

# Background Information: Higher Education System in Poland



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# Higher Education System in Poland

## I. General Characteristics

<b>Population</b>	
Total population (I.I.2013) (million) <sup>1</sup>	38.53
Population density (2013) (persons per square kilometre) <sup>2</sup>	121.7
<b>Population Structure (2013) (share of total population %)<sup>3</sup></b>	
0-14 years	15.1
15-24 years	12.8
25-49 years	36.3
50-64 years	21.4
65 years and older	14.4
<b>GDP</b>	
GDP per capita in PPS (2013), EU 28 = 100 <sup>4</sup>	67
GDP year-on-year growth rate (2013) (%) <sup>5</sup>	1.7
<b>Education (2009/2010) (All levels)<sup>0</sup></b>	
<b>Enrolment</b>	
Total (ISCED 0-6)	8,570,191
Tertiary Level of Education (ISCED 5-6)	2,007,212
<b>Tertiary Education</b>	
Population aged 25-64 years with tertiary education (2012) (%) <sup>7</sup>	25.0
Population aged 30 – 34 years with tertiary education (2012) (%) <sup>7</sup>	39.0
Public expenditure on tertiary education (percentage of GDP) (2011) <sup>8</sup>	1.0

## 2. Types of Higher Education Institutions

In Poland, higher education is offered mainly by two types of institutions – university (*uczelnia akademicka*) and non-university (*uczelnia zawodowa*) higher education institutions. There are both public and private higher education institutions in Poland.

A university type higher education institution offer degrees in first (Bachelor), second (Master), long national programmes, and third (Doctoral) cycle qualifications whereas a non-

<sup>1</sup> European Commission. (2013). *Eurostat Compact Guides: Basic Figures on the EU, Winter 2013/2014 Edition*. Luxembourg: Publications office of the European Union.

<sup>2</sup> Eurostat. (2013). *Population density*. Retrieved from <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tps00003&plugin=0>

<sup>3</sup> Eurostat. (2013). *People by age group*. Retrieved from <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/refreshTableAction.do?tab=table&plugin=1&pcode=tps00010&language=en>

<sup>4</sup> Eurostat. (2013). *GDP per capita in PPS*. Retrieved from <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=teco0114>

<sup>5</sup> Eurostat. (2013). *Real GDP growth rate*. Retrieved from <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=teco0115>

<sup>6</sup> Eurostat (2014). *Students by ISCED level, age and sex*. Retrieved from [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=educ\\_en1rt1&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=educ_en1rt1&lang=en)

<sup>7</sup> OECD. (2014). *Education at a glance 2014: OECD Indicators*, pp. 44. Retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/edu/Education-at-a-Glance-2014.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> OECD. (2014). *Education at a glance 2014: OECD Indicators*, pp. 232. Retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/edu/Education-at-a-Glance-2014.pdf>

university type higher education institution offers courses in the first and second cycles or long national programmes. The non-university type higher education institutions in Poland also include state higher vocational education institutions (*państwowa wyższa szkoła zawodowa*) which offer both first and second cycle programmes.

### 3. Study Structure

Poland joined the Bologna Process in 1999<sup>9</sup>. Higher education attainment and student's performance are measured in credit points compatible with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS).

#### First cycle qualification (Bachelor)

- The completion of first-cycle studies leads to a professional title of Bachelor or engineer (*licencjat or inżynier*).
- First cycle degrees leading to the award of the title of engineer (*inżynier*) require at least seven semesters as compared to the first-cycle programmes leading to the award of Bachelor (*licencjat*), which last at least six semesters.
- The workload associated with a Bachelor degree in Poland is generally 180 ECTS for a Bachelor degree and 210 ECTS for engineering degree.
- The focus of the first-cycle programmes lies on preparing students for employment or for continuing further education.

#### Second cycle qualification (Master)

- The second cycle qualification includes Master programmes with study duration of one and a half to two years.
- The workload associated with a Master degree in Poland is 90 to 120 ECTS credits.
- The completion of second-cycle studies leads to a professional title of Master (*magister*).
- The focus of the Master programmes is on developing theoretical knowledge and application and creative skills.

#### Third cycle qualification (Doctoral)

- The third cycle Doctoral degree requires a number of semesters determined by the institution.
- The Doctoral degree is awarded to the candidates after the submission and successful defence of the doctoral dissertation before the thesis committee and passing the doctoral examination.

#### Long national programmes

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<sup>9</sup> Europa. (2010). The Bologna process: setting up the European Higher Education Area. Retrieved from [http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/education\\_training\\_youth/lifelong\\_learning/c11088\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/lifelong_learning/c11088_en.htm)

- Long national programmes in Poland generally require 300 (five year programme) to 360 (six year programme) ECTS credits.

#### 4. Admission Requirements<sup>10 11 12</sup>

Higher education (university and non-university) entry requirements generally include the matriculation certificate (*matura*) or an equivalent certificate. Admission to Bachelor programmes is based on the results of the external maturity exams introduced in Poland in 2005. Additional entrance examinations may be conducted by the higher education institutions if necessary to assess skills and knowledge which are not evaluated by the maturity exam.

Admission to Master programmes requires a relevant Bachelor degree (*licencjat or inżynier*) or the equivalent of Polish higher education diploma. A Master degree (*magister*) qualifies for a doctoral programme. In addition to the general entry requirements, the institutions may define their own admission conditions and procedures.

#### 5. Enrolment Levels

Figure 1 shows trends in enrolment levels (ISCED 5, 5B and 6, ISCED 97) in Poland between 2003 and 2012. The enrolment levels in both Tertiary Type 5A and 5B increased until 2008 and decreased thereafter. Tertiary type 6 enrolments have increased slightly between 2003 and 2012.

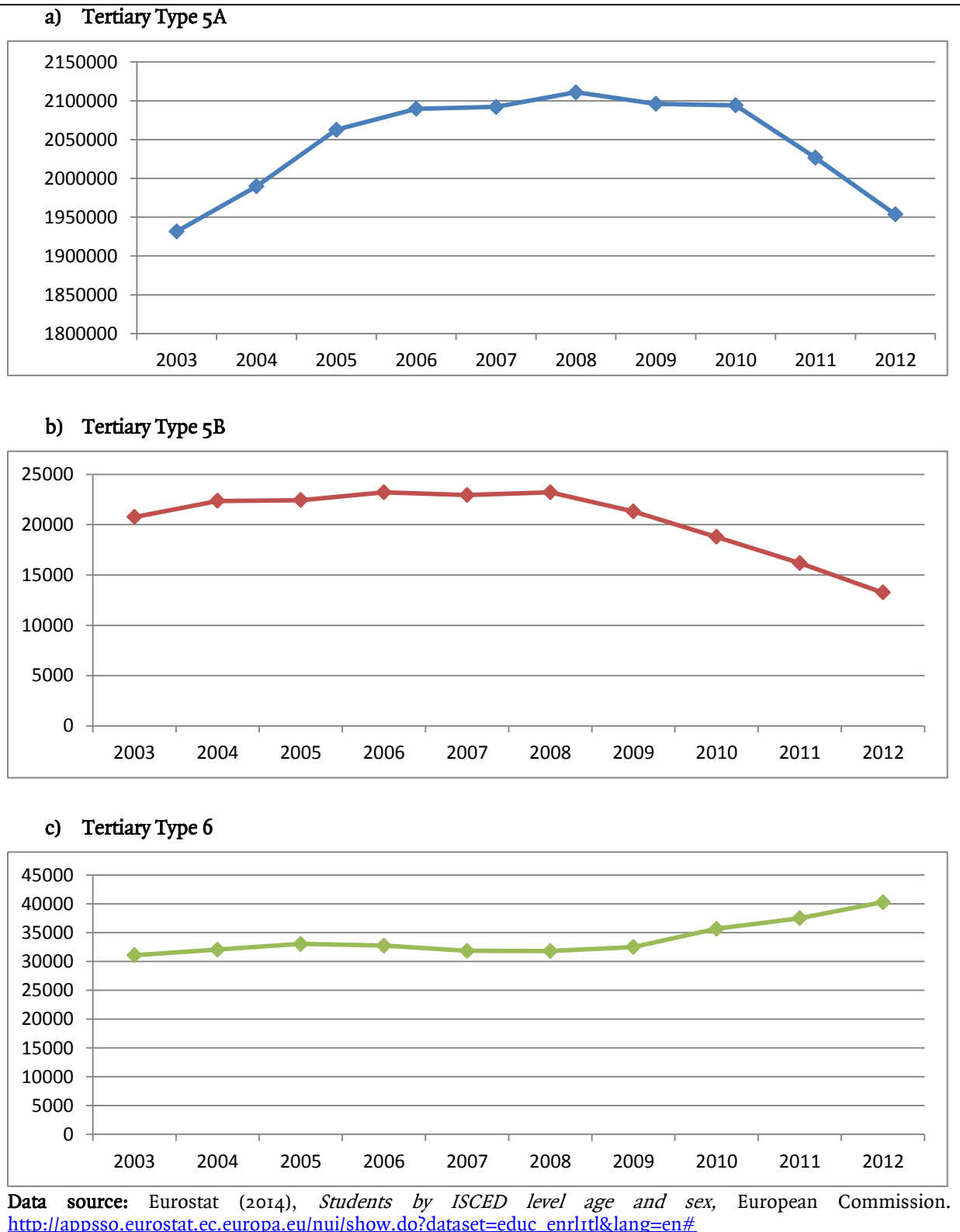
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<sup>10</sup> Eurydice. (2014). *Bachelor*. Retrieved from <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Poland:Bachelor>

<sup>11</sup> Eurydice. (2014). *Second cycle programmes*. Retrieved from [https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Poland:Second\\_Cycle\\_Programmes](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Poland:Second_Cycle_Programmes)

<sup>12</sup> Eurydice. (2014). *Third cycle (PhD) programmes*. Retrieved from [https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Poland:Third\\_Cycle\\_%28PhD%29\\_Programmes](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Poland:Third_Cycle_%28PhD%29_Programmes)

Figure 1: Trends in enrolment levels



## 6. Registration and/or Tuition Fees<sup>13</sup>

In Poland, full-time education at state institutions of higher education is free for Polish students, students from the European Union (EU)/European Economic Area (EEA) and students who hold the Polish Charta (*Karta Polaka*). There is also no additional registration fee, although there are recruitment fees. All other foreign students are required to pay tuition fees. The fees at private higher education institutions are established by the institutions themselves.

## 7. Financial Support for Students<sup>II</sup>

Financial support for students in higher education institutions and for Doctoral students is granted in the form of non-refundable and refundable support. Non-refundable support is paid from the state-budget and may be allocated in the forms of maintenance grants, grants for students with disabilities, merit-based grants for outstanding students awarded by the rector, merit-based grants for outstanding achievements awarded by the minister, and assistance grants. Refundable financial support is granted to students who started their studies before turning 25 in the form of credits and loans which are financed from the financial resources of commercial banks and whose interest is partly covered from the state budget. Moreover, Doctoral students are eligible to apply for doctoral scholarships.

This report is based on the following sources:

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<sup>13</sup> Eurydice. (2014). *Higher education funding*. Retrieved from [https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Poland:Higher\\_Education\\_Funding](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Poland:Higher_Education_Funding)