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**STRUCTURAL FUNDS FOR THE INCREASE
OF COMPETENCES OF EMPLOYEES OF ENTERPRISE
IN POLAND – THE DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF
OF ENTREPRENEURS****Abstract**

The quality of human capital in enterprises will have more and more influence on the size of the Polish economy. Currently, some branches of industry already lack in qualified employees, including management staff. Therefore, Operational Programme “Human Resources Development” will support the increase of employment and social cohesion, among others by occupational activation, the development of adaptation potential of enterprises and their employees, an increase of the education level of the society, a decrease of areas of social exclusion and support of mechanisms of effective management in state administration. Support directed at enterprises and their employees will be provided in a wide range, especially for persons with low or out of date professional qualifications, in order to strengthen their potential and adjust their qualifications, including transfer support. All these elements are supposed to lead to a situation in which, after a completed support process, the Polish economy will become more competitive. In this paper, I would like to present the assessment of structural funds in the light of development of competences of the staff of entrepreneurs.

Introduction

In the whole characteristics of Operational Programme “Human Resources Development”, Priority II Development of Human Resources and Adaptation of Potential of Enterprises deserves special attention. It has one of the highest allocations of financial means intended for an increase of competitiveness, innovation and development of adaptation potential of enterprises through an

increase of qualifications of employees of companies and economic and social partners.

Currently, in the countries of old EU the tendency of transition from an economy based on work and capital to a knowledge-based economy, where information, know-how and information and communication technologies are the most important, is even stronger. Poland is still delayed in this scope, which is caused by an improper use or adjustment of human capital.

Challenges in the scope of technological changes in EU are connected with the necessity to invest in knowledge and skills of Polish staff of entrepreneurs', especially in SME sector. An active policy in the scope of staff education is an important element of the promotion of Poland as a place that is attractive for investors. It is necessary to strengthen the adaptation potential of enterprises through support of new solutions in the scope of work organization and forms of work performance. These activities aim at the improvement of competitiveness of enterprises and maintenance of current workplaces, as well as a balance between elasticity and competitiveness and safety of employment. A modern global economy requires more and more from the enterprises. The development of an enterprise, meeting the requirements of competition or maintenance of market position depend on human capital and identification of its needs. The determination of system frameworks which will enable the optimal use of adaptation potential and support of companies in the scope of employees' trainings is an important element of functioning of a system for entrepreneurship support. One also has to remember about proper adjustment of the training offer to expectations of entrepreneurs and persons who are about to start a business activity.¹

The aim of this paper is to characterize and assess the structural funds in the scope of development of employees' competences as important sources of financing of various forms of improvement of qualifications of employees in Poland. This paper consists of two chapters. In the first chapter, terms of human capital, social capital, qualifications and their importance in maintenance of strong position on the market will be explained. In the second chapter, I will describe the structural funds that have supported the development of human resources in the years 2007-2013, as well as operational programmes that have implemented them.

¹ Program Operacyjny Kapitał Ludzki, Opis priorytetów i działań, Warszawa 2007.

1. Human resources, level of education and companies development

1.1. Human resources definition

Human resources, next to financial and material resources of an enterprise, are one of the basic resources of an organization, and according to many contemporary theorists and practitioners of management – the most important of them. Human resources are composed of the whole team of persons who create the organization, starting from regular employees, ending with directors that manage the whole organization. Former management theories were not interested in the importance of human capital in an organization, emphasizing work efficiency, economical aspects of a business, functioning or use of modern machines and technologies in the production process. Nowadays, human resources are the central element of idea from the scope of social potential management, according to which they are the most valuable capital of an organization. As a term, human capital appeared already in the 18th century in works of the Scottish economist Adam Smith. The synonyms of human resources are: employees, human capital, staff, personnel.² However, as an economic term it appeared only in the late 1950s and 1960s. Theodore Schultz, while analysing the situation of underdeveloped countries, noticed that the achievement of well-being by poor people does not depend on the fact whether they own any land, machines, energy, but on their knowledge. He called this quality aspect of economy “human capital”³. Usually, human capital is defined as a combination of own inborn talents and abilities of individuals, and skills and knowledge that are gained during education and trainings (Sometimes, health is also mentioned). The world of business has willingly adopted the concept of human capital, but it usually treats it mostly as skills and talents of workforce that have a direct influence on success of a particular business or branch⁴. Human capital is completed with social capital, which enables more effective group activities. According to R. Putnam, social capital presents such qualities of society as trust and standards and connections that may increase the efficiency of society by facilitating the coordinated actions, but horizontal, not vertical connections within civil commitment are the most important. Networks of connections that are of informal, horizontal and personal character have a beneficial influence on economy⁵. Social capital facilitates the actions of individuals inside the structures and enables the achievement of certain goals, which

² Portal Rynku, *Pracy Słownik HR*, www.hrk.pl

³ Fitz-enz Jac, *Rentowność inwestycji w kapitał ludzki*, ABC, 2001, s. 8.

⁴ OECD Insights Human Capital: How what you know shapes your life Summary in Polish.

⁵ R. Putnam, *Demokracja*, op. cit., s. 258 za M. Młokosiewicz *Kapitał społeczny i kapitał ludzki a kwestia ubóstwa*, [w:] D. Kopycińska (red.) *Kapitał ludzki w gospodarce*, PTE, Szczecin 2003, s. 94.

would not be possible without it. According to J. Coleman, a commonly shared value stating that everyone should resign from his/her own benefits and act for the benefit of society is an unusually strong social resource. Such rule, strengthened by social approval, status, prestige and other prizes, is a social capital that motivates people to work for public benefit.⁶ The idea of analysing the social capital in the context of knowledge management is relatively young. It may be caused by the fact that it was overshadowed by other concepts that were focused on systemic solutions and solutions connected with the activity of an organization as a whole. People, processes and technologies were so often mentioned as the most important sources of organization effectiveness that many of us have forgotten about social mechanisms. One of the most important arguments for the consideration of human capital is the fact that if used properly, it brings positive results, which are the following:⁷

- More efficient sharing of knowledge – thanks to relations based on trust and common goals,
- Lower costs of transactions – thanks to a high level of trust and spirit of cooperation (not only within the organization, but also in contact with its clients and partners),
- Levelling of personnel changes, costs borne while dismissing employees, costs connected with employing and training the new ones,
- Avoiding stagnations caused by changes of personnel,
- Maintenance of valuable organizational knowledge,
- Better cohesion and complexity of actions thanks to understanding of goals and better stability of organization.

Social capital is located in civil commitment networks and is a moral resource. It has a direct influence on the quality of citizens' lives and economic results of enterprises in our country.⁸ There are many definitions of human resource management. According to M. Armstrong, it is a philosophy of business concerning the management of people in order to use their possibilities, in order to outrival the competition and maintain a strong position on the market. In order to defeat the rivals, one has to invest not only in technology, but also in people⁹.

⁶ T. Grosse, *Kapitał jak katalizator*, CEO, 7 października 2002.

⁷ M. Kowalkiewicz, *Zarządzanie wiedzą krok po kroku* (3), Gazeta IT, nr 9, 2005.

⁸ A. Fazlagic, *Kapitał społeczny i zaufanie w Polsce*, Modern Marketing, nr 1, 2004.

⁹ M. Armstrong, *Zarządzanie zasobami ludzkimi Strategia i działania*, Wydawnictwo Profesjonalnej Szkoły Biznesu 1996, s. 25.

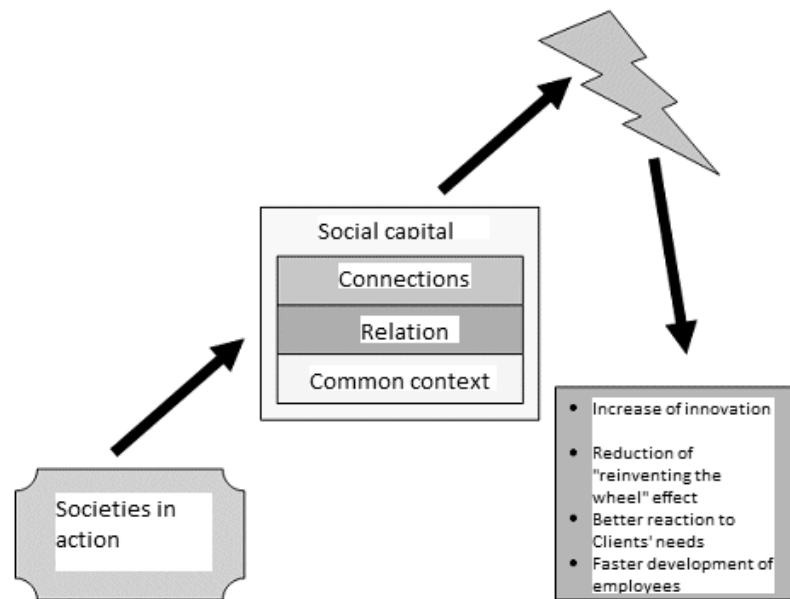


Fig. 1. Social capital

Source: M. Kowalkiewicz, *Zarządzanie wiedzą krok po kroku* (3), *Gazeta IT*, nr 9, 2005.

P. Drucker, American classic of management and organization theory, in one of his works presents seven basic qualities that characterize management. They are presented below:¹⁰

- Management concerns mostly people. Its aim is such cooperation of many people which enables the neutralisation of weaknesses and maximal use of talents and strengths of participants. People are the most important resource of organization.
- Management is deeply rooted in the culture. Individuals are participants of many cultures: national, regional, professional, organizational. Effective influence on other people requires the knowledge of cultures in which they participate and respect to these cultures. Change of an organizational culture is one of the basic conditions of efficient restructuring of post-communist enterprises.
- Management requires simple and understandable values, aims of action and tasks, uniting all members of organization. Values and aims should lead to their emotional commitment. Such ambitious tasks have the ability to mobilize

¹⁰ A.K. Koźmiński, W. Piotrowski, *Zarządzanie. Teoria i praktyka*, PWN, Warszawa, 1996, s. 136-142.

people to effort even when they seem unlikely at the beginning. The especially suggestive examples are the ones of Japanese companies that in 1950s aimed at equalling the American giants, which seemed crazy at the time.

- Management should lead to the situation in which an organization is able to learn, to adapt to changing conditions and constant improvement of participants, which means acquiring new skills, possibilities and patterns of action. The role of a boss consists among others in providing the employees with access to information enabling the correction of mistakes and self-improvement.
- Management requires communication, meaning the circulation of information inside an organization and exchange of information with others.
- Management requires an expanded system of indicators enabling constant and comprehensive monitoring, evaluation and improvement of action. There are sets of commonly used financial, economical, market, technical and social indicators. The use of indicators enables not only to react to occurrences, but also to predict the course of events and take preventive measures. Management of each enterprise should elaborate their own set of indicators adjusted to its character by expanding the monitoring of particular areas of company's activity.
- Management has to be interchangeably oriented at the basic and most important final result, which is a satisfied client.

Human resource management is a strategic and coherent approach to management of the most valuable assets of an organization – employed people, who individually and collectively contribute to the realisation of its aims.

According to Storey's definition formulated in 1995 "management of human resources is a distinctive approach to employment management which seeks to achieve competitive advantage through the strategic deployment of a highly committed and capable workforce, using an array of cultural, structural and personnel techniques". According to M. Armstrong, human resource management may be viewed as a set of co-related actions that are ideologically and philosophically justified. It includes employment, development and awarding people in organizations, as well as the formation of proper relations between the management personnel and employees. All line managers and team leaders deal with these problems, but human resource management specialists have a crucial role to play here.¹¹

The aim of human resource management is, generally speaking, enabling an enterprise to achieve success thanks to people employed in it. To be more precise, aims of HRM may be formulated in the following way:¹²

¹¹ M. Armstrong, *Zarządzanie zasobami ludzkimi*, Dom Wydawniczy ABC, Kraków, 2000, s. 19.

¹² Tamże, s. 19-20.

- provision of a wide range of services supporting the enterprise aims and constituting an element of an organization management process,
- finding and keeping qualified, engaged and well-motivated employees in the organization,
- increasing and developing inborn skills of people – their contribution, potential and ability to find employment – through provision of trainings and constant opportunities for development,
- creation of atmosphere enabling the maintenance of productive and harmonious relations between the management personnel and employees, facilitating the development of common trust,
- creation of conditions facilitating team work and elasticity,
- helping an organization in maintenance of balance and adjusting to the needs of various stakeholders, such as owners, governmental agencies or trusts, management personnel, employees, clients, suppliers and society in general,
- leading to a situation in which employees are appreciated and awarded for their work and achievements; consideration of differences in needs of particular people and groups of employees, their work style and aspirations,
- provision of equal opportunities to everyone,
- adoption of ethical rules of personnel management based on care for people, justice and clarity,
- maintenance and improvement of physical and mental condition of employees.

In present management, an individual is treated as a creative personality that has many possibilities which he/she wishes to develop and use. He/she wants to contribute to an organization and constitute its important part. The man is not motivated to act by willing to gain external awards, but by the desire of self-realisation. For human resource management on an appropriate level and in a proper way, it is necessary to¹³:

- elaborate a system of selection and promotions which should support the realisation of company's strategy,
- create an internal flow of personnel in order to achieve an easier adjustment to strategy requirements,
- filling single workplaces with proper people, so as to achieve a situation in which a useful person who is able to control and motivate him/herself works in a given position,
- present the postulate of equal treatment of issues connected with human resource management, e.g. marketing, finance or production to the management personnel.

¹³ T. Pomianek, *Zarządzanie zasobami ludzkimi*, Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Informatyki i Zarządzania, Rzeszów, 2000, s. 15-16.

”Instruments used in human resource management evolve dynamically. This is why specialists in this field are forced to constant actualization and improvement of their workshop”.¹⁴ Human resource management has certain, easy to define purposes, such as: enabling the management personnel to achieve their aims through skilful engagement of personnel, but in a way that fully uses their possibilities and skills. Not using all existing personnel skills is harmful, as it means that the organizational culture is low and most importantly, that the level of human resource management is insufficient. Engagement of employees in work requires often motivation, control of their action, which influences the entire organization, especially in the aspect of its functioning. For a better operation of an organization, human resource management shall lead to the release of hidden talents, innovation and willingness to flexible actions of employees.

In order for an employee to function properly in an enterprise, it is necessary to have a workplace chart or at least scope of duties. In medium or big enterprises, one or both of the above mentioned forms are used. In small business, there are no formalized duties connected with performed work. The proper development of employees should, according to employers, be connected with gaining experience, then forming skills, gaining professional and general knowledge and at the end increasing the level of skills that may be useful for the occupied job position.¹⁵

1.2. Development of employees’ competences in company

From the term ‘professional work’ results the term ‘professional qualifications’, which leads to occupational preparation. Its result understood as “a set of qualities characterizing professional personality of an employee”¹⁶ is described not only by sets of mental and practical skills determining correctness, purposefulness and efficiency of work, but also a positive motivation system and status of professional competences that give the highest value to qualifications (ibidem). Therefore, occupational preparation considered in categories of performance leads to the thesis that competences result from professional qualifications and decide on the quality of professional work. The word “qualifications” is derived from Latin language, from the word *qualitas*, it defines “quality, evaluation, education and preparation to performance of professional work”.¹⁷ Qualifications mean formal preparation for the performance of a certain profession or occupation of a certain post, reflected in graduation from a proper school, studies, courses, trainings, and gaining concrete skills during former professional work. The twin brother of competences, however

¹⁴ M. Juchnowicz, *Narzędzia i praktyka zarządzania zasobami ludzkimi*, Wydawnictwo Poltext, Warszawa, 2003, s. 9.

¹⁵ M. Kęsy, *Kompetencje zawodowe młodych*, Wydawnictwo UJ, Kraków 2008, s. 82.

¹⁶ Z. Wiatrowski, *Podstawy pedagogiki pracy*, Bydgoszcz, 2000, s. 242.

¹⁷ *Słownik wyrazów obcych*, 1992, s. 627.

the more static one, basing on what he has already achieved, appreciating stability proven by a proper diploma. The difference is very subtle and not recognized by everyone. It may be said that qualifications are usually a good basis for the creation of competences. However, it is neither a necessary condition nor a sufficient one. Qualifications result from hard, long-term work, and competences are often connected with skills.¹⁸ Professional qualifications are understood as a set of knowledge and skills required to realise the parts of professional tasks (in a chosen specialty).¹⁹ In the Polish Classification of Jobs, Occupations and Specialities, there are two aspects of qualifications:

- Skill level – a function of the range and complexity of the tasks involved, where the complexity of tasks has priority over the range.
- Skill-specialization – type of knowledge applied, tools and equipment used, materials worked on, or with, and the nature of the goods and services produced.

The structure of classification is based on the system of terms, the most important of which are: job/occupations, specialization, occupational skills and qualifications. It results from grouping of jobs/occupations on the basis of similarity of occupational qualifications required to perform the tasks of a chosen job (specialty), with consideration of both aspects, i.e. their level and specialization. The above criteria were used for the classification of particular jobs and occupations in unit groups, which were then included into minor, sub-major and major groups.²⁰

Table 1. Structure of major groups of classification and levels of classification

	Major group name	Number of groups in a major group			Number of occupations and specialties	Skill level
		Sub-major	Minor	Unit		
1	Legislators, senior officials and managers	3	6	33	43	-
2	Professionals	4	20	63	440	4
3	Technicians and associate personnel	4	17	69	313	3
4	Clerks	2	7	20	51	2 or 3

¹⁸ *Słownik HR*, www.hrk.pl

¹⁹ Rozporządzenia Ministra Gospodarki i Pracy w sprawie klasyfikacji zawodów i specjalności dla potrzeb rynku pracy oraz zakresu jej stosowania z dnia 8 grudnia 2004 r. (Dz.U. Nr 265, poz. 2644).

²⁰ Rozporządzenia Ministra Gospodarki i Pracy w sprawie klasyfikacji zawodów i specjalności dla potrzeb rynku pracy oraz zakresu jej stosowania z dnia 8 grudnia 2004 r. (Dz.U. Nr 265, poz. 2644).

5	Services and sales workers	2	7	21	77	2 or 3
6	Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	4	8	13	40	2
7	Craft and related trades workers	4	17	74	318	2
8	Plant and machine operators and assemblers	3	20	72	338	2
9	Elementary occupations	3	10	21	83	1
10	Armed forces	1	4	4	4	-
	TOTAL	0	116	392	1707	

Source: Regulation of the Minister for Economy and Labour on classification of occupations and specialities for labour market needs and its scope of 8th of December 2004 (Journal of Laws No. 265, Item 2644).

Four broad skill levels were included in the classification, similarly as in ISCO-88 and ISCO-88 (COM), which were defined in reference to education levels:

- The first ISCO skill level was defined with reference to ISCED category 1, comprising primary education (elementary qualifications).
- The second ISCO skill level was defined with reference to ISCED category 2 comprising middle school education and ISCED category 3 comprising secondary general school, secondary specialized school and basic vocational school education.
- The third ISCO skill level was defined with reference to ISCED category 4 comprising postsecondary school education and ISCED category 3 comprising secondary technical school education.
- The fourth ISCO skill level was defined with reference to ISCED category 5 comprising education leading to Bachelor's, Master's degrees or a postgraduate university education and category 6 comprising education leading to a PhD degree.

The particular major groups of jobs can be characterized in the following way:²¹

- Members of parliament, senior officials and managers. This major group includes occupations whose main tasks consist of determining and formulating government policies, as well as laws and public regulations, overseeing their implementation, representing governments and acting on their behalf, or planning, directing and coordinating the policies and activities of enterprises and organizations, or departments.

²¹ Rozporządzenia Ministra Gospodarki i Pracy w sprawie klasyfikacji zawodów i specjalności dla potrzeb rynku pracy oraz zakresu jej stosowania z dnia 8 grudnia 2004 r. (Dz.U. Nr 265, poz. 2644).

- Professionals. This major group includes occupations whose main tasks require a high level of professional knowledge and experience in the fields of physical and life sciences, or social sciences and humanities. The main tasks consist of increasing the existing stock of knowledge, applying scientific and artistic concepts and theories to the solution of problems, and teaching about the foregoing in a systematic manner.
- Technicians and associate personnel – This major group includes occupations whose main tasks require technical knowledge and experience necessary to carry out technical and other work connected with the study and application of concepts and operational methods in the above-mentioned fields.
- Clerks. This major group includes occupations whose main tasks require the knowledge and experience necessary to organize, store, compute and retrieve information, record and compute numerical, financial and statistical data, and performing a number of customer-oriented clerical duties, mostly in connection with mail services, money-handling operations and appointments.
- Service and sales workers. This major group includes occupations whose main tasks require the knowledge, skills and experience necessary to provide protective services, personal services related to e.g. travel, housekeeping, catering, personal care and selling and demonstrating goods in wholesale and retail stores.
- Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers. This group major includes occupations whose main tasks require the knowledge, skills and experience necessary to grow and harvest crops, fruit or wild plants, grow and exploit forest, raise and breed animals, catch or cultivate fish.
Craft and related trades workers. This group major includes occupations whose main tasks require the knowledge, skills and experience necessary to extract and process raw materials, produce and repair goods and construct, preserve and repair roads, constructions and machines. The main tasks require the knowledge and an understanding of the nature of work, used materials, machines and produced goods.
- Plant and machine operators, and assemblers. This group major includes occupations whose main tasks require the knowledge, skills and experience necessary to drive vehicles and operate other mobile plant, supervise, control and monitor operating of industrial machinery and equipment on site or with use of remote controlling and to install products from components according to strict standards and methods. The performance of tasks requires mainly the knowledge and an understanding of the rules of functioning of machinery.
- Elementary occupations. This group major covers occupations which require simple or basic skills and small amount of theoretical knowledge necessary to perform usually simple and routine tasks involving the use of simple hand-held

tools and limited own initiative and evaluation. In some cases, it requires some physical effort.

- Armed forces. Members of this group are professional soldiers of permanent and contractual military service and conscripts enrolled for basic military training and re-enlisted military service.

Work that is well-adjusted to employee's qualifications means work that does not exceed them and during which these qualifications are at least used partially. It means that qualifications should be broadly interpreted.²² Work should correspond with employee's qualifications. The term 'qualifications' mentioned in Article 42.4 of the Labour Code, means not only professional preparation of an employee – his/her formal education, gained professional experiences and necessary skills, but also psychophysical qualities of an employee, mental predispositions and the ability to perform certain activities in terms of physical health.²³ Besides occupational qualifications, there are also socio-moral and psychophysical qualifications, as well as medical requirements and contraindications. They constitute the scope of occupational qualifications²⁴ that are taken into consideration in the recruitment process. In many enterprises, competences concerning action are formed in the next phase).²⁵

Table 2. Types of occupational qualifications

Non-occupational qualifications	They constitute the basic requirements necessary in each job, both in careers and in other occupations (e.g. social or household) and mean a positive attitude and proper physical condition. They also reflect basic skills of a practical and mental action. These qualifications do not prepare for any specific job and do not entitle to its performance.
General occupational qualifications	Qualifications characteristic for a certain occupational area, usually including a group of jobs.
Qualifications basic for a given profession	Qualifications specific for a certain occupation and including main skills necessary for effective performance of duties.
Specialist qualifications	Qualifications that determine additional skills, specific for a certain job, that should be identified with professional specialisations or special scopes of work.

Source: Nowacki T. *Zawodownawstwo. ITeE, Radom 1999 za prof. dr hab. S.M. Kwiatkowski Institute for Educational Research, Standards of occupational qualifications, employers' expectations, BEZPIECZEŃSTWO PRACY 3/2006.*

²² Wyrok SN z dnia 5 lutego 1998 r., I PKN 515/97.

²³ Por.: Wyrok SN z 4 października 2000 r. (I PKN 61/00, Pr. Pracy 2001/5/33).

²⁴ *Słownik pedagogiki pracy*, Warszawa, 1986.

²⁵ P. Koper, *Jak zarządzać personelem*, Poradnik Gazety Prawnej, nr 30, 2004.

Defining the diversifying competences that will show us behaviours that are typical of individuals achieving good results, enable us to create models of behaviours thanks to which it will be possible to train people with worse results in order to increase their effectiveness. Gaining better education and systematic broadening of knowledge is one of the requirements of a current job market.²⁶ According to the provisions of Article 17 of the Labour Code and Article 94.6 of the Labour Code, an employer is obliged to facilitate employees with improving their occupational qualifications. An employer is not obliged to train employees, but he/she has to facilitate it for them if they are willing to raise their qualifications (decision of Supreme Court of 25 May 2000, I PKN 657/99, OSNP 2001/22/660).²⁷ At the same time, according to Article 18^{3b} § 1 of the Labour Code, an employer is obliged to equal treatment of employees, which also concerns access to training in order to improve occupational qualifications. Exclusion during selection of employees for occupational training is treated as impairment of the equal treatment rule if the superior is unable to prove that he/she made the choice on the basis of objective criteria.²⁸ The scope and conditions on which an employer facilitates employees with improving occupational qualifications is regulated by the Minister of National Education and Minister of Labour and Social Policy Regulation of 12 October 1993 on rules and conditions of increasing occupational qualifications and general education of adults (Journal of Laws of 2006, No. 103, Item 472; No. 31, Item 216).²⁹ Increasing occupational qualifications and general education of adults means education in schools and higher education institutions as well as education, additional education and training in non-school forms, which include: postgraduate studies, courses, seminars, professional and specialist internships, vocational trainings, guided self-education. Increasing employees' qualifications may be performed, according to needs, in daily, part-time, extramural, guided self-education, extension or mixed systems. The selection of a proper mode of education is very important, as it determines the scope of benefits for an employee. Good employees guarantee the high quality of work, which influences profits gained by their employer.³⁰ Enterprises that want to stay on the market, at the same time maintaining a strong position or strengthening the current one, have to invest in trainings for their employees.

²⁶ *Kiedy pracownik uczy się na koszt pracodawcy*, Gazeta Prawna, nr 199, 2004.

²⁷ D. Cichocka, *Szkolenie pracowników*, Gazeta Prawna, nr 32, 2008.

²⁸ A. Giżejowska, *Przepisy o szkoleniu pracowników z komentarzem*, www.rp.pl/arttykul/79559.html

²⁹ Tamże.

³⁰ *Podnoszenie kwalifikacji – obowiązki pracownika i pracodawcy*, Serwis Prawno-Pracowniczy, nr 31, 2004.

2. Structural funds for development of companies' staff

2.1. Structural funds in 2007-2013

The transition from an economy based on work and capital to a knowledge-based economy where information, know-how and information and communication technologies are the most important is connected with the necessity to invest in knowledge and skills of personnel of Polish enterprises. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the adaptation potential of enterprises through trainings, consulting, the support of new solutions in the scope of work organizations and forms of work provision, the support of mobility between sectors of science and economy. Activities in this scope aim at strengthening of enterprises' competitiveness and maintenance of existing workplaces. On the basis of experiences from the previous period, conclusions for a current programming period have been identified:

- provision of cohesion of legal solutions for co-financing or provision of alternative sources of co-financing,
- elimination of repeating and redundant elements of an institutional system,
- making procedures and implementation rules more flexible,
- avoiding segmentation of support,
- transfer of support for people to regional levels, especially in case of competition projects,
- need to clearly define the competences of particular institutions participating in programme realisation,
- necessity to provide an efficient system of financial flows,
- provision of efficient channels of communication, information and promotion,
- increase of flexibility in relocation of means by regional (województwi – voivodeship) local administration authorities,
- flexible and wide definition of categories of people authorized to use help.

HC OP will continue the actions started within the framework of SOP HRD and Priority II IOPRD:

- support for systems and structures in the area of labour market, social integration and education,
- support for persons and social groups through the increase of competences of employees of institutions on the labour market, social assistance, teachers,
- helping unemployed persons, persons looking for work and threatened with social exclusion,
- adjusting qualifications of staff and employees of enterprises,
- actions aiming at an increase of the level and quality of education of society that corresponds with the needs of the regional labour market,
- support for restructuring processes,
- realisation of scholarship programmes,

- popularisation of knowledge transfer,
- continuing education of adults,
- development of entrepreneurship.

Within the framework of Human Capital Operational Programme, actions aiming at the adjustment of qualifications and occupational skills of employees to economy requirements will be financed within Priority II, Measure 2.1 Development of Modern Economy Personnel, Submeasure 2.1.1 Development of Human Capital in Enterprises – Competition Projects. Within this submeasure, the following types of projects will be realised:

- supraregional closed projects of trainings (general and specialist) and consulting for entrepreneurs (or groups of entrepreneurs) prepared on the basis of individual strategies of companies' development,
- national open projects of trainings (general and specialist) and consulting for enterprises and enterprises employees,
- postgraduate studies for entrepreneurs and enterprises employees.

The Polish Agency for Enterprise Development plans to support the projects of closed trainings which result directly from strategic plans of enterprises and comply with enterprise's directions of development. Within the framework of Submeasure 2.1.1 it intends to promote the projects which will support persons over 50 years of age, according to governmental documents (50 PLUS, KPDZ for 2008 and National Employment Strategy for 2007-2013). The purpose of the realised competition projects is the development of enterprises, meeting requirements of competition or maintenance of position on the market thanks to the increase of availability and adjustments of trainings to the enterprises' needs. The purpose will be achieved by supporting about 45 thousand enterprises which invest in training of their employees and increasing qualifications of 300 thousand employees of enterprises thanks to their participation in trainings. Competitions will be announced in the first quarter of 2008, first agreements on financing of the project will be concluded in the second quarter of 2008. For example: the first allocation for initial competitions for 2007-2008: Submeasure 2.1.1 – 278 million. Complementary with Priority II is Priority VIII HC OP – Regional Business Personnel. These two priorities differ mostly in terms of the scale of projects and regionalisation. Within the framework of Priority VIII, projects for one voivodeship will be realised, and they will be much smaller than in the case of Priority II.

The following two measures will be conducted within the Regional Business Personnel priority:

- Measure 8.1 Development of Employees and Enterprises in Region, which main purpose is the increase and adjustment of skills of persons working for the needs of a regional economy.

- Measure 8.2 Transfer of Knowledge which main purpose is the increase of transfer of knowledge and strengthening of connections between R+D sector and enterprises, aiming at the economic development of regions.

With regard to enterprise's possibility of use the funds, the focus was set on those submeasures that are available on general competition rules.

Within Measure 8.1 those are:

- Submeasure 8.1.1 – Support of Development of Occupational Qualifications and Consulting for Enterprises.
- Submeasure 8.1.2 – Support of Adaptation and Modernization Processes in the Region.
- Submeasure 8.1.1 – Support of Development of Occupational Qualifications and Consulting for Enterprises includes the following types of projects:
 - general and specialist trainings (open and closed) and consulting connected with trainings for management staff and employees of enterprises in the scope of: management, identification of needs in the scope of employees' qualifications, flexible forms of work, work organization, management of OHS, implementation of environmentally friendly technologies, use of communication and information techniques in a conducted activity,
 - consulting for micro, small and medium enterprises, including people who are self-employed, in the scope of finance, human resource management or accounting,
 - trainings directed at persons with low occupational qualifications or other working adults who are interested in gaining new, completing or increasing occupational qualifications and skills.
- Submeasure 8.1.2 – Support of Adaptation and Modernization Processes in the region includes:
 - help in the formation of local partnerships aiming at elaboration and implementation of strategies of economic change management at the local and voivodeship level,
 - support of employees going through an adaptation and modernization process in the creation and realisation of outplacement, including especially trainings and professional consulting,
 - increase of awareness of management personnel and employees of modernized companies through consulting and trainings in the scope of possibility and need of realisation of projects from the scope of support of conducted changes,
 - re-qualification trainings and consulting in the scope of selection of new occupations and gaining new occupational skills,
 - trainings and consulting for entrepreneurs preparing for the change of enterprise's profile of activity,

- research and analyses of developmental trends and prognosis of economic changes in the region.
- Submeasure 8.2 Transfer of Knowledge also plans to increase qualifications of enterprises employees through the transfer of knowledge and strengthening the connections between research and development sector and enterprises.
- Submeasure 8.2.1 – Support for Cooperation of Science and Enterprises, includes:
 - internships and trainings for employees of universities and scientific units and scientific employees in enterprises,
 - promotion of academic entrepreneurship in order to commercialize the knowledge and skills of spin-off, spin-out team operating in higher schools,
 - trainings and consulting for employees of universities and scientific units, doctoral students, students and graduates aiming to establish a spin-off, spin-out business activity.

The expected result of the realization of Priority VIII activities is the support of 140 thousand of enterprises in the scope of training of their employees and support of 200 thousand employees in the form of trainings and courses. At the level of our voivodeship, the EU funds are managed by the Marshal Office in Łódź, which functions as an Intermediate Body of OP HC. A new organization unit was selected in the structure of the Marshal Office in Łódź – OP Human Capital Department, which aims at coordinating the implementation of the Programme in our region. The amount of money for Lodz voivodeship is about EUR 112.7 million.³¹ OP Human Capital Department has already elaborated an action plan for 2007-2013 which includes the expected goals, a financial plan, descriptions of the selection of a system and competition projects together with a list of attachments required for the agreement on project financing. A schedule of announced competitions was also placed there. For example, for the first stage – 2008 for Measure 8.1 a budget of PLN 47,927,480 was envisaged, including PLN 38,334,393 for Submeasure 8.1.1. It is planned to train 1,600 adults, including 334 persons over 50 years of age, 334 persons endangered with negative results of restructuring. It is planned to train 15,997 persons till 2013 in Lodz voivodeship, including 3 335 persons over 50 years of age and 697 persons endangered with restructuring.

³¹ Informacja dla mediów Nowe fundusze unijne na walkę z bezrobociem, czyli jak będzie wdrażany Europejski Fundusz Społeczny w Łódzkiem przez kolejne 6 lat, Łódź, 30 sierpnia 2007 r.

Conclusions

Social and human capital, which is a part of intangible assets of an enterprise, contributes to a better use of work resources and supports the growth and competitiveness of economy. Good education, gained qualifications supported with skills also enable easier adaptation to dynamic environment. Education is the easiest way to increase the owned capital.

The EU, within the structural policy, supports human resources from the European Social Fund. It supports individuals and social groups through the increase of competences of employees of job market institutions, social assistance, teachers, support of jobseekers and individuals endangered with social exclusion, adjustment of qualifications of personnel and employees of enterprises. It also supports systems and structures in the scope of labour market, social integration and education.

The analyses of programme (operational) documents, defining the aims and main directions of spending financial means from structural funds in particular periods of programming, lead to the conclusion that there are great possibilities of financing personnel development with the use of the European Social Fund. It concerns both direct support of enterprises through grants for trainings and consulting and indirect support in the form of financing the trainings for employed people, who want to increase their occupational qualifications on their own.

In current perspective, there are almost four times more means to be used than in the old perspective. Two-thirds of these means will be implemented directly by local authorities. Simplified application and realisation procedures let us hope that such considerable means will be absorbed more efficiently than in the previous period. Studies show that the majority of participants of trainings, especially from the SME sector, participated in such trainings for the first time, and they stated that it was caused by lack of funds for this purpose. In the current period, the EU structural fund will certainly influence the increase of employment rates of particular support groups and better adjustment of their qualifications to the labour market.

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