



## **COUNTRY REPORT**

**POLAND**

Ministry of National Education

Poland

2005

*Language Education Policy Profile*



# COUNTRY REPORT

## Language education in Poland

National and regional language, foreign languages  
and languages of national and ethnic minorities

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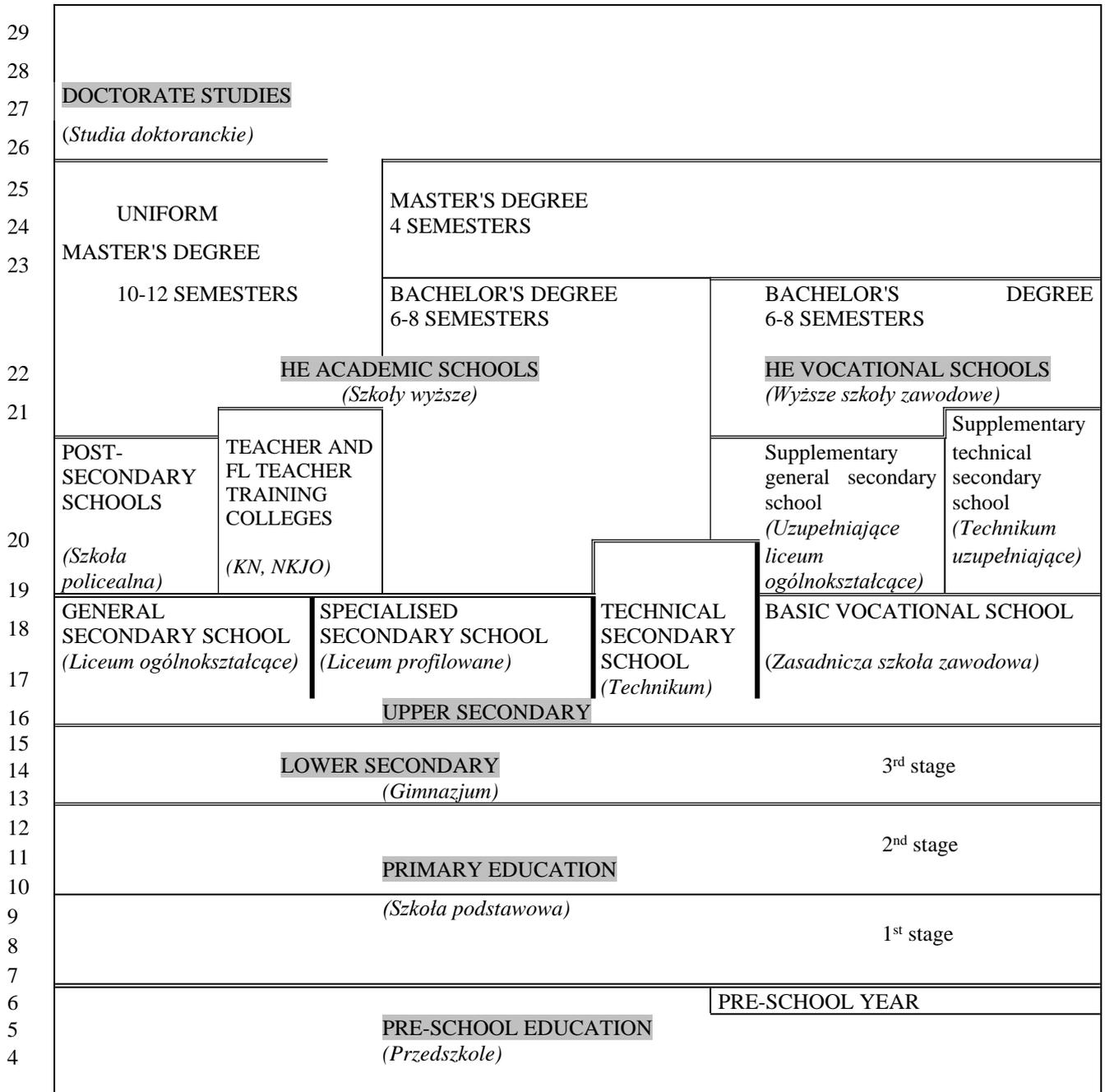
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## 1. Introduction

The scheme below presents the system of education in Poland. Brief introduction to this system will enable full understanding of this Report.



Source: Eurydice (2005), *The system of education in Poland*, Warsaw: Foundation for the Development of the Education System, Socrates program, p. 5.

Six-year-old children are obliged to complete a year of preparation for primary education, either in kindergartens or in pre-school classes attached to primary schools. Full-time compulsory education starts at the beginning of the school year during the calendar year in which the child reaches 7 years of age. Tuition is divided into 4 stages:

- Education stage I – grades I-III of primary school (*szkoła podstawowa*) (children between 7-9 years of age),
- Education stage II– grades IV-VI of primary school (children between 10-12 years of age),

- Education stage III - lower secondary school (*gimnazjum*) (youth between 13-15 years of age),
- Education stage IV - upper secondary school (basic vocational schools, 3-year general and specialized secondary schools, 4-year technical secondary schools, 2-year supplementary general secondary schools and 3-year supplementary technical secondary schools for the leavers of basic vocational schools, post-secondary schools).

Stage II ends with an obligatory test and stage III – with an obligatory examination. Upper secondary school leavers (except basic vocational school leavers) may sit for the *Matura* examination, which is compulsory for admission to higher education.

Higher education studies give a possibility to obtain a Bachelor's degree (*licencjat*) after three years of studies or Master's degree (*magister*) after 5 years of studies. Continuation of education during doctoral studies may lead to the Doctor's degree (*doktor*).

Since the beginning of the 1990s the responsibility for the administration of educational institutions has been delegated to local/regional authorities. At present local authorities (*gmina*) exercise administrative control over kindergartens, primary and lower secondary schools, while district authorities (*powiat*) – over upper secondary and special schools, as well as over psychological and pedagogical centres. Regional authorities (voivodships) run initial and in-service teacher training centres, regional schools and institutions, as well as continuing education centres. Pedagogical control over all schools is exercised by educational superintendents (*kurator*).

Since 1991 schools can be of two types: public schools and non-public schools – civic (aid granted schools), private and church schools. Students in non-public schools pay a tuition fee. Non-public schools are free of charge.

The Act of 7 September 1991 on the Education System (with further amendments) constitutes the basis for the operation of the educational system.

Schools of higher education in Poland can be public or non-public. They are autonomous in all aspects of their activity.

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) operate on the basis of the Act of 27 July 2005 "Law on Higher Education".

## **2. Language education – present situation**

### **2.1. National languages**

In accordance with Article 27 of the *Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 2 April 1997*: "Polish shall be the official language in the Republic of Poland. This provision shall not infringe upon national minority rights resulting from ratified international agreements".

#### **2.1.1. The Polish language**

This unequivocal statement implies that all state institutions operate only in Polish. Legal acts are also issued in this language. Polish is also a language of public life in Poland.

Most of the population (38.230.100) living in the territory of Poland speaks Polish.

Article 9 of the *Act on Polish Language of 7 October 1999 (J. L. No 90, item 999 with further amendments)* stipulates that "...The Polish language is a language of instruction, examinations and thesis in all types of public and non-public schools". The Polish language is taught in all types of schools, i.e. in primary, lower secondary and all types of upper secondary schools. It is a compulsory subject. It is also a language of instruction.

According to the *Główny Urząd Statystyczny (GUS) (Central Statistical Office)* in the school year 2004/05 the Polish language was taught to:

- 2.724.428 pupils in primary schools
- 1.661.442 pupils in lower secondary schools
- 919.517 pupils in upper secondary general schools
- 1.539.702 pupils in upper secondary vocational schools.

The total number of 6.845.089 children and youth learnt Polish in 2004/05.

The Polish language competence is checked during the test for pupils of grade VI of the primary school, as well as during the final examination at the end of lower secondary school and during the *Matura* exam – both in its oral and written part.

### 2.1.2. Languages of national and ethnic minorities and the regional language

The provisions of the Act of 6 January 2005 on national and ethnic minorities as well as the regional language introduce, with regard to specific groups of Polish citizens, a term of: “national minority”, “ethnic minority” and “a community using regional language”.

On the basis of the provisions of this Act the status of a national minority covers groups of Polish citizens (provided that they fulfill specific conditions) of **Belorussian, Czech, Lithuanian, German, Armenian, Russian, Slovak, Ukrainian and Jewish** origin.

The status of ethnic minority is granted to the following groups of Polish citizens (provided that they fulfill specific conditions) of **Karaim, Lemko, Romany and Tatarian** origin.

**The Kashubian language** was granted a status of a regional language, on the basis of the provisions of the above-mentioned Act.

According to the census, conducted by GUS in 2002, the percentage of specific national minorities within the structure of Polish society was as follows:

Total population of Poland- .....	38.230.100 (100%)
Belorussian minority - .....	48.700 (0.13%)
Lithuanian minority - .....	5.800 (0.02%)
German minority - .....	152.900 (0.40%)
Armenian minority - .....	1.100 (0.00%)
Russian minority - .....	6.100 (0.02%)
Slovak minority - .....	2.000 (0.01%)
Ukrainian minority - .....	31.000 (0.08%)
Jewish minority - .....	1.100 (0.00%)
Lemko minority - .....	5.900 (0.02%)
Romany minority - .....	12.900 (0.02%)

There is not detailed data concerning Czech, Karaim and Tatarian minorities, which are not very numerous in Poland. It is estimated that approximately 200 Karaims live in Poland.

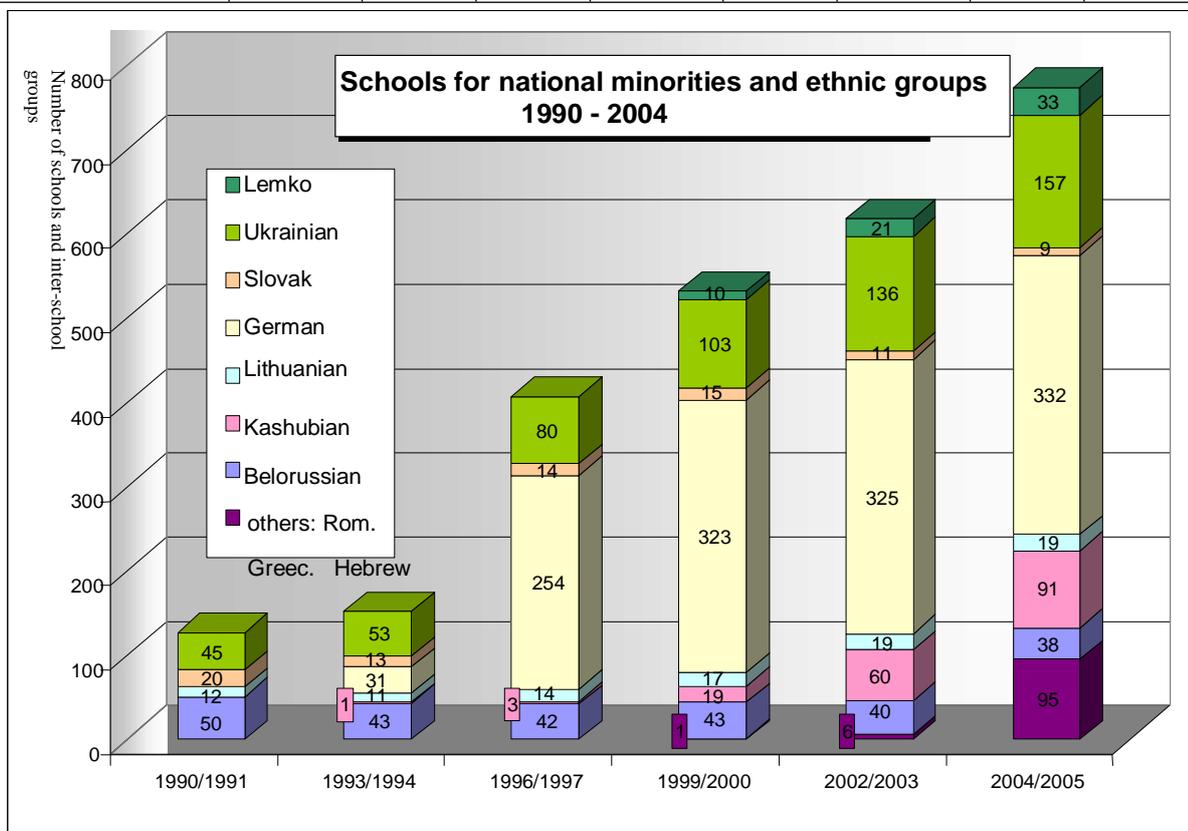
The issues connected with minority and regional language teaching in public education system are regulated by the provisions of Article 13 of the Act of 7 September 1991 on the Education System as well as the executive provisions to this Act, including, in particular, the Regulation of the Minister of National Education and Sport of 3 December 2002 on the conditions and ways of implementing, by public schools and establishments, tasks enabling to maintain national, ethnic, language and religious identity of pupils belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups.

The following languages are taught in Polish educational system:

- Belorussian, Lithuanian, German, Armenian, Slovak and Ukrainian (having the status of minority languages),
- Lemko (having the status of ethnic language) and
- Kaszubian – regional language

The statistical data concerning education for national and ethnic minorities in the school year 2004/05 (according to GUS):

Language	Kindergarten/grade "0"		Primary school		Lower secondary school		Upper secondary school	
	Establishments	Children	Schools	Pupils	Schools	Pupils	Schools	Pupils
Belorussian	1	47	23	1766	13	1029	2	827
Kaszubian	4	18	71	3640	17	614	3	204
Lithuanian	4	55	11	394	4	196	1	135
Lemko	7	18	21	212	10	90	3	23
German	50	1016	256	24025	75	11391	1	121
Armenian	-	-	1	22	-	-	-	-
Slovak	1	4	6	197	3	71	-	-
Ukrainian	26	158	88	1583	56	770	2	440



## 2.2. Foreign language teaching in the Polish educational system

Foreign language teaching in schools is one of the priority tasks implemented within the framework of the activities connected with the reforms of the educational system. In the era of Poland's integration with the EU it is essential that the young generation may fully benefit from the cultural and scientific heritage of Europe as well as may bring to Europe everything that is valuable in Polish science, culture and history.

Schools have been assigned with a new, very important task related to the introduction of teaching of Western European languages on a large scale. In particular schools are to support the development of attitudes – curiosity, openness and tolerance towards other cultures combined with the increasing awareness of one's identity. The school is responsible, through foreign language teaching, for making pupils able to communicate in a foreign language.

A foreign language is taught in Polish schools as a **compulsory subject** and / or as a **non-compulsory** one.



The Core Curriculum of General education, which has to be implemented in each grade of each education stage, constitutes the teaching basis at all stages of education. A foreign language teacher may – in accordance with the Regulation of the Minister of National Education and Sport of 5 February 2004 on the certification and withdrawal of certification of pre-primary education programmes, teaching curricula and textbooks fit for use in school education (J. L. No 25, item 20) – implement a foreign language teaching curriculum, chosen from among curricula which were approved and registered by the Ministry of National Education, or develop his/her own curriculum on the basis of the Core Curriculum.

In the school year 2004/2005 the total number of 6.905.690 pupils learnt a foreign language as a compulsory subject and 1.576.570 pupils – as a non-compulsory one. The table below presents the data concerning particular languages:

Compulsory foreign language (number of pupils)		Non-compulsory foreign language (number of pupils)	
English	4.077.220	English	737.890
French	210.340	French	60.420
German	2.135.290	German	576.950
Russian	415.370	Others	201.310
Latin	41.360		
Spanish	11.580		
Italian	10.180		
Others	4.350		

Source: CODN

The table below presents the number of schools with compulsory foreign language teaching in the school year 2004/05 (according to the situation on 31.12.2005 – GUS data):

Type of schools	Number of schools with English	Number of schools with French	Number of schools with German	Number of schools with Russian
Primary schools	10.236	218	4.312	1.499
Lower secondary schools	5.781	458	3.416	593
General Upper Secondary Schools	2.529	977	2.391	1.009
Vocational schools	886	70	901	613
Specialised schools	1.628	273	1.492	577
Technical Secondary Schools	3.046	460	2.854	1.282
Artistic Schools	107	51	67	21
Post secondary Schools	475	69	220	41
Total	24.688	2.576	15.653	5.635

The table below presents foreign language teaching as a non-compulsory subject in the same school year.

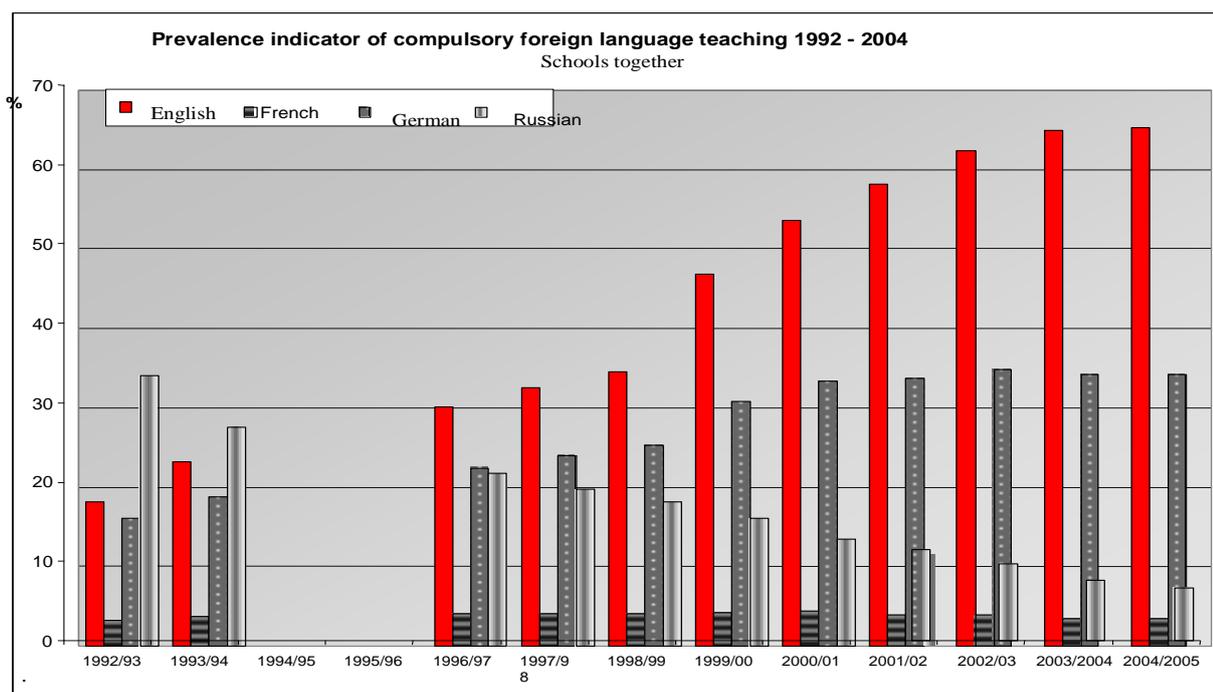
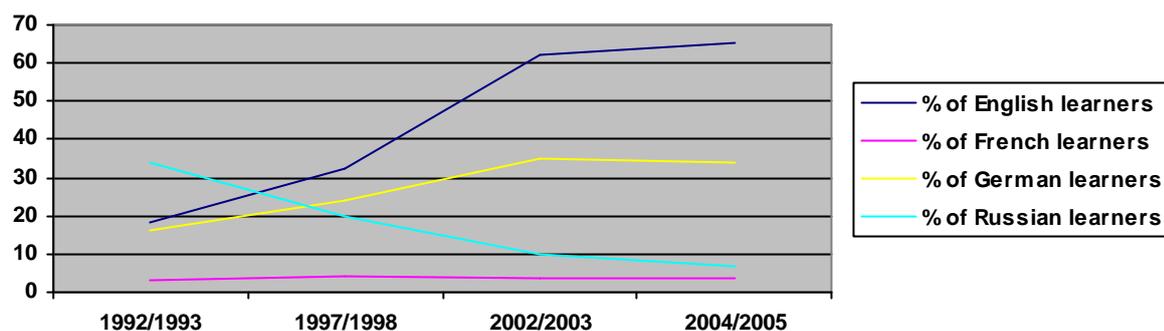
School Type	Number of schools with English	Number of schools with French	Number of schools with German	Number of schools with other languages
Primary schools	6.107	233	2.337	963
Lower secondary schools	1.695	530	2.503	985
General Upper Secondary Schools	34	81	65	291
Vocational schools	4	0	3	1
Specialised schools	18	3	18	10
Technical Secondary Schools	20	6	18	19
Artistic Schools	0	4	4	0
Post secondary Schools	77	9	32	32
Total	7.955	866	4.980	2.301

It is very interesting to follow the developments over the last 15 years concerning the prevalence of compulsory teaching of particular foreign languages. At the beginning of the 90-ties, so at the beginning of the transformation period in our country, Russian dominated among foreign languages taught in Polish schools. The number of pupils learning Russian was equal to the total number of pupils learning English and German.

But in the school year 2004/2005 only 10% of the total number of pupils learning English was learning Russian.

These developments are presented in a better way in the tables below (five years periods and the last school year):

School year	% of pupils learning English	% of pupils learning French	% of pupils learning German	% of pupils learning Russian
1992/1993	18.2	3.2	16.0	34.0
1997/1998	32.5	4.0	23.9	19.7
2002/2003	62.4	3.8	34.8	9.7
2004/2005	65.3	3.4	34.2	6.7



The two tables below illustrate how dynamic the change was in foreign language teaching in Poland in all types of schools in total. In the school year 2004/05 in comparison with the school year 2003/04 the number of pupils learning the most popular foreign languages in Poland decreased. However there was an increase in the number of pupils learning two Romance languages: Spanish and Italian. Similarly the number of pupils learning a second non-compulsory language also increased. However, the biggest increase can be observed in the case of English and German.

Source: *Prevalence of foreign language teaching in 2004/05*, CODN (National In-Service Teacher Training Centre)

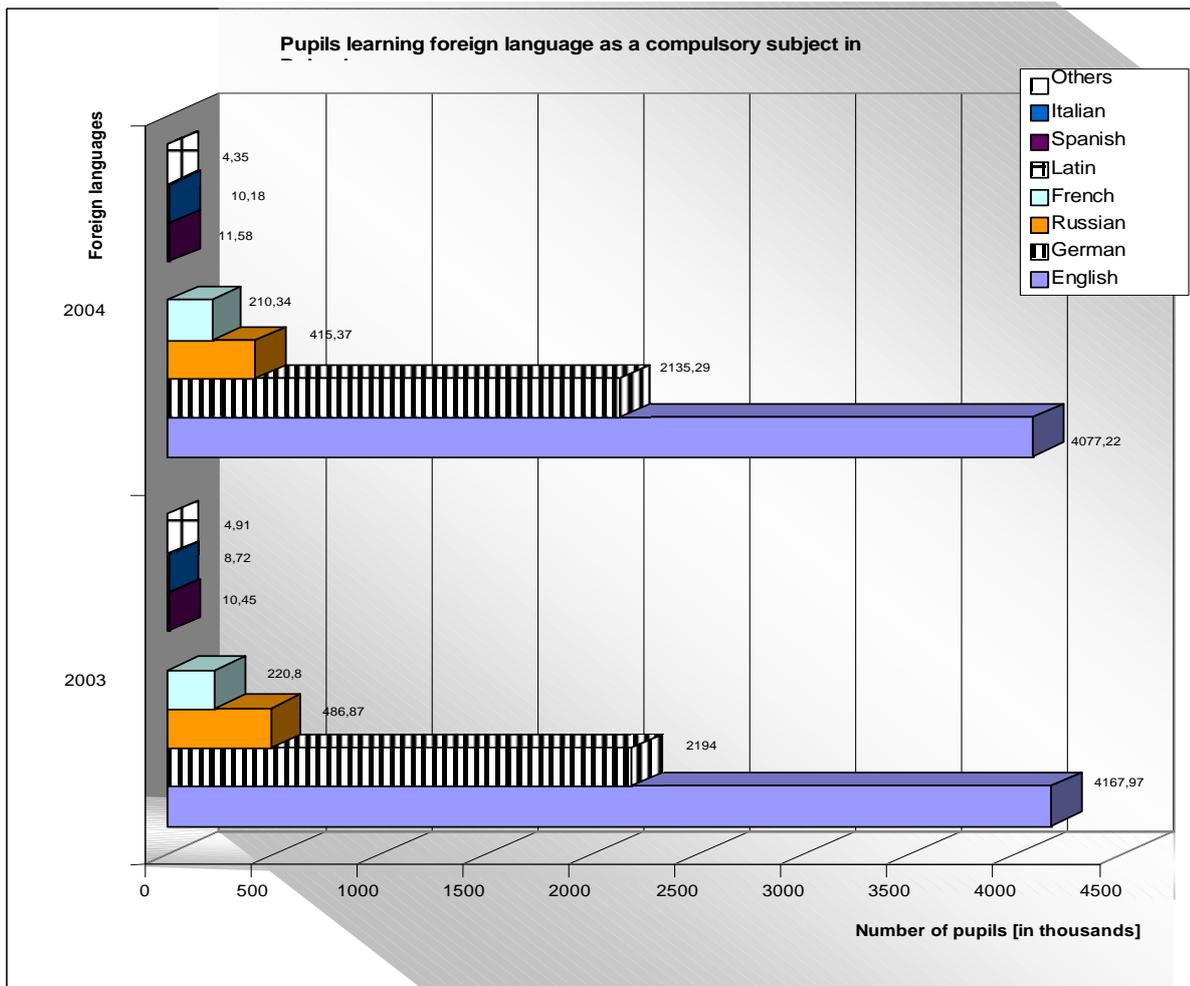
Pupils learning foreign language as a compulsory subject in all types of schools (in thousands).

Language	English	French	German	Russian	Latin	Spanish	Italian	Other
Situation in 2003	4.167.970	220.800	2.194.000	486.870	44.580	10.450	8.720	4.910
Situation in 2004	4.077.220	210.340	2.135.290	415.370	41.360	11.580	10.180	4.350
Change (persons)	-90.75	-10.46	-58.71	-71.50	-3.22	1.13	1.46	-0.56
Change %	-2.2%	-4.7%	-2.7%	-14.7%	-7.2%	10.8%	16.7%	-11.4%

Pupils learning foreign language as a non-compulsory subject in all types of schools (in thousands).

Language	English	French	German	Others
Situation in 2003	546.900	52.830	432.200	170.060
Situation in 2004	737.890	60.420	576.950	201.310
<b>Change (persons)</b>	<b>190.990</b>	<b>7.590</b>	<b>144.750</b>	<b>31.25</b>
<b>Change %</b>	<b>34.9%</b>	<b>14.4%</b>	<b>33.5%</b>	<b>18.4%</b>

Source: *Prevalence of foreign language teaching in 2004/05, CODN (National In-Service Teacher Training Centre)*



Source: *CODN (National In-Service Teacher Training Centre)*

Foreign languages are also taught in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). There are 1.926.100 students in Poland (GUS 2004/05). All of them learn one or two foreign languages during their studies. There is no statistical data concerning the number of students choosing specific languages.

Foreign languages are also taught in special schools. In accordance with the Regulation of the Minister of National Education and Sport of 12 February 2002 with further amendments, it is compulsory to learn one foreign language in special primary school (from II stage of education) and in special lower secondary school. There is an exception to this Regulation as regards pupils with moderate or severe mental disabilities as well as deaf and hard of hearing pupils, blind and visually impaired as well as autistic pupils – having at the same time moderate or severe mental disabilities. Two foreign languages are compulsory in specialised upper secondary schools, however deaf or hard hearing pupils may be exempted from the obligation to learn second foreign language pursuant to the provisions of Article 9 of the Regulation of the Minister of National Education and Sport of 8 September 2004.

It is worth mentioning that regardless of stage of education and school type, a foreign language that is offered by a school does not depend only on the choice of parents and pupils. The availability of qualified foreign language teachers constitutes also a very important factor.

### **2.2.1. Foreign language teaching in primary schools**

Foreign language is a compulsory subject from grade IV in primary schools i.e. in the second stage of education. In the first stage of education, in some schools, foreign language is taught as a non-compulsory subject.

It is mentioned, in the proposals concerning the National Strategy on Foreign Language Teaching, which will constitute a part of the LLL Strategy (Life Long Learning Strategy) that there are possibilities to lower the age of compulsory language education to 7 years, i.e. to grade I of primary school. The date of the introduction of this rule has not been confirmed yet. However, the first steps have been already taken in order to implement this goal. It means that the training of teachers who will be qualified to teach young learners has already been started. (See: networking programme - Young Learners, chapter 5.2).

The present situation in the field of foreign language teaching in primary schools is as follows:

English is the most popular language in grades I-III. In grade III of primary school 30% of children learn this language. As an interesting side note one can add that in grades I-III only 125 children learn Spanish and 110 learn Italian.

Prevalence factors of foreign language teaching in grades I-III of primary school (calculated for pupils of primary schools run by *gminas* ).

Grades	English	French	German	Russian
I	25,66%	0,18%	5,58%	0,03%
II	28,11%	0,21%	6,96%	0,03%
III	29,05%	0,24%	7,72%	0,04%

Source: *Prevalence of foreign language teaching 2004/2005, Warsaw: CODN.*

The results of the analysis of foreign language teaching in different grades of primary school show that 27,66 % of pupils in grades I – III learn English, 0,21% - French, 6,75% - German, 0,03% - Russian, and in grades IV–VI 72,17%, 0,96%, 25,74% and 5,07% respectively.

English is the dominant foreign language followed by German and Russian in primary schools situated both in towns and in rural areas. However, English and German are less popular in rural areas than in towns (the difference is 300.000 and 100.000 pupils). On the other hand, three times more pupils learn Russian in schools situated in rural areas than in towns (respectively 79.000 and 24.000 pupils).

### **2.2.2. Foreign language teaching in lower secondary schools**

In the year 2004/2005 72,2% of pupils of lower secondary schools learnt English as a compulsory language, 30,6% - learnt German, 3,3% - Russian and 1,7% - French.

The striking thing is that the number of pupils (389.333) learning German as a second non-compulsory subject was twice as big as the number of pupils learning English (195.170).

### **2.2.3. Foreign language teaching in vocational schools**

There is one type of schools where more pupils learn German than English. These are vocational schools, however we can observe a slight increase in the number of pupils learning English. In the school year 1997/1998 52% of young people learnt German in this type of school and 13% learnt English. In the school year 2004/2005 the level was respectively 33,5% and 29,9%.

It is worth mentioning that the foreign language teaching as a non-compulsory subject in vocational school is not universal (350 persons).

#### 2.2.4. Foreign language teaching in general upper secondary schools

Pupils of general upper secondary schools learn two compulsory foreign languages. The biggest absolute and relative increase in the school year 2004/2005, in comparison with the previous year, concerned German language (11,9%).

The table below presents the number of pupils as well as the percentage of young people learning specific foreign languages in this type of school in the school year 2004/2005:

Foreign language	Number of young people learning this language	% of young people learning this language
English	726.360	97,1%
French	100.210	13,4%
German	532.370	71,2%
Russian	87.990	11,8%
Latin	39.100	5,2%
Spanish	8.470	1,1%
Italian	8.240	1,1%
Others	1.010	

*Source: Ministry of National Education*

Incidence of foreign language teaching in a form of compulsory subjects is only slightly lower than the incidence of foreign language teaching as compulsory and non-compulsory subjects together. This is due to the fact that only a small number of pupils in general upper secondary schools learns additional foreign language.

#### 2.2.5. Foreign language teaching in other types of upper secondary schools

In other types of upper secondary schools i.e. in technical and specialised upper secondary schools there are two dominant foreign languages: English (660.670 pupils) and German (548.280 pupils).

The situation is similar in post secondary schools (English - 35.510 pupils, and German - 12.120 pupils).

#### 2.2.6. Regional distribution of foreign language teaching

English dominates in 15 voivodships and is the second most dominant language only in one - Lubuskie Voivodship (followed by German). The situation concerning German language is reversed.

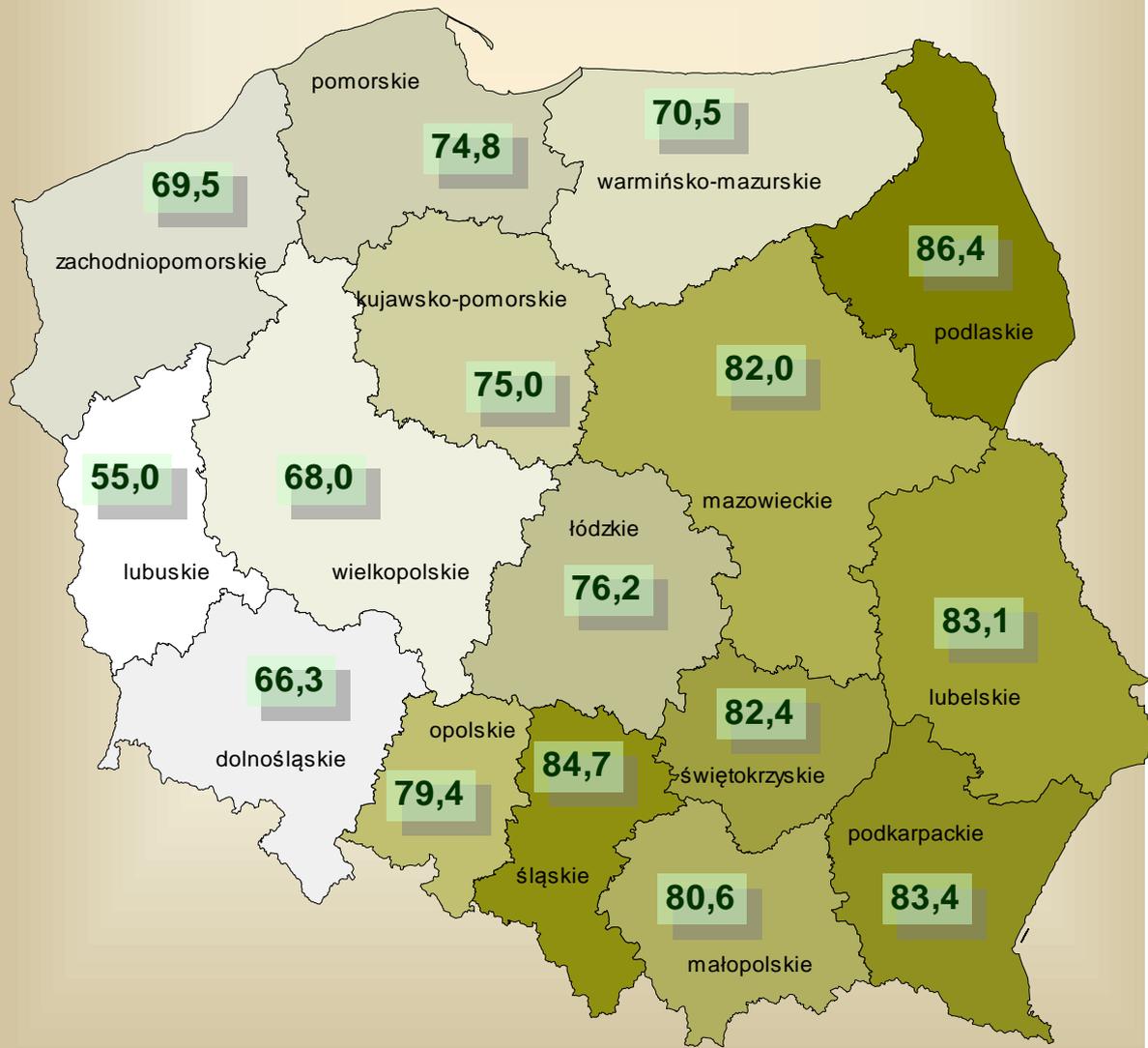
English is most prevalent in: Podlaskie, Śląskie and Podkarpackie Voivodship; German in Lubuskie, Dolnośląskie and Zachodniopomorskie; French in: Śląskie, Małopolskie and Mazowieckie Voivodship; and Russian in: Lubelskie, Mazowieckie and Podlaskie Voivodship.

English is much less prevalent in: Lubuskie, Dolnośląskie and Wielkopolskie; German in: Mazowieckie, Lubelskie and Podlaskie; French in: Warmińsko-Mazurskie, Zachodniopomorskie and Pomorska; and Russian in: Opolskie, Dolnośląskie and Lubuskie.

The above situation can be presented graphically as follows (source: CODN):

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING**  
**AS COMPULSORY AND NON-COMPULSORY SUBSUBJECT**  
**IN THE SCHOOL YEAR 2004/05**  
**ACCORDING TO VOIVODSHIPS**  
**(IN PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PUPILS)**

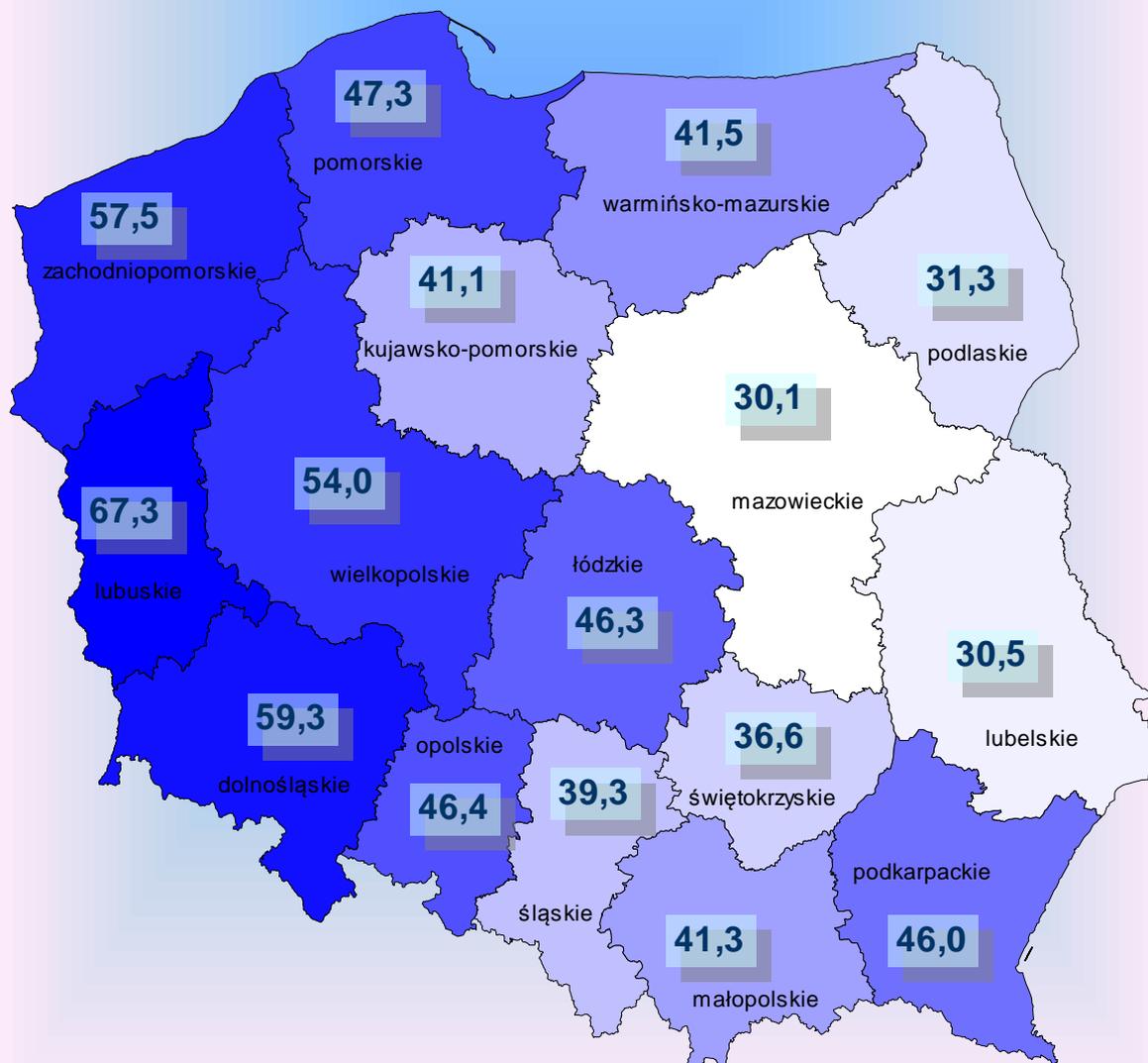
**state 77,1%**



### GERMAN LANGUAGE TEACHING

AS A COMPULSORY AND NON-COMPULSORY SUBJECT TOGETHER  
IN THE SCHOOL YEAR 2004/05  
ACCORDING TO VOIVODSHIPS  
(IN PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PUPILS)

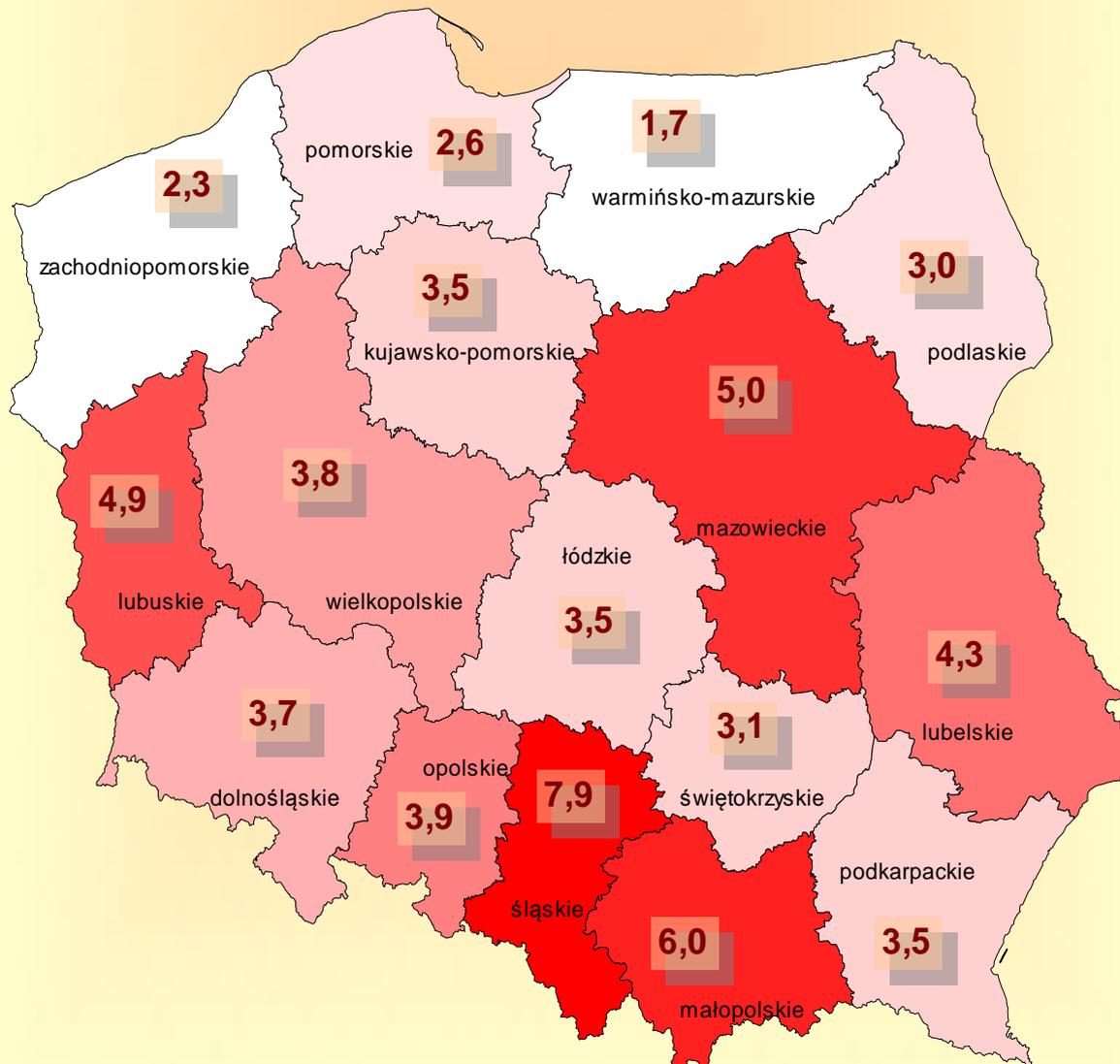
state 43,4%

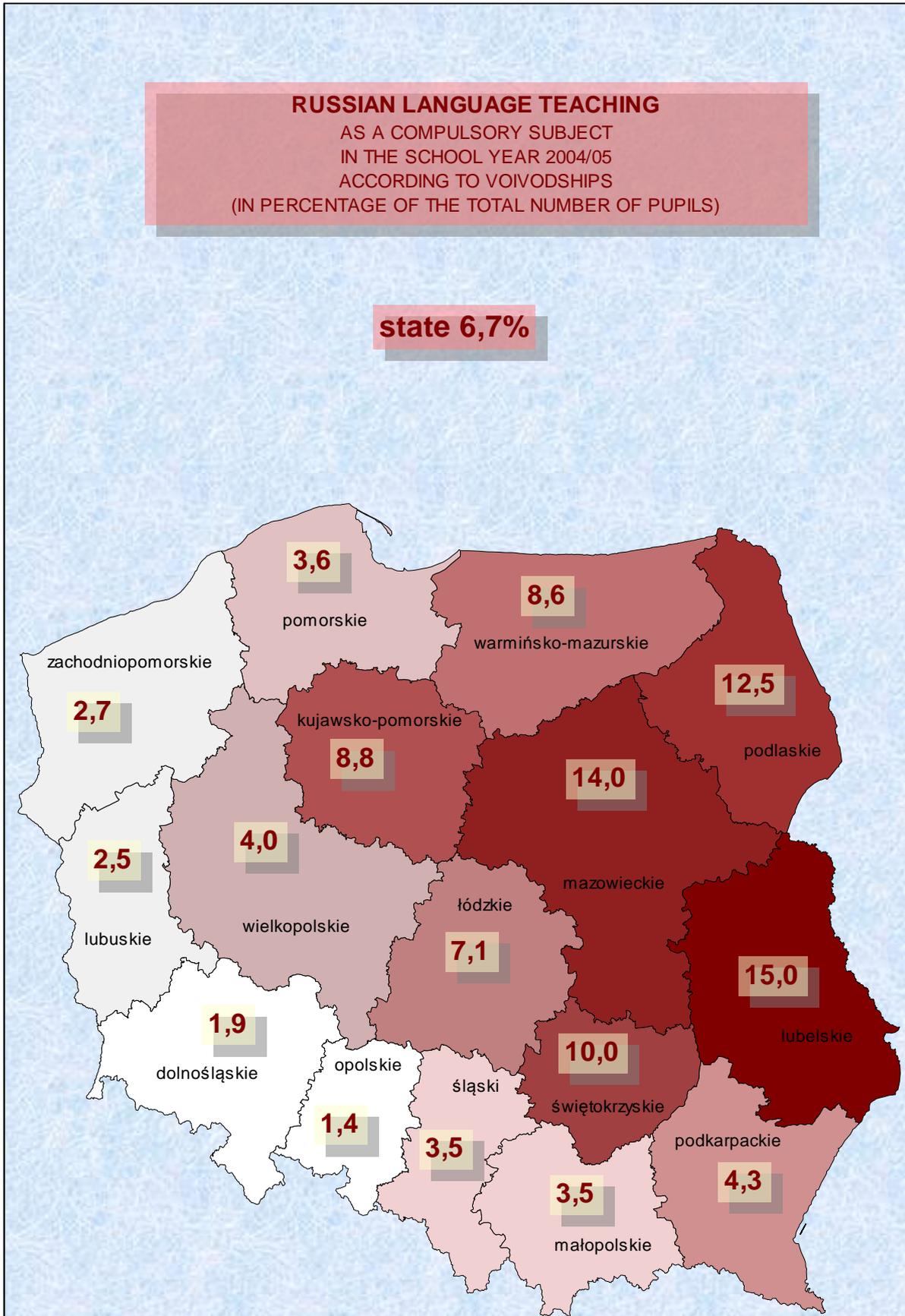


**FRENCH LANGUAGE TEACHING**

AS A COMPULSORY AND NON-COMPULSORY SUBJECT  
IN THE SCHOOL YEAR 2004/05  
ACCORDING TO VOIVODSHIPS  
(IN PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PUPILS)

**state 4,4%**





### 2.2.7. Languages of national and ethnic minorities and the regional language

The representatives of national and ethnic minorities as well as communities using regional language are obliged to learn Polish language just like other Polish citizens are. Moreover – upon a

voluntary request – they may also participate in activities aiming to maintain their sense of language and cultural minority. Minority (national and ethnic) language teaching as well as teaching of the regional –Kashubian language is organized in schools upon a request of parents (or students, provided that they are 16 years old).

A minority language may become a language of instruction and may also be a second language of instruction (in bilingual education) or a non-compulsory subject. A class (inter-class group) may be established already for 7 pupils interested in learning this language. In case of dispersed minorities minority language teaching may be organized in inter-school groups (for a group not smaller than 3 and not bigger than 20 persons).

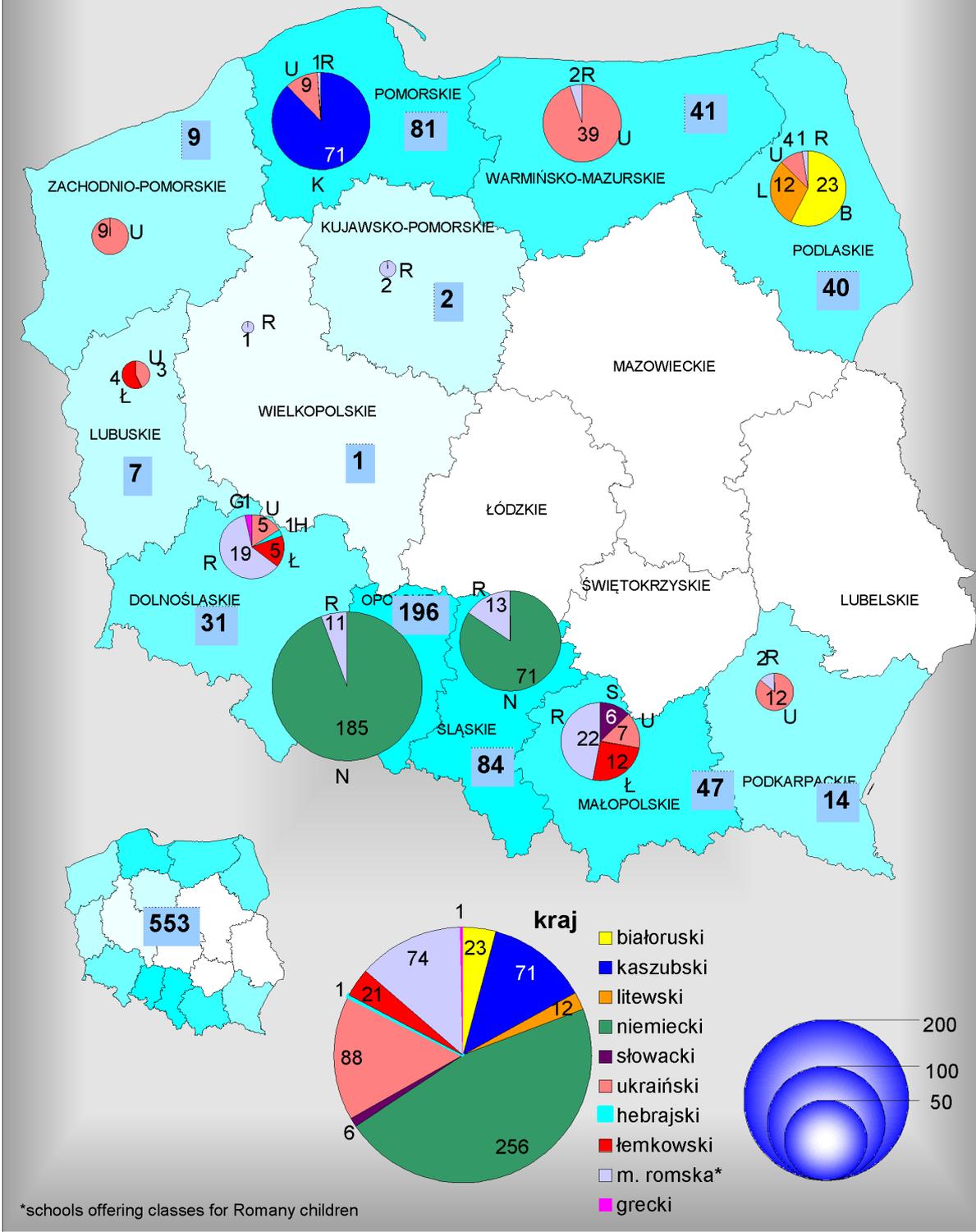
Once a pupil chooses to learn a minority language it becomes a compulsory subject for this pupil. The final mark for this subject is included in the school certificate and is also taken into account in the calculation of the average mark.

A pupil learning a minority or regional language may choose this language as an additional subject for the oral or written part (or both parts) of *Matura* exam.

Moreover, graduates of schools or departments (*oddziały*), in which a minority language is a language of instruction, may take *Matura* exam in Polish or in minority language (except for the exam of Polish language and literature and the parts of the exam concerning the history and geography of Poland).

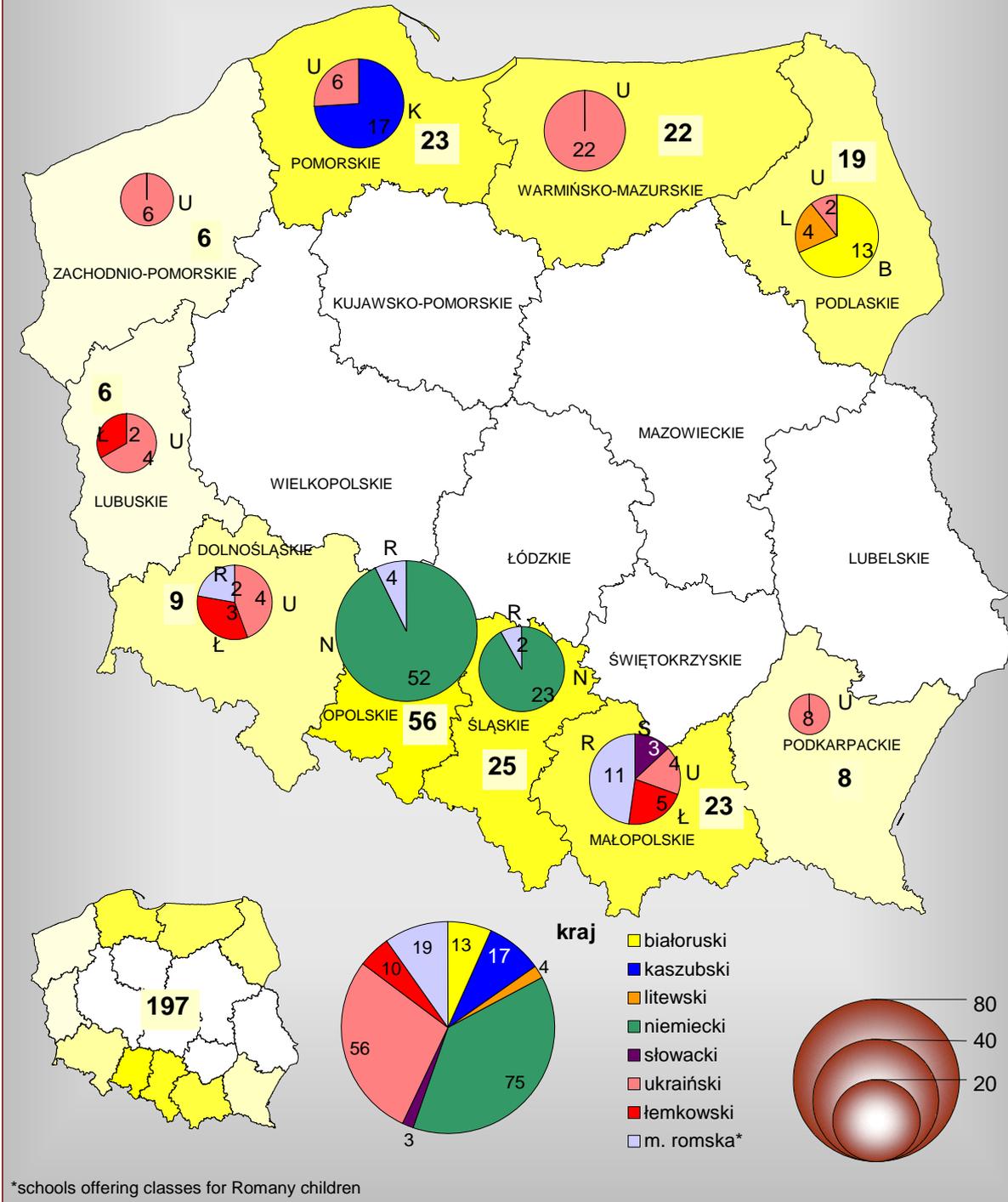
The maps below illustrate the regional spread of teaching of languages of national and ethnic minorities as well as the regional language:

**PRIMARY SCHOOLS WITH MINORITY AND ETHNIC GROUPS' LANGUAGES  
by voivodship, 2004/05**



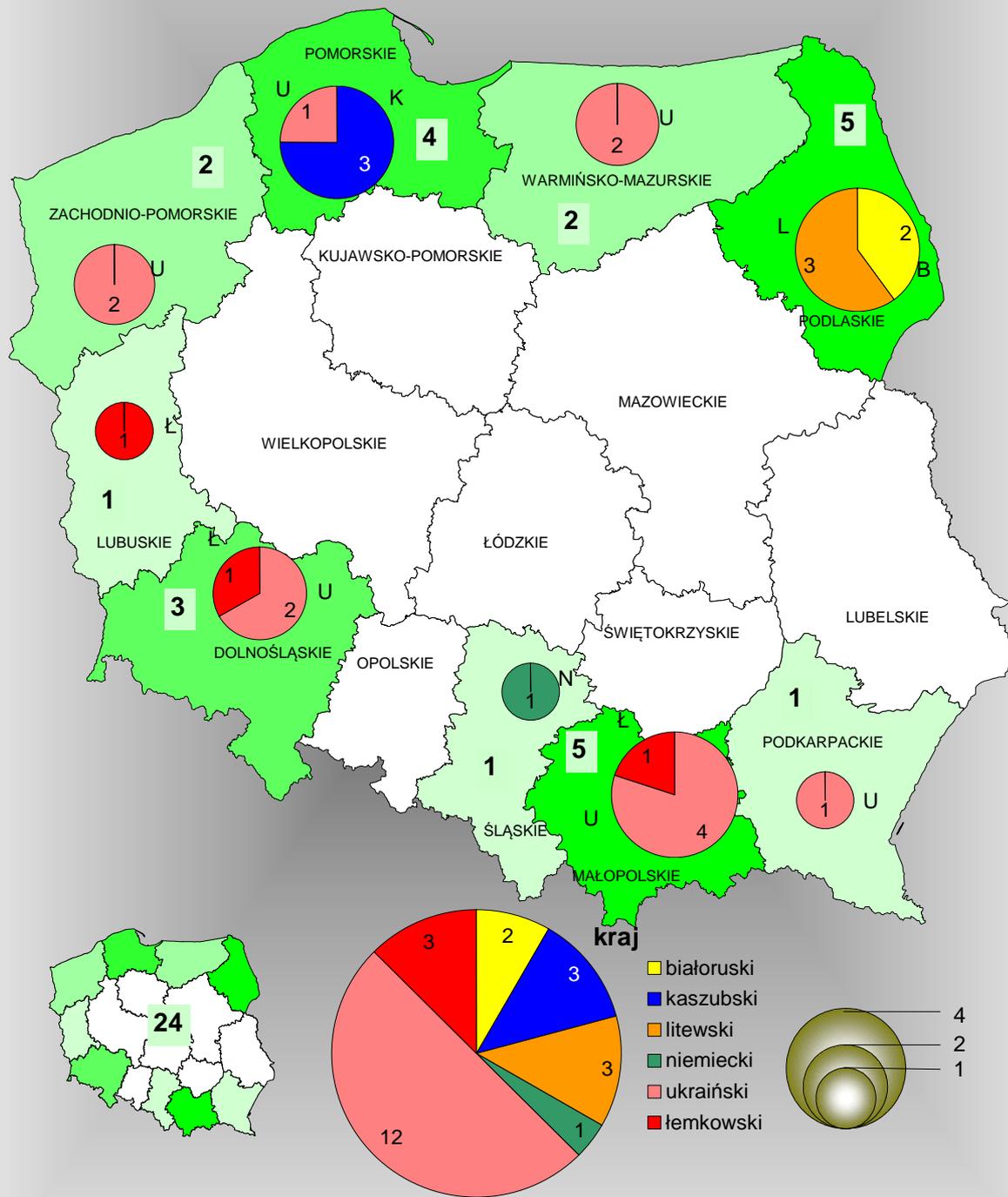
białoruski-Belarusian; kaszubski-Kashubian, litewski-Lithuanian; niemiecki-German; słowacki-Slovak; ukraiński-Ukrainian; hebrajski-Hebrew; łemkowski-Lemko(Ruthenian); m.romska-Romany minority; grecki-Greek

**LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOLS WITH MINORITY AND ETHNIC GROUPS' LANGUAGES  
by voivodship, 2004/05**



*białoruski-Belarusian; kaszubski-Kashubian, litewski-Lithuanian; niemiecki-German; słowacki-Slovak; ukraiński-Ukrainian; łemkowski-Lemko(Ruthenian); m.romska-Romany minority*

**UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOLS WITH MINORITY AND ETHNIC GROUPS' LANGUAGES  
by viovodship, 2004/05**



\*inter-school teams of pupils from post-primery schools of old type

*białoruski–Belorussian; kaszubski–Kashubian; litewski–Lithuanian; niemiecki–German; ukraiński–Ukrainian; łemkowski–Lemko(Ruthenian)*

### 2.3. Foreign language learning outside formal education system

The beginning of the 90-ties saw the beginning of the transformation period and the opening of foreign markets and therefore the necessity to increase the language competences of Polish society. Market needs begun to be fulfilled by many newly established language schools. Statistical data quoted in this chapter are based on the findings of research carried out by “The Teacher” Publishing House.

#### 2.3.1. Language schools

During past 15 years many language schools were established and many of them were also closed. The results of the survey show that the number of language schools was four times bigger than the number mentioned below. It does not reflect the change in the demand concerning language courses and trainings but is a sign of the development of competition and the fact that some schools were run by persons who were not qualified in this field. The market regulations provided for (and they still do) the establishment of language schools by any economic entity or by anyone undertaking business activity which included also the activities coming under class 80.42, i.e. “courses and trainings which are not classified under other headings”. This enables the fast establishment of a school but does not guarantee the quality of its performance.

Not so long ago, language schools, specially those which addressed their educational offer to youth, were undertaking steps to obtain a registration in Local Educational Authorities as well as a status of a non-public educational establishment. In this way, parents felt reassured and had confidence in such a school. However, a system of certification and standardization of language schools by different associations (e.g. PASE, EQUALS) and other commercial entities replaced the above mentioned system of granting “credibility” very quickly. The obtainment of a status of examination center was an additional asset for language schools. Unfortunately, these efforts undertaken by many language schools did not contribute significantly to the improvement of the quality of their performance. The results of the surveys, conducted during the past 5 years in Warsaw, show that 71% of the participants of language courses change their language schools, trying to find one, which would more adequately fulfill their expectations.

Language schools, especially in big cities, want to attract clients trying to outdo one another in using different means of promotion and building an image of a unique school. Bigger competition results in raising the expectations of clients who want to participate in exemplary lessons and to assess teachers against their own criteria. These practices are less popular in small towns, where there is less concentration of language schools. However, this situation forces language schools to improve the quality of their performance in order to keep clients who have already started learning foreign language in a given school and to attract new ones.

The biggest category of language schools is a category of schools, which teach more than one foreign language.

<b><i>Number of private language schools</i></b>	<b>6.845</b>
Schools teaching more than one foreign language	72,3%
English language schools	21,8%
German language schools	3,2%
Language schools teaching other languages	2,7%

English has been the most popular foreign language among languages taught in private schools in Poland for many years. However, German is more popular than English in regions situated near our western border. Just after Poland’s accession to the UE we observed the increased interest in French. But it was for rather a short and transitional period, as the number of persons learning French quickly dropped to the level from before the accession.

The biggest number of private language schools has in their teaching offered English.

**Number of private language schools teaching specific languages**

Language schools teaching English	6.328
Language schools teaching German	3.477
Language schools teaching French	1.692
Language schools teaching Russian	3.852
Language schools teaching Spanish	463
Language schools teaching Italian	569
Language schools teaching other languages	912

Schools, which provide preparatory courses for the international foreign language exams and have good performance indicators, are also popular.

**Number of persons participating in preparatory courses for particular foreign language exams:**

FCE	6213	CAE	3987
CPE	654	TOEFL	1293
LCCI	4258	DL	298
DSLCF	456	DELF	669
DALF	162	ZD	1596
ZMP	56	ZOP	162

**2.3.2. Students of language schools – statistics**

In the year 2004/2005 the total number 786.327 persons learnt foreign languages in private language schools.

The average age of persons participating in language courses organized by private language schools is 22 years. Most of the participants are women.

Women	86,7%
Men	13,3%
Under 25	54,2%
26 – 30	25,1%
31 – 40	19,2%
41 – 50	6,1%
Above 50	3,4%

38 % of the participants of language courses organized by private language schools have completed higher education; almost every third participant is a pupil of a primary or secondary school.

Higher education	34,0%
Higher education and additional post-graduate studies	4,1%
Academic title (doctor, professor)	1,2%
Not completed higher education	32,9%
Post – secondary education	6,8%
Upper-secondary education with <i>Matura</i> exam	13,7%
Lower secondary education	16,1%
Primary education	13,1%
Higher education and post graduate studies together	38 %

Most of the participants of such courses live in towns with the population of more than 100.000 people.

Mazowieckie and Łódzkie	34,0%
Dolnośląskie, Opolskie and Śląskie	22,1%
Pomorskie, Kujawsko-Pomorskie and Zachodniopomorskie	14,2%
Wielkopolskie and Lubuskie	12,9%
Małopolskie, Świętokrzyskie and Podkarpackie	10,8%
Warmińsko-Mazurskie, Podlaskie and Lubelskie	6,0%

It is worth mentioning that the above-mentioned data covers also language courses conducted in private companies, as private language schools also organize most of these courses.

#### **2.4. Teaching aims and content**

Teaching aims and content of language education are included in the *Core Curriculum for General Education in Specific Types of Schools*. (Annex to the Regulation of the Minister of National Education and Sport of 6 November 2003). This Core Curriculum is written for the Polish language, foreign languages as well as languages of ethnic or national minorities. "The overall aim of school education – as it is presented in the Core Curriculum - is to provide comprehensive development of each pupil." Language education does not only mean teaching proper and fluent communication, writing and reading comprehension, which is necessary to acquire knowledge and develop skills, it also means teaching attitudes enabling mutual understanding and cooperation between nations with diversified language and cultural background. The Core Curriculum is not a teaching curriculum. It includes general guidelines, which constitute the basis for the development of original curricula for specific educational context.

Teaching curricula are developed either by individuals in accordance with the needs of a given school or one class in a school, or by institutions (e.g. Publishing Houses), which, for this purpose, establish teams of experts. Having obtained a positive recommendation from the Ministry of National Education such curricula are included on the list of recommended school curricula ([http://www.men.waw.pl/programy/programy/progr\\_dopuszcz.php](http://www.men.waw.pl/programy/programy/progr_dopuszcz.php)).

Schools are free to choose textbooks from the list approved by the Ministry. The list of recommended textbooks is also available on the Internet site of the Ministry of National Education ([http://www.men.waw.pl/podrecz/podrecz/wykaz\\_podrecz.php](http://www.men.waw.pl/podrecz/podrecz/wykaz_podrecz.php)). It is a very long list and sometimes in one Voivodship different schools may use different textbooks. Exceptions to this are the textbooks for languages of national and ethnic minorities and the regional language. They are developed for particular classes, financed by the Ministry of National Education and distributed free of charge.

The Core Curriculum also includes skills that each pupil should acquire in each education stage. In 2003 CODN (*the National In-Service Teacher Training Centre*) published the Polish version of *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR); Un Cadre Européen Commun de Référence pour les langues: Apprendre, Enseigner, Évalue*). The process of gradual implementation of language teaching standards included in this document has already started.

The Core Curriculum also includes so called educational paths (covering educational and didactic issues). These paths are introduced in the second education stage. It is the responsibility of a Headmaster to ensure that these educational paths are included in the school set of teaching curricula. Teachers of all subjects, including foreign language teachers, are responsible for their implementation.

The following educational paths are compulsory now:

Education stage II (grades IV-VI of primary school):

- Reading and media education
- Ecological education
- Health education
- Civic Education:
  - Education for family life
  - Regional education – cultural heritage in a given region
  - Patriotic and citizenship education.

Education stage III (lower secondary school):

- Reading and media education
- Ecological education
- European education
- Regional education – cultural heritage in a given region
- Philosophical education
- Health education
- Polish culture in the context of Mediterranean culture
- Civil defense.

Education stage IV (general upper secondary and specialised and technical upper secondary schools):

- Reading and media education
- Ecological education
- European education
- Philosophical education
- Health education
- Regional education – cultural heritage in a given region
- Education for family life.

The implementation of educational paths demands the introduction of cross- curriculum teaching approach (integrated content, competences and skills from different fields) and facilitates the introduction of European dimension and CLIL to schools.

#### 2.4.1. Results of language education

The teaching results are visible in the results of the test implemented in the grade 6 of the primary school, lower secondary school examination and the *Matura* examination (which can be taken by all the graduates of particular types of upper secondary schools). The test and the gymnasium exam are carried out in Polish and were introduced in 2002. The *Matura* examination comprises a foreign language as one of the examination subjects.

In 2004 the results of the first “examination” taken in the pupil’s career (the test taken in the grade 6 of the primary school) were as follows:

	Total (40 points max.)	Reading (10 points max.)	Writing (12 points max.)	Understanding (8 points max.)	Use of information (2 points max.)	Use of knowledge (8 points max.)
Average result of pupils in <i>gminas</i>	<b>24.51</b>	8.04	7.91	3.43	1.42	3.7
Average result of pupils in towns	<b>26.74</b>	8.36	8.65	3.95	1.55	4.22

Source: Central Examination Board

The main aim of this test is to diagnose the need to introduce changes in the educational aims and content as well as teaching methods in order to improve the level and quality of education and to provide all children, from rural and urban areas as well as from other environments, with equal educational opportunities. This test is also important from the perspective of further language education both in Polish and in other languages. This test presents a picture of pupils' language skills and competences thus points out the direction of their development.

In 2004, in the humanities element of the final lower secondary school exam, which is a prerequisite for the admission to the education stage IV, the average result was **27,01** out of **50** points. Generally pupils from schools situated in towns obtained better results.

However within the framework of PISA survey conducted in 2003, the Polish 15-year-olds obtained on average **497** points in the field of text comprehension. The OECD average for the year 2003 was **494** points. It was a better result than the result achieved in 2000, when Polish 15-year-olds obtained **479** points.

*Source: Education Development Strategy 2007-2013.*

*Matura* exam, in a new form (see: 2.6.1.3), so called new *Matura* exam (*nowa matura*) was organized for the first time in 2005. The average nationwide results in Polish are **67%** for oral part and **51,63%** at the standard level and **40,82%** at the extended level for written part. The average nationwide results in foreign languages are **78,99%** for written part and **71,83%** for oral part at the standard level and **67,18%** for written part and **78,72%** for oral part at the extended level. As for students who took *Matura* exam in minority languages, all of them passed it positively. *Matura* exam is at the same time as the university admission exam.

In the Polish educational system *Matura* exam taken by school leavers from upper secondary schools is the first external language performance indicator. Modern foreign language is one of the compulsory subjects of this exam. This helps to describe the level of acquired language competences and skills at this education stage. The *Matura* exam may be taken either at the standard or extended level based on different examination standards laid down in the Regulation of the Minister of National Education and Sport of 10 April 2003. The graduates of bilingual schools take the foreign language exam on one - bilingual level. There are also schools, which prepare to and organize International Baccalaureate.

The Foreign Language Standards of Attainment, which constitute the basis for the provision of *Matura* exam, cover areas and skills in accordance with the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (knowledge, text reception and production, language interaction and mediation). In future this approach will allow making a direct comparison between the results of *Matura* exam and the Common European Framework.

The Central Examination Board started working on the development of such indicator in 2004. This work has not been completed yet. Therefore it is impossible to make precise match between the results of *Matura* exam and the Common European Framework. However having analyzed legal basis, examination standards and exemplary *Matura* examination sheets the average level of the exam on standard level was described as B1, exam on the extended level as B2 and the exam for bilingual classes as C1. The minimum pass result for the exam taken on standard level (30%) means that student taking the exam has obtained "basic communication skills" which corresponds to level A2. It is planned, as a follow-up, to analyze students' work of this year's exam and to correlate the percentage results of *Matura* exam with the level of competences described in the Common European Framework.

#### **2.4.2. European dimension in language education**

The effects of the language education are also visible within the framework of international contacts of Polish pupils. Inter-school exchange programmes, joint implementation of projects with schools from abroad, knowledge competitions in the fields of geography, history, culture and language of other countries and all sorts of celebrations and events have become permanent elements of daily life in Polish schools. In each issue of *Języki Obce w Szkole (Foreign Languages in School)*, a

magazine for teachers issued since 1957, the section called *Sprawozdania (Reports)* describes an international undertaking, which would not be possible if pupils and teachers could not communicate in different languages.

The European dimension of language education is reinforced by the following educational paths: European and regional education included in the Core Curriculum for education stage III and IV. The educational paths are not separate subjects so they do not have special timetables, specialist teachers or textbooks. The aim of educational paths is to provide pupils, in the simplest way, with an understanding of European issues and to teach them how to benefit from the possibilities of living, learning and working together in a common Europe. Foreign language teachers similarly to teachers of other subjects have an obligation to include European issues into foreign language lessons. The School Pedagogical Council and subjects departments (teachers of the same or similar subjects) take a decision concerning specific teaching content. Foreign language teachers like discussing during their lessons such issues as the history of the European integration process, integrating and disintegrating factors, Poland and the Poles in the process of building a common Europe, European countries and Poland's way to Europe, system, procedures and areas of negotiation, the attitudes of the Member States and the Polish society to the enlargement of the European Communities, single European labour market and its accessibility for Polish citizens, the founding fathers of Europe: R. Schuman, A. De Gaspari, K. Adenauer and others. Depending on pupils' language skills these issues may be discussed in more or less detailed way. During such lessons a foreign language is a tool used to transmit different subject contents.

The broadly understood European issues are present in the teaching content and educational path of civic education. The Council of Europe proclaimed the year 2005 - the European Year of Citizenship through Education. In practice, this means initiating pupils' projects around such issues as the application of democratic procedures in schools, organizing class discussions and debates and raising interest in public life. Thanks to such activities, we can prepare young people to be citizens of united Europe, where different languages are communication tools.

The European dimension of foreign language teaching is particularly visible in the number and quality of implemented international projects and inter-school exchange programmes. **eTwinning** action of **eLearning** programme can be an example of good practice. Projects implemented within the framework of this Action are implemented with the use of computers by partner schools in Poland and other European countries. The level of ICT used by partner schools is different. It ranges from very simple e-mails to the last technological innovation - Podcast. The biggest number of exchange programmes was implemented in the school year 2004/05 in forms of cross-curricular projects. Foreign languages take the second place followed by history, civic education, religion and ethics, philosophy, theatre, music and dance. Schools participating in this Action compare own country with other countries, introducing European dimension into their own perception of the world. Language and digital technologies are also means of preparing youth to function in the European society. English is the most popular language used during the implementation of such projects, followed by German (see: 3.5.2).

Knowledge about Europe is disseminated in Poland through the activities of School European Clubs. Their aim is to teach the sense of European unity through the dissemination of knowledge about Europe, preparing youth to live and work in united Europe and promoting information about the European integration processes.

The first School European Clubs were established in Poland at the beginning of the 1990s. They are a form of cooperation between teachers and pupils. They operate in a similar way to other special interests groups. Young pupils learn such attitudes as active participation, tolerance, respect for cultural differences and other nations, they learn how to search information, work in a team and achieve complex targets. The School European Clubs should look for partner institutions both in Poland and other European countries by themselves. Schools that have School European Clubs organize knowledge competitions about Europe, evenings of European poetry, fairytales, "European discos", they celebrate European Day and days of different European countries. The existence of the

School European Clubs enhances and promotes foreign language learning in schools. There are 1443 registered School European Clubs in Poland but many more operate without any registration.

## 2.5. Language teachers

Until 1990 foreign language teachers, similarly to teachers of other subjects were trained only in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). In 1990 the scope of initial teacher training in HEIs could not fulfill the needs of educational system. There were two main reasons for this situation:

- sudden growing demand of educational system for teachers and in particular foreign language teachers due to the fact that Russian language teaching in schools was replaced by the introduction of western language teaching,
- baby boomers starting school education at the beginning of 1990s.

Therefore Initial Foreign Language Teacher Training Colleges were established and persons without full teacher qualifications were permitted to work as teachers in schools. At present the issues of initial teacher training and qualifications required to work as a teacher in schools in different stages of education are regulated.

### 2.5.1. Initial teacher training

Foreign language teachers, similarly to teachers of other subjects, are trained within the framework of two systems:

- higher education, on the basis of the provisions of the Act of 27 July 2005, on Higher Education (J. L. No 164, item 1365),
- education, on the basis of the provisions of the Act of 7 September 1991 on the Education System (J. L. of 2004 No 256, item 2572 with further amendments).

Teachers are trained in public and non-public Higher Education Institutions within the framework of:

- 1) Master's degree studies in modern languages, specialization in a given foreign language or applied linguistics within the scope of a given foreign language,
- 2) Bachelor's degree studies in modern languages, specialization in a given foreign language or applied linguistics within the scope of a given foreign language.

The system of initial teacher training in HEIs was changed on 1 October 2004. HEIs training teachers within the framework of Bachelor's degree studies provide initial teacher training in two specializations (main and additional) enabling graduates to acquire qualifications in two subjects (in different types of activities). It is also possible to provide dual specialization initial teacher training within the Master's degree studies.

Within the educational system foreign language teachers are trained in Initial Teacher Training Establishments, i.e. in Foreign Language Colleges. The rules concerning the operation of Foreign Language Colleges are laid down in the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 12 August 1997 on the operation of Initial Teacher Training Establishments (J. L. No 104, item 664).

Initial teacher training in a Foreign Language College is provided under the educational and teaching supervision of a HEI. Thanks to this system students of Foreign Language Colleges may obtain not only the diploma of the completion of the College but also a vocational title of Bachelor as well as may continue education within the complementary Master's degree studies.

Foreign Language Colleges from their inception, i.e. from 1990, play a complementary role to foreign language teacher training provided by HEIs. At present there are 80 Foreign language Colleges providing training for teachers of the following foreign languages: English, German, French, Spanish, Italian and Russian.

Moreover, since 1990 - due to the sudden growing demand of the educational system for teachers - holders of a Master's degree or a diploma of the completion of other higher vocational studies in

any discipline (specialization) or a diploma of the accomplishment of training in an Initial Teacher Training Establishment in any specialization have been allowed to obtain qualifications necessary to teach foreign language in specific types of schools and establishments by obtaining a certificate of a foreign language proficiency, as well as undertaking a course in pedagogical and methodological background to a given language. The language exams are conducted by specialized institutions: English – the British Council, German – Goethe Institute and Austrian Institute, Spanish – Cervantes Institute, Italian –Italian Institute of Culture, French – French Institute.

All forms of initial foreign language teacher training are included in the provisions concerning qualifications, i.e. in the Regulation of the Minister of National Education and Sport of 10 September 2002 on detailed qualification requirements for teachers as well as the identification of schools and cases in which teachers without completed higher education or Initial Teacher Training Establishment may be employed. (J. L. No 155, item 1288).

57.500 students were trained in public and non-public HEI within the field of English, German, French and Russian language in the academic year 2004/05.

16.300 students studied in Foreign Language Colleges in 2004/05. Almost 4.500 obtained a diploma of the completion of Foreign Language College.

### **2.5.2. Initial teacher training standards**

Teacher training standards were specified for all levels of education in HEIs, i.e. higher vocational studies, complementary Master's degree studies, one-cycle five years Master's degree studies and post-graduates studies in the Regulation of the Minister of National Education and Sport of 7 September 2004 on Teacher Training (J. L. No 207, item 2110). These standards specify the minimum number of hours of initial teacher training subjects such as: psychology, pedagogy, teaching specific subjects (330 hours), as well as the obligation of pedagogical apprenticeship (minimum 150 hours). Moreover, they also introduce an obligation to provide foreign language courses within a specified scope, which enables students to acquire advanced language competences (level of language proficiency - B2 Common European Framework) - in case of higher vocational studies, and B2+ - including training to use specialist terminology within the scope of a given discipline of studies – in case of Master's degree studies) as well as a requirement concerning the provision of ICT courses preparing students to use ICT in the teaching a given subject or conducting other activities.

In case of studies of training dual language teachers, the level of proficiency in the second language represented by a graduate of higher vocational or Master's degree studies should correspond to the level of language proficiency - C2 (*Common European Framework*).

These standards are particularly important for teachers of other subjects in bilingual schools.

### **2.5.3. Language and pedagogical training and language competences of teachers**

Initial teacher training – including initial foreign language teacher training – covers specialist training within the scope of a given language, teacher training and pedagogical apprenticeships.

In accordance with the provisions in force initial teacher training includes the provision of minimum 270 hours of courses in scope of psychology, pedagogy and issues connected with foreign language teaching as well as a minimum of 150 hours of pedagogical apprenticeships.

Initial teacher training is provided on the compulsory basis in Foreign Language Colleges and each graduate of such College holds not only foreign language competence but is also prepared to teach this language. Graduates of studies in modern languages are only trained to teach a foreign language if they undertook a teaching specialization during their studies, completed courses in initial teacher training as well as carried out the appropriate number of hours of pedagogical apprenticeship.

Graduates of studies who did not follow the initial teacher-training module may complete such training during post-graduate studies or qualification course.

#### **2.5.4 Qualification requirements for foreign language teachers and teachers teaching other subjects in a foreign language, national or ethnic minority teachers or mother tongue teachers.**

Teachers' qualifications are regulated by the Regulation of the Minister of National Education and Sport of 10 September 2002 on detailed qualification requirements for teachers as well as the definition of schools and cases in which teachers without completed higher education or Initial Teacher Training Establishment may be employed.

A person is deemed qualified to teach foreign languages or other subjects in a foreign language in **schools, kindergartens, foreign language teacher training colleges, and establishments** if s/he has completed Master degree studies in philology or applied linguistics in a given foreign language; or Bachelor or Master degree studies in a country where the official language is the same as the foreign language to be taught at school in Poland. It is also necessary to complete professional training (pedagogical preparation).

A person is qualified to teach foreign languages in **schools, kindergartens and establishments** if s/he holds a Bachelor diploma (a diploma of completed higher vocational studies) in philology or in a foreign language specialization or in applied linguistics in a given foreign language; or a foreign language teacher training college diploma in specialization of a given foreign language; or a Master or Bachelor diploma in any studies or specialization and a certificate of state teacher foreign language exam of the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree or a certificate of advanced command/proficiency in a foreign language as defined in the regulation. It is also necessary to complete professional training (pedagogical preparation).

A person is qualified to teach foreign languages in kindergartens, schools and establishments if s/he holds a diploma of teacher training college (Initial Teacher Training Establishment) in any specialization and a certificate of state teacher foreign language exam of the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> degree or a certificate of at least advanced command of a foreign language as defined in the regulation or a final upper secondary (*Matura*) exam and a certificate of state teacher foreign language exam of the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> degree. It is also necessary to complete professional training (pedagogical preparation).

Besides, a person is qualified to teach in **kindergartens and in the first stage of primary school (grades I – III)** if s/he holds a Master or Bachelor diploma in pedagogical studies or in specialization qualifying for work in kindergartens or in the first stage of primary school (grades 1-III) or a teacher training college (Initial Teacher Training Establishment) diploma in specialization qualifying for work in kindergartens or in the first stage of primary school (grades 1-III) as well as a certificate of at least basic knowledge of foreign language as defined in the regulation and a diploma of post graduate course or qualification course on teaching a foreign language to young learners.

A person is qualified **to teach subjects – excluding foreign languages** – and conducting classes in a foreign language in bi-lingual schools if s/he has all the necessary teaching qualifications for a given type of school and as regards the foreign language taught or the foreign language of instruction – a Master diploma in philology or applied linguistic in this language or a Bachelor diploma in philology or foreign language specialization or applied linguistics, or a Master or Bachelor diploma received in the country where the given foreign language is the official language of the country or a certificate of at least basic knowledge of foreign language as defined in the regulation.

Qualifications **to teach or conduct activities in groups, departments, kindergartens or schools enabling pupils from ethnic or national minorities to maintain their sense of national, ethnic and language identity** are held by a person who has qualifications required to work as a teacher in a given type of school or kindergarten and in addition has competence in a language that she/he teaches or uses to conduct activities. Nevertheless language competence should be certified by a diploma (certificate) or confirmed by the employing institution in agreement with a competent minority or ethnic association (union).

Teachers acquire qualifications to teach in a given minority or ethnic language by the completion of an appropriate modern languages or post-graduate studies, as it is the case of the Kashubian language.

**Mother tongue** teachers are trained during Master's degree studies, higher vocational studies and in Teacher Training Colleges. People who completed Master's degree studies in the specialization of the Polish language have qualifications to teach in all types of schools; people who completed higher vocational studies possess qualifications to work in primary, lower secondary and vocational schools and people who completed a Teacher Training College in the specialization of the Polish language may teach in primary and vocational schools.

### 2.5.5. Foreign language teachers – statistics

556 700 teachers – full timers and 176.100 teachers - part timers worked in education in the school year 2002/03. The total number of foreign language teachers in Poland is 68281.

Table below presents the number of foreign language teachers in Poland.

Foreign language teachers in Poland (2002/03)

Language	Part-timers	Total
English	11943	36289
French	1168	2929
Spanish	110	259
German	7198	20812
Italian	116	201
Russian	2611	6914
Other foreign languages	517	877
Total	23663	68281

The table illustrates that teaching of two foreign languages of English and German is very prevalent. The second noticeable trend is that foreign language teachers work part time. They have (especially English language teachers) many job opportunities both in school education and in much better paid outside school education. Therefore, they often work in several institutions.

The table below presents the percentage of foreign language teachers possessing tertiary-level qualifications.

Language	Higher education in %
English	94.1
French	97.5
Spanish	97.6
German	97.1
Italian	100.0
Russian	96.3
Other foreign languages	98.8

*Source: Ministry of National Education.*

The above-mentioned statistics show that a majority of foreign language teachers are formally trained to work in this profession.

Teachers participate actively in in-service teacher training activities due to professional ambitions and possibilities of professional advancement.

### 2.5.6. Approaches and methods used by foreign language teachers in Poland

It is recommended to use a strong eclectic form of communication approach in foreign language teaching. This implies that teachers include other teaching methods, such as cognitive or direct methods into their teaching techniques. Communication approach was reinforced after the implementation of the reforms of educational system in Poland (1999) due to the fact that these

reforms clearly indicated the change of the teaching paradigm from knowledge based to skills based.

The communication learner-oriented methods are also the most popular approaches used during language courses organized in the system of out of school education. There are language schools in Poland, which work in accordance with Callan and Berlitz's method. Courses for the youngest children that are conducted according to Hellen Doron's method are also popular. The superlearning and NLP (Neuro- Linguistic programming) methods are also known and applied during language courses. Elements of these methods are also used in foreign language teaching methodology in order to increase the effectiveness of education.

There is lack of broad analysis of working methods used by foreign language teachers. The conclusions of inspection reports, surveys conducted on small groups of teachers, discussions with methodological advisers as well as published and second-hand pupils' opinion show that innovative methods and simulation techniques are not very popular. Teachers still prefer traditional working methods, which are mainly focused on the transmission of knowledge and checking learning outcomes. Too little emphasis is put on the development of pupil's autonomy and his/her communication competences.

## 2.6. Language policy

In accordance with Article 21 of the Act of 7 September 1991 *r. on the Education System* the state overall language policy is coordinated and implemented by the competent Minister of National Education in cooperation with the Voivods and other authorities and units responsible for the operation of educational system.

The changes introduced in the educational policy to date show that all the initiatives undertaken by the Minister of Education were going in a good direction. During the last 15 years the following activities were undertaken, which influenced the position of foreign language teaching in the education system:

- Introduction of teaching of 2 freely chosen foreign languages into the school system starting 1990 (see 2.2) combined with the abolition of compulsory Russian language teaching
- Year 2004/2005 Introduction of 3- and 4-year Bachelor Degree studies in higher vocational schools and in many faculties of modern languages, at the same time promoting initial teacher training through academic studies in the years 1992-1996 (see: 2.5)
- Lowering the age of children starting foreign language learning to the grade 4 of the primary school and introduction of vital changes to the assessment and examination system (see 2.2, 2.4).

The above-mentioned reforms enabled pupils, parents and Headmasters to choose languages taught in school education system depending on available human resources. They also reinforced the status of foreign languages as compulsory or optional school subjects, defined teaching rules and procedures, enabled the introduction of changes into the assessment and examination system as well as guaranteed initial teacher training which trains teachers to respond quickly to the changing needs of their pupils.

The overall state policy in matters connected with the protection of the rights of national and ethnic minorities as well as the rights of communities using regional language is under the guidelines of the minister responsible for religions as well as national and ethnic minorities (at present within the competence of the Minister of Interior and Administration).

Educational matters, in particular those connected with teaching minority languages and the regional language fall within the competence of the minister responsible for education. Both ministries: Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Interior and Administration cooperate with one another within the framework of the Interdepartmental Team for National and Ethnic Minorities coordinated by the Ministry of Interior. *The Strategy for the Development of Lithuanian Minority Education in Poland* as well as *Draft Strategy for the Development of German*

*Minority Education in Poland* were developed as a result of these common actions in 2001 and 2004 respectively.

The Joint Committee of Government and National and Ethnic Minorities established on the basis of the Act of 6 January 2005 on national and ethnic minorities and regional languages started its activities in September 2005. Working group for education of national and ethnic minorities (which will continue the work of the above mentioned Interdepartmental Team) is one of the bodies of this Committee.

Education of Romany children is a separate issue. Romany language is not taught in Polish public schools (except for lack of teachers, Romany people are not interested in the provision of teaching of this language within the system of public education. However, another problem occurs. Romany children starting their school education have low competence in Polish or they do not know this language at all. It is necessary to organize for them complementary, remedial classes of Polish language and other subjects. The system solved this problem by adopting *the Governmental Program for Romany society in Poland, 2004-2014*. This program is coordinated by the Ministry of Interior and Administration. The Ministry of National Education is also very actively involved in the implementation of the educational module of this program, transferring funds to local authorities for the organization of pre-school education as well as remedial education for pupils of Romany origin.

The provision of teaching of languages of national or ethnic minorities or the regional Kashubian language (see: 2.2.7.) is under the responsibility of a Headmaster who has received from parents (16- year-old pupils) a written request for the provision of such activities. If a given school has not such resources to provide minority language teaching (or regional language teaching) because of insufficient number of people enrolled for the course of this language or lack of a teacher, the Headmaster forwards the list of people signed up for such a course to the local authority responsible for the school administration and management, which – taking into account transport possibilities – shall organize inter-school teaching departments.

Local authorities responsible for running the schools and Headmasters cooperate with organizations of national and ethnic minorities in Poland to implement the aforementioned tasks.

The competent Local Educational Superintendents (*Kuratorzy*) supervise the appropriate implementation of the tasks aiming to maintain the sense of language and cultural identity of national and ethnic minorities.

### **2.6.1. Forms of language education – competences taught during lessons of the Polish language**

It is well known that the earlier language education starts, the earlier children become interested in languages in general and are keen to learn them. The language education in mother tongue begins when a child starts speaking. Well provided language education will teach competences which will facilitate foreign language learning in future. That is why teaching of national language i.e. Polish is very well emphasized in Polish education system.

*The Regulation of the Minister of National Education and Sport of 12 February 2002 on the framework plans concerning teaching in public schools* (J. L. No 15, item 142, with further amendments) constitutes the basis for the provision of the Polish language teaching.

In accordance with the provisions of the above-mentioned legal act the weekly spread of hours allocated to Polish language teaching in different types of school/stage of education is as follows:

- Primary school:
  - Grades I - III – 54 hours of integrated teaching
  - Grades IV – VI – 16 hours of Polish
- Lower secondary schools, grades I – III – 14 hours of Polish
- General upper secondary school, grades I – III 14 hours of Polish

- Specialised upper secondary school, grades I – III - 14 hours of Polish
- Technical secondary school, grades I – IV 14 hours of Polish
- Vocational school, grades I – II 5 hours of Polish.

The competences acquired by pupils are assessed at the end of education stage II, III and IV (see: 2.4.1.).

### **2.6.1.1 Test in grade VI of primary school**

Polish language is a subject taught in primary schools (approximately 6 hours a week). Skills taught during this subject are assessed not only within the system of internal assessment but also in a system of external exams i.e. by way of a written test, which is conducted in the last - sixth grade of primary school. It is a cross-curricular test, which means that it checks these skills and competences which are taught within the framework of all subjects and which are important in further stages of education and in life. Teachers cover the test standards while preparing the pupils to sit this test. These standards result from the binding Core Curriculum. Teaching curricula should comply with the Core Curriculum and standards.

Skills and competences, which are externally assessed:

- reading,
- writing,
- understanding,
- use of information,
- practical use of knowledge

The tasks of the test are not divided into parts representing particular school subjects. Nevertheless pupils of grade VI must show, amongst other things, that they have the skills and competences necessary to understand literature text and produce different forms of written texts, such as essay description, report, minutes, letter, telegram, invitation, notice, advertisement, instruction and recipe.

Reading skills are assessed with the use of closed tasks. Writing skills are assessed with the use of open tasks. Pupils write a longer text in accordance with the instruction, which includes requirements concerning the form and content of the text.

The assessment criteria concerning a written work i.e. production skills of different types of written texts include the text consistency, focus, grammaticalness (orthography, punctuation), layout (division into paragraphs, clarity).

A pupil may receive a maximum number of 40 points, including: 10 points for reading, 10 points for writing, 8 points for understanding, 4 points for use of information and 8 points for practical use of knowledge. The assessment rules are published in the Exam guidelines (*Informator do sprawdzianu*).

It is a competence - based test. There is not a minimum pass standard. The results of this exam do not affect the pupil's final marks. Feedback on assessment results should help a school to improve its quality performance and a pupil to be aware of his/her strengths and weaknesses.

### **2.6.1.2. Examination in grade III of lower secondary school**

Just as is the case of the primary school, at lower secondary school, Polish is taught as an individual subject. Skills typical for the Polish language subject are assessed within the school's internal and external system, i.e. in a written standardized test. Students take this examination in grade III of lower secondary school. The test is of inter-subject character, which means that exam requirements incorporate relationship between individual fields of knowledge. In other words, only Polish language-related skills taught within other subjects are tested.

The examination consists of two parts: the first includes skills and knowledge in the field of humanities: Polish, history, civics, art and music, and incorporates the following educational paths:

Philosophical education; Regional education – cultural heritage in a given region; Reading and media education; European education; and Polish culture in the context of Mediterranean culture. The second incorporates knowledge and skills in the field of sciences.

According to the provisions of standard testing requirements, externally tested skills in the scope of humanities include:

- reading comprehension of culture-related texts – on the literal, metaphorical and symbolic levels, the interpretation of culture-related texts, which are broadly understood and include literary and journalistic texts, as well as scientific texts for general public and various sources of information: legal acts, illustrations, maps, tables, diagrams, graphs, charts. Apart from journalistic and scientific texts for general public, the humanities examination sheet includes literary texts,
- writing your own text – the tested forms of expression include: description, short story, characterization, report, review, essay, note, plan, reportage, article, interview, announcement, invitation, inscription, application letter, letter, diary. Moreover, students' linguistic and stylistics competences are tested.

In the examination sheets, the ability to read and comprehend culture-related texts is assessed with the use of a closed test, and ability to write your own text is tested with the use of two tasks requiring a longer answer. Students taking the examination write a functional text and express themselves in a prescribed longer form, such as: an essay, review, report, short story, description, characterization, reportage, diary, letter. Other vital skills taught at Polish lessons, to mention expressing your opinion, the formulation of arguments and basic rhetorical skills, are tested with questions requiring short answers.

The assessment criteria for a functional text include: content-relatedness (substance), composition (the use of formal features characteristic of a given form of expression), style, language (correct syntax, inflection, lexis), notation (spelling and punctuation). These tasks are awarded from 0 to 5 points.

The assessment criteria for a longer written expression pertain to: content and form relatedness, composition, style and language (vocabulary, phraseology, syntax, lexis and the consistence of the style with the form of expression), notation – spelling and punctuation. For a longer written expression students may be awarded a maximum of 16 points out of the total 50 for the performance of tasks in the humanities part of the examination.

Specific skills related with reading comprehension of culture-related texts and the writing of your own text have been included in standard testing requirements, which constitute the basis for administration of the examination.

The competence test is universal and compulsory. Taking the examination is a prerequisite for graduation. However, it does not affect students' end of the year assessment.

The result of the competence test plays an informative and selective role. It is taken into consideration when admitting students to upper secondary schools.

### **2.6.1.3. The *Matura* Examination**

The *Matura* Examination (*Secondary Education Graduation Examination*) taken upon the completion of secondary education is an optional one. Only the leavers of upper secondary schools entitled to take the exam may sit it. These include general secondary schools, specialised secondary schools, technical secondary schools and supplementary general secondary schools. Secondary education graduation certificate obtained as a result of taking the *matura* examination gives the right to continue education at schools of higher education, teacher training colleges and post-secondary schools.

Polish exam is a subject-related one and consists of an oral and written part. It constitutes a compulsory part of the *matura* exam. It verifies skills indispensable for further education, professional work and life, and which include speaking (preparing and making a presentation),

participating in a conversation, understanding of a non-literary text (journalistic, scientific text for general public), the reception of literary texts and writing of your own text.

The oral part of this examination is organized at school and assessed by the examination board, established by the school head, which includes at least one person employed in a different school.

The oral exam consists of two parts: presentation of a chosen topic and discussion on the presentation. The first part of the exam lasts 15 minutes, the second – around 10. The oral exam is designed to assess the skills linked to self-teaching: searching for information, its selection, formulating of theses, research hypothesis and arguments, as well as expressing opinions, preparing bibliography, delivering of the presentation and participation in the discussion.

Presentation topics for the oral exam are prepared at school and pupils choose them from the school list at the beginning of the school year in which they will take the examination. The pupil spends the whole school year working on the presentation.

The exam is assessed according to the uniform, centrally defined criteria. They address such aspects as the content of the presentation in relation to the chosen topic, structure of the presentation, discussion, and language proficiency (the proficiency is assessed on the basis of the presentation and discussion). The pupil can receive a maximum of 20 points for the oral part of the examination. No level of language proficiency is defined for the oral exam.

The written part is an external exam assessed by independent examiners, trained and registered by the regional examination boards. The examination tasks are prepared by the Central Examination Board in cooperation with the regional boards.

The written exam can be taken at standard and extended level. The following skills are assessed at the standard level: reading comprehension of a non-literary text, writing of your own text related with a literary text listed in the Matura Guide as compulsory reading for this level. Sheet I (standard level) consists of a non-literary text and test verifying understanding of the text, as well as two topics for an essay. Each topic is prepared for a different literary text or its fragment. An examinee selects one topic and writes an essay connected with it. Examination requirements apply to the reception of the text at the level of the idea.

At the extended level, i.e. in sheet II, you will also find two topics relating to different literary texts. The topic instructions require an analysis and interpretation of a text, with which a student may be unfamiliar, i.e. a text that has not been included in the Matura Guide list. The requirements at the extended level differ from these at the standard level mainly in this sense that they require the reading of the text not only at the level of idea, but also at the level of language structure.

At both levels, content relatedness, composition, style and language (correctness of syntax, inflection, phraseology, lexis and word-formation) of the essay, as well as notation (spelling and punctuation) are assessed. Also at both levels, students may obtain additional points for unique attributes of their work.

The marking pattern at individual levels of the exam place emphasis on different planes of the essay; language, style and composition (50% of total points) at basic level, and content-relatedness of the work (60% of total points) at extended level.

### **2.6.2. Forms of language education – the role of the *European Language Portfolio***

The aims and content of foreign language teaching in Poland are consistent with the recommendations included in the document by the Council of Europe “Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment” which was translated into Polish in 2003.

Legal regulations reflect the importance of language education in the Polish educational system – foreign language learning is compulsory for children aged 10 and more. Pursuant to the current core curriculum, languages are to be used for communication between people, learning about other cultures, shaping the attitude of openness and independence in learning. The document of the

Council of Europe entitled *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* was translated into Polish in 2003. In the years preceding the Polish edition, the ideas included in the document had been propagated among foreign language teachers in original language versions via the system of in-service teacher training. The contents and aims of foreign language teaching in Poland have been consistent with these included in CEF.

The support for and appreciation of foreign language teaching in Polish educational system is especially evident in the importance of the role *European Language Portfolio* plays in language education of children, youth and adults. *The Portfolio* for children aged 10-15 was the first to obtain the accreditation of the Council of Europe. It was followed by the ones for the adults and children aged 6-10. *The Portfolio* for students of upper secondary schools and HEIs is at the second stage of a pilot programme. Also the *Portfolio* for children aged 3-6 is at the pilot stage. At the end of 2006 students and teachers at Polish schools will be able to work on *European Language Portfolio* at all levels of language education.

*European Language Portfolio* not only facilitates mastering linguistic competence and skills, as well as communication competence recommended by CEF, but mainly facilitates the development of independence in language learning, recognizing and evaluating one's progress, as well as establishing aims for further learning and methods for achieving them. It helps to develop language awareness in small children and openness to other languages. It excites curiosity about the world and knowledge, and also develops motivation for learning. *The Portfolio* also stands for a belief that you can become successful as a language learner.

The Ministry of National Education finances the *European Language Portfolio* project as an element of consistently implemented language education.

### **2.6.3. Forms of language education – bilingual education - CLIL**

Bilingual teaching has been present in Poland since early 1960s. However, it was only in the years 1991/1992 that it gained popularity. At present, schools with bilingual classes operate in general upper secondary schools and lower secondary schools. In these schools, the second language of instruction is English, German, French, Spanish or Italian.

There are 39 bilingual schools with English, 35 with German, 7 with French, 5 with Spanish and 1 with Italian as the second language.

Pursuant to legal regulations in force, bilingual teaching means teaching other subjects in Polish and the second language of instruction. Usually, the second language is used for the teaching of two-three subjects, which most often include mathematics, physics and astronomy, chemistry, biology and hygiene, general history, world geography and computer science. The school leavers can take matura exam in all these subjects pursuant to relevant legal regulations. Bilingual teaching can be conducted during Polish, history, geography of Poland and foreign language lessons.

*With the new matura examination, new standards pertaining to the second language of instruction examinations at the bilingual level have been introduced along with the possibility to take the matura exam in the bilingually taught subject. The same premises and uniform structure for all the languages govern the exam in the second language of instruction. Examination sheets with French and Spanish as the second language of instruction include additional tasks. This results from bilateral agreements on matura examinations concluded by the Ministry of National Education and Sport with the French Embassy (1997 and 2001) and the Ministry of Education of the Kingdom of Spain (1997 and 2004).*

The leavers of the schools with German as the second language of instruction can study in Germany without the need to take the language competence exam, which is compulsory for all foreigners. It is so because the German part has made it possible for them to take DSDII group exam at the level of matura exam. The leavers of schools with English as the second language of instruction very often carry out International Baccalaureate programme. At present, 11 general secondary schools in Poland offer IB programme. Thanks to concluded international agreements, the leavers of schools

with French and Spanish as the second language of instruction have the right to take additional exams, which are included in educational systems in France and Spain. The successful passing of these exams entitles them to apply for admission to schools of higher education in those countries on the same rules as their citizens do.

The idea of CLIL is also implemented in cross-curricular educational paths (see section 2.4).

CLIL is also applied in higher education institutions. Foreign language teaching in HEI is conducted in the form of foreign language courses. Every student admitted to a full time or part-time course is entitled to a voucher for a given number of foreign language classes funded by the school budget. The number of foreign language classes varies from 120 to 480. Students are admitted to groups with different advancement levels based on diagnostic tests. Students can choose from English, German, French, Italian, Spanish and Russian language courses, however the largest number of them decides on English.

At the courses, general language is taught, however at the majority of them specialised texts are being introduced, and in many cases the courses are completed with a specialised language exam.

Other forms of CLIL type activities are described in 3.5.2.

#### **2.6.4. Forms of language education – out-of-school language education**

The out of school education has been mentioned in section 2.3 of this report, however, you cannot miss on it in this section. The majority of Poles believe that foreign language learning, and in particular, English language learning, is very important in their lives and the lives of their children. The command of a foreign language allows you to study abroad, is a precondition for finding a good job, and is indispensable in your professional career. At the same time, the results of language teaching at schools are critically looked at, quite often without taking into consideration the fact that mastering a language requires time and hard work. In the quest for fast success, parallel with school education a language is learnt at private language schools.

One of the consequences of this phenomenon has been a tremendous development of out of school educational service sector in the scope of foreign language teaching. Language schools offer foreign language courses for all age groups. Their offer includes general language, courses, courses preparing for globally recognized language proficiency certificates, for matura exams, as well as specialised language courses. As a result of Poland's entering the European Union, specialised language courses for specific professional groups are gaining popularity among doctors, nurses, lawyers and economists.

### **3. Plurilingualism and diversity of language education**

It is the aim of Polish educational authorities to enable students to make free selection of a foreign language learnt. Despite enormous popularity of English, it is not imposed as an obligatory language on the national scale, especially as in the gminas situated in the border zone, the languages of our neighbours gain popularity. However, the selection of the language is dependant on the availability of qualified teachers. In order to ensure multilingualism of teaching, training is provided to teachers of different languages and various forms of training improvement are organized in order to make them highly qualified language professionals who develop in their students plurilingual and pluricultural competences, which augments the sense of being a part of European culture and tradition.

#### **3.1. Promotion of plurilingualism via network in-service teacher training projects**

The first Poland-wide network language projects were established in 1990s (INSETT – English - 1994, YOUNG LEARNERS –foreign language teaching at early stages of primary education – 1999, DELFORT – German - 1999), and the remaining ones at the beginning of this century (CONCORDE-COFRAN, CONCORDE-MULTI MEDIA – French, ROSSICA – Russian, HOLA – Spanish, FORMATORE – Italian). They were an immediate reaction to a very difficult situation in

foreign language teaching. The change in their status (the decreasing share of Russian language learners, permanent lack of western European language teachers (also teachers methodologists), insufficient trainer pool, and resulting from it insufficient skill improvement offer, as well as an urgent demand for courses leading to the award of specific qualifications (e.g. by retraining Russian language teachers) have resulted in the need for searching for new solutions.

Looking from a perspective of a few years that have passed, the establishment of countrywide network language projects has proven to be an effective solution. National In-Service Teacher Training Centre in Warsaw developed the projects, which consisted in covering possibly the largest number of teachers of individual foreign languages with an effective methodological care. They achieved that by the establishment of training regions throughout Poland with the use of existing infrastructure. These projects were implemented in close cooperation with various foreign (depending on the language, e.g. the British Council, Goethe-Institute, Spanish Embassy, French Embassy) and domestic partners (e.g. in-service teacher training centres, teacher training colleges).

These projects were put in practice thanks to the funding provided by the Ministry of National Education and foreign partners. At present, INSETT is fully funded by the Polish part, and the share of foreign partners is consistently decreasing in other projects.

The forms of cooperation are stipulated in detail in contracts signed by the National In-Service Teacher Training Centre with foreign partners and training centres in the regions.

The goals of the projects include:

- improving the quality of foreign language teaching at individual stages of education,
- facilitating the use of various forms of skill improvement by our teachers thanks to the widening of local offer (training in the regions) with placing special emphasis on foreign language teachers in small towns and villages,
- activation of local in-service teacher training centres and schools of higher education and encouraging the latter to cooperate with teachers.

Each year, the training offer of countrywide network projects is adapted to the needs of teachers. They can participate in the following training:

- qualification courses,
- language improvement courses,
- improvement courses directed at new areas of teaching methodology,
- specialist courses, e.g. for school headmasters, future teacher trainers, mentors, etc.,
- improvement courses related to the most important educational changes in Poland, e.g. new matura exam, *European Language Portfolio*.

Thanks to active participation in the proposed forms of skill improvement, foreign language teachers have opportunities for:

- professional development,
- teaching skills improvement,
- language improvement,
- professional contacts and exchange of professional experiences,
- obtaining information on current situation in Polish education,
- gaining inspiration for innovative activities.

Poland-wide network language projects have gained not only national but also international renown as system solutions, which can ensure effective foreign language teacher improvement training on the national scale. They use existing local training opportunities, as well as implement the recommendations of the Council of Europe regarding the combination of area of training and skill improvement.

The INSETT, YOUNG LEARNERS, DELFORT, CONCORDE-COFRAN and CONCORDE-MULTIMEDIA projects have been awarded European Language Label certificates.

Each year, about 9,000 teachers (including about 4,000 English language teachers, about 3,000 German language teachers, about 1,500 French language teachers and other less numerous teachers of other languages) benefit from the network in-service teacher training scheme.

### **3.2. Supporting languages of national and ethnic minorities and the regional language**

The Ministry of National Education finances the preparation and printing of curricula, textbooks and auxiliary materials for teaching of national and ethnic minority languages and regional language, and distributes them free of charge among students.

It also participates in promoting national and ethnic minority languages, as well as a regional language in Poland by providing financial and organizational support to tasks with local, countrywide and international scope undertaken by associations representing minority communities, which include:

- language contests,
- school competitions staged in minority languages - recitation, theatre, literary competitions,
- reviews and festivals of artistic output of children and youth (in minority languages).

### **3.3. Language diversity in the examination system**

Language diversity is reflected both in the Polish system of education and the examination system. At the *Matura* exam, students can choose from 9 foreign languages (English, German, French, Russian, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Slovak, Swedish). In 2005 76,2% of students took this exam in English, 16,8% in German, 5,3% in Russian, 1,5% in French and 0,2% in other languages. Moreover, there exist bilingual schools with English, German, French, Spanish and Italian as the language of instruction. The leavers of these schools have an opportunity to display their language skills at the *Matura* exam. This system of education is a method of CLIL implementation.

Students of bilingual schools take foreign language exams prepared according to separate examination attainment standards, and on top of that can take an exam in foreign language in six subjects: history, geography, physics, chemistry, biology and mathematics (an additional examination sheet in a given subject). Examinations, apart from knowledge of a given subject and the ability to use it, assess the extent to which the examinee has mastered terminology related with a given subject in a given foreign language and the extent to which he/she is capable of dealing with a given text or task in a foreign language. The results of the written part of the exam in a foreign language are included in a certificate, which should be treated as an additional asset of applicants applying for the admission to a school of higher education or for work at the European labour market. This is of great importance in the situation when a growing number of Polish students apply to study or work abroad.

Moreover, matura exams are administered in national minority languages (Ukrainian, Belarussian, Lithuanian) and one regional language, which is Kashubian. In the case of these exams, emphasis is placed on the knowledge of culture of a given language area.

### 3.4. Supporting international cooperation

The satisfaction resulting from the ability to use the language in practice in the country where it is used or interaction with native users constitutes the strongest motivation for language learning. International contacts have taken various forms and constituted a permanent element of language education in Poland.

#### 3.4.1. International cooperation of central institutions

International cooperation in the field of education and foreign language competence improvement is conducted at several planes, including:

- bilateral cooperation based on implementation programmes to agreements on cultural and scientific cooperation between the government of the Republic of Poland and governments of individual countries,
- bilateral cooperation coordinated by the Ministry of National Education, based on agreements concluded with ministries of education in other countries,
- multilateral cooperation in the framework of educational initiatives undertaken by international organizations, such as Council of Europe, European Union, UNESCO, OECD,
- bilateral or multilateral cooperation resulting from agreements concluded directly by schools, HEIs, local authorities.

The establishment of the Contact Point of the European Centre For Modern Languages of the Council of Europe in Graz at the National In-Service Teacher Training Centre in Warsaw based on the Partial Agreement has been of great importance to foreign language teachers. Polish foreign language teachers and methodologists actively participate in workshops and seminars organized by the Centre, and thanks to the Contact Point have access to extensive literature, and can follow the works conducted abroad without leaving Poland.

#### 3.4.2. International cooperation of local institutions

Schools at all stages of education and various educational institutions establish international contacts on their own and decide on various forms of cooperation. Due to the fact that they enjoy autonomy, only the bodies that directly supervise them are informed about the fact of taking up such cooperation. Therefore, no data is available on the scale of these initiatives. Usually, they take form of inter-school exchanges, the participation in international projects and e-mail correspondence. These initiatives are usually described on websites of individual schools or institutions. Many of them are described in the press and *Języki Obce w Szkole (Foreign Languages in School)* periodical.

#### 3.4.3. Language camps

For over 45 years, the Ministry of National Education has organized summer language camps for school children and youth and provided co-financing for them. The camps are organized at centres selected by superintendents of schools as part of their pedagogical supervision duties (at boarding houses, dormitories, special educational centres, in-service teacher training centres). For example, in 2003, 35 language camps were organised, including:

- 26 English language camps (including 4 for the pupils of primary school grade V-VI, 7 for lower secondary school students, and 15 for secondary school students),
- 3 French language camps,
- 3 German language camps,
- 2 Russian language camps,
- 1 Spanish language camp (for secondary school students).

The total number of students participating in the camps equalled 3,530.

The Ministry's subvention to language camps includes co-financing of accommodation and meals for children and young people, as well as the provision of conditions for organization of language workshops and of the recreation and leisure activities.

The native foreign language teachers and language assistants are recruited to teach at language camps in cooperation with the Polish UNESCO Committee, the Anglo-Polish Universities Association (APASS), the French Institute, and the Kościuszko Foundation. The Ministry of National Education covers the full costs of accommodation and meals during the staff's stay in Poland, the costs of the recreation/tourist programme and of the 7-day excursion organized at the end of the camp.

This initiative is especially valuable for youth coming from small towns and villages. It enables them to enjoy active recreation combined with language education. This initiative has been designed to bridge the gap in educational opportunities of children and youth.

### **3.5. Promoting European initiatives**

From among several European initiatives, especially valuable are these augmenting the motivation to learn languages, shaping the attitude of tolerance and arousing curiosity of the world.

#### **3.5.1. European events**

##### **2001 European Year of Languages**

The Ministry of National Education actively participated in and undertook varied activities related to the European Year of Languages (EYL) announced by the European Commission and the Council of Europe in 2001. An information package available on the Ministry's website was prepared and published, contacts were established with marshal offices, local authorities, a competition for a Polish poster relating to EYL was organised, MEN in cooperation with the Council of Europe staged in Frombork a European conference entitled *Languages of our Neighbours*, which was attended by representatives of neighbouring countries and ethnic and national minorities in Poland. In Polish schools many events, such as competitions, festivals, performances presenting various European countries and their cultural heritage have been staged in various languages. Many of these events were described in the *Języki Obce w Szkole* periodical and posted on websites of individual schools. Undoubtedly, the 2001 European Year of Languages has contributed to deeper identification with European culture.

**September 26 - European Day of Languages** (observed since 2001) has become an indispensable part of school event calendar. It is the day when multilingualism and various cultures of Europe are promoted. Polish schools and educational circles have been taking an active part in the celebrations. The main goal has been arousing students' willingness to become acquainted with culture, history and lifestyles of other countries. Schools stage exhibitions, competitions, tournaments, make posters, guides, information brochures, stage performances, hold discussions, make various presentations, invite foreigners to meetings and try to outdo one another in ideas how to present a given country. The most valuable thing about this day, however, is the fact that preparations for it last a long time and students remember for a long time the success they have achieved. And this constitutes an incentive for further activities and common work and learning.

#### **3.5.2. Community educational programmes - Socrates, eLearning, Leonardo da Vinci, Youth**

The **Lingua** Component of EU Socrates program allows for the implementation of projects that promote foreign language teaching and developing new teaching methods and aids. Each year, several dozens preparatory visits are organized and several meetings, initiatives, competitions, seminars, and conferences related to the promotion of languages are held. The number of Polish institutions participating in the program and implementing international cooperation projects is consistently growing. In the years 1998-2004, Polish institutions participated in 34 different

European language projects, as part of which 22 teaching materials in the form of textbooks, brochures, exercise books, CD-ROMs and websites, 8 teaching materials and curricula, 2 materials regarding the standardization of requirements and student achievements, and 12 materials and campaigns propagating foreign language learning were developed. Most importantly, although these projects have been of European character, some of them to a great extent answered the needs of Polish educational context. For example, it has happened so in the case of *Primeros Pasos* project targeting the French language teachers who work with small children and in the case of *TiPS* project that supports the certification of Polish as a foreign language. Apart from English, French and German, majority of *Lingua* projects applies to least widely used and less taught languages. These projects include virtually all official European languages, and several of them apply to Polish as a foreign language.

Throughout the year 2004, in the framework of the **Lingua** Action, activities aimed at promoting and popularizing products of this Action were undertaken. This campaign was based on the idea of promoting the Council of Europe's tools, such as the Common European Framework of Reference and the European Language Portfolio, and their use in the *Lingua* projects. It contributed to substantial popularity of these tools in Poland and was registered on DVD ROM.

*Source: "SOCRATES LINGUA. Compendium of Projects 1998-2004"*

As part of the **Erasmus** component, each year, a significant number of Polish students go abroad to study at partner universities in order to continue their studies in a foreign language.

The dynamics of Polish students' departures as part of the **SOCRATES-Erasmus Programme** (influence on the augmenting of students' linguistic competences – in the scope of language of instruction, which most often is English, German, French, Italian, Spanish and in the scope of the language used in the host country) are as follow:

	1998/1999	1999/2000	2000/2001	2001/2002	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005*
Germany	500	972	1190	1392	1682	1870	
France	168	334	529	623	745	857	
Spain	63	165	245	319	442	546	
Italy	71	160	252	304	403	481	
Great Britain	151	227	281	262	314	337	
Belgium	124	162	218	230	294	358	
Holand	139	218	207	243	292	294	
Finland	44	135	174	188	280	310	
Sweden	32	97	143	192	246	286	
Denmark	82	158	159	197	241	362	
Portugal	22	61	119	152	192	222	
Austria	22	46	61	73	131	159	
Greece	5	56	77	96	106	122	
Irland	3	22	35	50	51	74	
Luxembourg	0	0	1	0	0	0	
Total	1426	2813	3691	4321	5419	6278	8391

\* statistical data under preparation

The dynamics of foreign students' arrivals to Polish universities as part of the SOCRATES-Erasmus Programme (influence on the augmenting students' linguistic competences – in the scope of the Polish language) are as follow:

	1998/99	1999/2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-05*
Germany	51	119	153	193	219	395	
France	41	92	98	95	201	314	
Italy	11	33	70	98	123	174	
Spain	12	30	78	80	123	176	
Great Britain	34	44	31	46	40	42	
Finland	14	30	42	47	46	60	
Portugal	5	22	39	62	81	125	
Belgium	22	26	27	44	53	69	
Holand	16	21	27	26	25	21	
Sweden	7	24	21	19	24	24	
Austria	1	7	9	13	24	22	
Greece	0	8	8	14	22	14	
Denmark	6	5	11	7	13	12	
Irland	0	4	0	6	1	10	
Luxembourg	0	1	0	0	1	1	
Total	220	466	614	750	996	1459	ca 2100

\* statistical data under preparation

Foreign students attending intensive Polish language courses within the **Erasmus** component

Country	Code	2002	2003	2004	2005
Austria	AT	1	1	1	2
Belgium	BE	3	8	3	2
Czech Republic	CZ	-	-	5	8
Denmark	DK	1	2	-	-
Estonia	EE	-	-	1	-
Finland	FI	5	14	8	10
France	FR	7	18	16	17
Greece	GR	-	-	-	-
Spain	ES	3	9	14	8
Holland	NL	2	2	1	5
Ireland	IRL	-	-	-	2
Lithuania	LT	-	-	-	2
Luxemburg	LU	-	-	-	-
Latvia	LV	-	-	-	-
Malta	MT	-	-	-	-
Germany	DE	28	54	56	71
Portugal	PT	-	2	13	2
Slovakia	SK	-	-	-	1
Slovenia	SI	-	-	-	-
Sweden	SE	-	-	1	2
Hungary	HU	-	-	1	3
Great Britain	UK	4	1	2	1
Italy	IT	9	13	10	20
EOG and candidate countries					
Bulgaria	BG	-	-	-	3
Island	IS	-	-	-	-
Norway	NO	-	-	-	2
Rumania	RO	-	-	-	-
Turkey	TR	-	-	-	6
<b>Total</b>		<b>63</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>167</b>

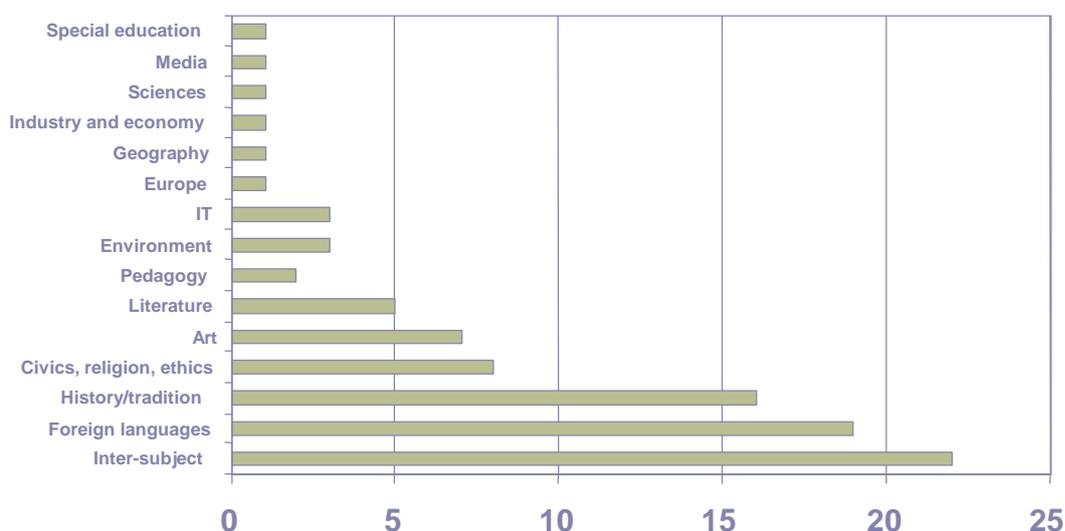
Source: FRSE

The **Erasmus** component plays a significant role in the process of the internationalization of higher education in Poland, and this is why educational authorities in Poland will support it.

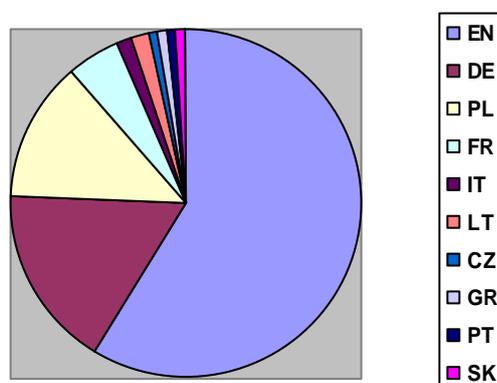
In the years 2001-2005, 236 language projects were implemented at schools as part of the **Comenius** component. In a large majority of projects, English has been the language of communication. A large number of them have also applied to German and French. In individual cases, the following languages have been represented: Italian, Irish, Polish, Finnish, Portuguese, Spanish and Slovak. The **Comenius** component also allows for the improvement of in-service

teachers' skills. In the school year 2004/2005, 1,230 teachers attended courses, among them teachers of other subjects who attended courses run in foreign languages. Moreover, as part of this component, students of modern languages and teacher training colleges left for 3-8 month language training in the capacity as language assistants. The number of such persons is consistently growing: in 2005, 120 Polish language assistants left for other countries, and 25 foreign assistants came to Poland. From the reports prepared by the assistants, one can draw a conclusion that these stays give them several advantages. They have an opportunity to put into practice their theoretical knowledge regarding foreign language teaching or the teaching of other subjects in a foreign language. They also have an opportunity to become acquainted with educational systems and cultures of host countries, and to propagate information on Polish education and culture among teachers and students they meet.

However, **eTwinning** action of the **eLearning** program devoted to the twinning of schools with the use of modern technologies and thematic cooperation projects has been the fastest growing EU initiative targeting schools. The largest number of projects implemented within this programme regards cross-curricular educational paths, foreign languages and traditions. The chart presented below regarding 91 projects implemented in the second term of school year 2004/2005 illustrates these trends:



Surprisingly, the Polish language is quite often used as means of communication within eTwinning projects, in which schools from abroad cooperate with their Polish counterparts:



Source: FRSE, "eTwinning Poland 2005"

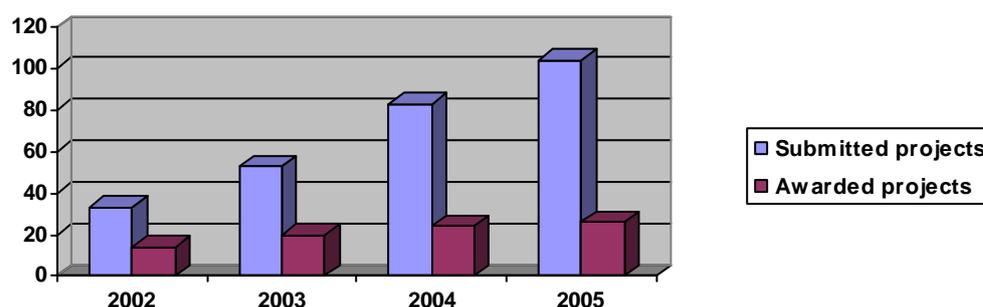
The European Commission considers the Polish National Agency of SOCRATES programme and National Bureau of eTwinning action to be among the most active ones. As far as the management of language actions is concerned, Polish National Agency programme and National Bureau of eTwinning action have introduced several innovative solutions in order to propagate the language project products. The Ministry of National Education will support these activities because many of the language projects implemented as part of these initiatives meet the demand of language education reform in Poland.

The **Leonardo da Vinci** programme allows for the implementation of projects mainly directed at vocational training in a foreign language. In the years 2000-2005, Polish institutions coordinated 10 such projects, which related to the following areas: technology, vocational counselling, public health, management, administration and agritourism. Apart from the most often used languages, such as English, French and German, the projects also applied to Czech, Lithuanian, Slovak, Spanish and Portuguese. Two projects regarded Polish as a foreign language in the area of business and finance.

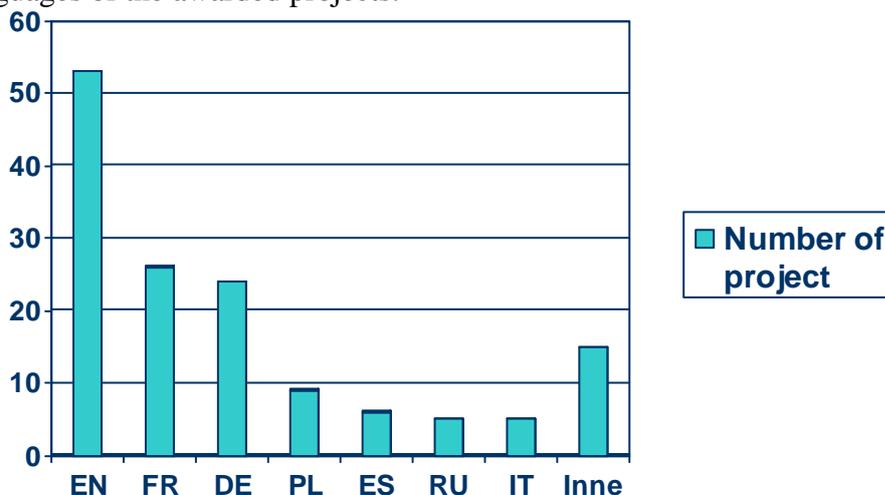
Within the **Youth** programme, it is possible to improve language skills of volunteers.

### 3.5.3. European competitions

In 2002, Poland became a member of **European Language Label** competition in the scope of foreign language teaching. The number of initiatives submitted to the competition and the number of certificates awarded is growing each year:



Languages of the awarded projects:



The "Others" item includes Hungarian, Finnish, Chinese, minority languages and the Kashubian language.

Source: FRSE "European Language Label Award" 2002-2005"

Kindergartens, schools at all stages of education, including schools of higher education, in-service teacher training centres and publishing houses apply for European Language Label. This best reflects the volume of initiatives taken and commitment to day-to-day work. In order to provide inspiration, the activities of the awarded schools and institutions are propagated on websites, in the press, periodicals and on TV.

#### **4. Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC) activities in language education**

Until recently, language classes have concentrated mainly on linguistic competence and skills development and training. Approximately in 2000, teachers have started to introduce more elements related to everyday life and culture of target countries. Working with authentic materials simply imposed the introduction of topics related to current issues. Access to Internet, press and books in foreign languages and ease of travelling have facilitated the availability of knowledge and aroused interest of young people. Schools have had no other choice but to adjust to that. As a result, language classes at schools have gradually become forums for the exchange of opinions. When in 2003, cross-curricular educational paths, and in particular civic education, regional education and European education, were introduced to core curriculum (see: 2.4), and simply imposed on teachers the use of cross-curricular teaching, language teachers had already been ready for that. Their so far instinctive activities have been simply organized and an aim has been prescribed to them, which is to prepare young people to play the role of responsible, open, and efficiently acting citizens of Poland, Europe and the world, which means teaching students to become intercultural citizens.

##### **4.1. Language teaching and EDC**

Language teaching is related to education for democratic citizenship. Teaching methods and contents included in foreign language curricula create favourable conditions for this and their examples include:

- Listening to others – at each lesson, listening comprehension ability, which among others stands for understanding or trying to understand others, putting yourself in somebody else’s position, seriously treating other people’s opinions and arguments, accepting praise and criticism, is trained.
- Talking to others – speaking ability training constitutes the basis for each language lesson – students learn to express their opinions (about needs, interests, feelings, values), talk in a comprehensible way, give clear and straightforward arguments, not to offend people with different opinions. The following techniques are used in training these skills:
  - ✓ pair work – which stands for establishing dialogue with another person
  - ✓ group work – which means participation in the division of labour, accepting tasks, working to complete them, accepting the decisions taken by the majority, emphasizing group responsibility
  - ✓ role plays and simulations– which stand for putting yourself in somebody else’s situation, tolerating divergences and differences, discerning conflicts and solving them in a socially accepted manner, accepting mistakes and differences, encouraging to the exchange of views, showing courage in expressing one’s own views
  - ✓ debates – using arguments and making choices in artificial (and later in real life) situations, thorough analysing of other people’s statements, listening to the parts of the conflict in order to reach the truth, looking for compromise and consensus.
- Project works undertaken during language classes teach the ability to live with others, cooperate, create and implement common enterprises, take responsibility for your actions.

If one adds to that the implementation of language aims included in curricula, such as teaching of the creation of different forms of expression, and combine it with the ability to behave in a manner

accepted in a given community, it is obvious that language education is truly related to education for democratic citizenship.

#### **4.2. Taking actions at the local community level**

Thanks to the style of their work, language teachers develop in students the attitudes of commitment and belief in their capabilities. They encourage students to participate actively in local community life. Schools, especially in small towns and villages, become centres of cultural and social life. Initiatives taken there meet interest not only of parents, and quite often grow to be initiatives on a local stage (exhibitions, performances, festivities, tournaments, competitions and town twinning originating from inter-school cooperation). What is more, the activity and commitment of children is quite often passed on to the parents.

The European clubs mentioned above and various forms of out of school activity approximate school education to social and public life. In this way, examples of civic activity are promoted, which helps young people function in international civic society.

### **5. Future strategies for language education – topics for discussion**

Language teaching has an important role in the educational policy. As a result of undertaken activities (see 2.6) a considerable progress has been achieved, however, there is scope for further improvement.

#### **5.1. Initial and in-service teacher training**

The improvement of the quality of teaching in initial teacher training is important, and should lead to the increase of teachers' effectiveness. The necessary mechanisms that can trigger such development include: preparing foreign language teachers to use innovative teaching methods, interactive and active tools in order to support the teaching process and to respond quickly to pupils' needs.

#### **5.2 Young learners language teaching**

Lowering of the age of compulsory language learning is envisaged in the "Strategy for the Development of Education in 2007-2013". It is planned that the compulsory learning of the first foreign language will start at the grade 1 of primary school. The fact that there is a clear social need for the implementation of this solution is also an additional argument for its support.

In order to implement this solution it is necessary to train the qualified staff for early school education (see also the Young Learners Network Programme, section 4.1). For this purpose, we train teachers, prepare training materials for the teachers who already teach grades I-III a foreign language as an additional subject. We have also prepared *European Language Portfolio for grade 0-III pupils*. A big number of textbooks and teaching aids for this age group are available on the market.

It is worth mentioning initiatives taken by local authorities who solve the problem of foreign language teaching in grades I-III themselves by paying for it with their own funds. These are the examples of good practice, which can be used as pilot projects prior to the introduction of this solution on the countrywide scale. One can also consider the use of a temporary model of foreign language teaching to young learners co-financed by local authorities with the use of specific incentives and providing support from the central budget.

#### **5.3. Stages of language education**

Foreign language is taught at each school as a compulsory subject from the fourth grade of the primary school. It would be advisable to think about earlier introduction of the second foreign language (already at lower secondary school) and the introduction of language competence test upon the graduation from the lower secondary school. It is connected, however, with ensuring the

continuation of the same language at subsequent stages of education and ensuring the adequate number of foreign language teachers.

There is also a social need, especially in large cities, to increase the number of bilingual schools, especially lower secondary schools. CLIL develops linguistic and communicative competences of students faster and makes them more open and more effective in performing various tasks. The introduction of compulsory foreign language classes into the teacher training curricula should contribute to preparing teaching staff qualified to teach CLIL.

The new matura exam in a foreign language also requires modernization. Works are conducted to adapt the matura exam standards to these of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*. Moreover, *matura* papers are still being analysed. The conclusions of the analysis will allow for taking further decisions. They are indispensable, because during the matura exam in 2005 a number of difficulties relating to recruitment procedures in higher education based on matura certificates appeared. These procedures must be agreed with reference to bilingual and international (IB) matura exam.

The difficulties also result from academic teachers' distrust in the quality of teaching at educational stage IV. It is advisable that educational stage IV and academic teachers commence cooperation and learn from one another.

Facing new opportunities for mobility and opening up of the labour markets it is necessary to consider modifying foreign language teaching in vocational training.

It is also necessary to undertake measures aiming at improving schools' equipment facilitating language learning.

#### **5.4. Schools for national minorities**

The maintenance of schools that teach minority languages and the regional language is increasingly difficult for the bodies which supervise them. Because of the growing population decline, one can observe a declining number of children, and less and less frequently these children learn mother tongue at home. It often happens that they start to learn it at school. Modifications to the system of financing education should be taken into consideration in order to preserve the functioning of small schools with regional/minority language teaching. It should also be discussed how the foreign language teachers should be trained, so they can contribute to the preservation of the national (ethnic), linguistic and cultural identity of pupils from ethnic minorities.

#### **5.5. Out-of-school education**

The results of survey on foreign language students in language schools are most disturbing. Every third student in such a school attends a primary or lower secondary school at the same time. Teachers employed in language schools confirm that their students often follow the courses in the same languages as those taught in their own school. This means that the foreign language teaching offered by schools does not satisfy the pupils and their parents. The increase in the minimum of teaching hours envisaged in the school curriculum for foreign languages should be considered – up to 900 hours for the first foreign language, and up to 500 hours for the second.

The popularity of out-of-school language education obscures the picture of the effectiveness of compulsory language education at schools. The first external matura exam, which was administered in 2005 showed that the results in foreign languages were better than in other subjects. It is difficult to decide to what extent this is due to the level of foreign language teaching at school, and to what extent – to the out-of-school education. It would be helpful to ask every pupil taking the foreign language Matura examination to fill in the form on the scope of additional foreign language learning he/she has undertaken. This would help with the assessment of effectiveness of the school-based foreign language teaching.

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- 1) [The Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 2 April 1997, art. 27](#)
- 2) [Act of 7 October 1999 on the Polish language \(OJ no. 90, item 999 as amended\)](#)
- 3) [Act of 27 July 2005, higher education law \(OJ no.164, item1365\)](#)
- 4) [Act of 7 September 1991 on the system of education \(OJ of 2004, no. 256, item 2572 as amended\)](#)
- 5) [Act of 6 January 2005 on national and ethnic minorities and regional language \(OJ no.17, item141\)](#)
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- 7) [Regulation of the Minister of National Education and Sport of 3 December 2002 on conditions and methods of performing by schools and public institutions of tasks allowing to sustain the sense of national, ethnic, linguistic and religious identity of pupils from national minorities and ethnic groups \(OJ no.220, item1853\)](#)
- 8) [Regulation of the Minister of National Education and Sport of 10 September 2002 on detailed qualifications required of teachers and the determination of schools and cases, in which it is possible to employ teachers without higher education diploma or who have not graduated from a teacher training institution \(OJ no.155, item1288\)](#)
- 9) [Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 12 August 1997 on teacher training institutions \(OJ no.104, item 664\)](#)
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- 12) [Regulation of the Minister of National Education and Sport of 5 February 2004 on the authorisation for school use of pre-school education programs, curricula and textbooks and on withdrawal of the authorisation \(OJ no. 25, item 220\)](#)
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- 16) [Draft Strategy for the development of German minority education in Poland, developed by the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Interior and Administration](#)
- 17) [Agreement between the Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Poland and the Embassy of the French Republic in Poland on the rules of administration of matura examinations for the leavers of bilingual forms with French as the second language at Polish general secondary schools in school years 1997/1998 and 1998/99 and conditions for the issuance by French authorities of French Language Proficiency Certificate to the leavers of these schools who successfully passed the prescribed examinations signed in Warsaw on 12 January 1998 \(as annexed and amended\)](#)

- [18\)](#) Agreement between the Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Poland and the Ministry of Education and Culture of Spain on the establishment and operation of bilingual forms with Spanish as the second language at general secondary schools in the Republic of Poland, the organization of matura examination for the leavers of these forms and the description of indispensable conditions for their being awarded the Titulo de Bachiller by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Spain signed in Warsaw on 6 May 1997 (as annexed and amended)
- [19\)](#) “Common European Framework of Reference: learning, teaching, assessment”, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 2001
- [20\)](#) “eTwinning Poland 2005” FRSE, Warsaw 2005
- [21\)](#) “Języki obce w szkole”, special issue: “Bilingual Teaching”, no 6/2002, Wydawnictwo Centralnego Ośrodka Doskonalenia Nauczycieli
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- [24\)](#) “The system of education in Poland”, Warsaw, Foundation for the Development of the Education System, Eurydice, 2005.

## Glossary of Abbreviations

CLIL	Content and Language Integrated Learning
CODN	National In-Service Teacher Training Centre
COMENIUS	a component of the SOCRATES Programme, supporting the initiatives leading to the improvement of quality in school education and to promoting of the European dimension in educational processes, through, among others, promotion of foreign language learning.
eLEARNING	European Union Programme operating in the area of support and use of ICT in the European education systems
eTWINNING	the main action of the eLearning Programme, providing support to schools wishing to cooperate via Internet with partner schools in other European countries
ERJ	European Year of Languages
ESOKJ	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment
EAQUALS	European Association for Quality Language Services
FRSE	Foundation for the Development of the Education System
GUS	Central Statistical Office
IB	International Baccalaureat
KN	teacher training college
LINGUA	a component of the SOCRATES Programme, supporting the other actions of the programme through the activities leading to the preserving and development of linguistic diversity in the European Union, improving the level of foreign language learning and teaching, assuring a wide access to various forms of “lifelong foreign language learning” according to the individual needs of learners.

MEN	Ministry of National Education
MENiS	Ministry of National Education and Sport
MSWiA	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration
NKJO	foreign language teacher training college
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PASE	Polish Association for Standards in English
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment OECD
SOCRATES	European Union Programme aiming at the development of European cooperation in education
TiPS	Testing in Polish and Slovene (a project in the Socrates-Lingua 2 Programme).