

**Marta Młokosiewicz**  
**Wojciech Jarecki**  
**Department of Microeconomics**  
**University of Szczecin**

## **DETERMINANTS OF THE TENDENCY TOWARD CONTINUING EDUCATION**

### **Introduction**

The modern economy is based on knowledge which is, to a great extent, a consequence of education. Society of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is described with a term *Information Society (Knowledge Society)* and the following features are ascribed to it: high educational aspirations, the readiness to change as well as the tendency toward developing its abilities. Knowledge, the ability to use it effectively and creatively as well as, closely connected with it, education are perceived as crucial factors of economic growth. As far as post-capitalist society is concerned, knowledge is a resource which serves further extending one's knowledge as the productivity of this society may only be increased by means of constant application of knowledge (Drucker 1999, pp. 38, 42, 57, 163).<sup>1</sup> Numerous research show (for instance, research conducted in the 80's, see: Psacharopoulos, 1984) that human capital is a basic determinant of economic development, and investing in the development of knowledge and abilities is the most effective investment of both, enterprises and individual persons (Rokicka, Starosta 2000, p.146, Drucker 2002, p.47)<sup>2</sup>. However, persons who invest in education or the economy do not benefit from the improvement in the level of education itself. What is important is the quality of acquired knowledge, coordination between qualifications and market needs as well as flexible adjusting them to changes in the economy (Kabaj 2002, pp. 24-25). An educated person should use his or her knowledge, if not to shape the future, then to effectively manage the present (Drucker 1999, p.173). The improvement in the level of education is a factor crucial for the possibility of further education since educated people are, more than uneducated, able to make use of store of knowledge, and therefore to exploit their qualification potential for the needs and changes in a labour market (Marciniak 2002, p.63).

The conception of lifelong learning (OECD, Paris 1996) includes individual development and the development of social characteristics in formal and informal systems, i.e. at schools and institutions of professional education, in colleges and institutions of adult education as well as in the scope of incidental education which is a result of one's everyday activity (at home, at work and in the community) and, connected with it, influence of the environment on a human being. What is emphasized in this conception is a need for preparing and encouraging everyone to learn the entire life as well as a need for directing educational actions in such a way so that everyone who should reskill or improve his or her qualifications – adults, working people and the unemployed - could be provided with suitable opportunities. Attention is also paid to the fact that the continuity of the process of education favours the ability to use knowledge acquired during formal education effectively and creatively (Reich

---

<sup>1</sup> According to P. F. Drucker, nowadays, a discipline of learning is needed as learning should result in better carrying out hitherto existing actions.

<sup>2</sup> Knowledge and abilities that a particular person has, acquired by means of education, develop his or her potential in context of a labour market. Received education and a tendency toward its completing, provide one with greater opportunities of professional promotion than a change in other attributes of a social position.

1996, p.147).

The notion of continuing education is interpreted similarly. It is a notion which includes a complex of educational processes (formal, informal and incidental) which, regardless of content, level and methods, allow for completing and updating the education through school and extracurricular forms, due to which adults may develop their abilities, extend acquired knowledge, improve professional qualifications or even enter a new profession, they change their attitudes as well (according to agreements reached during UNESCO Conference- Nairobi 1976).

In practice, both notions: continuing education and lifelong learning are often used interchangeably and this holds for the present paper as well.

Many different aims are ascribed to continuing education. These, among others, include (Munk, Lipsmeiser 1997, p.52):

- promoting personal development, self-confidence and self-realization, professional promotion,
- preventing the qualifications from becoming outdated, adaptation to changes,
- increasing cultural participation and social competence,
- easing special problems of high-risk groups, responding to demand generated by socio-economic development,
- innovativeness through the improvement of abilities,
- enhancement of the effectiveness of management, productivity and profitability, the growth in earnings and national income.

As far as hitherto existing Polish educational practice is concerned, formal education is dominant, i.e. the system of education based on legally binding education system (ISCED 97<sup>3</sup>). Due to technological progress (especially in the scope of informatics and automation) constant changes in a labour market take place. New professions and specialities come into existence, and the importance of informal and incidental education gradually increases.

Taking universally promoted priorities connected with the economy based on knowledge, gradual moving from the conception of tutelary country to the country of labour, the recognition of the need for the country supporting the human capital, so the increase in persons' capability to work through education into consideration (Golinowska 2006, p.7), it is useful to analyse determinants of the tendency toward taking up continuing education. Considering determinants of the development of this phenomenon seems to be particularly important in relation to Polish labour market which contends with high unemployment<sup>4</sup>. The results of the research concerning continuing education can be useful for shaping proper education policy.

Taking the above into consideration, a basic aim of the present paper is the analysis and evaluation of the tendency toward continuing education in Poland in comparison with the European Union, and especially Baltic States that were chosen: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, on account of the level of education, a status in a labour market, age, a sector of the economy and practised profession. The above characteristics were chosen for the analysis on the assumption that they are crucial determinants of continuing education. Using statistical data of Euro stat (state on November 9, 2005), the aim of the research, determined at the beginning, was realised by means of:

---

<sup>3</sup> Education levels according to ISCED 97 are, in relation to Poland, the following: 0-2 level- at most gymnasial education, 3-4 level- vocational and secondary education, 5-6 level- undergraduate, higher education and beyond. A government order on May 6, 2003 (Dz. U. no 98, item 895)

<sup>4</sup> A difficult situation in a Polish labour market results in the fact that more and more people are interested in changing or improving their qualifications and formal education is a significant element of qualifications. As a result, in Poland from 1990 to 2005, there was a dynamic, almost 500%, increase in the number of people who had been studying.

- the evaluation of current state of the activity in the scope of continuing education in Poland in comparison with the European Union, and especially in comparison with Baltic States chosen for the analysis,
- specifying the relation between a status in a labour market (and, particularly, unemployment) and continuing education in Poland in comparison with the European Union, and especially in comparison with chosen Baltic States,
- the identification of groups of persons who take up continuing education more often than others, according to the category of age, level of education, practised profession as well as a sector of the economy, with special reference to similarities and differences between Poland and the European Union, and especially between Poland and chosen Baltic States.

The above aims of the research were adopted for the realisation in subsequent parts of the present paper which were titled: the level of education and a status in a labour market as determinants of continuing education, as well as continuing education vs. age, a sector of the economy and practised profession.

### **The level of education and a status in a labour market as determinants of continuing education**

It is beyond any doubt that the increase in the level of education is a factor crucial for the possibility of further education- it favours the ability to adjust and develop human capital for the needs and changes in a labour market. Table 1 shows data concerning the relation between the level of education and a status in a labour market as well as the activity in the scope of continuing education in Poland in comparison with the European Union, and especially in comparison with chosen Baltic States.

As it turns out from table 1, in the European Union, 42,5% of persons of working age participated in lifelong learning. In Poland, this percentage was considerably lower (30%) but similar to Estonia (31,4%) and Lithuania (27,8%). Among the countries selected for the analysis, only in Latvia a registered percentage of persons learning constantly was higher than the average given for the European Union (over 46%).

Taking status of persons of working age in a labour market into consideration, it may be noticed that there is a great diversity among particular groups, and also countries, in comparison with the average given for the EU. For, employed persons were the most active. As far as the EU is concerned, almost half of them had been constantly learning. In Poland, they constituted 39%- a little bit more than in Estonia (almost 38%) and Lithuania (33%), but in comparison with Latvia- over 10% less.

An average activity of unemployed persons in the scope of continuing education in the EU was greater than in Poland and other analysed countries. The percentage of the unemployed who had been constantly learning was similar to the average given for the European Union in Latvia (37,5%), whereas in Poland it amounted to 23%, just as in Estonia. The unemployed from Lithuania were the least active in extending their education.

In the EU, among professionally passive persons, 27,5% (on average) of persons of working age had been constantly learning and this percentage was twice as high as in analysed countries, apart from Latvia in which 31% of professionally persons had been constantly learning.

Thus, in Poland, Estonia and Lithuania, persons of working age were considerably less active (as far as lifelong learning was concerned) than people in Latvia and in the EU (on average).

Considerably greater differences may be noticed while analysing the participation in continuing education in relation to the level of education (table 1). In the EU, among people who had, at most, gymnasial education (0-2 level), circa 23% took part in continuing

education. A higher percentage of such persons was recorded in Latvia (30%), and considerably lower in Lithuania (circa 6%), in Poland and Estonia (circa 10% and 10%, respectively). At this level of education, just as in a collation altogether- the employed were more active, the unemployed and professionally passive- less active. In Poland, professionally passive people who participated in continuing education merely constituted less than 6%.

Table 1. The percentage of persons of working age who participated in continuing education in Poland and selected Baltic States in comparison with the European Union, according to the level of education and a status in a labour market

Status	the EU	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania	Poland
<b>ISCED 97 – all levels of education</b>					
Altogether	42,5	31,4	46,2	27,8	30,0
The employed	48,0	37,9	52,0	33,0	39,1
The unemployed	40,6	22,6	37,5	16,3	23,0
Professionally passive	27,5	11,5	31,1	11,3	12,9
<b>ISCED 97 0-2 level</b>					
Altogether	23,1	10,1	30,0	5,8	9,2
The employed	27,0	15,3	38,6	8,4	13,8
The unemployed	25,3	---	15,9	---	9,0
Professionally passive	17,3	---	22,4	---	5,6
<b>ISCED 97 3-4 level</b>					
Altogether	44,2	25,0	43,6	20,9	26,5
The employed	46,8	29,4	47,0	23,7	32,3
The unemployed	45,2	21,9	41,3	11,8	22,6
Professionally passive	34,5	9,4	32,3	12,8	14,4
<b>ISCED 97 5-6 level</b>					
Altogether	68,7	51,8	70,9	59,6	73,9
The employed	71,2	58,1	75,5	63,3	79,3
The unemployed	67,2	---	54,8	57,6	73,7
Professionally passive	51,5	24,1	49,3	25,5	36,0

\*- state on November 9, 2005

Source: own compilation based on Euro state data:

[http://epp.eurostat.ec.eu.int/portal/page?\\_pageid=0,1136184,0\\_45572595&\\_dad=portal&\\_scema=PORTAL](http://epp.eurostat.ec.eu.int/portal/page?_pageid=0,1136184,0_45572595&_dad=portal&_scema=PORTAL)

Persons who received vocational or secondary education (3-4 level) were considerably more active- in the EU, circa 44% of these persons participated in continuing education. In Poland and other countries chosen for the analysis, the activity of people who received such education was below the average given for the EU, yet the inhabitants of Latvia once again turned out to be the most active, and the residents of Lithuania- the least active. Along with lowering the status in a labour market, a decline in activity in the scope of continuing education took place, yet this decline was relatively slight as far as the entire EU and Latvia were concerned and considerably more significant in the remaining countries, including Poland.

Both in the entire EU and in analysed countries, persons who had higher education (5-6 level) were the most active in lifelong learning. The percentage of such persons amounted to almost 69% for the entire European Union. As data included in table 1 show, a particularly high percentage of persons who received higher education and were active in extending their

knowledge was recorded in Latvia (almost 71%). However, in contrast with collations regarding lower levels of education, as far as 5-6 level was concerned, Poland occupied the first position- almost 74% of persons of working age improved their skills here.

Taking the status in a labour market into consideration, it can be noticed that the Poles were the most active among the employed and unemployed who had higher education (79% and 74% respectively), alongside the EU average which amounted to 71% (the employed) and 67% (the unemployed). People in Latvia and Estonia (both the employed, the unemployed and professionally passive) were relatively less active in completing their qualifications among persons who had higher education.

Analysing the Poles' activity in the scope of lifelong learning including subsequent levels of education it may be clearly noticed that differences between subsequent percentage rates (given for people who have been constantly learning) are greater than in the case of the remaining countries and the EU average. In consequence, the Poles override only Lithuanians, at 3-4 level also Estonians, and at 5-6 level Latvians and the EU average as well.

The following observations result from the hitherto made analysis:

- along with lowering the status in a labour market, a decline in activity in the scope of continuing education took place, yet in analysed countries, in contrast with the entire EU, this activity declined to a greater extent,
- both in the entire EU and in analysed countries, persons who had higher education participated in continuing education the most actively, people who had secondary education- less actively, and people who had at most gymnasial education- the least actively,
- only after the Poles received higher education, did they begin to be active in the scope of continuing education (a percentage of people who improved their qualifications recorded at 5-6 level that was recorded was considerably higher in Poland than in the European Union, on average, as well as in countries selected for the analysis, except for professionally passive persons),
- it was Latvia where the qualifications were improved the most intensively (at all levels of education).

The analysis of data concerning the relation between the unemployment rate and education in Poland in comparison with chosen Baltic States and the entire European Union may suggest that the quality of acquired knowledge, its usefulness for getting and keeping job leaves a lot to be desired (see table 2).

Table 2. The unemployment rate vs. education according to ISCED 97 scale in Poland and chosen Baltic States in comparison with the European Union, from the first quarter of 2003 to the second quarter of 2005

Year/quarter	The unemployment rate (%)				
	the EU	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania	Poland
<b>All levels of education according to ISCED 97</b>					
2003/I	9,1	10,6	10,6	13,6	20,5
2003/II		10,7	10,6	12,9	19,4
2003/III		9,5	10,7	11,6	19,3
2003/IV		9,3	10,3	11,7	19,3
2004/I	9,3	10,1	11,5	13,0	20,7
2004/II		10,0	9,9	11,3	19,1
2004/III		10,0	10,0	10,6	18,2
2004/IV		8,5	10,3	10,6	18,0

2005/I		9,5	9,9	10,3	18,9
2005/II	9,0	8,1	9,2	8,5	18,0
<b>The unemployment rate in ISCED 97 0-2 level</b>					
2003/I		23,2	15,9	19,0	28,0
2003/II	12,1	17,6	16,9	21,4	26,1
2003/III		12,6	17,4	15,5	25,0
2003/IV		15,0	17,1	14,2	25,9
2004/I		19,2	17,8	18,2	30,1
2004/II	12,5	19,7	16,0	14,4	28,2
2004/III		18,3	16,2	13,7	25,5
2004/IV		16,0	18,2	17,6	24,8
2005/I		19,9	15,6	19,0	29,4
2005/II	12,6	14,3	17,8	15,4	28,2
<b>The unemployment rate in ISCED 97 3-4 level</b>					
2003/I		10,3	11,3	15,6	22,1
2003/II	9,4	12,2	10,2	13,7	20,8
2003/III		10,9	10,9	12,7	20,6
2003/IV		9,1	10,5	13,3	20,8
2004/I		11,3	12,0	14,8	22,3
2004/II	9,6	10,5	10,5	12,7	20,3
2004/III		10,9	10,4	11,5	19,5
2004/IV		9,3	10,8	11,6	19,7
2005/I		10,2	10,7	11,6	20,3
2005/II	9,2	10,0	9,1	9,7	19,3
<b>The unemployment rate in ISCED 97 5-6 level</b>					
2003/I		7,1	4,4	6,2	6,7
2003/II	4,9	5,2	6,2	6,4	7,1
2003/III		5,7	5,2	7,2	8,7
2003/IV		7,8	3,9	6,7	7,7
2004/I		5,1	5,3	7,0	7,1
2004/II	5,1	5,7	3,4	6,9	7,2
2004/III		4,9	4,9	7,3	7,7
2004/IV		4,6	4,2	6,2	6,9
2005/I		5,4	3,4	4,5	6,6
2005/II	5,0	3,2	4,1	3,8	6,8

Source: own compilation based on Euro stat data: [http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int/portal/page?\\_pageid=0,1136184,0\\_45572595&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL](http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int/portal/page?_pageid=0,1136184,0_45572595&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL)

What turned out from table 2 was the fact that in the second quarter of 2005, the unemployment rate in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia altogether did not differ considerably from the average given for the entire EU (it stood at 8-10%, on average). Only in Poland it was almost two times higher.

Only after various levels of education were taken into consideration, were greater differences with regard to the unemployment rate recorded. As for persons who received at most gymnasial education (0-2 level, according to ISCED 97 scale), the unemployed constituted 12,6% of them in the EU, circa 15% in Estonia and Latvia, almost 18% in Lithuania, whereas in Poland as many as 28%. Among persons who had at most post-secondary education (3-4 level), the unemployment rate stood at over 9% in the EU, 9-10% in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, whereas in Poland it was two times higher. Among persons

who received higher education (5-6 level), the unemployment rate was considerably lower- circa 5%- in the EU, yet, in Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia it stood at 3-4%, whereas in Poland- 7%.

On the basis of analysis of data included in table 2, the following general conclusions may be drawn:

- in collation, which took various levels of education into consideration, there were smaller disproportions as for the unemployment rate during the analysed period in the European Union on average than in particular Baltic States selected for the analysis,
- definitely the smallest percentage of the unemployed was recorded among persons who had higher education; this percentage was even lower than the EU average, whereas in Poland it was a bit higher than the EU average,
- similarly to the EU average, in selected countries, the situation of persons who had secondary education was worse (on account of the unemployment rate) than in the case of persons who had higher education, yet the unemployed who received at most gymnasial education constituted the largest percentage.

There is an assumption, which turns out from hitherto discussion and data included in table 2, that apart from a relatively slight interest in continuing education in Poland- in comparison with other countries- the level of adjusting the acquired abilities and qualifications to the needs of a labour market was low, which was reflected by a high unemployment rate in our country. Poland overrode Lithuania in the majority of hitherto presented classifications concerning the activity in the scope of continuing education, and took the last but one position among the countries that had been distinguished. As for the collation concerning the unemployment rate depending on education, Poland took the last position, also in the case of persons who represented 5-6 level according to ISCED 97 scale. While analysing data included in table 2, it has to be stated that despite slighter activity in the scope of continuing education in Lithuania, the unemployment rate (which was much lower than in Poland) decreased more rapidly there than in other analysed countries (including Poland) during the analysed period. As for 0-2 level of education, Lithuania overrode even Latvia and Estonia, when it came to the rate of the fall in unemployment during the analysed period of time. Similar situation occurred in the case of a collation regarding 3-4 level according to ISCED 97 as well as 5-6 level. This may imply a great consonance between acquired knowledge and qualifications to the needs of a labour market at all levels of education in Lithuania.

In the case of persons who had at most gymnasial education (0-2 level), the unemployment rate in Poland was even higher. A similar situation took place in Latvia which may suggest that this level of education was a “weak link”, in both countries that had been mentioned, which should be strengthened. Among persons who received higher education, the unemployment rate in Poland- although relatively lower than in the case of the remaining levels of education- stood at, more or less, the same level from the first quarter of 2003 to the second quarter of 2005. Similarly to Poland, the situation of persons who had higher education in a Latvian labour market changed very slightly (though it was obviously better than in Poland). At that time, the unemployment rate given for this group decreased by more than half in Estonia and by more than 1/3 of its former value in Lithuania.

The above analysis may bring about the following suggestion: in the case of both Poland and Latvia, the opportunities of continuing education, that had been offered, provided, to insufficient extent, a flexible adjusting knowledge and qualifications of learning persons to changes in the economy. However, due to the fact that the unemployment rate was higher in Poland than in Latvia, the described problem was related to Poland to an undoubtedly greater extent.

Apart from the level of education of persons and their status in a labour market, the

analysis of the influence of age, a sector of the economy as well as practised profession on the activity in the scope of lifelong learning may be useful for specifying education policy. That is why the subsequent part of the present paper has been devoted to these issues.

### **Lifelong learning vs. age, a sector of the economy and practised profession**

Persons who had already finished their formal education and had taken up professional job or had been looking for a job or were professionally passive, participated in continuing education to various extent (depending on age). Data presenting these relations were shown in table 3.

Table 3. Lifelong learning according to age (in %) in Poland and chosen Baltic States in comparison with the European Union\*

<b>Age (years)</b>	<b>the EU</b>	<b>Estonia</b>	<b>Latvia</b>	<b>Lithuania</b>	<b>Poland</b>
Altogether	42,0	31,4	46,2	27,8	30,0
25-34	50,2	41,4	56,3	34,2	40,8
35-44	45,0	35,8	48,6	31,6	33,0
45-54	40,3	29,6	42,2	25,3	25,8
55-64	29,5	15,8	35,6	16,3	16,2

\* state on November 9, 2005

Source: own compilation based on Euro stat data:

[http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int/portal/page?\\_pageid=0,1136184,0\\_45572595&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL](http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int/portal/page?_pageid=0,1136184,0_45572595&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL)

It might be inferred, from data included in table 3, that there was a diverse participation in lifelong learning depending on age of persons, yet in the EU altogether as well as in particular countries chosen for the analysis, a decline in activity in the scope of continuing education as a person became elder, was a rule. The most active in extending their knowledge were persons who belonged to the group 25-34 (years), whereas the least active- especially in Estonia, Poland and Lithuania- were persons from the group 55-64 (years). What deserved a special attention in the case of Latvia was a considerable (almost 36%) percentage of persons who took up continuing education and belonged to the eldest group. This percentage was higher by 6% than the average given for the EU. In Poland, Estonia and Lithuania, only 16% who were 55-64 years old took up various forms of lifelong learning.

In contrast with determinants of lifelong learning that had been considered in the hitherto analysis, in the case of collation *continuing education vs. a sector of the economy*, only the employed were taken into consideration. Yet, considerable regularities and differences between particular countries may be noticed in the case of these data as well (see table 4).

As it turned out from table 4, the diversity of the percentage of persons who took up continuing education with regard to sectors of the economy on the entire EU scale was slighter than in the countries that were mentioned in the table. Among the employed, the most active in the EU (on average) were people who worked in service sector among whom more than 52% had been constantly learning, whereas persons who worked in agriculture, hunting or forestry were the least active (37,5%). Some of the regularities observed in Poland and other, selected for the analysis, countries were similar to those which were observed in the European Union as a whole- the greatest percentage of persons who had been constantly extending their knowledge and abilities constituted people who worked in service sector.



However, there was a great diversity between Poland and the remaining countries as well as average figures given for the EU, as for the activity in the scope of lifelong learning in the remaining sectors. In Poland and Lithuania, just as in the EU (on average), the smallest percentage of persons who had been constantly developing their abilities constituted people who worked in the first section (a-b), yet it amounted to just 13,5% in Lithuania. In contrast with these countries, this percentage, given for people who worked in agriculture and related sectors, amounted to as many as 47%. Also in this country as well as in Estonia, the smallest percentage of constantly learning people was recorded in industry.

Table 4. Participation in lifelong learning in Poland and chosen Baltic States in comparison with the European Union according to a sector of the economy (in %)\*

Sector	the EU	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania	Poland
Altogether	47,5	37,8	51,9	33,0	39,1
Agriculture, Hunting, Forestry (a-b)	37,5	26,4	47,0	13,5	22,5
Industry (c-f)	39,0	24,3	41,1	26,3	30,3
Service (g-q)	52,3	45,8	58,2	42,9	49,2

\* state on November 9,2005

Source: own compilation based on Euro stat data:

[http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int/portal/page?\\_pageid=0,1136184,0\\_45572595&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL](http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int/portal/page?_pageid=0,1136184,0_45572595&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL)

Practised profession was adopted as the last determinant which influenced the tendency toward lifelong learning. The research was carried out on the basis of ISCO-COM 88 classification<sup>5</sup> (table 5).

Table 5. Participation in lifelong learning according to the groups of professions in Poland and chosen Baltic States in comparison with the European Union (in %)\*

Professional group	the EU	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania	Poland
Altogether	47,5	37,8	51,9	33,0	39,1
Members of parliament, high officials and managers, specialists, technicians and other middle level staff (1-3)	64,8	63,6	75,6	66,6	67,2
Office workers, private service workers and sellers (4-5)	45,1	33,1	50,4	26,5	36,2
Farmers, gardeners, foresters and fishermen, industry workers and craftsmen, (6-7)	34,4	20,7	39,8	16,2	21,3

<sup>5</sup> Legally binding on the basis of an annex to the order of the Minister of the Economy and Labour on December 8, 2004 (Dz. U. no 265, item 2644)

Operators and fitters of machines and devices, workers carrying out simple works (8-9)	27,7	13,7	31,6	12,6	20,2
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------	------	------	------	------

\* state on November 9, 2005

Source: own compilation based on Euro stat data:

[http://epp.eurostat.ec.eu.int/portal/page?\\_pageid=0,1136184,0\\_45572595&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL](http://epp.eurostat.ec.eu.int/portal/page?_pageid=0,1136184,0_45572595&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL)

As it turned out from table 5, both on the EU scale as well as countries selected for the research (including Poland), members of parliament, high officials and managers, specialists, technicians and other middle level staff participated in lifelong learning the most actively. As for these professional groups, there were no significant differences between analysed countries and the entire EU with regard to the percentage of persons who had been constantly learning- only in the case of Latvia a recorded percentage was larger than European average by 10% and amounted to almost 76%. Among people who belonged to the remaining professional groups, there was a decline in activity in the scope of constant extending their knowledge along with taking up simpler and simpler works, both in the EU (on average) and in selected countries, especially in Lithuania and Estonia. Yet, in Latvia the activity in the scope of constant improving the qualifications was greater than in the entire EU in every professional group. In Poland, the recorded percentage of persons, including farmers, gardeners, foresters and fishermen as well as industrial workers and craftsmen, who had been constantly learning was relatively low in relation to the EU average. This percentage stood at the level similar to Estonia and was even larger than in Lithuania, yet- taking the share of agriculture in the Polish economy in comparison with other sectors- it should be stated that this percentage was too low.

Summing up the hitherto analysis concerning the influence of age, a sector of the economy and practised profession on the engagement in constant extending one's knowledge and qualifications, the following general conclusions may be drawn:

- the activity in the scope of lifelong learning declined with age, both in the entire EU as well as in the countries that had been distinguished in the present paper,
- a general regularity (both in the EU on average and in particular countries) was the fact that persons who were employed in service and who, at the same time, had been constantly improving their knowledge and qualifications- in comparison with other sectors- constituted the largest percentage, whereas the fewest people (except for Latvia) had been constantly learning as far as agriculture and related sectors were concerned,
- the activity in the scope of lifelong learning declined along with taking up simpler works carried out within practised profession, which was confirmed by the regularities, that had been observed earlier, between the level of education and constant improving one's knowledge,
- greater, than the EU average, activity in the scope of lifelong learning according to age, a sector of the economy and with regard to all professional groups was recorded only in Latvia.

### Conclusions concerning Poland

It turns out explicitly, from the presented analysis, that the level of education, a status in a labour market, age, a sector of the economy and practised profession are crucial determinants of the activity in the scope of lifelong learning- these determinants significantly differentiate

the activity in this scope. Some regularities, to which attention has been paid while another parts of the present paper were (being) summed up, might be observed during detailed analysis of the influence of these determinants on continuing education in particular countries. In the summary of the entire paper, conclusions concerning Poland were paid special attention. These were the following:

- there were fewer people who had been constantly learning in Poland than in the EU on average,
- what deserves attention is a great (in comparison with the remaining groups which include people who had education at 0-2 and 3-4 levels) activity of the Poles who received higher education (the employed and the unemployed) in constant extending their knowledge and qualifications; from the point of view of activity in the scope of lifelong learning in Polish circumstances, the fact that one had higher education was especially advantageous as, thanks to it, persons who were of working age had a greater, than the others, tendency toward updating their qualifications with regard to the needs of a labour market,
- a considerable diversity in engagement in continuing education between particular levels of education of the Poles may, at the same time, imply that in Poland, at early stages of education the need for constant improvement of one's knowledge and abilities was not influenced sufficiently by education system as well as that it existed in the minds of persons at these education levels to an insufficient extent,
- due to a very slow fall (at all levels of education) in the unemployment rate which, in Poland, stood at relatively very high level, special attention should be paid to the quality of education, especially at 0-2 level, so providing at most gymnasial education; educational offer should be synchronized with the needs of a labour market to a greater extent,
- what is also worth emphasizing is a very slight, in comparison with the EU average, activity of professionally passive persons in Poland, which includes persons who have higher education as well- the way of thinking characteristic for Information Society has not yet been rooted in the awareness of the Poles sufficiently,
- what is worrying is the fact that there was a small percentage of people from the sector of Polish agriculture who had been constantly learning, in comparison with a particularly large percentage of people who were employed in this sector; it may be a serious cause of difficulties in the economy restructuring, creating difficulties with the promotion of new forms of farming in agriculture that are advantageous in the modern age of environmental protection, demand for healthy food, or for rest in the bosom of nature.

The authors of the paper express hope that the results of the research that have been obtained will be useful for further analysis of the reasons of diverse activity in the scope of lifelong learning among particular countries, and for further research on the influence of various factors on the discussed phenomenon which may be used for shaping education policy paying special attention to the needs of a labour market. The research on the determinants that favour greater mobilization of professionally passive persons in Poland (just as in Lithuania or Estonia) as well as a qualitative analysis of various forms of continuing education- especially in Poland- would be advisable.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

1. Drucker P.F., (2002), *Myśli przewodnie Druckera (The Essential Drucker)*, Wydawnictwo MT Biznes, Warszawa.
2. Drucker P.F., (1999), *Spółczeństwo pokapitalistyczne*, PWN, Warszawa.
3. Dane Eurostatu: [http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int/portal/page?\\_pageid=0,1136184,0\\_45572595&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL](http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int/portal/page?_pageid=0,1136184,0_45572595&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL) (stan na dzień 22.02.2006)

4. Golinowska S., (2006), Przyszłość państwa opiekuńczego i systemu zabezpieczenia społecznego, *Polityka Społeczna*, nr 1.
5. Kabaj M., (2002), Optymalizacja struktur kształcenia zawodowego i popytu na pracę, w: red. U. Jeruszka, *Optymalizacja kształcenia zawodowego z punktu widzenia rynku pracy*, IPISS, Warszawa.
6. Marciniak S., (2002), Perspektywy kapitału ludzkiego jako czynnika rozwoju gospodarczego, w: Białoń L., Pietras C., Obrębski T., Marciniak S., *Perspektywy kapitału ludzkiego jako czynnika wzrostu gospodarczego Polski*, Wydawnictwo Politechniki Warszawskiej, Warszawa.
7. Munk D., Lipsmeiser A., (1997), *Objectives, Realisation and Organisation of Continuing Vocational and Training*, CEDEOP, Thessaloniki.
8. Psacharopoulos G., (1984), *The Contribution of Education to Economic Growth*, w: red. J.W. Kendrick, *International Comparisons of Productivity and Causes of the Slowdown*, Ballinger Publishing, Cambridge.
9. Reich R.B., (1996), *Praca narodów (The Work of Nations)*, Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, Toruń.
10. Rokicka E., Starosta P., (2000), *Mobilność zawodowa i edukacyjna*, w: red. Kryńska E., *Mobilność zasobów pracy*, IPISS, Warszawa.
11. Rozporządzenie Rady Ministrów RP z dnia 6 maja 2003 r. (Dz. U. nr 98, poz. 895).
12. Serwis Oświatowy WSiP,  
[http://www.wsipnet.pl/oswiata/os\\_sloownik.php?literka=K&haslo=221](http://www.wsipnet.pl/oswiata/os_sloownik.php?literka=K&haslo=221) (stan na dzień 20.02.2006)
13. Załącznik do rozporządzenia Ministra Gospodarki i Pracy z dnia 8.12.2004 (Dz.U. Nr 265, poz 2644)