

Educational security in Poland in the third decade of the 21st century. Selected aspects of the state's policy towards teachers

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Abstract

The article aims to define the notion of educational security and assessment of a selected aspect of the state policy towards teachers and its importance in ensuring this security in Poland in the third decade of the 21st century. The most important research questions are: How should educational security be defined? What is the difference between educational security and education for security? What policy does the Polish state in the 21st century pursue towards teachers as an element of the education system and ensuring educational security? An analysis was carried out of literature and sources devoted to education for safety, statistical data, reports and other documents concerning, among other things, the remuneration policy of teachers and expenditure on education in Poland in the 21st century. Importantly, academic teachers were not included, which deserves separate research. The main conclusions of the analysis are as follows: 1) educational security is a term different from the concept of education for security and should be treated as one of the types of security according to the objective

criterion; 2) low salaries of teachers have a direct impact on the level of educational security; 3) nowadays, the low quality of education is particularly noticeable in terms of the nation's lack of (low) resistance to propaganda and disinformation.

Keywords educational security, education for security, teacher, education in Poland

Introduction

In the age of the digital revolution and unrestricted access to information, the proper use of information is becoming increasingly challenging. The consequences of this phenomenon, such as the growing wave of populism, the popularity of conspiracy theories, and above all, the use of the internet to spread propaganda and disinformation, prompt reflection on the preparedness of the state (nation) to face these threats. The foundation of this preparation is education, which enables effective defence based on knowledge, skills, social competencies, as well as awareness of the need for lifelong learning and, in a situation of information overload, the ability to select, verify and critically evaluate information.

Therefore, there is a need to identify educational security as one of the categories of security understood in terms of subject matter. To date, this term has not been included in the still open catalogue of types of security according to subject matter criteria. Given the fundamental role of teachers in building this security, it is worth identifying and assessing selected aspects of state policy towards them in contemporary Poland.

The aims of this article are to define the concept of educational security and to assess the state's policy towards teachers and its significance in ensuring this security in Poland in the third decade of the 21st century. The main conclusions of the research are as follows: How should educational security be defined? What is the difference between educational security and education for security? What policy does the Polish state in the 21st century pursue towards teachers as an element of the education system and ensuring educational security?

The article does not use information directly provided by teachers regarding their professional situation and other aspects due to the subjective nature of this information. This means, among other things, that issues related to improving professional qualifications through courses, training, etc. have been omitted.

Opinions on their quality are divided. Data and statistical research results were used, which include information on, among other things, teachers' salaries. The analysis did not include academic teachers, a group that deserves separate research. This is confirmed by the publication by Robert Borkowski, which provides a fragmentary description of this environment, and we can only hope that one day it will be examined in a comprehensive manner¹.

Although it seems that research has been undertaken which results may be obvious in general terms, since Chancellor Jan Zamoyski's maxim is widely known: *Such will be the Republics as the upbringing of their youth*, but its continuation is less so: *Moreover, I am convinced that only public education makes citizens harmonious and good*, it was worth undertaking them, because the search for truth in this case leads to an extremely important question concerning what kind of citizens the political elites responsible for the Polish state need.

Educational security – concept and essence

Vademecum bezpieczeństwa (Security guide) does not include the term “educational security”², nor does it include “international security”. However, several other terms have been proposed. Their definitions contain certain elements of educational security. They are included in a definition of “education for security”³, which is based on the explanation of education and security concepts. As pointed out by the author

¹ R. Borkowski, *Trąd w gaju Akademosa* (Eng. Leprosy in the grove of Academus), in: *W poszukiwaniu prawdy: księga jubileuszowa ofiarowana Profesorowi Janowi Widackiemu*, H.E. Kubiak, M.J. Lubelski (eds.), Kraków 2018, pp. 107–122.

² Perhaps this is because Ryszard Zięba, who is usually cited first in the literature on subject, does not do so. For example, he does not mention educational security among the types of security according to the subject criterion. See: R. Zięba, *Wprowadzenie* (Eng. Introduction), in: *Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe po zimnej wojnie*, R. Zięba (sci. ed.), Warszawa 2008, p. 18. The concept was also not included by the authors of the publication: *Słownik terminów z zakresu bezpieczeństwa narodowego* (Eng. Dictionary of national security terms), J. Pawłowski, B. Zdrodowski, M. Kuliczkowski (eds.), Warszawa 2008. However, they pointed out educational threats, including the dysfunctionality of educational institutions, both school and extracurricular, as well as the helplessness and resignation of teachers (pp. 174–175). It is also not included in: *Leksykon bezpieczeństwa. Wybrane pojęcia* (Eng. The lexicon of security. Selected terms), K. Dziubińska-Wójcik (eds.), Kielce 2016.

³ As Andrzej Pieczywok claims, the concept of education for security was introduced into Polish terminology in 1993–1995 at National Defence Academy. See: A. Pieczywok, *Bezpieczeństwo jako wartość edukacyjna i badawcza* (Eng. Safety as an educational and research value), in: *“Rodzinna Europa”*. *Europejska myśl polityczno-prawna u progu XXI wieku*, P. Fiktus, H. Malewski, M. Marszał (sci. eds), Wrocław 2015, p. 458.

of the term, Ewelina Włodarczyk, this is (...) *an interdisciplinary field that is difficult to systemise*⁴. An important addition to this definition is the statement that education for security is (...) *the foundation for shaping a culture of security in society*⁵. This is reflected in attitudes, values and behavioural norms that enable the elimination and reduction of threats as well as the transformation of challenges for security into opportunities. Thus, education for security should enable individuals to understand threats and develop the ability to adapt their behaviour to eliminate or exploit these threats, both at the individual and group level (national, or even international, depending on the role that the individual plays).

Włodarczyk reviews various definitions and states that education for security:

(...) is the totality of processes taking place in the course of independent action and cooperation of the entire society within the framework of formal and informal interactions directed at people (children, youth, adults and the elderly), which aim to develop competencies enabling: recognising threats in the reality surrounding humans, preventing and counteracting internal and external threats, responding appropriately to the challenges of the modern world, as well as personal development of the individual⁶.

Its main goal, as the researcher rightly points out, is to shape the attitudes of the subject so that they understand the need for self-education, lifelong learning and cooperation. This is essential in order to deal with the threats that will arise in the future. The most important features of education for security indicated in this definition, which are useful for further analysis, are:

- processual nature;
- this is an activity that can be carried out both independently and within society (cooperative);
- this is a formal and informal interaction, i.e. educating on security regardless of who organises it, and even when there is no organiser, because the entity does it independently (emphasis on self-development);
- covering all age groups;
- identifying security threats, preventing and counteracting them, responding to related challenges.

A person educated in security matters should therefore understand that its essence lies in being process-oriented, which entails the necessity of continuous

⁴ Term: education for security, *Vademecum bezpieczeństwa* (Eng. Security guide), O. Wasiuta, R. Klepka, R. Kopeć (eds.), Kraków 2018, p. 279.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., p. 282.

self-improvement. Equally important is widespread knowledge on this subject, since not all values associated with it can be achieved by an individual alone – collective effort is required. Thus, it is necessary to emphasise the importance of a cooperative attitude that recognises the sense of community – beginning with the family, extending through the local community, the nation or international community when addressing problems of a global nature. For this reason, according to Jolanta Martuszevska, education for security consists of the following categories: psychological (needs), axiological (values), epistemological (theory of knowledge) and teleological (goals)⁷.

Education for security is therefore associated with high demands placed on the citizen. The state must assist in meeting them. Since 2009, Polish schools have implemented education for security subject, which replaced defence preparedness. In 2017, it was decided that primary and secondary schools would have 30 teaching hours. Additionally, this topic is covered in the first three stages of education (in grades 1–3 of primary school as part of integrated education, grades 4–8 of primary school and in secondary school in various subjects, e.g. Polish language or social studies). Various state institutions and services, such as the police, are also involved in disseminating this information by organising educational meetings with residents, including schoolchildren, as well as non-governmental organisations, those involved in pro-defence activities in particular and more broadly on the subject of security. The special role of these institutions and organisations can be seen in the field of security prevention, which (...) *should include all educational activities aimed at preparing people to effectively counter threats and supporting their predispositions, interests, abilities, self-esteem, respect, empathy and bonds with society so that they feel they are an important link in building a culture of safety in their environment*⁸. It should be noted that it emphasises preparation for countering threats and personal development (informal education, for which a large responsibility lies with non-governmental organisations).

It is also worth recalling the definition of participatory security management. It includes a reference to educational measures used by those responsible for security management to achieve the objectives set in this area, contributing to the creation

⁷ J. Martuszevska, *Potrzeby edukacji dla bezpieczeństwa społeczności lokalnej – aspekt aksjologiczny, psychologiczny oraz wybrane akty normatywne* (Eng. Needs of education for safety of the local community – axiological, psychological aspect and selected normative acts), “Acta Politica Polonica” 2019, no. 1(47), p. 70. <https://doi.org/10.18276/ap.2019.47-06>.

⁸ Term: security prevention, in: *Vademecum bezpieczeństwa*, O. Wasiuta, R. Klepka, R. Kopeć (sci. eds.), Kraków 2018, p. 544.

of a safe environment⁹. Thus, they are one of the five fundamental means, alongside scientific, organisational, legal and technical ones. It is worth noting that educational and scientific measures are directly linked to each other. Without the effective application of these two, the others will not fulfil their function, because the entities responsible for them will not only be unable to construct them, but also to use them. Thus, education (broadly understood, including science) determines success in the participatory (also general) security management. Consequently, it determines success in governing the state and the nation, because security is their most important need, on the satisfaction of which all others depend.

This approach to the issue is not predominant in the literature on the subject, as the authors focus on education for security as an object of education¹⁰. In this case, however, the discussion will focus on the relationship between the level of education and the security of the state/nation, as well as the state's care for the education and upbringing system, which should be regarded as fundamental ideas of educational security.

However, there are scientific works that, to some extent, relate to this problem. For example, Artur Banaszak addressed the topic of the impact of education and schooling on social security¹¹. His most important findings are:

- access to education and schooling is essential for ensuring social security, within which self-development is a fundamental value. The author emphasises that the level of education, including access (equal rights) to it, determines an individual's life. In the case of Poland, there are constitutional guarantees in this regard;
- access to education and schooling translates into the development of individuals and the nation, which in turn translates into a sense of security;
- the economic crisis of 2008 did not lead to a reduction in spending on education and training in Poland, but according to data from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, in 2010 Poland ranked sixth place from the bottom (out of 34 countries) in terms of expenditure per participant in the school and higher education system;

⁹ Term: participatory security management, in: *Vademecum bezpieczeństwa*, O. Wasiuta, R. Klepka, R. Kopeć (sci. eds.), Kraków 2018, p. 746.

¹⁰ See for example: S. Ciupka, *Security issues and security education*, "Scientific Journal of Bielsko-Biala School of Finance and Law" 2021, vol. 25, no. 4, pp. 5–8. <https://doi.org/10.19192/wsfip.sj4.2021.1>.

¹¹ A. Banaszak, *Oświata i edukacja a bezpieczeństwo społeczne* (Eng. Education and social safety), in: *Bezpieczeństwo społeczne w XXI wieku w ujęciu socjologicznym, pedagogicznym, prawnym i nauk o zarządzaniu*, M. Such-Pyrgiel (sci. ed.), Józefów 2013, pp. 139–158.

- extracurricular activities that are not subsidised by the state (e.g. language courses, private tutoring) play an important role in the education process, but during the economic crisis, households cut back on these activities for financial reasons;
- local governments, which participate in maintaining the education system, do not receive sufficient subsidies and have to make up the shortfall from their own resources, which is why they try to reduce spending on this system, e.g. by closing smaller schools;
- funds allocated to education and schooling should be treated as a state investment (including in security);
- the state must ensure equal access to education (which translates into security) and treat students individually, and thus provide care for children from poorer families by ensuring their access to extracurricular activities.

Banaszak therefore focused on social security, emphasising the role of personal development opportunities as its foundation. He demonstrated a direct relationship between security and education, in a broader context than just security education.

Marta Łukawska approached this issue in an even more general way¹², as she wanted to prove that education provides security. First, she pointed to the axiological importance of education. The values instilled in students translate into their decisions and, consequently, into the world they build (individuals and communities), and further into the value of the knowledge they acquire. The main role in the process of education and schooling is played by the student and the teacher as the person who imparts knowledge and performs a profession of public trust. Łukawska refers to the example of education in Poland before World War II and the effectiveness of transmitting patriotic values and shaping such attitudes¹³, which was reflected in the struggle of Polish soldiers on all fronts of the war, and then in the resistance of Poles against the authorities imposed by the USRR. According to her, this is one of the tasks of education for security. However, it should also be implemented in other subjects, e.g. as part of teaching values and knowledge important for achieving energy, environmental and information security. According to Łukawska, a high level of education and teaching of relevant content translate into an increased sense of security for individuals and a higher level of security for

¹² M. Łukawska, *Edukacja jako jeden z gwarantów bezpieczeństwa w Polsce* (Eng. Education as one of guarantors of security in Poland), "De Securitate et Defensione. O Bezpieczeństwie i Obronności" 2016, no. 2(2), pp. 142–152. This publication is not written in the best language and contains some errors, but the way the issue is approached is consistent with the approach used in the article.

¹³ See in more detail: E. Włodarczyk, E. Sadowska-Wieciech, J. Rokitowska, *Edukacja dla bezpieczeństwa. Istota i uwarunkowania* (Eng. Education for safety. Essence and conditions), Kraków 2018, pp. 35–44.

the state, which is impossible to disagree with. Similarly obvious is the conclusion at the end of her article, according to which highly educated people have opportunities to make inventions important for national defence, and citizens raised in the spirit of patriotism will be ready to fight for their homeland.

Taking these considerations into account, it can be tentatively concluded that educational security means the ability of a nation/state to shape people according to its prevailing educational ideals and goals, at every level and in every form of education, necessary to protect and defend fundamental values such as existence, territorial integrity, sovereignty and quality of life (social development)¹⁴. However, this does not exhaust the meaning of the concept.

People are shaped by imparting knowledge to them and through the educational process. It is therefore much more than education for security, which according to Zdzisław Jezierski, focuses on preparing for protection against threats and acting in dangerous situations, and dates back to a time when education focused on defence issues¹⁵. However, terms “educational security” and “education for security” are connected because they emphasise what education should do to promote security within three elements: individual, groups of people as well as state and international structures¹⁶. It is a continuous process, never-ending due to the dynamic nature of threats and the measures used to combat them. The term “educational security” also encompasses the meaning of the terms “security prevention” and “participatory security management”. Educational security is the foundation for success in achieving security policy aims in every objective aspect. Without a high level of education, a state/nation will not achieve adequate defence capabilities, ensure economic, health, information, cultural or environmental security of its citizens, and ultimately, ensure the resilience of the state/nation adequate to the challenges and threats it faces¹⁷. This is the fundamental task of education at the national level.

¹⁴ The meaning of the term “education” according to: S. Zalewski, *Polityka bezpieczeństwa państwa a edukacja obronna* (Eng. State security policy and defence education), Warszawa 2001, p. 41.

¹⁵ Z. Jezierski, *Powstanie i rozwój edukacji dla bezpieczeństwa jako systemu dydaktyczno-wychowawczego w polskich szkołach* (Eng. Establishment and development of education for safety as a didactic and educational system in Polish schools), “Interdyscyplinarne Studia Społeczne” 2017, no. 1(3), p. 7. Cf. similar position: J. Martuszewska, *Zadania instytucji edukacji dla bezpieczeństwa na potrzeby bezpieczeństwa państwa* (Eng. Tasks of safety education institutions concerning the needs of state security), “Kultura – Społeczeństwo – Edukacja” 2020, vol. 17, no. 1, p. 403; I. Grabowska-Lepczak, *Edukacja dla bezpieczeństwa. Aspekty teoretyczne i praktyczne* (Eng. Education for security. Theoretical and practical aspects), Warszawa 2017.

¹⁶ A. Pieczywok, *Bezpieczeństwo jako wartość edukacyjna i badawcza...*, p. 460.

¹⁷ Pieczywok points to relevant areas of education for security: political, military, economic, psychosocial and financial. See: *ibid.* Grabowska-Lepczuk supplements them with public and environmental security. See: I. Grabowska-Lepczak, *Edukacja dla bezpieczeństwa...*, p. 16. As can be seen

This approach is confirmed by Kazimierz Żegnałek, who accurately stated that security (...) *depends primarily on properly organised and conducted educational activities*¹⁸. Thus, national education is a fundamental prerequisite for security. Educational security can therefore be discussed in the context of national education, while education for security can only be discussed as a subset of national education. Many authors equate these two concepts¹⁹.

These findings lead to the conclusion that educational security is: the ability of a nation/state to build, maintain and develop an educational system that allows people to be shaped in accordance with its prevailing ideals and educational goals. This applies to every level and every form of education, necessary to protect and defend fundamental values such as existence, territorial integrity, sovereignty and quality of life (social development). Therefore, it is both an education system and education for security in specific subject areas, e.g. military, social, health, environmental or cultural. The latter plays a decisive role, as education (both formal and informal) is the primary instrument for a country to preserve its cultural identity in the context of globalisation and the associated internalisation of values that are aligned with its own identity²⁰. It is through education that the state provides access to language, customs, traditions, history and religion. In this way, it influences the sense of cultural identity (at the individual level) and national identity (at the state level), which it considers to be the most important components of cultural security²¹.

It is worth looking at educational security in Poland in relation to teachers, the key player in the education system, who should be constantly improving their

from this example, it is an open and very broad catalogue, and its supplementation testifies not only to the processual nature of security and education, but also to the fundamental importance of education for ensuring the security of the state/nation.

¹⁸ K. Żegnałek, *Dydaktyka edukacji obronnej* (Eng. Defence education teaching), Warszawa 2001, p. 11.

¹⁹ For example: B.A. Orłowska, *Bezpieczeństwo edukacyjne dzieci cudzoziemskich jako element bezpieczeństwa kulturowego* (Eng. Educational security of foreign children as an element of cultural security), "Środkowoeuropejskie Studia Polityczne" 2021, no. 3, p. 113. <https://doi.org/10.14746/ssp.2021.3.7.>; M. Niewczas, J. Puacz-Olszewska, *Bezpieczeństwo edukacyjne w Polsce – aspekty prawne* (Eng. Educational security in Poland – legal aspects), "Rocznik Bezpieczeństwa Międzynarodowego" 2017, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 139–141. <https://doi.org/10.34862/rbm.2017.2.12>; G. Habigier-Pipska, *Bezpieczeństwo edukacyjne jako obszar bezpieczeństwa wewnętrznego państwa* (Eng. Educational security as an area of internal security of the country), "Annales Universitatis Paedagogicae Cracoviensis. Studia Politologica" 2014, vol. 12, no. 151, pp. 70–74, provided that it also applies a narrow approach, limiting educational security to school.

²⁰ J. Czaja, *Bezpieczeństwo kulturowe Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* (Eng. Cultural security of the Republic of Poland), Warszawa 2004, p. 26.

²¹ D. Jach, *Wybrane zagadnienia z zakresu bezpieczeństwa kulturowego* (Eng. Selected issues on cultural security), "Wiedza Obronna" 2018, no. 1–2, p. 136. <https://doi.org/10.34752/wvxj-k680>.

skills and abilities²². According to Jolanta Martuszezwska, based on the results of a survey of teachers, their most important demands related to their professional situation and education policy in 2019 were: decent salaries, less bureaucracy, teachers having subject specific, pedagogical, psychological and methodological competences that are constantly developed, time for self-development and selection for the profession. This is intended to enable teachers to gain authority among students, which will translate into success in educating them and supporting them in developing their passions (maintaining their willingness to learn)²³. The rest of the article will present selected aspects of the teaching profession and the Polish government's policy in this area.

Educational security in Poland in the third decade of the 21st century from the perspective of state policy towards a teacher

The Polish strategic documents list important tasks for education in the area of security. For instance, the authors of the still not updated *Defence Strategy of the Republic of Poland* from 2009 referred to it twice. They pointed out, among other things, that the state defence system should include the task of defence education and patriotic upbringing of society²⁴. In the newer *Concept of Defence of the Republic of Poland* from 2017, in the version available to the public, education has been omitted²⁵. *The National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland 2020* mentions education five times. Firstly, reference was made to the need to use entities within the education and higher education system to create a universal defence system, in particular to enhance knowledge and capabilities for the development of national security by promoting patriotic attitudes, civic duties and pro-social behaviour, increasing resistance to information manipulation, contributing to health security (health education, including the development of physical culture)²⁶. The authors of this strategy therefore apply

²² J. Martuszezwska, *Zadania instytucji edukacji dla bezpieczeństwa na potrzeby bezpieczeństwa państwa* (Eng. Tasks of safety education institutions concerning the needs of state security), "Kultura–Społeczeństwo–Edukacja" 2020, vol. 17, no. 1, p. 405. <https://doi.org/10.14746/kse.2020.17.15.1>.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 407.

²⁴ *Strategia Obronności Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* (Eng. Defence Strategy of the Republic of Poland), Warszawa 2009, p. 10, 15.

²⁵ *Koncepcja Obronna Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* (Eng. The Concept of Defence of the Republic of Poland), Warszawa 2017.

²⁶ *Strategia Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej 2020* (Eng. National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland 2020), Warszawa 2020, p. 15, 21, 31.

the approach referred to in the case of educational security. This means that those who draft strategic documents concerning security are aware of the importance of the education²⁷.

Despite this knowledge, for many years no action was taken to provide the educational security, especially with regard to the remuneration policy for teachers. One of the official documents whose authors openly pointed to this problem is *Socio-economic analysis with diagnosis of areas for intervention of the ESF. Final report*²⁸. There you can read that:

However, the quality of education still has a number of shortcomings. The most important factors affecting the quality of education include teachers' competences and the conditions in which teachers can use them, e.g. by adapting the pace and methods of learning to the needs of students and using activating methods, determined primarily by the core curriculum and framework teaching plans. It should be noted that there is still a need for teacher training, but training courses are not the most effective form of professional development²⁹.

The report also lists a number of weaknesses among teachers, e.g. (...) *insufficient preparation of candidates and beginning students to undertake higher education*³⁰. Unattractive pay for novice teachers was identified as the main reason for this situation. This perpetuates negative selection for the profession: teacher training is chosen by many secondary school (formerly lower secondary school) graduates who had low academic results, and the higher the academic achievements of students in fields offering teacher training, the fewer of them choose it³¹. The number of teachers in 2019 fell by 3% compared to 2018, and staff shortages became noticeable in some local labour markets³². This phenomenon intensified in subsequent years, resulting, among other things, in teachers working in more than one school.

²⁷ However, the authors of the documents are inconsistent. For instance, *Rekomendacje do Strategii Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* (Eng. Recommendations to the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland), Warszawa 2024, do not mention a word about education.

²⁸ *Analiza społeczno-gospodarcza wraz z diagnozą obszarów interwencji EFS. Raport końcowy* (Eng. Socio-economic analysis with diagnosis of areas for intervention of the ESF. Final report), Warszawa 2020.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 66–67.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 59.

The mentioned diagnosis is still relevant in 2024, despite the pay rises that teachers received after the Prime Minister Donald Tusk's government came to power in 2023. The effects of the changes introduced may only become apparent in the coming years. A report published by the Statistics Poland (GUS) entitled *Education and upbringing in the 2022/2023 school year*³³ includes a chart showing expenditure on education in Poland in 2003–2022. It shows that during this period expenditure fell from 4% of GDP to 3.5% of GDP, despite a nominal increase from over PLN 20 billion to over PLN 106.3 billion³⁴. There were 512 100 teachers employed full-time, most of them (56.8%) in the position of certified teacher (the highest level of promotion). Elementary schools employed 51.7% of all teachers. For comparison, according to GUS, in the 2019/2020 school year, 513 900 teachers were employed full-time, most of them in the position of a certified teacher (56.1%) and an appointed teacher (19.1%)³⁵. In previous years, the number of teachers grew, although slightly. The decline in numbers is clear, even when taking into account that most teachers hold position of certified and appointed teacher, which means that those starting work are a significant minority (approx. 20% in 2023, in comparison to 46% in 2006)³⁶. If we assume that negative selection persists (and until the pay rises there was no reason for this to change), this means that many of the new teachers are working in this profession because they have no alternative. In the coming years, they may be co-implementers of education policy, and in the future, they will bear the main responsibility for it. This is due to the fact that many teachers are already of retirement age or approaching it.

According to data from the 2024 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development report, the average age of teachers in Poland is one of the highest among the countries surveyed. Out of 40 countries, Poland ranks second to last, which is due to a lack of young people willing to work in this profession. The percentage of teachers under the age of 30 fell from 9.4% in 2013 to 4.3% in 2022, while the average age (including those working not only full-time) in 2024 was 45.6 years. The number of vacancies at the beginning of 2024 was 16 000. Poland is one of 18 countries struggling with staff shortages, out of 21 that provided

³³ *Oświata i wychowanie w roku szkolnym 2022/2023* (Eng. Education and upbringing in the 2022/2023 school year), Warszawa–Gdańsk 2023.

³⁴ All data quoted after: *Oświata i wychowanie w roku szkolnym 2022/2023* (Eng. Education and upbringing in the 2022/2023 school year), Warszawa–Gdańsk 2023, pp. 18–19.

³⁵ *Oświata i wychowanie w roku szkolnym 2019/2020* (Eng. Education and upbringing in the 2019/2020 school year), Warszawa–Gdańsk 2023, p. 22.

³⁶ *Nauczyciele w Polsce – podstawowe dane* (Eng. Teachers in Poland – basic data), <https://nauczyciel2040.pl/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Diagnoza-Nauczycieli-w-Polsce.pdf>, p. 4 [accessed: 3 XII 2024].

data on this issue³⁷. At the same time, the number of people leaving the profession due to resignation rather than retirement is growing. This also applies to young teachers who resign shortly after being hired. The authors of the OECD report state that earnings are not the only reason for this situation. Although teachers in Poland are among the lowest paid compared to teachers in OECD countries, they rank fifth from the bottom in terms of the purchasing power of a teacher starting their career, and second from the bottom (after Hungary) in terms of statutory remuneration. This problem is also linked to the declining attractiveness of the profession due to the stress, bureaucracy, limited autonomy and long career advancement process associated with it.

The diagnosis from the reports coincides with the assessments of the Poles. According to the results of the Ipsos survey conducted in 2024³⁸, only 18% of respondents rated the educational system in Poland positively, while 40% rated it negatively. Among 30 countries, Poland ranked sixth from the bottom. The biggest problem was found to be an outdated curriculum, as stated by 45% of respondents (compared to an average of 29% across all countries), followed by inadequate teacher training – 32% (with an average of 27%). Thus, respondents in Poland were more likely to point to these two problems than respondents in other countries.

The ratings from the Ipsos report do not correspond to those given to education by respondents in 2022. According to a study from the CBOS (Public Opinion Research Center)³⁹ report, over 40% rated the level of education in Poland positively at that time. A significant change has therefore taken place over the past two years, which may be related to the fact that the Ipsos study ranked ideologisation and politicisation as the third most significant problem in Polish education. However, it should be noted that the upward trend in negative ratings has continued since at least 2008. According to CBOS research, 66% rated primary school education positively at that time, compared to only 48% in 2022. The situation was similar in secondary schools – 63% and 47%, respectively. Thus, the aforementioned ideologisation and politicisation could only accelerate the process of negative perception of the level of education. The respondents indicated staffing problems as the third biggest challenge.

³⁷ All data quoted after: *Education at a Glance 2024*, https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2024/09/education-at-a-glance-2024_5ea68448/c00cad36-en.pdf, pp. 418–432 [accessed: 3 XII 2024].

³⁸ All data quoted after: *IPSOS Education Monitor 2024. A 30-Country Ipsos Global Advisor Survey*, https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2024-08/Education_Monitor_2024_Ipsos.pdf [accessed: 3 XII 2024].

³⁹ All data quoted after: *Polskie szkoły 2022* (Eng. Polish schools 2022), https://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2023/K_002_23.PDF [accessed: 3 XII 2024].

Despite this, Polish students' exam results are high, as are their skills compared to their peers from other countries⁴⁰. One possible explanation for this phenomenon is the extensive tutoring market. According to available data for 2024, every second child used tutoring services, and families spent an average of PLN 4000 per year on them⁴¹, and this amount is growing. According to data from 2022, one in four students used tutoring services⁴². According to the results of the OLX analysis from the beginning of the 2023/2024 school year, as many as 72% of parents declared that their children use or will use private tutoring. The tutoring market grew by 42% compared to 2021, which was related to increased demand and the desire to earn additional income by teachers and students⁴³. This leads to the conclusion that parents must bear the cost of additional education for their children in order to compensate for the shortcomings of the public education system. It is difficult to accept that their intention is to ensure educational security. It can be assumed that this refers to children acquiring an education of a standard sufficient to ensure a high standard of living in the future. Due to high demand and inflation, this is becoming increasingly expensive. According to the GUS data, the cost of educational services rose by 12.6% in 2023 (compared to an 8.7% increase a year earlier)⁴⁴.

⁴⁰ *Polscy piętnastolatki w perspektywie międzynarodowej. Wyniki badania PISA 2022* (Eng. Polish fifteen-year-olds in an international perspective. PISA 2022 survey results), https://pisa.ibe.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/PISA2022_Polscy-pietnastolatki-w-perspektywie-miedzynarodowej.pdf [accessed: 3 XII 2024].

⁴¹ *Coraz więcej dzieci korzysta z korepetycji. To ogromny wydatek dla rodziców* (Eng. More and more children are receiving private tutoring. This is a huge expense for parents), TVP3 Warszawa, 11 III 2024, <https://warszawa.tvp.pl/76382566/coraz-wiecej-dzieci-korzysta-z-korepetycji-to-ogromny-wydatek-dla-rodzicow> [accessed: 3 XII 2024]; *Korepetycje – coraz częstsza forma pomocy dla uczniów. Czy są niezbędne?* (Eng. Tutoring – an increasingly common form of assistance for students. Is it necessary?), Jedyńka Polskie Radio, 30 I 2024, <https://jedyńka.polskieradio.pl/artukul/3326654,Korepetycje---coraz-czC4%99stsza-forma-pomocy-dla-uczni%C3%B3w-Czy-s%C4%85-niezb%C4%99dne> [accessed: 3 XII 2024].

⁴² A. Patyk, *Rynek korepetycji rośnie do niebotycznych rozmiarów. Rodzice wydają średnio 293 zł miesięcznie* (Eng. The tutoring market is growing to astronomical proportions. Parents spend an average of PLN 293 per month), Obserwator Gospodarczy, 9 VII 2022, https://obserwatorgospodarczy.pl/2022/07/09/rynek-korepetycji-rosnie-do-niebotycznych-rozmiarow-rodzice-wydaja-srednio-293-zl-miesiecznie/#google_vignette [accessed: 3 XII 2024].

⁴³ *Rynek korepetycji w Polsce osiągnął stabilizację – analiza OLX* (Eng. The tutoring market in Poland has stabilised – OLX analysis), Newseria Biznes, 20 III 2024, <https://biznes.newseria.pl/biuro-prasowe/edukacja/rynek-korepetycji-w-polsce,b89964611> [accessed: 3 XII 2024].

⁴⁴ *Sytuacja społeczno-gospodarcza kraju w 2023 r.* (Eng. The socio-economic situation of the country in 2023), "Analizy Statystyczne GUS" 2023, no. 12, p. 42.

Finally, it is worth comparing the facts and arguments presented here with the content of the *Nauczyciel_ka 2040. Odważ się myśleć inaczej*⁴⁵ report published in October 2024. According to this report:

- only 4% of young Poles consider teaching to be their dream career, even though 81% have experience in teaching. They do not find it an attractive profession because it does not meet their requirements, especially financial ones and it lacks prestige;
- 79% of young people believe that teachers do not earn enough, and approx. 50% say that they have too many responsibilities. Following pay rises in the 2023/2024 school year, the average salary of teachers is 2% higher than the national average, and that of teachers starting work is 2% higher than the minimum wage;
- the main problem facing the Polish education system is the aging of teachers. In 2024, the ratio of students to teachers placed Poland in the middle of the OECD ranking, which, however, due to the aforementioned process, may change in the coming years, especially in large cities, where there is already a shortage of teachers;
- women account for 82% of teachers in Poland, which is higher than the European average for older primary and secondary school classes;
- there are no recent studies on teachers working multiple jobs; the last one was conducted in 2011 and 2013. The average teacher worked 1.25 full-time jobs at that time. Recently, there has been a slight increase in the number of full-time jobs and teachers employed due to the admission of children from Ukraine to schools. At the same time, according to the Ministry of National Education data, the number of hours worked by teachers between 2019 and 2023, increased by 14%, and the number of teachers by 2.8%;
- although most teachers say they are satisfied with their profession, only 15% would like their child to pursue the same career.

To summarise the report's findings, it should be stated that factors reducing job satisfaction among teachers include: low wages, bureaucracy, limited opportunities for career advancement (it takes too long), low prestige of the profession, difficulties in relations with students' parents, insufficient support from them in solving educational difficulties, stress at work and overly large classes. This may result in significant problems in the implementation of education for

⁴⁵ *Nauczyciel_ka 2040. Odważ się myśleć inaczej* (Eng. Teacher 2040. Dare to think differently), https://nauczyciel2040.pl/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Raport-Nauczyciel_ka2040-1.pdf [accessed: 3 XII 2024].

security tasks within the framework of the state's provision of educational security. The state's policy is directly responsible for some of these factors.

Summary

The picture of Polish education that emerges from the research leads to the conclusion that in Poland in the third decade of the 21st century, the harsh words of the main character in Marek Koterski's film entitled *Dzień świra* (Eng. Day of the Wacko) are still relevant. They reflect deep disappointment with the teaching profession. Today, this disappointment may be shared by teachers who are just starting their careers, working full-time, without overtime or other bonuses and living in large cities. And it is this group that is important to the future implementation of the state's educational security tasks, which include education for security. If the state does not take care of its teachers, they will not be able to perform their duties. Without knowledge, skills and social competencies in the areas of defence, health, culture, social issues, ideology, ecology, energy and information, security cannot be ensured.

Currently, the consequences of educational weaknesses are particularly felt in the areas of information security, the fight with propaganda and disinformation spread by internet. People lacking basic knowledge and the ability to use this tool become victims of propaganda and disinformation campaigns, e.g. those inciting fear of war, discouraging the defence of one's own country or promoting anti-vaccine, anti-environmental or anti-Ukrainian narratives. They are the targets of adversary's actions whose task is to create as much social division as possible, to deprive the nation of cohesion and thus render it defenceless against threats, including those critical to the state's existence, territorial integrity and sovereignty. All these values can be lost even without a conventionally understood war – through poor-quality education that causes people to submit to the adversary's will and to voluntarily surrender sovereignty in exchange for the promise of bringing the chaos the adversary has caused under control (will therefore win the war for the hearts and minds of the nation in what is now called cognitive warfare).

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