

**SPATIAL DIVERSIFICATION  
OF THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE BY PROVINCE  
AND DISTRICT IN POLAND BETWEEN 2008 AND 2013**

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**Key words:** unemployment, unemployment rate, province, district.

**A b s t r a c t**

One of the characteristic features of unemployment in Poland is a strong spatial diversification of that phenomenon. The main objective of this paper is to illustrate changes in the unemployment rate in provinces as well as (urban and rural) districts between 2008 and 2013. A thorough analysis has confirmed a dramatic difference in the intensity of unemployment in the individual districts of the country. The unemployment rate in urban districts in 2013 differed by over 24 percentage points, while in rural districts in the analysed period that spread amounted to 30%. The analysis shows that the growth of the unemployment rate in Poland was profoundly affected by the global economic crisis and other factors. The research has confirmed that unemployment is a major social problem which affects all regions of the country to a varying extent.

**PRZESTRZENNE ZRÓŻNICOWANIE STOPY BEZROBOCIA W POLSCE  
W LATACH 2008–2013 WEDŁUG WOJEWÓDZTW I POWIATÓW**

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**Słowa kluczowe:** bezrobocie, stopa bezrobocia, województwo, powiat.

**A b s t r a c t**

Jedną z cech bezrobocia w Polsce jest silne zróżnicowanie przestrzenne tego zjawiska. Głównym celem referatu jest ukazanie zmian stopy bezrobocia w skali województw i powiatów (grodzkich oraz ziemskich) w latach 2008-2013. Wnikliwa analiza potwierdziła ogromną różnicę nasilenia zjawiska bezrobocia w poszczególnych powiatach kraju. Rozpiętość stopy bezrobocia w powiatach miejskich

wynosiła w 2013 roku ponad 24 punkty procentowe. W powiatach ziemskich natomiast w okresie analizy różnica wynosiła ponad 30%. Z analizy wynika, że światowy kryzys gospodarczy i inne czynniki miały ogromny wpływ na wzrost stopy bezrobocia w Polsce. Badania potwierdziły, że bezrobocie jest ogromnym problemem społecznym, który z różnym nasileniem dotyka wszystkie regiony kraju.

## Introduction

In 1989, the processes of adaptation of our economy to the market system was launched which brought about, among other things, a phenomenon that was new to the Polish society and had particularly severe economic and social consequences, namely open unemployment.

The phenomenon of unemployment is not a new problem; it was registered in the countries of Western Europe earlier. Until the 1990s it referred to the capitalist system. However, in Poland, in the socialist system, it was essential to create a structural balance between vacancies and those in search for employment. According to Latuch, there were periodic discrepancies but they were never of mass character (LATUCH 1985, p. 299). During the PRL (Polish People's Republic) period, unemployment existed in at least two forms (frictional and concealed one), however, it was hidden behind the so-called full employment policy, which, to some extent, was social in nature. But the political transformation and economic restructuring resulted in making the structure and size of employment more realistic. Therefore, since the nineties of the 20th century unemployment has constituted one of the most essential problems of the Polish economy. It consists in the fact that a proportion of population able to work and declaring willingness to take up work fails to find a job. So unemployment is a consequence of a failure to adjust the supply and demand on the labour market.

Unemployment is a social phenomenon whose effects are painful for the unemployed person and their family. From the psychological perspective, it is a phenomenon which consists in a loss of income, loss of voluntary exchange of privileges and obligations, loss of institutional dependency and loss of contractual work. It brings the risk of social exclusion, and constitutes a threat to the health of those affected (KOWALCZYK 2008, p. 22).

Unemployment is one of the largest social problems not only in Poland; it also affects most countries in Europe. Poland is in the top ten of the EU countries in terms of the size of the unemployment rate. In most European countries the unemployment rate grew even more in the last few years, and this was mainly due to the financial and economic crisis, low demand on the labour market and the imbalance between supply and demand for various skills (*Skills mismatch: more than meets the eye* 2014). As described by

Kwiatkowski, the fact that unemployment is such a crucial problem is a consequence of economic, social and political importance of this phenomenon. Unemployment not only affects the standard of living of the population and the dynamics of the economic development, but it also substantially determines the public mood and popularity of the government (KWIATKOWSKI 2005, p. 7). Due to all these factors unemployment is of interest to the representatives of various scientific disciplines, state government and local government institutions, as well as non-government organizations. Various conclusions are formulated, programmes implemented and actions taken to limit the size of this phenomenon. Despite all these efforts, unemployment is consistently at a too high level and therefore it constantly attracts attention of many authors and a number of scientific disciplines. That is why so much has been written about the various aspects of unemployment. However, the works written do not exhaust any of the analysed aspects of this phenomenon, as the size and structure of unemployment, as well as certain features shared by the unemployed, show considerable variability in time and space.

Unemployment is analysed by means of various measures. One of the commonly used indicators is the unemployment rate. Its great advantage is the fact that it facilitates comparative analysis from two perspectives: time and space.

The discussion shows that unemployment is quite a complex issue. It cannot be described in a comprehensive manner in the limited scope of the paper. The authors had to, therefore, make a selection of specific issues and time frames. They decided to present a summary analysis of the unemployment rate as a synthetic indicator of this phenomenon, and the dynamics of changes which it undergoes in time and specific spatial systems.

Hence, the basic aim of the paper is to show changes in the unemployment rate from June 2008 to December 2013, and disclose provinces and districts with extreme values of the unemployment rate. In addition, an attempt was made to establish a potential sustainability of indicators in the different territorial units of the country. Due to the limited scope of the study, only selected half-yearly time frames were applied, which showed the indicator level during a period of intervention and public works (June) carried out as part of subsidized employment, and after their completion (December).

At the same time, the authors captured the period when the unemployment rate was relatively low, at less than 10%, and then its increase in subsequent months, quarters and years (*Bezrobocie rejestrowane...* 2011, p. 30). These values were compared against changes in the scale of individual provinces and districts. A little more attention was paid to the situation in the districts of Western Pomerania. A variety of information sources, studies and publications were used as shown in the references appearing at the end of the paper.

However, the studies of the Central Statistical Office of Poland, especially in the series entitled *Bezrobocie rejestrowane* [Registered Unemployment], were of fundamental importance, as they included necessary data for the specific periods in the analysis. They enabled the authors to apply the observation method, comparative analysis and descriptive statistics which demonstrate quite considerable changes in the unemployment level occurring in a specified period of time and in individual spatial units.

### **Changes in the unemployment rate in provinces**

The performance of comparative analysis is facilitated by the detailed statistical data contained in the tables (Tab. 1, Tab. 2). When analysing information about the country, it can be seen that the value of the indicator in June each year is smaller than that at the end of the year. A similar trend can be observed for the unemployment rates in most provinces. An exception from this rule can be noticed only in the Łódź, Mazovia, Pomerania and Silesia Provinces, and this only in 2008. In the subsequent years all provinces follow the national trend (Tab. 1).

It is worth emphasising that the indicators provided for June and December do not represent extreme values at all. The extreme values of the unemployment rate were usually recorded in other months, for example, in 2010 the maximum value was noted in February (13.2%), while the minimum value – in August (11.4%) (*Bezrobocie rejestrowane... 2011*, p. 30). However, the indicators recorded in June and December are similar.

The analysis shows that the number of the unemployed correlates with the economic situation of the region (Tab. 2). The lowest unemployment rate can be found in the Wielkopolska, Małopolska, Mazovia and Silesia Provinces. These regions are relatively best developed economically, with an absorbent and diversified labour market. The highest unemployment rate, on the other hand, was found in the Warmia-Mazuria, West Pomerania, Kujawy-Pomerania and Lubskie Provinces. These are relatively less developed regions, where State Agricultural Farms and collectivized agriculture prevailed until the 1990s. It should be added that labour resources in these regions are usually characterized by a relatively lower level of education and quite limited professional qualifications. A worrying aspect, however, is the fact that these people are often not interested in taking up a job; they prefer social assistance from the state. What is also alarming is that such an attitude of the parents is often inherited by the next generation.

Table 1

Changes in the unemployment rate by province

Description	June 2008	Dec. 2008	June 2009	Dec. 2009	June 2010	Dec. 2010	June 2013	Dec. 2013
Poland	9.4	9.5	10.6	11.9	11.7	12.3	13.2	13.4
Lower Silesia Province	9.8	10.2	11.3	12.5	12.7	13.0	13.2	13.2
Kujawy-Pomerania Province	13.0	13.4	14.3	15.8	15.5	16.6	17.7	18.1
Lublin Province	11.0	11.3	11.5	12.8	12.1	13.6	13.9	14.4
Lubuskie Province	11.5	12.4	14.4	15.9	15.2	15.6	15.4	15.7
Łódź Province	9.6	9.2	10.4	11.6	11.9	12.1	14.1	14.1
Małopolska Province	7.3	7.6	8.6	9.7	9.6	10.4	11.4	11.6
Mazovia Province	7.6	7.3	8.1	9.0	9.0	9.4	11.0	11.0
Opole Province	9.5	9.9	11.0	12.6	12.4	13.1	14.0	14.3
Podkarpackie Province	12.6	13.1	14.0	15.5	15.0	15.8	15.6	16.4
Podlasie Province	9.1	9.8	10.9	12.6	12.2	13.2	14.6	15.1
Pomerania Province	8.7	8.4	10.0	12.0	11.8	12.2	13.2	13.3
Silesia Province	7.3	6.9	8.2	9.2	9.6	9.9	11.2	11.2
Świętokrzyskie Province	13.4	13.9	13.8	14.7	14.5	14.7	15.6	16.5
Warmia-Mazuria Province	15.7	16.8	17.8	20.2	18.8	20.0	20.4	21.7
Wielkopolska Province	6.2	6.4	7.8	9.1	8.9	9.2	9.6	9.6
West Pomerania Province	13.2	13.4	14.1	16.5	15.9	17.4	17.2	18.0

Source: *Bezrobocie rejestrowane. I-IV kwartał 2008* (2009, p. 45), *Bezrobocie rejestrowane. I-IV kwartał 2009* (2010, p. 45), *Bezrobocie rejestrowane. I-IV kwartał 2010* (2011, p. 45), *Bezrobocie rejestrowane. I-IV kwartał 2013* (2014, p. 47).

Also salient is the fact that spatial configuration of the unemployment scale is quite stable. The first place is invariably occupied by the Warmia-Mazuria Province, while the second place usually belongs to the Western Pomerania Province. Less frequently the second position is taken by the Świętokrzyskie or Lubuskie Provinces, and the third place is usually held by the Kujawy-Pomerania Province.

### Diversification of the unemployment rate in urban districts

There is a widespread perception that, as a rule, in cities with district rights unemployment is at a considerably lower level than in other cities. In order to confirm or reject that proposition the entire set of districts (380 administrative units) was divided into urban (66 districts) and rural (country) ones (314 districts) and analysed. In both groups of districts several administrative units with the lowest and the highest level of the unemployment rate were separated and subjected to a more detailed comparative analysis.

Table 2

Provinces with the lowest and the highest unemployment rate

June 2008	Dec. 2008	June 2009	Dec. 2009	June 2010	Dec. 2010	June 2013	Dec. 2013
Provinces with the lowest unemployment rate							
Wielkopolska Province 6.2	Wielkopolska Province 6.4	Wielkopolska Province 7.8	Mazovia Province 9.0	Wielkopolska Province 8.9	Wielkopolska Province 9.2	Wielkopolska Province 9.6	Wielkopolska Province 9.6
Małopolska Province 7.3	Silesia Province 6.9	Mazovia Province 8.1	Wielkopolska Province 9.1	Mazovia Province 9.0	Mazovia Province 9.4	Mazovia Province 11.0	Mazovia Province 11.0
Silesia Province 7.3	Mazovia Province 7.3	Silesia Province 8.2	Silesia Province 9.2	Silesia Province 9.6	Silesia Province 9.9	Silesia Province 11.2	Silesia Province 11.2
Provinces with the highest unemployment rate							
Warmia-Mazuria Province 15.7	Warmia-Mazuria Province 16.8	Warmia-Mazuria Province 17.8	Warmia-Mazuria Province 20.2	Warmia-Mazuria Province 18.2	Warmia-Mazuria Province 20.0	Warmia-Mazuria Province 20.4	Warmia-Mazuria Province 21.7
Świętokrzyskie Province 13.4	Świętokrzyskie Province 13.9	Lubuskie Province 14.4	West Pomerania Province 16.5	West Pomerania Province 15.9	West Pomerania Province 17.4	Kujawy-Pomerania Province 17.7	Kujawy-Pomerania Province 18.1
West Pomerania Province 13.2	Kujawy-Pomerania Province 13.4	Kujawy-Pomerania Province 14.3	Lubuskie Province 15.9	Kujawy-Pomerania Province 15.5	Kujawy-Pomerania Province 16.6	West Pomerania Province 17.2	West Pomerania Province 18.0

Source: see Table 1.

Table 3

Cities with district rights with the lowest and the highest unemployment rate

June 2008	Dec. 2008	June 2009	Dec. 2009	June 2010	Dec. 2010	June 2013	Dec. 2013
urban districts with <b>the lowest</b> unemployment rate							
Sopot 1.6	Poznań 1.7	Poznań 2.4	the capital city of Warsaw 2.8	Poznań 3.3	the capital city of Warsaw 3.4	Poznań 4.4	Poznań 4.1
Poznań 1.7	Katowice 1.9	Sopot 2.4	Poznań 3.2	the capital city of Warsaw 3.4	Poznań 3.5	Sopot 4.7	the capital city of Warsaw 3.4
Gdynia 1.8	Sopot 1.9	the capital city of Warsaw 2.4	Sopot 3.3	Katowice 3.5	Sopot 3.8	the capital city of Warsaw 4.8	Sopot 4.9
Katowice 2.1	the capital city of Warsaw 1.9	Katowice 2.6	Katowice 3.3	Sopot 3.6	Katowice 3.8	Katowice 5.4	Katowice 5.4
urban districts with <b>the highest</b> unemployment rate							
Radom 20.1	Radom 19.7	Grudziądz 20.7	Grudziądz 22.4	Grudziądz 21.7	Radom 22.5	Złotoryja 26.4	Złotoryja 28.3
Grudziądz 17.8	Grudziądz 17.8	Radom 20.3	Radom 21.5	Radom 20.8	Grudziądz 20.8	Radom 22.7	Radom 22.6
Przemysł 16.3	Przemysł 16.3	Przemysł 17.9	Przemysł 19.4	Przemysł 19.4	Przemysł 19.2	Grudziądz 21.9	Grudziądz 20.7
Chełm 15.1	Chełm 14.3	Włocławek 15.4	Włocławek 17.3	Włocławek 17.7	Włocławek 18.7	Bytom 20.5	Bytom 20.7

Source: *Bezrobocie rejestrowane. I-IV kwartał 2008* (2009, p. 75–84), *Bezrobocie rejestrowane. I-IV kwartał 2009* (2010, p. 75–84), *Bezrobocie rejestrowane. I-IV kwartał 2010* (2011, p. 75–84), *Bezrobocie rejestrowane. I-IV kwartał 2013* (2014, p. 78–87).

In this subchapter the urban districts were analysed and the data necessary for the analysis were presented in Table 3. The detailed analyses show that relatively lowest values of the unemployment rate can be found in urban districts. In 2010 they exceeded 3% (Poznań, the capital city of Warsaw), and earlier, e.g. in 2008, they did not even reach 2% (Sopot, Poznań). Also in 2013 in many other cities with district rights they are relatively low and amount to 4-5%.

However, at the same time there is a group of urban districts where the unemployment rate exceeds 20%. These are primarily Radom and Grudziądz (and, lately, also Bytom and Złotoryja), and they take the first or second place interchangeably. Other cities that appear in this group of districts, such as Przemyśl and Włocławek (and earlier also Chełm) do not reach the level of 20% any more. So generally it can be assumed that the number of districts of this kind is relatively small, and the rates recorded there do not belong to the highest ones (as compared with rural districts).

### **Changes in the unemployment rate in rural districts**

In this group of territorial division units one can notice a more significant diversification of the unemployment rate. On the one hand, even in this set we can see districts with a very low value of this indicator, fluctuating around just under 4% or only slightly exceeding 5%. This group includes: the poznański and bieruńsko-łężyński districts in the Silesia Province, as well as the wrocławski district in the Lower Silesia Province (Tab. 4). Earlier, e.g. in 2008, this group of units included also the kępiński, pszczyński, gdański, grodziski, nowotomyski, wolsztyński and wrocławski districts. It is worth adding here that in 2008 the unemployment rate in the poznański district was below 2%.

On the other hand, in this set of territorial units there are districts with a very high unemployment rate, exceeding 30%. At the end of 2010, this group included: the szydlowiecki district in the Mazovia Province and as many as three districts in the Warmia-Mazuria Province, i.e. the piski, bartoszycki and braniewski districts. A similar value of the indicator, exceeding 29%, was shown in two more districts: the radomski district (29.6%) in the Mazovia Province and the białogardzki district in the West Pomerania Province (29.4%). The aforementioned group of units was joined in 2009 by the łobeski and pyrzycki districts. With only minor exceptions (the szydlowiecki district), all the other districts with the highest unemployment rate are located in the Warmia-Mazuria and West Pomerania Provinces. As you can remember, these are typical post State Farm regions. One should note that in 2013 the value exceeding 30% was also shown by the rates for the nowodworski and wałbrzyski districts.

Table 4  
Rural districts with the lowest and the highest unemployment rate

June 2008	Dec. 2008	June 2009	Dec. 2009	June 2010	Dec. 2010	June 2013	Dec. 2013
Rural districts with the lowest unemployment rate							
Poznański 1.7	poznański 1.8	poznański 2.5	poznański 3.5	poznański 3.7	poznański 3.6	poznański 4.8	poznański 4.6
Kępiński 2.7	bieruńsko- -łędzkiński 3.1	bieruńsko- -łędzkiński 4.0	kępiński 4.5	bieruńsko- -łędzkiński 4.7	bieruńsko- -łędzkiński 5.1	wrocławski 5.4	kępiński 5.1
Pszczyński 3.8	kępiński 3.1	warszawski zachodni 4.3	bieruńsko- -łędzkiński 4.6	kępiński 5.3	wrocławski 5.3	kępiński 5.6	wrocławski 5.3
Gdański 4	wrocławski 3.6	kępiński 4.5	wrocławski 5.0	wrocławski 5.4	kępiński 5.3	bieruńsko- -łędzkiński 6.0	wolsztyński 5.8
Rural districts with the highest unemployment rate							
Szydłowiecki 30.2	szydłowiecki 31.2	bartoszycki 32.4	szydłowiecki 35.3	szydłowiecki 33.7	szydłowiecki 35.1	szydłowiecki 37.3	szydłowiecki 38.9
Bartoszycki 29.0	bartoszycki 30.9	szydłowiecki 31.2	bartoszycki 33.8	piski 30.1	piski 31.5	wałbrzyski 31.6	piski 32.7
Braniewski 28.9	braniewski 29.5	braniewski 28.9	braniewski 32.9	bartoszycki 30.0	bartoszycki 31.0	piski 30.2	wałbrzyski 32.0
Białogardzki 28.1	białogardzki 28.4	piski 27.1	łobeski 30.5	radomski 28.3	braniewski 30.9	kętrzyński 28.1	nowodworski 30.7

Source: see Table 3.

## **Diversification of the unemployment rate in the districts of the West Pomerania Province**

The authors' place of residence gave rise to the fact that slightly more attention has been paid to the unemployment level in West Pomerania. It is worth noting already at the beginning of this subchapter that in this area there are no districts (either urban or rural) included among the units with the lowest indices, on the contrary, the West Pomerania Province has second highest unemployment rate in the country, after the Warmia-Mazuria Province.

A relatively low unemployment level can only be observed in urban districts and in the kołobrzegi district. However, at the end of 2010, a relatively lower value was recorded only in the urban district of Szczecin, although it was close to 10% (precisely 9.6% – Table 5). In all other districts, both urban and rural ones, the unemployment rate exceeded 10%. In December 2013, not even one district had the rate of below 10%.

Relatively lowest unemployment rate was recorded in the urban districts of Szczecin and Świnoujście. In most cases, the city of Koszalin shares the third or the fourth place interchangeably with the kołobrzegi district, although at the end of 2010, it took the second position, and in 2013 – the third.

Among the rural districts (with the exception of the kołobrzegi district) the lowest unemployment rate was achieved by the following districts: myśliborski (16.4%), policki (17.3%), goleniowski (18.5%), walecki (19.2%) and stargardzki (19.9%). These are, however, not substantial differences as compared with the other territorial units, although at the end of 2010 all other districts of the West Pomerania Province showed an unemployment rate of above 20%. Similar values were recorded for the indices at the end of 2013.

The least favourable results are usually found in the białogardzki, łobeski, choszczeński and pyrzycki districts. Moreover, these districts belong to the group of districts with the highest unemployment rate in the country. This disgraceful list includes: the drawski, szczecinecki and świdwiński districts. Not much better results have been recorded in the case of (not included in Table 5) kamieński (26.3%), koszaliński (25.6%) and gryficki (24.4%) districts. Slightly better results were obtained at the end of 2010 by the sławieński (21.4%) and gryfiński (21.9%) districts, and in 2013 by the goleniowski and policki districts.

Most generally, it can be said that the unemployment situation in the West Pomerania Province, like in the Warmia-Mazuria Province, is unfavourable. The analyses conducted prove that the West Pomerania Province has a great social capital which has not been utilised. Therefore, the main goal of the economic policy of the state and of the local authorities should be to increase

Table 5  
Districts of the West Pomerania Province with the lowest and the highest unemployment rate

June 2008	Dec. 2008	June 2009	Dec. 2009	June 2010	Dec. 2010	June 2013	Dec. 2013
Districts with the lowest unemployment rate							
The city of Szczecin 4.5	the city of Szczecin 4.2	the city of Szczecin 6.4	the city of Szczecin 8.1	the city of Świnoujście 6.7	the city of Szczecin 9.6	the city of Świnoujście 8.7	the city of Świnoujście 10.6
The city of Świnoujście 7.2	the city of Świnoujście 8.1	the city of Świnoujście 6.9	the city of Świnoujście 9.8	the city of Szczecin 9.4	the city of Koszalin 10.7	kołobrzesci 10.8	the city of Szczecin 10.6
Kołobrzesci 8.0	the city of Koszalin 8.2	kołobrzesci 8.5	the city of Koszalin 9.9	kołobrzesci 9.7	the city of Świnoujście 11.2	the city of Szczecin 11.1	the city of Koszalin 12.2
The city of Koszalin 9.0	kołobrzesci 9.6	the city of Koszalin 8.7	kołobrzesci 11.0	the city of Koszalin 10.5	kołobrzesci 11.9	the city of Koszalin 12.4	kołobrzesci 13.0
Districts with the highest unemployment rate							
Białogardzki 28.1	białogardzki 28.4	białogardzki 26.7	łobeski 30.3	łobeski 25.4	białogardzki 29.4	białogardzki 28.0	białogardzki 29.6
Łobeski 24.1	łobeski 23.9	choszczeński 23.9	choszczeński 27.9	pyrzycki 25.3	łobeski 28.3	łobeski 27.4	koszaliński 28.7
Choszczeński 22.5	szczecinecki 23.3	drawski 23.3	białogardzki 27.9	choszczeński 24.9	pyrzycki 27.2	choszczeński 26.6	choszczeński 28.7
Choszczeński 22.5	świdwiński 23.2	szczecinecki 22.9	pyrzycki 26.9	drawski 24.7	świdwiński 27.1	koszaliński 26.2	pyrzycki 28.0

Source: *Bezrobocie rejestrowane. I-IV kwartał 2008* (2009, p. 84), *Bezrobocie rejestrowane. I-IV kwartał 2009* (2010, p. 84), *Bezrobocie rejestrowane. I-IV kwartał 2010* (2011, p. 84), *Bezrobocie rejestrowane. I-IV kwartał 2013* (2014, p. 87).

the professional activity of the population through increasing the activity of the regions with respect to the economic and social policy. The authorities of individual districts meet with various levels of success in limiting the size of unemployment. It also depends on the overall economic mode, general social and economic development level and more or less diverse labour market. Usually, urban districts and those located in the coastal belt (e.g. the kołobrzescki district) get much better results in combating this phenomenon. In that area, there is a relatively greater diversification and demand on the labour market (not only in tourist season). Much more difficult situation exists in the following districts: białogardzki, choszczeński, łobeski, pyrzycki and świdwiński.

## Conclusion

The discussion, analyses and assessments conducted show that unemployment is one of the most acute problems of our time experienced by a large part of the population of our country as well as that of Europe. Despite visible signs of improvement on the labour market, especially as compared with the early years of this century, the unemployment rate is still high (*Bezrobocie rejestrowane. I–IV kwartał 2010*. 2011, p. 30). The rates quoted in the paper prove that it is still at a two-digit level.

Another important observation is that the unemployment level shows a great spatial diversification, in particular in individual districts. However, even provinces show a dramatic difference. In the Wielkopolska Province, unemployment rate at the end of 2010 amounted to 9.2%, while in the Warmia-Mazuria Province it was 20%. So the spread of the index was 10.8 percentage points. By the end of 2013 it had grown up to 12.1 points.

Nearly twice as large spread was recorded in urban districts. During the same period, unemployment rate in the capital city of Warsaw was at the level of 3.4%, while in Radom it reached 22.5%. The amplitude between the extreme values of the index exceeded 19.1 percentage points, and by the end of 2013 it grew even further to 24.2 points.

Even more considerable diversification can be observed in the group of rural districts. Extreme values of the unemployment rate have been recorded in the poznański (3,6%) and szydłowiecki (35,1%) districts. Hence, the spread is very large, as it amounts to as much as 31.5 percentage points. By the end of 2013 it had decreased to 24.3 points.

Much smaller index spreads can be found in the districts of the West Pomerania Province. The difference between the cities of Szczecin (9.6%) and Świnoujście (11.2%) is only 1.6 point, while between the rural białogardzki

(29.4%) and kołobrzeski (11.9%) districts it is 17.5 percentage points. These values were recorded in 2010; three years later they amounted to 1.6 and 16.6 percentage points respectively. This does not mean, however, that the unemployment situation in this province is more favourable than in most other regions and on average throughout Poland; this is because both in urban and rural districts the unemployment rate is far higher than in other provinces.

The research demonstrates one conclusion: there is a continuing need to combat, or at least partially and gradually alleviate, the size of this phenomenon. Various programs are implemented to limit the scale of unemployment, but they do not produce the expected results.

The situation on the market dispels any doubts as to the necessity to undertake a range of measures aimed at substantially limiting the size of unemployment and the problems which it causes, both in the macro- and micro scale. Therefore, the government authorities, the local government and other units face huge challenges. The recovery of economic processes and combating different pathologies should be of interest to all concerned: the government, local government, non-government organizations, the existing enterprises and the unemployed themselves. The unemployed need not only more financial resources (for training and self-employment), but also more determination, entrepreneurship and innovative thinking, as there have been cases reported where job offers were accepted only reluctantly or even rejected, while many of the unemployed take up work on the so-called grey market.

Meeting these demands, while applying active instruments to combat unemployment by the employment services, may enable those who are really in search for a job to return to the labour market.

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