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**Active Labour Market Programmes in Poland  
Between 2005 and 2010**

**Abstract**

*High unemployment in Poland is a major socio-economic problem. The unemployment rate in Poland reached the level of 16.7% in 2005, 9.3% in 2010 and 9.7% in 2011.*

*Unemployment in Poland is mainly structural, which is reflected in the structural imbalances between labour demand and labour supply with respect to vocational qualifications, professions, and spatial deployment. The main factor determining unemployment is the necessity for structural changes in the Polish economy caused by its transformation and integration with the European Union, changes aimed at enhancement of economic innovation, competitiveness and effectiveness.*

*An active labour market policy plays an important role in a situation characterized by high structural unemployment. Efficiently applied instruments of an active labour market policy can reduce this unemployment. Therefore, the main aim of this paper is to evaluate the role of the active labour market policy in Poland between 2005-2010, taking into consideration the characteristics of its main instruments, its participants, and expenditures.*

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## **1. Introduction**

An important role in combating high structural unemployment in Poland is played by the active labour market policy of the State. The structural character of unemployment is determined by qualifications gaps, as well as occupational and spatial mismatches occurring between the structure of labour supply and labour demand. The main reason why this type of unemployment is present in Poland is the necessity to reorganize the country's economy towards that of an innovative, competitive and efficient EU Member State.

The main purpose of this article is to assess the effectiveness of Poland's active labour market policy as an anti-unemployment tool in the years 2005-2010. To this end, it is necessary to characterise the policy's programmes and the services that labour offices provide to activate unemployed persons, as well as the related expenditures and the users of active programmes who find employment following their completion.

The article is structured as follows. Section 2 below introduces the notion, goals, and measures of an active labour market policy. Section 3 presents expenditures involved in the implementation of the policy. Section 4 shows the numbers of users of active labour market programmes and their changing proportional shares. Section 5 discusses active labour market policy in terms of employment effectiveness and cost effectiveness, and Section 6 presents conclusions summing up the presentation and analysis.

## **2. The significance of an active labour market policy and its instruments**

Before assessing the significance of the active labour market policy in Poland between 2005 and 2010, the situation in the market must be examined with respect to the level, dynamics, and the rates of unemployment. The numerous negative impacts of unemployment make it a serious socio-economic problem. The data characterizing this phenomenon are presented in Table 1.

The data shows that between 2005 and 2008 unemployment was declining. Its total volume decreased by 1,299,200 people, i.e. by 46.9% compared with the baseline year. The rate of unemployment also decreased, from 17.6% to 9.5% (by 8.1 percentage points). These positive trends resulted from the improving economic situation and the resultant increasing number of

jobs<sup>1</sup>. In the next two years, 2009 and 2010, the labour market situation was still better than in 2005, despite a strong increase in the number of unemployed workers. In relation to the baseline year unemployment was lower by 31.7% and 29.5%, respectively, but significantly higher compared to its level in 2008. In 2010 the unemployed population was greater by 480,900; the rate of unemployment also rose, from 9.5% to 12.4%. This situation was driven by the economic slowdown: in 2009 GDP increased by 1.6% and in 2010 by 3.9% (in relation to the previous year) (*Rocznik Statystyczny Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, 2011, p. 684).

**Table 1. The volume, dynamics and rate of registered unemployment in Poland, years 2005-2010**

Specification	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
All registered unemployed, in thousands	2773.0	2309.4	1746.6	1473.8	1892.7	1954.7
Change in dynamics 2005=100	100.0	83.3	62.9	53.1	68.3	70.5
Rate of registered unemployment (%)	17.6	14.8	11.2	9.5	12.1	12.4
Job offers, in thousands	885,2	1117,2	1242,3	1031	902,6	1021,2

Source: *Rocznik Statystyczny Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* (Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Poland), GUS, Warszawa, 2008, p. 242; 2011, p. 235.

In order to evaluate the situation in the Polish labour market it is worthwhile to compare the unemployment rates in Poland with those of the other EU (27) Member States.

**Table 2. Unemployment rates in EU-27 Member States, years 2005-2011**

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
EU-27	9.0	8.3	7.2	7.1	9.0	9.7	9.7
Euro area (17)	9.2	8.5	7.6	7.6	9.6	10.1	10.2
Belgium	8.5	8.3	7.5	7.0	7.9	8.3	7.2
Bulgaria	10.1	9.0	6.9	5.6	6.8	10.3	11.3

<sup>1</sup> In the analysed years GDP expanded from 3.6% in 2005 to 5.1% in 2008; its growth in 2006 and 2007 was even higher than that, 6.2% and 6.8% respectively. *Rocznik Statystyczny Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* (Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Poland), GUS, Warszawa 2011, p. 684. The rate of employment rose from 45.2% in 2005 to 50.6% in 2010, *Rocznik Statystyczny Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* (Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Poland), GUS, Warszawa 2011, p. 218.

Czech Republic	7.9	7.1	5.3	4.4	6.7	7.3	6.7
Denmark	4.8	3.9	3.8	3.4	6.0	7.5	7.6
Germany	11.3	10.3	8.7	7.5	7.8	7.1	5.9
Estonia	7.9	5.9	4.6	5.5	13.8	16.9	12.5
Ireland	4.4	4.5	4.7	6.4	12.0	13.9	14.7
Greece	9.9	8.9	8.3	7.7	9.5	12.6	17.7
Spain	9.2	8.5	8.3	11.3	18.0	20.1	21.7
France	9.3	9.2	8.4	7.8	9.5	9.7	9.6
Italy	7.7	6.8	6.1	6.7	7.8	8.4	8.4
Cyprus	5.5	4.7	4.1	3.8	5.5	6.4	7.9
Latvia	9.6	7.3	6.5	8.0	18.2	19.8	16.2
Lithuania	8.0	5.2	3.8	5.3	13.6	18.0	15.3
Luxembourg	4.6	4.6	4.2	4.9	5.1	4.6	4.8
Hungary	7.2	7.5	6.5	7.8	10.0	11.2	10.9
Malta	7.3	6.9	3.6	6.0	6.9	6.9	6.5
Netherlands	5.3	4.44.4	3.6	3.1	3.7	4.5	4.4
Austria	5.2	4.8	4.4	3.8	4.8	4.4	4.2
Poland		13.9	9.6	7.0	8.1	9.6	9.6
Portugal	8.6	8.6	8.9	8.5	10.6	12.0	12.9
Romania	7.2	7.3	6.4	5.8	6.9	7.3	7.4
Slovenia	6.5	6.0	4.9	4.4	5.9	7.3	8.2
Slovakia	16.4	13.5	11.2	9.6	12.1	14.5	13.6
Finland	8.4	7.7	6.96	6.4	8.2	8.4	7.8
Sweden	7.7	7.1	6.1	6.2	8.3	8.4	7.5
United Kingdom	4.8	5.4	5.3	5.6	7.6	7.8	8.0

Source: Eurostat data,

[http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics\\_explained/index.php/Unemployment\\_statisticsep.eurostat.ec.europa.eu](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Unemployment_statisticsep.eurostat.ec.europa.eu), (24.04.2013).

The data in Table 2 presents unemployment rates calculated according to the guidelines of the International Labour Organization. The data concerns unemployed aged 15 to 74 who, during the reference week, were not employed and without any other work. In the case of Poland the unemployment rates calculated in this way differ from the unemployment rates registered by the Polish Labour Offices (Table 1), since the latter take into account unemployed in the working age group, i.e. 18 to 60 years for women, and 18 to 65 for men.

The analysis of unemployment rates in the EU-27 and its Member States it can be said that in most countries 08 these rates showed a downward trend in the years 2005–20. Later, between 2009 and 2011, the unemployment rates showed an upward trend (in some countries even since 2008) due to the financial and economic crisis.

The unemployment rates in the Polish economy in the years 2005–2008 were significantly higher than those for the EU-27, but showed a downward trend. The economic downturn contributed to a renewed increase in unemployment rates in Poland in the years 2009–2011 but the rates were slightly lower than in the EU-27 and in the Eurozone (due to high unemployment rates in countries such as Spain (over 21%), Greece (17.7%), and Portugal (about 13%)).

In order to reduce unemployment, a pro-employment economic policy is necessary, i.e. one combining socio-economic policy measures with a labour market policy. The main components of this policy include expanded investment activity, stimulation of the development of small and medium-sized firms, reduced tax burdens, higher competitiveness of domestic products, as well as development of labour market programmes (Kotlorz 2007, p. 114). The concept of flexicurity has been promoted in recent years, which seeks a balance between the security of employment for employees and employers, while ensuring the flexibility of labour. Its major elements are the following (Kryńska 2009, p. 14):

- availability of flexible forms of employment,
- active labour market policy,
- lifelong learning,
- modern solutions within social security systems that provide unemployed individuals with income as well as re-employment opportunities.

According to the above, the significance of the State's active involvement in the labour market is addressed by various implementation concepts within an anti-unemployment policy (Smith 2003, pp. 368-374). The State's policy in the labour market consists of interventions targeted to the imbalances which appear, such as declining employment or increasing unemployment (Kwiatkowska 2007, p. 215). The policy's toolbox includes both active and passive policies.

The passive policies aim to alleviate the economic impacts of unemployment that affect people who lose their jobs and thereby their incomes. So passive policy has a protective, welfare role, and its main tools are unemployment benefits and pre-retirement allowances. Its effectiveness depends on the actual amount of a benefit and the period during which it can be drawn, based on the concept that while securing a minimum standard of living, a benefit should not discourage the beneficiary from seeking gainful employment.

The active labour market policy is intended to make unemployed workers active again and to help them find the jobs they need through their participation in special programmes. This policy is also capable of improving the structural match between labour supply and labour demand, protecting workers' qualifications from obsolescence and offering opportunities for their improvement, thus helping unemployed workers maintain the average level of productivity (Kwiatkowski 2002, pp. 301-304; Calmfors 1995; Calmfors, Skedinger 1995). The level of effective labour supply is thereby sustained and labour is readily available when more jobs are created.

An active labour policy uses many instruments to accomplish its goals. The instruments can be broadly divided into the supply-side instruments and demand-side instruments. The first category includes measures ranging from training courses for the unemployed and internships to on-site vocational training. They are used to improve unemployed workers' qualifications and skills with a view to increasing their chances for re-employment.

According to the law in force [*Ustawa o promocji zatrudnienia i instytucjach rynku pracy z 20 kwietnia 2004 r. (The Law on Promotion of Employment and Labour Market Institutions of 20 April 2004)*], Dz.U. (Journal of Law) 2004, no. 99, item 1001, art. 40-42], the purpose of trainings should be to improve the occupational skills of unemployed workers, to retrain them, or to teach them, thereby increasing their chances of getting a new job or retaining the one they have, or obtaining any other gainful employment. Training courses are particularly useful to unskilled workers and for those who need adaptation to the new requirements in the labour market (Dolny, Maksim 2010, p. 51). The period of training may be scheduled for up to 6 months, with the minimum number of training hours being 25 a week in most cases. This period may be extended to 12 months depending on the training curriculum, or up to 24 months when special trades or unskilled people are involved. An unemployed person is allowed to choose a training course, unless its costs exceed 3 times the average wage paid in the economy. The costs of examinations, certificates and licences necessary to practice a trade may also be financed from public funds up to 100% of the average wage. The training institution is eligible for additional payment (up to 50% of the minimum wage) for every unemployed person who finds a job within 30 days after the training and remains in employment for at least 6 months. The unemployed trainee may apply for a non-interest bearing training loan (up to four times the average wage in the economy), that must be repaid within 18 months. An eligible trainee participating in a course involving at least 150 training hours a month may additionally seek a training allowance within 120% of the unemployment benefit. If a trainee drops out for reasons other than getting a job, the costs of training must be repaid, together with the applicable interest.

Another supply-side instrument is internships. This instrument was introduced to activate graduates registered as unemployed within 12 months after they completed their education. This programme not only allows them to acquire occupational skills, but also increases the number of available jobs by offering employment financed by the Labour Fund.

The Act of 2004 was amended on 19 December 2008 [Dz. U. (Journal of Law) 2009, no. 6, item. 33. This amended act became effective on 1 February 2009]. Under the amended Act, internships became available to all groups of unemployed with a special status in the labour market. The eligible groups are as follows:

- the long-term unemployed,
- unemployed persons whose social contracts have expired,
- unemployed women,
- unemployed aged 50+,
- unemployed persons without occupational qualifications or experience, or those without secondary education,
- unemployed single parents with at least one minor child,
- unemployed disabled persons,
- newly released convicts who have problems finding jobs,
- maintenance debtors.

The eligible beneficiaries have been distributed among different categories established for the purpose of differentiating the duration of internships. The distribution criteria are the following: aptitude, educational attainment, and the present qualifications of a prospective beneficiary. Internships are carried out according to a structured programme which sets out the scope of the intern's tasks and the details of the person in charge. An unemployed intern may seek an internship allowance, which is granted according to the same rules as those applying for a training allowance.

The last supply instrument, on-site vocational training, continued unchanged until 2009. The unemployed users of the programme were entitled to an internship allowance. This type of training did not involve an employment contract and its maximal duration was 6 months. The main beneficiaries were persons under 25 years of age, the unskilled unemployed, and persons with a special status in the labour market.

The amendment to the Act of 2004 replaced on-site vocational training with vocational preparation for adults, available to all unemployed, also transferring some of its functions to internships.

The demand-side instruments of an active labour market policy aim to multiply employment opportunities for the unemployed by increasing the demand for labour. Their range includes subsidized work options such as public works and intervention works, job-creation funds, and community-benefitting works.

Under a public works scheme, unemployed persons may work for a period of up to 12 months. The beneficiaries do jobs that their community finds useful and which are provided by municipalities and non-governmental organizations specialising in environmental protection, culture, healthcare, unemployment, or social aid. Those eligible for public works are unemployed persons with a special status in the labour market. A provider of public works employing people for a period of 6 months may seek a refund of the costs incurred for their wages and social insurance premiums from the Labour Office. When the period of employment is 12 months, then the provider is refunded employees' costs every second month [Dz.U. (Journal of Law) 2004 no. 99, item 1001, art. 2, item 1, par. 22].

The intervention works programme consists of subsidizing the employment of unemployed persons with a special status in the labour market for employers who create additional jobs for them. This category of employees is treated as all other personnel in the organization – they are entitled to the same remuneration and benefits. In the case of the long-term unemployed, persons without occupational qualifications or secondary education, the disabled and ex-convicts, the maximum period of employment is 18 months [Dz.U. (Journal of Law) 2004 no. 99, item 1001, art. 56]. The Act grants special privileges to people aged 50+, allowing their employment to be up to 24 or 48 months. The remuneration that a full-time employee is paid from the monthly subsidy is up to the level of the unemployment benefit plus social insurance premium. If the subsidy is paid bi-monthly, then the remuneration is within the minimal wage plus social insurance premium. Part-time employees receive not more than half of the minimum wage plus the insurance premium. Employers who decide to extend full-time contracts with their formerly unemployed employees for another six months from the completion of intervention works may seek a one-time bonus, with a maximum amount of 150% of the average wage. It should be noted that not only do intervention works enable temporary activation of unemployed workers, but they also give them the chance to obtain steady jobs.

Another demand instrument for activating the unemployed is job creation funds, which are available to unemployed persons wishing to start their own business or persons planning to expand their small or medium-sized enterprises. They respectively offer self-employment opportunities and/or the possibility of creating new jobs for unemployed persons. They also help employers further the

expansion of their enterprises. An unemployed person may receive a one-off grant in cash to start a business and the qualifying expenses include legal assistance, consultations, and business guidance services. The grant may not be greater than six times the average wage paid in the economy. If the business one wishes to start is a social cooperative, the grant may not exceed four times the average wage per cooperative founding member, and three times the average wage for a regular member. For the grant to be non-repayable, the enterprise must operate for at least 12 months. If the beneficiary fails to meet this requirement, the grant must be repaid with interest.

The same instrument allows employers to seek funds for the purchase of new or additional equipment for the unemployed worker they have recruited. The refundable amount is equivalent to the gross qualifying costs, but may not be greater than six times the average wage. This form of financial aid does not require repayment if the formerly unemployed worker using the equipment stays in employment for 24 months [Dz.U. (Journal of Law) 2004 no 99, item 1001, art. 46].

Community-benefitting works were introduced in 2005 as a means of helping persons facing a particularly difficult life situation. This programme allows unemployed persons who are ineligible for unemployment benefits, and those participating in social programmes or individual life-skills programmes to be referred to community-benefitting jobs in their municipalities. The weekly number of working hours must be greater than 10 and the maximum hourly rate is 6 PLN (zlotys). Municipalities receive a refund on these employees from the Labour Fund, which amounts to 60% of the beneficiary's minimal pay [Dz.U. (Journal of Law) 2004, no 99, item 1001, art. 73a].

Labour offices have been established to help the unemployed by making their job-seeking activities more effective. The range of services they offer includes occupational guidance, placement, the payment of activation allowances, and supporting their clients in actively searching for jobs.

Occupational guidance provides the unemployed and job-seekers with structured information about the most appropriate jobs and employers, as well as about training and education opportunities. Employers are supported in selecting the right type of an employee and in making the occupational development of their new and existing personnel more efficient. In providing occupational guidance, labour offices must observe the following rules (Dolny, Maksim 2010, p. 42): availability and voluntary use of services, non-discrimination, the freedom to choose a job and an employer, gratuitousness, and the protection of personal data.

Labour offices need an efficient job placement system to function effectively. This system is geared to seek and utilise job offers in an optimal

way, i.e. to find a candidate with the needed occupational skills for a particular job. Acting as an intermediary that helps bring together unemployed individuals and employers, labour offices also advise their unemployed clients of their rights and duties. These responsibilities make close cooperation with employers and the acquisition of job offers a very important part of their business. A labour office may reject a job offer from an employer if it violates the equal treatment principle or discriminates against some applicants. Placement services are provided free of charge on a voluntary basis and are available to all unemployed. It is reasonable to assert that for labour offices to be effective as a provider of placement services, they need well-trained and active placement consultants, capable of expanding and boosting interaction with the labour market. Consultants' performance should be evaluated against the number of job offers they have managed to acquire, particularly for people with a special status in the labour market. With Poland now an EU member state, the importance of international job placement has increased. The delivery of services in this area is facilitated by a special programme called EURES (the European Employment Service). Its specialized staff, known as EURES counsellors, offer information and guidance to people who want to find jobs or personnel in other Member States.

The activation allowance is available to unemployed individuals with a right to an unemployment benefit if the money they earn after re-employment is less than the mandatory minimum wage in a given year. Its amount is calculated as the difference between their remuneration and the minimum wage. However, it may not exceed 50% of the unemployment benefit that a person would draw if unemployed. The allowance is not paid when the employer has been refunded the costs of new or additional equipment for the worker, the worker has been employed by the same employer they worked for before registering as unemployed, or when the job is abroad [*Ustawa o promocji zatrudnienia i instytucjach rynku pracy z 20 kwietnia 2004 roku 9 (The Law on Promotion of Employment and Labour Market Institutions of 20 April 2004)*, Dz.U. (Journal of Law) 2004, no 99, item. 1001, art. 48].

Another important service provided by labour offices involves activities aimed at making the unemployed more committed to seeking jobs. The programmes used to this end include job-seeking training for the unemployed, activation classes, and access to electronic databases that teach the skill of job-searching and self-employment. Courses are provided at so-called 'job clubs' and information and career planning centres. The main target groups are persons who do not know how to seek jobs, have lost motivation for seeking employment, or plan to re-join the labour force after being economically inactive for a long period.

It is worth noting that the active labour policy derives its significance from its great number of activities based on different demand-side and supply-side programmes and from the services of labour offices. The programmes could be made more effective by being customized to the needs of the local labour markets and by ensuring the careful selection of their participants. In other words, the active programmes should focus on groups facing a high risk of unemployment and having an inferior status in the labour market.

### 3. Expenditures related to the active labour market policy

All programmes within the labour market policy are financed by the Labour Fund (LF). This institution was established on 1 January 1990 as a special fund of the State. Its income is derived from premiums paid by employers (2.45% of the base used to calculate workers' old-age and disability premiums), EU funds, a budget subsidy, and loans. These various forms of income are not subject to income tax. The Fund's expenditures and the dynamics of their changes are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3. The levels and dynamics of Labour Fund's expenditures in Poland in the years 2005-2010**

Specification	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Total expenditure, in million PLN	5587	5513	5352	5755	11245	12234
Dynamics						
- 2005 = 100	100.0	98.7	95.8	103.0	201.3	218.9
- previous year = 100	100.0	98.7	97.1	107.5	195.4	108.8

Source: Ministry of Finance (MF) data, [www.mf.gov.pl](http://www.mf.gov.pl), calculated by the author.

According to the data above, the Labour Fund spent similar amounts in the period 2005-2007, during which time a weak downward trend in expenditures caused by the improving labour market situation is noticeable. The spending increased again in 2008, more clearly compared to the previous year (by 7.5%), but less markedly compared to the baseline year of the analysis (3%). In 2009 and 2010 the Fund's expenditures grew considerably, driven by the economic downturn and the worsening situation in the labour market, manifested in the rising level and rate of unemployment. Compared with 2005, the increases in those two years exceeded 100% and 118%, respectively. Analysing expenditure increases against the previous year's data we see that their dynamics in 2009 was extremely high (an increase of 95.4%), but in 2010 the process slowed down to an 8.8% increase vis-à-vis the previous year.

The Labour Fund was established for the purpose of financing both active and passive labour market policies. The major expenditure items in its budget are the operating costs of labour offices, the reimbursement of social insurance premiums, remitted loans, and the costs of investments for the public employment service. The structure of the expenditures is presented in Table 4 below.

**Table 4. The structure of Labour Fund's expenditures in Poland, years 2005-2010 (%)**

<b>LabourFund's expenditures</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Passive anti-unemployment programmes (benefits and allowances)	54.0	51.1	42.0	33.1	40.0	40.9
Active anti-unemployment programmes	33.7	38.7	50.9	58.4	55.2	54.2
Other expenditures	12.3	10.2	7.1	8.5	4.8	4.9

Source: developed by the author based on the MF's data.

In 2005 and 2006 the most funds were spent on unemployment benefits and pre-retirement allowances for the unemployed. These two items accounted for over 50% of LF's total expenditures. It was not until the following years that their proportion decreased to 40% on average (the lowest percentage share coming in 2008 – 33%). Thus a marked trend in expenditures was the changing allocations from passive to active labour market programmes. While in 2005 and 2006 the active programmes consumed a relatively small portion of the LF's budget (between 33-39%), their 2007 share accounted for more than 50% (the largest share being in 2008 – 58.4%). The changes in the structure of the Fund's expenditures must be recognised as advantageous, because significantly greater allocations to the active labour market programmes enable the occupational activation of the unemployed and help reduce unemployment in the country, making it easier for the pro-employment economic policy to achieve its objectives. They also prevent workers' passive attitudes from consolidation.

It is worth comparing expenditures on active (ALMP) and passive (PLMP) labour market policies in Poland and the other EU-27 countries. The percentage share of this expenditure in the GDP of individual countries in 2010 will be considered for this purpose. The programs of active labour market policies include: job placement services and career counselling, vocational training, job rotation and job sharing, employment incentives, promotion of employment opportunities and rehabilitation for disabled persons, job creation, and start-up incentives for the unemployed. The passive programs include benefits for unemployed and early retirement benefits.

**Table 5. Expenditures for active and passive labour market policies in Poland and other EU-27 countries in 2010 (% of GDP)**

Country	ALMP	PLMP
EU-27 <sup>a</sup>	0.773	1.358
Belgium	1.487	2.281
Bulgaria	0.133	0.451
Czech Republic	0.341	0.375
Denmark	1.788	1.58
Germany	0.933	1.327
Estonia	0.228	0.859
Ireland	0.916	3.031
Greece	0.226	0.701
Spain	0.797	3.107
France	1.127	1.447
Italy	0.38	1.456
Cyprus	0.289	0.59
Latvia	0.554	0.693
Lithuania	0.309	0.483
Luxembourg	0.456	0.779
Hungary	0.608	0.71
Malta	0.154	0.347
Netherlands	1.171	1.743
Austria	0.853	1.414
Poland	0.696	0.343
Portugal	0.694	1.391
Romania	0.058	0.557
Slovenia	0.446	0.72
Slovakia	0.332	0.605
Finland	0.993	1.775
Sweden	1.312	0.535
United Kingdom	0.387	0.31

<sup>a</sup> data for EU-27 and UK for 2009

Source: LMP Expenditure by Type of Action (Summary Tables, % of GDP) Eurostat Database, Luxembourg, <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do> (access 19.11.2012).

Based on the data from Table 5 it can be said that the share of expenditures for active and passive labour market policies in Poland was below the average share of this expenditure in the GDPs of EU-27 as a whole. In total, in 2010 Poland spent 1.039% of GDP on the two policies while the EU-27 spent 1.131% of GDP in 2009. Among the Member States, the following countries

demonstrated a high percentage of GDP spent on labour market policy; Ireland 3.947%, Spain 3.904%, Belgium 3.768%, and Denmark 3.368%. A relatively small percentage of GDP was spent on labour market policy in the following Member States: Malta 0.501%, Bulgaria 0.584%, and Romania 0.615%. In many countries the structure of expenditures on labour market policies has changed. The expenditure on active labour policy increased in countries such as Denmark, Belgium, Sweden, and the Netherlands. Significantly less was spent on activation of the unemployed in countries such as Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania, Romania, and Slovakia. There are also changes in the internal structure of expenditures on active policies. These changes involve a gradual reduction of expenditures on relatively expensive and ineffective programs designed to provide temporary jobs in the public sector and subsidize employment in the private sector. The changes also involve an increase in the relatively cheaper and more effective schemes, such as job placement and career counselling, vocational training, and monitoring of unemployed (Kalinowska-Sufinowicz 2013, p.182).

The importance of selected active programmes as anti-unemployment measures is shown in Table 4 below.

**Table 4. The structure of expenditures on active programmes in Poland, years 2005-2010 (%)**

Specification	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Total expenditure	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
including:						
- training	9.7	9.2	10.7	9.0	9.5	9.2
- intervention works	10.4	10.8	8.6	6.3	4.5	4.1
- public works	15.7	7.2	7.1	8.0	8.2	8.9
- community-benefitting work	x	1.3	1.3	1.1	0.9	0.8
- internships	32.1	33.1	27.8	29.6	33.7	35.6
- on-site vocational training	10.4	10.0	8.6	11.3	3.2	x
- start-up funds		18.4	21.5	22.5	27.2	26.1
- new or additional equipment for a worker	21.7	9.9	14.5	12.3	12.8	15.4

Source: Efektywność podstawowych form aktywizacji zawodowej realizowanych w ramach programów na rzecz promocji zatrudnienia, łagodzenia skutków bezrobocia i aktywizacji zawodowej (The Effectiveness of Basic Forms of Occupational Activation within the Framework of Programmes Promoting Employment and Mitigating the Effects of Unemployment), 2005-2010, MPiPS, Warszawa 2010.

The data of the MPiPS (Ministry of Labour and Social Policy) shows that the amounts of funds allocated to anti-unemployment programmes in the years 2005 and 2010 grew from PLN 2,052mln to 6,747mln. The active labour market programmes accounted for PLN 1,870mln in 2005 and for 5,323mln in 2010, i.e.

almost a three-fold increase. Regarding the structure of expenditures on the active programmes, in each year of the analysed period internships consumed the most funds, with internships' percentage share being the greatest in 2009 and 2010 (between 33-35%). The proportion of the start-up funds was also considerable (initially around 21%, but increasing to 26-27% in 2009 and 2010). This proves that the development of entrepreneurial attitudes among the unemployed was becoming increasingly important. Other programmes attracted much smaller funding, but allocations to the purchase of new and additional equipment for workers grew in the years in question from 9.9% to 15.4%. The training funds' share in the total budget was quite stable (over 9%). The proportionate share of public works generally declined, from 15.7% in 2005 to 8.9% in 2010, but from 2008 on it stabilised at circa 8%. The share of intervention works shrunk significantly and continuously (falling from 10.4% to 4.1% between 2005 and 2010), but it must be recalled that some of its functions were taken over by on-site vocational training, whose average share between 2005 and 2008 represented 10% of the total spending. In 2009 on-site vocational training consumed only 3.2%, but the exact data for that year is not available because the programme was replaced that year by vocational preparation for adults. The lowest amount of available resources was devoted to community-benefitting works (ca.1%).

Generally, between 2005 and 2010 the demand-side instruments increased their share in the total budget allocated to the active labour market policy, from 47.8% to 55.3%. Conversely, the supply-side instruments' proportionate share declined from 52.2% to 44.8%. These changes show quite clearly that the Polish labour market policy switched from making the unemployed and job-seekers more employable to stimulating job creation.

#### **4. The users of the active labour market programmes**

The number of unemployed users of the active labour market programmes (ALMP) in Poland rose between 2005 and 2010. Compared with 2005 when 561,700 unemployed people used the basic measures of activation, in 2010 the number was already 788,700, an increase of 40.4%. The share of ALMP users in the registered unemployed population rose between the first and last year of the analysed period from 20.3% to 40.3%, as the group of unemployed people using occupational activation programmes was expanding.

**Table 5. Expenditures on ALMP users in Poland in the years 2005-2010, thousands PLN**

Specification	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Total	561.7	594.3	672.8	652.3	749.4	788.7
including:						
- training	150.9	146.9	178.1	168.3	168.3	182.3
- intervention works	70.9	69.1	59.1	46.0	40.3	43.1
- public works	69.2	32.7	40.9	44.5	54.0	74.6
- community-benefitting work	x	61.5	73.4	63.9	65.8	67.6
- internships	162.7	169.1	173.0	169.9	256.7	299.3
- on-site vocational training	67.0	58.3	65.8	79.4	72.0	X
- start-up funds	27.9	34.9	45.1	52.2	63.9	77.0
- new or additional equipment for a worker	13.1	21.8	37.4	28.0	28.4	44.6

Source: see Table 4.

**Table 6. Proportional shares of expenditures on ALMP users in Poland per category, years 2005-2010 (%)**

Specification	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
including:						
- training	26.9	24.7	26.5	25.8	22.5	23.1
- intervention works	12.6	11.6	8.8	7.1	5.4	5.5
- public works	12.3	5.5	6.1	6.8	7.2	9.5
- community-benefitting work	x	10.3	10.9	9.8	8.8	8.6
- internships	29.0	28.5	25.7	26.0	34.3	37.9
- on-site vocational training	11.9	9.8	9.8	12.2	9.6	X
- start-up funds	5.0	5.9	6.7	8.0	8.5	9.8
- new or additional equipment for a worker	2.3	3.7	5.6	4.3	3.8	5.7

Source: calculated by the author based on the data in Table 5.

Internships and training courses were the most frequently used instruments to activate the unemployed population. The number of interns increased in the years in question by 136,600 people (around 84%). Their percentage also rose from 29% to around 38% of all ALMP users. Between 2005 and 2010 the group of trainees grew in number by 31,400 (20.8%), but their proportionate share in the total population of ALMP users declined by 3.8 percentage points. The proportion of people undergoing training started to decline from 2007. The number of unemployed people benefitting from intervention works decreased considerably in the analysed years – by around

28,000 people (over 39%). Their proportional share also shrank as a consequence, from 12.6% to 5.5%. At the same time, the number of people covered by community-benefitting works increased by 6,100, although in spite of this their share in the total unemployed population covered by activation measures decreased from over 10% to 8.6%. More people became interested in on-site vocational training – the number of its users rose from 67,000 to 72,000, with the programme becoming open to all unemployed and job seekers. The number of employers and unemployed people benefitting from job creation funds (start-up funds and funds dedicated to the purchase of new and additional equipment for workers) increased by 196.6% (from 41,000 to 121,600 people in total), and their proportionate share went up from 7.3% to 15.5% of all ALMP users.

Overall, the number of people using the active demand-side instruments which represent the scale of subsidised employment (intervention works, public works, community-benefitting work and jobs created from public funds by employers and the unemployed) increased in the years 2005-2010 by 36.9%. Their share among all unemployed users of ALMP rose from 32.2% to 39.1%. Regarding the users of the other active supply-side instruments (training courses, internships, and on-site vocational training), this group expanded somewhat less (by 26.3%), and its proportionate share in the total unemployed population benefitting from ALMP declined from 67.8% to 61%<sup>2</sup>.

Table 7 shows the number of unemployed persons completing particular programmes and their percentage shares among all programme users by year.

According to the data, the average percentage of unemployed persons who successfully completed particular active labour market programmes in 2006-2008 and 2010 exceeded 95%. Lower rates can only be found in 2005 and 2009 (89.3% and around 87%, respectively).

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<sup>2</sup> The number of users of vocational preparation programmes for adults, which replaced on-site vocational training in 2010, has been omitted due to data unavailability, so the share of those who took advantage of the active supply-side programmes is likely to be underestimated. If we assume that the 2010 percentage of those who used *vocational preparation for adults* was 9.6%, i.e. the same as in 2009, then the total number of supply-side programme users is 565,4 and the new total of users is 872,5. So, between 2005 and 2010 the supply-side share would be reduced by 3% (from 67,8% to 64,8%, and the demand-side share would be increased by 3% (from 32,2% to 35,2%).

**Table 7. Users completing activation programmes in Poland, years 2005-2010**

Specification	2005		2006		2007		2008		2009		2010	
	thous-ands	completion (comp.) %	thous-ands	comp. %								
Total	501.8	89.3	567.7	95.5	647.9	96.3	607.4	93.1	651.2	86.9	759.3	96.3
including:												
- training	147.6	97.8	142.1	96.7	172.4	96.8	163.3	97.0	163.7	97.3	178.5	97.9
- intervention works	60.5	85.3	62.5	90.4	56.4	95.4	46.6	101.3	39.2	97.3	40.6	94.2
- public works	68.1	98.4	34.7	106.1	37.7	92.2	42.4	95.3	52.3	96.9	73.2	98.1
- community-benefitting work	x	X	56.9	92.5	72.5	98.8	61.2	95.8	64.8	98.5	65.2	96.4
- internships	135.6	83.3	155.6	92.0	164.5	95.1	150.0	88.3	208.9	81.4	279.9	93.5
- on-site vocational training	48.6	72.5	59.2	101.5	61.3	93.2	63.7	80.2	30.0	41.7	x	x
- start-up funds	27.9	100.0	34.9	100.0	45.1	100.0	52.2	100.0	63.9	100.0	77.0	100.0
- new or additional equipment for a worker	13.1	100.0	21.8	100.0	37.4	100.0	28.0	100.0	28.4	100.0	44.6	100.0

Source: Efektywność podstawowych form aktywizacji zawodowej realizowanych w ramach programów na rzecz promocji zatrudnienia... (The Effectiveness of Basic Forms of Occupational Activation...), op. cit. Calculations by the author.

Measures designed to activate the unemployed, such as job creation funds, start-up funds, and the purchase of new and additional equipment for workers by employers were 100% successfully completed, i.e. as many people completed the programmes as were admitted to them.

The rate of unemployed persons that finished training courses was also high in the analysed years – over 97%. Intervention works were less successful in that respect, though. The numbers of participants who dropped out of those programmes in the first two years of the period were 10,400 and 6,600, respectively. In the next years fewer persons enrolled in the programme, but the percentage of those who finished it rose (95%-100%). The proportional shares of persons who completed the public works programme in the years 2005-2010 were also high. In 2005 and 2010 they exceeded 98% and the 2006 rate was even greater (in excess of 100%, because persons who started the programme in late 2005 ended it the following year). As in the case of the other programmes, only an insignificant fraction of persons participating in community-benefitting works decided to withdraw from the programme before its end, the percentage of those who finished it being around 96-98%. The only year when the rate was lower, 92.5%, was 2006, but this was the first year of the programme. As far as internships are concerned, it is notable that despite a considerable and growing number of interns, the percentage rates of those who finished the programme were relatively lower. The lowest rates were recorded in 2005 and 2009 (slightly above 80%). In the other years the average rate of completion was 92% of programme users. Regarding on-site vocational training, the numbers of dropouts recorded in particular years of the analysed period were quite considerable. The greatest differences between those enrolled for the programme and those who finished it took place in 2005 and 2009, when respectively over 18,400 and 42,000 people left the programme before it officially ended.

## **5. The effectiveness of the active labour market programmes**

The performance of the active labour market programmes as anti-unemployment tools is evaluated by employment effectiveness and cost effectiveness.

Employment effectiveness is tantamount to the re-employment rate. The data characterising the employment effectiveness of the examined programmes can be found in Table 8.

Among all the analysed years, the employment effectiveness of activation programmes addressed to the unemployed population was the lowest in 2005,

when the re-employment rate was estimated at 47.3%. It was the highest (around 55-58%) from 2006 to 2008, when the situation in the labour market improved as a result of the good economic conditions. In the next two years, 2009-2010, the employment effectiveness declined to 53-54%, arising from the economic slowdown and the presence of more unemployed workers in the Polish economy.

**Table 8. Employment effectiveness<sup>a)</sup> of active labour market programmes in Poland in the years 2005-2010 (%)**

Specification	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Total	47.3	54.9	57.7	56.0	53.2	54.2
including:						
- training	37.2	45.1	44.4	39.2	34.3	36.7
- intervention works	66.3	72.2	74.3	73.4	71.8	70.8
- public works	29.0	46.0	46.9	46.6	48.0	46.0
- community-benefitting work	x	35.0	44.0	43.4	39.8	39.8
- internships	46.3	51.1	55.2	54.2	49.5	48.4
- on-site vocational training	46.5	51.1	52.6	53.4	52.0	x
- start-up funds	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
- new or additional equipment for a worker	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

<sup>a)</sup> Employment effectiveness is measured as the ratio of the number of people who within three months of completion of a programme found a regular job, other gainful employment, or started their own firm, to the total population completing the programme in the designated year.

Source: see Table 7.

The employment effectiveness of particular active programmes was different in different years. Its highest rates, 100% by definition, were recorded for start-up funds and the purchase of new and additional equipment for workers. Intervention works were also relatively effective in terms of re-employment; on average, 70% of the unemployed users of the programme found employment following its completion. The probable explanation for this situation lies in the considerably smaller group of people using the programme and its requirements: employers must sign employment contracts with the unemployed persons who have been referred to them, and in order for their employment to be subsidised it must go on for as long as specified in the contract. Internships and on-site vocational training also produced relatively high re-employment rates. The re-employment rate for internships rose from 46% in 2005 to an average of 53.5% in 2006-2008. But in the last two years of the entire analysed period it fell below 50%, to 48.4% in 2010, a trend which shows that the range of employment opportunities available to the programme

participants was decreasing. The employment effectiveness of on-site vocational training ranged between 51 and 53% from 2006 on. Regarding public works, the re-employment rate of its users was the lowest (29%) among the programmes in 2005, but in the following years it stabilised at a significantly higher level of 46-48%. This indicates the higher probability of getting a job by those who finished the programme. The least effective programmes, in terms of re-employment, were training and community-benefitting works. The employment effectiveness of training considerably deteriorated in 2009 (declining to 34.3% from 44-45% in the previous years). This trend shows that training, as an instrument reducing structural gaps in the labour market, was not fully utilised. To counter the situation, training curricula should address local employers' needs to the greatest extent possible. The employment effectiveness of community-benefitting works was somewhat higher in the analysed years – it was estimated at 40%.

Let us now examine the cost effectiveness characterising particular active programmes addressed to the labour market.

Cost effectiveness is defined as the cost of re-employing an unemployed person who has completed a programme of occupational activation. The data concerning cost effectiveness is set forth in Table 9.

**Table 9. The cost effectiveness<sup>a)</sup> (re-employment costs per user) of ALMPs in Poland in the years 2005-2010 (in PLN)**

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Total	7842	6511	6681	9148	11590	12948
including:						
- training	3173	2911	3477	4374	6762	7431
- intervention works	4835	4869	5118	5737	6415	7549
- public works	14884	9102	10050	12578	13122	14069
- community-benefitting work	x	1285	1039	1277	1423	1597
- internships	9557	8458	7615	11309	13085	13977
- on-site vocational training	8567	6720	6664	10299	8245	x
- start-up funds	12035	10700	11904	13402	17102	18037
- new or additional equipment for a worker		9200	9654	13685	18143	18380

<sup>a)</sup> The cost effectiveness is measured as the ratio of the annual costs of running an activation programme to the number of people who, within three months of completion of the programme found a regular job, other gainful employment, or started their own firm.

Source: see Table 8.

The cost effectiveness of the active labour market programmes increased throughout the analysed period, particularly between 2008 and 2010. The costs of re-employing an unemployed person increased in total by more than 5100

PLN (65%) and the most cost-effective programme was community-benefitting works. The amount that the programme needed to re-employ a person was initially PLN 1 000-1 200, but in the years 2009-2010 it increased by PLN 100-200. The cost effectiveness of training and intervention works was also relatively high, although re-employment costs rose in both cases. In the case of training, the initial amount of re-employment costs, being PLN 2911 on average in 2006, increased by PLN 4520 in 2010. The costs of employing a person under intervention works were also initially relatively low (PLN 4800-5100), but gradually rose to PLN 7549 in 2010, which somewhat deteriorated the cost effectiveness of this programme.

Start-up funds for the unemployed had the lowest cost effectiveness in the analysed period. The re-employment costs in the programme increased from PLN 12035 to 18037, i.e. by almost 50%.

Public works were very costly too. The re-employment costs per unemployed beneficiary kept rising, and reached over PLN 14000 in 2010. Even so, public works are important for the long-term unemployed and low-skilled people, because they help them integrate into the labour market. Therefore, despite the reservations that may arise from the programme's relatively low employment effectiveness and comparatively high operating costs, the programme is still important for being able to activate groups of people facing particularly difficult situations in the labour market and the highest risk of permanent unemployment. The cost effectiveness of the programme 'purchase of new and additional equipment for a worker' was low. Its re-employment costs rose steadily, reaching PLN 18 380 in 2010, twice the 2006 amount. Somewhat smaller funds were needed to re-employ interns and the users of on-site vocational training. In the former case, the amount the Labour Fund had to spend to re-employ a person increased between 2005 and 2010 from PLN 9 557 to 13 977, being greater in the last year of the analysed period by PLN 4440 (46.5%). The second programme reflected a greater cost effectiveness, as the re-employment costs increased much less, to PLN 8245 in 2010.

The conclusion arising from the above presentation is that for ALMPs to be more effective they must be specifically and well addressed to the needs of the target groups, the programmes must be evaluated for performance, and appropriate adjustments must be introduced whenever necessary. In particular it would be advisable to increase the employment effectiveness of training, to improve the quality of job placement and occupational guidance services, and to increase the effectiveness of internships and on-site vocational training. Poland's 2009 allocations to ALMPs accounted for 0.53% of the country's GDP, compared with the EU average of 0.44%. It must be noted, though, that in some developed EU countries the allocations are even greater, for instance in Belgium

they constitute 1.19% of GDP, in Denmark - 1.17%, the Netherlands – 0.79%, Austria and Sweden – 0.67% each, and Germany – 0.61%. The important objectives include improved effectiveness of labour market programmes stimulating the occupational activity of the unemployed, the correct selection of participants for the programmes, and the monitoring of the programmes so that public funds spent on them are not wasted.

## 6. Conclusions

The above presentation leads to the following conclusions:

- the importance of an active labour market policy as an instrument reducing unemployment and narrowing structural gaps in the labour market is generally recognized, and reflected in many governmental programmes and laws;
- the active labour market policy should be integrated with the pro-employment policy of the State, as this approach guarantees a higher effectiveness of measures developed to improve the labour market situation;
- the restructuring of Labour Fund's expenditures, involving a transfer of funds from the passive programmes to the active ones, was a move in the right direction;
- in order to gain better knowledge of what the labour market needs and to launch anti-unemployment measures, labour offices must improve the dynamics and quality of their operation in areas such as job placement and occupational guidance and information services, by recruiting employees having specialist knowledge of these areas and ensuring that there is good cooperation between them and local authorities;
- the high diversity of measures applied within the active labour policy is a positive phenomenon. Special attention should be given to the demand-side instruments that not only strengthen entrepreneurial attitudes, but also offer subsidised jobs to groups of people facing the highest risk of unemployment in order to help them enter the labour market. The other important group, supply-side instruments, are mostly intended to improve the occupational qualifications and skills of the unemployed;
- higher effectiveness of the occupational activation programmes addressed to the unemployed population calls for improved targeting criteria, the careful selection of programme participants, monitoring of the labour market, and analysing the employment and cost effectiveness of the active programmes;

- in the analysed period spanning the years 2005-2010, community-benefitting works, training, and intervention works had the greatest cost effectiveness, while intervention works, internships, and on-site vocational training showed the highest re-employment rates. Because the employment effectiveness of training was relatively low throughout the years in question, labour offices should improve their cooperation with employers to get to know their preferences, and also to learn about the needs of the labour market.

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Efektywność podstawowych form aktywizacji zawodowej realizowanych w ramach programów na rzecz promocji zatrudnienia, łagodzenia skutków bezrobocia i aktywizacji zawodowej 2005-2010 (The Effectiveness of Basic Forms of Occupational Activation within the Framework of Programmes Promoting Employment and Mitigating the Effects of Unemployment), MPiPS, Warszawa 2010

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## Streszczenie

### **PROGRAMY AKTYWNEJ POLITYKI RYNKU PRACY W POLSCE W LATACH 2005-2010**

*W warunkach wysokiego strukturalnego bezrobocia w Polsce ważną rolę w jego zwalczaniu odgrywa aktywna polityka państwa na rynku pracy. Strukturalny charakter bezrobocia wynika z niedopasowania struktury podaży pracy do struktury popytu na pracę w aspekcie kwalifikacyjnym, zawodowym i przestrzennym. Bezrobocie to jest głównie determinowane koniecznością przemian strukturalnych w polskiej gospodarce dla poprawy jej innowacyjności, konkurencyjności i efektywności jako państwa członkowskiego Unii Europejskiej.*

*Podstawowym celem opracowania jest ocena skuteczności aktywnej polityki rynku pracy w zwalczaniu bezrobocia w Polsce w latach 2005-2010. Realizacja tego celu wymaga dokonania charakterystyki instrumentów tej polityki oraz usług urzędów pracy w procesie aktywizacji zawodowej bezrobotnych, ukazania wydatków na realizację aktywnej polityki rynku pracy oraz uczestników programów aktywnych, którzy dzięki nim uzyskali zatrudnienie. Podjęta jest także ocena efektów zatrudnieniowych i kosztowych związana ze stosowaniem aktywnej polityki rynku pracy.*