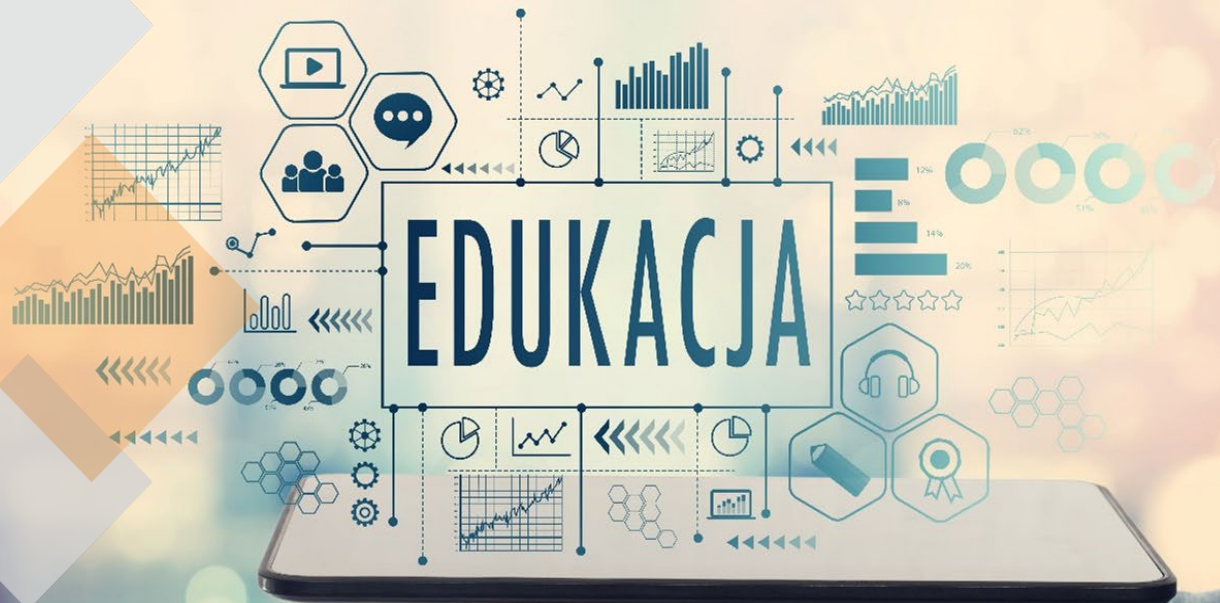




Jerzy Bielecki  
Thessaloniki, 20-21.11.2024 r.

# Transformation of Poland's National VET System Over the Last 20 Years



## Introduction

- Development since EU accession
- Key reforms
- European transparency tools
- Key challenges for Poland's VET system
- Role of Cedefop
- Evolution of ReferNet
- Sources



## Development of National VET System Since EU Accession

- 1999, 2012, 2017–2019 reforms focused on learning outcomes and labour market integration
- Increased emphasis on work-based learning and general skills alignment with EU frameworks
- Enhanced monitoring of VET graduates (based on administrative data) and forecast for labour market demand
- Poland's accession to the EU in 2004 brought a shift towards aligning the VET system with European standards, emphasising transparency, mobility, and comparability
- Development of the Polish Qualifications Framework (PQF) aligned with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), setting clear levels of education and training
- Focused on preparing students with both vocational and transversal skills to meet evolving labour market demands

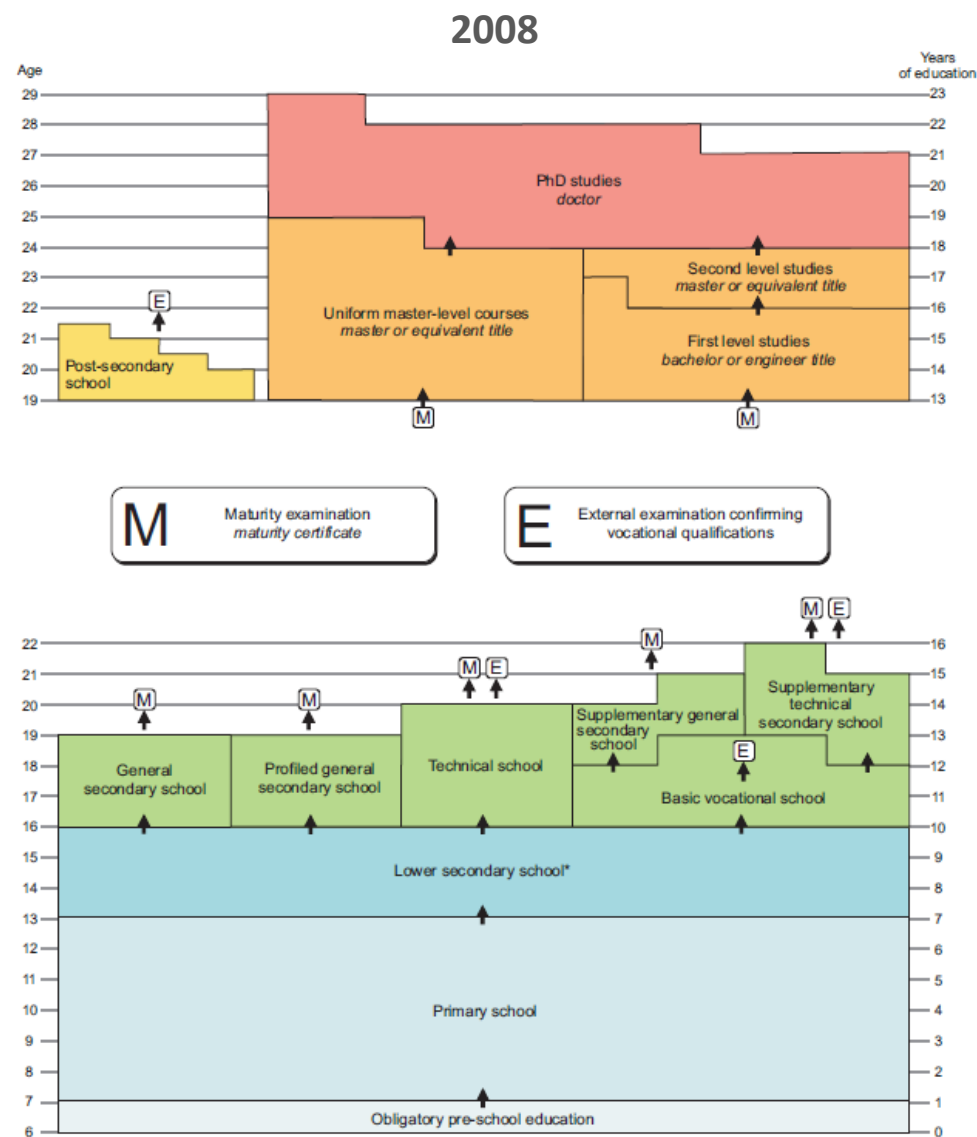


## Major VET Reforms in Poland

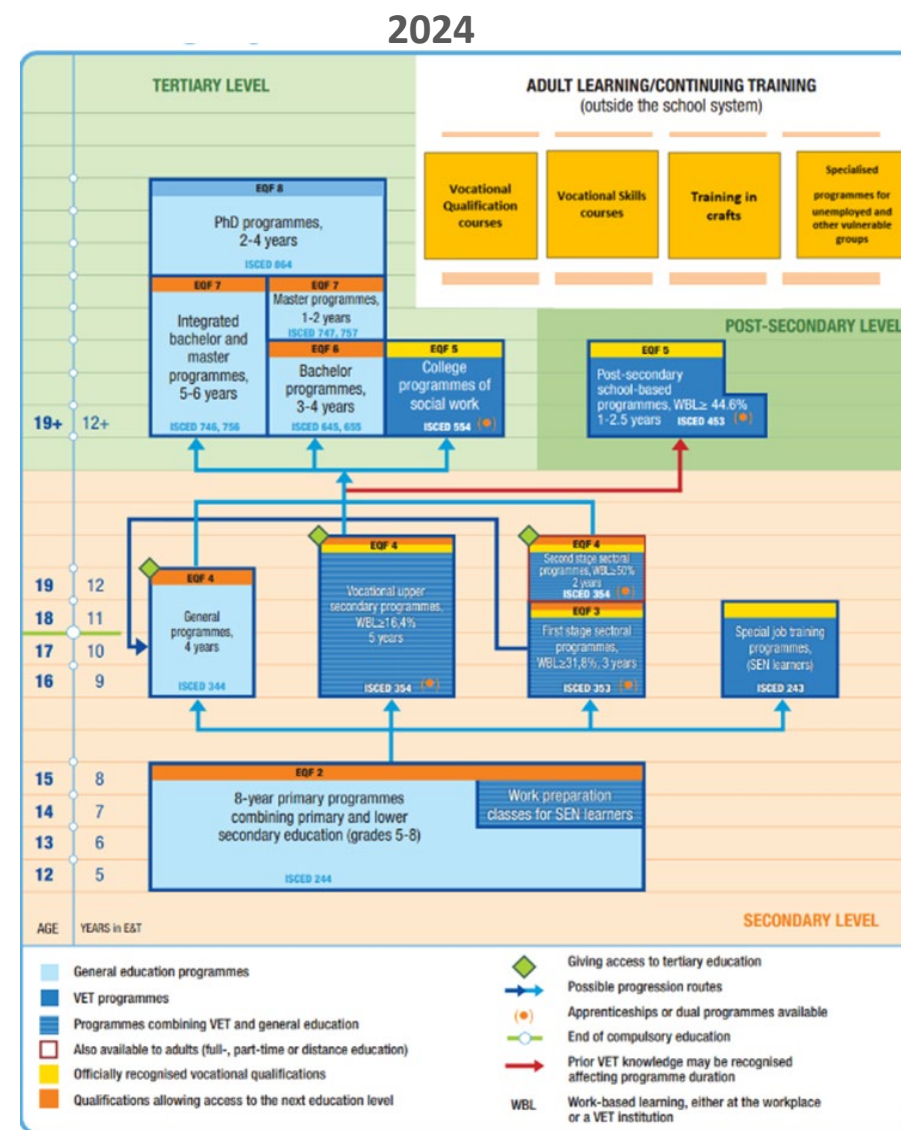
- **1999:** Decentralization of VET management, external examinations introduced
  - Decentralized VET governance to empower local authorities and introduced standardised external assessments to measure learning outcomes objectively
- **2012:** Core curricula adapted to European qualifications; non-formal learning recognition expanded
  - Adopted a qualification-based curriculum structure, facilitating the use of learning outcomes as a common reference
- **2017-2019:** Structural reforms introduced dual-sectoral schools and strengthened employer involvement
  - Comprehensive restructuring of the VET system with a dual pathway approach, introducing first and second-level sectoral schools and expanding apprenticeship opportunities in collaboration with industry



# Changes in VET in Poland



\*Including lower secondary schools with work preparation classes



NB: ISCED-P 2011.



## Adoption of European Transparency Tools

- **EQF/NQF**: National frameworks adapted for cross-country recognition of qualifications
  - Adoption of the EQF allowed for alignment between the Polish Qualifications Framework and EU standards, enabling comparability and mobility of Polish qualifications within Europe
- **EQAVET**: Quality assurance improved through standardised assessments.
  - Strengthened quality assurance through periodic reviews and evaluations of VET programs, enhancing trust and reliability in vocational qualifications
- **Validation of Non-formal and Informal**: Policies established for recognition of informal qualifications
  - Established processes for recognising skills acquired outside formal education, aiding lifelong learning and labour market adaptability



## Key challenges for Poland's VET system

- Boosting the attractiveness of VET
- Increasing employer involvement in training, skills identification, and curriculum updates.
- Improving VET teachers' qualifications
- Promoting lifelong learning for adults
- Building partnerships between VET schools and universities for shared best practices
- Providing quality guidance and counselling across age groups
- Upgrading infrastructure to match labour market needs
- Expanding and updating training programmes
- Strengthening support for learners, especially post-pandemic and for Ukrainian students
- Enhancing the general skill levels of vocational students
- Adapting the VET system to the modern economy's demands



## Role of Cedefop and Future Collaboration

- Research and guidelines to align Polish VET policies with EU standards
- Professional development for educators and VET policymakers, enhancing quality and innovation in vocational training
- Cooperation on studies related to labour market needs, skill mismatches, and future skill demands to adapt VET systems
- Potential to expand cooperation on digital skills, green economy training, and youth employment strategies, fostering sustainable growth



## Evolution of ReferNet in Poland

- ReferNet supports comprehensive data collection on VET trends, educational outcomes, and labour market needs in Poland.
- Compiles reports on national VET policies and contributes to EU-wide assessments, helping shape evidence-based policy.
- Engages with national stakeholders to ensure accurate representation of Poland's VET system in European contexts.
- Potential to enhance focus on digital transformation in VET, green skills, and alignment with evolving EU priorities for workforce development.



## Conclusion

- Poland's VET system has made considerable advancements post-EU accession, with reforms aligning it closer to European standards.
- Implementation of European transparency tools, like EQF and EQAVET, has improved the quality, transparency, and portability of vocational qualifications.
- Both Cedefop and ReferNet have played crucial roles in guiding Poland's VET reforms and ensuring alignment with EU priorities.
- There is room to build on current advancements by focusing on digital skills, green competencies, and further collaboration with EU agencies to enhance Poland's workforce readiness for future demands.



## Sources

- Cedefop (2024). *Vocational Education and Training in Europe. VET in Europe database – Detailed VET System Descriptions: Poland*
- Sitek, M., & Stasiowski, J. (2022). *Changes in the Organisation and Functioning of Vocational Education and Training in Poland: An Overview of Reforms 1989–2022*
- ReferNet (2020). *The Future of vocational education and training in Europe. Annex 1 Questionnaire. Internal Document*



**Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych**  
ul. Górczewska 8, 01-180 Warszawa  
tel.: (22) 241 71 00, e-mail: [ibe@ibe.edu.pl](mailto:ibe@ibe.edu.pl)