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## TRAINING SYSTEMS IN TERMS OF QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCES OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN SELECTED EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

**A b s t r a c t.** Training of social workers, based on Polish and EU standards of education, aims at their acquiring professional qualifications and competences. It also aims at the development of the profession in order to cope with the social challenges of the modern society. The analysed issue of the European training system of social workers is presented in the context of the legal regulations in selected European countries.

In this context, it is worthwhile to learn the basic qualifications and competences of social workers obtained in the course of education in selected European countries. The presented study examines this issue with regard to Polish standards. There is a need on the one hand of the implementation of the UE legislation to Polish legislation, but on the other hand, every state has the right to apply its own solutions to the education of social workers, defining qualification standards of the profession. There is therefore a need for updating and developing educational standards in preparation for practicing the profession of social worker in Poland, using the standards of the EU, EU Member States and European states outside the EU. The article draws attention to these considerations, and tries to present these standards in the context of European and national educational standards.

**Key words:** European training systems; harmonization of higher education; qualifications and competences of social workers

### INTRODUCTION

In the EU law the notion of “regulated profession” is defined as “a professional activity or group of professional activities, access to which, the pursuit of which, or one of the modes of pursuit of which is subject, directly or indirectly, by virtue of legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions

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to the possession of specific professional qualifications.”<sup>1</sup> The pursuit of a regulated profession depends on satisfying the requirements defined in relevant regulations of the given member state of the EU. Every member state of the EU makes its own decision about regulating the access to professions. It happens that in one of the member states a particular profession is regulated and in other ones the profession does not have such a status.<sup>2</sup>

The profession of social worker is a regulated profession, so it is subject to special legal regulations in the sphere of making access to it. The qualifications of social workers and the requirements and tasks that are set to them are regulated by law. Pursuant to Polish law the professional standards of this profession require completion of undergraduate studies in the field of social work. The legal basis in Polish jurisdiction refers to the following acts:<sup>3</sup>

– Law of 20 April 2004 on the promotion of employment and about the institutions of the labor market<sup>4</sup>;

– Regulation by the Minister of Labor and Social Policy of 7 August 2014 on classification of professions and specialties for the needs of the labor market and the scope of its application.<sup>5</sup>

In the classification of professions and specialties contained in the Regulation by the Minister of Labor and Social Policy of the Republic of Poland the profession of social worker is included in the register with the code 341205.<sup>6</sup> The classification of professions and specialties is a systematized set of professions and specialties that are encountered on the labor market. The classification was compiled on the basis of the International Standard Classification of Occupations ISCO-08. The classification is recommended for the use in particular countries by the International Labor Organization (ILO) and EUROSTAT – European Statistical Office. It is implemented by the recommendation of the Commission of the European Communities of 29

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<sup>1</sup> *Regulated profession* – the definition of “regulated profession” in the understanding of Directive 2005/36 – <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LEXUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2005:255:0022:0142:EN:PDF> [accessed: 20.12.2016].

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.nauka.gov.pl/ogolne-informacje-o-systemie-uznawania-kwalifikacji-zawodowych-zgodnie-z-dyrektywa-2005-36-we-co-to-jest-zawod-regulowany-dzialalnosc-regulowana.html> [accessed: 25.01.2016].

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.mpips.gov.pl/praca/bazy-danych-mpips-dla-potrzeb-edukacji-i-pracy/klasyfikacja-zawodow-i-specjalnosci/> [accessed: 25.01.2016].

<sup>4</sup> Law of 20 April 2004 on promoting employment and on the institutions of the labor market, Art. 36 par. 8 (Official Journal of the Republic of Poland of 2004, section 674 with amendments).

<sup>5</sup> Regulation by the Minister of Labor and Social Policy of 7 August 2014 on the classification of professions and specialties for the needs of the labor market, and the scope of its application (Official Journal of the Republic of Poland of 2014, section 1145).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

October 2009 (Official Journal of the Republic of Poland L. 292, 10/11/2009 P. 0031-0047) on the use of the International Standard Classification of Occupations ISCO-08<sup>7</sup>. Bringing the classification up to date in order to adjust it to the changes occurring in the labor market (Polish and European ones) by introducing into it new occupations/specialties is done every 2-3 years. The Polish classification of occupations and specialties, as methodologically based on the International Standard Classification of Occupations ISCO-08, is brought up to date by regulations issued by the Minister of Labor and Social Policy (starting from 2015 it is the Minister of the Family, Labor and Social Policy) on the classification of occupations and specialties for the needs of the labor market, and the scope of their application.<sup>8</sup>

In the Republic of Poland regulations on the rules of recognizing professional qualifications obtained in member states of the European Union are applied. Qualifications are a set of competences the obtaining of which was confirmed by a proper document (e.g. a diploma, a certificate) issued by a competent authority. Recognition of professional qualifications remains in force in the Republic of Poland also with respect to the profession of social worker. In Poland qualifications of social workers are indicated by the Act of 12 March 2004 on social aid<sup>9</sup> and by the Act of 16 February 2007 on modification of the law on social aid<sup>10</sup> and later amendments to it concerning the right to pursue the profession.<sup>11</sup> The basic qualifications of social workers are defined by Art. 116 and Art. 156 of the Act on social aid with the consideration of the further amendments to the Act.<sup>12</sup>

In the EU legislature the concept of regulated activity has been introduced for the needs of the system of recognition of qualifications. The activity that is mentioned in Annex IV to the Directive 2005/36/EC may be one of them. The

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<sup>7</sup> Recommendation of the Commission of the European Communities of 29 October 2009 on the use of the International Standard Classification of Occupations ISCO-08 (Official Journal of the Republic of Poland L 292, 10/11/2009 P. 0031-0047).

<sup>8</sup> <http://psz.praca.gov.pl/rynek-pracy/bazy-danych/klasyfikacja-zawodow-i-specjalnosci> [accessed: 25.01.2016].

<sup>9</sup> Act of 12 March 2004 on social aid (Official Journal of the Republic of Poland of 2004, No 64, pos. 593; Official Journal of the Republic of Poland of 2009, No 175, pos. 1362; Official Journal of the Republic of Poland, pos. 163).

<sup>10</sup> Act of 16 February 2007 on modification of the Act on social aid (Official Journal of the Republic of Poland of 2007, No 48, pos. 320).

<sup>11</sup> Act of 12 February 2010 on modification of the law on social aid and some other laws (Official Journal of the Republic of Poland of 2010, No 40, pos. 229); Act of 5 August 2015 on modification of the law on social aid (Official Journal of the Republic of Poland of 2015, pos. 1310).

<sup>12</sup> See: Act of 16 February 2007 on modification of the Act on social aid, Art. 5 (Official Journal of the Republic of Poland of 2007, No 48, pos. 320); <http://www.mpips.gov.pl/pomoc-spoeczna/interpretacje-wybranych-przepisow/kwalifikacje-pracownika-socjalnego/> [accessed: 25.01.2016].

introduction of this concept is justified by the possibility that a worker has professional qualifications on the basis of relevant professional experience. More precisely, it is stated: if the right to pursue one of the activities mentioned in the directive in one of the member states is dependent on the possession of definite qualifications in the scope of knowledge and of skills with the general, commercial, or professional character, a migrant may automatically have his qualifications for pursuing this activity recognized, on condition that he has relevant professional experience or experience combined with adequate education in the sphere of pursuing the same activity in a member state from which he comes.<sup>13</sup>

Taking the above statements into consideration it seems that it is worth getting to know about the basic qualifications of social workers in chosen European states. The present study analyzes this issue with the consideration of Polish standards. On the one hand the process of implementation of the Union legislature into the Polish legislature progresses, and on the other, every state has the right to apply such solutions of the defining of the standards of qualifying this professional group that are proper for its system of training social workers. Hence, there is a need for bringing the education standards up to date and developing them in the sphere of preparation to the profession of social worker in Poland, using the standards that are in force in the European Union member states, and European states that do not belong to the EU. The present article pays attention to these determinants and tries to show them in the context of European and Polish education standards.

## 1. EUROPEAN STANDARDS OF TRAINING SOCIAL WORKERS

The education policy of the European Union and of particular countries of Europe has recently started playing an ever greater role against the background of other communities' policies. Many factors have contributed to it, and among them one of the major ones is the introduction of new reforms and curricula aiming at perfecting various stages of education.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.nauka.gov.pl/ogolne-informacje-o-systemie-uznawania-kwalifikacji-zawodowych-zgodnie-z-dyrektywa-2005-36-we/co-to-jest-zawod-regulowany-dzialalnosc-regulowana.html> [accessed: 25.01.2016].

<sup>14</sup> Por. Jerzy Koperek, K. Rychlewska-Szczepańczyk, "Polityka edukacyjna między dwoma modelami: polskim i francuskim – szkolnictwo wyższe," in Adam Koperek, Jerzy Koperek, *Polityka edukacyjna. Rozwój kwalifikacji pracowników socjalnych – konteksty i perspektywy* (Łódź 2012), 205-218; Ewa Kantowicz, "Koncepcje kształcenia do pracy społecznej w ujęciu Aleksandra Kamińskiego," in Ewa Marynowicz-Hetka, Hanna Kubicka, Mariusz Granosik (ed.), *Aleksander Kamiński i jego twórczość pedagogiczna. Dyskusja o przeszłości wobec teraźniejszości i przyszłości* (Łódź:

The Bologna declaration was a breakthrough in the European education policy, owing to which a plan was conceived of harmonizing higher education in Europe. The declaration contributed to the introduction of a number of changes aiming at creating new educational possibilities and establishing the European Higher Education Area. A special role in these changes is played by the Socrates program whose particular elements deal with reforms of school education, starting with the kindergarten level and ending with higher studies and permanent education of adults.

The process of European integration in the sphere of higher education is going on on the basis of the Bologna declaration that was accepted by European countries.<sup>15</sup> Standardization of levels and curricula is very important for the process of the development of higher education in Europe. One of the elements of this standardization is a three-level division of education – the B.A. level, the M.A. level, the doctor's level, and the European Credit Transfer System, owing to which the clarity of the formally obtained qualifications increases. It also favors the mobility of students and professionals in the sphere of social work. These actions are taken on the forum of the European Union, but the ultimate legal regulations of education systems are enforced by member states. From this it follows that also autonomous solutions are permissible that are determined by a country's own experience in the sphere of doing social work and by the social-economic development of the country.<sup>16</sup>

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Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 2004), 359-367; Ewa Kantowicz, Andrzej Olubiński (ed.), *Działanie społeczne w pracy socjalnej na progu XXI wieku* (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Akapit, 2003); Synnöve Karviainen, Tarja Pösö, Mirja Satka (ed.), *Reconstructing social work research. Finish Methodological Adaptations* (Jakaskyla: SoPhi, 1999); Anna Kotlarska-Michalska (ed.), *Obszary pracy socjalnej w teorii i praktyce* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo UAM, 2002); Christine Labonte-Roset, "The European Higher Education Area and Research Orientated Social Work Training," a lecture delivered at the International Seminar *Social Work Education in Europe – Towards a Stronger Research-Oriented*, 31 March – 4 April (Hochschule Magdeburg 2004); Ewa Marynowicz-Hetka, "Badanie – działanie – kształcenie. Wybrane problemy analizy i przygotowania do działania," in Anna Kotlarska-Michalska (ed.), *Obszary pracy socjalnej w teorii i praktyce* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo UAM, 2002); Zbyszko Melosik, *Uniwersytet i społeczeństwo. Dyskursy wolności, wiedzy i władzy* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Wolumin, 2002); Andrzej Mielczarek, "Dokąd zmierza praca socjalna w XXI wieku?" *Vladislavia* 2002, nr 13.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Jerzy Koperek, K. Rychlewska-Szczepańczyk, *Proces harmonizacji szkolnictwa wyższego w Unii Europejskiej*, in: Adam Koperek, Jerzy Koperek, *Polityka edukacyjna. Rozwój kwalifikacji pracowników socjalnych*, 153-171; Jerzy Koperek, K. Waligórska, *Znaczenie Procesu Bolońskiego dla rozwoju europejskiej polityki edukacyjnej*, in: *ibid*, 173-204.

<sup>16</sup> Ewa Kantowicz, *Praca socjalna w Europie. Inspiracje teoretyczne i standardy kształcenia* (Olsztyn: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warmińsko-Mazurskiego w Olsztynie, 2005), 247; see Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 7 September 2005 r. on recogniz-

By defining the European standards of social workers' education in the context of the provisions of the Bologna declaration, perfecting the education systems in the sphere of social work both in the European Union and in particular European countries is aimed at. Both different and common elements that are searched for, although they may not be compared as far as their content is concerned, may be referred to definite standards.<sup>17</sup>

The European Union and its member states are to a large degree aiming at the development of the community labor market. This has a clear effect on their education policy. Under these conditions a peculiar debate was started between the world of politics and that of universities about the education of employees. For obvious reasons universities promote the "academic quality" of education, whereas politicians support the development of vocational higher education. The following arguments speak for this type of education: 1) the financial argument coming from the area of financing the higher school; 2) the social argument from the field of preventing unemployment; 3) the argument from the field of the employment policy. In the first case politicians state that vocational higher education is cheaper in comparison with universities offering a full higher education. The second argument is reduced to the thesis that vocational higher schools graduates find work more easily. And when formulating the third argument it is noticed that the educating institutions, and especially the institutions of social aid, in a long-term process would have to create a demand for social workers with full higher education on the labor market. Such a process would undoubtedly require shaping the demand for such a kind of qualifications actively in the sphere of social work. So it turns out that economic reasons to a large degree condition the European education policy in the sector of higher education.<sup>18</sup>

In European higher education standardizing the education system according to the Bologna declaration does not level the differences in professional qualifications obtained in different European higher schools.<sup>19</sup> This obviously results from the differences in education systems in particular countries, and also from the character and identity of the given higher school. It is also

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ing professional qualifications (Official Journal of the Republic of Poland. UE L 255 of 30.09.2005, p. 22, with changes).

<sup>17</sup> Kantowicz, *Praca socjalna w Europie*, 246-247.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 252; cf. Piotr Sałustowicz, "Wyższe kształcenie zawodowe pracowników socjalnych w Niemczech," *Praca Socjalna* 1993, nr 4: 25.

<sup>19</sup> Kantowicz, *Praca socjalna w Europie*, 252; Koperek, Rychlewska-Szczepańczyk, *Proces harmonizacji szkolnictwa wyższego*, 153-171; Koperek, Waligórska, *Znaczenie Procesu Bolońskiego*, 173-204.

worth noting that according to sociological observations education is ideologically rooted in the given society, taking educational patterns from it, and at the same time it educates citizens for the needs of the society. A kind of a peculiar feedback is noticed then, between the socialization process in the society and the education process at schools that prepares people to work in this society.<sup>20</sup>

In Europe some countries also have a dual system of training social workers. In this system education obtained at universities and polytechnics on the one hand and education obtained at vocational higher schools on the other are distinguished. This is the case, among others, in Finland, the Netherlands and Lithuania, where the university and the vocational bachelor's degree are distinguished. On the contrary, in France only such higher schools may grant the university bachelor's degree that have received the permission from the Minister of Culture.<sup>21</sup>

Despite the different education systems that obtain in European countries, in most of them vocational studies (three-year-long) are the basic form of academic education and of obtaining professional competences. This concerns, among others, Denmark, Greece, Spain, Germany, Scotland and Sweden. Certainly in these countries also there is the possibility of further education on the level of full university studies and obtaining a specialty.<sup>22</sup>

However, a problem appears that is connected with education on the level of full university studies. It is the fundamental question about the differences

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<sup>20</sup> Cf. Adam Koperek, Jerzy Koperek (ed.), *Polityka edukacyjna. Rozwój kwalifikacji pracowników socjalnych – konteksty i perspektywy* (Łódź, 2012); Adam Koperek, *Edukacja patriotyczna w podstawowych środowiskach wychowawczych: w rodzinie, szkole i społeczności lokalnej*, in: *ibid.*, 63-89; Adam Koperek, "Socjalizacja jako społeczno-wychowawczy proces integracji jednostki ze społeczeństwem," *Pedagogika Katolicka* 2011, nr 8, 261-265; Adam Koperek, "Wpływ kultury na wychowanie społeczne w procesie socjalizacji," *Pedagogika Katolicka* 2010, nr 7, 96-101; Adam Koperek, "Socjalizacja jako proces wychowania do uczestnictwa w życiu społecznym," *Przedsiębiorczość i Zarządzanie* 11 (2010), vol. 4, 139-154; Adam Koperek, *Wychowanie do pojednania. Formatio Catholica* (Łódź-Gachenbach: Adam Koperek, Kazimierz Piotrowski, 2010); Adam Koperek, "Edukacja patriotyczna w kontekście polskiej kultury narodowej," *Saeculum Christianum. Pismo Historyczno-Społeczne* 16 (2009), nr 1, 257-267; Adam Koperek, *Wychowanie prospołeczne jako warunek uczestnictwa obywateli w życiu publicznym* (Warszawa, 2007); Adam Koperek, *Zaangażowanie społeczne obywateli* (Łódź: Wydawca Adam Koperek, 2008); Adam Koperek, *Człowiek – Państwo – Świat. Edukacja społeczna obywateli* (Łódź-Gachenbach: Adam Koperek, Kazimierz Piotrowski, 2008).

<sup>21</sup> Kantowicz, *Praca socjalna w Europie*, 252; cf. Walter Lorenz, "Social work and Bologna process," *Social Work & Society* 3 (2005), vol. 2, 230; Koperek, Rychlewska-Szczepańczyk, *Polityka edukacyjna między dwoma modelami: polskim i francuskim – szkolnictwo wyższe*, 205-218.

<sup>22</sup> Kantowicz, *Praca socjalna w Europie*, 252.

in the scope of the curricula of the Bachelor's degree and Master's degree studies. In principle, most countries agree that undergraduate studies are supposed to prepare a student for practicing the profession of social worker, and so they are more practical in their character. On the other hand, studies ending with a Master's degree should be rather directed to doing research. This distinction is stressed more by academic institutions, among others, in France, the Netherlands and Germany, and less in Austria and Belgium. This division into teaching practical competences on the level of the first degree studies (BA) and stressing research on the level of the second degree studies (MA) is especially well seen in England and Ireland.<sup>23</sup>

## 2. LAW REGULATIONS IN THE SCOPE OF TRAINING SOCIAL WORKERS

Law regulations in the field of training social workers are the result of formal actions taken by the government. It is so in most European countries. For example, in Switzerland government departments of education and social work or associations of schools of social work are responsible for law regulations in this field. However, in Great Britain and Ireland it is the institutions that are responsible for the promotion of training social workers that enact the regulations. The range of the regulations is decided by documents setting the goals, tasks, curricula and the institutional frames of education, and also defining the length of the studies and the levels of the academic education.<sup>24</sup> Detailed information on this subject are contained in a comparative report of the research program in the field of social policy compiled under the European Council auspices in the form of the CDPS(97)21 document.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 252-253; cf. Lorenz, *Social work and Bologna process*, 31.

<sup>24</sup> Kantowicz, *Praca socjalna w Europie*, 247.

<sup>25</sup> In the field of the standards of training social workers in Europe the document CDPS(97)21: *The initial and further training of social workers taking into account their changing role. Co-ordinated research programme in the social field (1994-1995)*, that was worked out under the European Council auspices is an important comparative report. It was drawn up as part of the research program in the field of social policy (1994-1995). It was coordinated on the plane of social work by Hans J. Brauns. The program that complemented and summed up earlier research, mainly developed the issues of protection of human rights and migration in the contents of professional education. It also touched, albeit in a limited dimension, the issue concerning the systems of training social workers in Europe. Cf. Kantowicz, *Praca socjalna w Europie*, 30; Jacob Kornbeck, "Researching social work professionalisation in the context of European integration," *Social Work in Europe* 5 (1999), nr 3, 75.



Supervision of government organs in the field of training social workers, and also more widely – workers of social professions, is conditioned by many factors. Education and social policy of the EU as well as the state's social policy in the area of social aid should be numbered among them. In European countries two different education systems are encountered. In one group of them a decentralized system functions (e.g. in Finland and Sweden). It is characterized by a far-reaching autonomy of schools, including schools training students for work in social professions. The government's responsibility is limited to drawing up the budget and enacting regulations in the sphere of education and social services. The situation is quite different in those countries in which the government takes all the responsibility for the whole of education, including standards of education. It is so, e.g. in Great Britain, where the government supervises and regulates the actions of schools with the help of a specially appointed commission (CCETSW).<sup>26</sup>

When analyzing the British education system and presenting the tasks of the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW),<sup>27</sup> from the historical point of view it should be emphasized that it was a continuator of the Council for Training in Social Work (CTSW)<sup>28</sup>. The Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW) from 1970 until 2001 was the legal organ responsible for promoting education and training in social work, for recognizing the courses and granting qualifications in the whole of Great Britain. The CCETSW was established on 1 October 1971 on the basis of the Health Visiting and Social Work (Training) Act of 1962. It substituted the Central Training Council in Child Care, the Council for Training in Social Work and the Recruitment and Training Committee of the Advisory Council for Probation and After-Care, and also it took over some functions of the Association of Psychiatric Social Workers and of the Institute for Medical Social Work. On 1 October 2001 the CCETSW was suspended and its functions were taken over by the General Social Care Coun-

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<sup>26</sup> Kantowicz, *Praca socjalna w Europie*, 247-248.

<sup>27</sup> Centralna Rada ds. Edukacji i Kształcenia w Pracy Socjalnej [Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW)], [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central\\_Council\\_for\\_Education\\_and\\_Training\\_in\\_Social\\_Work](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Council_for_Education_and_Training_in_Social_Work) [accessed: 25.01.2016].

<sup>28</sup> The Council for Training in Social Work (CTSW) was established in 1962, and in 1970 its name was changed to the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW) <http://archiveshub.ac.uk/data/gb152422col> [accessed: 25.01.2016].

cil (GSCC), the Scottish Social Services Council (GSCC), the Care Council for Wales (CCW) and the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC).<sup>29</sup>

When one analyzes the example of Great Britain he notices the government's deep interest not only in the program-organization sphere of education, but in the quality of education itself as well. It is similar in other European countries. For example in Finland the government's interest in the quality of education is concerned with the division of competences within specialization among schools. On the other hand, in England and Scotland it refers to standardization of education programs that define the specialist competences and the students' professional competences.<sup>30</sup>

Therefore among European countries differences may be noticed in the education systems. Countries in which the government's stronger interference in the plans, curricula or trends in the training of social workers may be seen include Austria, Belgium, France, Greece, Spain, Poland, Norway, Czech Republic, Switzerland, Great Britain, Italy. On the contrary, in Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden the schools' and universities' autonomy is emphasized, especially in the aspect of working out and implementing the curricula.<sup>31</sup>

It is also worth emphasizing that regulations in the sphere of recognizability of the competences and professional qualifications of social worker, social pedagogue or of representatives of other social professions may be applied by specialized government departments and organs. Such a procedure functions mainly in countries that have considerable experience in the sphere of educating for social professions.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central\\_Council\\_for\\_Education\\_and\\_Training\\_in\\_Social\\_Work](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Council_for_Education_and_Training_in_Social_Work) [accessed: 25.01.2016].

<sup>30</sup> Kantowicz, *Praca socjalna w Europie*, 248.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid; cf. The document CDPS(97)21: *The initial and further training of social workers taking into account their changing role. Co-ordinated research programme in the social field (1994-1995)*, the European Council 1997; Jacob Kornbeck, "Reflection on the Exportability of Social Pedagogy and its Possible Limits," *Social Work in Europe* 9 (2002), nr 2; Jacob Kornbeck, "Post-graduate degrees in social work: report from a European Symposium in Paris 1-2 June 1999," *Social Work in Europe* 6 (1999), nr 2.

<sup>32</sup> Kantowicz, *Praca socjalna w Europie*, 250.

Tabela 1. A characterization of social workers' basic qualifications in Europe

Country	Type of school	Length of education	Obtained qualifications
1	2	3	4
England (Great Britain)	university	3 years 4 years	Diploma in Social Work – BASW
Austria	higher vocational school	3 years	Diplom – Sozialarbeiter
Belgium	higher vocational schools – <i>Hogescholen</i>	3 years BA	Diplome d'Etat
Cyprus	Intercollege	3-4 years BA	Bachelor Degree in Social Work
Czech Republic	higher vocational schools, universities	3 years BA 5 years MA	
Denmark	higher schools of social work	3 years Dip SW	Socionom/Socialraadgiver
Estonia	university	3 years BA	Bachelor Degree in Social Work
Finland	university	4 years BA	Socionom
France	higher schools, universities	3 years BA	Diplome d'Etat
Greece	higher vocational schools	3,5 years BA	Ptychion
Spain	higher schools of social work	3 years BA	Diploma
Holland	higher vocational schools	4 years BA	Diploma
Ireland	universities	4 years BA	Bachelor in Social Science
Iceland	university	4 years BA	Felagsradgjafi
Lithuania	universities	4 years BA	Bachelor Degree in Social Work
Luxemburg	Institute of Higher Education	3 years BA	Diplome d'Etat
Germany	universities of applied sciences, universities	3/4 years BA	Diplom – Sozialarbeiter Diplom – Sozialpädagoge
Norway	social work college, universities	3 years Dip SW	Socionom

Portugal	universities	4 years Dip SW	Diploma
Romania	higher vocational schools, universities	3-4 years	Diploma
Slovenia	universities	4 years Dip SW, BA	Diploma
Sweden	universities	3,5 years BA	Socionom <i>Bachelor of Science in Social Work BA-SSW</i>
Hungary	higher colleges, universities	3-4 years BA	Diploma
Italy	higher schools, universities	2,5 years Dip SW 3 years BA	Diploma

Source: E. Kantowicz, *Praca socjalna w Europie*, p. 250-251 (the author's modification concerning the type of school in Greece).<sup>33</sup>

Harmonizing the European education system according to the Bologna declaration along with the national legislative solutions specifying formal requirements in the sphere of social workers' training undoubtedly favors standardization and recognizing their qualifications and professional competences obtained during the various forms and fields of study in European higher schools.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> See D. Kramer, Hans J. Brauns, "Europe," in Thomas D. Watts, Doreen Elliott, Nazneen S. Mayadaw (ed.), *International handbook on social work education* (Westport Connecticut-London: Greenwood Press, 1995); Annamaria Campanini, Elisabeth Frost (ed.), *European social work-commonalities and differences* (Rome: Carocci Publishing, 2004); Document CDPS(97)21: *The initial and further training of social workers taking into account their changing role*.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Kantowicz, *Praca socjalna w Europie*, 252; Ewa Kantowicz, "Edukacyjne wymiary profesjonalizacji pracy socjalnej," *Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska*, Sectio J., 26 (2013), 133-146; Anna Kotlarska-Michalska, "Przykłady dysfunkcji w kształceniu pracowników socjalnych," *Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska*, Sectio J., 26 (2013), 147-165; Act of 18 March 2008 on the rules of recognizing professional qualifications obtained in the EU member states (Official Journal of the Republic of Poland of 2008 r., Nr 63, pos. 394); Koperek, Rychlewska-Szczepańczyk, *Proces harmonizacji szkolnictwa wyższego w Unii Europejskiej*, 153-171; Koperek, Waligórska, *Znaczenie Procesu Bolońskiego*, 173-204; Jerzy Koperek, "Kwalifikacje pracowników socjalnych podstawą ich warsztatu pracy," in Adam Koperek, Jerzy Koperek, *Polityka edukacyjna. Rozwój kwalifikacji pracowników socjalnych*, 15-31; Adam Koperek, Jerzy Koperek, "Warsztat pracownika socjalnego w Polsce. Aspekty prawne," in Marian Z. Stepulak, Julia Gorbaniuk (ed.), *Wybrane aspekty pracy socjalnej w warsztacie pracownika socjalnego – doświadczenia polsko-niemieckie*, (Centrum Badań nad Rodziną, vol. 8, Instytut Nauk o Rodzinie Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego Jana Pawła II, Lublin-Eichstätt-Ingolstadt: Wydawnictwo Archidiecezji Lubelskiej „Gaudium”, 2010), 23-38; Adam Koperek, Jerzy Koperek, "Warsztat pracownika socjalnego

### 3. THE SYSTEM OF TRAINING SOCIAL WORKERS IN POLAND

#### 3.1. THE BASIC QUALIFICATION STANDARDS

The model of social work functioning in each country has been worked out on the basis of the country's experience and it is dependent on the accepted model of the society. Polish experiences in the field of developing a social worker's workshop have also their specific determinants. The development model of social work accepted in Poland is based, among others, on the vision of the society of communities. Also the principle of social solidarism has its justification in the Polish society; the principle results both from the historical conditionings, especially clearly seen in the "Solidarity" social movement, and from the current experiences of various charity actions in Poland. Moreover, the Polish society is also subject to the modern transformation, democratization and globalization processes. Threats that are connected with them undoubtedly present a new challenge for social work.<sup>35</sup> However, one may hope that the profession of social worker in Poland stands a chance of winning a proper social standing, of developing according to the experiences in this field that have been gathered up till now, to the demand resulting from social changes and to the adequate development of the state's social policy.<sup>36</sup>

According to the Bologna declaration the division into studies of the first (BA), second (MA) and third (a doctor's degree) level has also been introduced in Poland. Since 2010 students have been trained in the field of social work on the first level. After completing the education on the BA level

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w Polsce. Aspekty społeczne," in Marian Z. Stepulak, Julia Gorbaniuk (ed.), *Wybrane aspekty pracy socjalnej w warsztacie pracownika socjalnego*, 59-69.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Adam Koperek (ed.), "Polityka międzynarodowa a globalizacja – wybrane aspekty," *Przedsiębiorczość i Zarządzanie* 13 (2012), vol. 3; Adam Koperek, Jerzy Koperek, "Możliwości dostępu polskich obywateli do rynków pracy w wybranych krajach Unii Europejskiej," in Stanisław Dolata (ed.), *Gospodarka Polski po wejściu do Unii Europejskiej* (Częstochowa: Wydawnictwo „Educator”, 2007), 285-310; Adam Koperek, Jerzy Koperek, "Perspektywy rozwoju polskiej gospodarki w kontekście uczestnictwa w procesie światowej globalizacji," *Przedsiębiorczość i Zarządzanie* 8 (2007), vol. 1, 65-76; Adam Koperek, Jerzy Koperek, "Dobro wspólne państwa w kontekście światowej globalizacji z perspektywy doświadczeń ordo-liberałów niemieckich," in Jerzy Koperek, Wiesław Bokajło, & al. (ed.), *Europejski Przegląd Naukowy*, vol. I: *Współczesne problemy Europy* (Częstochowa: Wydawnictwo „Educator”, 2008), 115-130; Adam Koperek, Jerzy Koperek, "Rada Europy i Unia Europejska podmiotami kształtującymi europejską politykę społeczną," in Marian Orzechowski, Eugeniusz Brzuska (ed.), *Świat i Europa we współczesnych stosunkach międzynarodowych – nowe wyzwania* [*Przedsiębiorczość i Zarządzanie* 12 (2011), vol. 8], 9-30.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Koperek, Koperek, *Warsztat pracownika socjalnego w Polsce. Aspekty społeczne*, 59-69.

higher schools started opening studies on the MA level. At the Faculty of Social Sciences, the Institute of Sociology of the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin the social work department on the MA level was opened in the academic year 2015-2016. In the future surely there will be a possibility in Poland – like in other European countries (among others Germany and Slovakia) – of a continuation of these studies on the doctor's degree level.<sup>37</sup>

So in the present situation graduates of BA studies may continue their training in social work on the MA level or obtain specializations of I and II degree according to the Ordinance of the Minister of Labor and Social Policy of 2 August 2005 on specialization in the profession of social worker.<sup>38</sup>

Two acts<sup>39</sup>, namely the Act on social employment of 13 June 2003<sup>40</sup> and the Act on social aid of 12 March 2004 [with further amendments 2007, 2009]<sup>41</sup> are the most important ones in Polish social law and ones that define the current legal order in the sphere of social work. Key legal acts that define the competences and norms concerning social workers in the sphere of their workshop include, among others: the regulations of the Minister of Labor and Social Policy of 2 August 2005 on specialization in the profession of social worker<sup>42</sup> and of 25 January 2008 on the specialty preparing to the profession of social worker realized in higher schools.<sup>43</sup> From the point of view of developing ethical standards of social workers in Poland the Ethical Code of the Polish Association of Social Workers has a significant place.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> See Act of 18 March 2008 on the rules of recognizing professional qualifications obtained in EU member states (Official Journal of the Republic of Poland of 2008 r., nr 63, pos. 394).

<sup>38</sup> Regulation of the Minister of Labor and Social Policy of 2 August 2005 on specialization in the profession of the social worker (Official Journal of the Republic of Poland of 2005, nr 154, pos. 1288, 1289); cf. Beata Kowalik, Aneta Stefańska, *Krajowy standard kwalifikacji zawodowych. Specjalista pracy socjalnej (244502)*, Ministerstwo Pracy i Polityki Społecznej. Departament Rynku Pracy. Europejski Fundusz Społeczny. Sektorowy Program Operacyjny Rozwój Zasobów Ludzkich, Radom: Wydawnictwo Instytutu Technologii Eksploatacji (PIB) 2007.

<sup>39</sup> See Koperek, Koperek, *Warsztat pracownika socjalnego w Polsce. Aspekty prawne*, 23.

<sup>40</sup> Act of 13 June 2003 on social employment (Official Journal of the Republic of Poland of 2003, nr 122, pos.1143).

<sup>41</sup> Act of 12 March 2004 (Official Journal of the Republic of Poland of 2004, nr 64, pos. 593; uniform text: Official Journal of the Republic of Poland of 2009, nr 175, pos 175, pos 1362; Official Journal of the Republic of Poland of 2015, pos. 163).

<sup>42</sup> Regulation of the Minister of Labor and Social Policy of 2 August 2005 on specialization in the profession of the social worker (Official Journal of the Republic of Poland nr 154, pos. 1288, 1289).

<sup>43</sup> The regulation of the Minister of Labor and Social Policy of 25 January 2008 on the specialty preparing for the profession of the social worker realized in higher schools (Official Journal of the Republic of Poland of 2008, nr 27, pos. 158).

<sup>44</sup> The Ethical Code of the Polish Association of Social Workers; [http://ptps.ops.pl/kodeks\\_etyczny.htm](http://ptps.ops.pl/kodeks_etyczny.htm) [accessed: 25.01.2015].

The basic qualifying standards for employing at the post of social worker are defined by the Act on social aid of 12 March 2004<sup>45</sup>. In the Act (Section III entitled “Organization of social aid”, Chapter II “Social workers”) in art. 116 par. 1 it is stated that:

“A social worker can be a person who meets at least one of the conditions stated below:

- 1) has a diploma of completion of a college for workers of social services<sup>46</sup>;
- 2) has completed higher studies in the area of social work;
- 3) up to 31 December 2013 completed higher studies in a field preparing to the profession of social worker in one of the departments:
  - a) pedagogy,
  - b) special pedagogy,
  - c) political science,
  - d) social policy,
  - e) psychology,
  - f) sociology,
  - g) family studies.”<sup>47</sup>

### 3.2. RECOGNITION OF ACQUIRED RIGHTS IN THE SCOPE OF THE RIGHT TO PURSUE THE PROFESSION OF SOCIAL WORKER

The regulations in art. 5 par. 1, 2 and 3 of the Act of 16 February on changing the Act on social aid refer to retaining acquired rights in the area of the right to pursue the profession of social worker.<sup>48</sup> Art. 5 par. 1 states:

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<sup>45</sup> Act of 12 March 2004 on social aid (Official Journal of the Republic of Poland of 2004, nr 64, pos. 593; uniform text: Official Journal of the Republic of Poland of 2009, nr 175, pos. 1362; Official Journal of the Republic of Poland of 2015, pos. 163); Act of 16 February 2007 on changing the Act on social aid (Official Journal of the Republic of Poland of 2007, nr 48, pos. 320).

<sup>46</sup> Act of 7 September 1991 on the education system, art. 2, p. 11 (uniform text: Official Journal of the Republic of Poland of 2004, nr 256, pos. 2572 with further changes).

<sup>47</sup> In the Act on social aid the content of the regulation in art. 116 par. 1 p. 3 refers only to persons who started their education in a *specialization preparing for the profession of social worker* and it should be read jointly with the content of the regulation in art. 116 par. 1a: “The minister who is relevant to the issues of social security in agreement with the minister who is relevant to the issues of higher education will define, by way of an ordinance, the required skills, a list of subjects, the least number of classes and the scope and amount of practical student training for the specialization preparing for the profession of social worker realized at higher schools at the departments that are listed in par. 1, being guided by the necessity of adequately preparing the graduates for practicing the profession of social worker”. See also the ordinance of the Minister of Labor and Social Policy of 25 January 2008 on the specialization preparing for the profession of social worker that is realized at higher schools (Official Journal of the Republic of Poland of 2008, nr 27, pos. 158).

<sup>48</sup> Act of 16 February 2007 on changing the Act on social aid, art. 5 par. 1, 2, 3.

“Persons who before 1 January 2007 obtained the diploma of a vocational higher school with the specialization of social work may pursue the profession of social worker”. The regulations concern persons who before 2007 graduated from a vocational higher school in the specialization „social work.” A graduate of such a school has a diploma whose content does not indicate the name of the department of the studies, but only certifies the completion of the specialization “social work.” On the basis of art. 5 par. 1 only a graduate from a vocational higher school who before the day of 1 January 2007 obtained a diploma certifying completion of studies with the specialization “social work” (the field of studies is not indicated in the diploma in this case) retains the right to pursue the profession of social worker, according to the principles of acquired rights, for an indefinite period. Art. 5 par. 3: “Persons who before the day of 1 January 2008 completed or continued higher studies with the specialty of social work in one of the departments: pedagogy, political sciences, social policy, psychology, sociology or family studies, after obtaining a diploma certifying the completion of the studies may pursue the profession of social worker.” Persons who in the year 2007 or in all the preceding years completed higher studies (BA or MA level) with the specialty “social work” at the departments mentioned above, as of day of obtaining the diploma are entitled to pursue the profession of social worker and to be employed at this post for an indefinite period according to the principle of acquired rights. Then, persons who before the day of 1 January 2008 were only in the course of realization of the specialty “social work” at the studies mentioned above, as of day of obtaining a diploma certifying the completion of the studies are entitled to pursue the profession of social worker for an indefinite period according to the principle of acquired rights. Art. 5 par. 2: “Persons who up to the day of 1 January 2008 received a diploma that certifies the obtaining of a professional title in the profession of social worker, may pursue the profession of social worker”. Persons who up to the day of 1 January 2008 (in all the years preceding that year) received a diploma confirming that they had obtained qualifications in the profession of social worker may pursue the profession of social worker. This means that every graduate of a post-secondary school (public or non-public with the rights of a public school) who has a diploma confirming that he had obtained qualifications in the profession of social worker, issued by a public school or a non-public school with the rights of a public school, retains the right to pursue the profession of social worker and to be employed and promoted at this post for an indefinite period, according to the principle of acquired rights. Independent of his work experience in the profession and changes in



the places of employment, or even a lack of work experience in the profession, the above mentioned graduates of post-secondary schools have the right to pursue the profession of social worker, to be employed at this post, and to be promoted for an unlimited period of time, on the basis of the Act on social aid. Even if the regulations are changed the above mentioned persons will not lose their rights to pursue the profession in the future due to the fact of obtaining “the professional title in the profession of social worker” according to the principle of acquired rights.<sup>49</sup>

Recognition of qualifications in the profession of social worker acquired in member states of the European Union, the Swiss Confederation or member states of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) – the parties of the agreement on the European Economic Area, is regulated by the Act on the rules of recognizing professional qualifications acquired in member states of the European Union of 18 March 2008.<sup>50</sup> The Act recognizes the qualifications for pursuing regulated professions or activities listed in Annex IV to Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications.<sup>51</sup> In Poland the organ that makes decisions about the recognition of qualifications in the profession of social worker is the minister who is relevant to social security (at present it is the Minister of Labor and Social Policy). Recognition of qualifications in a regulated profession of social worker does not concern citizens of member states of the European Union, the Swiss Confederation or member states of the European Free Trade Association – the parties of the agreement on the European Economic Area, who obtained the qualifications for the profession of social worker in Poland. Those persons, receiving a diploma that confirms the completion of education according to the qualification requirements for the profession of social worker acquire the rights to pursue this profession in Poland.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> J. Koperek, *Warsztat pracownika socjalnego w Polsce. Aspekty prawne*, 27-28.

<sup>50</sup> Act of 18 March 2008 on the rules of recognizing professional qualifications acquired in member states of the European Union (Official Journal of the Republic of Poland, nr 63, pos. 394).

<sup>51</sup> Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications (Official Journal of the Republic of Poland UE L 255 of 30.09. 2005, 22, with amendments).

<sup>52</sup> J. Koperek, *Warsztat pracownika socjalnego w Polsce. Aspekty prawne*, 29.

## CONCLUSION

The profession of social worker is a response to current social needs, such as: poverty, unemployment, homelessness, old age, marginalization, discrimination, addictions and so on. The problems arose as result of the intensification of social-economic and cultural phenomena that require social intervention.

To face so many social challenges social workers should be modernly educated, ethical and professionally experienced; they should be ready to meet even the most difficult and complicated social questions.

Education in the profession of social worker based on the Polish and European Union educational standards aims at preparing in a professional way and at introducing into work persons who pursue the studies. University education in this area, continued by permanently raising one's professional qualifications, aims at achieving the situation in which social workers could fruitfully practice their profession both in their own country and in other European countries.

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