

PROBLEMS OF THE POLISH LABOUR MARKET AGAINST THE BACKGROUNDS OF THE EU COUNTRIES AFTER 2004

ANNA ORGANIŚCIAK-KRZYKOWSKA
FACULTY OF ECONOMIC SCIENCES
CHAIR OF SOCIAL POLICY
UNIVERSITY OF WARMIA AND MAZURY
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R E S U M E N

THE SITUATION IN THE LABOUR MARKET IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD IS THE SUBJECT OF CONTINUAL SURVEYS AND ANALYSES. PARTICULAR ATTENTION IN THOSE SURVEYS IS FOCUSED ON UNEMPLOYMENT CONTINUING OVER LONG-TIME THAT OCCURS DESPITE GOVERNMENTS OF THE MAJORITY OF COUNTRIES UNDERTAKING CONTINUAL EFFORTS AIMING AT LIQUIDATING OR AT LEAST LIMITING IT.

THE MAIN GOAL OF THE PAPER IS TO PRESENT THE CURRENT PROBLEMS OF THE LABOUR MARKET IN POLAND AND OTHER EUROPEAN UNION COUNTRIES THAT DEVELOPED UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS. AN ATTEMPT AT PRESENTING THE CURRENT SITUATION AND SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LABOUR MARKET IN POLAND DEVELOPED UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF THE CONDITIONS EXISTING AT THE TURN OF 2008-2009 WAS THE SPECIAL OBJECTIVE OF THE PAPER.

PALABRAS CLAVE:

UNEMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL POLICY, EUROPEAN LABOUR MARKET, DIVERSITIES OF
UNEMPLOYMENT, KEYNESIAN THEORY

INTRODUCTION

The situation in the labour market in the contemporary world is the subject of continual surveys and analyses. Particular attention in those surveys is focused on unemployment continuing over long-time that occurs despite governments of the majority of countries undertaking continual efforts aiming at liquidating or at least limiting it. According to the Eurostat data, in 2008, the number of unemployed in the EU 27 countries was 16,7 million people. In mid-2009, as a consequence of the global economic crisis the number of unemployed in the

EU (27) countries neared 21,5 million.¹ As it is easy to notice, the number of the unemployed increased by around 5 million people.

Major changes in the labour market can also be noticed in the United States where during the recent time the number of unemployed increased clearly from around 9 million in 2008 to almost 14,5 million in 2009.² This means that the number of the unemployed increased by ca. 60%.

In Poland we can also observe a change in the situation in the labour market manifesting by the increased numbers of the unemployed during the

¹ epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu 21.07.2009.

² ibidem.

recent time. After relatively stabilised situation in 2008 and the decrease in the number of unemployed to the level of 1.473.800 people, as a consequence of the global economic crisis the number of the unemployed registered with the labour offices was 1.719.900 people in mid-2009.³

The main goal of the paper is to present the current problems of the labour market in Poland and other European Union countries that developed under the influence of the global economic crisis. An attempt at presenting the current situation and selected characteristics of the labour market in Poland developed under the influence of the conditions existing at the turn of 2008-2009 was the special objective of the paper.

GLOBAL AND DOMESTIC DIVERSITIES OF UNEMPLOYMENT

Spatial diversification is one of the contemporary characteristics of the labour market. This is a characteristic of that market present in both the domestic and the international perspective. It is particularly well visible after considering the unemployment and employment rates for different countries of the world. Observation of their levels in a longer time perspectives shows the trends in development of that phenomenon worldwide (table 1).

Considering the fact that both at the end of the 20th c. and the beginning of the 21st c. significant extent of unemployment is observed worldwide, the analysis of contemporary labour market in this paper will start with discussing the unemployment (table 1).

Unemployment development in long-term perspective (39 years), observed in selected countries of the world (including the EU countries) allows noticing the following regularities:

- 1) the most stable situation in the labour market occurred in Japan,
- 2) the lowest unemployment rates during the entire thirty nine years covered occurred in Austria, Switzerland and Norway,

3) the highest unemployment rates during that period occurred in Spain, Ireland, Belgium, Italy and France,

4) for a relatively long period (1984-1998) high average unemployment rates in the EU (from 8,3% to 12,1%) were observed.

At the same time it is worth highlighting the important influence of the economic crisis of the years 2008-2009 on the situation in the labour markets of many countries. The decrease in the global demand resulted in production limitation and that in turn influenced limitation of employment and increase of unemployment. That situation was particularly painfully experienced in Ireland and Spain. In case of Ireland it can be said that it used to be one of the European Union countries with the most stable situation in the labour market after 2000. The unemployment rate was at the level of 4,3-4,5 % and it was one of the lowest in the European Union. Currently, i.e. in 2009, that rate is 10,6 %, which means that it is 2,5 times higher than in 2006.

The situation in the Spanish labour market was unstable already in 1980. During the initial years of the new century Spain, using the EU aid, tried stabilising its situation decreasing the unemployment rate to the level of 8,5 % in 2006, however, currently, i.e. in 2009 that rate doubled and reached 17,4 %.

The situation in the European labour market changed entirely. In 2006, significant difficulties in the labour market and high unemployment rates were observed in countries such as Germany, Belgium, Slovakia and Poland. Stable situation and low unemployment rates (up to 5%) were observed in Estonia, Ireland, Lithuania and the United Kingdom.

In 2009, the situation in the global and the European Union labour markets changed (table 3). In addition to Spain and Slovakia, Ireland, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia joined the group of countries threatened with difficulties in the labour market. The unemployment rates in those countries exceeded the level of 10%. Here we deal with the market

³ www.stat.gov.pl , 30.04.2009.

Table 1
Unemployment rate in selected countries (1970-2009)

Country	1970	1974	1978	1980	1984	1988	1990	1994	1998	2000	2004	2006	2009
USA	5,0	5,6	6,1	7,2	7,5	5,5	5,5	6,3	4,5	5,4	5,1	4,8	8,5
EU	2,6	2,9	5,4	6,3	11,0	10,3	8,7	12,1	10,0	8,3	8,0	7,9	7,6
Japan	1,2	1,4	2,2	2,0	2,7	2,5	2,1	2,9	4,1	5,0	4,1	4,1	4,4
Germany	0,6	2,1	3,7	3,2	7,9	7,6	6,2	8,4	11,4	8,4	9,5	9,0	7,6
France	2,5	2,8	5,2	6,3	9,7	10,0	8,9	12,3	11,8	9,6	9,7	6,5	8,8
Italy	5,4	5,4	7,3	7,7	10,1	12,1	11,5	11,7	12,3	10,8	8,0	3,0	6,9
UK	2,4	2,2	4,9	6,1	11,4	8,2	5,9	9,6	4,7	5,2	4,6	3,9	6,9
Denmark	1,3	2,3	7,3	7,0	10,1	8,6	9,6	11,0	6,6	4,2	5,0	4,0	5,7
Belgium	1,9	2,5	7,2	7,9	13,2	10,3	8,7	12,8	12,4	8,4	8,0	7,9	7,3
The Netherlands	1,0	2,6	3,8	4,6	11,7	9,1	7,5	9,8	4,1	3,4	4,8	3,7	2,9
Spain	2,7	3,0	7,0	11,5	20,1	19,5	16,3	24,5	18,8	14,1	10,4	8,5	17,4
Portugal	3,8	1,9	7,9	8,0	8,6	5,8	4,7	6,4	5,0	4,3	6,9	7,3	8,5
Greece	4,2	2,1	1,8	2,8	8,1	7,6	7,0	10,7	10,8	11,8	10,2	8,8	7,8
Ireland	5,8	5,3	8,2	7,3	15,5	16,7	13,9	15,7	7,6	4,5	4,3	4,4	10,6
Austria	1,2	1,2	1,8	1,6	3,8	3,6	3,2	4,5	7,2	3,2	4,5	5,6	4,5
Sweden	1,2	1,6	1,8	1,6	2,6	1,6	1,5	7,6	6,5	5,6	6,4	6,3	8,1
Norway	1,4	1,4	1,8	1,7	3,2	3,2	5,2	5,6	2,4	3,3	4,1	3,6	3,1
Switzerland	0,0	0,0	0,3	0,2	1,1	0,6	0,5	4,5	3,9	2,4	4,0	3,1	–
Finland	1,9	1,7	7,3	4,7	5,2	4,5	3,4	18,5	11,3	9,5	8,8	7,1	7,5

Source: *Kwartalnik Statystyki Międzynarodowej* 2002-2006, GUS, Warszawa 2002-2006; M. Kabaj, *Strategie i programy przeciwdziałania bezrobociu*, SCHOLAR, Warszawa 1997; Eurostat publication «New Release» 2009 of June 2009.

Table 2
Unemployment rates in selected countries of Europe in 2006

Countries with low unemployment rates (under 5%)		Countries with medium unemployment rates (5% to 10%)		Countries with high unemployment rates (over 10%)	
Byelorussia	1,5	Austria	5,6	Germany	10,5
Estonia	2,3	Sweden	6,3	Belgium	12,0
Switzerland	3,1	Rumania	5,5	Slovakia	10,4
Lithuania	3,1	Slovenia	9,9	Poland	14,9
Norway	3,6	Hungary	7,2		
Denmark	3,9	Finland	8,1		
Ireland	4,4	Portugal	7,3		
Luxembourg	4,9	Italy	6,5		
The Netherlands	3,7	Russia	7,5		
United Kingdom	3,0	Latvia	7,9		
		Czech Rep.	7,7		
		France	9,0		
		Spain	8,5		
		Greece	8,8		
		Ukraine	7,9		
		Bulgaria	9,7		

Source: *Kwartalnik Statystyki Międzynarodowej* 2002-2006, GUS, Warszawa 2002-2006.

situation related unemployment. It is caused by the sudden decline in demand experienced by many industry markets. The Keynesian, market situation

related unemployment or unemployment resulting from lack of demand are the other terms used to describe that type of unemployment.⁴ According to the

⁴ I B. Czarny, E. Czarny, R. Bartkowiak, R. Rapacki, *Podstawy ekonomii*, PWE, Warszawa 1998.

Table 3
Unemployment rates in the European Union countries in 2009 (UE - 7,6 %)

Countries with low unemployment rates (under 5%)		Countries with medium unemployment rates (5% to 10%)		Countries with high unemployment rates (over 10%)	
The Netherlands	2,9	Czech Rep.	5,5	Slovakia	10,5
Austria	4,5	Denmark	5,7	Ireland	10,6
Cyprus	4,9	Rumania	5,8	Estonia	11,1
Slovenia	5,0	Bulgaria	5,9	Lithuania	15,5
		Luxembourg	6,1	Latvia	16,1
		United Kingdom	6,2	Spain	17,4
		Malta	6,7		
		Italy	6,9		
		Belgium	7,3		
		Finland	7,5		
		Germany	7,6		
		Poland	7,7		
		Greece	7,8		
		Sweden	8,1		
		Portugal	8,5		
		France	8,8		
		Hungary	9,2		

Source: *Kwartalnik Statystyki Międzynarodowej 2002-2009*, GUS, Warszawa 2002-2009.

Keynesian theory, there are fluctuations (swings) in the economy that influence changes in the employment and changes in the demand.⁵ In the phase of market situation deterioration decrease in demand, production and employment occurs. The market situation related unemployment appears when the demand in the entire economy decreases. In those circumstances the stocks of unsold products increase first, then difficulties with sales decrease production and as a consequence the demand for labour decreases. Changes in the market situation justify the name for that type of unemployment.

The Netherlands, Austria, Cyprus and Slovenia are the European Union countries that remain in the stable situation characterised by unemployment rates at the level of up to 5% (this is the so-called frictional unemployment rate). Frictional unemployment is a short-term mismatch in the labour market caused by continual flow of employees changing their place of residence, place of employment, the movement of those complet-

ing education and starting employment, etc. The frictional unemployment is treated as the result of delays in adjustment of the labour supply structure to the demand for labour. That mismatch characteristic for a dynamic economy results from continual changes in the structure of the demand for labour and the structure of labour supply. As a consequence it leads to simultaneous development of unemployment and numbers of vacant jobs in various market segments.⁶

According to Eurostat data, Poland is in the group of countries with medium level unemployment rates (5-10%), with the unemployment rate at the level of 7,7% of vocationally active population.⁷ This, however, is the so-called harmonised unemployment rate applied for measuring the situation in the EU countries labour market differing from the level of the registered unemployment rate applied in Poland. That later one is computed as the ratio of the number of the unemployed registered in the country labour offices to the vocationally ac-

⁵ *Słownik ekonomiczny przedsiębiorcy*; ZNICZ, Szczecin 2000, p. 135.

⁶ A. Organiściak-Krzykowska, *Regionalne uwarunkowania bezrobocia*, Wyd. UWM, Olsztyn 2005.

⁷ Eurostat publication »New Release« 2009, of 21 July 2009.

tive civilian population.⁸ Its level is higher than the harmonised rate published by Eurostat.

According to the data by the Central Statistical Office (GUS), the registered unemployment rate in Poland in 2009 was at the level of 11 %. Its level is higher than the harmonised unemployment rate for Poland published by Eurostat by more than 3 percent points. Different methodologies for computing that indicator may result in imprecision in discussions on that phenomenon.

The consequences of the economic crisis then are also visible in Poland although weaker international interrelations than in other EU countries caused that the unemployment rate increase over the years 2008-2009 was relatively smaller than in, e.g. Spain or Ireland. The registered unemployment rate increased over that time by around 1,5 percent point (table 4).

Dynamic changes in the unemployment rate started in Poland as of the beginning of 2009 and

increased during consecutive months of that year (table 5). Their minimal decrease observed in April resulted from seasonal employment in agriculture, construction, tourist services and other seasonal works.

In 2009, the situation in the labour market in Poland, despite a significant improvement after 2004 – was more difficult than in the EU. The unemployment level was higher than in the EU by around 3,5 percent point (figure 1). The situation improvement in the Polish labour market was possible, among others, thanks to the accession to the EU. Earlier the difference in the levels of unemployment rates between Poland and the EU was several percent points. It can be said then that in Poland the situation in the labour market improved much more than in the other EU countries. The average indicators estimated for the European Union were not improved as a consequence of the difficult situation in the labour markets of countries that acceded to it in 2004.

Table 4
Registered unemployment level in Poland during the years 2000-2009

Year	Number of the unemployed ('000)	Unemployment rate (%)
2000	2702,6	15,1
2001	3115,1	17,5
2002	3122,6	20,0
2003	3073,3	20,0
2004	2999,6	19,0
2005	2773,0	17,6
2006	2309,4	14,8
2007	1746,6	11,2
2008	1473,8	9,5
2009*	1719,9	11,0

Source: *Bezrobocie rejestrowane w Polsce 2000-2009*, GUS, Warszawa 2000-2009.

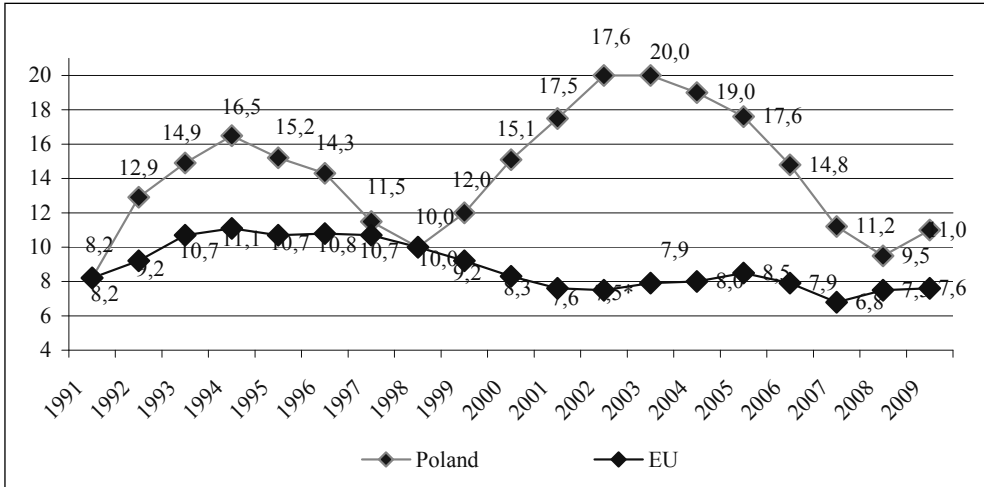
Table 5
Registered unemployment level in Poland during the years 2008-2009

Month and year	Number of the unemployed ('000)	Unemployment rate (%)
December 2008	1473,8	9,5
January 2009	1634,4	10,5
February 2009	1718,8	10,9
March 2009	1758,8	11,2
April 2009	1719,9	11,0

Source: *Miesięczna informacja o bezrobociu w Polsce 2008-2009 (Monitoring rynku pracy)*, GUS, Warszawa 2008-2009.

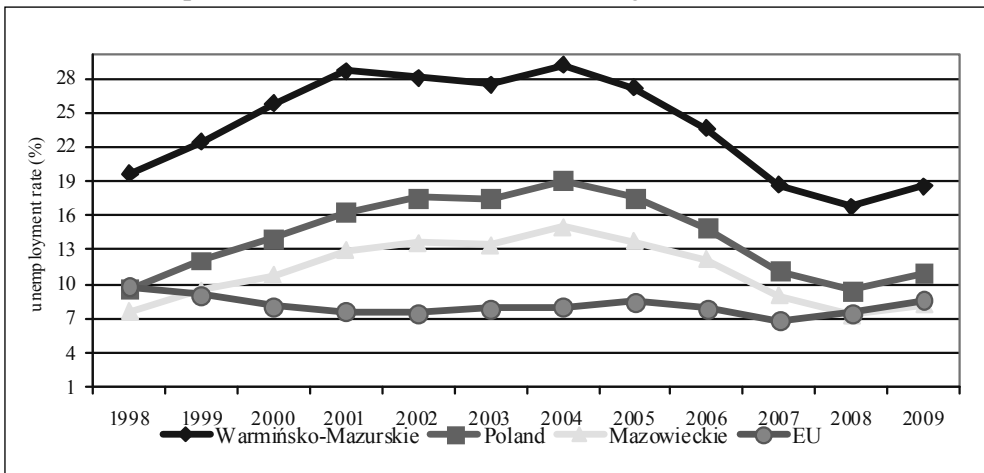
⁸ *Bezrobocie rejestrowane*, GUS, Warszawa 2009.

Figure 1
Unemployment rate in Poland and the EU during the years 1991-2009 (%)



Source: *Bezrobocie rejestrowane w Polsce 2002-2009*, GUS, Warszawa 2002-2009.

Figure 2
Unemployment rate in Poland and the EU during the years 1998-2009



Source: *Bezrobocie rejestrowane w Polsce 2007-2009*, GUS, Warszawa 2007-2009.

As of 2004, which marks Poland's accession to the European Union, a decrease of the unemployment rates was recorded in both Poland and the entire Community. Those trends continued until 2007 when the unemployment rates were at the level of around 18% in Warminsko-Mazurskie voivodship, 11% in Poland (as a whole), 8% in Mazowieckie

voivodship and 7% in the entire EU. From 2007 to 2008 a significant increase in the unemployment rate occurred in the European Union while in Poland and the discussed voivodships the decreasing trend continued. Year 2008 was the time of breakthrough as a consequence of spreading global economic crisis that resulted in the increase in num-

bers of the unemployed across the entire Europe. As of that year a noticeable increase of unemployment rate to the level of almost 19% occurred in Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship and to 8% in the EU as a whole in 2009 (figure 2).

The highest unemployment rates were recorded in voivodships dominated by agriculture in which the State-owned farms played an important role

in the past. Those were also the regions characterised by unfavourable economic structure and poor infrastructure that were not attractive for investors and where those searching for employment had low education (mainly elementary and basic vocational). Those voivodships are: Warmińsko-Mazurskie, Zachodniopomorskie, Lubuskie and Podkarpackie (table 6).

Table 6
Unemployment in Poland by voivodship in 2009

Item	Number of the unemployed ('000)	Unemployment rate (%)
Poland	1719,7	11,0
Dolnoslaskie	137,2	12,1
Kujawsko-Pomorskie	124,7	14,9
Lubelskie	112,4	12,4
Lubuskie	56,2	14,7
Łódzkie	117,7	10,7
Małopolskie	117,1	9,0
Mazowieckie	202,5	8,2
Opolskie	42,6	11,6
Podkarpackie	128,9	14,4
Podlaskie	53,0	11,2
Pomorskie	84,0	10,3
Slaskie	153,2	8,5
Swietokrzyskie	80,8	14,4
Warmińsko-Mazurskie	98,6	18,6
Wielkopolskie	117,7	8,1
Zachodniopomorskie	93,3	15,0

Source: *Bezrobotni oraz stopa bezrobocia według województw, podregionów i powiatów, uroku 2009*, www.stat.gov.pl.

The lowest unemployment rates were recorded in voivodships that could be characterised as industrialised, urbanised, concentrated around large urban agglomerations, characterised by multifunctionality, diversified economic structures, as well as developed economic and social infrastructure that attracted inflow of capital.⁹ Those are also voivodships characterised by better education of workforce, larger number of entrepreneurs (employers) and, in general, more modern economic structure.

In 2009, the spread between the highest unemployment rate characterising Warmińsko-Mazurskie

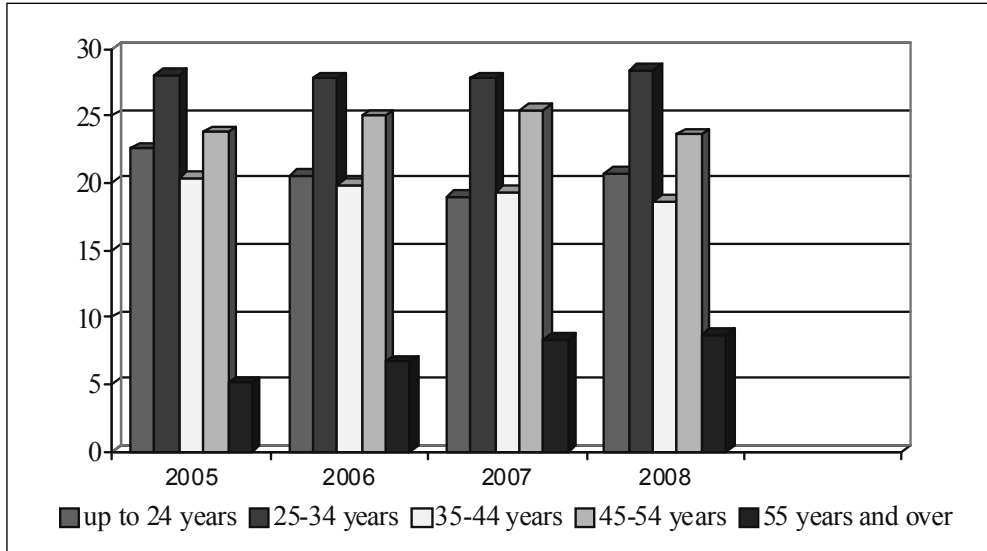
voivodship (18,6 %) and the lowest one registered in Wielkopolskie voivodship (8,1) was 10,5 percent point.

In the structure of the unemployed (in 2008) young people in most cases aging 25-34 years still dominated representing over 27% of all the unemployed (figure 3).

The unemployed aged up to 24 years, the share of which in the total number of the unemployed was 20% were the next age category threatened with unemployment. The lowest was the share of the unemployed over 55 years of age as those people in Poland are eligible to the so-called early retirement.

⁹ S. Korenik, *Dysproporcje w rozwoju regionów Polski-wybrane aspekty*, Wyd. AE, Wrocław 2003.

Figure 3
Structure of the unemployed in Poland during the years 2005-2008

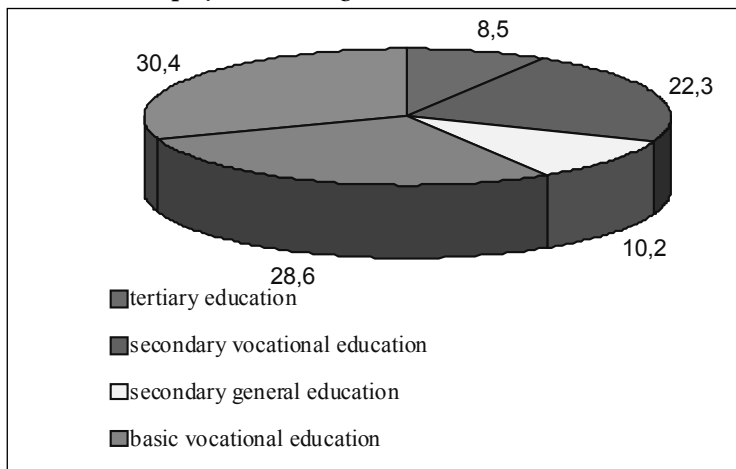


Source: *Bezrobocie rejestrowane w Polsce*, GUS, Warszawa 2009.

The unemployed in Poland are poorly educated. The largest percentage of the unemployed were people with incomplete elementary, elementary and lower secondary education (30,4%). On the other hand, the lowest unemployment rates were recorded

in case of people with tertiary education (8,5%). It could be said that education protects against unemployment although both in Poland and the European Union the percentage of unemployed with tertiary education increases (figure 4).

Figure 4
The unemployed according to education in Poland in 2008

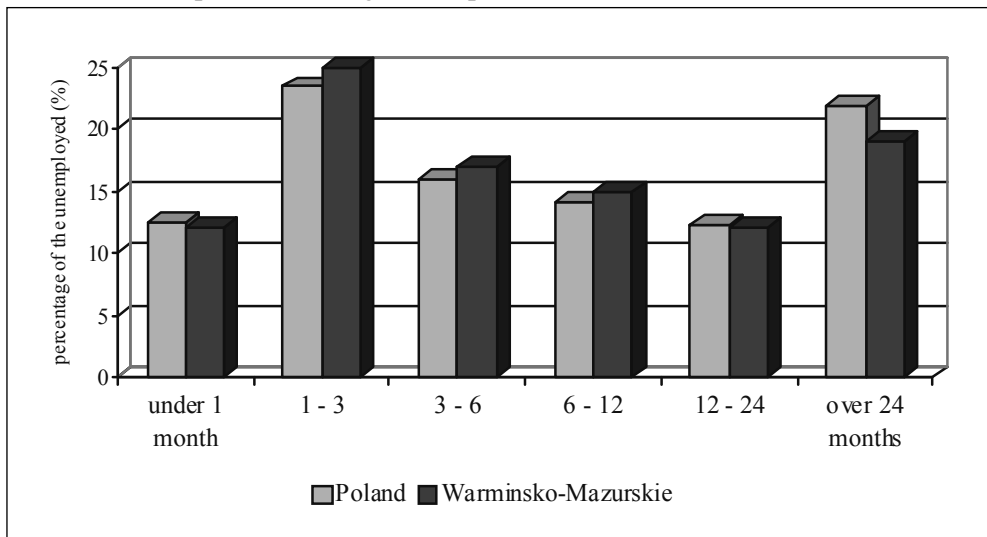


Source: *Bezrobocie rejestrowane w Polsce*, GUS, Warszawa 2009.

The structure of the unemployed according to the duration of unemployment has improved. In 2004, people unemployed for over 12 months dominated that structure.¹⁰ In 2008, people searching for a job

for up to 3 months dominated the structure of the unemployed. This is a positive phenomenon indicating movement of the population in the labour market and their higher mobility (figure 5).

Figure 5
Unemployed according to unemployment duration in Poland in 2008



Source: *Bezrobocie rejestrowane w Polsce*, GUS, Warszawa 2009

GLOBAL AND DOMESTIC DIVERSIFICATION OF EMPLOYMENT

Implementation of the Lisbon Strategy that specified new socio-economic perspectives for the European Union was to serve improvement in the situation in the labour markets of the European Union countries.¹¹ Its priority targets were to create 20 million new jobs by 2010, increasing the employment rate from 63,2% in 2004 to 70,0% in 2010 and decreasing the unemployment rate from 8,9% in 2004 to 3-4% in 2010. An important role was also attributed to the New Employment Strategy initiated by the Union Council (in 2003) for the

first decade of the 21st c. It encompasses: making the Tripartite Agreement for Increase of Employment, expanding the labour market deregulation and establishing groups of experts on employment with the task of monitoring the factors of creating and liquidating jobs and development of an employment promotion strategy.¹²

In the European Union countries particular importance is attributed to the phenomenon of the so-called employability the base of which is the social contract between the enterprise and the employee based on continuous development of competences of the employees.¹³ All those activities were and are

¹⁰ *Bezrobocie rejestrowane w 2005 r.*, GUS, Warszawa 2005.

¹¹ At the Lisbon summit in 2000 the leaders of the EU countries agreed the new strategic goal of the Union. It was to achieve the position of the most developed economy in the world by 2010.

¹² M. Kabaj, M. Kabaj, *Strategie i programy przeciwdziałania bezrobociu w Unii Europejskiej i w Polsce*, Scholar, Warszawa 2004.

¹³ P. Speck, *Konzept für eine neue Arbeitswelt*, «Personal» 2004, No. 6, p. 30.

to contribute to the increase of employment in the European Union.

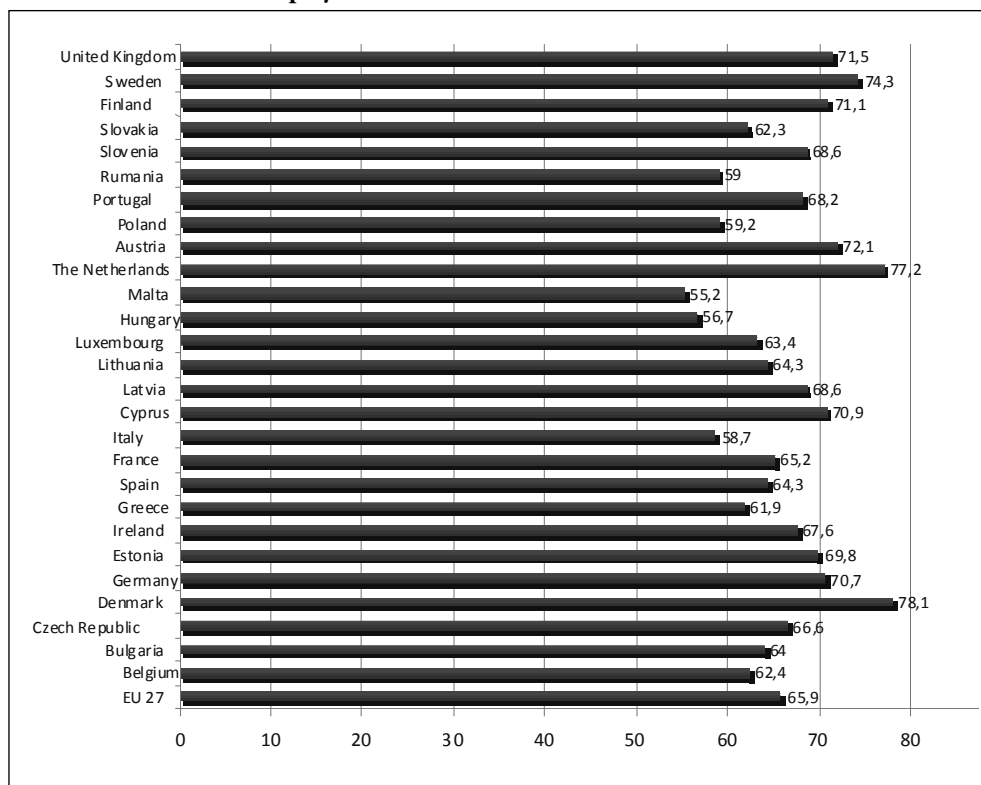
However, the global events from the turn of 2008 and 2009 contributed to development of numerous barriers to Lisbon Strategy implementation. They caused numerous obstacles in achieving its assumptions and caused that the employment rate in the EU is lower than projected at 65,9% (figure 6).

In the international perspective we will also notice spatial diversification of the employment rate in the individual European Union countries. Ac-

ording to the available data of 2008, the highest employment rates were recorded in Denmark (78,1%), The Netherlands (77,2%) and Sweden (74,3%). They were higher by around 10 percent points from the average employment rate for all the EU countries that was 65,9% during that year.

The employment rates were below that level in Malta - 55,2%, Hungary - 56,7% and Italy - 58,7%. In Poland that indicator was 59,2%, which ranked Poland fourth among the countries with the lowest employment rates.

Figure 6
Employment rates in the EU countries in 2008



Source: Eurostat data of 21 July 2009.

The employment of women in the European Union looked somewhat different in 2008. The top ranking countries as concerns the employment of women rate were Denmark - 74,3%, Sweden - 71,8%

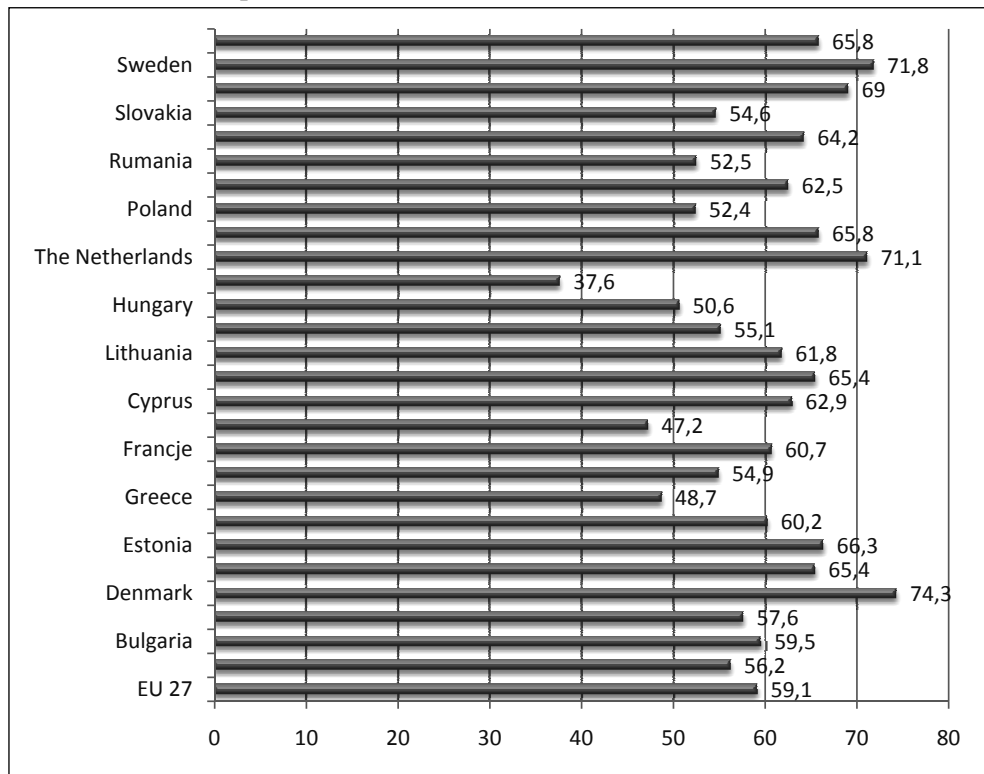
and The Netherlands - 71,1%. The lowest women employment rates were recorded in Malta - 37,6%, Italy - 47,2% and Greece - 48,7%. Also in this case Poland ranked fourth lowest at 52,4%.

The average women employment rate for the 27 countries of the European Union was 59,1% (figure 7).

The highest men employment rate among the EU countries in 2008 was recorded in The Netherlands - 83,2%, Denmark - 81,9%, and Cyprus - 79,2%. On

the other hand the lowest rates were recorded in Hungary - 63 %, Rumania - 65,7% and Poland - 66,3%. The men employment rates in those countries were lower by around 7 percent points than the level of the overall indicator of men employment in the European Union countries that was 72,8%.

Figure 7
Employment rate of women in the EU countries in 2008



Source: Eurostat data of 21 July 2009.

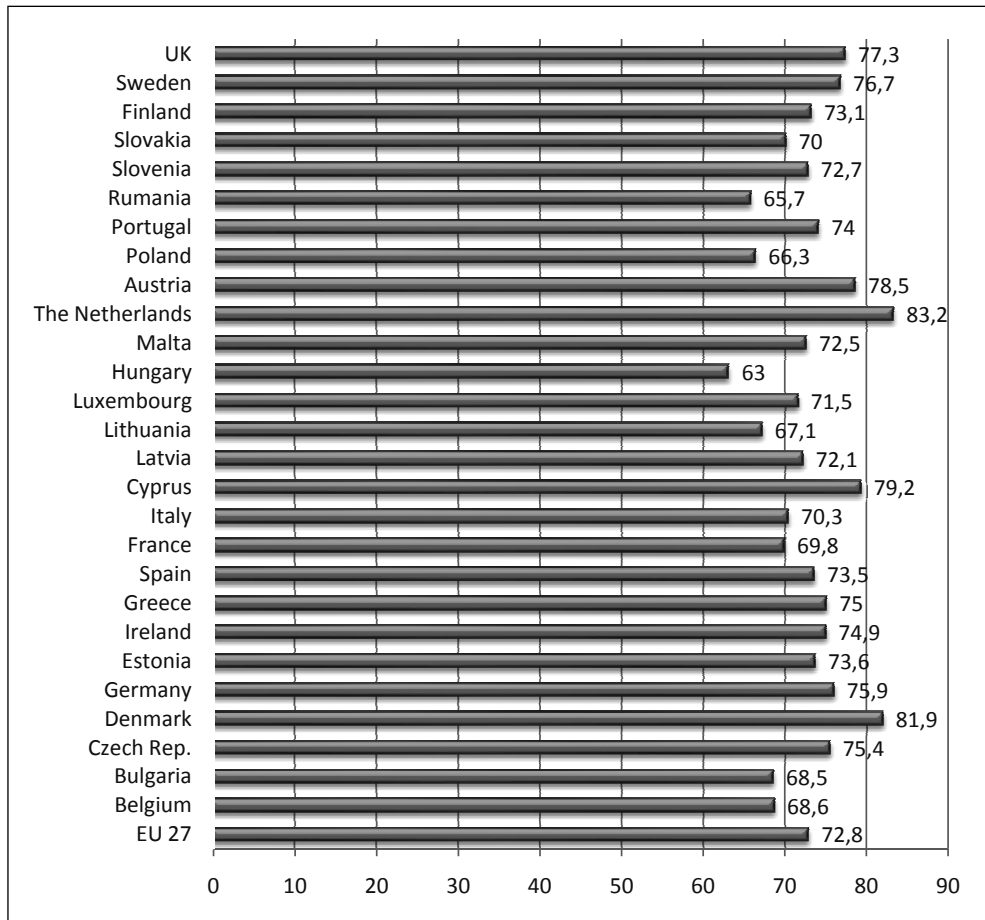
Even more difficult situation from the perspective of the employment rates is observed in Poland (figure 9).

Analysing the employment rate in Poland according to the criterion of gender during the years 2007-2009, a gradual increasing trend of that indicator can be noticed. In 2007 the overall (jointly for women and men) employment rate was 47,2%, women employment rate was 40,1% and men rate was 54,9%. During the analysed period in the Polish labour market the overall employment rate increased

by 2,8 percent point to the level of 50%, the employment rate for women increased by 2,7 percent point to 42,8% while the men employment rate increased to the level of 58,1% (which means that it increased by as many as 3,2 percent point).

Gradual increase of the employment rate in Poland during the years 2007- 2009 observed across all the age groups is a positive phenomenon in the domestic labour market (figure 10). Two age groups: 25-34 years and 35-44 years are characterised by the

Figure 8
Employment rate of men in the EU countries in 2008



Source: Eurostat data of 21 July 2009.

highest employment rates. In 2007, the highest employment rate was recorded for the 35-44 years age group at 80% and for the 45-34 years age group at the level of 74,1%.

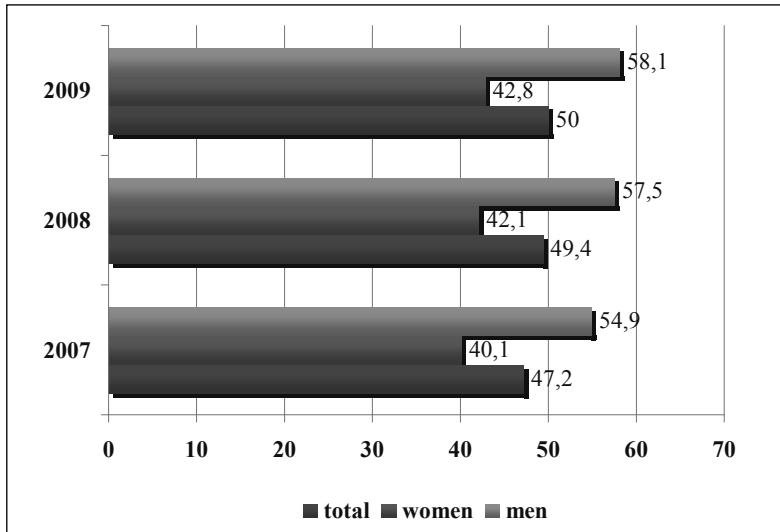
On the other hand, the lowest level of that indicator characterised the 60-65 years age group, which is obvious as this age group encompasses the population in post-productive age.

In 2009, the employment rate in Poland, in all age groups increased in average by 2,94 percent point to 82,2%. In the 35-44 years age group the increase was by 2,2 percent point to 78%, in the 25-34 years age group that increase was by 3,9 percent point

while in the 60/65 and more age group the employment level reached 5,8% giving a yearly increase in the employment rate by 0,2 percent point.

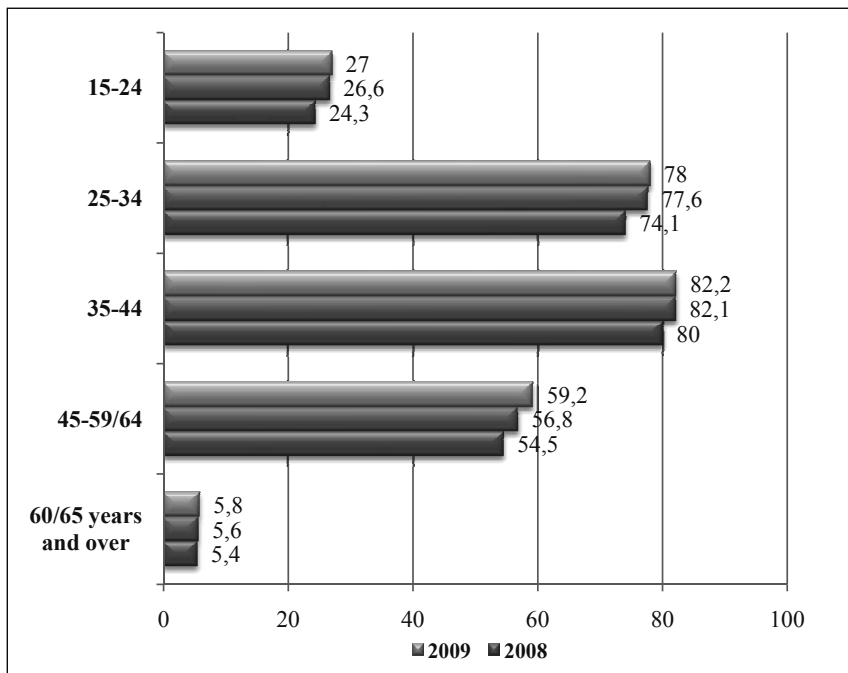
The above figure presents spatial diversification of the employment rates in Poland by voivodship during the first quarters of the years 2007- 2009. The highest employment rates were characteristic in 2009 for Mazowieckie (54,3%), Łódzkie (51,3%) and Wielkopolskie (50,6%) voivodships classified as economic centres of Poland. The lowest employment rates on the other hand were recorded in Zachodniopomorskie (46%), Lubuskie (46,9%), and Warminko-Mazurskie (47,6%) voivodships.

Figure 9
Employment rates in Poland according to gender during the years 2007-2009 (%)



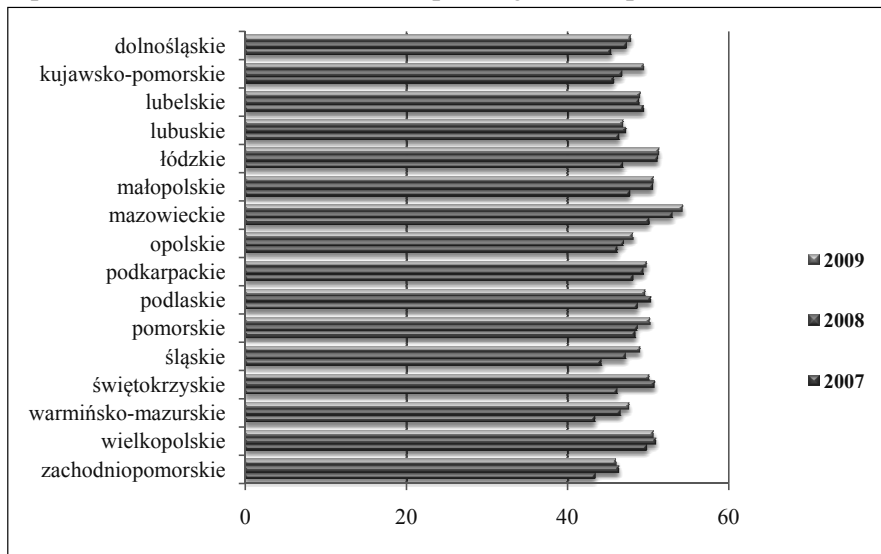
Source: *Kwartalna informacja o rynku pracy*, GUS, Warszawa 2009.

Figure 10
Employment rates in Poland by age during the years 2007-2009 (%)



Source: *Kwartalna informacja o rynku pracy*, GUS, Warszawa 2009.

Figure 11
Employment rates in Poland by voivodship during the first quarters of 2007-2009 (%)



Source: *Kwartalna informacja o rynku pracy*, GUS, Warszawa 2009.

Compared to the values of that indicator from 2007, in all the voivodships mentioned the share of the employed population increased - by 4,2 percent point in Mazowieckie voivodship, 4,4 in Łódzkie voivodship, 0,8 in Wielkopolskie voivodship, 2,6 in Zachodniopomorskie, 0,5 in Lubuskie and 4,2 percent point in Warmińsko-Mazurskie.

CONCLUSION

It is worth highlighting that the economic crisis of the years 2008-2009 influenced deterioration of the situation in the international, and in particular European as well as domestic labour markets significantly. Particularly severe deterioration of situation in the European Union can be observed in Ireland and Spain where the unemployment rates doubled while the employment rates decreased significantly. A relatively stable situation characterised by relatively low unemployment rates and high employment rates takes place in countries such as The Netherlands, Denmark, Austria, the United Kingdom and Italy.

The same situation applies to voivodships of Poland. The lowest unemployment rates occur in voivodships that can be characterised as industrialised, urbanised, concentrated around large municipal agglomerations to which the capital is flowing readily.

The highest unemployment rates were recorded in voivodships that by their nature are agricultural where State-owned Farms played an important role in the past. Those are the regions with unfavourable economic structure and poor infrastructure that do not attract investments and where those searching for employment had low level of education.

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