

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LABOUR MARKET

Nowadays, at globalization times numerous fears in various countries have been observed such as inflation, high unemployment level, ecological degradation, migration as well as loss of social values and ties. Economic processes resulting from phenomenon of globalisation are followed by numerous changes, including ones on the labour market, causing break of social bonds by growing unemployment. Societies in low and middle developed countries as Poland expect globalisation with human face, one which by changing the labour market shall contribute to improve the level of life for the whole of society. Such expectations induce an analysis of changes occurring on the labour market in globalisation conditions.

Results of the global economic crisis and the demographic situation related to ageing societies cause a need to implement solutions on the labour market which shall be both flexible and protective. Processes occurring on the labour market strongly impact the feeling of stability and welfare of households. The situation in this sector of the economy has been the subject of many political debates, media discussions and academic discourses. Discussions on the labour market reveal authentic dilemmas related to making a choice between flexibility and safety of citizens. Changes occurring in still more unpredictable environment, which on one hand constitute a basic source of risk for stability of labour markets and economies, on the other hand enforce taking measures to reduce any negative impact of those processes upon economic entities by working out mechanisms and tools which can increase their adaptive skills to changes.

Models for solving labour market problems known in theory do not fully match the situation and challenges of the modern economy. Thinking in categories of sustainable and stable growth requires an approach which often approves various needs of particular members of the labour market in different fields of activities.

Subordination of employers' interests to those of employees', or a reverse situation, though may bring short-term particular benefits for one party of an employment relation is not, as it may seem, an optimal solution in a broader perspective and long-term run. That is the spirit of flexicurity which is gaining still higher popularity in European states. In the European Union, the *flexicurity* approach is treated as one of the basic instruments for realisation of the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy and adapting the European social model to the common globalisation challenges. It should be noted that in order to identify a best strategy approved within the flexicurity model and to negotiate an appropriate pack of means, a nation-wide dialogue among representatives of employers, employees, the government and other entities is necessary. Such a dialogue is also necessary during the phase of implementation of a given model and in order to introduce any potential corrections. Involvement of social partners should ensure gaining benefits from using

the flexicurity model by all participants on the labour market. In a social dialogue, the key issue is to prepare social partners to take responsibility for changes to the labour market implemented due to a need to balance flexibility and security. It should be remembered that the EU states are on various levels of progress in implementing the flexicurity model. Poland, as an EU member state, within the European Employment Strategy and the Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth is obliged to implement the flexicurity concept i.e. to strive for increasing flexibility and security on the labour market. Flexibility should mean smooth «transitions» in one's professional life, ending the period of education, commencing professional life, changing jobs, starting a job after a period of unemployment or lack of employment, retirement. Security is understood not as a permanent place of work but as certainty of employment. Such perceived security is achieved through equipping people with appropriate skills which should help them to find new jobs.

To build a sustainable future, Europe must now go beyond the horizon of short-term objectives. We should enter the path of development and then stay on that road. That is the objective for the Europe 2020 Strategy. Its assumptions are more jobs and a higher standard of life. The strategy shows that Europe may develop in an intelligent and sustainable manner, support social inclusion, find various methods to create new jobs and define a direction for its growth.

Implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy is facilitated by detailed goals. For the labour market, two Programmes are of importance. One of them is «Programme for new skills and employment». It is devoted to modernisation of labour markets and strengthening citizens' position by life-long development of qualifications in order to increase the professional activity ratio and better adaptation of supply to demand on the labour market, also by mobility of the labour force. Another programme is «European programme for fighting poverty» which aims at providing social and territorial coherence so that benefits from economic growth and employment are widely accessible and people who are poor and socially excluded could lead a decent life and actively take part in social life.

According to a proposal by the European Commission, one of the highest priorities in the Europe 2020 Strategy should be shaping human resources toward development of new qualifications on the labour market and their better adaptation to the knowledge-based economy. Supporting the flexicurity model, which joins flexibility of the labour markets with securing minimum social standards, has been supplemented in the Strategy with a demand to promote employment mobility, also among particular labour markets in Europe.

The Europe 2020 Strategy should primarily support employment. It recommends broader use of self-employment together with reduction of the number of regulatory acts and their unification on the European scale. Another important demand is integration of those social groups on the labour markets which are most heavily impacted by the unemployment issue. They include youth, women and immigrants.

Summing up, both in Europe and in Poland, the process of making labour markets more flexible is progressing, which is evidenced by spreading untypical forms of employment which partially supplement and partially replace typical

employment (such as full-time employment on the basis of a permanent employment contract). This phenomenon includes both low-qualified staff and managerial level personnel. It may be stated that the flexicurity policy is a concept of looking for a balance between flexibility of the labour market, increasing competitiveness of companies and the entire economy and social security of the staff (including the unemployed). The policy is reflected in EU documents (e.g. the Europe 2020 Strategy) which stress the need to popularise untypical forms of employment across Europe with simultaneous maximally possible social protection for «untypical employees» and using flexible forms of employment to increase the economic activity level of groups which are marginalised on the labour market. The flexicurity concept assumes a need to agree positions of trade unions and employers' organisations so that flexicurity solutions beneficial for and approved by the both parties could be popularised.

References:

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE POLITICS OF THE BRITISH NEW LABOUR PARTY¹

A conscious appeal to an axiological system, which supposed to express the needs and interests of modern society, was a characteristic feature of the *New Labour's* doctrine. With great conviction, Tony Blair emphasized that politics was a matter of values. The main purpose of the British socialist project was to undertake a thorough modernization of the state according to the values that were founded in the concept of «third way». The values which appealed to social, economic, and ecological order occupied a special place. Thus the idea of sustainable development had a meaningful role in Blair's policy.

¹ This is the summary of my recent book: A. Płachciak, *Rozwój zrównoważony w polityce brytyjskiej Nowej Partii Pracy*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego we Wrocławiu, Wrocław 2015, pp. 276.