

Warsaw, 16.10.2017

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The Polish Teachers' Union  
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Elżbeta Rafalska

Minister of Family, Labour and Social Policy

Dear Minister,

Karat Coalition and the Polish Teachers' Union appeal to the Minister to introduce changes in the names of the professions so that the name includes both the female and male forms. The names of professions in the female grammatical form would attract women to professions traditionally dominated by men, what would be beneficial for women as well as employers and schools, which due to the demographic decline are struggling with the lack of students in technical professions.

We see an urgent need to review the document *Classification of professions and specialties for the needs of labour market* in order to eliminate inconsistency in the nomenclature of professions and specialties. In the *Classification* introduced by the Decree of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy dated 07/08/2014, the names of the vast majority of professions are in male grammatical form and only a small percentage is in the female form. The Ministry justifies that the names of professions in female form refer only to traditionally feminised occupations. There are, however, many inconsistencies in the *Classification* resulting from the lack of clear criteria for the division into male and female professions; for example, in the professions heavily now feminized, the male names persist – there is still a teacher-man profession and not a teacher-woman, a librarian-man profession and not a librarian-woman, a hairdresser-man profession and not a hairdresser-woman, a florist-man profession and not a florist-woman, a salesman profession and not a saleswoman. In the case of traditional "female" professions when the men enter these jobs the masculine version of the job titles is introduced and exists alongside the feminine title e.g. model-woman / model-men, stewardess / steward, nurse/male nurse.

The male form of professions suggests that these are jobs intended only for men. Thus, the division into the so-called "male" and "female" professions deepens. It manifests itself in the gender based segregation of the vocational courses in schools, significant disproportions between boys and girls in vocational schools (72% of pupils are boys) and segregation of the labour market – the sectors of economy dominated by women and these dominated by men.

The feminised ones are less paid, have a lower social statute and are characterized by a surplus of employee, which means difficulties with finding a job.

One of the challenges of the present labour market in Poland is the significant demand for qualified workers, people with the specific professions both the traditional and the new ones associated with the development of modern technologies or changes in society's needs. The proposed changes would have a positive effect on the educational choices of girls at the post-primary school level and on women's choices in the case of vocational courses increasing their number in the professions in demand and consequently improving the chances of women on the labour market. We would like to remind you that the female forms of professions appeared in Poland as early as in the 19th century and were aimed at professional activation of women. The professions in the female forms have been introduced into the dictionaries of the Polish language. Their introduction to the document *Classification of professions and specialties for the needs of the labour market* would make women to have the same access to professions as men. These changes would be relatively easy to apply because often the first part of the name is common for many professions, e.g. technician-men / technician-women, assembler-men / assembler-women, operator-men/ operator-women.

We hope that the Minister will respond positively to our appeal. We declare our readiness to cooperate on changing the names of professions. At the same time, we are asking for a meeting so we can present our proposals.

Yours sincerely,

President of the Polish Teachers' Union

Sławomir Broniarz

Director of Karat Coalition

Kinga Lohmann