

Higher Education in Poland: The Past, Present and Future

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Higher Education in Poland Before Transition

1. The role of the state:

- The state as the owner of all (except one) universities and colleges
- The state as an omnipotent regulator - no academic freedom and autonomy

2. The enrolment rate in higher education and the level of adult education

- Contradiction between official propaganda („Poland: country of people participating in education”) and reality regarding higher education: 1990/1991 enrolment rate (gross): **12,9%** ; percentage of population aged 20 and more with higher education (1988): **7,2%!!!**

The State and its Policy Regarding Higher Education Since 1989: The First Stage - the 90's of 20th Century

1. **The need for the fast development of higher education (arguments for):**
 1. Knowledge based economy
 2. Demography and the situation in the labour market
2. **Main barrier:** Limited budgetary funds
3. **Solution:** Legislative and institutional changes:
 1. Low barriers to entry for new institutions
 2. Acceptance of joint use of human capital by public and non-public institutions
 3. Development of the non-public sector
 4. Development of part-time education
 5. Higher education as a non-free of charge good for the significant proportion of students
4. **Results:** very fast growth in the number of institutions: **92** (1988/1989) - **213**(1996/1997) and students: : **356,4** thousand (1988/1989) - **913,9** thousand (1996/1997)
5. **Problem:** quality of education

The State and its Policy Regarding Higher Education Since 1989: The Second Stage – The First Decade of the 21st Century:

1. Goal: Improve the quality of education by increasing the strength of the state. The state as the final guarantor of quality of higher education. Main elements of the system:

1. State diplomas
2. State education standards
3. State list of fields of education
4. State Accreditation Commission
5. Introduction of the Bologna System

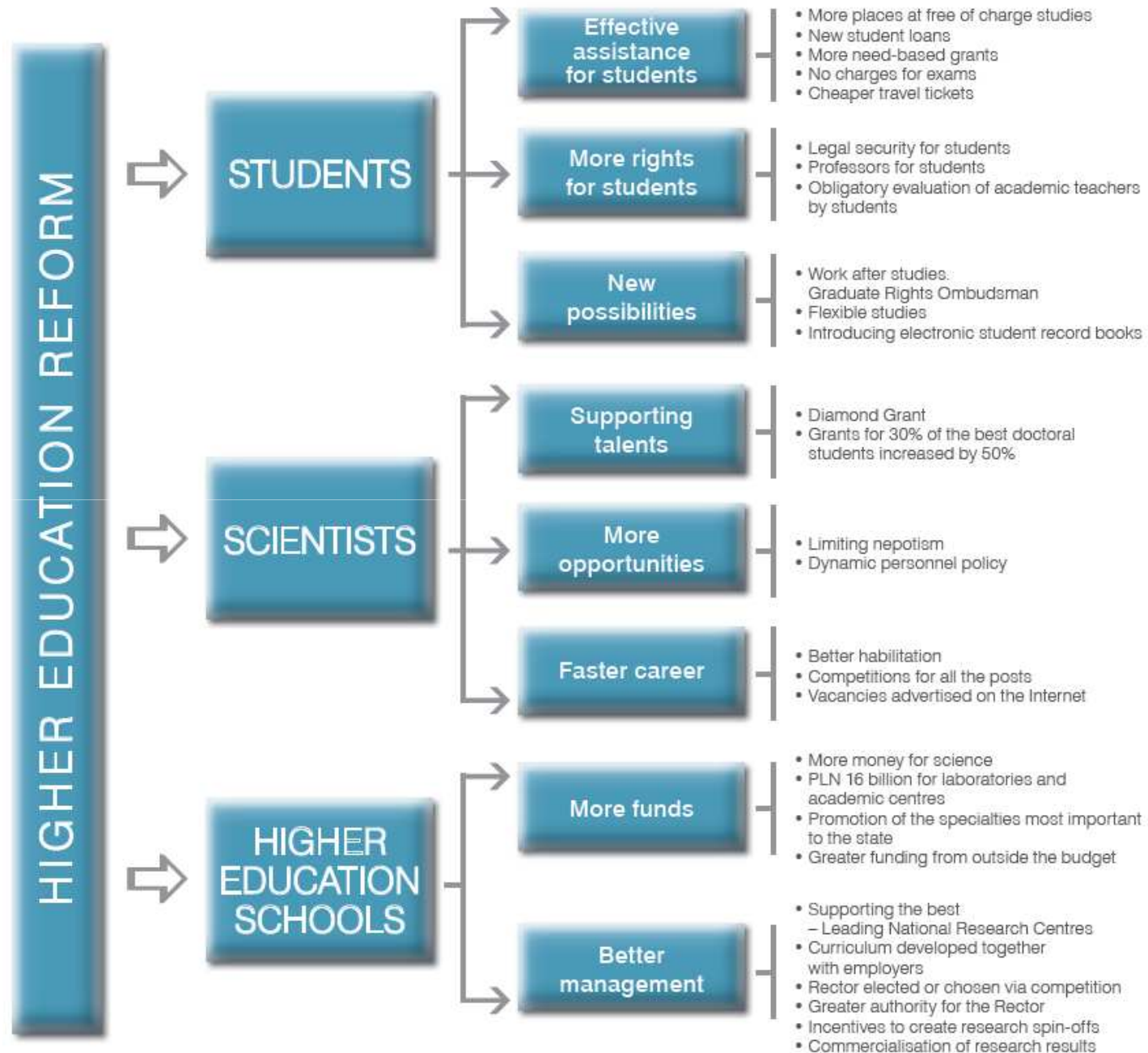
2. Problems:

1. Contradiction between the structure of education (from the perspective of areas of education) and labour market: fast development of education in social sciences and humanities as well as an insufficient number of students in technical sciences (2009/2010: **61,8%** of students studying social sciences and humanities).
2. Poland's world position in higher education

The State and its Policy Regarding Higher Education Since 1989: Third Stage - Reforms of Science and Higher Education in Poland 2010/2011

- **Reform goals:** quality improvement and innovation growth, improvement of Poland's world position in higher education and science, greater degree of satisfaction of labour market demand
- **Main ideas:** competition (institutions and people), internationalisation, economisation, change of the state's role (curator, regulator and verifier and not guarantor and protector)
- **Instruments:** legislative changes (including financial regulations) and institutional changes (e.g. Scientific Entities Evaluation Committee)

Higher education reform in Poland



Source:
Ministry of
Higher
Education
and
Science

Final Remarks

1. Higher education in Poland is entering a new faze of development:

1. Less candidates for enrolment
2. Too many institutions especially in the non-public sector
3. Less state guarantees and regulations (no more state diplomas and no more state list of fields of education)
4. More academic autonomy but with more responsibility and higher risk
5. Limited possibilities for the joint use of human capital by different institutions
6. More links with different stakeholders (e.g. alumni & employers)
7. More competition also from abroad

2. Some dilemmas and challenges facing the future

1. How to reconcile quality of education and quantity of enrolment?
2. How to reconcile exclusivity and mass education?
3. How to ensure long term employability and not only short term fulfilment of job market?

Higher (Tertiary) Education in Poland 1989 – 2010: Key Data

Specification	Academic year	
	1988/1989	2009/2010
Number of students (in thous):	356,4	1900,0
of which in:		
Public institutions (%)	More than 99	Approx. 66
Non-public institutions (%)	Less than 1	Approx. 34
Full-time (%)	76,5	49,4 (in non-public sector less than 20)
Graduates (in thous)	50,0	439,7*
of which graduates of full-time programmes (%)	75,1	46,0
Institutions (all)	92	470
Non-public	1	338
Enrolment rate (gross) (%)	12,9**	53,7

*2008/2009, **1990/1991

Source: GUS

Thank you for your attention !

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