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Bezrobocie w województwie lubuskim i rejonie Zielonej Góry w latach 2012-2014, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem grupy 50+

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UNEMPLOYMENT IN LUBUSKIE VOIVODESHIP AND THE DISTRICT OF ZIELONA GÓRA IN THE YEARS 2012-2014, WITH SPECIAL FOCUS ON GROUP 50+

Abstract

The article presents a brief theoretical outline of unemployment in Poland and includes statistical data on unemployment in lubuskie voivodeship and the district of Zielona Góra. The paper aims at showing the size of unemployment among individuals over 50. Also, it presents some measures that counteract the exclusion in the local labour market.

BEZROBOCIE W WOJEWÓDZTWIE LUBUSKIM I REJONIE ZIELONEJ GÓRY W LATACH 2012-2014, ZE SZCZEGÓLNYM UWZGLĘDNIENIEM GRUPY 50+

Streszczenie

W artykule przedstawiono krótki zarys teoretyczny bezrobocia w Polsce i zamieszczono dane statystyczne dotyczące bezrobocia w województwie lubuskim i rejonie Zielonej Góry. Celem artykułu jest pokazanie wielkości bezrobocia wśród osób powyżej 50 roku. Ponadto, w artykule zaprezentowano kilka wskaźników, które przeciwdziałają wykluczeniu na lokalnym rynku pracy.

Since 1994 (the Act on Employment and Counteracting Unemployment and its amendment of 2004) an unemployed person has been defined as:

- 1) a Polish citizen residing in Poland, searching and finding employment or other paid work in the territory of Poland or starting employment or other paid work outside Poland at foreign employers;
- 2) a foreigner residing in the territory of the Republic of Poland and holding a permission to settle or who has been granted the refugee status in the Republic of Poland, searching and finding employment or other paid work in the territory of Poland;
- 3) a foreigner, whom the competent body has granted a permission to work in the territory of the Republic of Poland.

In addition to the guidelines regarding nationality, the Act explains who is considered an unemployed person in Poland. According to the law an unemployed individual is:

a person who is unemployed and does not perform other paid work, capable and ready to take up a full-time job in a given profession or service, except for (g), not attending a full

time school, registered in the District Employment Office competent for the individual's place of (permanent or temporary) residence, if:

- a) the person is over 18, with the exception of young graduates,
- b) the female is under 60 and the male is under 65,
- c) the person is not entitled to a pension for incapacity for work, training allowance, social welfare disability pension, or after termination of employment, other paid work, cessation of non-agricultural activities he/she does not receive pre-retirement benefits, pre-retirement allowance, rehabilitation benefit, sickness, maternity or parental benefits,
- d) the person is not the owner or (independent or dependent) holder of farming real estate, as understood in the Civil Code, of an area of agricultural land exceeding 2 comparative fiscal hectares, or is not liable to retirement insurance as a spouse or household member in a farm with an area of land exceeding 2 comparative fiscal hectares,
- e) the person is not the owner or (independent or dependent) holder of a farm constituting the special section of agricultural production under fiscal law, on provision that the income from special sections of agricultural production, calculated to determine the income tax from natural persons does not exceed the average income from work in private farms of 2.0 comparative fiscal hectares, determined by the President of the Central Statistical Office, under the agricultural tax provisions, or is not liable to retirement insurance as a spouse or household member in such farms,
- f) the person did not commence non-agricultural activities from the date indicated in the registration application until the day of deleting the activity from the register, or is not liable – under separate provisions – to compulsory social insurance, with the exception of farmers' social insurance or pension provision,
- g) the person is disabled and their health allows them to work at least half-time in a given profession or service,
- h) the person is not temporarily arrested, nor does the person serve a prison sentence,
- i) the person does not earn a monthly income of more than half the minimum remuneration; excluding income generated from interest or other income from financial means held in bank accounts, except for (d),
- j) the person does not receive, pursuant to the provisions of social welfare, permanent compensatory or guaranteed periodic benefit¹.

In Polish literature on unemployment, it is usually defined as "a phenomenon where part of the population of working age, capable and ready to perform work corresponding to typical conditions in a given economy, remains unemployed despite searching"².

Thus, three characteristics of the unemployed can be specified:

¹ Act on Employment and Counteracting Unemployment of 14 Dec 1994 and amendments of 1 January 2004.

² Kwiatkowski E., *Bezrobocie i zatrudnienie [in] Elementarne zagadnienia ekonomii*, ed. R. Milewski, Warszawa 1996.

1. it refers to individuals without jobs, that is persons who do not perform paid work or are nor self-employed;
2. it refers to individuals who are ready and able to work on typical conditions occurring in the economy;
3. it refers to individuals searching work.

For the last three years the labour market situation in lubuskie voivodeship has had nearly the same unemployment rate of about 15.4%. It is about one per cent higher than the unemployment rate in Poland – 14.4%, according to the 2013 Central Statistical Office reports. At the end of September 2013 lubuskie voivodeship had the sixth highest unemployment rate of 15.3% in Poland, and the highest unemployment occurred in warmińsko-mazurskie voivodeship (22.5%), zachodniopomorskie voivodeship (19.3%) and kujawsko-pomorskie voivodeship (19.1%).

The Central Statistical Office statistics for 2013 years show a slight improvement in the labour market in lubuskie voivodeship in comparison to 2012. Although in December 2013 there was an increase in the number of the unemployed in the voivodeship, typical of the end of the year, but it was much smaller than in previous years. At the end of December 2013 there were 59 805 individuals registered as unemployed in our voivodeship. The largest increase in unemployment was recorded in the districts of Nowa Sól, Żagań and Zielona Góra.

Table no 1. Unemployment rate by voivodeships in August 2012 and September 2013

Voivodeship	August 2012	September 2013
Dolnośląskie	12.4%	14.3%
Kujawsko-pomorskie	16.6%	18.9%
Lubelskie	13.0%	14.9%
Lubuskie	14.9%	16.9%
Łódzkie	13.0%	14.8%
Małopolskie	10.6%	12.3%
Mazowieckie	10.2%	11.4%
Opolskie	13.1%	15.2%
Podkarpackie	15.3%	17.0%
Podlaskie	13.9%	15.5%
Pomorskie	12.1%	14.3%
Śląskie	10.2%	11.9%
Świętokrzyskie	14.9%	16.7%
Warmińsko-mazurskie	19.3%	22.2%
Wielkopolskie	9.1%	10.6%
Zachodniopomorskie	16.3%	19.1%
POLAND	12.4%	14.2%

Source: own work based on data found on: <http://www.egospodarka.pl/art/galeria/91390,Bezrobocie-w-Polsce-I-2013,3,39,1.html>

Characteristics of unemployment in lubuskie voivodeship – as of January 2014
(statistical data obtained from reports of Voivodeship Employment Office and District
Employment Office in Zielona Góra)

At the end of January 2014 there were 63 511 unemployed individuals registered in District Employment Office (DEO). Among them there were 32853 females, representing 51.7% of the total number of the unemployed. Compared to December 2013 the number of the unemployed increased by 6.2%. The increase in the number of the registered unemployed was primarily observed in the group of individuals previously employed, while the increase was smaller in the group of individuals who never worked.

On 31 December 2013 the unemployed registered in employment offices constituted 15.7% of working population. The unemployment rate in the sub region of Gorzów was 14.5% and in the sub region of Zielona Góra it was 16.5%. The highest unemployment rate was recorded in the following districts: nowosolski (26.0%), strzelecko–drezdenecki – (25.4%), and żagański (25.4%). The lowest unemployment rate was recorded in the district of Zielona Góra (town district of Zielona Góra) – (7.8%), district of Gorzów (town district of Gorzów) – (8.6%), and district of Gorzów (country district of Gorzów) – (12.9%). In January 2014, there were 31 528 individuals who had remained unemployed for more than 12 months (so-called long-term unemployed persons) in our voivodeship – constituting 49.6% of the total. The largest number of the long-term unemployed in lubuskie voivodeship resides the districts of Nowa Sól (56.5%) and Międzyrzecz – (55.9%).

One of the largest groups of the unemployed are those under 25 – about 16.9% of the total. However, the situation in the labour market of individuals aged 50 and over is the most difficult. At the end of January 2014 they constituted 26.6% of the total number of the unemployed (16 903 individuals). The largest group of the unemployed in this age category was recorded in the district of Słubice (35.9%) and the country district of Gorzów – 30.5%, and the smallest group was found in Wschowa – 24.0%.

Table no 2. Unemployed individuals over 50 in lubuskie voivodeship in January 2014

Specification	Number	%
Gorzów Wlkp. (town district)	1604	30.5
Gorzów Wlkp. (country district)	1006	29.5
Krosno Odrzańskie	1174	26.7
Międzyrzecz	1406	26.6
Nowa Sól	1930	24.5
Słubice	830	35.9
Strzelce Krajeńskie	1293	26.0
Sulęcín	515	26.4
Świebódzin	791	24.2
Wschowa	576	24.0
Zielona Góra (town district)	1417	28.5

Zielona Góra (country district)	1243	24.1
Żagań	1611	25.3
Żary	1507	25.7
Total	16903	26.6

Source: own work based on District Employment Office reports on the state and structure of unemployment in lubuskie voivodeship in January 2014.

The most common reasons why the unemployed cannot find work are as follows:

- women who did not start work after the birth of a child (20.5% of the total number of the unemployed);
- individuals without vocational qualifications (30.6%);
- individuals without work experience (20.8%);
- individuals without secondary education (60.5%);
- single parents with at least one child under the age of 18 (13.5%);
- individuals who have not found a job after serving a prison sentence (2.3%);
- disabled individuals (8.1%).

A study conducted by the Department of Social Pedagogy in 2012 as part of the project „The Life of Inhabitants of Lubuskie Voivodeship. The Present and Prospects” indicates the most common causes of job loss in lubuskie voivodeship. The most common reason for being unemployed is the liquidation of a company, redundancies, leaving at one’s request, leaving a job by mutual agreement. The first two of these causes are the consequences of the transition of the economy of Poland to free market.

Table no 3. Reasons for losing jobs in lubuskie voivodeship

Reasons for losing jobs	No	%
Company liquidation	278	29.1
Redundancies	257	26.9
Dismissal on disciplinary grounds	14	1.5
Leaving at own request	120	12.6
Leaving by mutual agreement	99	10.4
Individuals who have never been employed	51	5.3
Other	135	14.2
Total	954	100

Source: Z. Wolk, Potencjał pracowniczy wobec zagrożenia bezrobociem [in:] Lubuszenie 2012. Diagnoza stanu, edited by G. Milkowska, Z. Wolk, Zielona Góra 2012.

The inhabitants of lubuskie voivodeship who participated in the project also list factors that determine, in their opinions, success in the local labour market. They mainly point out factors such as their competence (represented by education, occupation and work experience),

age, and will to work. In the opinions of the respondents an important advantage turned out to be a political orientation and slyness of the individual seeking work³.

Lubuskie voivodeship is not a large and thriving economic centre. Its current labour market is dominated mainly by small and medium entities. Their functioning is often prone to many external conditions, particularly in times of economic problems of countries with which we co-operate. According to the same studies, human capital of our voivodeship largely comprises of individuals whose occupations are oriented to goods (45%), followed by occupations oriented to people (36%), data (11.2%), natural environment and creative activity (respectively 6.7% and 1.1%). That means a narrow stream of employment in production, and wider in social services⁴.

Soft competencies are an important advantage in the fight for a place of work in the region (particularly in small companies). Soft competencies are our psychosocial skills. They are closely related to our personality. There are seven main features of these competencies, that is creativity, dynamism of action, communication skills, flexibility, initiative, team work and time management.

However, key skills are always significant. The inhabitants of lubuskie voivodeship generally declare mastering the skills of planning work, organizing the workplace, writing official letters, driving a car or computer skills⁵.

Table no 4. Mastering key skills by inhabitants of lubuskie voivodeship

Key skills	Number	%
Basic knowledge of at least one western European language	897	50,3
Holding driving licence	1312	73,6
Basic computer skills	1343	75,4
Work planning	1633	91,6
Organisation of workplace	1576	88,4
Writing official letters	1371	76,9

Source: Z. Wołk, *Potencjał pracowniczy wobec zagrożenia bezrobociem* [in:] *Lubuszanie 2012. Diagnoza stanu*, edited by G. Milkowska, Z. Wołk, Zielona Góra 2012.

An important element of the research into unemployment is checking the readiness for work. The 2012 research clearly shows that the inhabitants of lubuskie voivodeship are strongly determined to find a job. They are ready to commute to work, to move to another place for work, to part temporarily with family or to work abroad.

In order to support the inhabitants the District Employment Office offers some active forms of counteracting unemployment in the local labour market, including internships,

³ Z. Wołk, *Potencjał pracowniczy wobec zagrożenia bezrobociem* [in:] *Lubuszanie 2012. Diagnoza stanu*, edited by G. Milkowska, Z. Wołk, Zielona Góra 2012.

⁴ Ibidem.

⁵ Ibidem.

intervention work, public work, training, socially useful work. In contrast, the unemployed in the voivodeship usually search work through: reading newspapers, contacting Employment Offices, asking friends for help, the Internet, sending offers to companies, visiting local businesses.

Table no 5. Statistics for individuals over 50 – individuals in specific situation in the labour market in districts of Zielona Góra:

Specification		Individuals over 50 – district of Zielona Góra	Individuals over 50 – town district of Zielona Góra	Total number in country and town districts of Zielona Góra
Time without a job	Less than 1 month	121	151	272
	1-3	246	278	524
	3-6	170	218	388
	6-12	258	289	547
	12-24	200	179	379
	More than 24	142	167	309
Education	Higher	28	120	148
	Post-secondary and secondary vocational	215	393	608
	High school	50	89	139
	Vocational	395	376	771
	Junior high school or lower	449	304	753
Total work experience	Less than 1 year	53	55	108
	1-5	50	52	102
	5-10	71	83	154
	10-20	256	287	543
	20-30	424	469	893
	30 and more	233	282	515
	no work experience	50	54	104
Total		1137	1282	2419

Source: own work based on the data of District Employment Office in Zielona Góra for 4th quarter 2013.

Individuals over 50 are classified in District Employment Office as being in a particular situation in the labour market. In the (town and country) districts of Zielona Góra their number amounted to 2419 individuals at the end of the 4th quarter of 2013. These are mainly people who have been without work for 6-12 months and over 12 months, so they struggle with long-term unemployment – which has the „heaviest" psychophysical effects. The unemployed of this age category are mainly individuals with vocational, lower secondary or lower educational background. The vast majority of the unemployed over 50 have 20-30 year work experience.

Table no 6. Unemployed individuals over 50 registered at District Employment Office in Zielona Góra in the years 2012-2014

Unemployed individuals over 50	2010 (as of the end of the year)	2011 (as of the end of the year)	2012 (as of the end of the year)	2013 (as of the end of the year)	2014 (as of January)
	2145	2348	2516	2419	2419

Source: own work based on 2010-2014 data from District Employment Office Zielona Góra.

According to demographic projections, after 2010 the number of working population in Poland is to decrease systematically. At the same time life expectancy is to be longer. This will result in retirement age being about 59.5 years. There will also be an increase in the population of post-working age – their percentage in 2007 was 15.9%. Therefore, the problems of people over 50 and their presence in the labour market seem to be one of the greatest priorities of the state. A low level of fertility present in Polish families, as well as a large percentage of emigration do not make the image of demographic development and the social security system look beneficial⁶.

Therefore, it seems extremely important to create various forms of assistance that aim at „saving” or creating new jobs for individuals over 50 . Starting from the actions of the state – such as ”Equal opportunities in the labour market for people 50 + ”, or „”Active 50 +” and the activities of various Employment Offices. In lubuskie voivodeship these types of activity were implemented within the framework of „Action Plan for Employment for the year 2011”. The plan assumed three main priorities. „Within the first priority various measures were taken to support the professional activity of a larger group of individuals and to maintain their activity, to increase labour supply, to modernize social protection schemes, to promote social integration, and to minimize social exclusion. At the same time projects aimed at improving the quality of knowledge about labour market, improving skills of personnel employment services and partners were implemented. The objectives of the second priority focused on increasing the adaptability of workers and companies by increasing professional skills, implementing modern management methods and supporting adaptation processes. The third priority aimed at the development of the education system so that it would fit the needs of the labour market, an increased investment in human capital through better education and improved skills. The activities were designed for the unemployed, job seekers and employees, entrepreneurs, local authorities, educational institutions, farmers and individuals planning to leave agriculture. The activities included vocational counselling, activation and vocational training, employment assistance as well as investment support in enterprises. Over 150

⁶ Voivodeship Employment Office in Zielona Góra website
www.wup.zgora.pl/%2Fsystem%2Fpobierz.php%3Fid%3D3092&ei=YtYiU4eiLofn4gSNtYAQ&usg=AFQjCNH87TuKiYx3nIeyoGADjzb40Cx1qw, as of 14.03.2014

thousand individuals participated in various types of the projects, and expenditures amounted to over 594 million Polish zloty⁷.

Activities as the ones described above or programmes such as „From the Beginning” created in Proszowice include various forms of support: counselling and job placement; grants of 20 000 zloty to undertake business activities preceded by training in small business; training for „pavers with qualifications to use compactors, vibratory rammers and concrete mixers”; training in “care and management of green areas”; internships; subsidized employment for public works; employment within the reimbursement of equipment costs. The programme also provides so-called. elements specific to some participants: **bridging support** for start-ups of 2400 zloty; an **incentive voucher** (of 2000 zloty) for an unemployed person who after a training finds a job on their own; an **adaptive voucher** of 800 zloty to level deficits in the process of adaptation to the workplace – for individuals undergoing internships and employed at the workplace where supplementary equipment was provided (the voucher can be used to **purchase clothes for work, visits to the hairdresser or beautician**); a **bonus for the employer** for hiring an unemployed person after a period of subsidized employment / internship of 2 000 zloty for each employee (the bonus is paid on condition that an employee is employed under a contract of employment for a period of at least 3 months) ; **refund of costs connected with the purchase of tools and work clothes** for local governments that have employed the unemployed for public works – which all give a chance for people 50+ who are at the risk of unemployment and unemployed⁸.

The current situation in the labour market forces the unemployed to search jobs actively. The forms of support for people 50+, described above, and other forms used in vocational counselling may be helpful, especially for the population that finds it difficult to adjust to a new reality of the labour market.

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⁷ Voivodeship Employment Office in Zielona Góra website

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⁸ District Employment Office in Proszowice website

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