibility of environments, learning materials or individualized support for students or trainees with disabilities.

Poland already signed but has not yet ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and, according to the available governmental information, intends to conclude ratification. The preliminary review of the national legislation, carried out before the decision to sign the Convention in March 2007, showed that it already reflects the majority of the Convention provisions (MFA 2010). Nevertheless, changes will be necessary to achieve full consistency of national law with the Convention, including Article 24. These should concern implementation of new organizational and financial solutions in such areas of education of people with disabilities as: financial subsidies, employment of disabled teachers, elimination of architectural barriers, specialized and public transport adapted to the needs of people with disabilities attending to or employed at schools (MLSP 2010).

Certainly, Poland is far from achieving the Convention provisions contained in Article 24 that persons with disabilities are able to access general tertiary education, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning without discrimination and on equal basis with others. Available statistics, as presented in the part 3 of this report, show that access to these types of education and training for people with disabilities is very limited. Although the Polish education system is steadily moving in the direction of less segregated and more inclusive education, access to inclusive education, particularly at the secondary level and for students with more severe disabilities is still restricted. The level of reasonable accommodation and available support, as shown in the part 4 of this report, also diverges from the Convention provisions contained in the Article 24. It is difficult to assess the impact of the Convention in the reform of education which is currently being implemented in Poland. On one hand, in the justification of changes concerning students with disabilities there is no word about the Convention.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, new regulation drafts concerning education of students with disabilities are presented to disability NGOs which seem very determined to use the Convention in disability advocacy activities.

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<sup>5</sup> For instance see the justification to the Regulation on conditions in mainstream schools and the justification to the Regulation on conditions in special schools available at <http://www.prawo.vulcan.edu.pl/?qindrodzaj=51&qdatprz=27-07-2010>.

### Section 3: Evidence of outcomes and progress towards inclusion

According to CSO statistics (CSO 2009a), the level of scholarization (net) in Poland is high and in the school year 2008-2009 amounted to 96.6% at the primary school level (age group 7-12), 94.8% at the lower secondary school level (age 13-15) and 89.6% in the age group 16-18. The data on scholarisation levels in the older groups is unknown as well the level of scholarization of children and young people with disabilities. Generally speaking, people with disabilities have substantially lower levels of education than others. In 2009, as many as 66.6% of people with disabilities aged 15 and over had education below secondary level as compared to 41.7% for people without disabilities and only 5.4% had university education versus 19.1% for people without disabilities (CSO, Labour Force Survey in Poland).

Since 1995 we can observe a constant decrease in the numbers of pupils in Poland due to lower birth rates. This concerns also students with disabilities and is one of the reasons lying behind the lowering number of primary special school pupils (not the only one, as explained below). In the school year 2006-2007 their number decreased by 6.6% and, at the same time, there was a rise in special education costs. According to the calculation of the Supreme Chamber of Control (2009), the average monthly cost of education of one pupil enrolled in special school amounted PLN1279 in 2006, and PLN1392 in 2007 (a 8.8% increase). These exceeded more than three times the costs incurred for education per student in the general system.

In the school year 2008–2009 there were 14,000 primary schools in Poland, including 776 (5.5%) special primary schools; and 7,300 lower secondary schools including 824 (11.2%) special lower secondary schools. In primary schools there were nearly 2.3 million students including 63,700 pupils with SEN (2.8% of the total number of students in primary schools). In lower secondary schools there were nearly 1.4 million students, including 56,200 students with SEN (4.1% of the total number of students in lower secondary school), (CSO 2009a). As shown in Table 1, the share of children with SEN attending special schools has been slowly but systematically decreasing for several years. In the school year 2008-2009, approximately 41% of children with SEN at the primary level attended special schools and 59% mainstream schools (respectively 2.5% special section, 18% integration section and 39% mainstream section). There is a very visible tendency to enroll primary schools pupils in more mainstream environments.



Table 1. Students with special educational needs in primary schools for children and youth in 2004-2009

School year	Total		Form of organization							
			special primary school		special section in primary school		integrated section in primary school		mainstream section in primary school	
	<i>in numbers</i>	<i>in %</i>	<i>in numbers</i>	<i>in %</i>	<i>in numbers</i>	<i>in %</i>	<i>in numbers</i>	<i>in %</i>	<i>in numbers</i>	<i>in %</i>
<i>Number of schools or sections</i>										
2004-2005	-	-	770	-	229	-	3004	-	11906	-
2005-2006	-	-	772	-	201	-	3275	-	12156	-
2006-2007	-	-	778	-	196	-	3424	-	11048	-
2007-2008	-	-	790	-	209	-	3306	-	17319	-
<b>2008-2009</b>	-	-	<b>776</b>	-	<b>165</b>	-	<b>3150</b>	-	<b>16129</b>	-
<i>Number of students</i>										
2004-2005	79512	100	35052	44.1	1653	2.1	12641	15.9	30166	37.9
2005-2006	76552	100	33209	43.4	1450	1.9	13578	17.7	28315	37.0
2006-2007	73028	100	31220	42.7	1290	1.8	14278	19.5	26240	36.0
2007-2008	68064	100	27284	40.1	2304	3.4	11084	16.3	27392	40.2
<b>2008-2009</b>	<b>63657</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>25883</b>	<b>40.7</b>	<b>1616</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>11362</b>	<b>17.8</b>	<b>24796</b>	<b>39.0</b>

Source: CSO 2009a

This trend, however, is not so obvious in case of lower secondary schools, as shown in Table 2. There, not only is the tendency of decreasing the share of students with SEN enrolled in special schools not visible but also the majority of pupils with SEN attend segregated settings. In the school year 2008-2009, approximately 56% of children with SEN at the lower secondary level attended special schools and 44% mainstream schools (respectively 3% special sections, 10% integrated sections and 31% mainstream section). There is a particular growth of students attending integrated sections (a 31% increase between the school year 2004-2005 and 2008-2009) and the sections themselves (a 50% increase between the school year 2004-2005 and 2008-2009).

Table 2. Students with special educational needs in lower secondary schools for children and youth only in 2004-2009

School year	Total		Form of organization							
			special lower secondary school		special section in lower secondary school		integrated section in lower secondary school		mainstream section in lower secondary school	
	<i>in numbers</i>	<i>in %</i>	<i>in numbers</i>	<i>in %</i>	<i>in numbers</i>	<i>in %</i>	<i>in numbers</i>	<i>in %</i>	<i>in numbers</i>	<i>in %</i>
<i>Number of schools or sections</i>										
2004-2005	-	-	809	-	202	-	1000	-	8114	-

2005-2006	-	-	806	-	180	-	1174	-	8759	-
2006-2007	-	-	820	-	174	-	1394	-	8123	-
2007-2008	-	-	816	-	143	-	1446	-	8427	-
<b>2008-2009</b>	-	-	<b>824</b>	-	<b>161</b>	-	<b>1503</b>	-	<b>8071</b>	-
<i>Number of students</i>										
2004-2005	64890	100	37140	57.2	1955	3.0	4434	6.8	21361	33.0
2005-2006	64075	100	35649	55.6	1813	2.8	5225	8.2	21388	33.4
2006-2007	61947	100	34602	55.8	1605	2.6	6170	10.0	19570	31.6
2007-2008	59297	100	33042	55.7	1613	2.7	5290	8.9	19352	32.6
<b>2008-2009</b>	<b>56178</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>31400</b>	<b>55.9</b>	<b>1669</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>5804</b>	<b>10.3</b>	<b>17305</b>	<b>30.8</b>

Source: CSO 2009.

Looking at the statistics presented above, it is necessary to raise a few more issues. First of all, the CSO may overestimate the number of pupils with disabilities enrolled in mainstream education as these statistics include also children who were officially registered at a mainstream school, but fulfilled their educational obligation outside the school in the form of individual teaching at home or in rehabilitation-educational classes (Wapiennik 2008). Secondly, these numbers concern students with SEN and include not only pupils with disabilities but also children and young people deemed to be socially maladjusted or at risk of social maladjustment. The details presented below in Table 3, show that students with such disabilities, like moderate and severe intellectual disabilities, multiple disabilities, deaf students and blind students usually attend special schools, while the majority of students with motor-skill impairment, hard of hearing or vision impaired attend mainstream settings (CSO 2009a). Pupils with profound intellectual disabilities are not included in the Table 3 at all as they attend rehabilitation-educational classes. Generally speaking, the more severe the disability is, the more likely the child is to be enrolled in a segregated environment.

Table 3. Pupils of primary schools and lower secondary school by type of disability in the school year 2008-2009.

Pupils by type of disability	Primary schools						Lower secondary schools					
	Total		of which				Total		of which			
			in mainstream school		in special school				in mainstream school		in special school	
in numbers	in %	in numbers	in %	in numbers	in %	in numbers	in %	in numbers	in %	in numbers	in %	
<b>Total</b>	<b>66219</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>39877</b>	<b>60.2</b>	<b>26342</b>	<b>39.8</b>	<b>58287</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>26848</b>	<b>46.1</b>	<b>31439</b>	<b>53.9</b>
deaf	739	100	193	26.1	546	73.9	591	100	108	18.3	483	81.7
hard of hearing	3154	100	2847	90.3	307	9.7	2004	100	1687	84.2	317	15.8
blind	176	100	59	33.5	117	66.5	108	100	28	26.0	80	74.0
vision	2211	100	1996	90.3	215	9.7	1485	100	1234	83.1	251	16.9

impaired with motor-skill impairment	3625	100	3568	98.4	57	1.6	2041	100	1941	95.1	100	4.9
with intellectual disabilities in mild degree	22419	100	12866	57.4	9553	42.6	23599	100	10661	45.2	12938	54.8
with intellectual disabilities in moderate or severe degree	11504	100	3477	30.2	8027	69.8	10319	100	2327	22.6	7992	77.4
with autism	1516	100	1310	86.4	206	13.6	323	100	282	87.3	41	12.7
with multiple disabilities	9251	100	3979	43.0	5272	57.0	5492	100	2079	37.9	3413	62.1
socially maladjusted and threatened with social maladjustment*	7843	100	6140	78.3	1703	21.7	9965	100	4341	43.6	5624	56.4
with psychic disorders	798	100	710	89.0	88	11.0	503	100	441	87.7	62	12.3
chronically ill	2983	100	2732	91.6	251	8.4	1857	100	1719	92.6	138	7.4

\*Together with threatened with addiction and with behavioral disorders.

Source: CSO 2009a.

Access to mainstream settings is much more limited at the upper secondary level. As shown in Table 4, in the school year 2008-2009, most of young people with disabilities at this level attended to special schools, approximately 77%, while only 23% attended to mainstream schools. Moreover, the above added comment about the overestimation of the number of students enrolled in mainstream settings applies at the upper secondary level as well. Some disabled students counted as mainstream schools' students were in fact enrolled in special classes within the school and some outside the school in the form of individual teaching at the student's home<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>6</sup>The precise data is unknown.

Table 4. Students with SEN in secondary schools in the schools year 2008-2009

Type of school	Total		of which			
			in mainstream schools		in special schools	
	in numbers	in %	in numbers	in %	in numbers	in %
<b>Total</b>	<b>36 352</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>8 326</b>	<b>22.9</b>	<b>28 026</b>	<b>77.1</b>
General secondary schools*	5 191	100	3 623	69.8	1 568	30.2
Vocational and specialized secondary schools	22 407	100	4 703	21.0	17 704	79.0
Special job-training schools	8 754	100	-	-	8 754	100

Source: CSO 2009a.

\*Including supplementary general secondary schools

Similarly, as at primary and lower secondary education level, the more severe disability is, the more likely the student is to be enrolled in segregated settings. As shown in Table 5, there are some types of disabilities where the overwhelming majority of pupils attend special schools: students with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities (99.6%), students with mild intellectual disabilities (89%), deaf students (88.3%), blind students (77.9%) and students with multiple disabilities (75.2%).

Table 5. Students with SEN by type of disability in secondary schools for youth in the school year 2008-2009

Pupils by type of disability	Total		of which			
			in mainstream schools		in special schools	
	in numbers	in %	in numbers	in %	in numbers	in %
<b>TOTAL</b>						
<b>Total</b>	<b>36 352</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>8326</b>	<b>22.9</b>	<b>28026</b>	<b>77.1</b>
deaf	1006	100	118	11.7	888	88.3
hard of hearing	1357	100	843	62.1	514	37.9
blind	136	100	30	22.1	106	77.9
vision impaired	1115	100	620	55.6	495	44.4
with motor-skill impaired	2130	100	1650	77.5	480	22.5
with intellectual disabilities in mild degree	15196	100	1679	11.0	13517	89.0

with intellectual disabilities in moderate or severe degree	9 321	100	37	0.4	9284	99.6
with autism	97	100	82	84.5	15	15.5
with multiple disabilities	1569	100	389	24.8	1180	75.2
socially maladjusted or threatened with social maladjustment*	2573	100	1260	49.0	1313	51.0
with psychic disorders	267	100	198	74.2	69	25.8
chronically ill	1585	100	1420	89.6	165	10.4
<b>GENERAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS</b>						
<b>Total</b>	<b>5191</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3623</b>	<b>69.8</b>	<b>1568</b>	<b>30.2</b>
deaf	191	100	68	35.6	123	64.4
hard of hearing	501	100	398	79.4	103	20.6
blind	65	100	24	36.9	41	63.1
vision impaired	505	100	368	72.9	137	27.1
with motor-skill impaired	1216	100	1036	85.2	180	14.8
with intellectual disabilities in mild degree	489	100	103	21.1	386	78.9
with intellectual disabilities in moderate or severe degree	-	-	-	-	-	-
with autism	73	100	70	95.9	3	4.1
with multiple disabilities	329	100	228	69.3	101	30.7
socially maladjusted or threatened with social maladjustment*	799	100	439	54.9	360	45.1
with psychic disorders	174	100	122	70.1	52	29.9
chronically ill	849	100	767	90.3	82	10.7
<b>VOCATIONAL AND SPECIALIZED SECONDARY SCHOOLS</b>						
<b>Total</b>	<b>22 407</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4 703</b>	<b>21.0</b>	<b>17 704</b>	<b>79.0</b>
deaf	815	100	50	6.1	765	93.9
hard of hearing	856	100	445	52.0	411	48.0
blind	71	100	6	8.5	65	91.5
vision impaired	610	100	252	41.3	358	58.7
with motor-skill impaired	914	100	614	67.2	300	32.8
with intellectual disabilities in mild degree	14 707	100	1576	10.7	13131	89.3

with intellectual disabilities in moderate or severe degree	567	100	37	6.5	530	93.5
with autism	24	100	12	50	12	50
with multiple disabilities	1240	100	161	13.0	1079	87.0
socially maladjusted and threatened with social maladjustment*	1774	100	821	46.3	953	53.7
with psychic disorders	93	100	76	81.2	17	18.3
chronically ill	736	100	653	88.7	83	11.3
<b>SPECIAL JOB-TRAINING SCHOOLS</b>						
<b>Total</b>	<b>8 754</b>	<b>100</b>	-	-	<b>8 754</b>	<b>100</b>
with intellectual disabilities in moderate or severe degree	8 754	100	-	-	8 754	100

\*Together with threatened with addiction and with behavioral disorders.

Source: CSO 2009a.

Moreover, integrated education at this level has a much shorter history than at compulsory level, and its shape is still under discussion. Access to integrated schools at the secondary level is very limited and in 2006-2007 only 4% of students with disabilities were enrolled in integrated education (Kummant 2007). One may draw a conclusion from looking at the statistics that many students start out in integrated or mainstream settings but end up in special schools as they get older (see also OSI 2005). It has to be also underlined, that some percentage of school-leavers with disabilities do not continue their education on secondary level after completing compulsory education (Wapiennik 2008).

There is also some information available on the educational outcomes of students with disabilities attending schools at the primary up to upper secondary level. Since 2002 a new external examination system has been introduced gradually in Poland, which provides a great deal of information regarding educational outcomes and qualifications of students. It is conducted at the end of a given stage of education and standardized for all students across the country. The examination results are checked by independent commissions and the Central Examination Board carry out the analysis of the outcomes and some of them concern students with disabilities<sup>7</sup>.

There are four parts of the external assessment system:

- Competence Test at the end of primary school, of general and compulsory<sup>8</sup> character but with no relevance for graduation or recruitment to lower secondary school (however, a pupil who decides not to take this Test will not graduate from primary school);

<sup>7</sup> Regulation on exams and tests 2007.

<sup>8</sup> Pupils with intellectual disabilities in moderate, severe or profound degree are not obliged to take Competence test.

- Gymnasium Exam in the third class of lower secondary school, also of general and compulsory character<sup>9</sup> and with no relevance for graduation but results are relevant for recruitment to upper secondary school;
- Matura Exam for graduates of general secondary schools, specialized secondary schools, technical secondary schools, supplementary secondary schools or post secondary schools; it is of not compulsory in character and has no relevance for graduation but results are relevant for recruitment to higher education institutions;
- Vocational Exam for graduates of vocational schools, technical schools and supplementary technical schools; it is not compulsory but is necessary to receive a diploma confirming vocational qualifications.

Students with disabilities have the right to take the exams in a form that is adapted to the degree and type of their disability. In case of the Competence Test and Gymnasium Exam this means also that students with mild intellectual disabilities, blind and vision impaired pupils and deaf and hard of hearing pupils write these exams on different examination sheets compared to other students. This gives the opportunity to compare their results with the others. According to the statistics of the Central Examination Board, there are no big differences between the Competence Test and Gymnasium Exam average result of pupils with disabilities and students without dysfunction<sup>10</sup>. However, looking at the average results from the Gymnasium Exam in 2009 presented in the table below, it should be stressed, that pupils with disabilities write the exam on examination sheets, the content of which is adapted to their disability and particularly in the case of students with intellectual disabilities, of lower difficulty level.

Table 6. Results of Gymnasium Exam in 2009.

Specification	Average results	
	of humanistic part	of mathematical-biological
	<i>in points</i>	<i>in points</i>
Pupils without dysfunction	31.61	25.96
Deaf and hard of hearing pupils	34.87	28.01
Blind and vision impaired pupils	28.28	21.25
Pupils with mild intellectual disabilities	31.00	29.6

Source: CEB 2009a.

Information about the educational outcomes of young disabled people compared with those without disability provides also for comparison of results of the Matura Exam and Vocational Exam in mainstream and special schools.

<sup>9</sup>Not compulsory for pupils with intellectual disabilities in moderate, severe or profound degree.

<sup>10</sup>Term used by the Central Examination Board.

As shown in Table 7, in 2008, more than 95% of graduates of mainstream secondary schools who sat the matriculation exam passed, whereas in special secondary schools it was only 67.4%. The same differences are visible in vocational and specialized secondary schools.

Table 7 Results of secondary school matriculation exam in secondary schools for youth in 2008.

Specification		Graduates			
		who sat secondary school matriculation exam		who passed secondary matriculation exam	
		<i>in numbers</i>	<i>in %</i>	<i>in number</i>	<i>in %</i>
General secondary schools for youth	mainstream	225913	100	215884	95.6
	special	285	100	192	67.4
Vocational and specialised secondary schools	mainstream	137649	100	107734	78.3
	special	291	100	197	67.7

Source: CSO 2009.

The differences are also present in the results of examination confirming vocational qualifications. Table 8, below, contains some information about the percentage of graduates who passed Vocational Exam in selected trades. The data shows that students with disabilities are less likely to receive a diploma confirming their vocational qualifications than other students when graduating basic vocational schools.

Table 8. Results of Vocational Exam in basic vocational schools in June 2008.

Specification	Graduates who passed Vocational Exam			
	total		with disabilities	
	<i>in number</i>	<i>as % of graduates who sat Vocational Exam</i>	<i>in number</i>	<i>as % of graduates who sat Vocational Exam</i>
Cook of small gastronomy	9956	89.6	703	69.5
Shop assistant	9108	94.0	84	63.4
Car mechanic	3660	82.9	10	37.0
Bricklayer	1218	91.5	15	55.6
Locksmith	1128	84.8	55	57.9
Mechanic/Fitter of machines and devices	682	71.8	8	42.1

Source: CEB 2009b.



The data on higher education and continuing education is much more limited than about those three educational levels already described. The publicly available CSO statistics lack in-depth information on students with disabilities in higher education institutions and the data concerns mostly the number of students. Although it is still small, the number of students with disabilities in higher education systematically increases every year. As shown in Table 9, the figure increased from 9,247 in 2004-2005 to 25,265 in 2008-2009 and their percentage share rose from 0.48 to 1.31%.

Table 9. Students with disabilities of higher education institutions in Poland 2004-2008

School year	Grand total		Of which students with disabilities	
	<i>numbers</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>numbers</i>	<i>%</i>
2008-2009	1 927 762	100	25265	1.31
2007-2008	1 937 404	100	22988	1.18
2006-2007	1 941 445	100	19923	1.02
2005-2006	1 953 832	100	14510	0.74
2004-2005	1 917 293	100	9247	0.48

Source: CSO 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009b.

It is even more difficult to obtain data on continuing education. Available statistics show, that in 2005 only 0.5% of people with disabilities aged 25-64 reported participation in lifelong education compared to 5.2% in the case of people without disabilities (Chłóń-Domińczak&Poznańska 2007). The data means that not only the share of people with disabilities participating in continuing education is very small but also that Poland has one of the lowest levels of participation in continuing education among EU countries in general. The research from 2005 (Bednarczyk, Woźniak 2005) gives more precise data on participation of people with disabilities in continuing education, but it is given together with data on people threatened with social maladjustment. Thus, people threatened with social maladjustment, with addiction or with behavioral disorders make up more than 50% of those with SEN in continuing education. People with motor-skill impairments are the second-largest group (12.7%), followed by chronically ill persons at 8.7%, hard of hearing (7.8%) and with intellectual disabilities in mild degree (7.1%). According to this research, blind persons, people with more severe degrees of intellectual disability and people with autism did not participate in continuing education at all. Further details are presented below, in Table 10.

Table 10. Students with SEN by type of disability in continuing education in 2005.

Students by type of SEN	<i>in%</i>
TOTAL	100
deaf	3.1
hard of hearing	7.8
blind	-
vision impaired	2.5
with impaired motor-skill	12.7
with intellectual disabilities in mild degree	7.1
with intellectual disabilities in moderate or severe degree	-
with autism	-
with multiple disabilities	-
threatened with social maladjustment (together with threatened with addiction and with behavioural disorders)	58.0
with psychic disorders	0.1
chronically ill	8.7

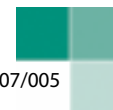
Source: H. Bednarczyk, I. Woźniak (eds.). (2005).

There is also some data available about participation in the labour offices' training programmes. The share of unemployed people with disabilities in training programmes offered by labour offices is also lower than the average of the whole group of the unemployed registered in labour offices. In 2008, 5,404 people with disabilities participated in such training, representing 8.0% of people with disabilities who were registered in the labour offices as unemployed, versus 11% in the whole group of the unemployed. Although there was a 1.6% increase, compared to 2007, the rise was smaller than in the whole group of the unemployed. The training is also less effective in the case of people with disabilities. The employment ratio within 3 months after the training in the group of the disabled unemployed amounted to 26.6%, versus 38.6% in the whole group of the unemployed (Strojna 2009).

When writing about participation of people with disabilities in continuing education, occupational therapy workshops should also be mentioned. Though these are units of social and vocational rehabilitation, one of their tasks is to develop basic and specialist occupational skills to enable participation in vocational training or to take up employment for people with disabilities (Act on Rehabilitation 1997). At the end of 2008, 645 such workshops were in operation with more than 20,000 participants with disabilities.

Nearly two thirds of the participants hold a disability certificate in significant degree and 37% in moderate degree. In 2008, people with intellectual disabilities made up 56% of all participants, followed by persons with mental health problems at 18.2% and persons with motor disabilities at 9.4%. Among the participants were also people with epilepsy (3.9%), with visual disabilities (2.8%), with speech and hearing disabilities (2.3%) and others (7.4%). Women were the minority and made up 44.9% of the participants (SFRDP 2009).

To sum up, it is very difficult to give precise data on how many young disabled people are 'Not in Education or Training', compared to the number of non-disabled young people as the data on people with disabilities from various sources is not consistent. Even the data from CSO is not sufficiently comprehensive, complete and coherent. Nonetheless, it can be presumed that the level of young disabled people's participation in education or training at the non-compulsory level is much lower than of young people without disabilities.



## Section 4: Types of support for students and trainees

Current legislation defining standards for teachers training, includes minimal knowledge of disability issues and does not constitute a qualification to teach students with special educational needs (*Regulation on teachers training standards, 2004; Regulation on teachers training standards, 2006*). In fact, teachers in mainstream schools receive no specific training in disability, unless they complete their knowledge in post-graduate studies or courses (OSI 2005). The binding legislation does not impose on mainstream schools an obligation to hire specialist for work with pupils with disabilities and support regular teachers unless they have integrated or special sections. This obligation is imposed only on special and integrated schools or mainstream schools with special or integrated sections. There is new legislation in draft, however, which will change this situation. Specialists working with disabled pupils, and among them supportive teachers employed in integrated schools and sections, must have at least an undergraduate university degree and a teaching certificate to work with children with disability (i.e. they must to have at least a first university degree with a Bachelor of Special Education or must complete post-graduate studies conducted by universities or courses in-service teacher training centres, giving them a qualification to work with pupils with disabilities).

Pupils with disabilities are entitled to use psychological-educational support on general basis. Additionally, according to *the Regulation on conditions in mainstream schools (2005)*, mainstream schools are obliged to ensure above all that students who are identified as having special educational needs will receive education according to the recommendations in their assessment, as well as:

- appropriate conditions, special equipment and teaching aids,
- adaptation of the curriculum to the individual needs of any student with disabilities who has obtained an evaluation for special education using appropriate methods,
- remedial or sociotherapeutic classes (in accordance with needs),
- integration with peers,
- and help for parents to improve their skills necessary to support the development of their child.

Current legislation does not impose an obligation on mainstream schools to develop individual plans based on comprehensive professional multidisciplinary team evaluation, which is clearly stated in the legislation concerning special and integrated schools and sections. Again, the project of a new regulation will probably change this situation.

Moreover, local authorities are obliged to provide free transportation to kindergartens, schools and other educational institutions (including non-public ones) for pupils with disabilities during their period of compulsory education until completing lower secondary schools (in the case of young people with mobility disabilities and pupils with severe or moderate intellectual disabilities also to upper secondary schools up to the age of 21; and, for young people with profound intellectual disabilities, up to the age of 25). This statutory requirement allows for reimbursement of the cost of the child's (and his or her parent's or guardian's) travel to school by public transport (Act on Education System, art. 14a, art.17).

As institutions of higher education are autonomous, legislation does not precisely describe the content and scope of the support available to disabled students or university applicants. Students with disabilities have the right apply for financial support on the same basis as other students, and additionally are entitled to a special disability scholarship. Apart from that, every college or university may implement their own disability policy, employ a disability plenipotentiary and establish an office for persons with disabilities but this is always an autonomous decision of the institution. Therefore, the scope and quality of the support varies from one institution to another.

In vocational training schemes, the support is mainly of financial character (see Section 4a below). An important role is also played by financial support available from the resources of the State Fund for Rehabilitation for Disabled Persons (hereafter State Fund) in the frame of targeted programmes, such as 'Student II' or 'Pythagoras 2007'.

## Section 4a: Financial support

As part of the family benefit system there is a supplement to family allowances available and vested on the parent (guardian) of a child with disabilities for covering increased spending on rehabilitation and education. It is granted for a child until 16, if the child holds disability certificate or between 16 and 24, if the person holds a disability certificate in moderate or significant degree. The supplement is payable at the monthly rate of PLN60 per child under 5 years of age and PLN80 per child aged 5-24. The eligibility depends on the family's actual financial situation and the monthly net per capita income cannot exceed PLN583 (*Act on Family Benefits 2003*). In 2008, nearly 203,000 such supplements were paid monthly (MLSP 2009). According to regulations on social security system cooperation, this service is also available to citizens of the UE and EEA, other foreigners having received the settlement permit, the long-term EC resident permit, the tolerated stay permit, or the refugee status awarded in the Republic of Poland and foreigners in accordance with bilateral treaties on social security (staying on the territory of Republic of Poland during the benefit period).

There are no other particular grants or allowances available for supporting the education of children and young people with disabilities at the primary-, lower secondary- or upper secondary level of education, as it is the obligation of schools to provide appropriate conditions, special equipment and teaching aids for pupils with disabilities and the school education is financed mainly by education subsidies. All educational tasks carried out by local governments are financed in the framework of general subsidy from the state budget (*Act on Education System 1991, Regulations on conditions... 2005*). In the year 2000 a uniform system for allocation of funds, with the use of an algorithmic formula based on the number of pupils, was adopted and since then the education subsidies are calculated according to the principle "funds follow the student". It is based, among other things, on the number of students who attend schools administered or established by local authorities. The total amount received by each local authority is based on a standard amount per student and adequately increased by the system of weightings taking into account particular conditions, i.e. particular groups of students (for example students with various special educational needs), specific groups of schools (for instance special or integrated schools), etc. It is the local autonomous government that is responsible for the design of a budget programme (i.e. a plan of expenditure) for all schools and educational institutions in its respective area (Eurydice 2010).

Students with disabilities studying in universities and colleges may apply for State-budget financial support on a general basis. In Poland there exists a system of scholarships and allowances such as: low-income scholarship, scholarship for achievements in learning and sport, social and food allowance, housing allowance, etc. Although it is the role of the Minister of Science and Higher Education to allocate funds to higher education establishments, these funds are distributed by the Rector and the student self-government boards according to internal rules. Public higher education institutions receive state subsidy toward the education and medical rehabilitation of students with disabilities (the Law on Higher Education 2005).

There is also refundable financial support granted to students under 25 years of age in the form of student credits and loans on the basis of the Act of 17 July 1998 on Student Loans and Credits.

Student credits and loans are financed from the financial resources of commercial banks, with the costs of interest partly covered from the State budget. Moreover, disabled students may request a special scholarship for persons with disabilities. As opposed to low-income scholarships, this is not means-tested and cannot be lower than 50% of the minimum basic remuneration of the assistant lecturer specified in the regulation on lecturers' remuneration<sup>11</sup> (i.e. not lower than PLN870). Since 2005, this scholarship is granted on the basis of disability certificate; students do not need to prove any longer that they have additional costs of disability. Thanks to this, the number of students with disabilities covered by financial support has been increasing. In 2008, 96% (24296) students with disabilities receive some kind of scholarship (and only 59% in 2004), of which 62% (15117) received only special disability scholarship and 38% (9179) - simultaneously special disability scholarship and other scholarships. The average special scholarship for persons with disabilities amounted PLN2307 per student (CSO 2005, 2009b).

According to the Law on Higher Education, foreigners may study in Poland on the same terms as the Polish citizens, and therefore apply for scholarships if they:

- hold a settlement permit,
- have a refugee status granted them in the Republic of Poland,
- enjoy temporary protection on the territory of the Republic of Poland,
- are migrating employees – citizens of EU/EEA countries employed in Poland (and members of their families, if residents on the territory of the Republic of Poland).

This right applies also to citizens of EU/EEA countries and members of their families, who have means sufficient to cover their living costs during the period of study. They are, however, not eligible for special scholarship for persons with disabilities.

Additionally, students with disabilities may use targeted programmes offered by the State Fund for Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons (hereafter State Fund for Rehabilitation) as some of them aim to increase the educational opportunities of people with disabilities. Among them the main role plays such programmes as<sup>12</sup>:

- Student II,
- Pythagoras 2007,
- Computer for Homer 2010,
- Student in the Country.

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<sup>11</sup>Regulation on remuneration conditions 2006.

<sup>12</sup>See more at [www.pfron.org.pl](http://www.pfron.org.pl).

'Student II' targets learners with a significant or moderate level of disability, who are university students, post-graduate students, PhD students, attendants of college for social workers, college for teachers or teachers of foreign languages, students of foreign higher education providers, students undergoing an internship abroad within European Union programmes, persons who have started their PhD proceedings but who are not the PhD students. The programme began in January 2008 but, in fact, it is a continuation of the 'Student' programme, which was available in the years 2002-2007. Within the programme, the following expenses can be covered by subsidies: tuition fees, board (when the place of study is different from the place of living), travelling, access to Internet (installation and a subscription fee), participation in rehabilitation activity workshops or receiving psychological therapy, procurement of goods and objects facilitating the study, excursions organized within school curriculum. Up to the end of 2008, already 13,200 students have been supported in the frame of this programme. In addition, 92 students with disabilities were granted special scholarships for outstanding achievements in the frame of 'Student II' (Council of Ministers 2009).

The 'Computer for Homer 2010' programme aims to provide financial aid for persons with sight impairments in procurement of modern standard and specialist computer and electronic equipment with all necessary appliances and programming which allow them to lead an independent life. The programme is addressed to the following beneficiaries: 1) persons of full age, learning or vocationally active, disabled as a result of sight impairment, who have a valid disability certificate in significant or moderate degree; 2) children and adolescents under 18 years old, disabled as a result of sight impairment, who have a valid disability certificate or disability certificate in significant or moderate degree. Within the programme, the subsidies can be obtained for: standard computer equipment, specialist computer equipment (also lecturer equipment) and specialist electronic Braille equipment as well as coverage of participation in computer training. There is a maximum support level for each equipment as well as an amount of own contribution.

The 'Pythagoras 2007' programme is addressed to post-secondary schools and higher education schools and aims to provide deaf students, students with hearing impairments, including deafblind students and deaf students with sight impairments and participants of exam preparation courses for higher education schools with aid of sign language translators or hearing aid equipment. The 'Pythagoras 2007' has been available since 2007 and replaced the 'Pythagoras' programme. The programme provides the financial aid dedicated to: cover services of sign language interpreter, procurement and assembling of aid equipment, procurement of specialist computer, electronic equipment and necessary programming, specialist electronic Braille equipment, lecturer equipment, copy and fax machines. According to the information available in the website of the State Fund for Rehabilitation<sup>13</sup>, 52 post-secondary schools and higher education schools have already used funds in the frame of the 'Pythagoras' and 'Pythagoras 2007' programmes.

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<sup>13</sup> [www.pfron.org.pl](http://www.pfron.org.pl)



'Student in the Country' is the programme aiming to even out educational opportunities of disabled students who live in rural or semi-rural areas and is addressed to pupils and students holding disability certificates and learning in primary-, lower secondary- and upper secondary schools. The programme's targets are: improvement of study conditions for students with disabilities, facilitating participation in activities aiming enhancement of physical and mental condition, stimulation of number of disabled persons obtaining upper secondary education. The subsidy may cover the following: procurement of devices allowing or facilitating the study, participation in activities aiming enhancement of physical and mental condition (including vacations and rehabilitation camps), costs of Internet access (excluding procurement of a computer), improvement courses within school curriculum and language courses (in case when courses are organized outside the place of living of a student, the travelling costs, board and lodging can be subsidized), excursion organized by school. This programme has been available since 1 September 2007 until 30 June 2010. Up to the end of 2008, nearly 43 thousand pupils living in 1724 districts have been already supported in the frame of this programme. Moreover, the State Fund has subsidized the purchase of 196 minibuses and 132 buses in 323 districts to transport pupils with disabilities to schools (Council of Ministers 2009).

Resources of the State Fund for Rehabilitation are also allocated for training of persons with disabilities in the frame of rehabilitation system and promotion of employment, i.e. for training organised by county labour offices or by employers.

The training organized by labour offices for people with disabilities registered as unemployed or as job-seekers aim to enhance their opportunities for employment, raise vocational qualifications or improve vocational activity (Act on Rehabilitation, art. 37-40). Costs of the training may cover: training institution fee, casualty insurance, travelling costs, board and lodging, service of sign language translators, lector (for a blind person) or an assistant for person with motor skill impairment (and disability certificate in significant degree), necessary medical or psychological examinations or rehabilitation services. The training may last up to 36 months and be reimbursed up to 100% of the total cost but no more than ten times average remuneration. In 2007, the State Fund spent, for this task, nearly 5.5 million PLN for 3,666 people with disabilities (of which 43% women); 523 (14%) of the trainees undertook employment (of which 38% women)<sup>14</sup>. The number of trainees decreased by 9% but spending raised by 4% in 2008 and the effectiveness was 16% (Council of Ministers 2009).

According to the Act on Rehabilitation (art. 41), training of people with disabilities can be organized also by employers. Expenses of such training may be partially reimbursed by the State Fund for Rehabilitation up to 80% of the total cost but no more than ten times average remuneration. This instrument is, however, rarely used: only 24 thousand PLN was spent for this task for just 5 persons in 2007<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>14</sup>Source: State Fund for Rehabilitation (<http://pfron.bip.org.pl/?tree=426>)

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

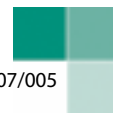
In addition, people with disabilities may participate in training organised in the frame of labour market instruments applied to people who are in a specific situation in the labour market. These can be used not only by people with disabilities registered in county labour offices as unemployed (and then financed by the Labour Fund) but also, due to the changes in Act on Rehabilitation (art. 11), by disabled people who are registered in a county labour office as job seekers while not employed (and then financed by the State Fund for Rehabilitation). There is no data, however, on how many of them were covered by this training as the statistics on training are given together with other labour market instruments.

## Section 4(b): Personal assistance, equipment and adaptations

Generally speaking, it is the obligation of the school to ensure that pupils with disabilities are educated in appropriate conditions and to provide them with special equipment, therefore the scope of the equipment and environmental adaptations vary from school to school. At the level of higher education, the situation is similar, as already described in the Section 4a. In case of continuing education, as already mentioned in the section 2, education and training providers are not required by legislation to provide special equipments and adaptations for students or trainees with disabilities. It will then vary from institution to institution. Some pupils or students may have access to support from non-governmental organisations but this is something of a 'postcode lottery'. Students and pupils with disabilities may, however, use the resources of the National Health Fund and County Family Assistance Centres for orthopaedic articles, assistive means, rehabilitation equipments as well as the State Fund for Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons for elimination of architectural, technical and communication barriers (see the ANED independent living country report 2009). Some of the State Fund targeted programmes also allocate resources specifically for equipment or adaptations for the purpose of education and training, for instance: 'Pythagoras 2007', 'Computer for Homer 2010', 'Student in the Country' (see above in Section 4a).

Personal assistance is another issue. Special schools (as well as mainstream schools with special sections) for students with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities, autism and multiple disabilities (in classes one to four in primary schools) employ teachers' assistants, responsible for the care of the students (for example helping children in the bathroom or while eating). When it is justified, a teacher's assistant can also be employed in classes five to six and in lower secondary schools as well as in integrated schools and mainstream schools with integrated sections (*Regulation on framework statutes of public kindergarten and public schools 2001*). There is no specific regulation on personal assistance at the other stages of education.

In fact, personal assistance is a rather new and developing concept in Poland and access to such services is very limited. There are some non-governmental organizations offering personal assistance for their members and a few autonomous governments also offer a kind of assistance services called "disabled person's assistant". However, these have rather general character and are not very focused on education (see more in the ANED independent living report 2009).



## Section 5: Evidence of good practice

A good example of a training institution which is at the same time an employment agency are the **Centres of Career Counselling and Support for Persons with Intellectual Disability** run by the Polish Association for People with Mental Handicap. The centres operate within the area of work service, personnel consultancy and career counselling in accordance with the Act on Promotion of Employment<sup>16</sup>. The activities of the Centres are based on the supported employment model and specialized training is one of the key elements. In its two first years, the project operated in the framework of the Sectoral Operation Programme Development of Human Resources (2004-2006) and since 2008, has been financed from resources of the State Fund for Rehabilitation. Currently, it is available in nine towns in Poland and more than 705 persons with disabilities (mostly intellectually disabled) benefited from these services up to the end of 2008 .

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<sup>16</sup> According to the Act on Promotion of Employment, non-governmental organizations may conduct services of labour market which are commissioned to them by province and county self-governments or establish employment agencies.

## Section 6: Reference

Legislation cited in the report<sup>17</sup>:

### *Constitution*

The Constitution of the Republic of Poland, 2 April 1997, Dz. U. 1997, No 78.

### *Laws and Acts*

The Act on Family Benefits, 28 November 2003, Journal of Laws, 2003, No. 228, item. 2255, with further amendments.

The Act on Loans and Credits for Students, 17 July 1998, Journal of Laws, 1998, No.108, item. 685, with further amendments.

The Act on Promotion of Employment and Institutions of the Labour Market, 20 April 2004, Journal of Laws, 2004, No. 99, item. 1001, with further amendments (*Act on Promotion of Employment*).

The Act on the Education System, 7 September 1991, unified text in Journal of Laws, 2004, No. 256, item. 2572 with further amendments (*Act on Education System*)

The Law on Higher Education, 27 July 2005, Journal of Laws, 2005, No.164, item.1365, with further amendments.

The Act on Vocational and Social Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities, 27 August 1997, Journal of Laws, No. 123, item. 776, with further amendments (*Act on Rehabilitation*)

### *Regulations*

The Regulation of Minister of National Education and Sport on conditions of organising education and care for children and young persons with disabilities and socially maladjusted in special kindergartens, schools and centres, Journal of Laws 2005, No. 19, item 166 (*Regulation on conditions in special schools*).

*The Regulation of Minister of National Education and Sport on conditions of organising education and care for children and young persons with disabilities and socially maladjusted in mainstream or integrated kindergartens, schools or sections, Journal of Laws 2005, No. 19, item 167 (Regulation on conditions in mainstream schools, 2005).*

The Regulation of the Minister of National Education and Sport on the standards for teachers training, 7 September 2004, Journal of Laws 2004, No. 207, item 2110 (*Regulation on teachers training standards, 2004*).

The Regulation of the Minister of National Education on the conditions and ways of grading, classifying and giving promotions to students and conducting exams and tests at public schools, 30 April 2007, Journal of Laws 2007, No. 83, item. 562, with further amendments (*Regulation on exams and tests*).

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The Regulation of Minister of Education on the standards for teachers training in teachers' colleges, 30 June 2006, Journal of Laws, 2006, No. 128, item. 897 (*Regulation on teachers training standards in colleges*).

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