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EDUCATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN POLAND AND SLOVAKIA

1. INTRODUCTION

A dynamic development of social work began in the former Czechoslovakia in 1980 and was subsequently continued in the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic. Significant transformations in the Slovakian education system were initiated after 1989. At that time, young people began to notice the importance of education, career advancement and involvement in public affairs. Similarly, numerous activities aimed at setting up and developing a democratic society were undertaken in Poland and embraced also the sphere of education. A gradual reform of social services commenced in both countries after 1989, was followed in the next years by the introduction of new solutions that had a significant impact both on education in the field of social work and on establishing the profession of social worker.

Education of social workers concentrates on transferring knowledge, developing skills and shaping attitudes that are conducive to effective work. Taking into account the evolvement of the education process in these countries, organized symposia, conferences and joint undertakings, as well as discussions on the emergence of social work as a scientific discipline in Poland, attempts were made to compare and present the ways of educating social workers developed in the neighbouring countries.

2. EDUCATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN POLAND (AFTER 1989)

Attempts to transform the system of vocational training of social workers in Poland, in the last years of the PRL (the Polish People's Republic), to some extent provided the basis for the modification of the legal regulations related to social assistance, which was carried out after 1989¹. In 1990, the Minister of Labour and

¹ See also: M. Brenk, *Od społecznika do profesjonalisty – ewolucja zawodu pracownika socjalnego w Polsce*, Kultura, Społeczeństwo, Edukacja 2(2012), p. 144-145; idem, *Kształcenie pracowników*

Social Policy (MLSP) in Poland was assigned the tasks from the scope of activity of the Minister of Health and Welfare (MHW) related to social assistance. In the next step, requirements were defined with respect to the qualification, roles and tasks of social workers². The adopted regulations stipulated that a person may be appointed a social worker if they “have appropriate qualifications, namely, they have completed education at a school of social workers or at a university in the fields of: social work, social policy, social rehabilitation, sociology, pedagogy, psychology or other related (Section 1). [...] it may also be a person having higher education in the fields not listed in Section 1, if they completed specialization in the organization of social assistance or related post-graduate studies (Section 2). A social worker is obliged to improve their professional qualifications (Section 3)”³. The adopted regulations specified the qualifications of social workers. Introduction of such legal provisions resulted in the fact that positions of social workers and heads of social welfare centres were held by people who completed the above mentioned fields of study in various specialties, sometimes quite different from the specialty of “social work” and, therefore, lacked the necessary knowledge and skills.

The study program in the field of “social work”, covering a total of 2,610 hours of classes, was introduced in fifteen schools in 1993. It had a multidisciplinary character and comprised: sociology, social pedagogy, social policy, social medicine, psychology, law, theory of organization and management, knowledge on the social dimension of work, the stages of human life, the structure and dynamics of social processes, problems and social issues, institutions solving social problems and social consequences of economic processes. The study program comprised also a social project (a novelty in the curriculum). Practical classes were planned to constitute 30% of the hours and be related with the theoretical subjects⁴. The study program

socjalnych w Polsce Ludowej, Studia Edukacyjne 31(2014), p. 245.

² Act of 04.06.1990 on assigning the Minister of Labour and Social Policy the tasks from the scope of the Minister of Health and Welfare concerning social assistance, Journal of Laws 1990 No. 29, item 172; Act of 29.11.1990 on social assistance, Journal of Laws of 1990 No. 87, item 506.

³ Pursuant to the provisions of the Act, Section 1 and 2 come into force on 01.01.1995. In the light of the applicable regulations completion of the above mentioned higher education (at the first and second degree studies) in the fields of specialties other than “social work”, or this specialty at the fields of study other than the specified, does not entitle to pursue the profession of social worker under the Act of 16.02.2007 on amending the Act on social assistance, Journal of Laws of 2007 No. 48, item 320, Article 5 Section 3. Persons who at the date of entry into force of the Act of 12.03.2004 on social assistance continued Master's degree in pedagogy, psychology, sociology and political science, and completed these studies before 31.10.2007 – irrespective of the specialty completed in the course of the studies, or completed before the entry into force of the Act the above-mentioned fields of study and the field of political science and social sciences - may pursue the profession of social worker. Journal of Laws of 2013 item 182, Article 156, Section 1a, Section 3, Section 3a.

⁴ Conf. *Dokumentacja programowa dla zawodu pracownik socjalny 26 01, wdrożenie próbne*, Ministerstwo Pracy i Polityki Socjalnej, Warsaw 1993, vol. 1, p. 189; vol. 2, p. 190-320 [Print reproduced]; V. Biederman, *Problemy kształcenia pracowników socjalnych*, in: *Praca socjalna służbą człowiekowi*, eds. L. Malinowski, M. Orłowska, Wydawnictwo Akademickie „Żak”, Warsaw 1998, p. 40-41; J. Szmagański, *Kształcenie do pracy socjalnej w Polsce po 1989 r.*, in: *Pracownicy socjalni i praca socjalna w Polsce. Między służbą społeczną a urzędem*, ed. M. Rymśza, Wydawnictwo ISP,

designed for institutions educating future social workers was implemented in 1995 and it remained obligatory until 1997. Moreover, specialty education was introduced (first and second degree) together with preparation for future executives in the organization of social assistance⁵. That initiative was aimed at raising the competency level of social workers and of the management of assistance centres.

The need was recognized to train employees, which was associated with the development of education preparing graduates to the profession⁶. In 2005, colleges of social services were established⁷. It was assumed that those institutions would remain under the auspices of universities. Graduates of the colleges received the diploma of social workers, while relevant agreements with universities allowed them to obtain a bachelor's degree, which is the basis for further education at the second degree level and receiving a master's degree. One advantage of the colleges was the fact that they provided good practical preparation for future social workers. Education programs partly differed from those carried out in universities. With regard to obtaining the bachelor's degree, the qualifications of the faculty could raise doubts since they were not comparable to the requirements imposed on the staff of higher education institutions, which compelled the students to make up for the so called program differences.

The number of colleges was decreasing, i.e. the data of MLSP show that in 2009, there were 14 institutions of that type⁸, while at the end of 2014 their number amounted to only eight. Colleges in Bielsko-Biała, Chorzów, Gdańsk, Łódź, Rzeszów and Zamość closed down.

Warsaw 2012, pp. 284-285. E. Marynowicz-Hetka, K. Wódcz i K. Frysztański made special contribution to the work of the team preparing the program.

⁵ Decision No. 7 of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy of 10.04.1995, Journal of MLSP No. 6, item. 7; Regulation of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy of 03.05.1997 on the degree of specialization in the profession of "social worker", Journal of Laws of 1997 No. 24, item 125-126. The, so called, new professions were also pointed out in the Polish system of social assistance, these included, for example, assistant to a disabled person, community support worker, caregiver at the social welfare home. Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 29 March 2001 amending the Regulation on the classification of occupations for vocational education, Journal of Laws of 2001, No. 34, item 405, introducing to the group of professions marked 346 - Employees of social welfare and social work the following professions: 346 [02] - assistant to a disabled person; 346 [03] - community support worker; 346 [04] - caregiver at the social welfare home.

⁶ In 1993, the Ministry of Labour appointed 15 post-secondary schools of social workers. Conf. A. Zasada-Chorab, *Kształtowanie się zawodu pracownika socjalnego w Polsce*, Wydawnictwo Centrum AV, Częstochowa 2004, pp. 96-97.

⁷ Regulation of the Minister of Social Policy of 24.03.2005 on colleges of social workers, Journal of Laws of 2005 No. 61, item 544.

⁸ The colleges provided education for social workers in the following cities: Wrocław, Toruń, Lublin, Biłgoraj, Zamość, Łódź, Warsaw, Gdańsk, Rzeszów, Bielsko-Biała, Czeladź, Chorzów, Skarżysko-Kamienna, Poznań. According to data from the Ministry of Labour of 30.01.2009, source: M. Kozak, *Kształcenie w zakresie pracy socjalnej w Polsce – rys historyczny*, Roczniki Nauk o Rodzinie i Pracy Socjalnej 4(59)2012, p. 348.

Table 1: A list of colleges of social workers operating under the provisions of the Regulation of the Minister of Social Policy of 24.03.2005 on colleges of social workers, Journal of Laws of 2005 No. 61, item 544. As of 3 December 2014.

No.	Voivodeship/city	Public/non-public college Name of the university providing scientific and educational supervision
1.	Lower Silesia Wrocław	PUBLIC University of Opole
2.	Kuyavia- Pomerania Toruń	PUBLIC Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz
3.	Lublin Lublin	PUBLIC Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin
4.	Lublin Biłgoraj	NON-PUBLIC Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin
5.	Masovia Warsaw	PUBLIC Warsaw University
6.	Silesia Czeladź	PUBLIC Uniwersity of Silesia
7.	Holy Cross Skarżysko Kamienna	PUBLIC Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin
8.	Greater Poland Poznań	PUBLIC Maria Grzegorzewska Academy of Special Education in Warsaw

Source: MLSP, Colleges of social workers, <<https://www.mpips.gov.pl/pomoc-spoeczna/kształcenie-i-doskonalenie-zawodowe-pracownikow-sluzb-spoecznych/kolegia-pracownikow-sluzb-spoecznych/>> (accessed on: 07.28.2015).

Subsequent colleges were either gradually closed down, e.g. on 30.09.2015 in Warsaw⁹, or there were attempts at converting them into institutions of higher education, e.g. in Czeladź. The Ministry of Science and Higher Education (MSHE) informed that from 1.10.2009 new colleges ceased to be opened. In 2011, the last recruitment to these schools took place, and in 2014 education in colleges was terminated. After 2015, colleges will be able to carry out recruitment, but their graduates will not be able to take the final exams ending higher education¹⁰. Social work

⁹ Resolution No. 109/13 of the Mazowieckie Provincial Parliament of 05.20.2013 on the elimination of the colleges of social service workers in Warsaw. Based on Article 18, point 19, point f, Act of 06.05.1998 on local governments, Journal of Laws of 2001, No. 142, item 1590, as amended, Article 9f Section 6 and Article 59 Section 1 and 2 of the Act of 09.07.1991 on the educational system, Journal of Laws of 2004, No. 256, item 2572, as amended, Article 12 Section 3 of the Act of 27.08.2009 on public finance, Journal of Laws of 2009 No. 157, item 1240, as amended § 10 Section 1, 2 and 3 of the Regulation of the Minister of Social Policy of 24.03.2005 on colleges of social work, Journal of Laws of 2005 No. 61, item 544.

¹⁰ The Ministry of Science and Higher Education, *Kształcenie w kolegiach – komunikat (Education in Colleges – communication)*, <<http://www.nauka.gov.pl/rada-nauki/kształcenie-w-kolegiach->

as a specialty in the fields of: pedagogy, special pedagogy, political science, social policy, psychology, sociology, family studies, entitling to commence professional practice could be carried out until 31.12.2013¹¹. A list of compulsory subjects was defined along with the specifications of the professional practice to be completed within a specialty preparing for the profession of social worker¹². Students pursuing education in the specialty preparing for the profession of social worker were obliged to complete the whole program minimum, i.e. 330 hours of subjects and 240 hours of practices, within one cycle of first degree or second degree studies. In 2006 in Poland, social work was introduced as a field of study in higher education institutions and the standards of education in this field were defined in the following year¹³. In 2012, the regulation that determined the above-mentioned educational standards was repealed. Institutions of higher education gained the freedom to work out their own study programs. The so called "National Framework for Higher Education Qualifications" came into force, and apart from general academic profile of education, also practical education profile was introduced¹⁴.

Creation of the above mentioned study programs, the quality of education offered to students in the field of social work as well as realization of practical classes, or other aspects such as participation of practitioners and preparation of the scientific staff involved in the implementation of the programs gave rise to a lot of doubt. J. Szmagałski posed two questions which need to be addressed, "Is the autonomy of higher education institutions in programming education in social work, which is a regulated profession, not going to excessively deregulate the theoretical basis and the specificity of functional skills for this profession? Are not the subsequent hasty systemic changes in education which are not followed by empirical verification of their functionality, going to cause scattering of the gained experience and blurring the identity of social work?"¹⁵.

Qualifications allowing to pursue the profession of social worker can now be obtained by commencing the first degree (BA) studies in the field of social work¹⁶ or

komunikat,archiwum,1.html>, (accessed on: 29.07.2015).

¹¹ The Social Assistance Act of 12.03.2004, Journal of Laws of 2009 No. 175, item 1362, Article 116.

¹² Appendix to the Regulation of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy of 25.01.2008 on the specialty preparing for the profession of social worker realized in universities, Journal of Laws of 2008, No. 27, item 158; in effect from 1.10.2008.

¹³ Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 13.06.2006 on the names of fields of study, Journal of Laws No. 121, item 838; Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 12.07.2007 on education standards for individual fields and levels of education, as well as the mode of formation and conditions to be met by the university to conduct interdisciplinary studies and macro-fields, Journal of Laws of 2007 No. 164, item 1166.

¹⁴ Act of 18.03.201 amending the Act - Law on Higher Education, the Law on Academic Degrees and Titles and on Degrees and Title in Art and amending certain other acts, Journal of Laws of 2011 No. 84, item 455, Article 2, Section 18a, Article 168a, Section 1.

¹⁵ J. Szmagałski, *Kształcenie do pracy socjalnej w Polsce po 1989 r.*, p. 297.

¹⁶ The word "or" means that qualifications are obtained after completing only the first degree studies, only the second degree studies, the first and the second degree studies (BA and MA degree). Doubt appeared in connection with the provision that enabled acquisition of a professional authorization

the second degree (complementary MA) studies in the field of social work or at a post-secondary college of social workers providing education in the profession of social worker¹⁷. Students can complete Bachelor studies in dozens of higher education institutions, and then continue their education at MA studies in several universities (Table 2).

Table 2: A list of universities (public and non-public) that provide a degree program in the field of social work in Poland. As at 10.01.2015.

No.	Name of the university	Ist degree studies	IIInd degree studies
1.	Jesuit University of Philosophy and Education Ignatianum in Cracow	X	-
2.	Jan Długosz University in Częstochowa	X	-
3.	Maria Grzegorzewska Academy of Special Education in Warsaw	X	-
4.	Pomeranian University in Śłupsk	X	-
5.	University of Lower Silesia in Wrocław	X	-
6.	Cardinal August Hlond University of Education in Myslowice	X	-
7.	John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin (KUL)	X	-
8.	Kujawy and Pomorze University in Bydgoszcz	X	-
9.	The Malopolska Higher Vocational School of J. Dietl in Cracow	X	-
10.	Łomża State University of Applied Sciences	X	-
11.	The Bronisław Markiewicz State Higher School of Technology and Economics in Jarosław	X	-
12.	The Jan Grodek State Vocational Academy in Sanok	X	X
13.	The S. Staszic State Vocational Academy in Piła	X	-
14.	The State Vocational Academy in Skierniewice	X	-
15.	The State Vocational Academy in Sulechów	X	-
16.	Pedagogium - Higher School of Social Sciences in Warsaw	X	-
17.	Social Sciences Academy in Łódź	X	-
18.	Paweł Włodkowiec Higher School in Warsaw	X	-
19.	Swietokrzyska Higher School in Kielce	X	-
20.	University of Gdańsk	X	-
21.	University of Adam Mickiewicz in Poznań	X	-
22.	Jagiellonian University in Kraków	-	X

only after finishing the second degree studies.

¹⁷ Act of 12.03.2004 on Social Assistance, Journal of Laws of 2013, item 182 as amended, Article 116, Section 1, point 1 and point 2.

No.	Name of the university	Ist degree studies	IInd degree studies
23.	The Jan Kochanowski University of Humanities and Sciences in Kielce	X	-
24.	University of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński in Warsaw	X	-
25.	Kujawy and Pomorze University in Bydgoszcz	X	-
26.	University of Łódź	X	X
27.	University of Maria Skłodowska-Curie in Lublin	X	X
28.	University of Mikołaj Kopernik in Toruń	X	X
29.	Opole University	X	-
30.	The Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow	X	-
31.	Pedagogical University of Krakow	X	X
32.	University of Rzeszów	X	-
33.	University of Szczecin	X	-
34.	Silesian University in Katowice	X	X
35.	University of Białystok	X	-
36.	University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn	X	-
37.	Warsaw University	X	-
38.	Wrocław University	X	-
39.	University of Zielona Góra	X	-
40.	Holy Cross University in Kielce	X	-
41.	Higher School of Health Education and Social Sciences in Łódź	X	-
42.	Higher School of Economics and Innovation in Lublin	X	-
43.	Higher School of Finance and Computer Science in Lodz	X	-
44.	Humanistic Higher School in Leszno	X	-
45.	The School of Higher Education in Humanities in Szczecin	X	-
46.	University of Humanities and Economics in Włocławek	X	-
47.	The College of Computer Science in Łódź	X	-
48.	Rzeszow School of Engineering and Economics	X	-
49.	Higher School of Social and Technical Sciences in Radom	X	-
50.	Higher School of Social Sciences in Lublin	X	-
51.	Janusz Korczak Pedagogical University in Warsaw	X	X
52.	Academy of Management and Administration in Opole	X	-

Source: Own elaboration.

Only few schools can offer their students to commence the second degree studies in social work thus allowing them to obtain a Master's degree. It is, moreover, still impossible to continue education in this field at the third level, i.e. to obtain a PhD, which is possible in other countries, e.g. in the neighbouring Slovakia. Social workers remain scattered in various institutions, their work experience does not enhance the image or the prestige of social services, neither are they sufficiently availed of in the process of education to social work.

2. EDUCATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN SLOVAKIA (AFTER 1989)

After 1989, Slovakia intensified its efforts to achieve independence and the Slovak Republic became an independent country on 01.01.1993. Under the new political, economic, and territorial conditions, it began gradual introduction of reforms. In 1996, Slovakia adopted a concept of reforming the social sphere, which was associated with the development of the profession of social worker (including the macro-level of social work).

Since 1991, with the creation of the School of Social Work at the Faculty of Education at the University of J.A. Komensky in Bratislava, social work developed in Slovakia in the form of a scientific discipline. In the Slovak discourse, the issue of identity and definition of social work is determined by comparison, by a referral to social pedagogy, at the same time both disciplines are perceived as independent fields of study¹⁸. A growing demand for social work as well as changes taking place in all spheres of social life resulted in the development of that discipline. Based on the act introduced in 2001, a civil servant must complete at least the first degree studies¹⁹. In result of its implementation, employees of social services and employment agencies undertook studies in institutions of higher education. They were followed by, e.g. judicial administration staff, customs offices, police officers, bank employees, private entrepreneurs, etc. Not all graduates followed the profession of social worker. Other universities formed the Departments of Social Work in the Slovak Republic (Table 3).

¹⁸ For more, see: A. Tokárová, *Sociálna práca ako vedná disciplína*, in: *Sociálna práca. Kapitoly z dejín, teórie a metodiky sociálnej práce*, ed. A. Tokárová, Akcent Print, Prešov 2003, pp. 45-72; L. Musil, *Různorodost pojetí, nejasná nabídka a kontrola výkonu „sociální práce“*, *Sociální práce/Sociálna práca* 2(2008), pp. 60-79; C. Határ, *Sociálna pedagogika, sociálna andragogika a sociálna práca. Teoretické, profesijné a vzťahové reflexie*, Česká andragogice společnost, Praha 2009; A. Tokárová, *Edukačné aspekty sociálnej práce*, *Pedagogika.SK* 3(2013)4, pp. 214-232.

¹⁹ Zákon č. 312/2001 Z.z., o štátnej službe a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov.

Table 3: A list of universities (public and non-public) that provide a degree program in the field of social work in the Slovak Republic.

No.	Name of the university(public and non-public)	Ist degree studies	IInd degree studies
1.	Prešovská univerzita v Prešove	X	X
2.	Univerzita Komenského v Bratislave	X	X
3.	Trnavská univerzita v Trnave	X	X
4.	Katolícka univerzita v Ružomberku	X	X
5.	Univerzita Konštantína Filozofa v Nitre	X	X
6.	Vysoká škola zdravotníctva a sociálnej práce sv. Alžbety	X	X
7.	Univerzita Mateja Bela v Banskej Bystrici	X	-
8.	Vysoká škola Danubius v Sládkovičove	X	X
9.	Univerzita Pavla Jozefa Šafárika v Košiciach	X	X

Source: Data gathered by E. Mydlíková in 2011, cited by T. Matulayová, B. Balogová, *Education of Social Workers in Slovakia*, in: *Social Work, Education and Postmodernity. Theory and Studies in Selected Czech, Slovak and Polish Issues*, ed. L. Musil, T. Matulayová, Technical University of Liberec, Liberec 2013, p. 101.

Appointment of cathedrals in seven public and two non-public institutions of higher education, initiation of research and intensification of training of social workers provided a stimulus for the discussion on the evolution of the scientific discipline and the profession of social worker. On 05.31.1997, in Žilina, the *Code of Professional Ethics of Social Worker* was adopted²⁰. The document was modified and updated in subsequent years.

Although, Slovak scientists consider transformation in Slovakia as completed, the constitution of social work as a profession and scientific discipline has not yet been finished. In 1998, an act on social assistance (Act No. 195/1998) was adopted. It defined the concept of social work, the requirements associated with obtaining professional qualifications in that area and, moreover, emphasized the need for improving those qualifications²¹. Legal regulations concerning social work should

²⁰ For more, see: *Etický kódex sociálnych pracovníkov Slovenskej republiky*, <www.socprac8.sk/uploads/.../Eticky_kodex%20.doc>, (accessed on: 29.07.2015); A. Mátel, *Aktualizácia etického kóde-xu sociálnych pracovníkov Slovenskej republiky – základný náčrt*, <<http://www.prohuman.sk/social-na-praca/aktualizacia-etického-kodexu-socialnych-pracovnikov-slovenskej-republiky>>, (accessed on: 29.07.2015).

²¹ Conf. T. Matulayová, B. Balogová, *Education of Social Workers in Slovakia*, in: *Social Work, Education and Postmodernity. Theory and Studies in Selected Czech, Slovak and Polish Issues*, ed.

have a positive impact on the course of the above mentioned transformation process, especially in terms of defining the profession of social worker, educational standards²², specialization and the acquired competencies.

In 2014, the previously announced act on social work and the conditions for the exercise of certain professional activities in the field of social and family affairs was adopted in the Slovak Republic. Social work within the meaning of this act, is professional activity carried out by social workers and social assistants. Professional activity is a set of work activities, which require knowledge and skills gained in institutions of higher education and confirmed by appropriate qualifications in the profession of social worker. Social work is a specialized professional activity conducted by social workers and defined by relevant regulations²³. Special procedure is a set of activities related to work, in the narrower scope of social work, provided that a person has specialist preparation, the implementation of which is related to the acquisition of knowledge and skills in the course of completing an accredited program of specialization training. Social workers and social work assistants have proper competencies and may use appropriate methods depending on the scope of the performed social work. Social work is carried out in conjunction with other disciplines (interdisciplinarity), in the field of psychology, law, medicine, education, sociology, etc.²⁴.

The Slovak study programs comprise subjects from the scope of social work (social work, record number: 776100). Individual universities provide education in the area of: applied social work; ethics of social work; charity and missionary work; charity work and social services; integrational social work; missiology, diakonia and social work; management and organization of social services; development aid and missionary work; social and missionary work; social and missionary work with the Roma community; social work with children and youth; social work with missionary and charity; counselling; work with the family; work for the Roma community; work in the Roma community; social and health care work with seniors; social work in health care; social work in public administration and social services²⁵. The introduced legislation is at some points convergent with the

L. Musil, T. Matulayová, Technical University of Liberec, Liberec 2013, p. 90; O. Botek, A. Kállay, L. Pavelek, M. Slaná, *Transformation of society, social policy and social work in Slovakia*, ERIS Web Journal 5(2014), p. 9, <http://periodika.osu.cz/eris>, (accessed on: 2.08.2015).

²² *Štandardy vzdelávania v sociálnej práci*, cited by T. Matulayová, B. Balogová, *Education of Social Workers in Slovakia*, p. 95.

²³ Napríklad zákon č. 305/2005 Z. z. o sociálnoprávnej ochrane detí a o sociálnej kuratele a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov v znení neskorších predpisov, zákon č. 448/2008 Z. z. o sociálnych službách a o zmene a doplnení zákona č. 455/1991 Zb. o živnostenskom podnikaní (živnostenský zákon) v znení neskorších predpisov v znení neskorších predpisov.

²⁴ Zákon z 9. júla 2014 o sociálnej práci a o podmienkach na výkon niektorých odborných činností v oblasti sociálnych vecí a rodiny a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov, č. 219/2014, Article 1, § 2.

²⁵ *Zoznam akreditovaných študijných programov podľa IČŠ, titulu a názvu študijného programu*, 26.02.2013, <<http://www.uips.sk/sub/uips.sk/images/PKvs/ZberUdaj/za225.pdf>>, (accessed

provisions of the Polish legislation, i.e. the legal regulations provide the definition of social work, lay emphasis on the required qualifications and on the need of their improvement, specialist preparation and professional activity, as well as on interdisciplinary preparation of social workers.

According to the Slovak regulations, social work assistants are not qualified to conduct individual practice, as opposed to social workers. Those qualifications are obtained by social workers with the completion of the second degree studies, while assistants acquire those qualifications by obtaining a diploma of the first degree studies. Independent practice in the field of social work can be carried out by a person who has: proper qualifications (documented by a diploma), three years of professional work experience, a relevant authorization, has not been convicted or found guilty of criminal offence, has legal capacity, monitoring of the supervisor, has not been deprived of the license within five years for the breach in fulfilling the obligations²⁶. The legislator took into account the issue of non-compliance with the requirement of professional qualifications by professionally active workers who completed studies in e.g. psychology, law, social services and counselling, administration, social policy, education, or do not have the appropriate level of education. The deadline for obtaining those qualifications was set for 31.12.2020²⁷. The ongoing debate on educational standards and specialties included in programs of study which is carried out with reference to the demand for certain specialists in the labour market as well as to employers' opinions, proves to be an important task and a challenge for both scientists and practitioners.

A significant role in shaping and promoting social work in Slovakia is played by a non-governmental organization, the Association of Teachers of Social Work (*Asociácia vzdelávateľov v sociálnej práci*²⁸). Its activities contribute to the introduction of positive changes in the training of social workers, professionalization of the occupation and improvement of the quality of practical activities. The first president of the Association was Š. Strieženec, who formulated a definition of social work. Strieženec organized studies and conferences participated by scientists and practitioners, initiated publishing activities or meetings with social work practitioners and, moreover, led to the creation of Chambers of Social Workers. His successor in 2006 was M. Schavel and, today, this function is performed by B. Balogová. A major contribution to the functioning of the organization and development of social work in Slovakia was made by A. Tokárová.

The Association has established cooperation with the Accreditation Committee, participated by experts, which resulted in promoting that field of study,

on 1.08.2015).

²⁶ Zákon z 9. júla 2014 o sociálnej práci a o podmienkach na výkon niektorých odborných činností v oblasti sociálnych vecí a rodiny a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov, č. 219/2014, § 3-5, 7, 36.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, § 45.

²⁸ *Asociácia vzdelávateľov v sociálnej práci*, <<http://avspsr.weebly.com/>>, (accessed on: 2.08.2015).

attracting attention to the education for social work, as well as enhanced professional advancement of social workers. The focus has been shifted towards, among others, accreditation procedures, exchange of experience in the field of education between universities, as well as to the initiative of creating an association of social workers²⁹. Schools delegate one representative to the European Association of Schools of Social Work, which represents the position of each country. For a couple of years, the Slovak organization, together with representatives of the Czech social work, participates in the issuance of an international journal³⁰, which provides a platform for the exchange of ideas, research, or discussions playing an important role in the shaping of that discipline and education of social workers.

3. CONCLUSION

The training of social workers in both countries is adapted to the needs of the labour market, which is conditioned by the needs of the society in the scope of social services, as well as by the educational policy of the states. An important role is played by associations of universities and representatives of the scientific community related to the education of social workers. Slovakian higher education prepares graduates of the first, second and third degree studies. Researchers can apply for the degree of associate professor, and professor. In Poland, despite the ongoing debate in the scientific community, social work has not yet been included among scientific disciplines. The debate addresses the question whether social work meets the requirements imposed on a scientific discipline. It seems that given the history of the formation, distinguished representatives who have made, and are still making a significant contribution to the development of scientific research, the emerging issues which are the subject of research and seeking means of practical implementation of their solutions, as well as the debate on the possible methods of research in social work, etc., it is worth taking a closer look at that important for Polish social work challenge.

²⁹ Conf. M. Schavel, *10 rokov od zalozenia občianskeho zdruzenia „Asociácia vzdelavateľov v sociálnej práci” – reflexie a podnety do ďalšej činnosti*, <<http://www.prohuman.sk/socialna-praca/10-rokov-od-zalozenia-obcianskeho-zdruzenia-asociacia-vzdelavatelov-v-socialnej-praci>>, (accessed on: 23.08.2012); M. Schavel, T. Matulayová, *Vysokoškolské vzdelávanie sociálnych pracovníkov v kontexte štátnej sociálnej a vzdelávacej politiky Slovenskej Republiky*, in: *Výzvy a trendy vo vzdelávaní v sociálnej práci*, red. B. Balogová, E. Klimentová, Prešovská univerzita, Prešov 2012, pp. 15-17. In Poland, since 1990, there is also the Polish Association of Schools of Social Work which pursues goals consistent with the Slovak organization. Its initiator and first president was E. Marynowicz-Hetka. From 2011, this position is held by A. Kotlarska-Michalska. Organizations in Poland and Slovakia associate universities, represented by representatives of various institutions.

³⁰ For more, see: *Sociální práce/Sociálna práca*, <<http://www.socialniprace.cz/>>, (accessed on: 2.08.2015).

EDUCATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN POLAND AND SLOVAKIA

Summary

The presented article aims at clarifying the situation in the field of social workers university education in Poland and Slovakia, taking into account social and political transformations in both countries. The first part of the article presents the origins of the beginning and development of social workers university education in Poland. The second part, based on an analysis of available governmental conceptual and strategic documents, clarifies the crucial influence of the state policy in the field of university education on the current state of social workers education in Slovakia. The third part, outlines a vision and the priorities as well as points to appropriate tools adopted on the level of national association of educators in the field of social work.

Keywords: social work, social worker, education, the Slovak Republic, the Republic of Poland

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EDUKACJA PRACOWNIKÓW SOCJALNYCH W POLSCE I W SŁOWACJI

Abstrakt

Celem artykułu jest ukazanie edukacji pracowników socjalnych na poziomie uniwersyteckim w Polsce i na Słowacji, w kontekście zmian społecznych i politycznych. Pierwsza część artykułu ma na celu zobrazowanie rozwoju kształcenia pracowników socjalnych w Polsce. Druga część, oparta na analizie dostępnych rządowych dokumentów strategicznych i koncepcyjnych, ma wyjaśnić ich wpływ na politykę państwa w dziedzinie szkolnictwa wyższego, w zakresie aktualnego stanu edukacji pracowników socjalnych na Słowacji. W trzeciej części ukazano wizję, priorytety i odpowiednie narzędzia na poziomie krajowym, stowarzyszenia pedagogów działających w zakresie pracy socjalnej.

Słowa kluczowe: praca socjalna, pracownik socjalny, edukacja, Republika Słowacka, Polska