

THE MINISTRY OF NATIONAL EDUCATION

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Mrs Kinga Lohmann
Director of Karat Coalition

Mr Sławomir Broniarz
President of Polish Teachers' Union

Responding to your letter regarding the review of *the classification of professions and specialties for the needs of labour market* and introduction of changes in the names of professions so that they contain both male and female grammatical forms, I would like to thank you for the expressed willingness to cooperate and at the same time I explain the following.

The classification of professions and specialties for the needs of labour market is determined by a decree of the Minister for Family, Labour and Social Policy. It is a systematic list of professions and specialties on the labour market, and is applied in a job placement and vocational guidance, vocational training, data collection for determining employment and lifelong learning policies as well as conducting research, analyses, forecasts and other materials on labour market.

The Minister of National Education determines *the classification of professions in vocational education*, which includes, among others, the list of professions taught in the education system. These professions are introduced into the classification, crossed out or modified only upon application of the minister competent for a specific occupation. In *the classification of professions and specialties for the needs of the labour market*, the professions taught at school are marked with the letter "S".

In *the classification of professions in vocational education*, the names of professions are identical with the names specified in the decree of the Minister of Family, Labour and Social Policy. Most professions are in the male grammatical form, what should not, however, affects the classification of a person into a specific profession, as in the vocational education system there are no structural barriers or negative stereotypes that would prevent girls from choosing professions traditionally considered as the "male" ones or would prevent boys from choosing professions commonly perceived as the "female" ones. There are also no legal obstacles to write on the diploma confirming the professional qualifications, the name of the profession, in which the qualifications were confirmed, in the form that would reflect gender of the person who obtained the diploma. For example, regardless of female or male grammatical form of the profession included in the classification of professions in vocational education, a man who learned the profession of a dental women-assistant can obtain an entry on the diploma of a dental man-assistant.

Public schools prepare all students to choose their professional path in the same way, regardless of their gender. Both boys and girls starting the next stage of education have the opportunity to use their own predispositions and interests. The vocational education system in Poland provides an equal access to education for both genders. Only minor restrictions for girls result from the provisions of the Regulation of the Council of Ministers regarding the list of work prohibited for adolescents. The

regulation permits the adolescents to do the certain types of prohibited works if this is necessary for vocational training and if these works are included in the apprenticeship training programs. For some professions, that permission does not apply to girls. This situation is not discrimination but it aims at protecting girls (women) from performing works that are particularly onerous or detrimental to their health.

Bearing in mind how important are the development of vocational education in Poland and its popularization among young people, the Ministry of National Education is taking active steps to promote it and adapt it to the challenges of modern times. These activities are manifested by inviting the representatives of various environments - employers, trade unions, representatives of schools and the other interested - to consult changes in vocational education, also in terms of the names of professions. Therefore, the vocational seminars are organized to discuss the most important aspects of vocational education in the industries. These seminars are an opportunity to consult changes in vocational education that the Ministry plans to introduce in close cooperation with the employers so as to best adapt vocational education to the modern labour market. During the previous seminars (4 seminars out of 12 have already taken place), the participants did not report the need to adjust the names of professions to the gender of people who learn these professions.

The seminars will be held until January 2018. A detailed schedule of the seminars with a list of professions for the given industry as well as the links to register for a seminar are available on the Ministry's homepage titled "A series of vocational seminars - we invite you to participate."

Yours sincerely,

Marzena Machałek

Secretary of State